Activating Safe Communities with a Gun Violence Response System in the Washington Neighborhood

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Background

- Gun violence is a leading cause of premature death in the U.S and kills more than 38,000 people and causes nearly 85,000 injuries each year. (American Public Health Association, 2022)
- The Washington Neighborhood (WN) in the City of Long Beach (LB) is an area where multiple factions of the city's largest criminal street gangs operate, which often results in territorial firearm assaults. (LBPD, 2016)
  - The West Division contributed to 40.2% of Long Beach City's firearm assaults and murders in 2018. (LBPD, 2016)
- Children between the ages 12-14 that attend Washington Middle School are surrounded by a threating community in the WN. (LBPD, 2016)

Purpose

- To interrupt the cycle of violence, and to reduce the incidence of firearm assaults and aggravated assaults in the WN.
- Reduce gang and street gun violence, specifically homicides and shootings, by targeting youth most at risk for engaging in or becoming victims of violence.
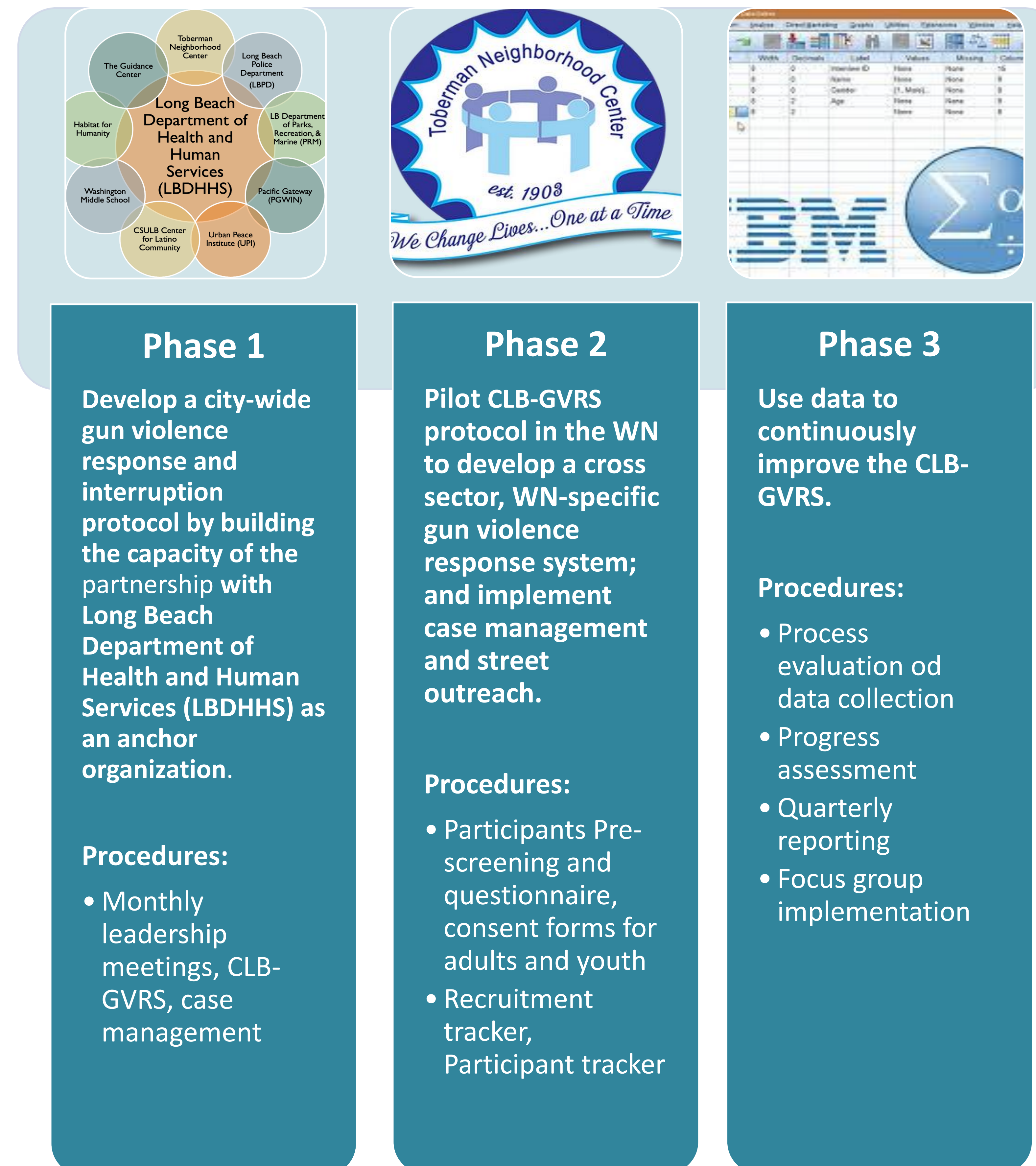
Program Aims

- Establish a coordinated City of Long Beach Gun Violence Response System (CLB-GVRS).
- Reduce gun related violence by activating the WN through a multi-sector, localized, youth and family-serving collaboration and street outreach model.

Methods

- **Design:** Non-experimental study design (3 phases)
- **Measurement:** Demographic, pre-and post-survey data (behaviors, health, gang affiliation) from study participants in case management phase.
- **Potential Participants:** Case management (n=30)
- **Eligibility:** Young adults between the ages of 13-24, residents of the City of Long Beach spending more than 50% of their time in the WN, and:
  - *Meets one of the following criteria:*
    - Prior history of arrest prison/juvenile detention
    - Gang affiliation
    - Victim of a shooting
    - Involved in high-risk street activity

Activities (Phases)

Phase 1
Develop a city-wide gun violence response and interruption protocol by building the capacity of the partnership with Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services (LBDHHS) as an anchor organization.

Procedures:
- Monthly leadership meetings, CLB-GVRS, case management

Phase 2
Pilot CLB-GVRS protocol in the WN to develop a cross sector, WN-specific gun violence response system; and implement case management and street outreach.

Procedures:
- Participants Pre-screening and questionnaire, consent forms for adults and youth
- Recruitment tracker, Participant tracker

Phase 3
Use data to continuously improve the CLB-GVRS.

Procedures:
- Process evaluation od data collection
- Progress assessment
- Quarterly reporting
- Focus group implementation

Preliminary Results

- **Phase 1: Gun Violence Response System (CLB-GVRS)**
  - Established with the City of Long Beach Police Department and 10 community partners August 2022.
  - Seventeen organizations involved in planning process.
- **Phase 2: Case Management and Street Outreach**
  - Human subjects' application approval
  - Toberman staff trained
  - Current participants enrolled (n=8)
- **Phase 3: Improvements of CLB-GVRS**
  - Ongoing process evaluation data collection
  - Quarterly reporting and progress assessment
  - End of project focus groups to be implemented

Future Directions

- Recruit more participants to get an accurate collection of data to be analyzed.
- Expand beyond the WN and cover a broader spectrum in the City of Long Beach.

Experiential Learning

- Gained knowledge on gun violence in the WN in LB and the city's response through the LB-ASC program.
- Gained experience working with raw data.
- Gained experience creating baseline and post survey template for data entry.
- Gained experience working with SPSS by creating data shells and inputting data.
- Gained experience working with One Drive and Qualtrics.
- Gained experience with data management (downloading and uploading participant surveys).

Acknowledgements