



**Project Safe Neighborhoods:  
Incorporating and Training Probation and Parole  
Professionals to Reduce Gun Crime**

## **Indianapolis: Probation Tackling Violence in the Community**

On October 9, 2004, Stephen Lawrence was found dead in a front yard near where he allegedly routinely sold cocaine in Indianapolis. Lawrence had been shot numerous times and had crack cocaine clutched in his hand at the time of his death. Lawrence had prior convictions for drugs and weapons. Lawrence is the 70th homicide victim in the city of Indianapolis this year.

The Lawrence case, at the time unsolved, is one of several cases presented at the “Review of Homicide Incidents” portion of the recent meeting of the Indianapolis Violence Reduction Partnership ([IVRP](#)) meeting and hosted by the Marion Superior Court Probation Department.

Detectives from the Indianapolis police department shared and compared information on several pending homicide cases, eliciting information from other members of the IVRP, which include all federal, state, and local criminal justice agencies serving Marion County, including the Marion Superior Court Probation Department. IVRP has partnered with [Project Safe Neighborhoods](#), and involved community leaders to address gun violence.

Being involved in IVRP meetings is nothing new to Robert “Bing” Bingham, Chief Probation Officer of Marion County Probation, he has been involved in IVRP for six years. In addition to the frequent, ongoing, police/probation information sharing noted earlier. CPO Bingham and his officers routinely notify offenders regarding firearm restrictions. Probationers are notified about the strict penalties under federal law for possession of a firearm by a felon or a domestic violence conviction to insure no misunderstanding of the law.

Also, notably, Marion County Probation partners with the Indianapolis Police Department and the Marion County Sheriff’s for bi-monthly “probation sweeps” for surprise visits to high risk probationers living in a certain geographic area. The probation sweeps have in the past netted drugs, drug paraphernalia, money, pornography and weapons.

The probation department also is a key participant in “lever pulling” sessions that target high risk probationers who are at risk of either committing a violent gun crime or being the victim of a gun crime. The group of high risk offenders is bombarded by messages by community leaders, and law enforcement that violence will not be tolerated, that if you possess a gun and get caught you will be prosecuted federally, and that if you want help in turning your life around help is available in the community.

By partnering probation with law enforcement and working together, Marion County Probation is on the cutting edge of combating gun violence in the community by implementing proactive, intense supervision of the most violent offenders in the community, while at the same time offering these offenders services, such as job skills, to help them stay in the community.