



Two Miami-Dade ZIP Codes Experienced Historic Drops in Homicide: Community Partnerships Result in More Safety



Executive Summary

Two ZIP codes in Miami-Dade county – 33147 and 33142 – achieved remarkable reductions in homicides between 2020 and 2024, demonstrating the power of coordinated public safety efforts. ZIP code 33147, encompassing Liberty City, plummeted from first to tenth in a ranking of the county's most lethal ZIP codes in terms of gun-related homicides. Prior to 2024, it had long been considered the county's most lethal ZIP code. This report examines this dramatic transformation with the intent to inform efforts to reduce homicides in other jurisdictions. **Our analysis finds that coordinated and targeted public safety investments that include community-based violence prevention and victim service programs are key to the historic homicide declines in the Miami-Dade ZIP codes that have struggled most with violence.**

A Historic Decline in Homicides

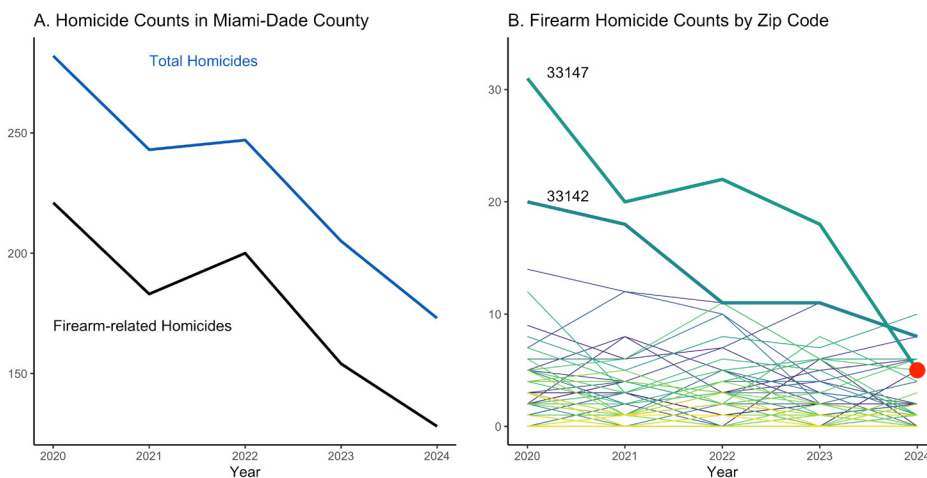


Figure 1. Homicide counts in Miami-Dade county between 2020 and 2024 (A), and firearm-related homicide counts for 80 ZIP codes in Miami-Dade county between 2020 and 2024 (B). The red dot indicates that the homicide count in 2024 for ZIP code 33147, known historically for having the highest rate of homicides in the county, dropped down to the 10th ranking in 2024.

Miami-Dade experienced a 39% decline in all types of homicides and a 42% overall drop in firearm-related homicides (hereafter referred to as “homicides”) from 2020 to 2024 (Fig. 1A), according to homicide counts by ZIP code data from the Miami-Dade Medical Examiner’s office. The countywide decline was driven primarily by dramatic drops in homicides in two ZIP codes long associated with high rates of violence:¹ 33147 and 33142 (Fig. 1B). ZIP code 33147, encompassing Liberty City and other neighborhoods, recorded 31 homicides in 2020 but just 5 in 2024 – an 83% decline. ZIP code 33142 recorded 20 homicides in 2020 and just 8 in 2024 – a 60% decline.

- 2020: 33147 (31 homicides), 33142 (20 homicides)
- 2023: 33147 (18 homicides), 33142 (11 homicides)
- 2024: 33147 (5 homicides), 33142 (8 homicides)

Both ZIP codes show extraordinary and sustained reductions in homicides. The number of homicides in each has declined nearly every year since 2020. And in just one year, between 2023 and 2024, 33147 experienced a 72% reduction—from 18 to 5 homicides—moving the ZIP code from the most violent to #10 countywide (Fig. 1B).

Federal, county, and city agencies have made targeted investments into both law enforcement and community-based initiatives in those two ZIP codes. ***This real-time, multi-sector coordination between community-based organizations and government agencies across neighborhoods, cities, and the county creates a response that goes far beyond the traditional silos allowing immediate synchronized action following violent incidents.***

¹ Schoen, N., Matchak, D., Armstrong, V., Sedighim, S., Lew, E., Jagid, J., Bullock, M.R. and Richardson, A., 2023. The cost of gunshot wounds to the head: an unevenly distributed burden. *World neurosurgery*, 172, pp.e201-e211.

Some key examples include:

The City of Miami, while focusing law enforcement efforts on identifying individuals with histories of violence and those unlawfully in possession of firearms due to past offenses and using the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) to solve cases and prevent future shootings through micro-hotspot policing initiatives, has its own Group Violence Intervention Strategy in Model City and Little Haiti areas through Community Health Outreach Workers and Master's Level Social Workers who have responded to 89 shooting incidents, served 60 clients, and conducted 171 custom notifications to both victims and perpetrators of gun violence.

Miami-Dade County deployed a comprehensive approach including the Anti-Violence Initiative/Group Violence Initiative (AVI/GVI) with street outreach teams responding to 798 shooting incidents since 2019, Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (started in 2021) providing 1,892 services to 476 individuals, and the Miami-Dade County Community Violence Intervention Initiative in partnership with the Carrie Meek Foundation's Supporting Safer Communities (SSC) grant program awarded over \$7 million to 80+ nonprofits, including those located in ZIP codes 33147 and 33142. This coordinated strategy integrated the Circle of Brotherhood, HVIP (Hospital-based Violence Intervention Program) teams, law enforcement, and outreach workers in real-time responses. In addition, since 1999, The GATE Program for Juvenile Weapon Offenders, funded through the Juvenile Services Department, has provided countywide six month programming to families while working collaboratively with local police departments to address juvenile weapon offenses and reduce recidivism through pro-social behavioral interventions.

Meanwhile the Miami-Dade Police Department (now the **Miami-Dade Office of the Sheriff**) removed 3,288 illegal firearms through Operation Community Shield (now operating as Operation Safe Summer), established ongoing daily intelligence-driven conversations with local state and federal law enforcement officials (including Federal prosecutors and the State Attorney's Office), and enhanced community engagement through neighborhood resource officers' "Coffee with a Cop" events, increased Crime Stopper collaboration and collaboration with community violence intervention programs like the Circle of Brotherhood.

The Florida Office of the Attorney General, utilizing Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, has supported the Thriving Mind South Florida Trauma Recovery Network since 2021. The Trauma Recovery Network provides access to mental health services, care coordination, peer support, and linkage to supportive community services for victims of violent crime and their families in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, including the 33147 and 33142 ZIP codes. To date, the program has served over 1,200 victims and family members, approximately 25% of whom are residents of those two ZIP codes.

At the Federal level, funding is distributed for law enforcement efforts, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) programs, and the US Department of Justice’s Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) launched in 2022 which was partly funded through the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. These federal CVIPI funds were used to support Circle of Brotherhood and other community-based organizations through evidence-based violence intervention and prevention programs that engage individuals and groups to prevent and disrupt cycles of violence and retaliation.

Did Investments in Community Partnerships and Violence Intervention Programs Play a Role in the Historic Homicide Declines?

Many factors – social, economic, and environmental – interact in complex ways to affect violence, making it difficult to identify a single factor that causes violence to increase or decrease. This section briefly addresses key questions and identifies several interventions from Law Enforcement, the Public Sector, and Community-Based Organizations that may have contributed to this historic drop in homicide counts.

Targeted Community-Based Partnerships and Violence Prevention Efforts Correlate with Reductions in Homicides

The commonality between neighborhoods that experienced the most substantial reductions in homicides was significant investments in community-based violence prevention alongside coordinated law enforcement efforts. Those targeted investments and strategic partnerships appear to be successful in reducing homicides. More specifically, areas with high-risk intervention programs experienced better safety results than areas without them.

Thirty-two grantees of the county’s Community Violence Intervention Initiative - Supporting Safer Communities (SSC) grant program administered by the Carrie Meek Foundation, were mapped. Grantees focused on high-risk interventions such as community violence interruption and support services for crime victims. As is shown in Fig. 2, these organizations are especially concentrated in and near 33147 and 33142, including Miami’s foremost community violence intervention program, Circle of Brotherhood.

Circle of Brotherhood deploys dedicated street interventionists, known as Peacemakers, who help to interrupt crime before it starts while also implementing a Safe Passage Program. Since 2022, it significantly expanded its reach into neighborhoods by deploying additional resources such as dedicated Peacemakers, Reentry Specialists, and Youth Success Coaches. From May to October of 2024 alone, Circle of Brotherhood and its partners facilitated 324 conflict mediations and 46 violence interruption sessions. Other significant violence intervention and victims services and advocacy programs that serve individuals in those two ZIP codes include, but are not limited to, Community Youth Against Violence, Multi-Ethnic Youth Group Association Learning Center, Historic Hampton House, Healing Justice Center, and the Survivors Helping Survivors Collaborative.

Though these data do not demonstrate causality, the presence of high-risk intervention and victim service programs is strongly correlated with reductions in homicides since 2020. Prior research provides causal evidence that the expansion of community nonprofits—particularly those focused on crime prevention, community building, and youth development—can lead to significant and sustained reductions in violent crime.² In Miami-Dade county, ZIP codes with the most high-risk intervention programs saw the biggest reductions in homicides (Fig. 2A).

² Sharkey, P., Torrats-Espinosa, G., & Takyar, D. (2017). Community and the crime decline: The causal effect of local nonprofits on violent crime. *American Sociological Review*, 82(6), 1214–1240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122417736289>

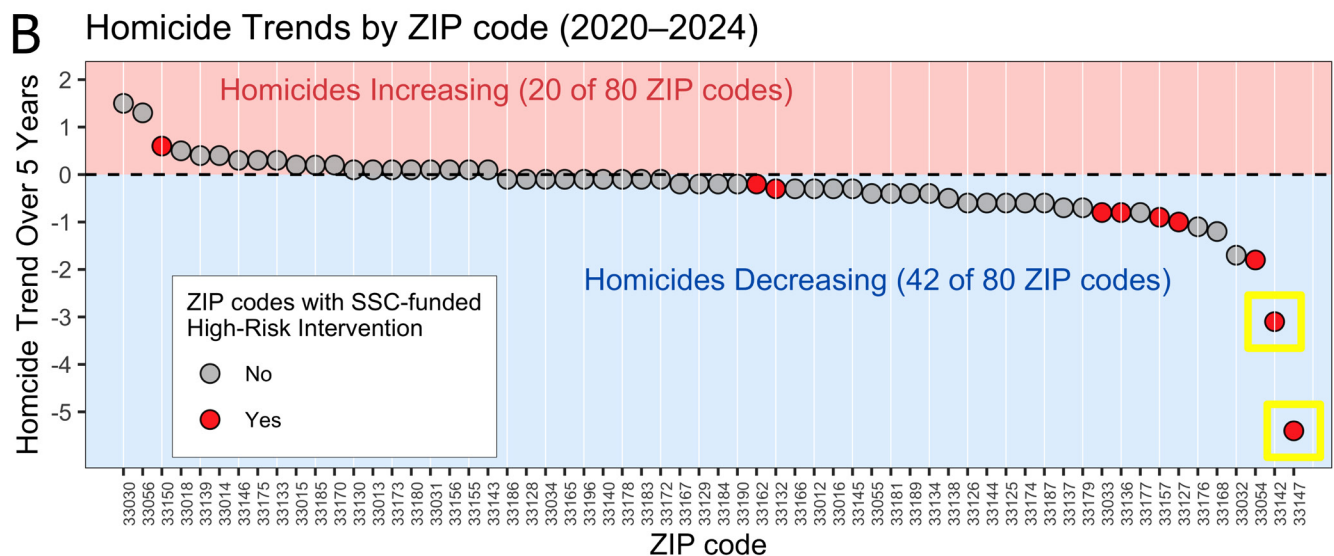
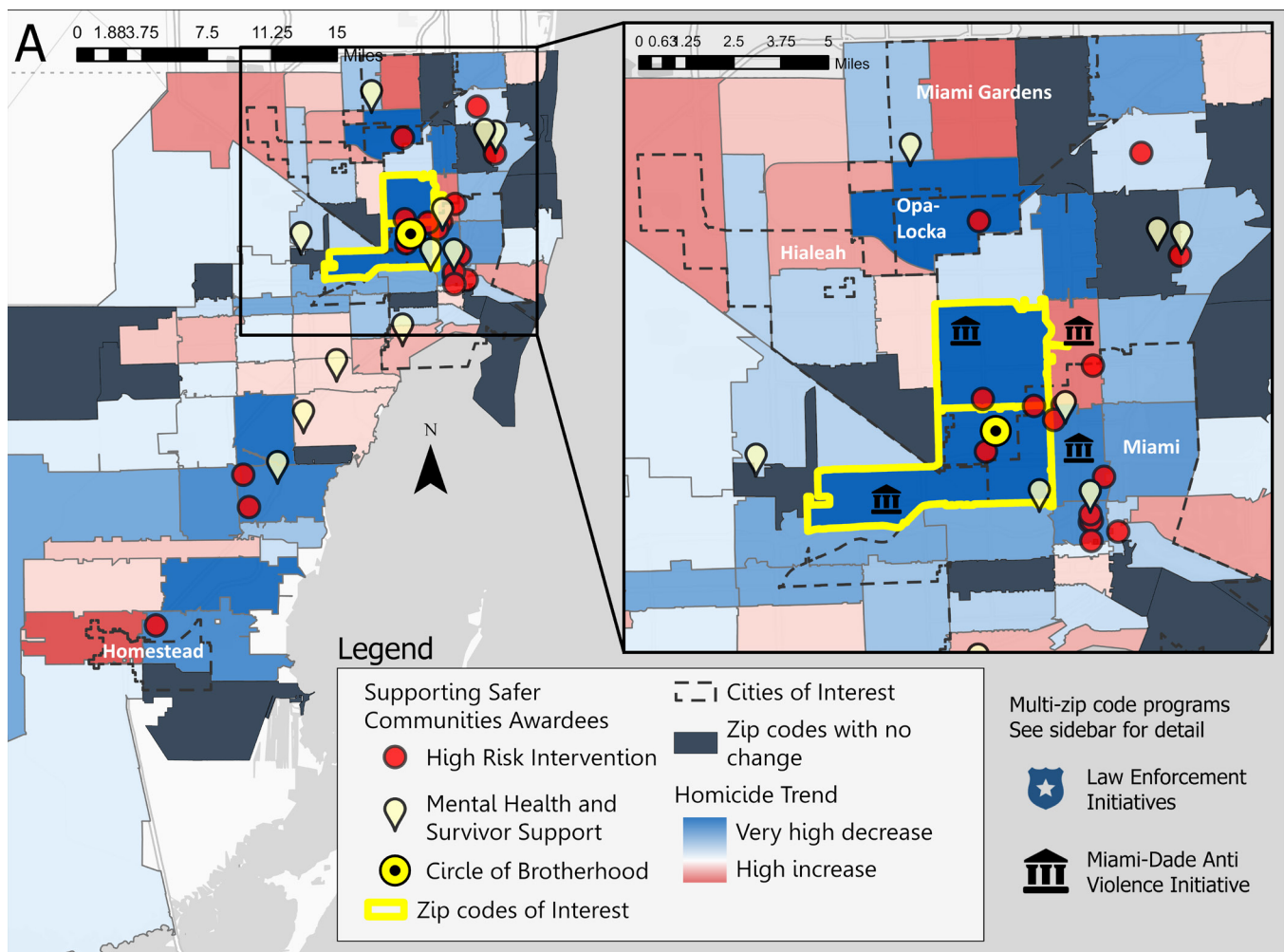


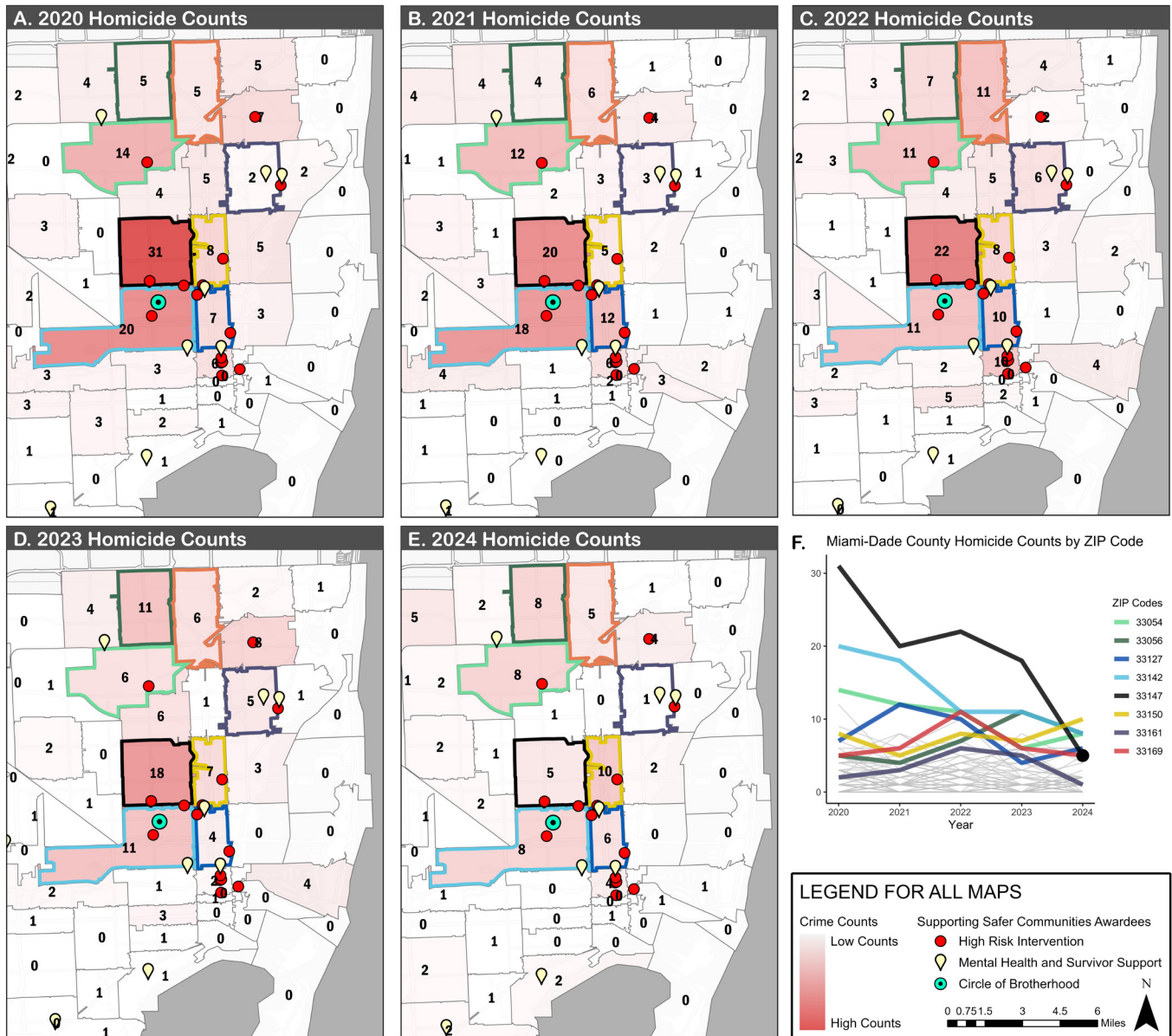
Figure 2. Homicide trends in each ZIP code across five years (2020–2024) in Miami-Dade county in relation to locations of Supporting Safer Community Awardees in Miami-Dade county and city boundaries (A), and corresponding gradient of homicide trendline for each ZIP code (B). Two ZIP codes with the highest declines in homicide rates between 2020–2024 are highlighted in yellow.

Even when examining a single funding stream—such as the American Rescue Plan Act’s funding of Miami Dade’s Supporting Safer Communities (SSC) grant program, which operated over a relatively short timeframe—we can still discern a clear pattern of targeted resource deployment. Locations of organizations funded through this initiative indicate violence prevention efforts were not evenly distributed across Miami-Dade county. Instead, resources were concentrated in communities facing the highest levels of risk, reinforcing the conclusion that local efforts to reduce homicides were intentionally focused where they were most needed. In turn, homicide counts in these ZIP codes decreased.

Conversely, our analysis also revealed that homicides increased primarily in ZIP codes that do not have high-risk intervention programs with brick-and-mortar locations funded through the SSC grant program (Fig. 2B). The 28 ZIP codes that experienced an increase in homicides had just one SSC-funded high-risk intervention program physically located in that ZIP code. ZIP codes that experienced the most significant increases – 33030 (Homestead) and 33056 (Miami Gardens) – do not have a single SSC-funded high-risk intervention program physically located in either of those ZIP codes.

Violence was decreased, not displaced

An analysis of surrounding ZIP codes shows that the decrease in violence in 33142 and 33147 was not simply the result of violence moving somewhere else (Fig. 3). No nearby ZIP code, individually or collectively, experienced a corresponding increase in homicides, indicating that violence was genuinely reduced rather than merely relocated. Moreover, neighboring Broward county homicide counts remained largely flat from 2020 to 2024, confirming genuine violence reduction in the larger region.



Miami-Dade County, FDEP, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

Figure 3. Heatmaps of homicide counts by ZIP code in northern Miami-Dade county between 2020 and 2024 with Supporting Safer Communities Awardee locations (A–E), with a corresponding line graph of five-year trends of homicide counts highlighted for eight ZIP codes (F).

Miami-Dade's violence prevention investments are one part of a larger coordinated public safety strategy that includes several key law enforcement and community safety programs.

Operation Community Shield: (now Operation Safe Summer under the Miami-Dade Sheriff Office): This flagship MDPD initiative removed 3,288 illegal firearms from Miami-Dade streets, with 2,840 removed in Unincorporated Municipal Service Areas. Municipal police departments contributed an additional 448 firearms removed—underscoring coordinated law enforcement efforts keeping weapons likely to be used in crimes off the streets.

City of Miami Police Department: The Department's efforts, included identifying and addressing repeat violent offenders, focused proactive enforcement of state and federal laws regarding convicted felons in possession of firearms and the straw purchasers that supply them, use of the ATF's National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) to both solve cases after the fact and prevent future shootings, and micro-hotspot policing initiatives.

Crisis Response Innovation: MDPD's groundbreaking Crisis Response Unit, staffing highly trained police officers alongside psychiatric nurse paramedics and licensed clinicians, responded to 495 crisis calls in their first five months, demonstrating law enforcement's evolving role in community safety.

Strategic Enforcement: The Sheriff's Office participated in and initiated daily intelligence driven phone conferences with local, state, and federal law enforcement officials, including prosecutors, to discuss shootings and strategically place assets throughout the county. These daily conversations support targeted intelligence-driven investigations and improved coordination between local, state, and federal information sharing.

Supporting Safer Communities Grant Program: A component of the Miami-Dade County Community Violence Intervention Initiative with oversight by its Office of Neighborhood Safety, SSC is managed by the Carrie Meek Foundation. The SSC Grant program provided over \$7 million to 80+ organizations focused on prevention, reentry, intervention, and mental wellness—complementing law enforcement efforts by addressing root causes and providing comprehensive support.

Miami Dade County Anti-Violence Initiative/Group Violence Initiative (AVI/GVI): Launched in March 2019, this initiative targeted ZIP codes 33147 and 33142 which were experiencing significant numbers of shootings and homicides. Street outreach teams worked closely with law enforcement, responding to 798 shooting incidents since 2019. The Hospital-based Violence Intervention Program (HVIP), added in December 2021 and staffed with a nurse practitioner, master's-level social workers, licensed clinical social workers, a medical director, and Jackson Health System coordinator, provided 1,892 services to 476 individuals, helping break cycles of retaliation. Miami-Dade County's HVIP stands out as one of only two programs nationwide with a nurse on staff in which the nurse practitioner provides wound care and education to gun violence victims.

Reentry and Economic Opportunity: Programs including \$135,000 in college scholarships for 90 at-risk youth and the 305 Second Chance Job & Resource Expo (connected 700+ attendees with 69 employers) helped provide alternatives to criminal activity.

Why These Declines Matter

Validation of Concentrated Investment: The results illustrate the benefit of concentrating resources in highest-violence areas rather than spreading interventions thinly. This targeted and focused approach achieved outsized impact benefiting the entire county. In addition, many of the sources of support for the work that may have contributed to these declines, such as ARPA stimulus funds and Federal Department of Justice grants, are sunseting or being terminated. It is unclear if these historic gains can be sustained in light of that decline in resources and investment.

Lessons and Implications

The resulting transformation in community safety demonstrates that with investment in the right resources and safety partnerships, communities historically experiencing high violence possess tremendous capacity for increased safety. The combination of strategic community investment and sustained partnership provides important lessons for other high-violence areas, not just in Miami-Dade county, but across the country. This success underscores the importance of violence intervention programs in homicide reduction efforts and indicates that intensive intervention in the most challenging areas can produce cost-effective, transformational results. By continuing to target intervention resources in the geographic areas most in need of violence reduction and strengthening cross-sector partnerships, Miami-Dade county can sustain this progress and keep improving safety across ZIP codes and the entire region.

Technical Appendix

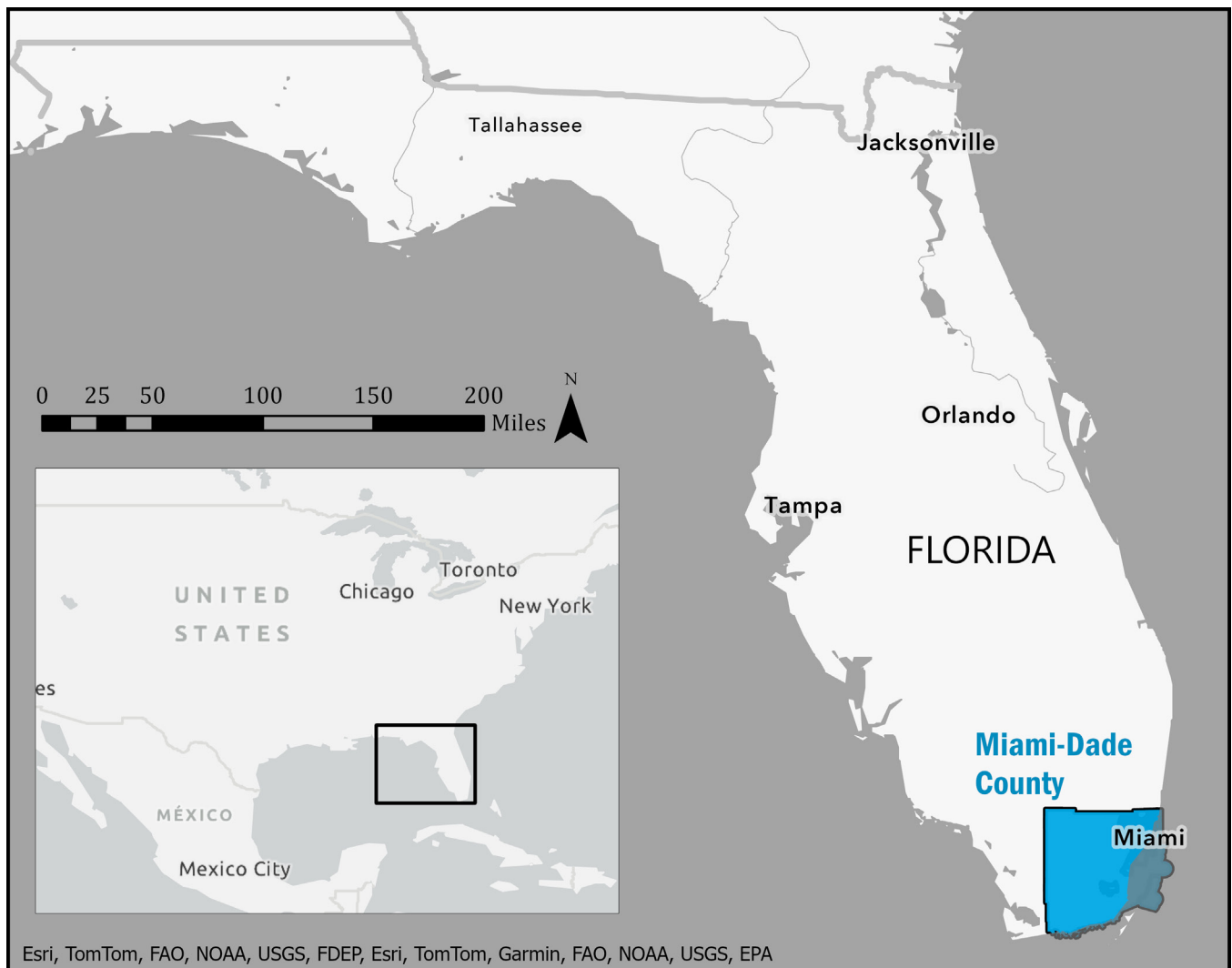


Figure A. Location of Miami-Dade County within Florida, USA.

Data Acquisition and Download

Miami-Dade Homicide Data – Annual homicide counts and homicide counts by firearm for all 80 ZIP codes between 2020 and 2024 were obtained from the Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner department. In Miami-Dade county, all homicides fall under the jurisdiction of the Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner Department. This department is responsible for investigating all non-natural deaths, including homicides, suicides, and accidental deaths (Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner Department). Homicides were recorded within the ZIP code if the incident took place within that ZIP code.

Miami Dade Spatial Data – Spatial layers encompassing Miami-Dade county (Fig. A) were downloaded from public data sources: County Municipal Boundaries (Miami-Dade County Open Data Hub) and county ZIP code boundaries (US Census Bureau 2024).

Identity and Locations of Supporting Safety Community Awardees – The list of awardees was obtained from the Carrie Meek Foundation, which worked with the Office of Neighborhood Safety to award millions of dollars to organizations in Miami-Dade county, including high-risk intervention programs and mental health and survivor support (Carrie Meek Foundation). If these organizations have brick-and-mortar locations, the latitude and longitude of these buildings were retrieved in Google Maps (Google).

Data Analysis

All data analyses were conducted in R 4.2.2. (R Core Team). The time series of firearm-related homicide counts in Miami-Dade county and by the 80 ZIP codes were plotted in a multi line plot to compare trends between ZIP codes. For each of the 80 ZIP codes, the gradient of the homicide trendline was obtained by calculating the slope of the linear regression between year and annual homicide counts by ZIP code. The coefficient of the slope was used to represent rate of change over time, where a positive slope indicated increase in homicide rates and a negative slope indicated decrease in homicide rates. Slopes with gradients so small that they rounded to zero at three decimal places were removed (18 ZIP codes). The remaining slopes were then plotted by ZIP code to compare the magnitude of decreasing vs increasing trends in homicide counts.

To explore if violence displacement could explain decreasing homicide trends in some ZIP codes, a two-sample t-test was used to determine if the magnitude of increase of trends (i.e. absolute value of trendline) in positive ZIP codes was similar to the magnitude of decrease of trends in negative ZIP codes. Distributions of the magnitude of slope for increase vs decreasing ZIP codes were significantly different ($T=2.6652$, $df=57.131$, $P=0.010$), indicating that the magnitude of decrease of homicides in some ZIP codes Miami-Dade county cannot be explained by the magnitude of increase in other ZIP codes.

The association between changes in homicide rates over time and the presence of a high-risk intervention organization within ZIP codes was examined. The homicide trend for each ZIP code was quantified by calculating the slope of a linear regression line modeling annual homicide counts against year, resulting in a continuous variable representing the rate of change in homicides. The presence of at least one high-risk intervention organization was recorded as a binary variable (Yes/No) for each ZIP code. To assess whether the homicide trend slope was correlated with the presence of these organizations, a logistic regression analysis was conducted with the presence of a high-risk intervention as the binary outcome and the homicide trend slope as the predictor variable. Logistic regression results indicated a significant positive association between the homicide trend slope and the presence of a high-risk intervention organization within ZIP codes. Specifically, for every one-unit decrease in the homicide trend slope—representing a steeper decrease in homicides over time—the odds of a ZIP code having a high-risk intervention organization increased by 18% (Odds Ratio = 1.18, 95% Confidence Interval = 0.039, 0.498, $P = 0.006$). This finding suggests that ZIP codes experiencing sharper downward trends in homicide rates are more likely to have established intervention organizations.

Mapping and Visualization

All spatial data visualization was conducted in ArcGIS Pro 3.1.0. (Esri, Redlands, CA). The identities of ZIP codes with large magnitudes of negative slopes were extracted for spatial visualization purposes. Base geographies (ZIP codes and municipal jurisdictions) were visualized for both maps. The coefficient of the slope was visualized by ZIP code (Fig. 2) to highlight homicide trends with Safer Communities Awardees overlaid. Homicide counts by ZIP code were visualized for Fig. 3 in northern Miami-Dade county as a time series of heatmaps between 2020-2024.

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. This analysis focuses on one type of violence—homicides, especially firearm-related homicides—without accounting for other forms such as non-fatal shootings, assaults, or domestic violence. Conclusions drawn here should not be extrapolated to broader patterns of violence. While we identified a significant association between homicide trends and the presence of high-risk intervention organizations, this relationship is correlational and does not imply causality. Our analysis is limited to a subset of organizations awarded Safer Communities funding in 2023; it does not capture all community groups, initiatives, or informal networks that may influence neighborhood safety. Our intention was to examine impacts of a focused group of formally recognized interventions rather than to provide a comprehensive landscape of all violence prevention efforts in Miami-Dade county.

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Acknowledgements

Subhash Kateel and Anne Devan-Song wrote this report. Kateel led the writing of the report and Devan-Song conducted data analyses and created data visualization. Cyrus O'Brien provided methodology and data visualization feedback and editorial support. Leah Sakala and Candace Hill contributed to framing and editorial support. Fred Fogg and Lisa Long provided editorial support. Allison Lamb contributed editorial support to data visualization and design. A final version of this report was also shared with the Office of the Mayor for Miami-Dade County, the Miami-Dade County Sheriff's Office, the Chief of Police for the City of Miami and many of the community organizations cited.

