2019 National Threat Picture
Top Threat Issues of Major City Law Enforcement Agencies

Threat Review Process (TRP) Background

Beginning in 2017, the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) and the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA) Intelligence Commanders Group (ICG), with the support of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), developed the ICG Threat Review Process (TRP) to establish the first National Threat Picture (NTP) among all member agencies. This is the first time that major law enforcement agencies have identified their top threat issues nationwide. All 69 MCCA United States member agencies participated in this process for a second year in a row – a 100% participation rate.

2019 National Threat Picture: An Overview

Core policing concerns continue to comprise the top issues for the second year in a row. Violent crimes involving firearms overwhelmingly remain the number one ranked issue, nationwide. All 21 threat issues are important to MCCA member agencies, regardless of ranking. The national priority rankings may not be indicative of individual agency results.

VIOLENT CRIME WITH FIREARM

- 91% of agencies ranked this among their top five concerns.
- 32% ranked this issue number one.
- *#1 issue for the Eastern and Central regions; #2 in the Western region.*

Defined as any violent crime, excluding homicides, that involves the use of a firearm, which may include, but not be limited to, car-jacking, home invasion, armed robbery, aggravated assault, etc.

CRIMINAL GANGS AND CREWS[1]

- 65% of agencies ranked this among their top five concerns.
- #2 in the Central region; #3 in the Eastern and Western regions
- Rose more than 25% in 2019, reflecting consolidated activity that was diluted in 2018 by using two categories to capture activity.

Defined as any organization that meets the reporting jurisdiction legal definition of a gang, engaging in criminal activity articulated by the jurisdiction's penal code. May comprise persons or organizations labeled as "regional", "neighborhood based", or "hybrid." Does not include prison or outlaw motorcycle gangs.

DRUG USER DERIVATIVE CRIME

- 58% of agencies ranked this among their top five concerns.
- 19% ranked this issue number one.
- #1 issue for the Western region, #5 for the Eastern and Central regions.

Defined as crimes committed by drug users to support their habit or while under the influence of drugs—not in furtherance of gang activity—including robberies, break-ins, assaults, impaired driving, etc.

DRUG TRAFFICKING AND PROLIFERATION

- 57% of agencies ranked this among their top five concerns.
- Dropped slightly in all three regions.

Defined as trafficking and proliferation of drugs; may include large-scale sale, production, and/or distribution of illegal drugs. Individuals may be affiliated with an organized gang or operate independently.

HOMICIDES

- 57% of agencies ranked this among their top five concerns.
- #3 in the Central region; #4 in the East; #8 in the West.

Defined as the deliberate and unlawful killing of one person by another by any means to include but not limited to; firearms, edged weapons, blunt force trauma, etc. For the purposes of this priority, the connection of the offender or victim to any organized gang, group, or organization is not relevant.

2019 NATIONAL THREAT PICTURE
21 Priority Threat Issues

RANK 2018	RANK 2019	THREAT ISSUE
1	1	VIOLENT CRIME WITH FIREARM
8	2	CRIMINAL GANGS AND CREWS[1]
2	3	DRUG USER DERIVATIVE CRIME
3	4	DRUG TRAFFICKING AND PROLIFERATION
5	5	HOMICIDES
4	6	OPIOID EPIDEMIC
7	7	VIOLENT CRIME WITHOUT FIREARM
6	8	NON-VIOLENT CRIMINAL VIOLATION
9	9	CRIMINAL ACTS AGAINST LAW ENFORCEMENT
10	10	SEX CRIMES
11	11	FINANCIAL CRIMES
16	12	DOMESTIC TERRORISM
13	13	GUN TRAFFICKING AND PROLIFERATION
12	14	ORGANIZED THEFT
15	15	HUMAN TRAFFICKING
14	16	CYBER CRIMES
17	17	HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMISM
18	18	ORGANIZED CRIME GROUPS
19	19	FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS
20	20	PRISON/JAIL GANGS
21	21	HUMAN SMUGGLING

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[1] In 2019, Centralized Gangs and Decentralized Gangs were combined into Criminal Gangs and Crews. For comparative purposes, the combined 2018 ranking was created by averaging the former placement of both categories.
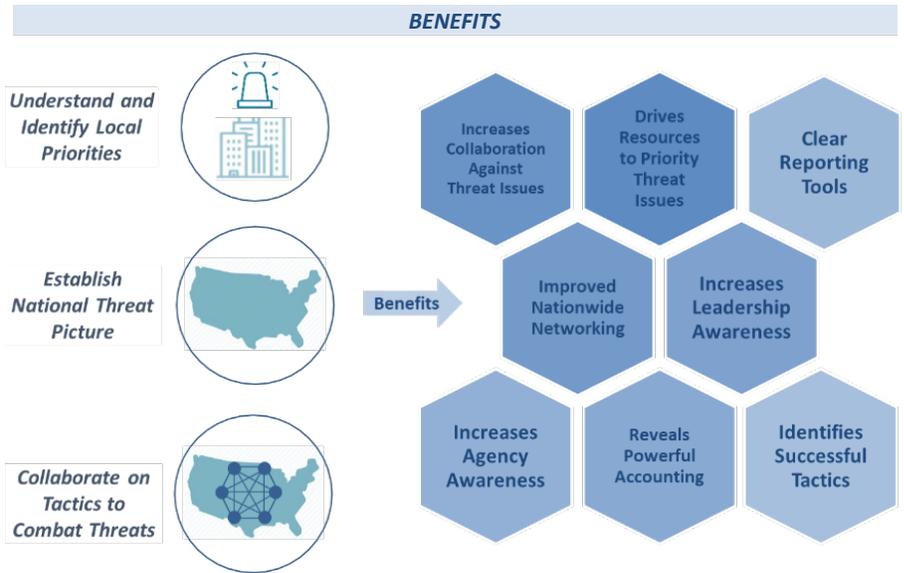
2019 National Threat Picture

TRP METHODOLOGY

A top threat issue is identified based on six different impact categories: Police perception; Public perception; Impact on community/neighborhood; Economic impact; Impact on police resources; and Law enforcements' impact on the threat.

BROAD AGENCY PARTICIPATION | The project lead identifies participants across the agency with operational and overall understanding of the agency's threat issues.

COMMON UNDERSTANDING | Participants meet to review background materials to ensure a common agency understanding of threat issues and definitions and the process for scoring and justifying findings.

THREAT RANKING and JUSTIFICATION | Participants initially work independently to rank the 21 threat issues based on existing information and what they know today – current cases, trends, statistics, intelligence, and experiences can all be used to justify rankings. A Threat Justification Matrix is one tool provided to agencies they can use to assign numerical values to six different Impact Categories to generate a ranking of the issues. The group convenes at the end to discuss findings and agree on any adjustments.

REVIEW AND FINAL RANKING | The executive staff from each command come together to discuss their findings with the chief executive (Chief/Sheriff) and determine the final rankings.

Key Trends

- **Criminal Gangs rose five places,** from 7.5 in 2018 to 2 in 2019, the largest rise in the dataset, due largely to consolidation of two 2018 categories, Centralized Gangs and Decentralized Gangs, into Criminal Gangs and Crews. The 2019 ranking gives a clearer picture of the true impact of gang activity.
- **Domestic Terrorism rose four places,** from 16 in 2018 to 12 in 2019. Two of three terrorism categories are in the bottom five ranks, but Domestic Terrorism has increased, likely reflecting growing concern prompted by recent acts of mass violence—such as shootings in schools, malls, concerts, large community events, religious establishments, and bars.
- **The Opioid Epidemic fell two places,** from 4 in 2018 to 6 in 2019. It remained #2 in the East and fell by one place in the both the Western and Central regions.

Purpose and Benefits

The TRP enables leaders of the nation's largest local law enforcement agencies to identify, prioritize, and address critical threat issues facing their communities, using a common, nationwide set of issues. This supports agencies in their analysis of threats, allocation of resources, and identification and review of threat mitigation strategies. Because the TRP is completed by all MCCA member agencies, command staff can identify and partner with similar cities for best practices and tactics to enhance mitigation of threat issues. The TRP is an annual process, completed by all members, to provide a benchmark with which police leaders can gauge year-to-year changes and identify persistent issues where nationwide collaboration may be especially important.

BENEFITS

Understand and Identify Local Priorities

Establish National Threat Picture

Collaborate on Tactics to Combat Threats

Benefits → Increases Collaboration Against Threat Issues; Drives Resources to Priority Threat Issues; Clear Reporting Tools; Improved Nationwide Networking; Increases Leadership Awareness; Increases Agency Awareness; Reveals Powerful Accounting; Identifies Successful Tactics

18	19	WESTERN REGION
1	1	Drug User Derivative Crime
2	2	Violent Crime With Firearm
8	3	Criminal Gangs and Crews
3	4	Non-Violent Criminal Violation
4	5	Drug Trafficking and Proliferation
5	6	Violent Crime – Non Firearm
6	7	Opioid Epidemic
7	8	Homicides
10	9	Sex Crimes
9	10	Criminal Acts against Law Enforcement

Includes AZ, CA, CO, HI, NM, NY, OR, UT, WA

18	19	CENTRAL REGION
1	1	Violent Crime With Firearm
7	2	Criminal Gangs and Crews
4	3	Homicides
2	4	Drug Trafficking and Proliferation
3	5	Drug User Derivative Crime
5	6	Violent Crime – Non-Firearm
6	7	Non-Violent Criminal Violation
9	8	Criminal Acts against Law Enforcement
8	9	Opioid Epidemic
16	10	Domestic Terrorism

Includes IL, KS, LA, MN, MO, NE, OK, TN, TX, WI

18	19	EASTERN REGION
1	1	Violent Crime With Firearm
2	2	Opioid Epidemic
7	3	Criminal Gangs and Crews
5	4	Homicides
4	5	Drug User Derivative Crime
3	6	Drug Trafficking and Proliferation
8	7	Violent Crime – Non-Firearm
6	8	Non-Violent Criminal Violation
9	9	Criminal Acts Against Law Enforcement
10	10	Sex Crimes

Includes DC, FL, GA, IN, KY, MA, MD, MI, NC, NJ, NY, OH, PA, SC, VA