

MARYLAND CRIME RESEARCH & INNOVATION CENTER

Launched in 2018 with a grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy

SEPTEMBER 2025 | NEWSLETTER

➤ Welcoming Our New Research Director Torri Sperry

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Torri Sperry as MCRIC's new Research Director. Dr. Sperry earned her PhD in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland. She brings to this role a familiarity with Maryland and has played central research roles on recent MCRIC partnership projects, including the Annapolis City Police Workload Analysis and as our first embedded data analyst with the Prince George's Police Department.

"MCRIC offered an abundance of research and professional opportunities throughout my time as a graduate student, and I am beyond excited to be able to continue this work as the center's research director as we expand our scope of partnerships with local jurisdictions."

-- Dr. Torri Sperry, MCRIC Research Director



Torri Sperry, PhD
MCRIC Research Director

Before then, she worked with various local and national organizations, including UMD's Violence Reduction Center, the Crime and Justice Institute, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and serves as a research consultant for Choice Research Associates. She is a mixed-methods researcher whose interests include evidence-based policing, as well as community violence reduction and police-community relations. Meet the full Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center (MCRIC) Team [here](#).

Bianca Bersani, PhD
MCRIC Director

➤ NEW: Follow MCRIC on LinkedIn!



We have a new presence on LinkedIn! Follow us at: www.linkedin.com/company/mcric

➤ PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS

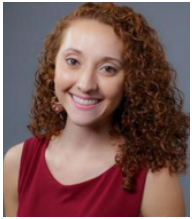
Police Workload Analysis

MCRIC collaborated with the Annapolis Police Department (APD) last year to conduct an **evidence-based workload analysis** for optimizing staffing amidst recruitment challenges. Effective resource allocation is crucial for law enforcement agencies to ensure public safety, maintain operational efficiency, and meet the needs of their communities. Current nationwide challenges related to the recruitment and retention of police officers make insights on adequate staffing and resource allocation even more important for police departments. An effective way to understand and navigate these challenges is to undertake a data-informed workload analysis.

Using a multi-method strategy that combined analyzing routinely collected police administrative data, survey data from APD officers and leadership, and interviews with the APD community and Annapolis City leadership, the team generated insight into call trends, officer experiences and perceptions, and resource needs and constraints.



Like many police departments, APD's service demands varied by day, time, month and call type which may inform APD's strategy for allocating scarce resources. Surveys and interviews with officers provided insights into perceived opportunities and local challenges related to recruitment and retention, reallocating roles and resources, and alternative non-law enforcement or hybrid response approaches.



Torri Sperry, PhD
MCRIC Research Director



Emily Glazener, PhD
Research Analyst

"We were continually impressed by the commitment of Annapolis city leaders and the Annapolis Police Department community to this important work," said MCRIC Director and Associate Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice Bianca Bersani. "It's clear that APD is facing workload challenges and that there is a strong commitment from the entire APD community to identifying these challenges and thinking creatively about how best to address them."

Despite the focus on Annapolis, these efforts can help to inform future workload analyses for agencies across the US who are facing similar police workload issues, particularly the small or mid-sized jurisdictions that face unique workload demands and challenges, but have been previously overlooked in workload studies. Workload analyses are not a one-size-fits-all solution, but should be routinely applied to adapt to changing community needs and evidence regarding best practices. To learn more about this project see [here](#).



Frank Donohue, MA
CCJS



Erika Feeney, MA
CCJS

PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS

Community-Based Violence Reduction Evaluation

Community-Based Violence Interventions (CBVI) aim to reduce violence within neighborhood and community settings using evidence-informed practices tailored to the specific needs of the community. MCRIC engaged in a multiyear partnership with the Greater Baybrook Alliance to evaluate a multi-pronged **community-based violence reduction effort** (CBVR) targeting places and people experiencing crime and violence in the Brooklyn, Curtis Bay, and Brooklyn Park neighborhoods in the south Baltimore peninsula.

"From the beginning, GBA aimed to facilitate the development of a strategic and sustained effort that centered the voices and experiences of people most directly impacted by crime and violence. By doing so, talented and passionate neighborhood leaders have fostered the BVRP into a scalable, community-wide initiative that we envision having a continued impact for years to come."

-Daisy Heartberg, GBA Chief Programming Officer



Bianca Bersani, PhD
MCRIC Director
Associate Professor

The **Baybrook Violence Reduction Plan (BVRP)** was designed to improve neighborhood conditions and reduce violent crime, based on a community problem analysis by MCRIC. Using a combination of spatial analyses of administrative data, interviews with community stakeholders, and community feedback, the intervention strategies employed in the BVRP focused on addressing acute and root causes of crime through place-based interventions and youth-focused case management.

The **place-based interventions** targeted six priority zones and aimed to strengthen collective efficacy and alter the built environment which included 188 GBA led activities including façade improvements, beautification, safety walks, and outreach events.



Greg Midgette, PhD
Associate Professor



CBVR Evaluation, continued:

The **person-based intervention** reflected a core concern in the community regarding the lack of opportunities and resources available to youth. Intensive case-management services (life-coaching) was offered to at-risk youth ages 15-18 aimed at providing resources and mentorship to facilitate the attainment of self-identified goals, achieve traditional markers of healthy development (e.g., graduation), and develop prosocial relationships.

The BVRP showed early promise in addressing acute motivators of crime and fostering community engagement.

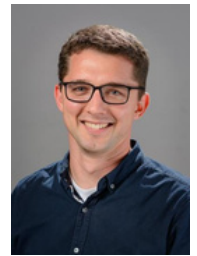
Descriptive results showed a slight reduction in violent crime in GBA neighborhoods from 2023 to late 2024, surpassing city-wide improvements in homicides, shootings, aggravated assaults, and total Part I crimes. Despite challenges in youth-service delivery, survey results suggest these programs boost youth confidence and could have long-term effects if sustained. Additionally, two large-scale randomized household surveys conducted by GBA before and after implementation (Fall 2021 and Fall 2024) reveals promising changes in multiple domains of [collective efficacy](#) throughout the neighborhood including perceptions of the police and social cohesion.

Efforts to expand this important violence reduction partnership between MCRIC and GBA that started in Fall 2024 was part of the April 2025 large scale termination of federal awards supporting community safety and violence intervention efforts.

➤ MORE NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

School Suspensions Research Using the Maryland Longitudinal Data System

Dr. Wade Jacobsen, Dr. Angie Henneberger, Dr. Mathew Uretsky, and Abbey Potter are using the [Maryland Longitudinal Data System](#) for two projects. The first examines (1) patterns in the use of in-school and out-of-school suspensions in Maryland schools, (2) the associations of suspension with subsequent juvenile justice involvement, and (3) potential mechanisms of these associations. The second examines the relationship between juvenile justice involvement and subsequent employment and wages, as well as educational characteristics that may explain this relationship.



Wade Jacobsen, PhD
Associate Professor

Violence Reduction Center: Street Outreach Programs

Working in partnership with professors Ericka Adams of San Jose State University (SJSU), and Ed Maguire and Cody Telep of Arizona State University (ASU), the VRC recently published [preliminary results](#) of an ongoing systematic review of street outreach programs in the Translational Criminology magazine. This review will assist policymakers, practitioners, and the public in better understanding whether street outreach initiatives effectively reduce violence.



Thomas Abt, JD
VRC Founding Director

Understanding what Violent Street Crime, Globalization, & Ice Cream, have in Common

In Dr. Gary LaFree's address for the [2024 Stockholm Prize](#), he discussed research with Dr. Greg Midgette on the impact of the death of Freddie Gray in Baltimore in 2015 on crime, crime reporting and arrest rates. To their surprise, they found that crime reporting increased in predominantly African American neighborhoods following what most people view as a high-profile example of police misconduct that targeted the Black community. Dr. LaFree uses this example in the resulting article to point out that research results in criminology often fly in the face of our commonsense expectations and we must remain open to unexpected findings.



Gary LaFree, PhD
Distinguished University
Professor Emeritus