NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY GOVERNOR'S CRIME COMMISSION RESEARCH & EVIDENCE BUILDING PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

January 2025

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Since July 2024, the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) and the NC Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) have partnered to identify GCC research and evidence building priorities and develop this *GCC Research & Evidence Building Priorities Action Plan (Action Plan)*. The aim of this *Action Plan* is to articulate and define key criminal justice, public health, and public safety policy research questions for GCC to make evidence-based decisions. The *Action Plan* also includes an initial data landscape assessment (Appendix B) identifying which local, state, and federal agencies maintain criminal justice, public health, and public safety outcomes to answer identified policy research questions. This *Action Plan* comes at an opportune time as GCC works to build on its use of data, research, and evidence through the Criminal Justice Analysis Center (CJAC) and GCC more broadly.

How GCC Plans to Use this Action Plan

This *Action Plan* organizes GCC's key policy research questions by types of research and evidence building activities. Each research and evidence building priority area details the background and motivation for the GCC policy research question, a brief description of proposed evidence building activities and timing, and anticipated challenges and solutions. At the end of the document, the section "GCC Next Steps to Advance Research & Evidence Building Activities" includes next steps for executing this *Action Plan*. GCC and external research partners will refine the policy research questions and proposed research methods to execute specific projects.

GCC considers this *Action Plan* a "living document" it will update regularly based on stakeholder feedback, evidence generated through research activities, and emerging agency needs.

Development of this Action Plan

Between July and September 2024, GCC and OSP partnered to identify GCC's research and evidence building priorities by engaging key internal and external stakeholders through virtual and in-person listening sessions and an online survey. OSP facilitated four listening sessions in August and September 2024 with over 120 participants from the following groups: 1) GCC Commissioners; 2) GCC Advisory Committees; 3) GCC Staff; and 4) GCC CJAC Data Advisory Group. OSP also sent an anonymous survey to approximately 200 individuals in the same groups who participated in the listening sessions. GCC Commissioners, GCC staff, GCC Advisory Committee members, and GCC CJAC Data Advisory Group members submitted a total of 52 responses. This *Action Plan* synthesizes the feedback from the listening sessions and online survey. From this feedback, the *Action Plan* details seven policy research questions GCC aims to answer by the end of 2027 summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Policy Research Question	Evidence Building Activities[A]	Planned Start[B]	Expected Results[C]
Cross-Agency Priority Research & Data Sharing Questions			
What is the relationship between incarceration in local jails and incarcerated individuals' health outcomes?	DA, PE	January 2025	LT
What GCC-funded resources and services are available across NC?	ER, FFF	February 2025	ST
What is the relationship between areas with high gun violence incidents and GCC-funded violence intervention and prevention programs?	DA, PE	February 2026	ST/LT
What factors predict the likelihood that someone who is a victim of crime will perpetrate a crime themselves in NC?	ER, DA, PE	March 2026	ST/LT
Embedding Evidence and Evaluation in GCC Grant Programs			
What is the evidence base for GCC grant funded programs?	ER, FFF	February 2025	ST
How can GCC prioritize funding programs and interventions with a proven evidence base?	ER, PA	February 2025	ST
What is the effectiveness of GCC-funded programs and services? Are GCC-funded programs implemented as intended?	PE	July 2026	LT

[A] Evidence building includes the following activities: Evidence Review (ER); Foundational Fact-Finding (FFF); Policy Analysis (PA); Descriptive Data Analysis (DA); Performance Measurement (PM); and Program Evaluation (PE). For definitions on each activity, see Appendix A

[B] Planned start dates are defined as the target date for having initial scoping meetings to refine research question.

[C] Expected results defined as: ST (short-term) if results expected before 2026 and LT (long-term) if results expected after 2026 or if activity is recurring.

Introduction

The [North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) Governor's Crime Commission (GCC)](#) serves as the chief advisory body to the Governor and to the Secretary of NCDPS on crime and justice issues. The GCC serves as the state administering agency designated to apply for federal criminal justice funding from the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) on behalf of the State of North Carolina. These federal funds, along with state-appropriated funds, are distributed to criminal justice agencies and nonprofits through a grant application process voted on annually by the Commission.[1]

The [North Carolina Office of Strategic Partnerships](#) (OSP) develops, launches, and enhances partnerships between state government and North Carolina's research and philanthropic sectors. This includes elevating the State's internal capacity to use and generate evidence in its policy and programmatic functions. OSP does this in part by building and enhancing collaborative networks of public officials, research partners, and partners from philanthropy and the nonprofit sector broadly. OSP prioritizes partnerships that are scalable, sustainable, and develop public, open-source resources.

GCC Research & Evidence Building Priorities Project Overview

GCC received a grant from the USDOJ Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) through the [Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI)](#) in 2023. The goal of the grant is to prevent and reduce violent crime in communities by supporting comprehensive, evidence-based violence intervention and prevention programs. The BJA requires grantees to identify and report performance measures related to the CVIPI activities. Grantees also must use the performance measures to measure the impact of the strategies funded by the CVIPI.

Related to this effort, GCC also received a grant from the [Council of State Governments Justice Center's Justice Counts initiative](#). Justice Counts is a national, consensus-building initiative designed to help policymakers make better decisions with criminal justice data that's more timely, less disjointed, and as useful as possible. The purpose of the grant from Justice Counts is to identify and obtain criminal justice metrics across disparate agencies and data sources in North Carolina. This will allow GCC to build the necessary data infrastructure and data warehouse that improves the accessibility and usability of criminal justice data for evidence-based decision making and program evaluation.

Since July 2024, GCC and OSP [have partnered](#) to accomplish the criminal justice and public health data sharing and data integration goals of the CVIPI and Justice Counts

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[1] https://www.ncdps.gov/about-dps/boards-and-commissions/governors-crime-commission/about-governors-crime-commission#CommissionerResources-6760

grants and to expand GCC's capacity to generate and use data and evidence. The project aims to develop the following areas:

- A *GCC Research & Evidence Building Priorities Action Plan* (this document) articulating key criminal justice, public health, and public safety policy research questions for GCC to make evidence-based decisions.
- An initial data landscape assessment (Appendix B) identifying which local, state, and federal agencies maintain criminal justice, public health, and public safety outcomes. The initial data landscape assessment identifies which agency administrative data GCC can use to answer the policy research questions detailed in this *Action Plan*. The initial data landscape assessment also identifies which outcome measures overlap with the CVIPI and Justice Counts grants performance measures GCC must obtain.
- Data sharing and data use agreements with local, state, and federal agencies for GCC to obtain and analyze the criminal justice, public health, and public safety outcomes identified in this *Action Plan* and in the initial data landscape assessment noted above and provided in Appendix B.

This *Action Plan* comes at an opportune time as GCC works to build on its use of data, research, and evidence through the Criminal Justice Analysis Center (CJAC) and GCC more broadly.

How GCC Plans to Use this Action Plan

This *Action Plan* organizes GCC's key policy research questions by types of research and evidence building activities. Each research and evidence building priority area details the background and motivation for the GCC policy research question, a brief description of proposed evidence building activities and timing, and anticipated challenges and solutions. At the end of the document, the section "GCC Next Steps to Advance Research & Evidence Building Activities" includes next steps for executing this *Action Plan*. GCC and external research partners will refine the policy research questions and proposed research methods to execute specific projects.

Development of this Action Plan

Between July and September 2024, GCC and OSP partnered to identify GCC's research and evidence building priorities by engaging key internal and external stakeholders through virtual and in-person listening sessions and an online survey described below. OSP facilitated four listening sessions in August and September 2024 with over 120 participants from the following groups: 1) GCC Commissioners; 2) GCC Advisory Committees; 3) GCC Staff; and 4) GCC CJAC Data Advisory Group.

OSP also sent an anonymous survey to approximately 200 individuals in the same groups who participated in the listening sessions. GCC Commissioners, GCC staff, GCC Advisory

Committee members, and GCC CJAC Data Advisory Group members submitted a total of 52 responses.

OSP compiled the feedback from the listening sessions and online survey and identified key themes and observations to develop the policy research questions and evidence building activities that GCC stakeholders identified as priorities. GCC and OSP worked together to consolidate, revise, and rank the policy research questions. This *Action Plan* provides the final policy research questions GCC plans to answer through its research and evidence building activities through 2027. There are two overarching research and evidence building areas included in this *Action Plan*:

- **Cross-Agency Priority Research & Data Sharing Questions:** Policy research questions requiring cross-agency data sharing across criminal justice, public health, human services, and education agencies at the state and local level.
- **Embedding Evidence and Evaluation in GCC Grants**: Describes a larger strategy around understanding the effectiveness of GCC-funded programs, and how GCC as an organization can incentivize the use of evidence-based program strategies to achieve the key outcomes.

The rest of this *Action Plan* describes planned GCC research and evidence building priorities and activities under each of these areas.

Current GCC Research, Data Analysis, and Evaluation Capacity

As part of the development of this *Action Plan,* OSP and GCC assessed current internal staff capacity and expertise to complete the necessary analysis to answer each of the seven policy research questions included in this document. As of December 2024, the GCC CJAC has a total of five positions with three currently vacant. GCC CJAC Director reported plans to fill these positions in early 2025, but until then, GCC CJAC will have limited capacity to start work on the key policy questions included in the *Action Plan*.

To support and supplement capacity to start work on the key policy questions in the *Action Plan,* OSP is ready to support GCC identifying potential external research support from academic institutions in North Carolina. OSP can support GCC in identifying potential external research support by posting the questions and related projects to the NC Project Portal and seek external research support as needed.

Cross-Agency Priority Research & Data Sharing Questions

A key theme that emerged from GCC stakeholders who participated in the listening sessions and responded to the online survey is the need for more cross-agency data sharing across criminal justice, public health, human services, and education agencies at the state and local level. Like the goals of the Justice Counts grant GCC received, stakeholders spoke about the need for better integration of criminal justice and public health data held across disparate agencies in North Carolina at the state and local level. They also spoke to the need to establish a data infrastructure to improve the accessibility and usability of data for evidence-based decision making. Specific cross-agency priority research and data sharing questions GCC seeks to answer include:

- [What is the relationship between incarceration in local jails and incarcerated individuals' health outcomes?](#)
- [What GCC-funded resources and services are available across NC?](#)
- [What is the relationship between areas with high gun violence incidents and GCC-funded violence intervention and prevention programs?](#)
- [What factors predict the likelihood that someone who is a victim of crime will perpetrate a crime themselves in NC?](#)

The rest of this section details GCC research and evidence building activities to answer each of these cross-agency priority research and data sharing questions.

What is the relationship between incarceration in local jails and incarcerated individuals' health outcomes?

Table 2

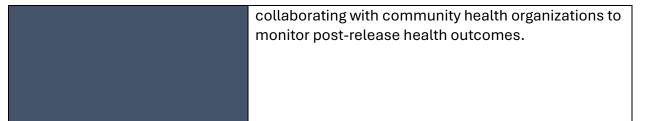| What is the relationship between incarceration in local jails and incarcerated individuals' health outcomes? **Sub-Question:** ○ **What is the relationship between mental health issues, substance use, and crime in NC?**	
Background and Motivation	GCC stakeholders identified a need for easier access to NC local jail data across the state to examine interactions with NC local jails and pre- and post-arrest health outcomes. Stakeholders indicated that the need for timely data and county-specific information would help inform public safety and public health decisions at a local level.

Proposed Evidence Building Activities[23]	1. **Descriptive Data Analysis:** Conduct descriptive studies to understand the baseline health status of individuals upon entering local jails. Compare rates and characteristics of overdose-related death, suicide, and homicide in formerly jailed people to the general population in North Carolina. Use data visualization to map geographic distribution of formerly jailed individuals and health outcomes. 2. **Program Evaluation (Quantitative Impact Study):** Conduct evaluations using quasi-experimental designs with longitudinal data to examine the effects of jail-time on certain health outcomes. Analyze outcomes over multiple years to assess impacts of incarceration in jails on health outcomes.

Activities Timeline	• **Planned Start:** January 2025
	• **Expected Results:**
	  • September 2025 **(Descriptive Data Analysis)**
	  • July 2027 **(Program Evaluation: Quantitative Impact Study)**

Anticipated Challenges and Solutions	Accessing detailed health and jail data may be difficult due to privacy laws and data sharing restrictions. GCC could establish partnerships with agencies to develop necessary permissions and data use agreements to protect privacy. Integrating data from various sources like local health departments, jails, and law enforcement agencies can be difficult due to differences in data formats, collection methods, and quality. GCC could create a standardized data framework to integrate data from different sources. Tracking health outcomes over time can be challenging due to difficulties in maintaining contact with formerly incarcerated individuals. GCC could use unique identifiers and establish protocols to track individuals over time by

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[2] Proposed evidence building activities includes activities GCC could do on its own and in partnership with external researchers.

[3] Evidence building includes but is not limited to the following activities: Foundational Fact Finding (FFF); Policy Analysis (PA); Performance Measurement (PM); and Program Evaluation (PE). For definitions on each activity, see Appendix A.

	collaborating with community health organizations to monitor post-release health outcomes.

What GCC-funded resources and services are available across NC?

Table 3

What GCC-funded resources and services are available across NC? Sub-Questions: • How can GCC develop a statewide resource to understand what services exist across the state? • How would GCC stakeholders use a statewide resource to connect customers with services? • How can GCC incorporate information on the quality and/or effectiveness of the services into the resource directory?	
Background and Motivation	GCC stakeholders identified a need for more information to understand what GCC-funded resources exist across the state. The goal would be to develop a resource that GCC regularly updates that can provide a directory of information on which services are available along with any information on their quality and effectiveness to inform GCC, its grantees, and individuals served. The resource directory could be a dashboard or map that allows users to see service availability and identify gaps in service where none is available in a given area.
Proposed Evidence Building Activities[45]	1. **Evidence Review:** Conduct an evidence review to identify potential frameworks and practices in other states related to their communication of program availability like programs GCC funds.

NC Governor's Crime Commission
Research & Evidence Building Priorities Action Plan
January 2025

	2. **Foundational Fact Finding:** Develop an inventory of GCC-funded programs and the services they offer to provide baseline data for the development of a program resource map. The resource map would include key information from GCC-funded programs on services provided, key outcomes, and whether their program models have an evidence base. GCC could develop the resource to include information from GCC partner programs on the availability of services and identify areas of North Carolina where there are not sufficient services to meet demand.

Activities Timeline	• **Planned Start:** February 2025
	• **Expected Results:**
	    • May 2025 **(Evidence Review)**
	    • October 2025 **(Foundational Fact Finding)**

Anticipated Challenges and Solutions	The primary challenge with developing a program resource directory is keeping information about programs and the services they provide up to date to be a tool GCC stakeholders can use. Additionally, given the wide variation in GCC grant programs and variation in the services GCC grantees provide, providing a common framework of services and potential measures of program quality will be difficult without direction and guidance from GCC providing a common reporting mechanism to capture information in a consistent manner.

What is the relationship between areas with high gun violence incidents and GCC-funded violence intervention and prevention programs?

Table 4

What is the relationship between areas with high gun violence incidents and GCC-funded violence intervention and prevention programs? **Sub-Questions:** • How could mapping gun violence, emergency room, and school data provide insights on where crime is happening in a community among young people? • What is the relationship between community resource and safety needs and the prevalence of crime in that community?	
Background and Motivation	GCC stakeholders identified a need to better understand the factors and relationships driving gun violence incidents in NC communities and how effective GCC-funded violence intervention and prevention programs are at reducing such incidents. Stakeholders identified a need for data that is easier to access and understand in the form of maps that allow different constituencies to analyze how gun violence incidents relate to community resource and safety needs.
Proposed Evidence Building Activities[67]	1. **Descriptive Data Analysis:** Conduct in-depth descriptive analysis to identify baseline characteristics of areas with high gun violence. Analyze factors such as poverty rates, unemployment, housing conditions, and historical crime data. The analysis could also include Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping to create maps of gun violence hot spots. Overlaying these maps with locations of GCC-funded programs to identify associations with gun violence prevalence and GCC-funded programs. 2. **Program Evaluation (Quantitative Impact Study):** Test the impact of one or more initiatives

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[6] Proposed evidence building activities includes activities GCC could do on its own and in partnership with external researchers.

[7] Evidence building includes but is not limited to the following activities: Foundational Fact Finding (FFF); Policy Analysis (PA); Performance Measurement (PM); and Program Evaluation (PE). For definitions on each activity, see Appendix A.

	aimed at reducing the number of gun violence incidents (e.g., quasi-experimental design like difference-in-differences) examining the incidence of gun violence in similar communities with and without gun violence intervention programs. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine the sustained impact of violence intervention and prevention programs over time tracking gun violence rates and community well-being across several years to assess long-term effectiveness.

Activities Timeline	• **Planned Start:** February 2026
	• **Expected Results:**
	  • July 2027 **(Descriptive Data Analysis)**
	  • December 2027 **(Program Evaluation: Quantitative Impact Study)**

Anticipated Challenges and Solutions	GCC would need access to both the number of gun violence incidents in the state but also detailed information on the types of violence intervention and prevention services (and intensity) to effectively understand the relationship and any causal impact between GCC's programming and gun violence incidence.

What factors predict the likelihood that someone who is a victim of crime will perpetrate a crime themselves in NC?

Table 5

What factors predict the likelihood that someone who is a victim of crime will perpetrate a crime themselves in NC? *Factors to consider: Domestic violence incidents; Mental health; Substance use; Foster care involvement; Juvenile justice involvement; Victim of sexual violence; Education outcomes; and Social determinants of health.* **Sub-Questions:** • **What are the most effective interventions in stopping the intergenerational crime/victimization cycle?** • **What data is currently available on intergenerational crime and victimization?**	
Background and Motivation	GCC stakeholders identified a need to understand what factors influence a victim of crime to perpetuate a crime, specifically within the victimization cycle. Stakeholders identified the need to understand what data exists on intergenerational crime and what effective interventions there are for stopping and preventing these incidents.
Proposed Evidence Building Activities[89]	1. **Evidence Review:** Conduct an evidence review to assess the current understanding of factors that influence intergenerational crime and the victimization cycle as well as relevant literature on existing interventions and relevant data. 2. **Descriptive Data Analysis:** Conduct descriptive studies to identify baseline characteristics of crime victims, such as socioeconomic status, mental health conditions, and prior criminal history, if any. 3. **Program Evaluation (Outcome Study):** Conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of crime victimization and

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[8] Proposed evidence building activities includes activities GCC could do on its own and in partnership with external researchers.

[9] Evidence building includes but is not limited to the following activities: Foundational Fact Finding (FFF); Policy Analysis (PA); Performance Measurement (PM); and Program Evaluation (PE). For definitions on each activity, see Appendix A.

	the likelihood that crime victims become perpetrators, tracking changes in behavior, mental health, and social outcomes over time. 4. **Program Evaluation (Implementation/Process Evaluation):** Supplement quantitative analysis with qualitative case studies of crime victims to understand which interventions are most successful in reducing the likelihood victims will perpetrate crime themselves.

Activities Timeline	• **Planned Start:** March 2026
	• **Expected Results:**
	  • April 2026 **(Evidence Review)**
	  • March 2027 **(Descriptive Data Analysis)**
	  • December 2027 **(Program Evaluation: Outcome Study & Implementation/Process Evaluation)**

Anticipated Challenges and Solutions	Given the complexity and breadth of this topic, GCC should identify specific outcomes it would like to focus on and then work to identify potential data sources to answer parts of this question. By completing the evidence review and initial descriptive data analysis, GCC will be able to identify the feasibility of answering this broad question, data it might be able to obtain that analysts can use to control for factors that might influence a crime victim to commit a future crime, and the ability to integrate and compile the data in a longitudinal manner.

Embedding Evidence and Evaluation in GCC Grant Programs

GCC stakeholders identified a need for a larger strategy around understanding the effectiveness of GCC-funded programs, and how GCC as an organization can incentivize the use of evidence-based programming strategies to achieve the key outcomes across grant funding stream. Specifically, GCC stakeholders identified a need for better use of research and program effectiveness data to inform GCC grant awards, monitoring and reporting, and defining "evidence" in GCC-funded programs. Stakeholders spoke about a need for more information and transparency on how GCC awards grant funds and why GCC funds one program versus another. Additionally, recent funding cuts require GCC to consider how to best prioritize limited funding for maximum impact.

Specific evidence and evaluation policy research questions GCC seeks to answer include:

- What is the evidence base for GCC grant funded programs?
- How can GCC prioritize funding programs and interventions with a proven evidence base?
- What is the effectiveness of GCC-funded programs and services? Are GCC-funded programs implemented as intended?

The rest of this section details GCC research and evidence building activities to embed evidence and evaluation in GCC grant programs.

What is the evidence base for GCC grant funded programs?

Table 6

What is the evidence base for GCC grant funded programs?
Sub-Questions:
• **Crime Victim Services**
o **How well do the crime victim services programs GCC funds align with the known evidence base on effective crime victim services?**
o **How can crime victim services address the needs of victims of multiple forms of crime (poly-victimization)?**
o **What mental health services are available to crime victims?**
• **Violence Intervention and Prevention Programs**
o **What is the evidence base for effective violence intervention and prevention programs?**
o **How well does this evidence base align to violence intervention and prevention programs in NC?**
o **What interventions can reduce the recidivist rate of domestic violence offenders?**

Background and Motivation	GCC stakeholders identified a need for more syntheses of evidence related to GCC's grant funded programs. Moreover, GCC stakeholders expressed an interest in understanding how well the current programs and services GCC funds align with the known evidence base of effective program models for each target population GCC grantees serve, with a particular focus on GCC crime victim service and violence intervention and prevention programs.
Proposed Evidence Building Activities[10][11]	1. **Evidence Reviews:** For each sub question, conduct an evidence review of existing literature and studies on the effectiveness of similar programs funded by GCC. The evidence reviews would summarize the available evidence, assess its quality, and determine which similar programs have demonstrated effectiveness. GCC could compare these findings to an inventory of GCC-funded programs to identify areas with strong evidence support and those areas where GCC should do additional evaluation. 2. **Foundational Fact-Finding:** Collect aggregate data on GCC-funded programs, including program objectives, target populations, and implementation strategies. Conduct exploratory studies to gather basic information on the reach and scope of the programs. Use descriptive statistics to summarize the characteristics and outcomes of the programs, providing a baseline understanding of their operations and impact.
Activities Timeline	• **Planned Start:** February 2025 • **Expected Results:** • May 2025 **(Evidence Reviews)** • August 2025 **(Foundational Fact Finding)**

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[10] Proposed evidence building activities includes activities GCC could do on its own and in partnership with external researchers.

[11] Evidence building includes but is not limited to the following activities: Foundational Fact Finding (FFF); Policy Analysis (PA); Performance Measurement (PM); and Program Evaluation (PE). For definitions on each activity, see Appendix A.

Anticipated Challenges and Solutions	There may be a lack of high-quality studies on the effectiveness of programs like those funded by GCC. GCC could address this limitation by expanding literature search to include gray literature like government reports. The diversity of GCC-funded programs in terms of target populations, objectives, and implementation strategies can make it difficult to aggregate and compare evidence. GCC could address this challenge in part by categorizing programs into relevant subgroups to conduct reviews for similar types of program categories. Data on GCC-funded programs may be incomplete, inconsistent, or of variable quality. GCC could engage with grantees to implement data collection protocols to ensure completeness and accuracy.

How can GCC prioritize funding programs and interventions with a proven evidence base?

Table 7

How can GCC prioritize funding programs and interventions with a proven evidence base? **Sub-Questions:** ○ **How can GCC incorporate evidence building activity requirements as part of the grants it awards to service providers?** ○ **How can GCC embed program evaluation requirements in grants?** ○ **How can GCC include evidence definitions and evidence requirements in its grant solicitations to increase the number of services it funds that are evidence-based?**	
Background and Motivation	GCC stakeholders discussed the need for better use of research evidence and program effectiveness data to inform GCC grant awards, monitoring and reporting, and defining "evidence" in GCC-funded programs. These recommendations largely stemmed from a desire by GCC stakeholders to have more information and transparency on how it makes grant awards and why GCC funds one program versus another. This is a priority given recent funding cuts to GCC programs that will require Commissioners to consider how to best prioritize limited funding for maximum impact.

Proposed Evidence Building Activities[12][13]	1. **Evidence Reviews:** Using the completed evidence review activities described earlier in this section, GCC could include a summary of the evidence base from the completed evidence reviews in the GCC Requests for Applications (RFAs) to help prospective grantees understand what is known about the effectiveness of funded grant programs and where GCC and its grantees need more research. 2. **Policy Analysis:** GCC staff and Advisory Committee members would work together to identify the feasibility of updating the requirements of its grant awards around prioritizing funding for evidence-based program strategies. Potential areas to increase funding towards evidence-based programs include:[14] a. **Incorporate Evidence Definitions:** GCC could work to develop grant-specific definitions of "evidence" to allow for stakeholders to have a shared understanding of which interventions have a track record of showing results. GCC could start with the NC Evidence Scale in developing grant-specific definitions. b. **Select Evidence Prioritization Strategy:** GCC could prioritize evidence in its RFAs by either requiring some or all grant funding to support evidence-based programs or allocate points to grant applications that meet evidence definitions.

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[12] Proposed evidence building activities includes activities GCC could do on its own and in partnership with external researchers.

[13] Evidence building includes but is not limited to the following activities: Foundational Fact Finding (FFF); Policy Analysis (PA); Performance Measurement (PM); and Program Evaluation (PE). For definitions on each activity, see Appendix A.

[14] Recommended evidence prioritization strategies draw upon resources developed by Results for America: Resources for Defining and Prioritizing Evidence of Effectiveness in State Grant Programs - Results for America

17

	c. **Require Grantees to Submit Program Logic Model and Evaluation Plan:** GCC could ask grantees to describe their approach on how they will measure the impact and success of programs that receive GCC funds. Logic models create a space for grantees to think through a program's "theory of change" and define output and outcome measures. Asking grantees to include an evaluation plan will allow GCC to fill gaps in knowledge and evidence about the effectiveness of program strategies. This could build off a past project GCC completed to assist grantees include logic models in their grant applications. d. **Update GCC RFAs:** GCC could update its RFA with the aforementioned items (evidence review, evidence definition, prioritization strategy), and requirements for grantee applicants to include preliminary logic models along with a brief description of evaluation approach.

Activities Timeline	• **Planned Start:** February 2025
	• **Expected Results:**
	  • April 2025 **(Evidence Reviews)**
	  • September 2025 **(Policy Analysis)**

Anticipated Challenges and Solutions	GCC should identify specific outcomes it would like to focus on with shaping the grant processes around an evidence base (i.e., what programs and/or services are they targeting with this change) and then work to identify potential solutions. Another challenge will be vetting program and service providers claims around the effectiveness of their programs.

What is the effectiveness of GCC-funded programs and services? Are GCC-funded programs implemented as intended?

Table 8

What is the effectiveness of GCC-funded programs and services? Are GCC-funded programs implemented as intended?
 	
Sub-Questions:
Violence Intervention and Prevention Programs
    ○ What is the causal impact of domestic violence intervention and prevention programs funded by GCC? Are GCC-funded programs implemented as intended?
Crime Victim Services
    ○ What is the causal impact of GCC-funded crime victim services on key outcomes of interest? Are GCC-funded crime victim services programs implemented as intended?
    ○ What is the impact of reduced funding for GCC-funded crime victim services on the ability to effectively meet the needs of crime victims?
    ○ How do court backlogs/delays and GCC funding cuts impact the availability and quality of GCC-funded crime victim services?
    ○ How can GCC improve the victim compensation process?
    ○ What is the impact of funding cuts on GCC funded programs' service provision? Impacts in rural communities?
    ○ What are areas of improvement for the quality of domestic violence and crime victim data?
    ○ How GCC improve the client tracking for crime victim services?	

Background and Motivation	GCC stakeholders identified a need for more program evaluation activities of GCC grants through mixed method evaluations to assess program implementation and program effectiveness. Stakeholders specifically spoke to the need to assess how well funded crime victim services and violence intervention and prevention programs and services align with what grantees propose in their grant application and the fidelity to which they implement and operate their programs to the theoretical model. GCC stakeholders also identified a need for better causal evidence on the programs funded by the agency and the extent to which they support the key outcomes for each GCC grant program. GCC stakeholders also called for additional research and

	evaluation to assess the impact of funding cuts to GCC programs on service availability through qualitative research.

Proposed Evidence Building Activities[15][16]	1. **Program Evaluation (Implementation/Process Evaluations):** To assess whether GCC-funded grantees implement as intended, GCC can conduct the following activities:
	
	   a. *Stakeholder Interviews:* Conduct interviews with program administrators, frontline staff, and participants to gather insights into how the grantees implement programs on the ground and identify differences from implementation goals.
	
	   b. *Observations and Site Visits:* Conduct site visits to locations where GCC grantees provide services to assess fidelity of program delivery in and adherence to program models.
	
	   c. *Survey and Feedback:* Send out surveys to program participants and staff to gather their perceptions and feedback on program implementation. Assess areas of satisfaction and identify challenges or areas needing improvement.
	
	2. **Program Evaluation (Outcome Studies):** To understand key drivers and factors influencing the effectiveness of GCC programs, GCC can conduct the following activities:
	
	   a. *Descriptive regression analyses:* Use regression analyses to explore the relationship between participation in GCC-funded programs and key outcomes such as reductions in crime

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[15] Proposed evidence building activities includes activities GCC could do on its own and in partnership with external researchers.

[16] Evidence building includes but is not limited to the following activities: Foundational Fact Finding (FFF); Policy Analysis (PA); Performance Measurement (PM); and Program Evaluation (PE). For definitions on each activity, see Appendix A.

rates and community safety improvements.

b. *Pre-Post Comparisons:* Conduct pre-post comparisons to assess changes in outcomes before and after program implementation. This can include outcomes such as crime statistics, participant behavioral changes, and community perceptions of safety.

c. *Qualitative Outcome Assessment:* Collect qualitative data through interviews and focus groups with program participants and community members to understand the perceived impact and benefits of GCC programs.

3. **Program Evaluation (Quantitative Impact Studies):** To assess the causal impact of GCC-funded programs, GCC can conduct the following activities:

a. *Randomized Control Trials (RCTs):* Where feasible, implement RCTs to be able to test the effectiveness of a specific GCC-funded program or intervention to be able to attribute outcomes to program under evaluation.

b. *Quasi-Experimental Evaluation:* Use quasi-experimental approaches such as regression discontinuity, difference-in-differences, and matching designs to estimate causal impacts.

4. **Program Evaluation (Cost-Benefit Analysis):** Conduct cost-benefit analyses to compare the costs and benefits of GCC funded programs. potential activities may include:

a. *Cost-Allocation Analysis:* Identify all costs associated with implementation of GCC-funded programs, including direct and indirect costs, to assess changes in GCC-funded program costs over time.

b. *Cost-Effectiveness Analysis:* Compare program costs to key outcomes like

	cost per reduction in crime rate to assess the financial efficiency and value of GCC-programs.
Activities Timeline	• **Planned Start:** July 2026 • **Expected Results:** December 2027
Anticipated Challenges and Solutions	GCC-funded programs are likely to vary widely in the amount of consistent program documentation and administrative records to assess implementation fidelity. GCC can address this through training to program staff on maintaining accurate and detailed records. Use of non-causal outcome evaluation methods can result in attribution of program to observed outcomes. GCC can address this through using mixed methods to triangulate across data sources to provide additional context and insight on observed changes in program outcomes. RCTs can be difficult to implement for technical and ethical reasons in the context of the programs and target populations GCC-funded programs serve. GCC could pursue quasi-experimental designs to develop causal impacts.

GCC Next Steps to Advance Evidence Building Activities

This *GCC Research & Evidence Building Priorities Action Plan* outlines recommendations for answering each of the seven policy research questions and evidence building priorities through a variety of methods from foundational fact finding to robust impact evaluations. GCC plans to follow the process and timelines described below and detailed in Table 9 to answer each policy research question.

1. **Scoping Meetings:** GCC will conduct meetings with core GCC staff ("point people") to refine the scope of each policy research question, discuss data and resource availability, and prioritize actions for project execution.

2. **Evidence Reviews:** Prior to conducting any research and evaluation activities, GCC will complete evidence reviews to determine the existence of any rigorous research and evidence related to the policy research question. The evidence reviews can: 1) provide partial answers to some of the questions, 2) identify potential approaches to pilot and evaluation, and 3) identify gaps in the literature that GCC could address through this *Action Plan*.

3. **Determine Whether Answering the Policy Question Can be Completed with Internal GCC Resources or Needs External Research Support:** GCC staff will determine whether they have the internal staff with the requisite time and expertise to conduct the analysis necessary to answer each question. If there are not sufficient internal resources, GCC can consider posting the questions and related projects to the NC Project Portal and seek external research support as needed.

4. **Researcher Partner Interest Meetings and Project Descriptions:** GCC and OSP will host Research Partner Interest Meetings to share and discuss project opportunities posted to the NC Project Portal. Interested researchers can then submit project descriptions for GCC's consideration.

5. **Research and Evaluation Activities:** GCC and external research partners (if any) will start conducting research and evaluation to answer the research questions based on GCC prioritization and capacity.

Table 9 provides a timeline for research and evidence building activities for GCC through 2027.

Table 9

Policy Research Question	Scoping Meetings	Evidence Review	Identify Internal or External Research Support	Research and Evaluation Activities Start	Expected Results
Cross-Agency Priority Research & Data Sharing Questions					
What is the relationship between incarceration in local jails and incarcerated individuals' health outcomes?	January 2025	February 2025	February 2025	March 2025	• September 2025 **(Descriptive Data Analysis)** • July 2027 **(Program Evaluation: Quantitative Impact Study & Cost-Benefit Analysis)**
What GCC-funded resources and services are available across NC?	February 2025	April 2025	April 2025	May 2025	• May 2025 **(Evidence Review)** • October 2025 **(Foundational Fact Finding)**
What is the relationship between areas with high gun violence incidents and GCC-funded violence intervention and prevention programs?	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	July 2026	• July 2027 **(Descriptive Data Analysis)** • December 2027 **(Program Evaluation: Quantitative Impact Study)**
What factors predict the likelihood that someone who is a victim of crime will perpetrate a crime themselves in NC?	March 2026	April 2026	June 2026	August 2026	• April 2026 **(Evidence Review)** • March 2027 **(Descriptive Data Analysis)** • December 2027 **(Program Evaluation: Outcome Study &**

					Implementation/Process Evaluation)
Embedding Evidence and Evaluation in GCC Grant Programs					
What is the evidence base for GCC grant funded programs?	February 2025	April 2025	April 2025	April 2025	- May 2025 **(Evidence Reviews)** - August 2025 **(Foundational Fact Finding)**
How can GCC prioritize funding programs and interventions with a proven evidence base?	February 2025	April 2025	April 2025	May 2025	- April 2025 **(Evidence Reviews)** - September 2025 **(Policy Analysis)**
What is the effectiveness of GCC-funded programs and services? Are GCC-funded programs implemented as intended?	July 2026	September 2026	November 2026	January 2027	December 2027 (**Program Evaluation Activities)**

Appendix A - Potential Approaches for Answering GCC's Policy Research Questions

The table below provides brief descriptions of the types of research methodologies that GCC and external partners may use to answer a GCC policy research question.

Research Method	Description
Evidence Review	A search, summary, and assessment of the quality of the available evidence on the effectiveness of one or more related programs or interventions, with a goal of determining which interventions have demonstrated effectiveness. May involve a comparison against an inventory of existing agency practices.
Foundational Fact Finding	Foundational research and analysis such as aggregate indicators, exploratory studies, descriptive statistics, and basic research (OMB M-19-23)
Policy Analysis	Analysis of data, such as general-purpose survey or program-specific data, to generate and inform policy, e.g., estimating regulatory impacts and other relevant effects (OMB M-19-23)
Descriptive Data Analysis	Non-causal, quantitative methods used to describe the relationship between various factors, differences across groups in terms of needs or outcomes, changes in outcomes over time, or other types of information, without making causal claims about these relationships, differences, or trends.
Performance Measurement	Ongoing, systematic tracking of information relevant to policies, strategies, programs, projects, goals/objectives, and/or activities research (OMB M-19-23)
Program Evaluation **(See below for types of program evaluation)**	The application of systematic methods to address questions about program operations and results. It may include ongoing monitoring of a program as well as one-shot studies of program processes or

	program impact (Newcomer, Hatry, & Wholey, 2015).[17]
• *Program Evaluation:* Implementation/Process Evaluation	Often mixed methods, an assessment of implementation of a program (e.g., whether its operations, activities, functions, performances, resources, etc. are being utilized as intended).
• *Program Evaluation:* Outcome Study	Often quantitative, but can include qualitative data as well, an evaluation of the outcomes of a program, where methodological challenges prevent credible inferences about the actual causal impact of the program (e.g., descriptive regression analyses or pre-post comparisons)
• *Program Evaluation:* Quantitative Impact Study	Rigorous methodological designs that plausibly lead to causal impacts of a program (e.g., Randomized Controlled Trials and Randomized Field Trials, quasi-experimental approaches such as regression discontinuity, difference-in-differences, matching designs under various assumptions)
• *Program Evaluation:* Cost-Benefit Analysis	Comparison of costs and benefits of a program in dollar terms. Alternatively, a cost-effectiveness analysis relates the costs of a program (in dollar terms) to its key outcomes or benefits (not necessarily in dollar terms).

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[17] Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P., & Wholey, J. S. (Eds.). (2015). *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. Jossey-Bass & Pfeiffer Imprints, Wiley.

Appendix B – Initial Data Landscape Assessment

The table below provides an initial data landscape assessment identifying which local, state, and federal agencies maintain criminal justice, public health, and public safety outcomes. The data landscape assessment identifies which agency administrative data GCC can use to answer the policy research questions detailed in this *Action Plan* and overlap with the CVIPI and Justice Counts grants performance measures GCC must obtain.

Research Question	Outcomes # = CVIPI PERFORMANCE MEASURE + = JUSTICE COUNTS METRIC	Control Variables # = CVIPI PERFORMANCE MEASURE + = JUSTICE COUNTS METRIC	Potential Data Sources
What is the relationship between areas with high gun violence incidents and GCC-funded violence intervention and prevention programs?	• **Reductions in gun violence incidents:** number of gun-related injuries and fatalities[#+] • **Improve community safety:** perceptions of safety among residents in the area[#+]	• **Socioeconomic status:** income levels, employment rates, education levels • **Demographics:** age, gender, race/ethnicity[+] • **Geographic area:** urban vs. rural areas • **Existing law enforcement presence:** number of law enforcement personnel[#+] • **Existing violence intervention and prevention programs:** number of programs available in a geographic area[#]	**NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS)** • Firearm Injury Surveillance Through Emergency Rooms (FASTER) program provides data on emergency department visits for nonfatal firearm injuries. • NC Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS) provides information on the victims, suspects, relationships, circumstances, and weapons that are associated with every incident of violence that results in a fatality in North Carolina. • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) provides information on health behaviors and preventive health practices related to the leading

| | | | causes of death and disability such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and injuries. |
| | | | • NC Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool (NCDETECT) provides statewide syndromic surveillance data from NC emergency departments, poison control centers, emergency medical services, and urgent care providers. |

NC Department of Public Safety (NCDPS)

- NC State Bureau of Investigation collects domestic violence (DV)-related homicides. Data include the total number of incidents, sex of perpetrator and victim, relationship to each other, month of incident, county of incident, previous DV restraining orders, and whether the perpetrator was on pre-trial release.
- National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) provides data on 52 crimes, and for incidents involving multiple

			criminal acts, all crimes are reported. The data include detailed information on perpetrators, victims, and their relationships to each other.
			• Crime Victim services data.
			NC Department of Information Technology (NCDIT)
			• CJLEADS data includes warrants, jail records, court records, prison records, probation and parole status, sex offense registration, DMV, and Wildlife and Concealed Handgun Permits.
			NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)
			• NC Youth Risk Behavior Survey provides information related to youth that impact their health now and in the future. Topics include violence, personal safety, physical activity, nutrition, mental health, tobacco, drugs and alcohol, protective factors and sexual behavior questions.

| What is the relationship between incarceration in local jails and incarcerated individuals' health outcomes? | • **Physical health outcomes:** incidence of chronic illnesses, infectious diseases and overall physical health status[#]
 • **Mental health outcomes:** incidence of mental health disorders, and self-reported mental health status[#]
 • **Healthcare utilization:** Frequency of medical visits, hospitalizations, and use of mental health services[#] | • **Demographics:** age, gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status[+]
 • **Pre-incarceration health status:** health conditions and healthcare access prior to incarceration[#]
 • **Length of incarceration:** duration of time spent in jail[#]
 • **Type of incarceration facility:** conditions and resources available in local jails[#+] | **NCDHHS**
 • Firearm Injury Surveillance Through Emergency Rooms (FASTER) program provides data on emergency department visits for nonfatal firearm injuries.
 • NC Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS) provides information on the victims, suspects, relationships, circumstances, and weapons that are associated with every incident of violence that results in a fatality in North Carolina.
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) provides information on health behaviors and preventive health practices related to the leading causes of death and disability such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and injuries.
 • Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program (CHAMP) provides information on a wide variety of health-related topics, including breast feeding, early childhood development, health care access and utilization, oral |

			health, mental health, physical health, nutrition, physical activity, family involvement and parent opinion on topics such as tobacco and childhood obesity.

NCDPS

- NC State Bureau of Investigation collects domestic violence-related homicides. Data include the total number of incidents, sex of perpetrator and victim, relationship to each other, month of incident, county of incident, previous DV restraining orders, and whether the perpetrator was on pre-trial release.
- National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) provides data on 52 crimes, and for incidents involving multiple criminal acts, all crimes are reported. The data include detailed information on perpetrators, victims, and their relationships to each other.
- Crime Victim services data.

			NCDAC • Offender Population Unified System (OPUS) provides demographic data, including name, race, ethnicity, skin tone, birth date, and birth city. There is also detailed incident data, including county, docket number, offense date, conviction date, sentencing date, and sentence. OPUS includes information about parole, post-release supervision, and infractions while incarcerated. **NCDIT** • CJLEADS data includes warrants, jail records, court records, prison records, probation and parole status, sex offense registration, DMV, and Wildlife and Concealed Handgun Permits. **Local County Jails** • Law enforcement records (response to gun violence and arrest records). • County Clerk of Courts Offices.

What factors predict the likelihood that someone who is a victim of crime will perpetrate a crime themselves in NC?	• **First-time criminal offense:** incidence of individuals who have been victims of crime committing their first crime[#+] • **Severity of crime:** type and severity of crimes committed by crime victims[#+] • **Health outcomes:** effects of committing a crime-on-crime victims physical and mental health[#]	• **Demographics:** Age, gender, race/ethnicity, geographic location, and socioeconomic status[+] • **Family background:** family structure, parental involvement, and prior criminal activity in family[#]	**NCDHHS** • Firearm Injury Surveillance Through Emergency Rooms (FASTER) program provides data on emergency department visits for nonfatal firearm injuries. • NC Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS) provides information on the victims, suspects, relationships, circumstances, and weapons that are associated with every incident of violence that results in a fatality in North Carolina. • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) provides information on health behaviors and preventive health practices related to the leading causes of death and disability such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and injuries. • NC Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool (NCDETECT) provides statewide syndromic surveillance data from NC emergency departments, poison control centers, emergency medical

			services, and urgent care providers. **NCDPS** - NC State Bureau of Investigation collects domestic violence-related homicides. Data include the total number of incidents, sex of perpetrator and victim, relationship to each other, month of incident, county of incident, previous DV restraining orders, and whether the perpetrator was on pre-trial release. - National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) provides data on 52 crimes, and for incidents involving multiple criminal acts, all crimes are reported. The data include detailed information on perpetrators, victims, and their relationships to each other. - Crime Victim services data. - Juvenile Justice data on juvenile detention center population and admissions, offense type (including school based vs. non-school based offenses),

			gang affiliations, clinical services and programming.
			NCDAC • Offender Population Unified System (OPUS) provides demographic data, including name, race, ethnicity, skin tone, birth date, and birth city. There is also detailed incident data, including county, docket number, offense date, conviction date, sentencing date, and sentence. OPUS includes information about parole, post-release supervision, and infractions while incarcerated. **NC DPI** • NC Youth Risk Behavior Survey provides information related to youth that impact their health now and in the future. Topics include violence, personal safety, physical activity, nutrition, mental health, tobacco, drugs and alcohol, protective factors and sexual behavior questions.

			• Student performance and academic progress records. • Student demographics. • Student behavioral data.
[What GCC-funded resources and services are available across NC?](#)	• **Availability of services:** different types of services and amount funded by GCC[#] • **Utilization of services:** individuals accessing services[#] • **Impact of services:** outcomes for participants who receive GCC services[#]	• **Demographics:** Age, gender, race/ethnicity, geographic location, and socioeconomic status[+] • **Service type:** categories of services (law enforcement, victim support, juvenile justice)[#+]	**NC Governor's Crime Commission** • Grant applications data and funding amounts. • Program reports on implementation and outcomes of programs. **Community Organizations** • Service provision data from non-profit organizations providing services in partnerships with GCC-funded programs. **U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)** • National Crime Victim Survey.