Utah Sentencing Commission

Utah Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice

Violent Crimes Working Group - Initial Report

Daniel Strong

Director, Utah Sentencing Commission

9-20-2022

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Working Group Overview
- UCJC Research Summary
- Working Group Discussion Summary
- Violence Prevention Coalitions
- Q + A

Working Group Overview

CCJJ / Sentencing Commission - Violent Crimes Working Group

- DHHS - Anna Fondario
- JJS - Brett Peterson
- UDC - Brian Nielson / Chyleen Richey
- BOPP - Carrie Cochran / Marshall Thompson
- Odyssey House - Christna Zidow
- AG's Office - Craig Barlow
- Police Chiefs - Craig Black
- AP+P - Dan Blanchard
- State Epidemiologist - Dr. Leisha Nolan
- Salt Lake County CJI – Tucker Samuelsen
- Catholic Dioses of Utah - Jean Hill
- Department of Public Safety - Commissioner Jess Anderson / Jimmy Higgs
- Juvenile Courts - Judge Sipes
- AG Investigations - Nathan Mutter
- Juvenile Defense / Sentencing Commission Chair - Pam Vickrey
- LDA Director - Rich Mauro
- SWAP - Ryan Robinson
- SL County DA - Sim Gill / Will Carlson
- Adult Defense - Steve Burton
- CCJJ Director - Tom Ross
- Sentencing Commission Director - Dan Strong
- Sentencing Commission Citizen Rep - MayKela Cox
- Utah Domestic Violence Coalition – Erin Jemison
- Utah House of Representatives (Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice) - Rep. Judkins

How We Got Here

2020-2021 Utah Homicide Spike

- Homicides spiked 44% in 2020 (103 homicides)
  - 67% involved firearms (FBI data)

- Slight decrease in 2021 (95 homicides), but still elevated far above 2019
  - 75% involved firearms (FBI data)

- Early 2022 homicide data is much better (but it's early)

Stakeholder Discussions

- The 2020 spike in homicide / violent crime was a subject of interest during the 2021 legislative sessions;
- At Post-session meetings of CCJJ and Sentencing Commission, various stakeholders indicated interest in exploring new policy solutions in 2022
- UCJC and Sentencing Commission heard a presentation from Dr. Christian Sarver with UCJC about effective policies to reduce violence in communities

UCJC Research Summary

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
College of Social Work

Research on the Efficacy of Interventions to Prevent Gun Violence

Christian Sarver, Ph.D.

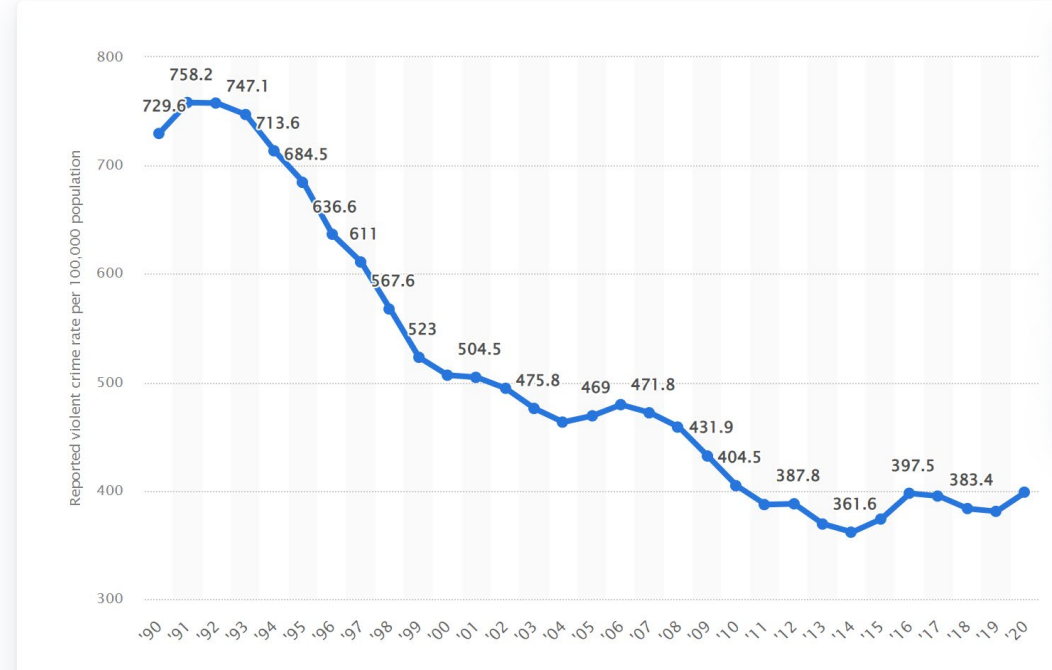
Utah Criminal Justice Center

University of Utah, College of Social Work

Presentation to the Utah Sentencing Commission

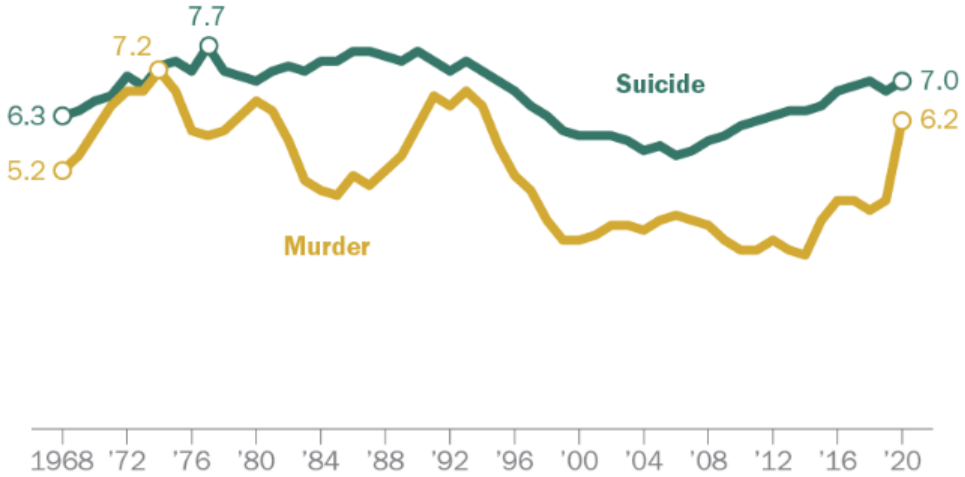
IMAGINE NEW HEIGHTS

Reported violent crime in the United States 1990 to 2020

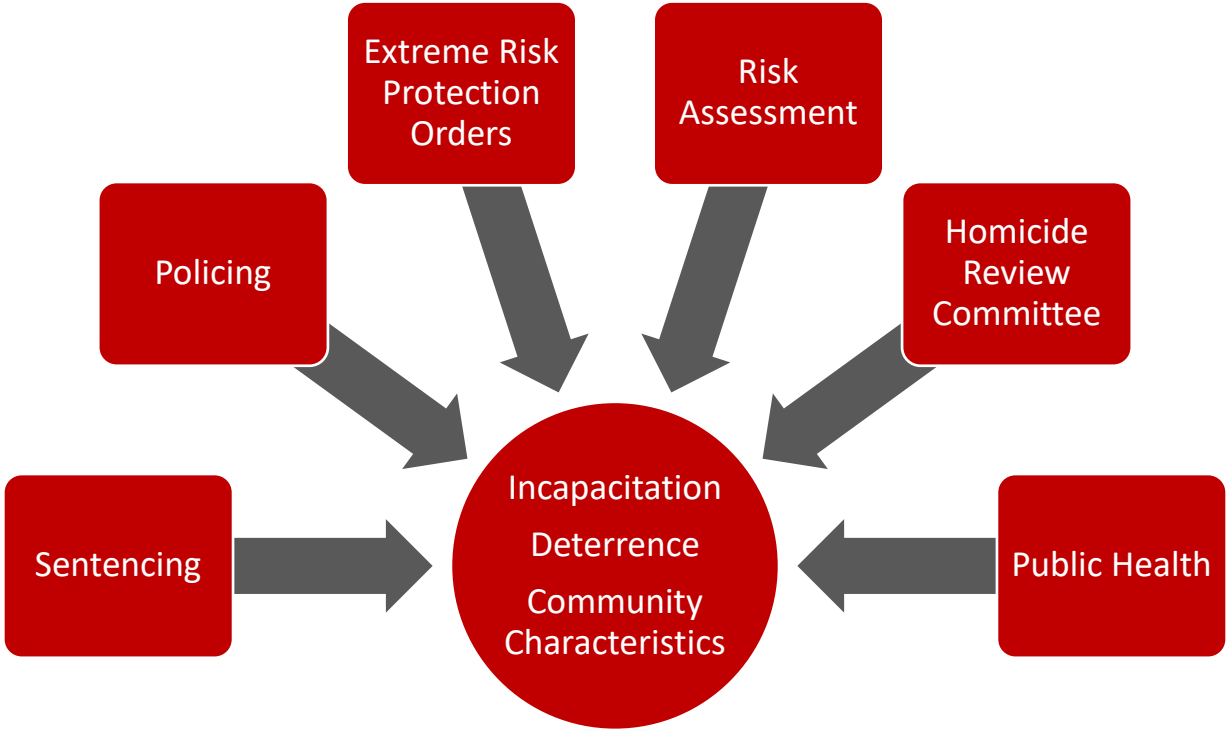


U.S. gun suicide and gun murder rates have increased in recent years, but remain below past highs

Gun deaths per 100,000 people (age-adjusted), by type



Gun Violence Prevention Strategies



Deterrence-based Interventions

- Prevent crime through increasing (perceived) cost
- Certainty of punishment is more effective than severity of punishment
  - Knowledge of consequences
  - Likelihood of detection
  - Threat is most effective with those who have not been punished
- Functionally, enhanced punishment as administered in US criminal justice system serves to incapacitate rather than deter

Incapacitation-based Interventions

- More effective for reducing crime at individual- rather than community-level
- With respect to incarceration, the size of the effect diminishes with the scale of imprisonment
- Have typically been used to ‘respond to’ rather than ‘prevent’ crime
- Can have criminogenic effects

Community Interventions

- Correlates of violent crime including gun crime
  - Concentrated disadvantage
  - Low collective efficacy
  - Large numbers of unsupervised youth
  - Micro-places, such as off-premise alcohol outlets, gas stations and laundromats

Enhanced Sentencing for Crimes Involving Guns

- 2-year mandatory add-on sentence for possession of firearm during felony & no plea deals offered in felonies involving guns
- Widely advertised
- Results
  - No overall change in sentence length, no change in the number of individuals sent to prison
  - Reduced the probability of conviction for some crimes
  - Did not reduce gun crime

Focused Deterrence Strategies

- Selection of a specific crime problem
- Assembling interagency enforcement group
- Conducting research to identify high-risk persons, places, contexts
- Direct and repeated communication with individuals to convey they are under scrutiny, what acts will get special attention, what they can do to avoid enforcement action
- Match enforcement with direct services and community involvement
- Media campaign

Procedural Justice & Legitimacy

Effectiveness of policing is dependent on public perceptions of the legitimacy of the actions of police actions

- When procedural justice approaches are used by the police:
  - Citizens evaluate legitimacy more highly
  - More likely to obey the law in the future
  - More likely to participate in enforcement activities

Public Health Strategies: Violence Interrupters

- Blocking the social transmission of violence
- Credible Messengers
- Rely on community to share information about potential shootings before they happen (not reported to police)
- Proactive in noticing patterns and developing relationships
- Conflict mediation
- Emphasize tracking retaliatory events and gang conflicts

Effective Interventions Should

- Increase certainty (actual or perception) of punishment
- Target high-crime places, times, and people
- Use ongoing data analysis to inform strategies
- Incapacitate individuals during periods of acute risk
- Focus on prevention
- Address the community circumstances that promote violent crime
- Enhance perceptions of legitimacy and fairness

Questions

Contact Information:

Christian Sarver, christian.sarver@utah.edu

Working Group Proposals

Upstream

- Violence Prevention Coalitions
- Public Health Partnerships
- Hotspot Mapping / Resource Allocation

Midstream

- Closing Weapons Offense Gaps
- Bolstering Relinquishment Procedures

Downstream

- Sentencing for Weapons Offenses
- Risk Assessment / Reduction

Violence Prevention Coalitions

Salt Lake County and JJYS

Youth Violence and Safety Coalitions

Brett Peterson

Utah Department of Health & Human Services

- While juvenile crime as a whole is down, we witnessed increases in homicide and gun violence nationally and in Utah.
- In 2021, an initial working group with juvenile courts, JJYS, SLCo, SLCo Sheriff/Unified, SL DA, UJDA, CCJJ, and other community partners was formed to evaluate data and researched responses to community violence.
- We identified communities where increases in offenses against persons have been the most significant and where the highest concentration of youth who have experienced juvenile court contact or jail bookings for person-level offenses reside.
- These communities are also characterized by having significant gaps in community protective factors. It is not possible to tackle this challenge without regard to the social determinants of violence risk

The opportunity generated through the DHHS Merger:

- This challenge requires a community-driven, integrated response that continuously coordinates public safety, public health, individual services, and community protective factors.

- Using juvenile reinvestment dollars, DHHS will be supporting Youth Violence and Community Safety Coalitions (“YVCSC”) in at risk communities in SLCo.

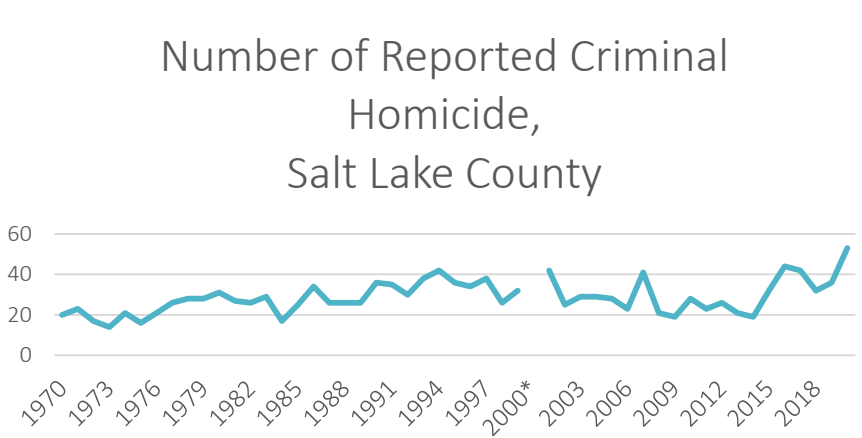
- This will allow us to bring local, county, state, public health, public safety, and direct service delivery support to the community.

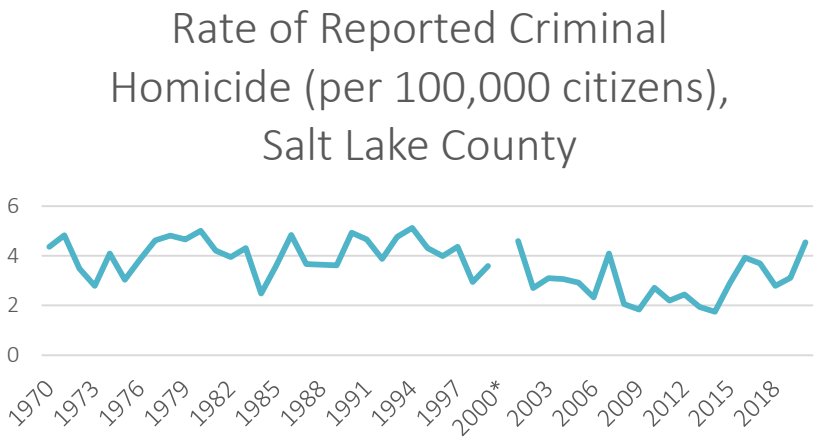
- A model that can be replicated, including in Rural Utah.

Midvale & Magna Safety & Success

County Context

2020, Criminal Homicide, Salt Lake County





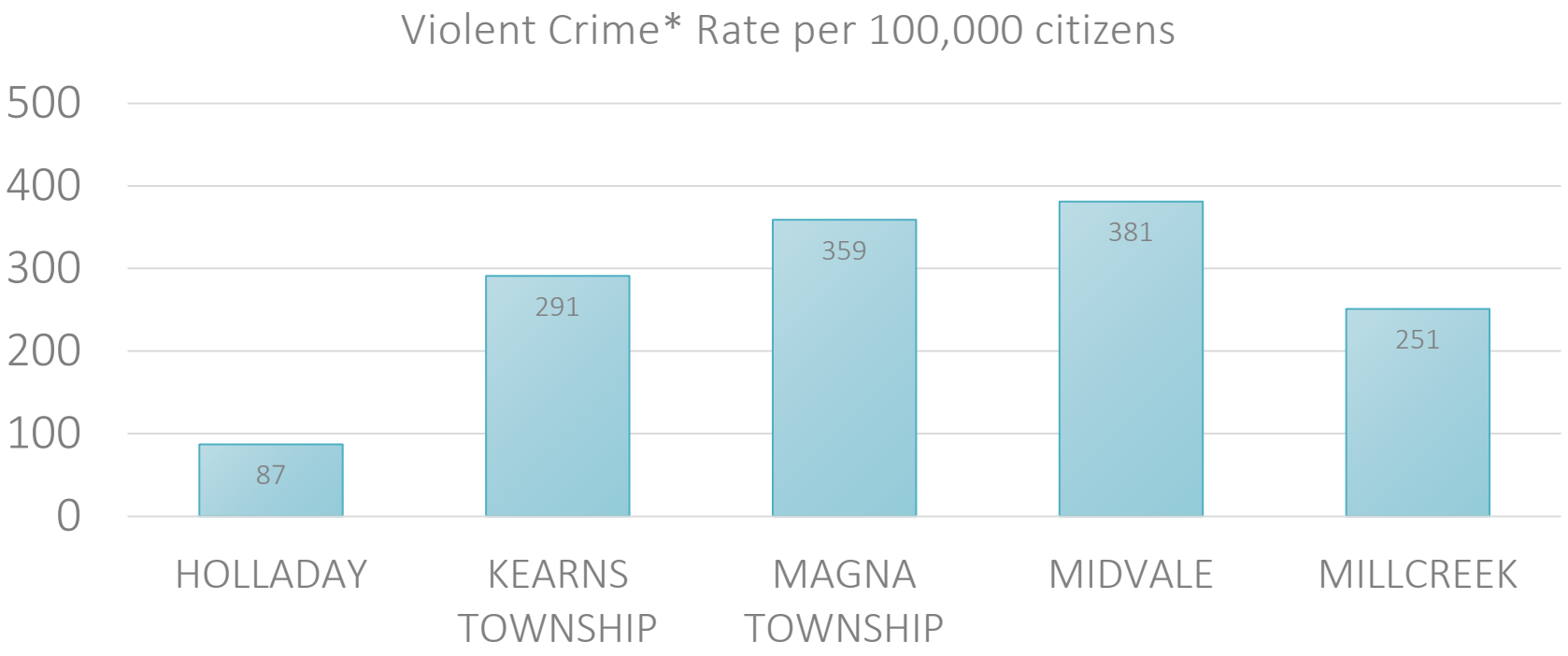
- 53 Criminal Homicides in Salt Lake County
- + 46% increase from 2019
- Highest number ever
- Highest rate (4.5 per 100,000) since 2001

Data Sources

- Crime Reports to Unified Police Department

- Arrests in Salt Lake County Adult Detention Center and Salt Lake Juvenile Justice Services
- Partnership with State JJS for juvenile data

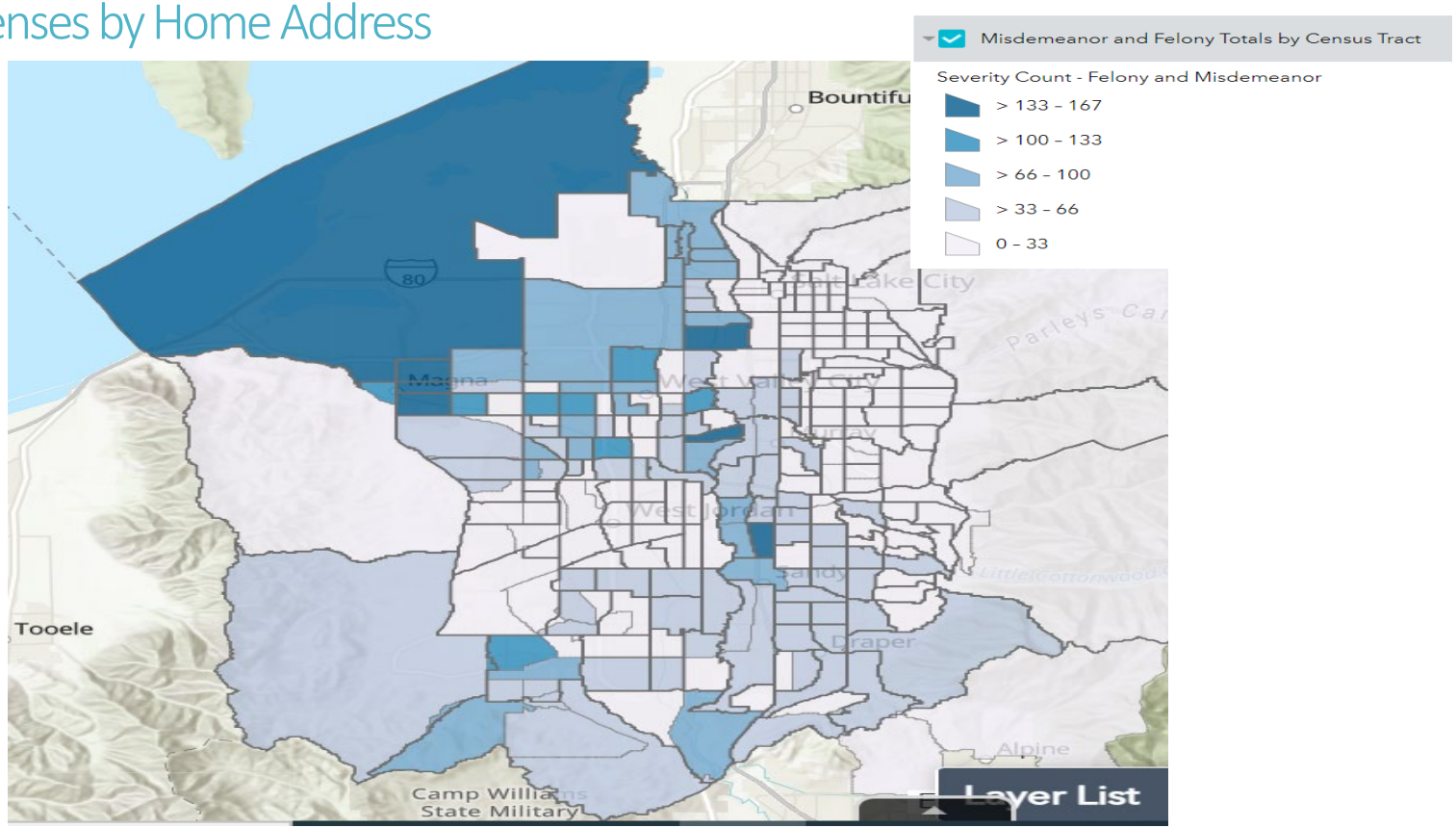
2019-21 UPD Reported Crime by Area



*Included Offenses are Murder, Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault

Crime Priorities: Magna

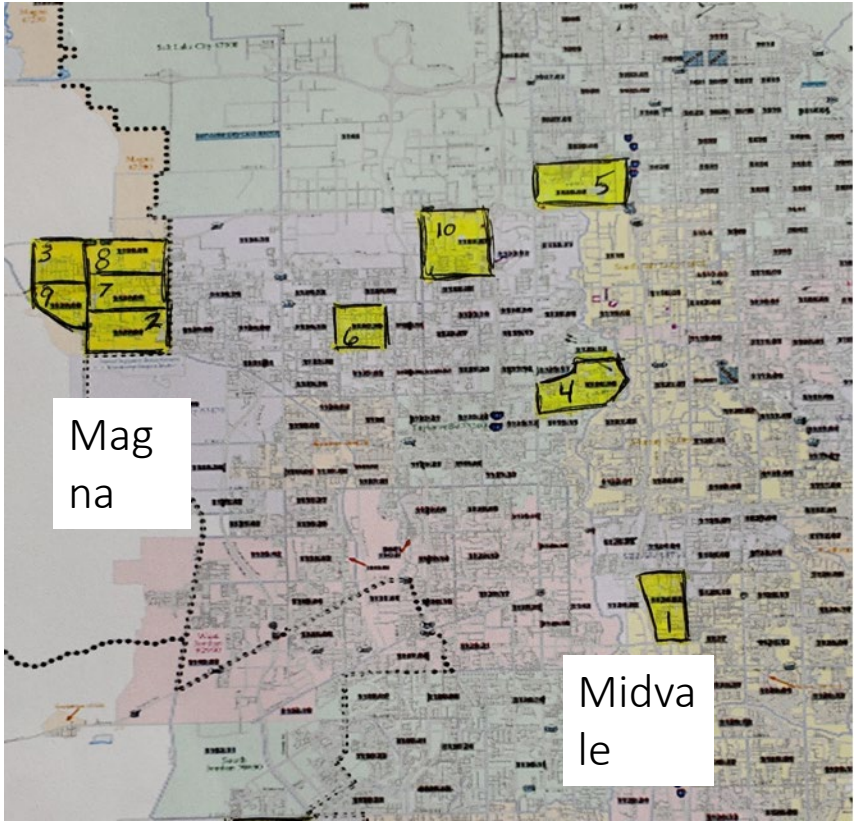
Juvenile Offenses by Home Address



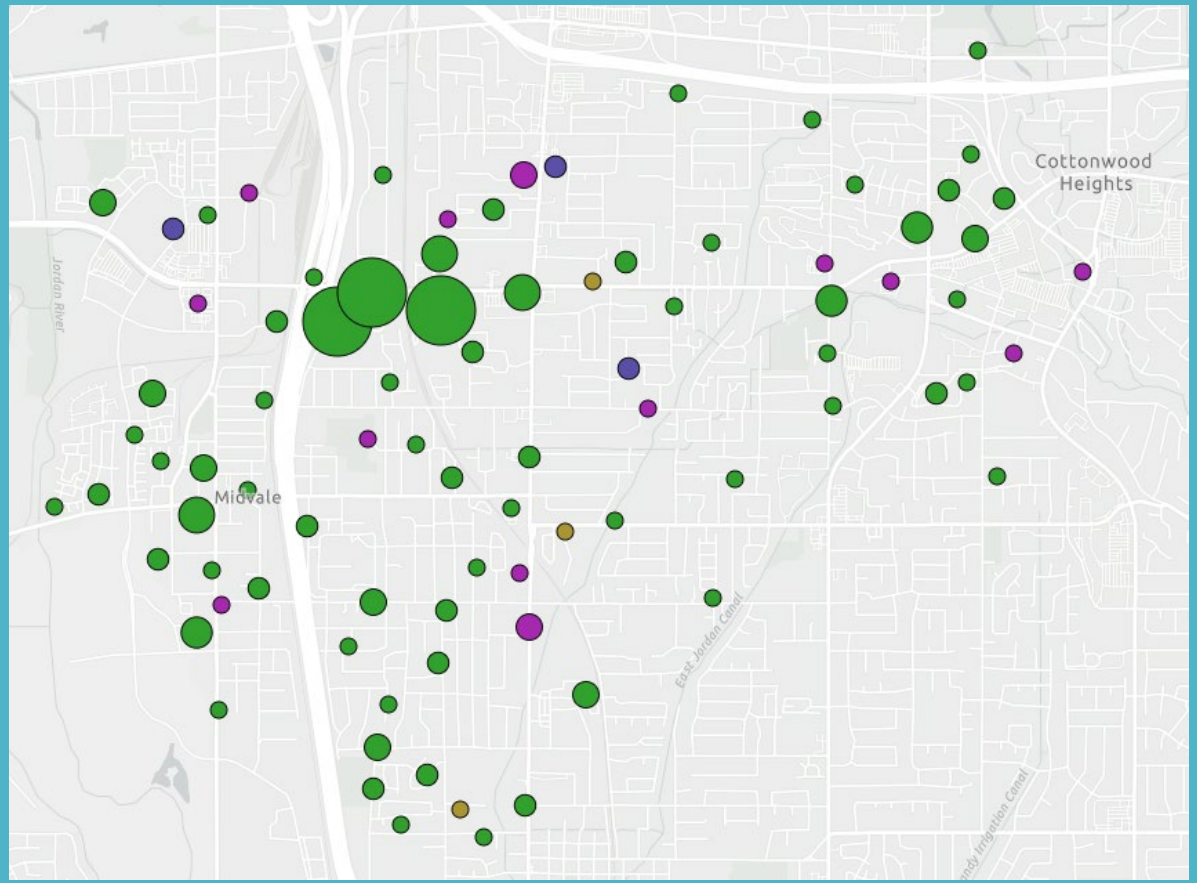
Crime Priorities: Magna

Juvenile Offenses by Home Address

- Of the top 10 Census tracts in Salt Lake County for juvenile arrests, 5 are in Magna
- The top Census Tract is in Midvale



Crime Priorities: Midvale



This map shows geographic hot spots of violent crimes.

Purple dots indicate high prevalence of robberies.

Yellow dots indicate locations of murders.

Crime Priorities: Midvale

Jail Adult Arrest Data
Overall Arrests per 100K citizens by fiscal year

City	2018	2019	2020	2021	2018-21 Average
HOLLADAY	447	482	300	244	368
KEARNS	1775	1462	1176	1103	1379
MAGNA	2489	2475	2277	1774	2254
MIDVALE	**2848**	2465	2101	**1857**	**2318**
MILLCREEK	183	265	221	249	230

Crime Priorities

Magna

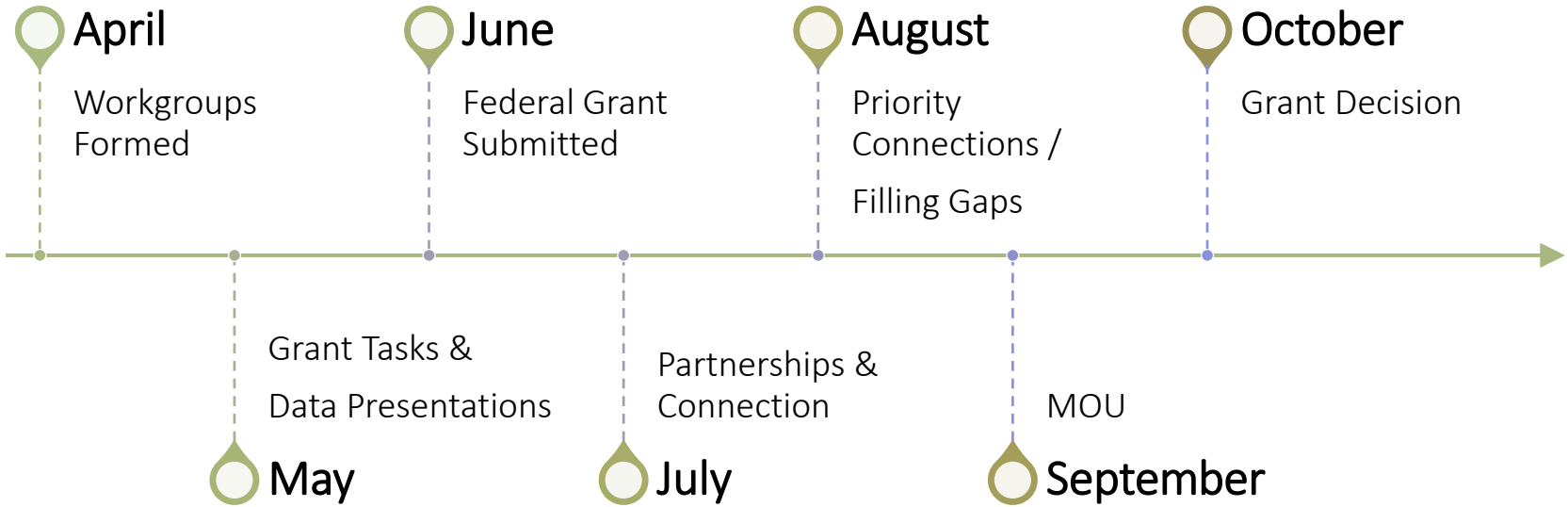
- Juvenile Offenses
- Drugs
- High violent crime rates, low property crime rates

Midvale

- Gang violence
- High concentration in hotspots
- High rates of violent and property crime

What is the Safety & Success Project?

A community driven, multi sector integrated response coordinating public safety, public health, individual services, and community protective factors to evaluate and refine prevention strategies across these domains/sectors.



Structure of Project – Data and Evaluation

- Partnership with JJS providing funding for better violence data tracking
- *Epidemiologist position and coalition support*

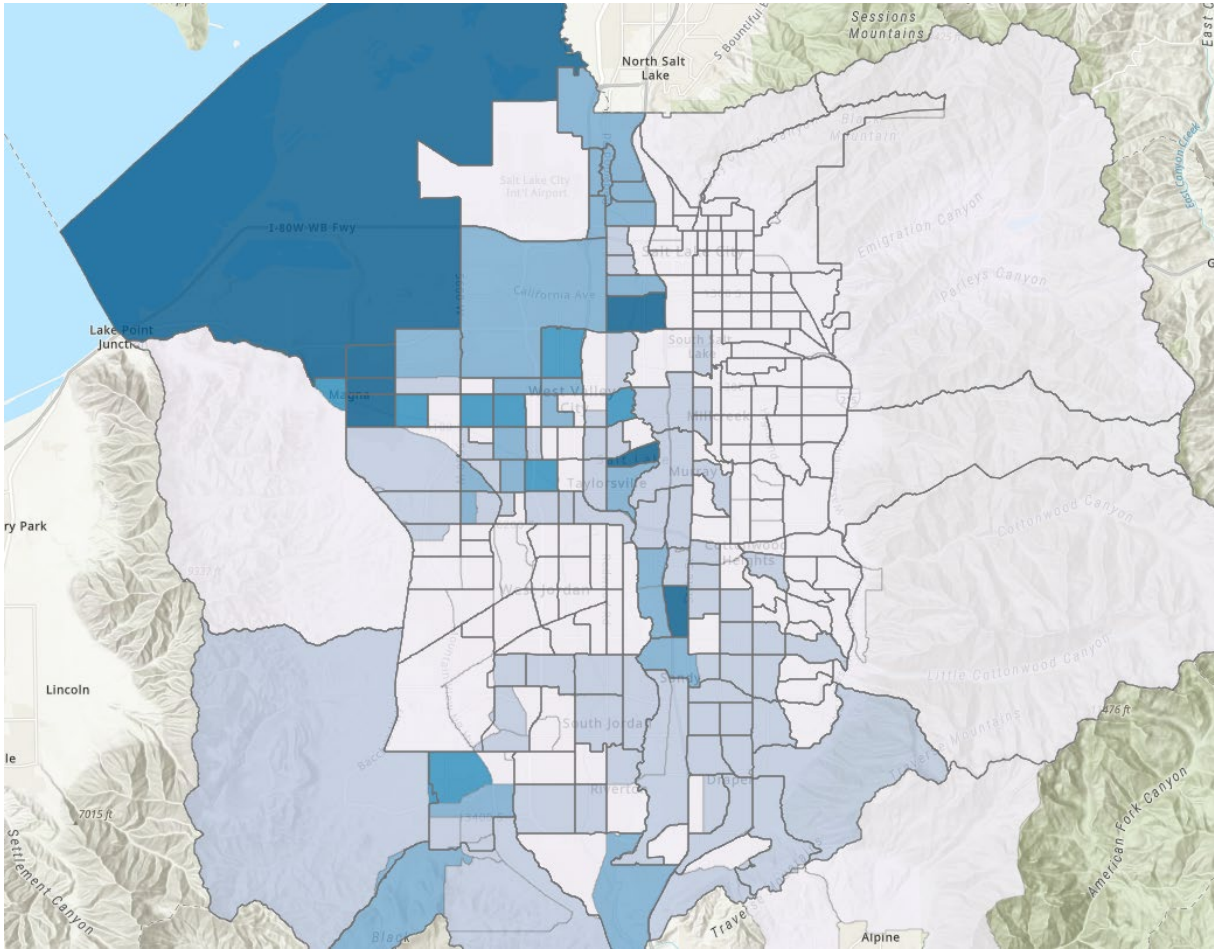
- Partnership with 3rd party evaluator to track effectiveness.

- Partnership with Sheriff's Office/Local Law Enforcement Agencies

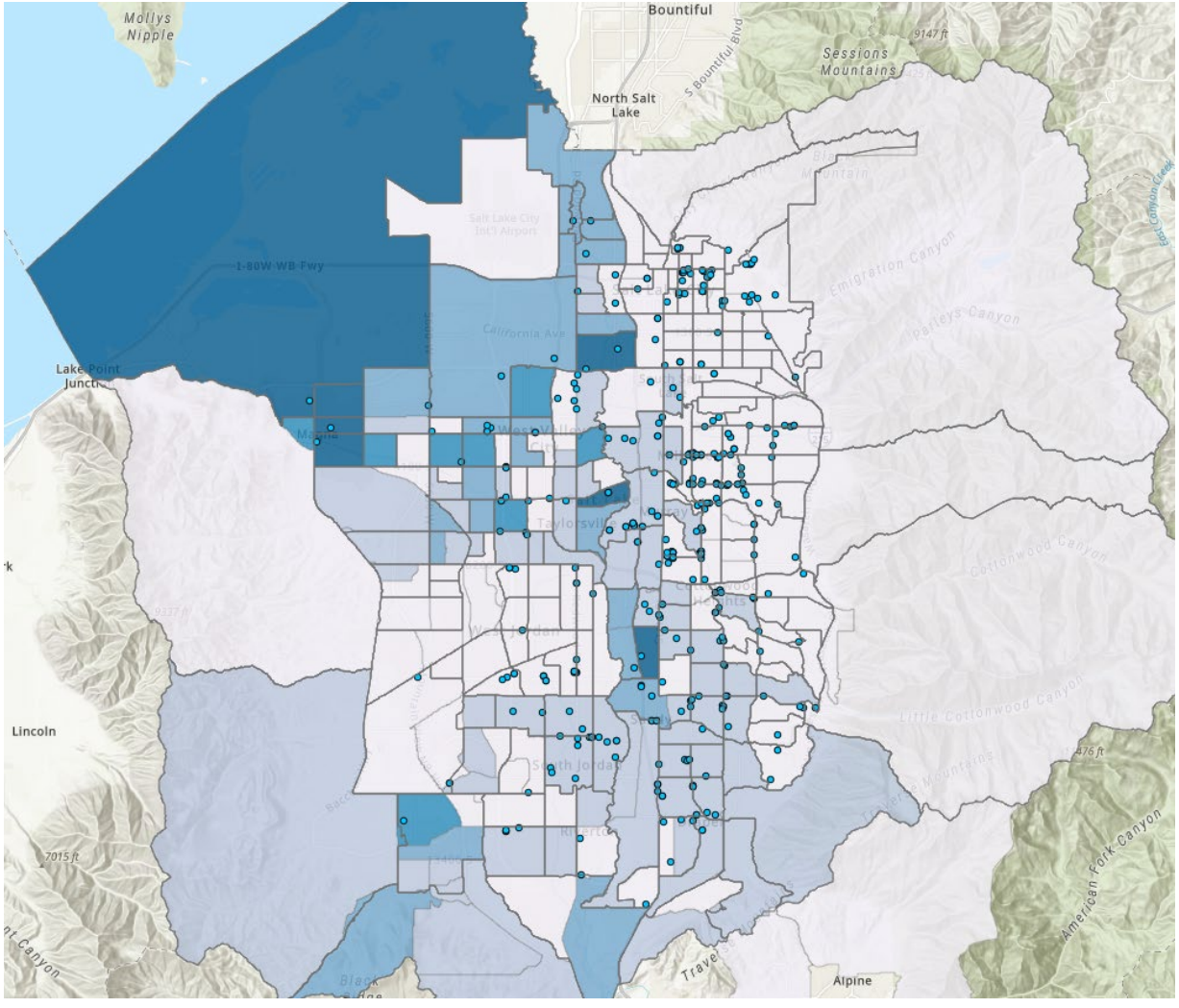
Key points and conclusion

- Lots of levers of government have a role to play in violence prevention
- Important to track data and understand needs of local communities
- Can fund community supports as well as traditional criminal justice system levers

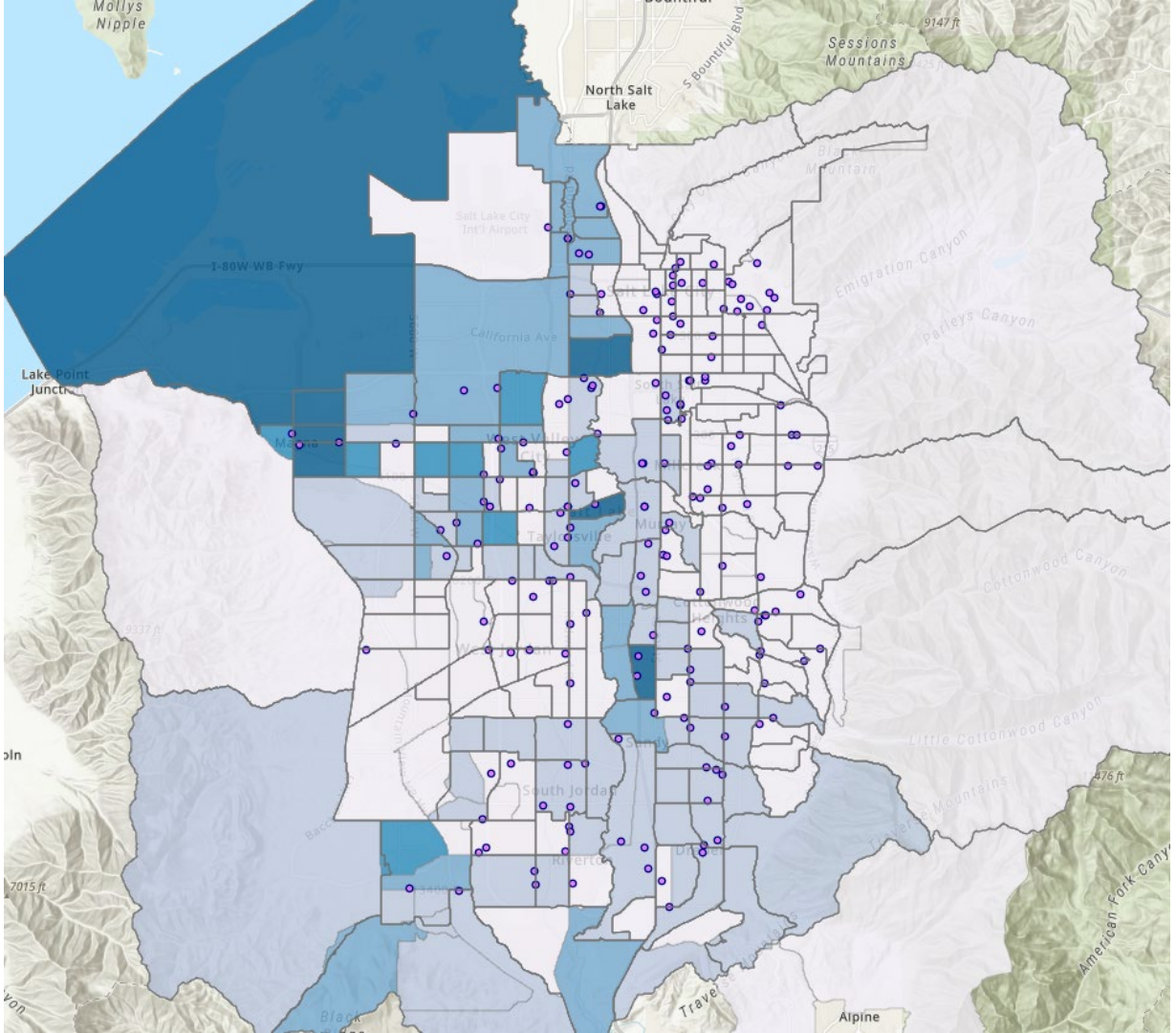
Mapping: Juvenile Arrests by Home Address



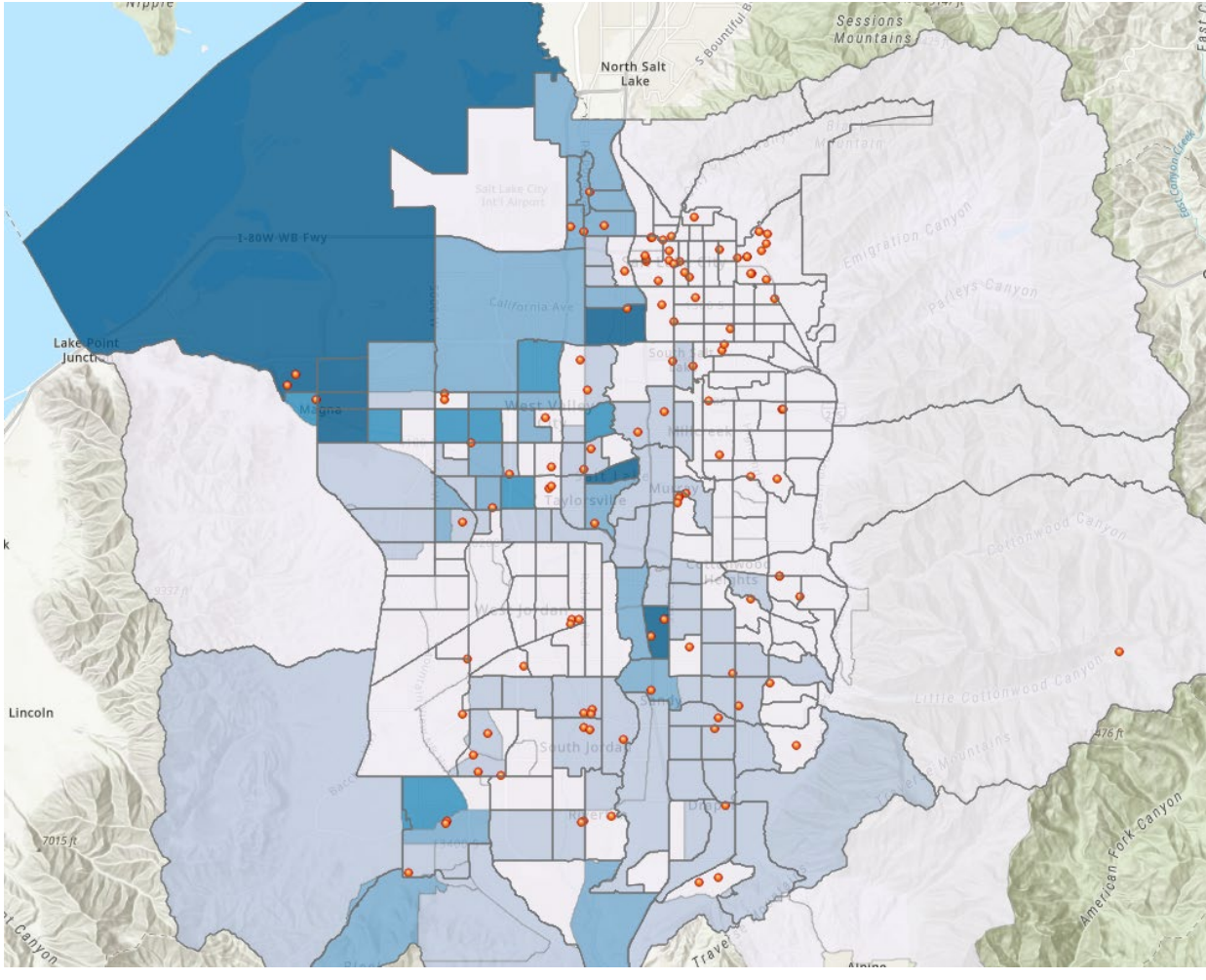
Mapping: Healthcare Facilities



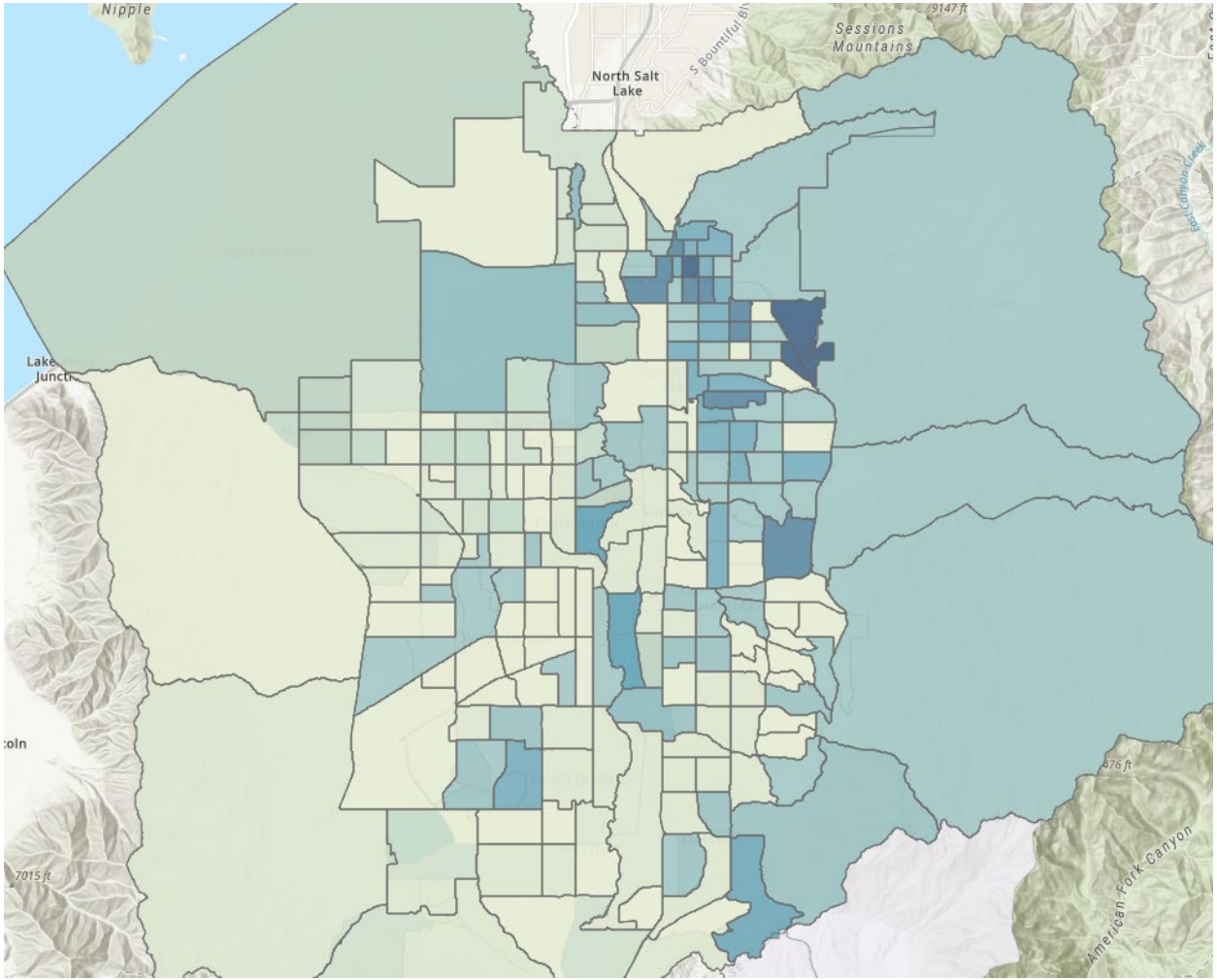
Mapping: Child Care Facilities



Mapping: Community Centers



Mapping: College Graduation Rates



Questions?