

# Homicides Decrease: ISP Public Safety Enforcement Group Reduces East St. Louis Violence Stats In 2022

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EAST ST. LOUIS – The Illinois State Police (ISP) Public Safety Enforcement Group (PSEG) is an investigative unit created in 2019 comprised of both state and local law enforcement agencies and community organizations utilizing a community-based approach to violent crime reduction. PSEG successfully helped decrease violent crime in the East St. Louis area in 2022. Compared to 2021, homicides in East St. Louis

decreased by 22% and non-fatal shootings by 29%. In 2022, PSEG seized more than 175 firearms.

“Thanks to ISP’s Public Safety Enforcement Group, we’ve taken significant steps forward in building safer communities where all families can thrive,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Our dedicated troopers and historic investments in state-of-the-art facilities are crucial components of a holistic, community-based approach to reducing violent crime and making Metro East residents feel safe.”

“In 2019, there were 36 homicides and 121 nonfatal shootings in East St. Louis alone,” said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. “PSEG’s hard work and dedication to the community helped reduce the number of homicides by 31% and the number of nonfatal shootings by almost 34% in 2022. ISP is committed to the East St. Louis community and maintaining this effort to reduce crime.”

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Homicides	36	34	32	25
Nonfatal Shootings	121	127	115	80

In October 2020, ISP and the East St. Louis Police Department formed PSEG and began working all reported violent crime cases together to boost resources, ensure professionalism and integrity in investigations, and reduce crime. Since its creation in October 2020, PSEG has opened more than 780 violent crime cases.

For example, in October 2022, the East St. Louis Police Department requested ISP assistance for a stabbing and criminal sexual assault that occurred. Officers were able to identify the suspect, Elijah Harper, apprehend him, and obtain a full confession during an interview. Within less than 48 hours of the crime being committed, the St. Clair County State’s Attorney charged Harper with Aggravated Criminal Sexual Assault /Weapon, Aggravated Kidnapping, Aggravated Unlawful Restraint, Aggravated Battery /Great Bodily Harm, and Aggravated Battery/Deadly Weapon.

PSEG also includes community organizations addressing trauma caused by violent crime in the city. The District 189 Wraparound Wellness Center provides trauma services to children of East St. Louis who have witnessed or been victimized by violent crime. In 2022, PSEG referred more than 100 youth dealing with trauma related to

violent crime to the Wrap Around Wellness Center. The Community LifeLine Family Resource Center is another partner that provides trauma services to victims of violent crime and their families. In 2022, PSEG referred more than 230 adults and family members who were victims of violent crime to the Treatment Alternative for Safe Communities – Community Emergency Response Team.

Law enforcement officers are investigating crimes, making referrals to community organizations, and engaging the community. Last year, PSEG sponsored a team of middle school boys from the East St. Louis area for the Metro East Baseball League, and in July, PSEG held its annual Field Day at Frank Holten Park with kids from the Metro East area. During the 2022 holiday season, ISP raised more than \$3,000 to purchase gifts for children. PSEG continues to impact the community by being present and approachable at multiple community events and mentoring youth. ISP agents coach baseball and basketball in East St. Louis and regularly go to community centers in housing developments just to listen to the youth.

The PSEG model is being studied nationwide. ISP has seen an overwhelmingly positive response from the community and statistics show this model is reducing violent crime.