



VIBRANT COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

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PURPOSE:

To address safety concerns of employees and consumers by launching a partnership among relevant public and private stakeholders focused on identifying and tackling issues that contribute to the increase in crime, violence, vagrancy, and blight in and around retail environments, business districts and communities across the country.

BACKGROUND:

Deteriorating social and economic conditions are plaguing communities across America, affecting retailers and other stakeholders committed to the communities in which they operate. The vibrancy of businesses in these areas is threatened and, in turn, so too is the vibrancy of entire communities.

The retail community has successfully advocated for new laws at the state and federal level to make selling stolen products more difficult, and to increase funding for organized retail crime task forces. These were notable achievements; implementing them to ensure they serve as effective deterrents to retail crime remains a top priority. But they alone will not address many of the underlying socio-economic factors that threatened the vibrancy of retail spaces and business districts.

Economic disruption or weakness has traditionally been a leading contributor to increases in issues such as addiction, crime and the unhoused. But today, with unemployment at or near record lows in many communities, a growing economy is unlikely to meaningfully address these problems. The underlying causes today are numerous and complex, and no single organization or institution can address them alone. Instead, durable solutions will require collaboration between government, law enforcement, non-profits, social services and the business community that leverages the reach and expertise of each. Retailers and their adjacent business peers, such as restaurants, hospitality and property owners, are uniquely positioned to be a catalyst for such collaboration, leveraging their position within communities across America to draw in the public and civil society partners required to make a meaningful difference.

GOAL:

Launch an initiative to promote actions to reduce unlawful activity in and around retail environments that threatens the vibrancy of these areas and surrounding communities. Effort will seek to substantially reduce recidivism among high-impact habitual offenders. Among the parallel actions included in the initiative will be:

- Best practice sharing among retailers on how to protect the store environment.
- Engage law enforcement and local officials to ensure commitment to prosecute violent and high impact offenders that threaten stores and communities.
- Forums for retailers and prosecutors to work together to address local persistent challenges.
- Engagement with ecosystem partners to identify and pursue stronger community-wide integration of technology solutions.
- Launch of pilots in two communities to test, study and promote actions to address underlying issues driving increase in unlawful activity with the goal of developing/refining programs that address addiction, mental illness, and other drivers of criminal recidivism.



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ACTIONS AND OUTPUTS TO SCALE IMPACT



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PROJECT ELEMENT DETAILS

Increase Prosecution and Deterrence of ORC: Increase the risk of arrest and prosecution of ORC criminals and limit their easy access to unsuspecting buyers through online marketplaces.

Action	Description	Status	Partner(s)
Curb Marketplace Fencing	Interrupt ORC criminals' easy access to fencing via online marketplaces.	Federal INFORM Consumers Act signed into law.	Buy Safe America Coalition
Identify ORC Patterns Across Retailers	Develop tool that leverages retailers ORC case data to identify boosters targeting multiple retailers, aggregate cases and streamline partnership with law enforcement agencies.	AI enabled collaboration tool successfully piloted, but operational issues need to be overcome.	Multiple Partners
County, State and Federal Task Forces	Enable coordination of efforts among law enforcement, prosecutors, retailers, policymakers, and multiple government agencies.	In place in several states. Combatting Organized Retail Crime Act introduced in Congress. Launched partnership with National District Attorneys Association.	State Retail Associations NDAA

Integrate Technology Solutions for Stores: Elevate store level protections by bringing solution providers together with goal of integrating promising technologies to support deterrence, identification, and investigations.

Action	Description	Status	Partner(s)
Identify promising tech solutions	Conduct review of technologies available and in use by retailers to address crime in stores, e.g., surveillance tools, body worn cameras, peer data sharing.	Underway	RILA APLC
Map impact of integration	Explore relationship between solutions and how if used together they can impact unlawful activity.		RILA Strategic Partners
Test combinations of tech solutions	Pilot combinations of technologies and promote findings.		

Reduce Activity of Habitual Offenders: Properly address underlying causes of increase in crime and vagrancy and reduce recidivism among certain habitual offenders.

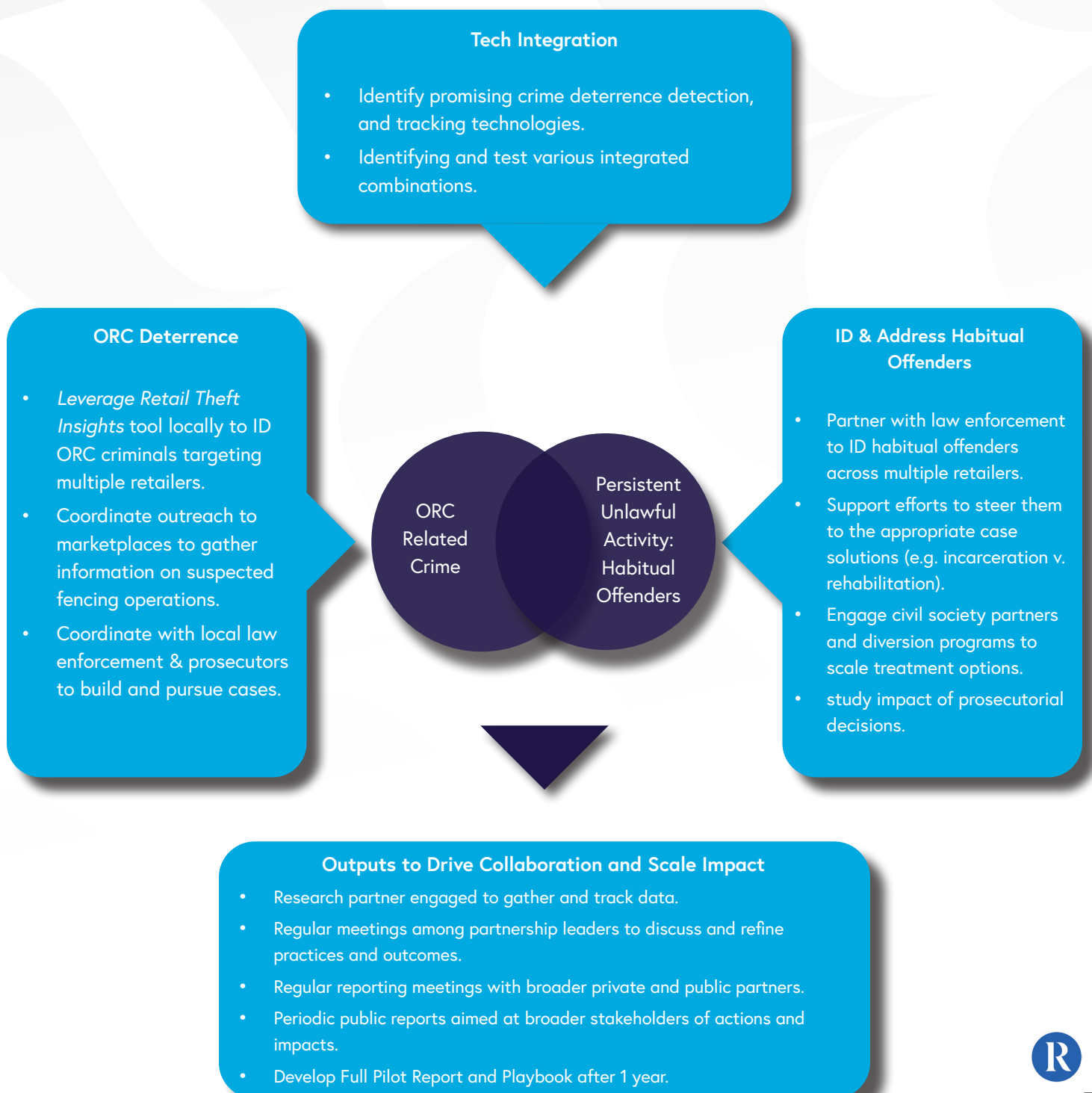
Action	Description	Status	Partner(s)
Identify Habitual Offenders for prosecution or diversion	Partner with law enforcement and DAs to identify repeat offenders across multiple retailers and support efforts to steer them to the appropriate case resolution (e.g. incarceration v. rehabilitation).	NDAA Partnership underway	NDAA

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PILOT PROJECT

Pilot public and private partnerships in localities, based on rigorous criteria, to test practices, measure results and promote findings. Pilot programs will run in parallel to broader ongoing efforts and the lessons learned will be quickly fed into all efforts to inform actions and scale impact via broader collaboration with stakeholders.

Pilot Concept



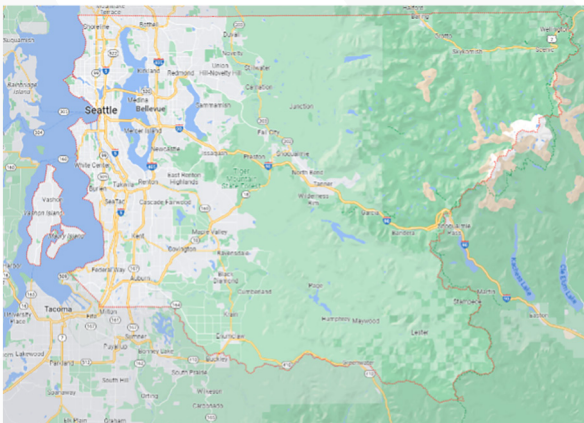
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PILOT COMMUNITY SELECTION CRITERIA

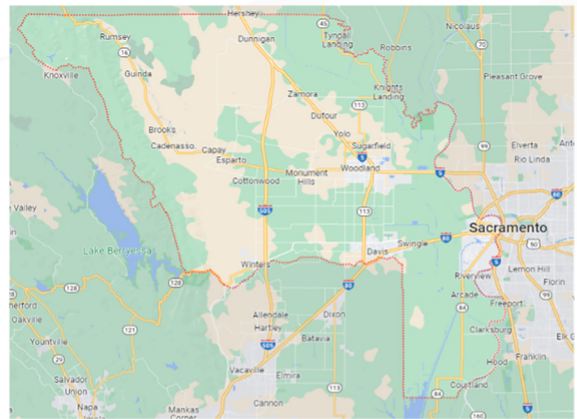
- Density among RILA members
- Common designation among retailers as high-risk area
- Engaged District Attorney
- Integrated community and social services (via police, DAs, court system, etc.)
- Reasonable expectation that an impact can be measured in one year
- Supportive police chief
- Aligned statutory environment
- Supportive mayor/city manager/local government
- Active Local business organization(s) (e.g. State retail association, local chamber)

PILOT COMMUNITIES

King County, WA



Yolo County, CA



EXPECTATIONS OF COMPANIES PARTICIPATING IN PILOTS

- Operate stores within or nearby pilot communities.
- Willing and able to share case data in a protected manner.
- Able to designate a local AP professional to pilot working group.
- Open to piloting combinations of technology.
- Commitment to active participation in cases post-arrest.

Pilot Working Groups (*Local designees from companies directly engaged in community pilots.*)

Engage directly with public and private sector partners to advance pilot goals, including but not limited to:

- Identifying High Impact Offenders, including ORC gangs, habitual offenders, and high-volume marketplace sellers, particularly those common across retailers
- Identifying best practices for collaboration on prosecution of offenders
- Participate in public relations efforts.
- Designing and testing diversion models that engage with social services.

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Vibrant Communities Timeline		
Timeline	RILA Actions	Community Pilots
3-Month (June '23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law enforcement / local official engagement best practices sharing underway among key RILA cross-functional communities. • Facilitate engagement between retailers and DAs through established cohorts. • Host webinars for retailers and DAs. • Outreach to FTC, State AGs and DAs to support enforcement of INFORM Consumers Act underway. • Pursuit of federal working group legislation. • Pursuit of State ORC task force funding. • Coordinate Store Walk September expose DAs to retailers' crime mitigation strategies and evidentiary considerations. • Develop ORC training course for DAs. • Establish website of resources for retailers and DAs to access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot community criteria established. • Criteria shared with NDAA to invite applications from DAs. • Applications received/reviewed. • Pilot communities identified. • Consensus reached among RILA members on Initiative goals and KPIs. • Leadership structure established.
6-Month (Sept '23)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research partner identified. • Local partners identified. • Pilot location working groups established. • Community pilots underway. • National partners (e.g. tech providers, associations, social service organizations) recruited. • Establish information-sharing among participating retailers to identify common habitual offenders. • Communications structure for engaged retailers and partners established and operational. • Seed funding identified. • Robust information flow to engaged stakeholders and beyond in place to encourage adoption of pilot practices in other communities.
1-Year (March '24)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial impact assessment from pilots received. • Assessment shared with NDAA for dissemination to DAs nationwide. • Reliable funding established.
Phase-2 planning underway, begin "Playbook" for national framework.		

RILA

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