



CITY  
**COLUMBIA,  
SOUTH CAROLINA**

POPULATION  
**133,451**

COVERAGE AREA  
**6 SQUARE MILES**

PRODUCT USED  
**SHOTSPOTTER FLEX**

CUSTOMER SINCE  
**2019**

PUBLIC SAFETY SUCCESS STORY

# Columbia PD Makes 39 Arrests, Confiscates 49 Guns in First Six Months of Program

SITUATION

Columbia, SC had double the national average of violent crime, and the city has struggled with an illegal gun issue. The community was desensitized to gun violence and was not calling in gunfire incidents to police on a regular basis.

RESULTS

In the first six months after installing ShotSpotter in April 2019, police received 778 alerts that resulted in 205 separate crime scenes within an area of the city where 75% of gunshots went unreported. Columbia PD estimated officers responded to 150 scenes during that time that they would not have visited without ShotSpotter, resulting in 39 arrests and 49 guns confiscated.

**1,000**  
shell casings recovered  
from 205 crime scenes

**75%**  
of gunshots in the  
coverage area go un-  
reported by residents

**25%**  
reduction in homicides  
compared to the same  
time a year ago

The ability of Columbia PD to respond to more gunshot scenes faster enables officers to collect better ballistic evidence that can help solve crimes as part of the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). For example, an illegal gun acquired by an ATF agent during a sting operation in 2020 matched the ballistics of two separate firearm shootings that police responded to in 2019 based on ShotSpotter alerts. That helped investigators build a case after the gun was reported stolen.

“*Gun violence destroys lives, families and communities, and reducing it is a priority for Columbia. The Shotspotter technology targets this violence, quickly puts our officers where they’re needed, and helps us identify shooters, while building trust and restoring peace in the challenged communities we serve.*

SKIP HOLBROOK | Columbia, SC Police Chief

“*We needed to make sure that even in the absence of the citizens calling in we could use data to make a difference. Lesson learned for us. We’re seeing that promise.*

STEVE BENJAMIN | Mayor of Columbia, SC

## HOW SHOTSPOTTER BENEFITS COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

### ✔ BUILD COMMUNITY TRUST

Demonstrates to residents who have felt abandoned or disenfranchised that **Columbia PD will respond when shots are fired.**

### ✔ FEWER ILLEGAL GUNS

In the first six months of the program, **Columbia PD seized 49** guns in a community where illegal firearms has long been a problem.

### ✔ BETTER BALLISTIC ANALYTICS

The combination of ShotSpotter and the NIBIN imaging ballistics database has **significantly increased the effectiveness of investigations.**

### ✔ VIOLENT CRIME DROPS

Police observed an **immediate drop in violent crime within months** of deploying ShotSpotter, and an overall reduction of 9% across all Part I Crimes.