

# Towards a New Age for Community Safety

a framework for  
violence prevention  
& gun reform

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# Executive Summary

The National Urban League is a movement built upon a mission and legacy of lifting barriers to justice, prosperity and power through direct service, advocacy, and convening thought-leaders to inspire actionable innovation and change. Since 1910, our movement has responded nationally and locally to the pressing issues of our communities and to threats against our lives. Today, our mandate is even stronger in the face of rising firearm violence and attempts to weaken community resolve.

Reports by U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics revealed that following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, gun violence increased by about 30% after an extended period of steady decreases in national firearm violence. However, according to Giffords Law Center's Annual Gun Law Scorecard, states with the least restrictive gun safety laws have been hardest hit by gun violence between 2011 and 2020. To add, the FBI Hate Crime Statistics report showed that race- ethnicity- or ancestry-based complaints through 2021 made up nearly 65% of all reported hate crimes. During the same period, personal firearm ownership has proliferated through the United States, ballooning to over 400 million handguns and assault rifles currently in circulation.

These findings tell a compelling story of a nation in crisis and in need of community-based solution-finding. We can point to economic instability and the disruption of jobs and direct social services due to the coronavirus pandemic. We can also point to the rise in politically motivated violence manifesting through racial, religious, sex-based, and sexual orientation-based hate and fear, and the rise of online hate and devious misinformation.

Through the work of the National Urban League's Office of the President and Equitable Justice and Strategic Initiatives division, the following report is intended to usher us [Toward a New Age of Community Safety](#), where a framework for violence prevention and gun reform is timely, useful, and necessary for our Affiliate network, our movement partners, and the general public. When we released the *21 Pillars for Redefining Public Safety and Restoring Community Trust* in 2021, we highlighted the importance of engaging with communities directly, investing in them, and developing strategies for alternative responses to crisis. This New Age framework provides greater context, offering regional comparisons of various community-led movements, programs, and projects to serve as inspiration for collaboration and partnership no matter where in the country you are.

To be clear, the National Urban League has supported Universal Background Checks and Assault Weapons Bans federally to help stem the rising tide of gun violence. We also know, thanks to insights and perspectives from our Affiliate, volunteer, and partner networks on the ground that federal law and policy change and direct community investment is the joint path forward we deserve.

Within our report, you will find regional community projects for state and local violence prevention implementation from the Northeast to Southeast, to Midwest, and West/Southwest. Our lists are intended to be instructive and demonstrative of the growing movement toward innovative, community-led prevention systems, but is not an exhaustive list of the thousands of efforts borne everyday by leaders in every community. This report also provides legislative and policy context for gun safety and reform on the federal, state, and local level, and statistical resources that we have found helpful to our movement's work in this space.

It is our hope that this document provides inspiration to the growing movement for change led by communities through partnership between neighbors, with government, and with nongovernmental allies. It is through the legacy of the Urban League movement that we are fortified and firm in our belief that through the frustration of these trying times that we can find solutions and strategies for building stronger, safer, and collaborative communities.

## PART I

# Regional Guide to Community-Led Efforts Against Violence

Throughout this section, some strategies that differ from the common practices are highlighted using the following color codes:

**Government-delivered program**

**Government-funded community program**

**Non-government community program**

**Program with full or partial youth-specific integration**

# NORTHEAST REGION

- » **New York**
- » **New Jersey**
- » **District of Columbia**
- » **Pennsylvania**
- » **Massachusetts**



# NEW YORK

## Alternatives to Policing

**Mental Health Response Team:** A New York City pilot program (B-HEARD) that dispatches mental health specialists and paramedics instead of police for certain nonviolent emergency calls has resulted in more people accepting assistance and fewer people sent to the hospital, early data shows.

- In 95% of cases, people accepted care from the B-HEARD team, which is compared with 82% for traditional 911 response teams, including police.
- “This is great news. A smarter approach to public health and public safety. A smarter use of resources. And the evidence—from Denver to New York—shows that responding with care works,” U.S. Rep. Jamaal Bowman, D-N.Y.
- What prompted its creation: Daniel Prude was killed by Rochester police officers after being physically restrained. Prude has been suffering from a mental health episode.

**Cure Violence Program:** Since 2012, the NYC Health Department has been providing program oversight and support to anti-violence programs in the city. [The Cure Violence model](#) is an evidence-based public health approach that seeks to stop the spread of violence by using the following methods and strategies associated with disease control: detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying, and treating the highest risk individuals and changing social norms. Cure Violence in NYC is part of the City’s [Anti-Gun Violence Crisis Management System](#), which is an initiative to reduce gun violence in 17 city precincts. The initiative includes Mobile Trauma Units, Safe in the City Grants, Public Safety Coalitions and Gun Violence Survivors Advisory Council.

- A John Jay [study](#) provided promising evidence that a public health approach to violence reduction may help to create safer and healthier communities. When compared with similar areas of New York City, gun violence rates declined significantly in two neighborhoods operating programs inspired by the Cure Violence model.
- [Mayor Adams’](#) anti-gun blueprint puts “cure violence” groups center stage

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Gun Buyback Program:** NYPD offers \$200 to anyone who surrenders a gun. This program is part of an ongoing effort to encourage New Yorkers who own guns to turn them in anonymously.

- New York Attorney General Letitia James [announced](#) that 84 firearms were turned in to law enforcement at a gun buyback event in the city of Rome. To date, Attorney General James has taken more than 2,300 firearms out of communities through gun buyback events and other efforts since taking office in 2019. “Gun buyback programs are essential to protecting New Yorkers and preventing dangerous guns from ending up in the wrong hands.”
- A program in the [Bronx](#) is being called a success after 75 illegal guns were turned in. A Mother’s Promise worked with nonprofit Bronx Rising Initiative, the NYPD, and the Bronx District Attorney’s Office to create the gun buyback program, offering a \$500 gift certificate to anyone who surrendered five guns. It was all anonymous.



**Report and Interactive Tracing Analytics Platform:** The Office of the Attorney General of the State of New York prepared the report on guns recovered in New York. The NYAG created this first-of-its-kind report and interactive Tracing Analytics Platform to better understand gun trafficking patterns and to assess the efficacy of laws in combatting illegal guns in New York State. The Platform further allows local law enforcement to reach their own conclusions about how to address crime guns in their area.

- By collecting and analyzing New York aggregate gun trace data for 2010-2015, NYAG identified regional differences in trafficking patterns while discovering a commonality among crime guns recovered across New York State: New York's gun laws have curbed access to the guns most associated with violent crimes, handguns.
- The analysis led to several recommendations, including calling on the federal government to close the so-called "gun show loophole" which allows private sales of firearms without a background check, and urging states to require permits for handguns, which has worked effectively in New York to keep these dangerous guns out of the hands of criminals.
- The NYAG report, informed by an analysis of gun trace data, **highlights** how guns flow into New York from states with weaker gun laws.

**Leaders from New York and 8 other states joined together for the first-ever multi-state gun intelligence consortium.**

- According to Governor Hochul, there has been an 80% increase in firearm homicides here in New York since 2019 and 75% of the guns that committed those crimes came from out of state.
- This new Interstate Task Force on Illegal Guns has been charged with identifying how weapons are being trafficked across state lines and from which states.
- The multi-state consortium **convened** to share intelligence, tools, tactics, and strategies to combat gun violence. The State Police discussed the latest tools and technologies available as well as analysis of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).
- Members of the Consortium: New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, Ohio, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New Hampshire.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Funding from the Governor:** Hochul Announced that NYS Has Provided \$30 Million in Grants to Fight Gun Violence Over Last Three Months

- The Governor announced \$6.3 Million in new funds to expand community and hospital-based gun violence intervention programs across the state.
- Governor Hochul also announced \$100,000 in new grants to Family Services of Westchester and Peace is a Lifestyle to expand their youth engagement and anti-violence programming in Westchester and the Bronx.
- The funding will allow nonprofit organizations and hospitals to hire 90 new outreach workers, violence interrupters, credible messengers, and social workers who will work to reduce gun violence through mediation, mentoring and community engagement, and addressing the trauma experienced by victims of violence and their families.

- With these new awards, the state has awarded a total of \$8.2 million in grants so 31 nonprofit organizations and hospitals can hire 129 new gun violence intervention staff, \$5.8 million for youth engagement programs, and \$16 million for workforce training and placement.

**Mayor's Office to Prevent Gun Violence:** OPGV works to coordinate the city's various anti-gun violence initiatives, amplify community-based intervention and prevention services, and introduce technological solutions to prevent gun violence to create safe, empowered, and interconnected communities in New York City.

**New York City's Crisis Management System** network deploys teams of credible messengers who mediate conflicts on the street and connect high-risk individuals to services that can reduce the long-term risk of violence.

- From 2010 to 2019, data shows the Crisis Management System has contributed to an average 40% reduction in shootings across program areas compared to 31% decline in shootings in the 17 highest violence precincts in New York City.
- Services offered include school conflict mediation, employment program, mental health services, legal services, and anti-gun violence employment program.

**The Peer Leadership Committee** consists of New Yorkers ages **16 to 24** who have been impacted by gun violence and are looking to affect change in New York City. OPGV Peer Leadership Committee travels to all five boroughs, hosting anti-violence events and facilitating discussion on how to promote peace.

**United Way's Atlas Program:** an initiative focused on enhancing community safety, increasing economic mobility, and strengthening the capacity of trusted local services.

- Atlas was established in direct response to New York City's dramatic reevaluation of its criminal justice system aimed at fulfilling the need for supportive, strength-based offerings to ensure that court-involved individuals can succeed.
- Atlas will work in collaboration with UWNYP's list of Community Based Organizations to provide a suite of services including mentorships family therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, opportunities for employment and education, and additional resources and supports to individuals awaiting trial who choose to participate in the program.

**Community Violence Intervention Act:** The 2021–22 budget establishes funding for gun violence prevention.

- Senator Zellnor Y. Myrie (D-Central Brooklyn) announced that the Community Violence Intervention Act was adopted. The act establishes a fund for violence intervention and interruption programs that serve our communities. "Violence intervention and interruption programs have a research-based, proven model for breaking the cycle of handgun violence that plagues our streets and takes the life of an estimated one in forty Black boys in America."
- This year's budget commits \$10 million to hospital-based violence intervention programs and community-based violence interruption programs and dedicates ten percent of New York's federally funded Victims of Crime Act funding to these groups in future years.
- These programs provide a credible, non-police response to gun violence, and have a remarkable track record of success in the communities most vulnerable to gun violence.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** New York is a national leader in gun violence prevention. From background checks on all gun sales, to a strong Extreme Risk law, to laws to disarm domestic abusers, to police reform laws and strong permit systems for the purchase and carry of handguns, New York has enacted some of the strongest gun laws in the country.

- On June 6, 2022, [Governor Hochul signed into law a package of gun control measures](#) that raised the age for purchasing an assault rifle from 18 to 21, prohibited body armor purchases, closed loopholes, mandated microstamping, strengthened “reg flag” laws, established a “Task Force on Social Media and Violent Extremism” in coordination with the NYS Attorney General’s Office, strengthened SAFE Act (2013) provisions by eliminating grandfathered large-capacity feeding devices, required police reporting in coordination with federal authorities, and required gun dealer inspections.

**SAFE Act** was signed into law in 2013, prevents criminals and the dangerously mentally ill from buying guns, cracks down on illegal guns and bans only the most dangerous assault weapons. The legislation includes provisions that protect and preserve law-abiding citizens’ right to bear arms and does not restrict New Yorkers’ ability to buy, sell, keep, or use guns.

**SCOTUS case on concealed carry:** The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) and the National Urban League filed an *amicus brief* in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen*, which asks whether a New York gun safety law that requires a person to show “proper cause,” or a special need for self-protection, to carry a concealed firearm outside their home violates the Second Amendment.

- The *amicus brief* argues that states’ authority to limit the public carrying of firearms is well-established and has resulted in reduced handgun violence and deaths. The brief highlights how historically, concealed carry restrictions have been implemented and enforced to protect Black people, and how today, concealed carry restrictions continue to play a significant role in reducing handgun violence and its effect on Black communities.

### **NYS Sen. Thomas Introduces S8173, New Legislation to Clamp Down on the ‘Iron Pipeline’ and Fight Gun Trafficking**

- Senator Thomas and Assemblymember Charles Lavine (D-Glen Cove) announced the introduction of new state legislation in 2022 to crack down on criminal gun traffickers and eliminate the steady flow of illegal guns into New York.
- The bill would have strengthened existing laws that prevent the unauthorized sale and possession of firearms. The legislation would have lowered the number of illegal firearms needed to qualify for a first or second-degree felony offense, which may carry multi-year prison sentences and substantial fines. The bill would have also lowered the number of illegal firearms an individual can possess that could be considered presumptive evidence of intent to sell.
- The bill stalled and eventually died in the New York State Senate. Similar legislation has not yet been reintroduced.

# DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Alternatives to Policing

**Cure the Streets** is a pilot public safety program launched by OAG aimed at reducing gun violence. It operates in discrete high violence neighborhoods using a data-driven, public-health approach to gun violence by treating it as a disease that can be interrupted, treated, and stopped from spreading.

- D.C. Attorney General Karl Racine announced an expansion to his office's program. Cure the Streets is based on the Cure Violence Global model, which employs local, credible individuals who have deep ties to the neighborhood in which they work.
- Early data indicates this public health approach to treating violence is working in these neighborhoods.
- **Keep in mind:** The sample size is small but targeted. Cure the Streets selected neighborhoods with high rates of gun violence and is targeted to address reciprocal violence, specifically Assault with a Deadly Weapon and gun homicides. This model does not address intimate partner violence or "random" or sporadic street crime.

**Building Blocks DC:** the district's gun violence reduction strategy. Using research-based models and lived experiences, Building Blocks DC aims to create long-term reductions in gun violence by helping people most at-risk of being involved with gun violence get connected to the services, supports and opportunities they need to succeed, engaging residents in co-creating solutions for communities most impacted by gun violence, and creating linkages of support between communities, government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations.

- In two years, the program has distributed more than [\\$1.6 million in funding to 162 grantees](#) to support gun violence prevention work in local communities.
- Last year's funding included [programs](#) like the successful Jobs Not Guns employment fairs that connected more than 250 people to companies and organizations willing to hire and help people with criminal backgrounds.

**Gun Violence Prevention Emergency Operations Center** has identified more than 67 person-based service and support resources from DC agencies that address employment, housing, substance use, mental health, and family challenges, completed Environmental Assessments of 151 Blocks and 49 Communities and offered 120 people employment opportunities through government and business partners.

**Mental Health Pilot Program:** 911 operators will instead send unarmed teams of behavioral health experts and peers to mental health call scenes.

- The D.C. [program](#), which had been in the works since February 2020, first emerged from a recommendation by the city's Police Reform Commission part of local and national efforts in the wake of George Floyd's killing to reduce violent contact between the public and law enforcement.
- In November 2021, the program was [expanded](#). The city hired more social workers, with a goal of having a third of all mental health calls directed to a dedicated mental health team by the third phase.

- From June to September, [approximately](#) 315 calls were routed to the D.C. Department of Behavioral Health.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Firearms Trafficking Strike Force:** The DOJ launched five cross-jurisdictional strike forces to help reduce gun violence by disrupting illegal firearms trafficking in key regions across the country in 2021. Leveraging existing resources, the regional strike forces will better ensure sustained and focused coordination across jurisdictions and help stem the supply of illegally trafficked firearms from source cities, through other communities, and into five key market regions: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area/Sacramento Region, and Washington, D.C.

- In March 2022, [five people were arrested in firearms trafficking conspiracy](#) involving 500+ firearms shipped from Georgia to California, sold on black market in California
- The President's [proposed budget](#) for FY23 includes \$1.73 billion for the ATF to expand the multijurisdictional gun trafficking strike forces to include additional personnel.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Community-Based Violence Interrupters:** Mayor Muriel Bowser announced that D.C.'s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE) will more than double the number of community-based violence interrupters and expand into three new neighborhoods.

- The program aims to prevent and reduce violence by sending violence interrupters into communities, where they build relationships, engage with residents at risk of being involved in gun or violent crime, and mediate disputes before they escalate to violence.
- Last year, communities that the ONSE engaged with experienced a [decrease in gun crimes and gun homicides](#), a trend that has remained consistent in 2021.

**Pathways Program:** The city will also use \$4.5 million in federal funds to expand the office's program to 130 participants. The transitional employment program aims to keep residents out of the criminal justice system and away from violent crime through education and building job skills.

- The first phase is an intensive, nine-week classroom-based training that focuses on life and job skills. Phase two offers six months of subsidized employment, which helps participants gain real work experience, build positive work habits, and establish a record of employment. The third phase offers long-term retention and support services aimed at ensuring participants successfully transition to permanent unsubsidized employment, retain said employment, and continue to pursue their other self-identified personal and professional goals.
- Individuals referred to this program are ages [20–35](#). Pathways participants are offered a host of wraparound services including transportation benefits, nutritional services, mental health services, housing assistance referrals, clothing and/or uniform assistance, access to a variety of pro-social extracurricular activities, and more.
- [Data](#) on ONSE official site says more than 90 percent of Pathways Program graduates have avoided criminal involvement.

**Mayor's Funding:** the city will award \$1.1 million in grants to community-based and nonprofit organizations working to reduce gun violence.

- The grants will require partnerships between entities or organizations working on gun violence reduction efforts. This grant cycle builds on the more than \$750,000 in grants awarded earlier this year to more than 60 individuals and community-based organizations that are supporting residents and neighborhoods impacted by gun violence.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** The District of Columbia has some of the strongest gun laws in the country and leads the nation with a strong background check law. The district has enacted new gun safety legislation like an Extreme Risk law and emergency ghost gun legislation.

- Generally, no person or organization may possess or control any firearm in the District of Columbia unless the person or organization holds a valid registration certificate

# NEW JERSEY

## Alternatives to Policing

**Camden's rebuilding of the police department:** Camden abolished its police department and rebuilt the force. The union contracts were thrown out, resulting in the county having full control. However, many on the force earn a lower salary with fewer benefits and it is a politically divisive entity. The priority was to integrate officers into the fabric of the community.

- Reports show that violent crime in the city has decreased, police officers are a regular presence at community block parties, the excessive use of force rates plummeted, and the homicide rate decreased.

**Essex's Community Care and Justice Program:** Through a partnership between the village of South Orange, Essex County, Seton Hall University, the South Orange Rescue Squad, and the South Orange Police Department, the Community Care and Justice Program was launched in October 2021

- Composed of two social workers and professors from Seton Hall and three interns from Seton Hall, Rutgers University, and New York University, the Community Care and Justice Program (CC&J) has a mission to serve and protect the vulnerable and underserved in the area through an engagement protocol and providing social service resources. They deal with issues including homelessness, elder abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health.
- South Orange EMS Chief "the social workers the CC&J program provides will make more of a difference than any ambulance or hospital could."

**Crisis Intervention Team:** a county-based collaboration of law enforcement professionals and mental health professionals who are committed to developing a local system of services that is responsive to individuals with mental illness, family members and the police officers.

- The CIT-NJ model strives to provide law enforcement officers and mental health professionals with knowledge and skills that allow them to respond to the individual in psychiatric crisis in a manner that minimizes the potential for injury. In addition, the CIT-NJ model can be instrumental in helping to divert the individual with serious mental illness from the criminal justice system to appropriate mental health treatment.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Atlantic City Metro Task Force:** members include the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, Atlantic County Sheriff's Office, and Atlantic City Police Department.

- "Since its formation, the Atlantic City Metro Task Force has made hundreds of arrests, seized scores of guns, and taken large quantities of drugs off the streets of Atlantic City and nearby municipalities," said Director Lyndsay V. Ruotolo of the Division of Criminal Justice.
- Acting Attorney General Platkin announced the arrest of four individuals trafficking illegal guns, heroin, fentanyl, and methamphetamine in Atlantic City, N.J., and other parts of Atlantic County. The investigation led to the recovery of nine illegal guns—including two assault rifles, one of which is a fully automatic, untraceable "ghost" gun—and 14 prohibited large-capacity ammunition magazines.

**GunSTAT:** To help educate the public, State Police now publishes monthly [data online which helps draw attention to the problem of interstate gun trafficking](#), as well as the states and manufacturers responsible.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Governor funding:** Governor Murphy and Acting Attorney General Bruck Commit \$8.2 Million for Community Violence Intervention Programs

- The funding supports 25 violence-intervention programs, covering 15 municipalities in every region of the state. This historic investment supports intervention strategies that provide alternatives to violence and embody a community-based public safety model.
- Funding supports community violence intervention programs like Paterson Healing Collective, an Everytown Community Safety Fund grantee, which identifies patients at risk of repeat violent injury and links them with hospital- and community-based resources aimed at addressing underlying risk factors for violence.

**Hospital Based Violence Intervention Program:** multidisciplinary program that combines the efforts of medical staff with trusted community-based partners to provide safety planning, services, and trauma-informed care to violently injured people, many of whom are **boys** and men of color.

- The New Jersey's Office of the Attorney General (OAG) utilized funds from the Victims of Crime Act Victims' Assistance grant to provide funds to local hospital-community organization partnerships to start or expand HVIPs across the state.

- HVIP's address social determinants of health at multiple levels including health, education, social and community (mentoring), economic stability and housing.
- Gov Murphy "With the implementation of hospital-based violence intervention programs, our state is better equipped to support victims and offer best practices to the community organizations working to prevent additional violence from occurring."

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** New Jersey has some of the strongest gun laws in the country. From comprehensive background checks to disarming domestic abusers to a strong Extreme Risk law.

- **Ghost guns:** New Jersey was the first state to comprehensively regulate untraceable and undetectable firearms, or "ghost guns."
  - » New Jersey's ghost gun law was enacted in 2018 and further strengthened in 2019. The law prohibits the purchase or acquisition of parts, prohibits using a 3D printer to produce a firearm or its components, prohibits the distribution of computer code capable of manufacturing firearms and its components, and prohibits knowingly possessing a firearm manufactured or assembled that is not imprinted with a serial number.
- **Red Flag law:** creates an Extreme Risk Protective Order, a type of court order that can temporarily restrict a person's access to firearms when they pose a risk of harming themselves or others and that can help prevent warning signs from turning into tragedies.

# PENNSYLVANIA

## Alternatives to Policing

**911 Triage and Co-Responder Program:** to better identify and respond to behavioral health crisis calls. Behavioral specialists work with 911 operators to determine the most appropriate response to crisis calls. Police officers and behavioral health specialists work together to connect individuals experiencing behavioral health crises or issues related to substance use to treatment, while also responding to emergency response calls alongside the police.

- "This announcement is an initial step to ensure supported interactions involving people in behavioral health crisis, as well as an opportunity to refine services between first responders and the citizens we serve" - Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw.
- In **2020 the outreach co-responder pilot** engaged with approximately 450 individuals, making over 150 real-time connections to services without making any arrests.

**Police Assisted Diversion:** allows officers to use their discretion to avoid arresting low-level offenders and steer them toward treatment or community service. PAD is a collaborative partnership among police officers, service providers, and community members.



Since [2015](#), the city has seen a 28.5 percent decrease in the prison population. PAD will serve as a way to safely divert participants from unnecessary jail time.

In a [study](#), Clients reported mostly positive experiences with the program, identifying the primary benefits as avoided arrest and relational support from affiliated service providers.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Gun Violence Task Force:** collaboration between the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, the Philadelphia Police Department and the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office—is comprised of attorneys + field agents who investigate the origins of crime guns and trace them back to prevent future crimes.

- The GVTF has made 1,871 arrests and seized 3,299 firearms since the task force's inception in October 2021.
- Track + Trace Initiative is a smart-on-crime, data-driven approach dedicated to tracing crime guns and decreasing gun trafficking and illegal transfers. Currently, 51% (595) of all PA law enforcement agencies are using eTrace.

**Straw Purchase Prevention Education Program:** created by the state Attorney General's office to provide resources and direct grant money for an educational and public service outreach program to inform individuals of the illegal nature of purchasing a firearm for an individual prohibited from owning firearms.

**Operation LIPSTICK:** In 2019, the AG provided the operation with a \$123,000 grant to partner with Mothers in Charge to implement outreach initiatives for women in the Philadelphia area to educate them about the dangers of straw purchases.

- In Boston, the Operation helped achieve a 33% reduction in gun crimes by women.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Violence Intervention Program Funding:** Governor Tom Wolf announced an additional \$35 million in gun violence prevention funding, as part of his final state budget proposal in February 2022. The funding would come in the form of violence intervention program grants overseen by the Pennsylvania Commission for Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). Earlier in 2022, Wolf announced another \$15 million investment in violence intervention grants through the American Rescue Plan.

**Philadelphia's Office of Violence Prevention:** implements strategies and initiatives to prevent, reduce, and end violence. OVP is particularly focused on addressing gun violence.

- OVP supports the [Community Crisis Intervention Program](#), Violence Prevention Partnership Program, Targeted Community Investment Grants and Group Violence Intervention Program

- The [Group Violence Intervention Program](#) deals with individuals who are most at risk of engaging in gun violence. They are connected to social services, employment, and community support. From July 2021 to September 2021 830 home visits were made to high-risk individuals, 606 referrals were made, and 161 custom notifications were made for GVI.
- Since 2019, the Targeted Community Investment Grants have funded 170 projects.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Pennsylvania has a mix of strong and weak gun laws. It has addressed the Charleston loophole to give law enforcement enough time to conduct background checks. It has also passed legislation to combat domestic gun violence. However, the state has stalled passing comprehensive background checks on all firearms and extreme risk protection order legislation.

- The State is [missing universal background checks](#) for long guns, gun owner licensing, extreme risk protection orders, assault weapon restrictions, large capacity magazine bans, waiting periods, strong concealed carry laws, open carry regulations, child access prevention laws and preempts local gun laws.

# MASSACHUSETTS

## Alternatives to Policing

**Mental Health Crisis Response:** is a pilot initiative by the City of Boston targeted at increasing the role of mental health workers and decreasing the role of police in responding to mental health crises.

- “I am proud to launch a pilot program that reimagines how we respond to mental health calls,” said Mayor Janey. “These pilot investments will connect residents - and their families - with the care they need as we bring more safety, justice, and healing to Boston neighborhoods.”
- The pilot initiative aims to improve the collaboration between the Boston Police Department and BEST, a comprehensive psychiatric emergency service for people in the Boston area with public or no insurance. Based on estimates from 2020, the BEST mobile units initiated over 6,000 mobile responses for Boston residents experiencing a mental health crisis.

**Office of Public Health Preparedness:** implemented to design trainings, workshops, seminars, and live exercises that instill field-tested skills to address the biological, psychological, and social impacts of violent and traumatic events. Services for victims can be activated immediately via phone or text. Providers—medical experts, psychologists, educators, community members—are trained and certified to deliver both individual and group interventions to respond to critical incidents and recovery for trauma inducing events.

The evidence-based service delivery system, Disaster Behavioral Health (DBH) responds to homicide, suicide, fires and more. This model has also been adapted in other states to serve

victims of the mass shootings in Parkland Florida, Sandy Hook, and Las Vegas. To date 2000 community members have become trained and certified responders.

**Don't Call the Police:** is an online directory of local resources which lists community-based alternatives to the police on issues relating to housing, the LGBTQ+ community, mental health, domestic violence and sexual assault, youth, elders, crime, and substance abuse.

**ACES Act:** S.2970, brought by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security in 2022 that would have provided funding for new community-based unarmed response programs.

- The bill would have established a new grant program to help communities fund unarmed alternatives to law enforcement in response to 911 calls.
- The grant program would have been run by a board composed of representatives from specific nonprofits, along with the secretary of the Department of Mental Health. The nonprofits include the Greater Boston Association of Black Social Workers, the Massachusetts Peer Support Network, and the Western Massachusetts Learning Community.
- The bill made it out of committee but was never committed by the full Senate and died when the 2022 legislative session ended.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Operation Ceasefire:** is a Boston problem-solving police strategy that seeks to reduce gang violence, illegal gun possession, and gun violence in communities. The goals of the program are to carry out a comprehensive strategy to apprehend and prosecute offenders who carry firearms, to put others on notice that offenders face certain and serious punishment for carrying illegal firearms, and to prevent youths from following the same criminal path. The program's suppression tactics include numerous warrants and long sentences for chronic offenders, aggressive enforcement of probation restrictions, and deployment of Federal enforcement powers.

- A simple pre/post comparison of time-series data in 2001 found a statistically significant decrease in the monthly number of **youth** homicides in Boston, Mass., following implementation of Operation Ceasefire.
- There was a 63 percent reduction in the average monthly number of youth homicide victims, going from a pretest mean of 3.5 youth homicides per month to a posttest mean of 1.3 youth homicides per month.
- Operation Ceasefire was associated with a 25 percent decrease in the monthly number of citywide gun assaults, and with a 44 percent decrease in the monthly number of youth gun assaults in district D-2.
- The Ceasefire intervention was also associated with a 32 percent reduction in the monthly number of citywide shots-fired calls for service.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Safe and Successful Youth Initiative:** is a secondary violence prevention program in 13 Massachusetts cities, including Boston, targeting **young men** most likely to commit or be victim of gang or gun crime. The program offers an array of services—including case management, outreach, and direct services (e.g., subsidized employment, behavioral health)—to young men ages 17 to 24.

- Significant reductions in city-level violent crime victimization rates, homicide victimization rates, aggravated assault victimization rates, and nonviolent crime victimization rates for 14- to 24-year-old men in SSYI treatment cities compared with young men in the SSYI treatment group who did receive services.

**The Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative:** is an ongoing program of the Division of Violence Prevention at the Boston Public Health Commission. The VIP Initiative seeks to reduce street violence in city neighborhoods through increased mobilization of community-based organizations and neighborhood residents, increased coordination of city agencies, and increased knowledge of city resources in those neighborhoods.

- VIP works in 6 micro-neighborhoods, averaging 900 households. The neighborhoods were selected because they have high rates of gun violence but strong community infrastructure.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Massachusetts has some of the strongest gun laws in the nation. From comprehensive background checks on all gun sales to disarming domestic abusers to an Extreme Risk law.

- Massachusetts residents 15 years and older who wish to possess, carry, and transport firearms, ammunition, and feeding devices are required to have a firearms license. Firearms licenses are issued by municipal police departments.
- A License to Carry (LTC) or Firearm Identification (FID) Card is required to possess or carry firearms in Massachusetts, unless otherwise exempt.
- A Firearm Identification (FID) Card is required to possess firearms in Massachusetts, unless otherwise exempt.

A faint, light gray outline map of the Southeastern United States, showing state boundaries. The map covers the area from Virginia in the north to Florida in the south, and from the Appalachian region in the west to the Atlantic coast in the east. A red rectangular box highlights the text 'SOUTHEAST REGION' over the map.

# **SOUTHEAST REGION**

- » **Virginia**
- » **North Carolina**
- » **South Carolina**
- » **Georgia**
- » **Florida**
- » **Alabama**
- » **Tennessee**

# VIRGINIA

## Alternatives to Policing

**Norfolk's Crisis Intervention Team:** offers a pre-booking alternative to law enforcement by providing appropriate and timely response to individuals who are experiencing a psychiatric emergency. It is a partnership between the Norfolk Police Department and the Norfolk Community Services Board.

- [848 calls from February 15, 2016 through June 30, 2016](#), 53% voluntary, 12 arrests and 12.3% could have resulted in arrest but treatment was the priority option.

Signed into law on April 6, 2022, **SB 202** requires both the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and Public Safety and Homeland Security to study ways to better handle mental health 911 calls.

Signed into law on April 27, 2022, **SB 593** is a measure that employs alternative methods for transporting a person in need of mental health services when a temporary detention order (TDO) is issued.

- Auxiliary officers would execute the TDO/Emergency Custody Order instead of officers and deputies. The auxiliary officers would be trained within three weeks to then handle mental health calls.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Firearms Trafficking Prevention Law:** It is unlawful for anyone to purchase more than one handgun within any 30-day period.

- However this restriction does not apply to licensed firearms dealers; law enforcement officers, law enforcement agencies, and agencies duly authorized to perform law enforcement duties; state and local correctional facilities; licensed private security companies; a person who is exchanging or replacing a handgun that he or she purchased within the last 30 days from the same seller; a person who is trading in one handgun for another, provided that no more than one trade-in is completed per day; a person whose handgun is stolen or irretrievably lost who deems it essential that such handgun be replaced immediately; and Virginia concealed handgun permit holders.
- The prohibition also does not apply to private sale of handguns.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Virginia Center for Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention:** is a newly funded state center focused on strengthening the state's efforts to reduce gun violence through research and data collection, partnerships with state public health agencies, providing support for and guidance to community-based violence intervention programs, and trainings and best practices for localities, community groups and law enforcement officials.

**2023 Operation Ceasefire Grant Program:** implemented in 2022, Virginia's new program creates a grant fund to support Group Violence Intervention programs around the Commonwealth in the model of Project Ceasefire.

- Ceasefire is unique for violence prevention programs in several ways, including decades of data supporting its efficacy. Ceasefire led to a 63% decrease in youth homicide in Boston, Massachusetts, a 42% reduction in gun homicide in Stockton, California, and a 34% reduction in homicide in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Gun Violence Intervention Program Grant:** to support the implementation of strategies that will result in reduced gun violence in local communities. This is a competitive solicitation open to localities in the Commonwealth who demonstrate in their application collaboration with key stakeholders and a commitment to the implementation of evidence-based programming or promising practices that have been proven effective in reducing gun violence.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Virginia took a huge step forward in 2020, enacting a historic slate of gun violence prevention laws. State law now requires background checks on all firearm sales, restricts access to firearms by people in crisis and disarms domestic abusers. **However,** Virginia legislators could require a waiting period before all gun purchases and strengthen its domestic violence gun laws.

# NORTH CAROLINA

## Alternatives to Policing

**Greensboro's Behavioral Health Response Team:** co-responder program that dispatches professional mental health clinicians in the field with an officer, or sometimes, an officer is sent later as a follow up.

- Since 2019, BHRT has supported Greensboro residents and all city employees who need to call and request assistance from the team when they encounter a mental health emergency.
- By the end of **2021, HRT had answered 3,274** calls for service and the city decided to expand the program. 59% of those served were Black, 36% identified as white while Hispanics made up 3% and Asian and bi-racial 1%
- In September 2018, Greensboro police hogtied and killed Marcus Deon Smith, a homeless Black man who was experiencing a mental health crisis in downtown Greensboro. After Smith's killing, hogtying was banned by the department and the city researched alternative policing models.

**Durham Community Safety Department:** mental health clinicians, licensed social workers, and other trained civilian responders answer and arrive at the scene of some 911 calls involving mental or behavioral health needs, minor traffic incidents, quality-of-life issues, and calls for general assistance.

- The department collaborates with Durham County Departments of Public Health, Social Services, and Emergency Medical Services, and Alliance Health.
- “When we look at other cities that are already doing this, we see a lot of evidence that this kind of work can be done in a way that’s consistent with everybody’s safety” Ryan Smith, [Director of the Community Safety Department](#).
- The Department created a [task force](#) which was formed by the City of Durham, Durham County, and Durham Public Schools Board of Education with a mission to recommend programs to enhance public safety and wellness that rely on community-based prevention, intervention, and re-entry services as alternatives to policing and the criminal legal system.

**Raleigh’s ACORNS:** Addressing Crises Through Outreach, Referrals, Networking, and Service, a [new unit of police officers and social workers that responds to calls](#) about mental health crises.

- Some observers and advocates have concerns about ACORNS. Greear Webb, a member of the Raleigh Police Advisory Board, is critical of the unit because it still sends armed officers to mental health calls.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Take Back North Carolina:** was implemented as a new initiative in March 2018 to combat violent crime, drug trafficking and crimes against law enforcement. The initiative renews the partnership between the United States Attorney’s Office; District Attorney’s offices; and federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies across the 44 counties of the district.

- The United States Attorney’s Office conducts training for state and local law enforcement on a variety of topics, including the federal firearms laws, federal prosecutors meet with federal, state, and local officers on a weekly basis to discuss and strategize about how to address the offenders driving the violence.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Asheville Advancing Racial Equity:** a plan to implement and advance environmental, economic, and social justice in the city. Approaches include changes in nuisance enforcement (animal control and noise complaints), data management, community engagement, homeless outreach, and changes to police training, reform, policy, and recruitment.

- The [initiative works to create a joint city/county task force](#), rename streets with historic local Black leaders, partnering with schools to address opportunity gaps, defund the police budget by 50%, allocate resources to the Equity and Inclusion Department, audit the city and create an all-civilian oversight committee.



**Community Reparations Commission:** will make recommendations on how and where to invest funds.

- The reparations as envisioned are not intended to make direct payments to descendants of enslaved African people from Asheville, but according to the resolution they aim “to increase minority home ownership and access to other affordable housing, increase minority business ownership and career opportunities, strategize to grow equity and generational wealth, closing the gaps in health care, education, employment and pay, neighborhood safety and fairness within criminal justice.”

**Durham’s Bull City United:** works to stop shootings and killings in specific neighborhood using a public health model with three primary strategies: detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying, and treating individuals at high risk of involvement in violence and changing social norms that tolerate violence in the community.

- Trained violence interrupters and outreach workers prevent shootings by identifying and mediating potentially lethal conflicts in the community and following up to ensure that the conflict does not reignite.
- From 2016 to 2018, total shooting incidents in the two target areas have decreased from 85 to 61 (28%) and persons shot has decrease from 46 to 22 (52%).

**Durham Beyond Policing:** a grassroots coalition to divest from policing and prisons and reinvest municipal resources into supporting the health and wellbeing of Black & Brown communities, benefiting all community members.

- The organization runs town halls, creates voter guides, and advocates for transformative justice/accountability.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** North Carolina has a mix of strong and weak gun laws. North Carolina requires a person to obtain a permit before purchasing a handgun, which includes a criminal background check. State law also prohibits people from possessing firearms if they are subject to domestic violence restraining orders—and requires them to give up the firearms they already own.

North Carolina could expand its permit requirement to apply to all gun sales, not just handgun sales. It can also expand its domestic violence laws to prohibit people from possessing firearms who have been convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence. The state could also pass an Extreme Risk law, which would empower loved ones or law enforcement to intervene to temporarily prevent someone in crisis from accessing firearms.

# SOUTH CAROLINA

## Alternatives to Policing

**Department of Mental Health's Mobile Crisis Team:** deploys a statewide community crisis on-site emergency psychiatric screening and assessment.

- Goal is to link patients to care and divert from unnecessary hospitalizations and incarcerations.
- Chief Joseph Hill of the Horry County Police Department [says a mobile crisis team is desperately needed](#) in the community to help families dealing with mental health crises.
- Columbia Police to [expand mental health response unit](#). Police say the unit has contacted 120 citizens experiencing some form of mental crisis.

**Charleston Dorchester Assessment/Mobile Crisis Team:** is a 24/7 psychiatric assessment team serving both Charleston and Dorchester Counties, diverting individuals from local emergency departments, when clinically appropriate, by linking them more directly to the appropriate treatment.

- A/MC is available to the community 365 days a year to triage psychiatric needs and connect individuals to treatment resources.
- A/MC partners with local law enforcement to provide in-person emergency assessments to link individuals to the appropriate level of care to treat their symptoms.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Community Crisis Response and Intervention:** In partnership with Spartanburg, Cherokee and Union law enforcement, emergency management services, 911 dispatch, and Probate Courts, the Program provides on-site emergency psychiatric screening and assessment to individuals experiencing mental health emergencies within 60 minutes of contact with the CCRI team. The service is available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

- In addition to assessing individuals in crisis, CCRI clinicians educate individuals on available community resources, coordinate appropriate transfers and referrals, match patients to the most appropriate care, and serve as liaisons to the local SCDMH mental health centers.

**Lowcountry Rising Above Violence:** a hospital and community violence prevention and intervention program serving the cities of Charleston and North Charleston, S.C., which provides wrap-around services to [high-risk youth](#) and victims of violence identified in hospital and community settings and provides community violence interruption strategies in neighborhoods with concentrated community violence.

**MUSC Turning the Tide Violence Intervention Program:** a hospital-based program that aims to reduce the odds of revictimization and improve physical, social, and mental health outcomes after a [young person](#) is shot.

- MUSC Health evaluated more than 260 gunshot wounds in 2020. Half of the victims were under age 25.

- MUSC was awarded a \$1M grant in February to implement [Lowcountry Rising Above Violence](#). MUSC will hire credible messengers.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** South Carolina has weak gun laws. State law does not require a person to pass a criminal background check before purchasing a firearm from an unlicensed seller. South Carolina can improve its gun laws in many ways including by enacting an Extreme Risk law, which would empower loved ones or law enforcement to intervene to temporarily prevent someone in crisis from accessing firearms.

Due to gaps in [state law, minors can legally purchase assault weapons](#) from private sellers in South Carolina with no parental oversight or background check.

# GEORGIA

## Alternatives to Policing

**Co-Responder Models:** licensed behavioral health clinicians work with law enforcement agencies on mental health crises. The clinicians connect individuals with treatment, counseling, and other resources.

- More than 100 people avoided jail time by the end of September due to the addition of clinicians.
- Co-responder models can also help reduce “frequent flyers”—individuals who law enforcement encounter over and over—by directing them to counseling or other mental health services.
- Alternative response units can lower instances of use of force and allow officers to focus on more critical issues like homicide investigations, said Tiffany Williams Roberts, an Atlanta-based civil rights and criminal defense attorney who works at the Southern Center for Human Rights.

**Mental Healthcare Reform:** Signed into law on April 4, 2022, HB 1013 changes the way law enforcement handles certain offenders in Georgia. If someone commits a crime and the police think it was caused by some type of mental illness, the bill gives them more freedom to check that person into a mental facility or take them in for outpatient treatment instead of putting them in jail.

**Policing Alternatives and Diversion Initiative:** The PAD Initiative was born out of the work and vision of Atlantans directly impacted by policing and incarceration and committed to a new approach to community safety and wellness.

- PAD began accepting diversions in October 2017 in four Atlanta Police Department beats. In 2018, the Atlanta Police Department diverted 69 people, and by 2019 expanded to 28 beats.

- PAD was awarded the Civic Impact Award for Government Innovation by the Center for Civic Innovation. PAD successfully completed the two-year pilot, diverting 150 people and providing harm reduction-based case management, housing, transportation, food assistance, and linkage to care that supported improvements in participant and community quality of life.
- In 2020, Atlanta City Council unanimously approved a substantial funding increase to expand PAD citywide.
- In 2021, in partnership with the City of Atlanta's non-emergency 311 city services line, PAD launches Community Response Services for quality-of-life concerns related to mental health, substance use, or extreme poverty. By summer 2021, Community Response Services expanded citywide.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Violent Repeat Offenders Initiative:** created in 2012 from the recognition that a new approach was needed to stem the persistent violent crime that was destabilizing entire communities and destroying families in some of Atlanta's struggling neighborhoods.

- Today, the VRO is the cornerstone of the enforcement component of the United States Attorney's strategy to combat persistent violent crimes. It brings together federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in a collaborative effort to identify the most violent crime "hot spots" in metro Atlanta and the individuals responsible for committing most of the violent crime in these hot spots.
- VRO's goal is to identify and prosecute the most dangerous individuals, who are already prohibited from possessing a firearm but who persist in committing violent offenses while armed.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Project Safe Neighborhoods Program:** focuses on prosecuting those individuals who most significantly drive violence in our communities and supports and fosters partnerships between law enforcement and schools, the faith community, and local community leaders to prevent and deter future criminal conduct.

- Implements a Credible Messenger initiative to intervene with high-risk juveniles and adults. The Credible Messenger Model utilizes individuals who can relate to and build trusting relationships with committed and incarcerated youth and adults, as well as their families.
- Credible Messengers are often neighborhood leaders, experienced prevention and reentry specialists, and individuals with relevant life experiences (usually including their own involvement with the criminal justice system) who coach, guide, mentor, facilitate and advocate for youth and young adults who have been imprisoned for gun-related and gang-related crime.
- Credible Messenger Models demonstrate a proven track record of deterring crime, reinforcing pro-social behaviors, improving relationships between stakeholders and community members, increasing engagement with social programs and services, and fostering compliance with court mandates.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Georgia has some of the weakest gun laws in the country, according to policy groups. The legislature continues to introduce legislation that includes permit-less carry and bills to allow the carry of guns in sensitive places.

- The Legislature also fulfilled its “guns everywhere” agenda, by allowing guns to be carried nearly anywhere in the state—from the busy Atlanta airport to college campuses.
- To become a safer state, Georgia could enact legislation to repeal its Stand Your Ground law, keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers, and repeal Guns on Campus.

## FLORIDA

### Alternatives to Policing

**Community Response Team (CRT):** is a one-year pilot program which will have trained mental health professionals, in teams of two, responding to non-violent calls for service. Orlando police officers will still respond to all calls involving armed individuals or threats of violence and can also refer calls for follow-up by the CRT, when it is not on duty.

- “During the last few months, we’ve had a lot of community conversations, and one of the things we heard from our residents is they want Orlando Police Department officers to focus on law enforcement and building relationships through community-oriented policing,” said Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer. “This new pilot will help further our efforts to do just that by having behavioral health professionals, in lieu of police, be the first responders for residents who are experiencing a mental health crisis.”
- Police Chief Orlando Rolón said that the department responds to an average of around 50 calls a day regarding individuals who need help with mental healthcare.

**Miami’s Criminal Mental Health Project (CMHP):** provides training for police officers to better understand how best to help people suffering from serious mental health crises.

- In 2013, Miami police arrested only 9 of more than 10,000 people in response to mental health calls—opting to bring most of them to crisis stabilization centers instead of jail.
- The significant reduction in arrests allowed the county to close one of its five jails.
- CMHP also offers treatment instead of prison for people arrested for non-serious crimes who suffer from a mental illness.
- Participants in these CMHP programs are 58 percent less likely to be arrested than those who did not participate.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Gun Bounty Program:** makes it possible for residents to get a \$1,000 reward for turning someone in with an illegal gun. The goal is to get weapons and criminals off the streets by reaching out to individuals who know someone with an illegal firearm.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Miami-Dade County's Group Violence Intervention:** focuses on **young men ages 18-24**, who are most likely to shoot or to be shot in street-group-related conflicts, offering them support through social services and a way out of a violent lifestyle. Miami-Dade County's Group Violence Intervention (GVI) Model is part of a national program that seeks to decrease gun related deaths.

- **GVI** has reduced youth homicides by up to 63% in other cities in which it has been implemented.

**The Peace and Prosperity Plan:** implemented by Miami-Dade County, takes a strategic prevention, intervention, and re-entry approach that looks at the whole child, family, and community, with a focus on the neighborhoods most affected, and addresses the social and economic disparities at the root of gun violence—targeting resources toward community revitalization needs and economic insecurity.

- The Peace and Prosperity Plan focuses on a six-week countywide Fellowship program through the Fit2Lead initiative. Fit2Lead demonstrated a 30% reduction in crime in neighborhoods where it was implemented, and through the Peace and Prosperity Plan the program will serve an additional **1,100 at-risk youth** each year.
- "This recent wave of tragic violence is absolutely unacceptable," Mayor Levine Cava **said** after the meeting. "This community has demanded an immediate response to protect public safety, and we are responding."

**The Credible Messengers of Florida:** address violence and **youth crime** using their lived experience, which often proves more relatable to people living in troubled neighborhoods where police are not trusted.

- The group is seeking non-profit status. It enjoys support from local organizations, collaborating on mutual aid programs and activities for young people.
- The Florida Legislature has considered creating a grant through the Department of Children and Families to fund community intervention programs, with Gov. Ron DeSantis calling for \$8.2 million for "mentoring initiatives" in his 2022 budget proposal.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Florida has a mix of weak and strong gun laws. Following the 2018 Parkland mass shooting, the state enacted an Extreme Risk law to enable law enforcement to petition a court to temporarily restrict access to firearms by those in crisis.

- However, the same legislation that created the Extreme Risk law also allowed schools to arm staff, putting students and staff at risk by introducing more guns in schools. Florida could improve public safety by enacting legislation requiring criminal background checks on all firearm sales, repealing the state's dangerous Stand Your Ground law, and by strengthening Florida's concealed firearm license.

## ALABAMA

### Alternatives to Policing

**100 Days of Non-Violence Initiative:** The Birmingham Urban League established a **high school nonviolence program** where the Urban League visits each area high school to foster dialogue about community response to violence and establishing a youth leadership support network for students.

**Birmingham's Public Safety Plan:** training, social workers partnering with police and Civilian Oversight of Complaints.

- "Social workers will partner with officers from West Precinct to address misdemeanor domestic violence incidents," Mayor Woodfin said. "The emergency advocacy team pilot program—or Pete, for short—is a pilot program which will work to break the cycle of domestic violence."
- The city is working on creating alternative justice models which will support prevention, diversion, and reentry.

**Huntsville Crisis Intervention Team:** a community partnership of law enforcement, mental health professionals, mental health consumers and family member advocates. CIT's goal is to help persons with serious mental disorders access medical treatment rather than placing them in the criminal justice system for illness-related behaviors.

- In 2021, they were aiming to have 30% of their patrol certified as CIT officers
- A new receiving/crisis diversion center is in development.

### Community Violence Intervention

**Montgomery Office of Violence Prevention:** The Department works to reduce the risk of violence through linked strategies in partnership with government, non-profit, neighborhood, and faith organizations by utilizing data-driven programs to address community needs and implement violence intervention.

The [Office of Violence Prevention](#), which was created in 2021, held the first of several community roundtables in February. Members of the community had the chance to give input and ask questions.

- Some people question the around 200 child groups that are eligible for funding from the city. They feel some organizations are not doing enough.

**Birmingham Peace Campaign:** The Safe Communities Strategy was created through the Birmingham Safe Neighborhoods Task Force. The Birmingham PEACE Strategy is the City's effort to implement a strategic framework through 2023. The strategy focused on community-led, customized efforts to achieve the Safe Communities Strategy.

Rolled out programs including Community First Responder Training, Community Policing, Complete Communities Initiative, Office of Re-Entry and Restorative Justice, [Young Citizen's Academy](#), and [Justice Involved Youth Services Pilot](#).

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Alabama has some of the weakest gun laws in the country. The legislature recently weakened its laws even further by passing permit-less carry and continues to introduce other harmful legislation including Stand Your Ground in churches. In 2018, Governor Kay Ivey signed a memo authorizing school administrators to have guns at schools if they qualify under the Alabama Sentry Program, enabling schools to arm teachers.

In [2020](#), Alabama had the seventh highest gun export rate in the country.

# TENNESSEE

## Alternatives to Policing

**Nashville Office of Alternative Policing Strategies:** responsible for creating and overseeing a co-response approach to mental health calls for service, a [juvenile diversion program](#), and a gun violence reduction program. They work in collaboration with community partners to deliver evidence-based products which provide viable alternatives for those dealing with behavioral health issues, struggling juveniles, and adults involved in gun violence.

**The Gun Retrieval Program:** partners with Churches to safely retrieve stolen guns, crime guns and potential crime guns from [youth](#) and prohibited persons without causing undue harm to the community at large.

**Co-Response Model/Partners in Care:** The city already has a mobile crisis team but is adding a new approach in which police officers and mental health professionals respond simultaneously to 911 emergencies involving people with mental health issues.



- The program kicked off on June 28, 2021. Sixteen [officers between the North and Hermitage precincts volunteered](#) for this new training, which includes six clinicians from the Mental Health Cooperative. Officers will stabilize the scene and the clinicians will evaluate anyone in need of help. The team will receive 40 hours of training from mental health professionals.
- The Mayor asked for more [funding to expand the program](#) in February. They want to add a second co-responder pairing—this time, a non-law enforcement duo that could instead include a medic and a mental health clinician.
- Emergency responders have so far assisted 821 people, arresting less than 4 percent of these residents, and instead connecting them to crisis support services—including in-patient mental health care.

**Pre-Arrest Diversion Infrastructure Program:** supports local communities in infrastructure development aimed at reducing or eliminating the time individuals with mental illness, substance use, or co-occurring disorder spend incarcerated by redirecting them from the criminal justice system to community-based treatment and supports.

- From 2017-2019, 4,591 law enforcement officers were trained in mental health topics, 785 behavioral health professions were trained in criminal justice issues and more than 13,000 people were diverted from jail to treatment.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Memphis Group Violence Intervention Program:** The Mayor’s Office created a GVIP Czar and GVIP staff. Their role is to coordinate, develop, and uplift gun violence prevention efforts occurring across the city. This includes taking inventory of all existing efforts to assess strengths and gaps, bringing together diverse stakeholders to identify common goals and strategies, and ensuring all active approaches are data and community driven.

- Rolled out a plan for focused deterrence, violence interrupters, community outreach workers, street, hospital and school-based intervention, and other wraparound services.
- The Memphis City Council approved [\\$2 million for the program](#)
- The program works with outreach worker groups like 901 [Bloc Squad](#) which is comprised of former gang members who visit crime scenes and work with at risk [youth](#).

**Center for Youth Advocacy and Well-Being:** the center aims to raise awareness for better behavioral health services in the community for [young people](#) and their families, and to coordinate delivery of those services to ensure the community’s youth have the best chance to succeed.

- The center continues to offer trauma-informed services and referrals to appropriate community partners with a focus on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma or violence experienced early in life that negatively influences mental health or behavior in the future and can contribute to a cycle of violence, chronic poor health, and decreased life expectancy.
- Initiatives run out of the center include gang intervention, mental health connection network, and a child wellness program.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Tennessee has a mix of weak and strong gun laws. Tennessee has improved their gun laws by narrowing the Charleston loophole to give law enforcement enough time to conduct background checks. It has also closed dangerous loopholes that allowed domestic abusers to buy guns. Despite those improvements, the Legislature continues to introduce harmful legislation. This includes permit-less carry, guns on campus, and expansion of Stand Your Ground. Tennessee lawmakers also weakened firearm safety training in 2019.

- To become a safer state, Tennessee could enact responsible gun storage requirements for both vehicles and homes, repeal Stand Your Ground laws, and repeal its permit-less carry law, according to Everytown.



# MIDWEST REGION

- » **Illinois**
- » **Michigan**
- » **Ohio**
- » **Kentucky**
- » **Missouri**

# ILLINOIS

## Alternatives to Policing

**Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy:** community-based program established to transform policing efforts into an efficient five-step process for law enforcement. The goal of CAPS is to solve neighborhood crime problems, rather than merely to react to their symptomatic consequences.

- Program activities consist of law enforcement's concentrating more intensively on the community and on prevention, while rotating with other teams that handle lower-priority and rapid response calls. This strategy promoted community policing.
- **Problem solving at the neighborhood level** is supported by a variety of strategies, including neighborhood-based beat officers; regular Beat Community Meetings involving police and residents; extensive training for both police and community; more efficient use of City services that impact crime; and new technology to help police and residents target crime hot spots.
- CAPS has been recognized as one of the most ambitious community policing initiatives in the United States. It has been cited as a model by numerous national experts, including officials at the U.S. Department of Justice and academic authorities on community policing.

**Community Emergency Services and Supports Act (CESSA):** requires emergency response operators to refer calls seeking mental and behavioral health support to a new service that can dispatch a team of mental health professionals instead of police.

- CESSA requires these calls be referred to the Department of the Human Services-Division of Mental Health (DMH) for immediate assistance, which can include dispatching mobile mental health units.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Chicago lawmakers have repeatedly proposed 3 bills increasing gun detection and trafficking prevention:**

- **Gun Trafficker Detention Act:** Gun owners must report a lost or stolen gun (can be done online) within 48 hours. Helps law enforcement identify/prosecute gun traffickers if their gun was lost or stolen and found at a crime scene. Traffickers would be held liable for any damage caused by their guns. Repeat violators would not be allowed to purchase a gun for five years.
- **Prevent Gun Trafficking Act:** Specifies prohibition of straw purchasing of firearms, making straw purchasing a federal crime. Attorney General is required to ensure that gun purchasing transactions clearly states penalties for violating federal anti-trafficking law.
- **Federal Firearms Licensee Act:** Expands applicability of federal firearm laws to "facilitators" like gun shows and online marketplaces. Requires physical security measures to prevent firearm thefts. Clarifies assessment standards for licensed dealers

and their employees. Increases record retention, electronic data management and sharing for background checks.

#### **Combating Illegal Gun Trafficking Act:**

- This bill, which became law in 2019, requires background checks for gun store employees, requires gun dealers to keep their business premises open for inspection by law enforcement during business hours, requires training for gun dealers and gun store employees on responsible business practices and the laws applicable to selling firearms, and requires video surveillance and alarm systems for all brick-and-mortar locations. The bill includes provisions from the Gun Dealer Licensing Act.

## **Community Violence Intervention**

**Office of Firearm Violence Prevention:** law creating the office allows the state to invest \$250 million into community violence prevention programs over the next three years.

- The new grants will help community advocates reduce gun violence through trauma-based services and **youth development programs**.
- The Office of Firearm Violence Prevention will work with the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Firearm Violence Research Group to create new intervention programs and training for high-risk youth. Advocates believe the intergovernmental approach to help community organizations will reduce gun violence and address trauma in neighborhoods.

**Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention (CBVIP) Program:** \$7.5 million per year investment in the ICJIA Community-based Violence Prevention Programs (CBVIP) grant, which provides grant funding to entities that provide services such as case management, violence mediation, mentoring, mental health counseling, and community and partnership building to ensure the most effective provision of these services to **at-risk youth and young adults**.

**Violence Prevention and Street Intervention Programs (VP-SIP):** In 2020, \$12 million was allocated for state violence prevention and street intervention grants and administration. Grant recipients were required to join, convene, or expand community coalitions that engage service providers, governmental agencies, law enforcement, faith-based groups, and community members. These coalitions seek to raise awareness for available violence prevention resources, help develop partnerships that can meet the immediate needs of clients and provide “pro-social” activities in the community.

**Safer Foundation Fund:** appropriated \$1 million to support the service agency Safer Foundation (SF) and its partnership with Mount Sinai Hospital’s Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI) This partnership “seeks to better understand the issues connected to gun violence in Chicago’s west side communities.” In addition to providing referrals to SF, SUHI hopes to build on their study of victims of nonfatal gun violence who are quickly treated and discharged with a goal of identifying needs, gaps, resources, and barriers to employment and workforce development.

- Annually **supports over 5,000 men, women, and youth** in attaining gainful employment.

**Chicago's Street Outreach:** hyper-local organization that hires, trains, supervises, and supports Outreach and Case Management staff who actively engage high-risk persons who are most likely to be involved in lethal violence. The aims are to mediate emerging conflicts, assist with life and safety focused transitions (work, school or living arrangements) and provide support and encouragement to reduce the threat of violence and trauma.

- In 2020, Street Outreach Programs received \$6 million in funding to help curb violence. The funding was distributed to 11 community grounds under the Communities Partnering 4 Peace initiative. The funds will also help fund the Metropolitan Peace Academy, an 18-week training on conflict mediation and de-escalation, which also earns outreach workers six credit hours toward an associate degree at City Colleges of Chicago.

**Chicago CRED:** takes a multifaceted approach to reducing gun violence. They work directly with the individuals who are most likely to carry a gun or get shot, and with the communities where gun violence is most concentrated. They run programs including Street Outreach, Coaching & Counseling, Workforce Development, and Advocacy.

- "Potentially" reduces individuals' likelihood of being shot or arrested by 50% and 48% respectively.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Illinois has some of the strongest gun laws in the country, including a law requiring background checks on all gun sales, an Extreme Risk law, and laws keeping guns away from domestic abusers.

**Illinois passes Secure Firearm Storage with Bipartisan Support:** Enacted in 2022, HB 4729 requires the Department of Public Health to develop and implement a comprehensive 2-year statewide safe gun storage public awareness campaign. The bill was passed with bipartisan support.

- "Secure firearm storage saves lives and can play a direct role in reducing youth access to firearms, school shootings and gun suicide. We must do all we can to ensure that gun owners are informed about the critical importance of secure storage."
- An estimated 54 percent of gun owners do not lock all their guns securely and it is estimated that 5.4 million children live in a home with at least one unlocked and loaded gun, an increase of 800,000 children since 2015.

# MICHIGAN

## Alternatives to Policing

**COPE (Community Outreach for Psychiatric Emergencies):** is a program created by Hegira Health in collaboration with the Detroit Wayne Mental Health Authority to centralize and mobilize adult crisis services across Wayne County. Since 2016, the organization has aimed to change the delivery of adult crisis services. COPE provides pre-admission review services to adults who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis and have Medicaid, Healthy Michigan, MI Health Link, or no insurance coverage.

- COPE completed 77,892 requests for Pre-Admission Review between April 1, 2016, and February 28, 2022.

**Ann Arbor's unarmed response proposal:** In 2021, the county voted to back a program for unarmed response to certain 911 calls in coordination with non-police professionals.

- In [April 2022, the city council voted](#) to allocate \$3.5 million to launching the program which will divert calls for non-criminal and non-violent incidents- including mental health crises- to social workers or other human service professionals, rather than armed police.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Funding:** In February, Gov. Whitmer announced a \$75 million plan that includes targeting gun trafficking; supporting programs to increase access to social as well as mental health services; and expanding jobs, education, and employment opportunities in communities affected by violence.

## Community Violence Intervention

**The Detroit Youth Violence Prevention Initiative:** is a multi-layered strategic framework with four (4) key programs that remain in existence today: Ceasefire, School Safety Stations, Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and Summer Youth Employment.

- Implementation of a Ceasefire gun violence prevention program and a Positive Behavioral Supports Intervention program in select Detroit schools.
- The Detroit Youth Violence Prevention Initiative (DYVPI) began four (4) years ago as a priority of former Mayor Dave Bing to ensure **youth** have a path out of violence toward a high quality of life through education, jobs, and careers.
- [Since the inception of the partnership](#) between DYVPI and Pathways to Potential, there has been a nearly 25% increase in the number of students receiving perfect attendance recognition and there are more students receiving "near perfect" attendance as well.

**Ceasefire Detroit:** is a partnership between federal, state, and local law enforcement and the community to reduce homicide and violent crime in Detroit. Under the strategy, social service providers describe services that are available under re-entry programs to help street group members succeed outside of prison, such as job training programs, substance abuse counseling, and bus transportation.

- Through [data-driven direct outreach](#), community events, and referrals from partner organizations, Ceasefire identifies and engages individuals likely to be shooters or victims of shootings.
- In [July 2021, \\$1.275 million](#) was secured for the expansion of the program.
- From [2013 to 2016, there was a 47% reduction in violent crime](#) arrests and a 29% reduction in arrests overall for program participants.
- In April 2022, it was [reported](#) that Ceasefire helped lower non-fatal shootings this year by 21% and homicides by 15%.

- Ceasefire launched the [Community Health Corps](#) last year which aims to tackle poverty through an intense, restorative case management model. CHC staff connect vulnerable residents to the right services provided by government and nonprofits—everything from food to rental assistance to behavioral health services.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Michigan has mostly strong gun laws.

- Building on modest reforms in years past, [Governor Whitmer signed an 11-bill gun reform package](#) into law on April 13, 2023, including universal background checks, an Extreme Risk law, and safe storage, among other provisions.
- State law requires individuals to have a permit before they can purchase a handgun from a private seller.
- State law also requires private gun owners to report missing or stolen firearms.

Michigan ranked 31st in terms of gun deaths per every 100,000 people from 2015 to 2019.

## OHIO

### Alternatives to Policing

**Dayton's Alternative Response System:** In 2021, the city introduced plans to launch an alternative policing system to handle calls relating to people in mental health crises in 2022.

- The city has tasked a Washington, D.C.-based company with data analysis of emergency calls made to the department, making recommendations, and meeting with community stakeholders.
- The city will also consider new training for emergency dispatchers and identify a system for how dispatchers can best communicate and work with officers and residents.

**Columbus' Alternative 911 Program:** In 2021, the mayor proposed spending more than \$5 million in 2022 to provide an alternative police response to 911 calls involving mental health and addiction crises.

- A six-week pilot program in early 2021 showed that more than 60% of calls received by those teams did not require immediate police or fire dispatch.
- [48% of the calls](#) were either completely resolved by the dispatcher or redirected to local community resources.
- The alternative response program would team paramedics, social workers, and police dispatchers to review the best response to non-emergency 911 calls.



## Community Violence Intervention

**Akron's Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program:** In 2021, the City of Akron announced a grant program and a new staff position to coordinate youth and community violence prevention programming.

- Akron set aside approximately \$10 million to provide grants and technical assistance to support eligible local organizations that are working to prevent violence from occurring, stop the progression of violence, and rehabilitate individuals with a history of violent behavior.
- The Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grant Program is open to nonprofit organizations and faith-based organizations, as well as healthcare organizations.

**Cleveland's Violence Prevention Committee:** In partnership with the Chief of Prevention, Intervention and Opportunity for Youth within the Mayor's Cabinet, the committee strives towards a decrease in violence citywide. The committee continues its work on engaging the community and implementing strategies proven to be effective in regard to violence prevention citywide.

**Peacemakers Alliance:** A coalition of agencies working to help end street violence in Cleveland as part of an anti-crime initiative that employs outreach workers to help improve safety for the city's children and families.

**Columbus' Safe Kids Make Safe Streets:** The Columbus Urban League's Neighborhood Violence Intervention Initiative whose goal is to reduce crime and gang-related violence and keep youth safe and on-track to healthy, productive lives.

- In 2018 alone, the initiative connected with more than 150 youth and deescalated 111 documented incidents. In 2021, the program helped 40 young people get summer jobs, calmed down 85 potentially violent situations, and helped with 19 peace agreements.
- The program places gang violence intervention specialists in South and East side neighborhoods where 14–24-year-olds stand at high risk of gang involvement.
- In March 2022, the Columbia City Council unanimously approved more than \$1 million in funding to four different nonprofits, including the Urban League.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Ohio has some of the weakest gun laws in the country. Ohio has no law requiring background checks on unlicensed gun sales, and state law allows teachers to carry guns in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. Ohio has no laws prohibiting domestic abusers from possessing guns.

- To become a safer state, Ohio can enact a law requiring background checks on all gun sales, prohibit teachers from carrying guns, enact laws prohibiting domestic abusers from possessing guns, enact an Extreme Risk law and regulate undetectable and untraceable firearms (also known as ghost guns).

# KENTUCKY

## Alternatives to Policing

**Louisville Mental Health 911 Calls Pilot:** In 2021, Louisville announced a pilot program to better assist people having a mental or behavioral health crisis while freeing up police officers to respond to violent crime. This was possible due to a \$5 million dollar investment in deflection and diversion programs.

- A research team at the University of Louisville developed the program alongside Seven County Services. Crisis intervention teams will be equipped to respond to nonviolent behavioral health emergency calls that do not require law enforcement.
- The program started within the Louisville Metro Police Department's Fourth Division, where research shows the city has a high number of crisis intervention-related calls.

**Alexandria Social Worker Program:** two social workers are on the police department's payroll. While they work for the police, they are not cops, they do not have arresting powers, and they do not carry weapons. They follow up with people who have had interactions with police, or they respond to a call after police officers have made sure the scene is safe for them to enter.

- Just a few years after the program's implementation, it is seen as indispensable: it frees officers from repeat calls for non-criminal issues and gets residents the help they need.
- After social workers connect with individuals in the community who need their help, they ask that they call them directly instead of 911 for anything that is not an actual emergency.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Funding Ordinance:** \$15 million was allocated by Louisville Metro Council for violence intervention programs.

- The funding will go towards the Office of Safety and Healthy Neighborhoods, which will oversee the usage of that funding directed toward these community programs.

**Louisville Group Violence Intervention:** Community leaders like ministers and police notify those doing the most harm that they will face hard consequences unless they quit the crime. Then, the perpetrators are offered help and resources to be able to live a life without violence.

- In [January 2022, the city held its first "call in"](#) meeting for the program. The meeting included gang members, city and community leaders, representatives from the criminal justice system, businesses, nonprofits and faith communities and family members of victims.
- In 2020, over 50 Louisville residents at high risk for violent crime participated in GVI, and of that group, only one person has been involved with violence since.

**Lexington's Violence Prevention Program BUILD:**

- In March 2022, activists from BUILD, which is made up of congregations in the city, held a meeting to push for a group violence intervention solution.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Kentucky's gun laws are among the weakest in the country. No state law requires background checks on all firearm sales. This makes it easy for prohibited purchasers to buy any gun they would like with no questions asked, by buying it from an unlicensed seller, like a person they meet online or at a gun show.

- Kentucky does not prohibit known domestic abusers from having guns. Kentucky also allows the carry of hidden loaded guns in public with no permit, no background check, and no safety training.

# MISSOURI

## Alternatives to Policing

**Crisis Response Unit:** In 2021, St. Louis launched a new program under the Crisis Intervention Team in cooperation with Behavioral Health Response (BHR).

- The CRU is comprised of 8 dedicated officers and 8 behavioral health clinicians. They work together responding to calls involving a behavioral health crisis, substance use and trauma to provide resources and connection to care at the time of the incident. BHR and CMHLs will also provide follow-up and connection to care.
- St. Louis also launched a 911 Diversion Program which takes place at the hub in Communications. Calls received are evaluated to see if it is a behavioral health crisis. Depending upon the level of crisis, calls may be diverted directly to BHR so individuals can speak with a mental health professional immediately.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Lock It for Love program:** The St. Louis Urban League partnered with the St. Louis Fire Department, Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice, and the St. Louis Public Library to hand out free gun locks in firehouses, library branches, and SLPD police stations to urge safe gun ownership practices. By June 2022, 8,000 gun [locks](#) had been distributed through the program.

**Aim4Peace:** is a public health approach to reduce shootings and homicides and reverse the violence epidemic in Kansas City.

- Aim4Peace focuses on the neighborhood factors that most often contribute to violence, helping those who are considered at highest risk of committing offenses due to their living or employment situation. Aim4Peace runs a hospital prevention program as well. The program is based off Project Ceasefire in Chicago.

**St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission:** works to reduce violent crime in the region by promoting and advocating for coordinated, well-resourced policies, support systems,

and interventions among area governments, institutions and agencies that serve **youth** and families most at risk of violent crime.

- Community Violence Prevention programs helped **facilitate** a 26% drop in homicides in the city of St. Louis

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Missouri gun laws are some of the weakest in the country. Missouri has no law requiring background checks on unlicensed gun sales. State law also allows people to carry hidden, loaded handguns in public without a permit or safety training. Missouri has no laws prohibiting domestic abusers from possessing guns.

To become a safer state, Missouri can enact a law requiring background checks on all gun sales, repeal its dangerous permit-less carry law, enact laws keeping guns away from domestic abusers, and enact an Extreme Risk law.



# **WEST / SOUTHWEST REGION**

- » **Washington**
- » **California**
- » **Colorado**
- » **Arizona**
- » **Texas**

# CALIFORNIA

## Alternatives to Policing

**Nevada County Mobile Crisis Team:** Created in 2020, the team is a partnership between the sheriff's office and the behavioral health department meant to defuse volatile situations and funnel more people into services rather than the criminal justice system.

- The team of a deputy sheriff and therapist responds to issues such as suicide threats, psychotic breaks, and drug use. Most calls are resolved with a "safety plan," a verbal agreement with the person that might involve seeking help from family, their therapist, or other services in the community.

**San Diego Psychiatric Emergency Response Team:** Provides emergency assessment and referral for individuals in behavioral health crisis who come to the attention of law enforcement through phone calls from community members or in-field law enforcement request for emergency assistance. Pairs licensed mental health clinicians with uniformed law enforcement officers/deputies. Clinicians are also partnered with law enforcement homeless outreach teams to provide proactive preventative connection to services.

- From 2019-2020, **PERT Clinicians (Law Enforcement and EMS combined)** conducted 35,701 contacts in the community. PERT provided 12,340 Crisis Interventions (of which, 5,750, or 47%, were diverted from a 5150 hospital transport to other community resources) and 23,361 Community Service interventions.
- PERT Clinicians provided 9,413 crisis intervention services to persons identified as being homeless. PERT attempted crisis resolution contact, but was unable to do so (e.g., person could not be located or declined to interact) an additional 7,695 occasions (thus, a total of 20,035 Crisis Interventions were attempted).

**L.A.'s Community Alternatives to 911:** holds workshops with the goal of being able to equip themselves as community members so they can support themselves and others to deescalate, so they do not have to call the police.

- **CAT-911 offers training and resources** on transformative and healing justice, domestic and sexual violence, mental health, wound care, and peace building.

**LAPD Alternative Dispatch program:** launched in 2021, the program involves sending out civilian personnel to mental health calls that are nonviolent and do not involve some type of criminal activity. The team does not include officers.

- In **April 2022, the Police Commission reported** that the program was showing signs of success. By that point, the team had responded to 591 diverted non-emergency calls since it began in January.
- The calls, diverted from either the department's emergency communication center or its non-emergency number, are primarily with the homeless community, such as noise disturbance or loitering. The team also visits the communities they patrol to offer resources and build relationships.
- The Call Direction to Ensure Suicide Safety pilot program, with Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services began in February 2021. From its implementation through the end of last year, 1,465 calls were diverted.

**Oakland Civilian Crisis Response Team:** In 2021, the Oakland City Council unanimously greenlit a new program that would send civilians with medical and mental health training to respond to non-violent emergency calls in East Oakland instead of police.

- The program will bring on five pairs of civilian responders. Each team will include one medical technician and one mental health professional. The teams will be staffed to respond to urgent calls 24/7. The program [launched in April 2022](#).

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**L.A. banning ghost guns:** In 2021, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously voted to prohibit ghost guns. Recent reports have stated that 41% of ATF's cases in Los Angeles involved a ghost gun.

**Gun Violence Prevention Project:** Berkeley Law partners with Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence and Brady Legal to reduce and prevent gun violence.

- The Project helps Giffords develop guides, factsheets, and other resources to educate individuals and organizations on California's Gun Violence Restraining Order laws and how these laws can be used to keep communities safe. Students have engaged in legal research and data analysis to help municipalities close loopholes in their gun ordinances. Students have conducted state-by-state legal analyses of statutes that could be used to regulate 3D-printed "ghost guns" to support litigation by Brady Legal.

## Community Violence Intervention

**California Violence Intervention Grant Program:** made \$200 million in state funding available over three years to help cities address gun violence. The organization helps coordinate a coalition of over 60 organizations across California including city leaders, policy organizations, and front-line practitioners to secure large-scale permanent state funding for effective violence prevention and reduction efforts.

- CalVIP provides grants to hospital-based violence intervention programs, evidence-based street outreach programs and focused deterrence strategies.

**Richmond's Advance Peace Program:** offers participants mentorship, skills training, and stipend. The program aims to reduce urban gun violence using formerly incarcerated community members as street outreach mentors and violence interrupters.

- The program runs the Peacemaker Fellowship which enrolls the small number of the most violent and hard to reach members of a community at the center of gun violence in an intensive 18-month program of trauma-informed, healing-centered, anti-racist mentorship, education, social services, and life opportunities.
- The [program began in 2010, and in 2019, Richmond recorded its lowest number of firearm assaults](#) causing injury or death (53) in five decades, representing a reduction of more than 70% since launching the program. Since 2018, the program has expanded to Sacramento, Fresno, Fort Worth and Stockton. [New York](#) announced in 2021 that it is piloting the program.

- As of [January 2018, of the 84 Fellows](#) who have participated in the Peacemaker Fellowship, 94% are alive, 83% have not sustained firearm related injuries or been hospitalized since becoming a Fellow, and 77% are not a suspect in new firearm crimes since becoming a Fellow.
- In [2021, the program reported working with 29 fellows](#), mediating 60 community conflicts, 35 service referrals, and response to 28 shootings.

**Oakland Ceasefire:** a data-driven violence-reduction strategy coordinating law enforcement, social services, and the community.

- A [2019 study](#) associated its strategy with a 31.5% reduction in gun homicides and a 43% reduction in gang shootings, while citywide arrests declined by over 60% from the previous decade.
- The program's three goals are to reduce gang/group related shootings and homicide, decrease recidivism and incarceration rates of individuals participating in the intervention, and strengthening police-community relations.
- The [program services those at the highest risk](#) of shooting or being killed, it relies on direct communication with the community through street outreach and other forms of community leadership. The program also provides paid job training, substance abuse counseling, educational and legal support, in addition to crisis response to shootings and violence.
- In [March 2022, the Mayor announced that the Ceasefire program](#) was back in operation after the pandemic forced them to scale back. By July, there had been 14 Ceasefire operations during which 30 guns were recovered.

**L.A.'s Office of Violence Prevention- Trauma Prevention Initiative:** supports community-driven approaches to public safety including community-based organizations conducting gang intervention work.

- [The initiative provides capacity building](#) through peer-to-peer violence prevention learning, training, and technical assistance, and works on prevention in communities through facilitated community engagement, strategic planning, and implementing community identified prevention strategies.
- In [April 2022, the Office of Violence Prevention](#) announced that it was expanding the Trauma Prevention Initiative to five new communities across the County.

**San Francisco's Office of Violence Prevention Street Violence Intervention Program:** the SVIP employs people to conduct street-level outreach in assigned neighborhoods. SVIP workers build relationships in their neighborhood, and work with the community there to prevent street violence.

- The SVIP focuses especially on [young](#) people. SVIP outreach workers engage in three main activities: street outreach, crisis response, and community mobilization.
- In [2021, San Francisco expanded the street violence intervention program](#). This expansion included partnerships with API non-profits, new community safety teams and a program to accompany seniors to medical and personal appointments.
- In [2018, SVIP served 157 individuals](#) with Crisis Response Family Support, 235 Individuals with Education Unit Mediation Support, and 204 Individuals with Intensive Mentorship



**Urban Peace Academy:** develops teams of trained professionals working to prevent and reduce violence. The instruction program develops teams of peacemakers that can effectively address gang-related violence. The Academy also presents effective strategies for forming relationships and trust between residents and officers to ensure neighborhood safety.

- The Academy runs gang intervention and law enforcement trainings, community leadership courses, and summer safety strategy training.
- Since [2007, the Academy has aided in the creation of the Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development](#), received \$5M in private funding to support their trainings and development of the gang intervention field, and [trained over 3,500 peacemakers](#).
- The [Academy](#) re-launched in February 2022 with 25 participants

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** California has some of the strongest gun laws in the country and leads the nation in having the most comprehensive system for removing firearms from those who are legally prohibited from having a gun.

The [state was one of the first in the nation](#) to enact an extreme risk protection order law (known as a gun violence restraining order).

# OREGON

## Alternatives to Policing

**Eugene's CAHOOTS:** (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) is a mobile crisis intervention program staffed by White Bird Clinic personnel using City of Eugene vehicles. This relationship has been in place for 30 years and is well embedded in the community.

- CAHOOTS provides support for EPD personnel by taking on many of the social service type calls for services to include crisis counseling. CAHOOTS personnel often provide initial contact and transport for people who are intoxicated, mentally ill, or disoriented, as well as transport for necessary non-emergency medical care.
- In 2019, CAHOOTS handled 18,583 calls for service. CAHOOTS diverts 5-8% of calls from the police.
- In 2020, [out of a total of roughly 24,000 CAHOOTS calls](#), police backup was requested only 150 times.

**Portland Street Response:** a team of unarmed first responders is dispatched in lieu of Portland Police Bureau officers to certain types of calls, including reports of an individual who is intoxicated or experiencing a mental health crisis.

- Originally implemented as a pilot program, PSR is set to expand citywide.
- The program can divert 5% of calls away from Portland PD, who are understaffed and struggling to respond quickly.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Ceasefire Oregon:** works to prevent gun violence by advocating reasonable, effective gun laws. Ceasefire educates the public and legislators about gun violence, lobbies on behalf of bills that will help make communities safer, and works to prevent the passage of bills that would make it easier for dangerous people to obtain and carry firearms.

- Goal is to reduce gun violence by 30-50% by requiring higher standards for gun ownership, enhancing accountability of federal licensed firearm dealers, and improving safety standards for guns and gun ownership.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Portland's Focused Intervention Team:** works in tandem with the bureau's Enhanced Community Safety Team, which was formed in 2021. The team is led by a captain, lieutenant and two sergeants, and has 12 officers plus four back-up officers.

- The team is tasked with interrupting cycles of retaliatory violence that can cause one shooting to lead to more.
- Works with a community oversight group that has participated in the hiring process and will help develop strategies for intervening in gun violence.

**Funding from Budget:** In March 2022, lawmakers allotted nearly \$40 million for Violence Intervention Programs in the budget.

- "Community groups know what they need to prevent gun violence in their neighborhoods, but they need the funding to do their work. This funding will not only save lives but will make sure these groups are able to do this work for years to come."

**Portland's Office of Violence Prevention:** OVP coordinates with pro-social resource services, provides and manages grant funding and enjoins the community in problem solving. OVP works with city bureaus, county, state and federal services, business, schools, and the faith community to provide consistent policy input, guidance, and advocacy to address youth violence.

- OVP facilitates the bi-weekly Community Peace Collaborative Public Forum which seeks to inform community, increase communication, and coordinate resources and expertise to reduce many forms of violence and crime.
- **OVP reflects priorities identified by Portland City Council** to build a more family-friendly city and increase public safety and reflects the emphasis on attacking the root causes of problems in neighborhoods, rather than simply focusing on policing efforts.
- In **March 2022, OVP awarded over half a million dollars** to small organizations across the city. One of the organizations that received a grant is the African Refugee and Immigrant Organization, which provides services for kids at risk of gun violence.

**Gresham's Youth Services Division Program:** The Violence Prevention Program which kicked off in March 2022 will allocate \$2 million in grant money which will be used to combat youth violence and gun violence.

- The funding will go to five big organizations to start; Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, Latino Network, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, New Avenues for Youth, and AS-IS Church/GRIT Underground.
- “The organizations have been happy to be able to get funding to do work here because we know a lot of those community-based organizations are stretched extremely thin, they’re understaffed, and underfunded and each will receive nine new employees.”

**Hospital Intervention for Gun Violence Prevention:** In March 2022, investments from the city and state allowed Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center to expand Healing Hurt People, its hospital intervention program, to more hospitals with more teams.

- The City of Portland gave the organization nearly \$1 million in 2021. The state committed another \$1.5 million in 2022.
- Since 2020, the team of 4 has responded over 300 times. The new grant allows the team to grow from 4 caseworkers to 10.

**Portland Gun Violence Intervention Pilot Program:** Since the program started in October, they have seen a 64% decrease in gun violence in comparison to pre-program levels.

- One of the actions taken as part of a pilot project was something the Portland Bureau of Transportation had never done before: use traffic calming infrastructure to reduce gun violence. They used traffic barrels, fixed broken lights in the park, and increased ranger patrols.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Oregon has made great strides in its commitment to passing laws that help prevent gun violence. In 2019, Oregon enacted a law that requires domestic abusers who are prohibited from purchasing or possessing a gun to relinquish any firearms that they own. The state enacted new gun safety legislation like an Extreme Risk law in 2017 and background checks on all gun sales in 2015.

# WASHINGTON

## Alternatives to Policing

**LEAD:** In 2020, the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program, which had long partnered directly with local police, shifted public safety away from law enforcement and toward a more community-based model.

- Referrals would no longer come from the police. LEAD also subscribes to a “harm reduction” model, which means clients are not given ultimatums about sobriety or relapse and are not funneled into jail if they do not immediately succeed.
- **LEAD** diverts individuals who are engaged in low-level drug crime, prostitution, and crimes of poverty away from the criminal legal system—bypassing prosecution and jail time—and connects them with intensive case managers who can provide crisis response,

immediate psychosocial assessment, and long-term wraparound services including substance use disorder treatment and housing.

- Independent evaluations show that **LEAD** reduces recidivism, LEAD is less expensive than the arrest-and-charge system, and LEAD participants are significantly more likely to obtain housing, employment, and legitimate income after a LEAD referral.

**Arrest and Jail Alternatives Grant Program:** tasked with the development and implementation of a grant program aimed at supporting local initiatives to properly identify criminal justice system-involved persons with substance use disorders and other behavioral health needs and engage those persons with therapeutic interventions and other services.

- In 2021, Walla Walla began a program diverting low-level offenders to community-based assistance instead of jail. The program provides mental health support, addiction treatment, meal and housing assistance, emergency shelter, and other services tailored to the needs of participating offenders.

**Seattle's Crisis Response Team:** a co-responder model, partnering Mental Health Professionals (MHP's) with specially trained officers.

- The Crisis Response Unit works closely with Patrol, Detectives, the Professional Standards Section, the Education & Training Section, Command Staff, the Crisis Intervention Committee, community partners, behavioral health service providers and advocates, academia, the courts, and others involved in crisis response. Currently, over 60% of the Seattle Police Department is designated as 40-hr 'CIT Certified'.

**The Crisis Solutions Center:** is a resource for police, medics, crisis mental health professionals and other first responders when they meet individuals in crisis might otherwise receive no help, or be taken to jail, an emergency room, or a psychiatric hospital inpatient unit.

**Mobile Crisis Team:** is a 43-member team of Mental Health Professionals and Substance Use Disorder Professionals. The MCT accepts referrals from first responders (police and fire), the King County Crisis Connections Line and Designated Crisis Responders (DCRs) for any individual who is experiencing a behavioral health crisis including mental health and/or substance use crisis.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Funding:** In March 2022, lawmakers allocated \$200 million in community investment, including funding for life-saving violence intervention programs.

- The budget also includes an additional \$8.3 million for the Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention.

**Washington Ceasefire:** a citizen activist group that has led the fight on reducing gun violence for almost 25 years.

- 100 local businesses are involved in their gun-free zone program.

- Held Youth, Suicide and Firearms Symposium. The symposium's focus was on guns and youth suicide, causes and risk factors for youth suicide, and prevention through reducing access to firearms.
- Since 2017, Ceasefire has reached over 3,000 students in grades 9-12 at several local high schools.

#### **Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention:**

- The office launched in March 2021 and was invited by the White House to participate in a [National Community Violence Intervention Collaboration](#).
- A diverse advisory committee of voices representing law enforcement, survivors of gun violence, public health, researchers, and community advocates, along with extensive stakeholder outreach, are informing and guiding OFSVP's work.
- The office created an [Inventory of Firearm Data for Washington State](#), compiled in partnership with the University of Washington's Firearm Injury and Policy Research program, identifying 31 data sources in the categories of health and healthcare and criminal justice and firearm-related licensing and sales data.
- The office also partnered with the [Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#) to establish peer network of state violence intervention offices.

## **State and Municipal Gun Regulations**

**Gun Safety Laws:** Washington has made strides toward a commitment to passing laws that help prevent gun violence.

- In 2018, Washington enacted a host of laws through a ballot initiative that included stronger background checks on all gun sales, raising the minimum age for gun purchasing, and requiring that gun owners store guns securely.
- In [March 2022](#), Governor Inslee signed HB 1705, legislation prohibiting ghost guns; HB 1630, legislation prohibiting firearms in public gatherings including school board meetings, voting centers, and other offices related to the electoral process; and SB 5078, legislation to prohibit high-capacity magazines into law.
- To become a safer state, Washington can strive to increase funding for community violence intervention programs and work to require training for those licensed to carry a handgun in public.
- While it did not end up passing, [HB 1759](#) would have required all schools to share secure storage information with parents and guardians. This bill would have been the first of its kind to require schools statewide to promote secure storage.

# ARIZONA

## Alternatives to Policing

**NOCAP Phoenix (Neighborhood-Organized Crisis Assistance Program):** is a civilian-only program that responds to mental health and behavioral calls. NOCAP aims to redirect mental and behavioral health calls away from police and toward trained counselors and social workers.

- Mayor Kate Gallego has been working on expanding the program since her start in the mayoral office in 2019. Shortly after she was elected, Gallego said a National Police Foundation study highlighted that Phoenix officers were responding to “too many mental health calls.”
- **NOCAP** received a \$15 million expansion following the approval of Phoenix’s 2021–22 fiscal budget.
- NOCAP has only five units serving Phoenix’s population of 1.6 million.
- Under NOCAP, at least 217,000 of the 470,000 non-violent, non-criminal calls in 2020 have been responded to by social workers and medical and mental health professionals, instead of police.

**The Phoenix Police Department collaboration with the Crisis Response Network (CRN):**

The Phoenix Police Department Communications Bureau can refer eligible 911 calls to Crisis Response Network—a nonprofit organization providing crisis call center services across the state. In Phoenix and the wider Maricopa County area, CRN’s Central Arizona crisis line resolves many crises over the phone or, if an on-scene response is appropriate, sends a mobile crisis team (MCT) of clinicians trained in crisis intervention rather than police.

- CRN’s Central Arizona location has 27 teams working 24/7.
- CRN reports about 15,000 crisis calls and 1,400 MCT dispatches per month. Within this group, about 150 MCT dispatches per month result from police referrals after officers have arrived on-scene and determined that one of CRN’s mobile teams can help de-escalate a situation.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Phoenix TRUCE:** is a public health strategy for reducing firearm violence. The TRUCE Project’s goal was to reduce shootings in its target area of South Mountain, well-known for its intergenerational gang involvement. In TRUCE, outreach workers and violence interrupters who had ties to the community used a set of seven criteria to select clients who were at risk of being a perpetrator or victim of gun violence for inclusion in the program. Individuals who had four or more of the seven criteria were deemed high-risk and recruited into the program.

- In 2014, an evaluation found that the program’s implementation corresponded to a significant decrease in overall levels of violence by more than 16 incidents on average per month.

**Project Safe Neighborhood:** is a two-decade old evidence-based and community-oriented program focused on reducing violent crime. The updated PSN approach is guided by four

key principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities and measuring the results of our efforts. The fundamental goal is to reduce violent crime, not simply to increase the number of arrests or prosecutions.

- “The United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Arizona has partnered with various local, state, tribal, federal, and non-government agencies to support a data-driven approach to identify high gun-crime areas and target its resources to combat violent offenders. Our statewide approach under the PSN Program includes community engagement to address prevention, outreach, and reentry initiatives to reduce violent crime and recidivism.”
- In December of 2021, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission was awarded \$379,981 to administer PSN grant funds in the District of Arizona.

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Arizona has weak gun laws and a high firearm death rate, especially when it comes to intimate partner homicide. Arizona repealed its concealed weapons permitting requirement in 2010 and currently allows anyone 21 or over to carry a hidden, loaded gun in public without a license.

# COLORADO

## Alternatives to Policing

**Denver’s STAR (Support Team Assisted Response) program:** pairs a Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) clinician with a Denver Health paramedic or emergency medical technician (EMT) to respond to low risk, low acuity calls coming into the 911 system. The team can provide medical assessment/triage, crisis intervention, de-escalation, transportation, and resource connection for community members in need.

- By June 2022, STAR had responded to 2,294 calls for service that would have otherwise been dispatched to police.

**Colorado Crisis Services:** is the statewide behavioral health crisis response system offering residents mental health, substance use, or emotional crisis help, information and referrals. Its mission is to strengthen Colorado’s mental health system by providing Coloradans with greater access to crisis services wherever they are regardless of ability to pay.

- People used CSS **55% more in 2020 compared to 2017.**
- October 2020 set a record since 2017, with 24,821 texts and calls.

## Gun Trafficking Prevention and Collaboration with ATF on the Iron Pipeline

**Trafficking & Straw Purchasing Legislation in Colorado**

- Colorado law requires a background check when an unlicensed seller transfers a gun. See Universal Background Checks in Colorado.
- Colorado prohibits any person from knowingly purchasing or otherwise obtaining a firearm on behalf of or for transfer to a person who the transferor knows or reasonably should know is ineligible to possess a firearm pursuant to federal or state law.
- Colorado prohibits any person, in connection with the acquisition or attempted acquisition of a firearm from any transferor, from willfully making any false or fictitious oral or written statement or furnishing or exhibiting any false, fictitious, or misrepresented identification, but only if the statement or identification is intended or likely to deceive such transferor with respect to any fact material to the lawfulness of the sale or other disposition of such firearm under federal or state law.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Office of Gun Violence Prevention:** In 2021, Colorado Governor Polis signed a law establishing a new office in CDPHE that coordinates and promotes effective strategies to reduce gun violence in the state.

- The **office conducts public awareness campaigns** to educate about state and federal laws and existing resources relating to gun violence prevention.
- Administers a **grant program** (subject to available money) for organizations to conduct community-based gun violence intervention initiatives focused on interrupting cycles of gun violence, trauma, and retaliation that are evidence-informed and have demonstrated promise at reducing gun violence without contributing to mass incarceration.
- Creates and maintains a resource bank as a repository for data, research, and statistical information regarding gun violence in Colorado.

**Colorado Ceasefire:** is the longest serving statewide, grassroots gun violence prevention organization in the State of Colorado. The organization is comprised of three branches: Legislative Action (a 501(C)4), Outreach (a 501(C)3), and a Political Action Committee. The organization is an affiliate of States United to Prevent Gun Violence.

- Key bills that Colorado Ceasefire have assisted in passing: Extreme Risk Protection Orders (2019), Universal Background Checks (2013), Gun buyer pays for the Background Check (instead of taxpayer) (2013), Ban on High-Capacity Magazines (2013), Domestic Violence Offender Surrender of Firearms (2013), In-person training required for Concealed Carry Weapons (CCW permit (2013), Tightened reciprocity laws on CCW permits (2013)

**Youth Violence Prevention Action Table:** increases communication and information sharing among city agencies, community organizations, and **youth** to address gaps and opportunities where the city can increase support. Under the program, existing multiagency initiatives have implemented comprehensive plans to address specific types of violence including gang violence, human trafficking, and suicide/self-harm.

- “We can only break the cycle of youth violence by engaging young people in conversation about solutions,” Mayor Hancock said. “We want them to reach for resources, not weapons. We want them to find fulfillment, not become trapped in the criminal justice system. It is time for less talk and more action that champions young people’s ideas and voices.”



## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Colorado has some strong gun laws. The includes requiring background checks on all gun sales, an Extreme Risk law, and laws keeping guns away from domestic abusers.

- A [new gun storage law](#) took effect July 1, 2021. The safe gun storage law requires Colorado gun owners to securely store their firearms when they are not in use.
- In recent years, [Colorado has passed important legislation](#) to strengthen its gun safety laws, including stronger protections against hate crimes and preemption reform. In 2021, Colorado had the 19th highest gun death rate among the states and exported roughly the same number of crime guns as it imported.
- In [2017](#), Colorado had the 24th-highest gun death rate among the states and exported roughly the same number of crime guns it imported.

## TEXAS

### Alternatives to Policing

**Austin Mental Health Intervention Clinicians:** When someone calls 911 in Austin, they are given four options: police, fire, EMS, or mental health services. The mental health services option dispatches mental health clinicians when intervention is needed but there is no apparent threat of violence.

- In 2021, the clinicians were able to divert 3,564 calls away from police response.

**Dallas's Mental Health Response Program:** In 2021, The Rapid Integrated Group Healthcare Team (RIGHT) Care program that dispatches clinicians and social workers along with police officers when responding to 911 calls regarding mental health issues was expanded.

- The behavioral crisis response program showed early success in reducing arrests and hospitalizations, but activists argue that police should not be involved in the response at all.
- The program aims to reduce unnecessary arrests and hospitalization in the city and has shown progress three years in with a 20% drop in the number of people taken to the ER and a 60% decrease in arrests.
- Dallas PD partnered with Parkland Health & Hospital System, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department and MMHPI to launch the RIGHT Care pilot program in January 2018 in the South-Central Division of Dallas PD that serves more than 120,000 residents in the area.
- In the first 18 months of the program, about 900 people were diverted from the ER. Roughly 500 people were spared jail time, according to MMHPI.

**Harris County's HART Program:** In 2021, Harris County officials passed the Holistic Alternative Responder Team program which sends public health staff instead of law enforcement to nonviolent calls involving issues like mental health, homelessness, and substance abuse.

- Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo said the \$5 million program would help free up law enforcement resources and help avoid unnecessary police interactions. It began in March 2022.

## Community Violence Intervention

**Harris County's Gun Violence Interruption Program:** In 2021, Harris County officials passed \$6 million in funding to implement the new program, which will connect people at risk of violent victimization and offending with mental health and substance abuse treatment, employment opportunities, and support to exit gangs. The program began March 2022.

- **The program will send 'violence interrupters'** into communities and hospitals to work on the root causes of violence

**Dallas Cred:** a group of trained violence interrupters whose goal is to identify people most at risk for violence and equip them with tools to turn their lives around.

- The violence **interrupters** don't carry weapons. They are armed with orange shirts, conflict resolution training, and a lifetime of street credibility. They canvass neighborhoods, engage with residents, and identify issues and behaviors that drive violence.
- In **February** 2022, they distributed food to 185 households and approximately 750 individuals.
- By **November** 2021, the team had already met with hundreds of people.

**Austin's Office of Violence Prevention:** founded in 2021, the office develops and implements gun violence prevention and intervention programs and invests in programs designed to promote healing, prevent trauma, and lay the groundwork for economic growth in communities of color.

- The **office addresses environmental causes of violence**, heals the trauma caused by violence, and equips change-agents to serve their communities.
- **More than \$1.24 million** has been dedicated to supporting **youth**, promoting gun safety, and sharing other community-oriented violence reduction strategies during the OVP's first year in operation.
- In addition to new gun storage and stress mitigation campaigns launched in March, the office also aims to spend around \$1.13 million on localized violence intervention and **grant** opportunities through 2022.
- In **March, the OVP partnered with Lock Arms for Life** to launch a public health campaign with an emphasis on gun storage to reduce violence in the community

## State and Municipal Gun Regulations

**Gun Safety Laws:** Texas has weak gun laws. The state does not require a person to pass a criminal background check before purchasing a firearm from an unlicensed seller. Texas also allows people with carry licenses to carry concealed firearms on college and university campuses. Texas even allows some staff and teachers to carry firearms in K-12 schools.

- To become a safer state, Texas can improve its gun laws in many ways, including by requiring background checks on all firearm sales, requiring domestic abusers prohibited from possessing firearms to relinquish the firearms they own, and enacting an Extreme Risk law to empower loved ones or law enforcement to intervene in order to temporarily prevent someone in crisis from accessing firearms.
- Texas is by far the leading source of guns trafficked across the southern border and fueling gun violence in Mexico and Central America.

**PART II**

# **Tools for Advocacy**



# NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE STATISTICAL PRIMER 2019 TO 2021

## TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE (U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS)<sup>1</sup>

- Gun violence reports increased by 30% during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup>
- Firearm homicides made up 71% of all homicides from 1993 to 2018, mostly using handguns.
  - » Firearm homicides decreased by 41% during that period.
- Males are victims of fatal and nonfatal firearm violence at a higher rate than females.
- From 2014 to 2018, young people aged 18 to 24 experienced the highest rate of firearm homicide.
- People ages 18 to 29 were nearly 1.5x more likely to be offenders and twice as likely to be victims than their share of the total population from 2014 to 2018.

## NATIONAL GUN SALE AND POSSESSION STATISTICS<sup>3</sup>

- Approx. 400 million guns are in circulation (up 7 million from 2018<sup>4</sup>) in the US, including 4 million AR-15 rifles.
- Gun ownership is trending upward. 39% of Americans owned guns in 2021 compared to 32% in 2016.
- 2.3 million guns were purchased in January 2021. Purchases jumped 64% during the Trump admin.
  - » 20% of 2021 purchases were by first-time purchasers, of which 50% were women and 20% were Black.
- 6.5% of US adults (17 million people) purchased a gun in 2021, up from 5.3% in 2019.
- Overall gun ownership in 2021 was 63% male, 73% white, 12% Hispanic/Latinx, 10% Black.

## GUN SALE INDICATORS: BACKGROUND CHECKS

Gun sale trends can be measured in part by the number of background checks conducted by the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). The NICS system is used for gun sales and for permitting.

### SPIKES IN NICS CHECKS

- Background checks were 4 times higher in 2022 than in 2000. Gun sales spiked in 2020 and 2021, as indicated by the FBI's NICS system.<sup>5</sup>
- Of the Top 10 Highest Days between 1998 and March 2023, all have occurred since 2017 with 6 of 10 in 2021, and 1 in 2022, 2020, 2019, and 2017.<sup>6</sup>
- Of the Top 10 Highest Weeks in the same period, 6 of 10 occurred in 2021, 3 in 2020, and 1 in 2012.<sup>7</sup>
- Gun checks have typically spiked on Black Friday and Christmas Day since 2007.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Special Report, April 2022 <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/tpfv9318.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> "U.S. gun violence increased 30 percent during COVID-19 pandemic." Penn State University College of Medicine. October 21, 2021. <https://www.psu.edu/news/research/story/us-gun-violence-increased-30-percent-during-covid-19-pandemic/>

<sup>3</sup> US gun sales spiked during pandemic and continue to rise. The Guardian. Edward Helmore. May 31, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/may/31/us-gun-sales-rise-pandemic>

<sup>4</sup> Giffords Law Center Gun Violence Statistics. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-violence-statistics/>

<sup>5</sup> NICS Firearm Background Checks: Month/Year. [https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/nics\\_firearm\\_checks\\_-\\_month\\_year.pdf](https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/nics_firearm_checks_-_month_year.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> NICS Firearm Checks: Top 10 Highest Days/Weeks November 1998 to March 31, 2023. [https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/nics\\_firearm\\_checks\\_top\\_10\\_highest\\_days\\_weeks.pdf/view](https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/nics_firearm_checks_top_10_highest_days_weeks.pdf/view)

<sup>7</sup> Id.

### SALES SPIKES: TIMELINE:

- Sales spikes have followed mass shootings and social uprisings due to fears of new gun restrictions.
- March 19, 2020: California issued the nation’s first COVID stay-at-home order. NICS checks exceeded 1.2 million that week (Mar 16–22, 2020).
- May 2020: After the murder of George Floyd (May 25) and resulting protests, NICS checks spiked in June and persisted through August. June 1–7, 2020 is one of the top 10 weeks in NICS checks with 1.004 million.
- Jan. 6, 2021: On the days immediately following the January 6th, 2021 insurrection attempt on the Capitol.
  - » Jan. 4–10, 2021: 1.07 million checks
  - » Jan. 11–17, 2021: 1.08 million checks
- March 17, 2021: The record for most NICS checks occurred when arrests for the Jan. 6 Insurrection began, the Atlanta spa shootings took place, and news about a historic migrant surge in 20 years emerged.

## Outcomes: Homicides, Suicides, Domestic Violence, Demographic Data, Stand Your Ground Laws

### HOMICIDES

- Americans are 25x more likely to be killed by gun homicide than other high-income nations (2019).<sup>8</sup>
- Roughly half of all gun homicides take place in 127 cities comprising less than a quarter of the population (2017)<sup>9</sup> (see below), and the other half is spread across the rest of the country, including 3,300 other cities.<sup>10</sup>
  - » Northeast: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C.
  - » Midwest: Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis
  - » South: Miami, Atlanta, New Orleans, Memphis, Dallas, Houston
  - » Southwest: Albuquerque, Phoenix, Denver
  - » West: Las Vegas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Portland, Seattle

*“Even excluding the 127 highest homicide cities, America’s gun homicide rate would still be many times higher than recent rates in Europe.”<sup>11</sup>*

### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- Black men make up 52% of all gun homicide victims despite comprising less than 7% of the US population.<sup>12</sup>
- Unarmed Black civilians are 5x more likely to be shot and killed by police than unarmed white civilians.<sup>13</sup>
- In Stand Your Ground states, homicides where white shooters kill Black victims are 5x more likely to be considered “justified” by Stand Your Ground laws than when the situation is reversed.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence: Statistics. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-violence-statistics/> Last viewed February 24, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Id., and see <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2017/jan/09/special-report-fixing-gun-violence-in-america>

<sup>10</sup> Want to fix gun violence in America? Go local. The Guardian. Aliza Aufrichtig (2017) <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2017/jan/09/special-report-fixing-gun-violence-in-america>

<sup>11</sup> Id.

<sup>12</sup> Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence: Statistics. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-violence-statistics/> Last viewed February 24, 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Id.

<sup>14</sup> Stand Your Ground Laws are a License to Kill. Everytown for Gun Safety. January 25, 2021. <https://everytownresearch.org/report/stand-your-ground-laws-are-a-license-to-kill/> Last Updated September 8, 2021.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE<sup>15</sup>**

- Domestic violence victims are 5x more likely to be killed when their abuser has access to a gun.
- 55% of intimate partner homicides are with guns.
- 25 million people in the US have reported being threatened or shot at by an intimate partner.
- Women in the United States are 21x more likely to be killed with a gun than women in other high-income countries.

**STAND YOUR GROUND (AKA SHOOT FIRST) LAWS<sup>16</sup>**

- SYG laws correspond with 150 additional gun deaths each month, resulting in a 7% increase in gun deaths in suburban counties and an 8% increase in urban counties. Increases include unintentional SYG-related deaths.
- Florida's Stand Your Ground law is linked to a 32% increase in the gun homicide rate.
- 29 states have adopted SYG laws, and 21 states have rejected them.

**SUICIDES<sup>17</sup>**

- The U.S. accounts for 4% of the world's population but 35% of global firearm suicides.
- Gun access triples suicide risk, as 59% of suicides involve a gun (2014).
- 57% of gun deaths in the US are suicides.

<sup>15</sup> Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence: Statistics. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-violence-statistics/> Last viewed February 24, 2021

<sup>16</sup> Everytown Research. Which states have rejected Shoot First laws? [https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/law/no-stand-your-ground-law/?gl=1%2A1gopnsn%2A\\_ga%2AMTkwnjkyMjA3My4x-NjQyMTc4MzIx%2A\\_ga\\_LT0FWV3EK3%2AMTY0NDUw\\_NDQ2Ni40LjEuMTY0NDUwNTE5Ny4w](https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/law/no-stand-your-ground-law/?gl=1%2A1gopnsn%2A_ga%2AMTkwnjkyMjA3My4x-NjQyMTc4MzIx%2A_ga_LT0FWV3EK3%2AMTY0NDUw_NDQ2Ni40LjEuMTY0NDUwNTE5Ny4w)

<sup>17</sup> Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence: Statistics. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-violence-statistics/> Last viewed February 24, 2021.

## State-Level Evaluations of Gun Violence and Gun Control (2019–2021)

### EVERYTOWN RANKING BY GUN VIOLENCE RATE (GUN DEATHS PER 100K RESIDENTS)<sup>18</sup>

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Mississippi | 11. South Carolina |
| 2. Louisiana   | 12. Oklahoma       |
| 3. New Mexico  | 13. Kentucky       |
| 4. Alabama     | 14. Georgia        |
| 5. Wyoming     | 15. Nevada         |
| 6. Alaska      |                    |
| 7. Montana     | 27. Texas          |
| 8. Arkansas    | 43. California     |
| 9. Missouri    | 47. New York       |
| 10. Tennessee  |                    |

### EVERYTOWN GUN LAW STRENGTH: TOP 15 STATES<sup>19</sup>

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. California    | 11. Delaware     |
| 2. New York      | 12. Colorado     |
| 3. Hawaii        | 13. Rhode Island |
| 4. New Jersey    | 14. Virginia     |
| 5. Connecticut   | 15. Pennsylvania |
| 6. Massachusetts |                  |
| 7. Illinois      | 32. Texas        |
| 8. Maryland      | 47. Georgia      |
| 9. Oregon        | 50. Mississippi  |
| 10. Washington   |                  |

### GIFFORDS GUN LAW SCORECARD (WEAKEST TO STRONGEST LAWS)<sup>20</sup>

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Arkansas = F     | 10. Alaska = F        |
| 2. Wyoming = F      | 11. Montana = F       |
| 3. Idaho = F        | 12. Alabama = F       |
| 4. Missouri = F     | 13. Tennessee = F     |
| 5. Kansas = F       | 14. North Dakota      |
| 6. Mississippi = F  | 15. West Virginia = F |
| 7. South Dakota = F | 16. Texas = F         |
| 8. Kentucky = F     | 47. New York = A-     |
| 9. Arizona = F      | 50. California = A    |

<sup>18</sup> 2022 Gun Safety Policies Save Lives. Which states have the ideal laws to prevent gun violence? Everytown. <https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/>

<sup>19</sup> Id.

<sup>20</sup> Giffords Annual Gun Law Scorecard 2021 <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/resources/scorecard/>



## City-Level Violence (2019–2021)

*“2021 and 2020 were two of the deadliest years on record for ... gun violence. The United States saw a 35 percent increase from 2019 to 2020.” The rate of gun homicide grew by 8% from 2020 to 2021.*

### CITY GUN HOMICIDE DATA: TOP 10 (PER 100K)<sup>21</sup>

- |                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Wilmington, DE (50.9) | 6. Baton Rouge, LA (35.6)       |
| 2. Memphis, TN (49.7)    | 7. Milwaukee, WI (34.1)         |
| 3. Detroit, MI (46.3)    | 8. Richmond, VA (33.5)          |
| 4. Flint, MI (44.6)      | 9. Portsmouth, VA (32.7)        |
| 5. Cleveland, OH (37.0)  | 10. North Charleston, SC (28.1) |

### CITY GUN HOMICIDE DATA: TOP 10 (RATE OF INCREASE 2020–2021)<sup>22</sup>

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Pueblo, CO (119%)      | 6. El Paso, TX (70%)        |
| 2. Amarillo, TX (117%)    | 7. Portland, OR (68%)       |
| 3. Lansing, MI (112%)     | 8. Hartford, CT (67%)       |
| 4. Austin, TX (86%)       | 9. Reno, NV (64%)           |
| 5. Fayetteville, NC (77%) | 10. Oklahoma City, OK (55%) |

### CITY GUN HOMICIDE DATA: TOP 10 (MOST DEATHS)<sup>23</sup>

- |                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Houston, TX (401)      | 6. Milwaukee, WI (194)         |
| 2. Memphis, TN (312)      | 7. Columbus, OH (173)          |
| 3. Detroit, MI (293)      | 8. San Antonio, TX (139)       |
| 4. Indianapolis, IN (231) | 9. Kansas City, Missouri (137) |
| 5. Dallas, TX (220)       | 10. Cleveland, OH (136)        |

<sup>21</sup> City Dashboard: Murder and Gun Homicide. Everytown. December 16, 2021. <https://everytownresearch.org/report/city-data/> (This data represents “the most recent, available, reliable data on murders (firearm and non-firearm) from 2016 to the first three quarters of 2021 and on gun homicides from 2016 to 2020 in nearly 500 cities.”)

<sup>22</sup> Id.

<sup>23</sup> Id.

## Gun Violence Increase Data: Gun violence has risen by 22% over the past decade across the country.<sup>24</sup>

### INCREASES, GENERALLY:<sup>25</sup>

- In 2021, more than 48,000 people were killed by guns, which is the most gun deaths on record.<sup>26</sup>
- Approximately 131 per day, which is 20 additional gun deaths per day than 2019.
- 45 states and DC experienced an increase in gun deaths from 2019 to 2020.
- 20,352 people of color, 70% of whom were Black, were killed by guns in 2020.
- Gun violence reports increased by 31% during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>27</sup>

### GUN HOMICIDES:<sup>28</sup>

- Homicides dominated the surges of gun deaths in 2020 (19,384 of 45,222 = ~43%).
- 2020 was the largest one-year increase in gun homicides on record.
  - » 36% of gun deaths from 2015 to 2019 were homicides.
  - » 43% of gun deaths in 2020 were homicides.
- Black and Latinx/Hispanic people made up 31% of the total population but 76% of the gun homicide victims in 2020.
  - » Black Americans were 11 times more likely than white Americans to be killed this way.
  - » Latinx/Hispanic Americans were 2 times more likely than white Americans.
- Young adults under the age of 25 made up over 6,360 gun homicide victims.
  - » For 18–34-year-olds, gun homicide rates increased by 37%.

24 Giffords Law Center Annual Gun Law Scorecard <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/resources/scorecard/>. According to the Giffords Law Center, “states with the weakest gun laws have been hit hardest by rising violence: from 2011 to 2020, gun death rates rose by ... 37% in [states ranked ‘F’ by the scorecard]. [States ranked ‘A’] saw a smaller increase over this period.”

25 New 2020 Gun Death Data Underscores the Urgency of This Crisis. Giffords Law Center. December 23, 2021. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/memo/new-2020-gun-death-data-underscores-the-urgency-of-this-crisis/>

26 Gun Violence in 2022, By the Numbers. <https://www.thetrace.org/2022/12/gun-violence-deaths-statistics-america/>

27 “U.S. gun violence increased 30 percent during COVID-19 pandemic.” Penn State University College of Medicine. October 21, 2021. <https://www.psu.edu/news/research/story/us-gun-violence-increased-30-percent-during-covid-19-pandemic/>

28 New 2020 Gun Death Data Underscores the Urgency of This Crisis. Giffords Law Center. December 23, 2021. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/memo/new-2020-gun-death-data-underscores-the-urgency-of-this-crisis/>

**GUN SUICIDES:<sup>29</sup> RATES HAVE INCREASED, BUT NOT SHARPLY.**

- From 2000 to 2020, gun suicides rose by 18%
- 30 states report more gun suicides in 2020 than in 2019.
- Suicide rates among Black, Latino, and Asian teenagers each more than doubled from 2011 to 2020.<sup>30</sup>
- Demographic shifts from 2019 to 2020:
  - » 71% of gun suicide victims were white men but that number decreased from 2019.
  - » Native Americans experienced a 41% increase in firearm suicide.
  - » Latinx/Hispanic firearm suicide increased by 14%
  - » Black firearm suicide increased by 14%
  - » Asian American firearm suicide increased by 4%
  - » Women experienced 104 fewer gun suicides.
  - » Men experienced 455 more gun suicides.

**UNINTENTIONAL GUN DEATHS:<sup>31</sup>**

- 2020 unintentional gun deaths among children under 18 years old rose 38% between 2019 and 2020, more than any year since 2005.
- Black Americans experienced a 25% increase 2019–2020.
- 40% of unintentional gun deaths involved people of color; 52% of child unintentional gun deaths involved children of color

**POLICE SHOOTINGS:<sup>32</sup>**

- 1,238 people were killed by police in 2022, the highest number on record.
  - » That number has steadily risen since Mapping Police Violence began tracking in 2013.
- Black people are 2.9x more likely to be killed by police than white people.

<sup>29</sup> Id.

<sup>30</sup> Gun Violence in 2022, By the Numbers. <https://www.thetrace.org/2022/12/gun-violence-deaths-statistics-america/>

<sup>31</sup> New 2020 Gun Death Data Underscores the Urgency of This Crisis. Giffords Law Center. December 23, 2021. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/memol/new-2020-gun-death-data-underscores-the-urgency-of-this-crisis/>

<sup>32</sup> Mapping Police Violence. <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>

# FEDERAL ACTIVITY SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE IN FULL OR PARTIALLY

## EXECUTIVE BRANCH ACTIVITY

In April 2021, the Biden Administration announced [six initial actions](#) to address gun violence. Since then, the following steps have been taken by the Administration to combat gun violence, including political violence:

- Directing the DOJ to draft several restrictions on “ghost guns”—kits that allow buyers to assemble firearms without serial numbers. The Attorney General is responsible for enforcing the Gun Control Act of 1968 and the National Firearms Act of 1934 and may promulgate regulations necessary for their enforcement. A [proposed rule](#) was released in May, which would require background checks and force manufacturers to include serial numbers on gun frames or receivers. Comments were due August 19, 2021.
- Instructing the DOJ to close a regulatory loophole related to stabilizing braces that effectively turn pistols into short-barreled rifles yet are not currently regulated as such. An ATF [proposed rule](#) that would define the classification of these firearms was released in June, and comments were due September 8, 2021. ATF is currently reviewing comments.
- Instructing the DOJ to create a template for states to pass red-flag laws. These laws would allow judges to seize firearms from gun owners who are a threat to themselves or others. The [model legislation](#) was published on June 7, 2021.
- Ordering an annual gun-trafficking study to help police determine the source of guns in crimes.
- Making changes and investments in agency-implemented community violence prevention programs

On February 3, 2022, the DOJ announced a new strategy to address gun violence and CVI, which includes:

- Prioritizing combating violent crime by directing every U.S. Attorney’s Office nationwide to increase resources dedicated to district-specific violent crime strategies.
- Addressing the “Iron Pipeline”/firearms trafficking by adding personnel and other resources to strengthen DOJ’s task forces that target interstate firearms trafficking.
- Launching a National Ghost Gun Enforcement Initiative, which will train prosecutors and share investigation and prosecution tools to help bring cases against those who use ghost guns to commit crimes.
- Prioritizing federal prosecutions of those who criminally sell or transfer firearms that are used in violent crimes, including unlicensed dealers who sell guns to criminals without the required background checks.

» [White House Fact Sheet](#): White House Actions to Reduce Gun Crime and Calls on Congress to Fund Community Policing and Community Violence Intervention—February 3, 2022.

**On June 23, 2022, Biden delivered remarks announcing his plan on violent crime prevention, the “[Comprehensive Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gun Crime and Ensure Public Safety](#).”** The strategy is composed of executive orders and agency actions, in addition to calling on Congress to pass gun control laws, including an assault weapon ban and expanded background checks. Below are the 5 main pillars of the strategy and the administration’s progress in the last 7 months on these efforts (which can also be found [here](#)):

- **Stemming the flow of firearms used to commit violence, including by holding rogue dealers accountable for violating federal laws.**
  - » DOJ launched five strike forces to address firearms trafficking to New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and Washington, D.C. They have opened 540 investigations and have taken custody of 3,100 guns.
  - » ATF [has implemented](#) a new policy where licenses of gun dealers can be revoked the first time they break federal law.
  
- **Supporting local law enforcement with federal tools/resources to address summer violent crime.**
  - » \$350 billion from the American Rescue Plan was dedicated for state and local funding, including for law enforcement, and addressing drug trafficking.
  - » DOJ has provided enforcement support to local communities to address gun violence.
  - » Treasury [announced guidance](#) allowing communities to use American Rescue Plan funds on policing-related efforts where there have been spikes in gun violence due to the pandemic.
  
- **Investing in evidence-based community violence interventions.**
  - » President Biden proposed \$5 billion in Build Back Better funding for DOJ and the CDC to invest in community violence interventions.
  - » The above-referenced \$350 billion and \$122 billion in K–12 funding from American Rescue Plan funds is also available to be used for CVI.
  - » In addition, five federal agencies made changes to 26 different programs to direct vital support to community violence intervention programs as quickly as possible.
  - » The White House created the Community Violence Intervention Collaborative, which includes mayors, law enforcement, CVI experts, and philanthropy committed to using American Rescue Plan funds for CVI.
  
- **Expanding summer programming, employment, and other services for teens and young adults.**
  - » The state and local funding addressed above could be used for these services. St. Louis, Missouri; Tucson, Arizona; and Los Angeles County, California, among others, have used the funding for this purpose.
  
- **Helping formerly incarcerated individuals successfully reenter their communities.**
  - » In FY2021, DOJ awarded \$85.5 million in grants for reentry services and the president has requested \$150 million in the FY2022 budget. OJP provided \$110 million in grants and requested \$135 million for 2022. The president’s FY22 budget proposal includes a \$25 million increase for Second Chance Act programs.
  - » Departments of Treasury and Labor have training to employers on federal resources for reentry (Work Opportunity Tax Credit & the federal bonding program).
  - » Build Back Better includes \$1.5 billion in grants for reentry services.
  - » In President Biden’s Executive Order on Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility, the OPM is directed to evaluate barriers to federal employment for formerly incarcerated individuals and address these barriers.
  - » HUD [issued a letter](#) addressing housing needs for formerly incarcerated individuals.

**On July 22, 2022, Vice President Kamala Harris addressed the National Urban League’s annual conference, leading off by discussing the epidemic of gun violence.** In her remarks, she called for repealing the liability shield for gun manufacturers, strengthening background checks, making it harder for people to get weapons of war, and treating the trauma that families and communities face when they lose loved ones to gun violence.

**On September 14, 2022, NUL and the Anti-Defamation League launched the Community Solidarity & Safety Coalition (CSSC),** an alliance comprised of non-governmental and non-partisan leaders that will work to collectively address critical community safety issues, including gun violence and mass shootings targeted toward communities suffering from hate-fueled violence. The Coalition recently had its first CEO-level meeting with the Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security John Tien, and debuted its coalition website, [www.cssc.org](http://www.cssc.org). The CSSC will be working to:

- Promote a broad national recognition of the threat of domestic violent extremism;
- Enable participating organizations to speak in concert against domestic violent extremist movements and together advocate for needed policy solutions;
- Prompt an assessment of the safety posture of private and nonprofit sector organizations and institutions to address the threat posed by domestic violent extremism;
- Call for specific policies that strengthen the capabilities of organizations and institutions across sectors to be prepared to confront hate-fueled violence;
- Disseminate best practices related to hate-fueled violence; and
- Encourage planning and training that strengthens our collective solidarity and safety.

## FEDERAL BUDGET PRIORITIES

### The National Urban League's Safe Communities Priorities in the Budget

Several of the National Urban League's [priorities](#) that were funded in the FY23 Omnibus bill relate directly to community investment, criminal justice and re-entry services, employment services, anti-hate initiatives, and more:

- Department of Labor
  - » \$4.1 billion for Training and Employment Services
  - » \$115 million for Reentry of Ex-offenders
  - » \$885.6 million for Adult Employment and Training
  - » \$948 million for Youth Employment and Training
  - » \$105 million for the YouthBuild program
  - » \$285 million for Registered Apprenticeship programs
  
- Department of Justice
  - » \$107 million for Youth Mentoring in Juvenile Justice Programs
  - » \$16 million for grants to train State and local law enforcement officers on racial profiling, de-escalation, and duty to intervene
  - » \$25 million for Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention and Prosecution Grants
  - » \$10,000,000 for grants authorized under the NO HATE Crime Act.
  - » \$10,000,000 for grants provided under the Community-Based Approaches to Advancing Justice program.
  - » \$15 million in support of the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Reauthorization Act, to investigate and prosecute unresolved civil rights era "cold case" murders
  - » \$125 million for Second Chance Act grants
  - » \$125 million for grants to help States improve their submissions into the National Instant Criminal Background Check system for gun purchases.
  - » \$25 million for the Community Relations Service (CRS)
  - » \$3 million to the Community Policing Development (CPD) for grants to support tolerance, diversity, and anti-bias training programs offered by organizations with well-established experience training law enforcement personnel and criminal justice professionals.

## CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Leader Schumer announced that a group of Senators, led by Sen. Chris Murphy (D–CT) are negotiating legislation to address mass shootings. Potential focus areas include background checks and red flag laws. Schumer has committed to putting a bill on the Senate floor after 7–10 days of initial talks—the first meeting of the group was held on May 26. As reflected below, most congressional activity on gun violence has occurred in the House.

- The National Urban League recommends the following congressional actions:
  - » Universal Background Checks/Close the Gun Show Loophole
  - » Ensure that all communities have Red Flag laws.
  - » Pass an Assault Weapons Ban
  - » Repeal the Tiahrt Amendment to allow ATF to trace “crime guns.”
- Priority Legislation
  - » Universal Background Checks/Gun Show Loophole:
    - \* On February 1, 2023, Rep. Fitzpatrick (R–PA–01) introduced H.R. 715, the [Bipartisan Background Checks Act](#), which would require a licensed gun dealer to perform a background check before a firearm is transferred between private parties, closing the online sale and gun show loopholes.
      - The House passed a very similar piece of legislation, H.R. 8, in 2021, but the bill stalled and eventually died in the Senate.
    - \* On March 30, 2023, Rep. Clyburn (D–SC–06) introduced H.R. 2403, [Enhanced Background Checks Act](#), which would extend the initial background check review period for the sale of a firearm from three to 10 days. The bill aims to close the “Charleston loophole” that allowed for the sale of weapons used in the mass shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC.
      - The House passed a very similar piece of legislation, H.R. 1446, in 2021, but the bill stalled and eventually died in the Senate.
    - \* On June 8, 2022, the House passed H.R. 7910, the [Protecting Our Kids Act](#), sponsored by Rep. Nadler (D–NY–10) which would have increased the necessary age to purchase semiautomatic firearms to 21 years old, prohibited straw purchases, required all firearms be traceable, required safe storage to prevent minors from gaining access to them, created a grant program to enforce safe storage, closed the bump stock loophole, allowed the federal government to fund gun buy-back programs, and restricted large capacity ammunition feeding devices.
      - Like the other reforms above, the bill stalled and eventually died in the Senate.
  - » Extreme Risk Protection Orders/Red Flag Laws
    - \* 1. S.247/H.R. 768, the [Extreme Risk Protection Order Expansion Act](#), sponsored by Sen. Feinstein (D–CA) and Rep. Carbajal (D–CA–24), would allow states to use COPS funding to allow family members to seek a gun violence prevention order to block “dangerous individuals” from purchasing firearms.
    - \* 2. Rep. Kelly (D–IL–02) sponsored H.R. 882, the [Keeping Guns from High-Risk Individuals Act](#) in 2021, which would have expanded the categories of persons who are prohibited from shipping, transporting, receiving, or possessing firearms or ammunition, including those who have been convicted of crimes of violence in the past 10 years.



- **Other Measures:**

- » **Comprehensive Gun Violence Prevention Legislation**

- \* In February 2022, Rep. Velázquez (D–NY–07) introduced H.R. 6575, the [Protecting Americans from Gun Violence Act](#), which would have reduced gun violence by funding gun violence research and victim assistance, and enhancing the tracking of lost and stolen firearms,
- \* Sen. Warren (D–MA) and Rep. Johnson (D–GA–04) introduced the [Gun Violence Prevention and Community Safety Act](#). The bill would have required individuals to obtain a license to purchase, acquire, or possess a firearm, raised the minimum age to 21 to purchase firearms and ammunition, established new background check requirements for firearm transfers between private parties, created a statutory process for extreme risk protection orders, restricted the manufacture, sale, transfer, purchase, or receipt of “ghost guns”, established a community violence intervention grant program, and removed limitations on the civil liability of gun manufacturers.

- » **Assault Weapons Ban/Bump Stocks**

- \* Sen. Feinstein (D–CA) and Rep. Cicilline (D–RI–01) have introduced S. 25/H.R. 698 [Assault Weapons Ban of 2023](#), which would criminalize the import, sale, manufacture, transfer, or possession of a semiautomatic assault weapon or large capacity ammunition feeding device.

- » **Iron Pipeline/Firearms Trafficking/Ghost Guns:**

- \* Rep. Torres (D–NY–15) has introduced H.R. 851, the [Iron Pipeline Review Act](#), which would direct the ATF to create a comprehensive annual report, in consultation with state and local law enforcement agencies, on firearms trafficked along Interstate 95.
- \* Rep. Velázquez (D–NY–07) introduced H.R. 1952, the [Stopping the Iron Pipeline Act of 2021](#), which would have established requirements for including passive identification capability into firearms sold in the United States. The term passive identification capability means technology that (1) identifies firearms through a mobile or fixed reading device, and (2) does not transmit an electronic monitoring or tracking signal.
- \* In 2021, Sen. Leahy (D–VT) introduced H.R. 878, [Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act](#), which would have punished and deterred firearms trafficking by establishing stand-alone criminal offenses for trafficking in firearms and straw purchasing of firearms. Rep. Rush (D–IL–01) and Rep. Kelly (D–IL–02) have previously introduced similar measures, the Gun Trafficking Prohibition Act (Rush) and the Prevent Gun Trafficking Act (Kelly).

- » **Investments in CVI (Community Violence Intervention)**

- \* Sen. Booker (D–NJ) and Rep. Horsford (D–NV–04) introduced S.2275/H.R. 4118, the [Break the Cycle of Violence Act](#), in 2021, which would have created grant programs to support community violence intervention efforts. H.R. 4118 passed the House, but the Senate version never received consideration.
- \* Rep. Moore (D–WI–04) introduced H.R.4324, [National Community Violence De-Escalation Training Act of 2021](#), which would help train individuals in de-escalation techniques using grants and guidance.

**Support the work of the National Urban League as we continue to advance policies and programs to empower African American and other urban communities.**

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