FUNDING COMMUNITY-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION

COMMUNITY-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION
Community-based violence prevention programs avert violence by working with a range of community stakeholders to provide support and intervention to those at highest risk for violence. To stop the cycles of daily gun violence in impacted communities of color policymaker must (1) address the underlying social and economic inequalities that fuel gun violence and (2) fund community-based gun violence prevention efforts that authentically engage individuals impacted by gun violence.

FIREARM HOMICIDE DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTS UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITIES OF COLOR IN CITIES
In 2017 14,542 individuals were murdered by firearm in the United States - an average of nearly 40 firearm homicides each day. The 2017 firearm homicide rate was the highest rate on record in more than two decades.1 Much of this firearm violence is concentrated within neighborhoods of color that face a host of systemic inequalities -- discrimination, lack of economic opportunities, and under-resourced public services. As a result, disadvantaged communities of color in cities are disproportionately impacted. Twenty-six percent of firearm homicides in the US occurred within urban census tracts that contained only 1.5% of the population,2 and Black Americans are over eleven times more likely to die by firearm homicide than their White counterparts.3 Yet, even within these communities only a small portion of the population is involved in firearm violence--as perpetrators, victims, or both.

ADDRESSING UNDERLYING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES
Under-served communities of color have been impacted by a legacy of racist social and economic policy. Policymakers should support efforts to address these systemic inequalities often at the root of gun violence. These investments will help improve health, promote opportunity, and reduce gun violence. These investments should include:

- Increased funding for job training programs and youth employment opportunities, which evidence suggests can help reduce gun violence.4
- Increased funding for recreation and community centers, parks, and pro-social development opportunities which allow individuals of all ages to build stronger, safer communities and reduce firearm violence.5
- Fund programs that clean and rehabilitate blighted and abandoned property. These programs are associated with significant decreases in gun violence of up to 39% and improved community health.6
- Incentivize urban development programs that allow individuals in impacted communities to lead efforts for neighborhood revitalization and provide affordable pathways to home ownership within these communities.

COMMUNITY-BASED EFFORTS TO INTERRUPT AND PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE
Community-based violence prevention programs bring together community members, social service providers, and, in some cases, law enforcement to identify and provide support for individuals at highest risk for gun violence. They also support individuals with the trauma associated with living in neighborhoods where witnessing gun violence is routine.
SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS GENERALLY:

- Deter individuals at high-risk for violence from engaging in firearm violence.
- Help individuals at high risk for violence resolve potentially violent disputes before they occur.
- Connect those at high risk for violence to education, employment, and housing services.
- Provide peer mentoring, trauma informed services, and culturally responsive mental health supports to individuals impacted by daily gun violence.
- Authentically engage community members to build trust and collaboration between stakeholders.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS

CURE VIOLENCE

- Outreach workers are trained to identify conflicts within their community and help resolve disputes before they spiral into gun violence.
- These outreach workers are credible members of the community and well-respected by individuals at a high risk of violence. Outreach workers use their credibility to interrupt cycles of retaliatory violence, help connect high-risk individuals to social services, and change norms around using guns to solve conflicts.
- Cure Violence models have been used successfully in multiple cities, including Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York. New York’s neighborhoods with a Cure Violence site experienced 18% reductions in homicides while the matched control neighborhoods experienced a 69% increase from 2010-2013.\(^7\)

GROUP VIOLENCE INTERVENTION / FOCUSED DETERRENCE

- Prosecutors and police work with community leaders to identify a small group of individuals who are chronic violent offenders and are at high risk for future violence.
- High-risk individuals are called into a meeting and are told that if violence continues, every legal tool available will be used to ensure they face swift and certain consequences.
- High-risk individuals are simultaneously connected to social services and community support to assist them in changing their behavior.
- An analysis of 24 focused deterrence programs found that these strategies led to an overall statistically significant reduction in firearm violence. The most successful of these programs have reduced shootings in cities by an average of 30% and improve relations between law enforcement officers and the neighborhoods they serve.\(^8\)

HOSPITAL-BASED VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

- Gunshot victims are provided wraparound services such as educational support, job training, and mental health services to interrupt retaliatory cycles of violence and the potential for re-injury.
- One study found that those enrolled in these programs were six times less likely to be hospitalized again for a violent injury and four times less likely to be convicted of a violent crime than those not enrolled in the program.\(^9\)
- An evaluation of Baltimore’s program found that it saved the city $1.25 million in lowered incarceration costs and $598,000 in reduced healthcare costs.\(^10\)
TRAUMA-INFORMED PROGRAMS WITH COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

- Trauma-informed programs that employ cognitive behavioral therapy to those at risk for firearm violence have experienced significant decreases in firearm violence.\textsuperscript{11}
- Cognitive behavioral therapy helps high-risk individuals cope with trauma while simultaneously providing new tools to de-escalate conflict.
- Trauma-informed programs in Chicago that provide high-risk youth with cognitive behavioral therapy and mentoring cut violent crime arrests in half.\textsuperscript{12}

SHOOTING AND HOMICIDE REVIEW COMMISSIONS

- Shooting review commissions bring together law enforcement, community members, criminal justice stakeholders and service providers to examine firearm violence within their community.
- Stakeholders collaboratively develop comprehensive interventions that identify high-risk individuals and that address the underlying factors that lead to violence.
- The shooting review commission in Milwaukee was associated with a significant and sustained 52\% reduction in homicides.\textsuperscript{13}
- A Department of Justice evaluation found shooting review boards to be an effective way to reduce gun violence by building trust between criminal justice stakeholders and the community.\textsuperscript{14}

A COMPREHENSIVE INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS SAVES LIVES

- Six states have funded community-based violence prevention programs. While the program models funded are different in each state, all states have experienced reductions in firearm violence within program sites.\textsuperscript{15}
- Connecticut’s state-funded group violence intervention program was associated with a 21\% decrease in shootings in New Haven each month.\textsuperscript{16}
- A state funded program in Massachusetts led to five fewer victims of violence a month and prevented nearly $15 million in crime victimization over one year in Boston and Springfield.\textsuperscript{17}
- New York State allocated funding for a wide-range of community-based violence prevention programs including the Cure Violence and Group Violence Intervention models. These investments helped reduce gun homicides across the state by 41\% from 2010 to 2017.\textsuperscript{18}
- The City of Oakland used both state and city funds to invest in comprehensive community-based gun violence prevention efforts to reduce gun violence by over 40\%.\textsuperscript{19} These efforts were authentically led by community members, provided extensive wrap around services, and focused on improving relationships between the community and law enforcement.

WE MUST REDUCE THE DAILY GUN VIOLENCE THAT DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTS COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

To do this, policymakers should (1) address the underlying social and economic inequalities that drive firearm violence in disadvantaged communities of color and (2) provide funding to support community-based violence prevention efforts that bring together community members and government agencies in an effort to identify high-risk individuals, interrupt cycles of violence, and provide support to those at risk for gun violence. Community-based violence prevention efforts save lives.
1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Homicide deaths and rates per 100,000. WONDER Online Database, 1999-2017.


3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Homicide Deaths and Rates per 100,000. WONDER Online Database, 3013-2017. Non-Hispanic Blacks compared to non-Hispanic Whites.


10 ibid.


14 ibid.


