



INVESTING IN INTERVENTION

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF STATE-LEVEL SUPPORT IN
BREAKING THE CYCLE OF URBAN GUN VIOLENCE

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PICO National Network
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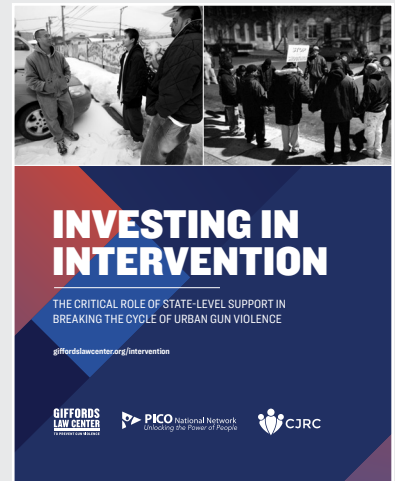
INVESTING IN INTERVENTION

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF STATE-LEVEL SUPPORT IN BREAKING THE CYCLE OF URBAN GUN VIOLENCE

Tens of thousands of people are shot each year on America's streets. These shootings are concentrated in cities and disproportionately impact underserved populations—but relief is within reach. A small handful of states are supporting affordable, proven solutions to address this epidemic, saving lives and millions in taxpayer dollars.

READ THE REPORT

States can do so much more to address the alarming rates of gun violence in our cities. Read the full report to learn how Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York are transforming communities with sustained investment in evidence-based violence reduction strategies.



INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE DRIVES GUN HOMICIDES

Day-to-day interpersonal gun violence drives a substantial percentage of overall shootings in this country. A disproportionate number of those shootings are concentrated in our cities—often in underserved communities of color. It's staggering to consider that black men make up 6% of the US population, yet account for more than half of all gun homicide victims each year. Latino men are also disproportionately impacted. Of America's 13,000 gun-related homicide victims in 2015, over 8,500 were men of color.



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THREE STATES LEAD THE WAY

A small handful of states, including **Massachusetts**, **Connecticut**, and **New York**, are making much-needed investments in evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs. However, these states are rare exceptions, and as gun violence devastates too many communities across America, there is a critical need to expand and scale up state-level support for the programs most effective at saving lives. With the total cost of American gun violence estimated at \$229 billion each year, investing in gun violence reduction strategies is also a smart economic move for state governments.

\$2 MILLION
PROGRAM COSTS

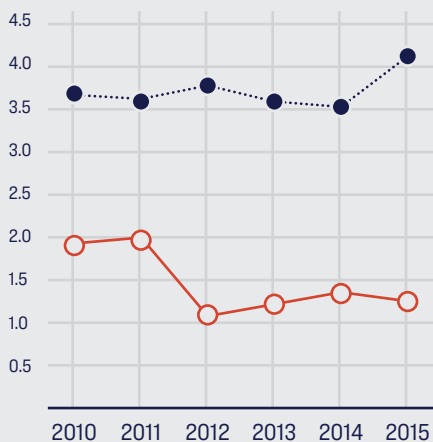
\$15 MILLION
IN SAVINGS

A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

From 2012 to 2013, a \$2 million violence reduction program in Boston and Springfield, MA, generated close to \$15 million in savings from decreases in crime. In part because of smart investments like this, Massachusetts has the nation's lowest gun death rate.

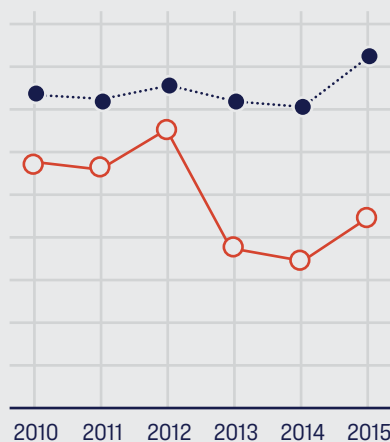
MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts' gun homicide rate fell by 35% in six years, while the national gun homicide rate rose by 14%.



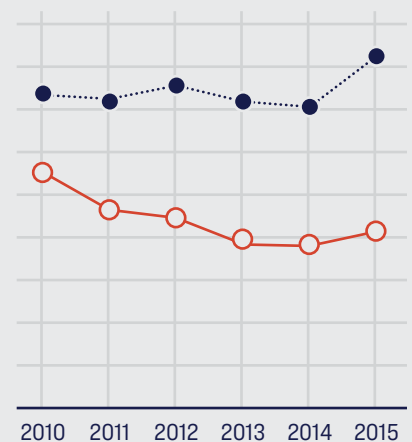
CONNECTICUT

Connecticut's gun homicide rate fell by 16% in six years, while the national gun homicide rate rose by 14%.



NEW YORK

New York State's gun homicide rate fell by 23% in six years, while the national gun homicide rate rose by 14%.



●···· National gun homicide rate per 100K —○— State gun homicide rate per 100K

Source: CDC WISQARS

KEY PROGRAM ELEMENTS CHECKLIST



Focus on High-Risk People and Places



Provide Robust State-Level Coordination



Commit to Long-Term, Stable Funding



Implement Evidence-Based Strategies



Conduct Regular Program Evaluations



Facilitate Community Input and Engagement

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Welcome



Giffords Law Center, PICO National Network, and the Community Justice Reform Coalition are proud to present the second installment in our series of reports on the most effective strategies to stem the crisis of gun violence in our cities.

Investing in Intervention: The Critical Role of State-Level Support in Breaking the Cycle of Urban Gun Violence is a deep dive into the concrete ways states can lift up the community-driven solutions that have a real and lasting impact on gun homicide and violence rates in underserved urban neighborhoods. The inequalities faced by these communities are real—**black men make up a mere 6% of the population in the United States, but account for more than half of all gun homicide victims each year.** That staggering toll is unconscionable, and our leaders can and must do more to save lives from the daily tragedy of urban gun violence.



As this report shows, evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs work in concert with strong policy-based solutions to produce results that are nothing short of astounding. In Massachusetts, one of the nation's leaders when it comes to investing in urban gun violence reduction, gun homicide rates fell by 35% from 2010 to 2015, while nationally gun homicide rates actually increased 14% in that same period.



Many other states should follow suit. At present, 45 states fail to make any investment in the solutions outlined in this report. **Morally, we share a collective obligation to do everything in our power to stop the preventable murder of so many of our fellow Americans.** Financially, the cost to taxpayers to support and scale up these proven programs would be minuscule compared to what gun violence currently costs—an estimated \$229 billion annually nationwide. Politically, these solutions have nothing to do with the regulation of firearms, making them more likely to receive bipartisan support. There is simply no excuse for states to keep ignoring this problem, and with 72,000 Americans intentionally shot by others each year, it is imperative we act now.

Our hope is that *Investing in Intervention* will serve as a roadmap for lawmakers and activists with the courage and desire to help build and support these critical programs in the communities they serve. But our commitment to expanding urban violence intervention and prevention strategies doesn't end in these pages. We encourage you to reach out to our organizations to partner with us and learn more about how these lifesaving, evidence-based solutions can be implemented in your home state.

With gratitude,

ROBYN THOMAS
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GIFFORDS LAW CENTER TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

For nearly 25 years, the legal experts at Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence have been fighting for a safer America by researching, drafting, and defending the laws, policies, and programs proven to save lives from gun violence. Founded in the wake of a 1993 mass shooting in San Francisco, in 2016 the Law Center joined with former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords to form a courageous new force for gun safety that stretches coast to coast.

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PICO NATIONAL NETWORK

PICO National Network is the largest grassroots, faith-based organizing network in the United States working to create innovative solutions to problems facing urban, suburban, and rural communities. Since 1972 PICO has successfully worked to increase access to healthcare, improve public schools, make neighborhoods safer, build affordable housing, redevelop communities, and revitalize democracy. Nonpartisan and multicultural, PICO provides an opportunity for people and congregations to translate their faith into action.

piconetwork.org



COMMUNITY JUSTICE REFORM COALITION

The Community Justice Reform Coalition (CJRC) is a national advocacy organization that builds safe and just communities through community-led engagement and investments. CJRC's mission is to offer a centralized voice for communities of color engaged at the nexus of gun violence prevention, public health, and criminal justice reform. CJRC focuses on building innovative leadership pipelines to alleviate gun violence in communities of color by educating stakeholders on ways to advocate for solutions that will reduce gun violence without targeting or further harming communities of color.

communityjusticerc.org

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INTRODUCTION

Breaking the cycle of gun violence in our cities is essential—and affordable.

In Massachusetts, a statewide initiative is dramatically cutting violence and incarceration rates by offering critical services to the young men most likely to pick up a gun, **providing non-violent alternatives and saving taxpayers \$7 for each dollar invested.**

In Connecticut, combined gun violence rates have dropped by more than 50% in three major cities since 2011, with help from a state-funded violence intervention program that brings together a powerful partnership of law enforcement officers, community members, and social service providers. **At a total cost of less than \$1 million per year, this program has prevented shootings while generating an annual savings of \$7 million.**

Meanwhile, in New York, gun violence rates continue to plunge—especially in New York City—as the number of evidence-based violence reduction programs expands, funded and coordinated in part by the state. **The state's \$20 million investment pales in comparison to the overall cost of gun violence in New York State—an estimated \$5.6 billion per year.¹**

In the face of America's gun violence epidemic, a small handful of states, including Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, are making lifesaving and cost-saving investments in evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs. As a result, these states are seeing meaningful reductions in gun homicide rates at a time

when national trends are moving in the opposite direction.

However, these states are rare exceptions, and as gun violence devastates too many communities across America, there is a crucial opportunity to expand and scale up state-level support for the programs most effective at saving lives.

We don't have a moment to lose.

Tens of thousands of people are shot each year on America's streets. We know these shootings are disproportionately concentrated in cities—particularly in underserved neighborhoods that suffer from the high rates of unemployment, poverty, racial segregation, and lack of access to quality education.²

While the widespread, preventable murder and wounding of so many Americans represents one of the greatest moral crises of our time, these acts of violence are also breaking the bank. **Consider that the law enforcement and healthcare costs alone associated with a single gun-related homicide are \$488,000, and more than \$71,000 for each non-fatal shooting.**³ Many gun violence victims don't have private health insurance, so taxpayers often foot the vast majority of this bill.⁴ When lost wages, employer expenses, and other costs are factored in, the economic toll of gun violence is even higher.

A \$1 million investment that leads to the prevention of just three gun homicides pays for itself and then some.

As a result, a \$1 million investment that leads to the prevention of just *three* gun homicides pays for itself and then some. When it comes to the state-funded programs highlighted in this report, the associated reductions in violence are much, much higher. A Yale study showed that Connecticut's Project Longevity, a violence prevention program explored in-depth in the coming pages, led to 55 fewer shootings per year in New Haven, representing millions of dollars in savings for taxpayers.⁵

Proven solutions like Project Longevity and other community-based intervention strategies have nothing to do with regulating firearms, which makes them far more likely to receive bipartisan support. The most common objection programs like this face is their cost, but the price of an investment in effective violence intervention is dwarfed by the cost of gun violence itself, which reaches hundreds of millions of dollars annually in most states.⁶

Nor do these programs require great sums of money to be effective. The Massachusetts initiative mentioned above costs less than \$8 million per year to operate in a state with a \$40 billion budget. In Connecticut, Project Longevity costs

less than \$1 million per year; the state's budget is \$30 billion. When evaluated in context, spending a few million dollars to drastically reduce shootings without having to go through the partisan struggle to pass new gun laws makes financial and political sense.

This report focuses on how state governments in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York are providing modest funds to implement and sustain innovative, evidence-based violence intervention and prevention programs. Our goal is to provide a roadmap of best practices and lessons learned from the places that have seen big returns on investment from supporting these strategies.

Legislators and activists in states that aren't currently making such investments, which unfortunately is the vast majority of states, should carefully examine the case studies in the coming pages. Any serious plan to address gun violence in our cities must include well-funded, community-based intervention programs like the ones explored here.

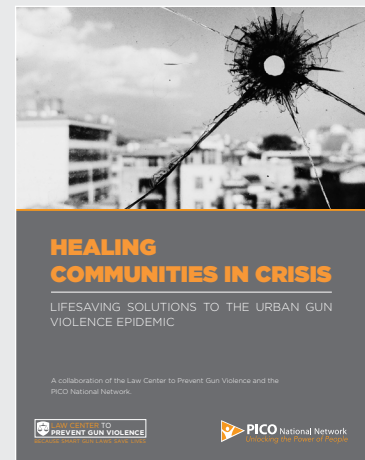
Simply throwing money at a problem is not a smart solution. However, when an investment is used to create an effective oversight infrastructure that is data-driven, strategic, and stable, then meaningful gains in public safety are possible—as has been the case in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York in recent years.

More states need to follow this example.

INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE IN AMERICAN CITIES

Murder inequality in America is real. A disproportionate number of shootings are concentrated in our cities—often in underserved communities of color. It's staggering to consider that black men make up 6% of the US population, yet account for more than *half* of all gun homicide victims each year. Latino men are also disproportionately impacted. **Of America's 13,000 gun-related homicide victims in 2015, over 8,500 were men of color.**⁷

Day-to-day interpersonal gun violence drives a huge percentage of the overall shootings in this country. In 2012, for example, a total of 90 people were killed in active shooter incidents, including the horrific



Our 2016 report, *Healing Communities in Crisis: Lifesaving Solutions to the Urban Gun Violence Epidemic*, identifies the most effective evidence-based violence prevention and intervention strategies, including the Cure Violence, Group Violence Intervention, and Hospital-based Violence Intervention Program models.

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assault weapon massacre at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado.⁸ That same year, nearly 6,000 black men were murdered in daily shootings that too often failed to make headlines. And this doesn't include the tens of thousands of non-fatal shootings that occur each year. Chicago suffered more than 3,500 such shootings in 2016 alone.⁹

Yet there is cause for hope despite these grim statistics. As outlined in our 2016 report, *Healing Communities in Crisis: Lifesaving Solutions to the Urban Gun Violence Epidemic*, a variety of innovative, evidenced-based violence intervention and prevention solutions have been developed in recent years.¹⁰ This includes strategies such as Cure Violence, Group Violence Intervention, and Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs.

These models operate around a common core truth: in any given city, only a very small percentage of individuals are responsible for the vast majority of gun violence. Breaking the cycle of violence can and will happen if the right people are reached with the right intervention.

INTERVENTION & PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The first part of this report provides an overview of three states—Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York—that have made an investment in evidence-based violence reduction strategies.

While every community is different, and there's no one-size-fits-all solution to gun violence, several common principles can be gleaned from the experience of these states. The second part of this report offers an in-depth examination of the following six key elements:

- 1. Focus on High-Risk People and Places**
- 2. Implement Evidence-Based Strategies**
- 3. Provide Robust State-Level Coordination**
- 4. Conduct Regular Program Evaluations**
- 5. Commit to Long-Term, Stable Funding**
- 6. Facilitate Community Input and Engagement**

In order to maximize outcomes, any state prevention and intervention grant program should include these features, which directly contribute to the quick and sustainable reduction of gun violence in urban communities.

While it's true that the vast majority of states don't currently invest in community-

based violence reduction programs, lawmakers and activists who want to save lives from gun violence shouldn't be discouraged. These solutions have been tried and tested in other states, they appeal to Republicans and Democrats alike, and they pay for themselves many times over. It's our hope that this report will offer the blueprint necessary for more states to make a real commitment to addressing the gun violence shattering too many lives in too many neighborhoods across America.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Millions of Americans live in neighborhoods with alarmingly high rates of gun violence.

For these men, women, and children, home can be a dangerous place where stray bullets fly through windows and loved ones are shot and killed in the street. It is a frightening reality that takes a tremendous toll on historically underserved communities of color already suffering from a lack of economic opportunity, adequate housing, healthcare, and a host of other basic necessities, the absence of which helps perpetuate a deadly cycle of poverty and violence.

Part of the solution to this crisis rests in states enacting sensible gun policies like universal background check and permit-to-purchase laws, which can and do save lives. But that's only one part of the equation. In order to truly transform and heal the communities most impacted by gun violence, states must also make sustained investments in evidence-based violence intervention and prevention programs.

In 2016, we released *Healing Communities in Crisis: Lifesaving Solutions to the Urban Gun Violence Epidemic*, a report that identified several of the most effective community-based intervention strategies, each boasting consistently impressive outcomes. These approaches are based on the key insight that in cities across the country, the vast majority of shootings are committed by a small and identifiable set of individuals and that breaking the cycle of violence requires focusing resources on this population. The key strategies are:

- **Group Violence Intervention (GVI):** This four-step, problem-oriented policing strategy, piloted in Boston, has a strong track record associated with

reductions in homicides generally ranging from 30% to 60%. The GVI model uses a carrot and stick approach that offers high-risk community members access to social services, education, and job training opportunities, while at the same time communicating a strong anti-violence message that promises swift and sure action from law enforcement should shootings and killings continue.

- **Cure Violence (CV):** This model, developed and piloted in Chicago, is also associated with significant reductions in violent crime. The model approaches interpersonal violence as a communicable disease, transmitted from person to person through contact and emulation, and seeks to squelch potentially deadly conflicts before they begin. Since the first Cure Violence program site was launched in 2000, the model has been credited with reducing shootings and homicides by up to 73%.
- **Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIP):** The HVIP strategy focuses on young people who have been hospitalized with violent injuries like gunshot wounds. Informed by the knowledge that the strongest risk factor for violence is a history of violent injury, HVIPs break the cycle of violence by transforming these traumatic events into life-changing, teachable moments. A growing body of evidence suggests that HVIP participants have significantly reduced rates of rehospitalization, making this strategy both a lifesaving and cost-saving measure.

Only a handful of states currently provide support to these proven gun violence reduction programs. For the 45 states still sitting on sidelines, inaction is a losing strategy. First and foremost, failure to respond to this crisis takes a devastating human toll, as interpersonal shootings constitute the majority of overall gun violence in this country. More than 115,000 Americans are the victims of gun violence every year—72,000 of them are killed or wounded intentionally by another person.

The associated costs impose a tremendous financial burden on cities, states, and the country as a whole. Available data suggests gun violence costs the United States at least \$229 billion every year—with a single gun homicide costing nearly half a million dollars in medical, criminal justice, and other expenses. By directing relatively modest funds to proven prevention and intervention strategies, legislators can save millions while investing in the safety and well-being of their most vulnerable constituents.

Fortunately, states are beginning to understand the value of investing in comprehensive prevention and intervention

Available data suggests gun violence costs America at least \$229 billion every year—with a single gun homicide costing nearly half a million dollars.

programs. Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York are part of an exclusive group leading the way and charting a new path for addressing the gun violence crisis in American cities.

MODELS FOR STATE-LEVEL SUPPORT: MASSACHUSETTS, CONNECTICUT, AND NEW YORK

Massachusetts has demonstrated its commitment to addressing youth violence by providing funding and technical assistance to two statewide competitive grant programs: the **Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI)** and **Shannon Community Safety Initiative (Shannon CSI)**.

Working in tandem, SSYI and Shannon CSI have stitched together a comprehensive network of violence prevention programs and social service providers that support at-risk Massachusetts youth from adolescence to adulthood.

Because Shannon CSI targets a much younger population and focuses on long-term prevention, it is more difficult to assess its immediate impact, but program sites are consistently associated with a reduced number of arrests and assaults.

Evaluations of SSYI grantees, however, paint a clear picture. Between 2013 and 2016, Lowell, Massachusetts, saw overall firearm-related activity drop by 22%, gang-related criminal activity decline by 31%, and nonfatal shootings plummet by 61%. With the cost of gun violence estimated at just under half a million dollars per gun homicide, it's easy to see how SSYI is producing meaningful savings for Massachusetts taxpayers. A 2014 report estimates that SSYI programs in Boston and Springfield save the state at least \$15 million per year.

In Connecticut, **Project Longevity** has shown how a small investment in intervention programs can have a tremendous impact. Launched in 2012 as a response to high rates of violence in several cities, Project Longevity funds the implementation of the GVI strategy in New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport.

As of fiscal year 2017, Connecticut spends less than \$1 million of its \$30 billion budget to fund Project Longevity. Still, even with this modest investment, between 2011 and 2016, combined gun homicides in the three Project Longevity cities were cut in half. In New Haven, the first and longest running site, researchers from Yale University directly attributed a 73% drop in the number of group- or gang-related shootings per month to

A 2014 report estimates that
Massachusetts' Safe and
Successful Youth Initiative in
Boston and Springfield saves
the state \$15 million per year.

Project Longevity. This reduction in shootings has generated millions of dollars in cost savings for Connecticut taxpayers.

New York State invests in two grant programs, both administered by the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS): the **Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative** and **Operation SNUG**. GIVE and SNUG utilize different strategies to combat violence, but both are aimed at intervening with young men at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of deadly violence.

The GIVE Initiative requires that counties submit a violence elimination plan that incorporates at least two strategies from a menu of evidence-based gun violence reduction methods: street outreach, focused deterrence, crime prevention through environmental design, and “hot spots” policing. Because many of these methods require participation from law enforcement, GIVE counties are also required to make an effort to improve relationships between police and community members by incorporating elements of procedural justice into their violence elimination plans. While formal evaluations are still pending, certain GIVE areas have observed reductions in shootings ranging from 7% to 35% following implementation.

Unlike GIVE, Operation SNUG exclusively supports the Cure Violence model of violence reduction, which requires significantly less involvement from law enforcement and a greater emphasis on street outreach work. There are 11 SNUG sites in the state, one of which operates out of Jacobi Medical Center, a level-one trauma center in the Bronx. While formal evaluations have yet to be completed, shootings in Jacobi SNUG precincts have declined by nearly 60% between 2014 and 2016.

In total, from 2014 to 2017, New York State invested \$58 million on GIVE and SNUG, making the state a national leader in its commitment to reducing gun violence through the use of evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies.

SIX KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL STATE VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAMS

Each of the models found in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York provides important takeaways for states seeking to invest directly in evidence-based violence prevention and intervention strategies. From these examples, we have identified six key elements that are essential to a statewide initiative seeking to scale up these strategies.

KEY ELEMENT ONE

FOCUS ON HIGH-RISK PEOPLE AND PLACES

Violence reduction initiatives can have the most impact when they focus resources on serious violent crime and on the communities and individuals most impacted by gun violence. In Connecticut, for example, Project Longevity was implemented in New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport—three cities responsible for over 70% of the state's gun homicides. This narrow focus has enabled the program to achieve significant reductions in shootings with a relatively modest budget.

We know that the vast majority of gun crimes in a given city—up to 70%—are committed by less than 0.5% of its residents. In line with this fact, each of the states profiled in this report took measures to ensure that resources were directed toward a highly targeted group of at-risk youth. Massachusetts' Safe and Successful Youth Initiative provides a particularly instructive example, as grantees are required to provide services exclusively to young men ages 17 to 24, who are determined to be at “proven risk” for becoming involved in gun crimes. States with limited resources can maximize impact by taking steps to ensure that funding is directed to the cities, neighborhoods, and individuals most at risk for violence.

KEY ELEMENT TWO

IMPLEMENT EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

There is now enough of an evidence base when it comes to violence prevention and intervention programs that states can take steps to ensure funds are being directed to programs that actually work. A 2016 review of more than 1,400 studies of violence prevention strategies, commissioned by USAID, found strong evidentiary support for the “focused deterrence” approach of GVI and also for street outreach programs that are focused on recidivism reduction strategies, particularly those that incorporate elements of cognitive behavioral therapy. The evidence also showed that “scared straight” programs that try to frighten young people into a safer lifestyle are actually strongly associated with negative outcomes.

A host of other evaluations and research are readily available to help guide states in supporting the evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs that are most likely to make a major impact on serious violence. For example, in a 2014 evaluation of Cure Violence in Chicago, the majority of neighborhoods with active program sites saw significant reductions in homicides, shootings, and overall violent crime. Given limited budgets, states should not support violence reduction programs that cannot point to objective evidence to justify their model.

KEY ELEMENT THREE

PROVIDE ROBUST STATE-LEVEL COORDINATION

In addition to financial resources, the state can also help cities oversee and implement violence prevention and intervention programs by providing technical assistance, training, and enabling sites to share their experiences and develop best practices. In New York, the state is able to provide regular training sessions for GIVE grantees that have helped familiarize participants with available violence prevention strategies. Through DCJS, New York is able to connect SNUG staff with subject-matter experts who provide technical support and facilitate information sharing between sites. In this way, New York has created a professionalized workforce of street outreach workers that receive standardized training and ongoing support.

The role of the state should not just be to provide funding for evidence-based strategies, but to create a thriving “community of practice” for violence reduction practitioners across the state.

KEY ELEMENT FOUR

CONDUCT REGULAR PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

To effectively reduce crime, cities must be able to accurately assess the impact of their violence reduction initiatives. Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York have all allocated funds for researchers to provide program-level evaluations and site-specific performance reviews. These assessments help administrators and those responsible for implementing the program identify problems and make adjustments that will better serve impacted communities.

KEY ELEMENT FIVE

COMMIT TO LONG-TERM, STABLE FUNDING

States must fully commit to violence prevention and intervention efforts if they hope to see sustained reductions in shootings and homicides. Unpredictable, one-year funding cycles can leave program sites susceptible to devastating budgetary shortfalls and make strategic planning incredibly difficult for program managers. Massive staffing cuts or even site closures can severely damage the credibility of a program. Community members who come to rely on these services can suddenly find this lifeline severed and are forced to return to a dangerous way of life that puts themselves and their neighborhoods at risk.

The upside of most evidence-based violence intervention programs is their relatively modest price tag, but a state can do more harm than good if such programs are funded in an unsteady manner. Locking in funding for a multi-year period can help alleviate this problem and give programs enough time to scale up and become institutionalized.

KEY ELEMENT SIX

FACILITATE COMMUNITY INPUT AND ENGAGEMENT

It's important that the men and women administering and implementing violence reduction initiatives listen to the communities they serve. Residents of impacted neighborhoods can provide critical insights that make these efforts more effective and can more credibly communicate an anti-violence message that resonates with high-risk youth. Community members can provide valuable information to caseworkers and program administrators, and these community members should be encouraged to continue their engagement throughout the life of the program.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

Lawmakers in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York are standing up for public safety by directing resources to programs that make communities safer from gun violence. Based on the pioneering efforts of these three states, the key elements highlighted above serve as a roadmap for other states to implement affordable and effective violence reduction strategies to successfully address the epidemic of shootings that currently leaves too many Americans in grave danger. Solutions to the gun violence crisis are within reach, and states must act now to bring communities the safety and security they deserve.

Leverage the legal and policy acumen of our experts to develop a plan for state-level investment in violence reduction strategies. For assistance or to request the in-depth technical appendix for this report, email [**lawcenter@giffords.org**](mailto:lawcenter@giffords.org)

PART ONE

Models for State-Level Support:
Massachusetts, Connecticut,
and New York

States have a pivotal role to play in reducing urban gun violence.

To truly save lives and bring safety to communities, our leaders must focus on both the supply side of America's gun violence epidemic—easy access to guns—and the demand side—the series of risk factors that make a person more likely to pick up a gun in order to do harm. Any comprehensive response to gun violence must have at its core a sustained investment in evidence-based prevention and intervention programs that directly address the root causes of violence. When this commitment to reducing risk factors is combined with strong, well-implemented gun laws, rates of violence plummet.

Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York are rare examples of states that have taken the important step of pairing their strong gun laws with meaningful support for community-based violence reduction programs. By wisely investing state dollars in evidence-based violence prevention and intervention initiatives that work directly on the ground with the very individuals most likely to pull a trigger, these states have created violence reduction ecosystems that simultaneously regulate access to firearms and address the underlying factors that lead to violence. The basics of these state-supported programs are overviewed here, as are their results to date.

MASSACHUSETTS—SSYI AND SHANNON CSI

It's worth understanding the gun violence reduction efforts of Massachusetts, a state with the lowest overall gun-related death rate in the country and the fifth-lowest gun homicide rate.¹ Moreover, between 2010 and 2015, Massachusetts' gun homicide rate fell by 35%, while at the national level, the gun homicide rate increased by 14%. This was driven by the fact that gun homicide rates among young people ages 14–24 in the state dropped by 45% even as they rose by 6% nationally.²

Through its Safe and Successful Youth Initiative and the Shannon Community Safety Initiative, Massachusetts is one of the only states to invest directly in evidence-based violence prevention and intervention strategies focused on young adults at high risk for involvement with violence. Studies show that these efforts are saving lives and taxpayer dollars by simultaneously reducing rates of violence and incarceration.

SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL YOUTH INITIATIVE (SSYI)

With its Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI), Massachusetts is investing in a public health strategy that addresses gun violence by working directly with young people at the highest risk of shooting or being shot. SSYI, first launched in 2011, is a competitive grant program that awards funding to cities with high rates of violence. Grantees must provide a broad spectrum of social services to young men ages 17–24 who are at “proven risk” of involvement in gun violence. Proven risk refers to individuals who are active perpetrators or victims of violence, members or leaders of street gangs or groups, or repeat juvenile offenders at risk of re-offending.

The SSYI target population often faces multiple risk factors for violence, including prior exposure to violence, past acts of violence, gang or group membership, substance abuse issues, and lack of educational and vocational opportunities. By directly addressing root causes, **SSYI has had an impact on both violence and incarceration rates, saving Massachusetts an estimated \$7 for each dollar invested in the program.**

THE BASICS

SSYI is a competitive grant program open to 20 Massachusetts municipalities, determined by rates of violence. Twelve of those municipalities are currently funded. As a condition of receiving SSYI funds, each grantee city is required to:

1. Use police data and community knowledge to **identify “proven risk” young men** between the ages of 17 and 24 who have a high likelihood for involvement with violence.
2. Use **street outreach workers** to interact with these young men, assess their current needs, and act as brokers for services to address unmet needs.

3. Implement a multi-sector plan for the provision of **comprehensive social services**, including education, employment, mental health, and intensive supervision, in order to address the root causes of serious interpersonal violence.³

As described by researchers, “the distinguishing feature of SSYI is its lack of police suppression or police contact of any kind with young men who receive services, focusing instead on improving individual economic, physical, social, and emotional well-being through an intensive and ongoing case management and outreach process that is not time-bound and continues until the young men are self-sufficient and leading healthy, independent lives.”⁴

SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS AND IMPACT

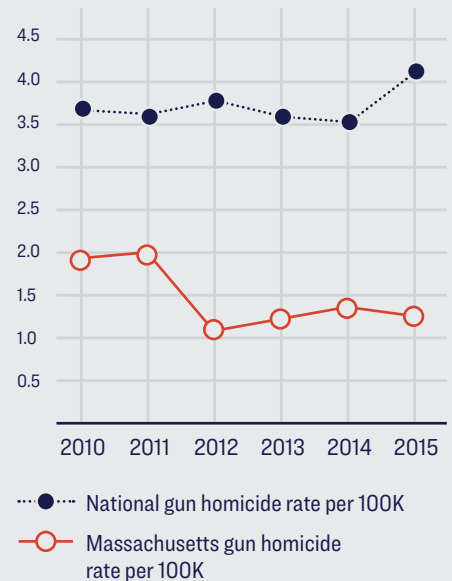
As of 2017, SSYI has a statewide service list of more than 1,500 “proven risk” young men.⁵ In the past year, 715 of these young men were enrolled in the program and actively receiving case management services, 336 participated in some form of education program, 473 were employed, and 244 were receiving trauma counseling. In 2016, 43 SSYI clients either graduated from high school or received a GED credential.⁶

In a report released October 2014, program evaluators found that SSYI had a “statistically significant and positive impact” in reducing the number of monthly victims of aggravated assault and homicide reported to police.⁷ Overall, SSYI cities “saw a 31% reduction in aggravated assaults compared to 2009, as well as a 25% reduction in homicide victimizations.”⁸ Evaluators noted that, during the study period, reductions in all forms of serious violence were greater in SSYI cities than in comparison cities.⁹ In fact, between 2011 and 2013, “SSYI-engaged cities experienced 139 fewer violent crime victimizations on average per month compared to non-SSYI municipalities.”

A separate evaluation examined the impact of SSYI on rates of incarceration for young people. Looking at the aggregate likelihood of incarceration among SSYI-enrolled youth across nine SSYI sites as compared to similar peers in these cities, researchers found that “receiving SSYI services and engagement with those services had a strong, positive effect on reducing the likelihood that a young person

MASSACHUSETTS’ DROP IN GUN HOMICIDES

Massachusetts’ gun homicide rate fell by 35% in six years, while the national gun homicide rate rose by 14%.



With a program budget of just \$2 million, Massachusetts’ Safe and Successful Youth Initiative in Boston and Springfield generated nearly \$15 million in cost savings from reductions in violent crime.

SAVINGS
\$15 MILLION

PROGRAM
COST
\$2 MILLION

Sources: CDC WISQARS; American Institutes for Research

will be incarcerated.”¹⁰

Based on these reductions in violence and incarceration, program evaluators from the American Institutes for Research examining SSYI sites in Boston and Springfield calculated that Massachusetts taxpayers saved as much as \$7.35 for every \$1 invested in the program from 2012 to 2013.¹¹ Evaluators found that during this time period, these sites “prevented close to \$15 million in violent crime victimizations from 2012 to 2013,” compared to a total program budget for these two cities of just over \$2 million.¹²

Each city is slightly different, but the SSYI site in Lowell, Massachusetts, provides an excellent example of how the program operates on the ground.

The American Institutes for Research estimated that Massachusetts taxpayers saved as much as \$7.35 for every \$1 invested in Springfield and Boston’s SSYI program.

CASE STUDY: LOWELL

Lowell, located in northern Massachusetts, 30 miles from Boston, is the state’s fifth-largest city, with a population of approximately 110,000. The SSYI grantee in Lowell is the Lowell Police Department, and the lead agency is a community-based nonprofit agency called United Teen Equality Center (UTEC). UTEC was an excellent fit to be the SSYI lead agency because its mission for the past 18 years has been to serve the proven risk youth that are the focus of SSYI.¹³

As a lead agency, UTEC—which receives the majority of Lowell’s current \$600,000 SSYI grant allocation—provides most of the major SSYI services within the same organization, with the exception of mental health services, which are provided by the Mental Health Association of Lowell.¹⁴

SSYI LIST OF PROVEN RISK YOUNG PEOPLE

Lowell’s SSYI program currently has a list of 75 proven-risk youth designated to receive services. At present, this list is generated internally by the Lowell Police Department gang unit, based on crime data and other intelligence gathered by officers regarding the individuals most likely to be engaged in or exposed to violent behavior.¹⁵ Once generated, this list is provided to UTEC, which is then responsible for providing a spectrum of social services to those who are identified.

ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE PROVISION

In order to serve the SSYI population, UTEC reaches out to potential clients in a series of very intentional steps, each focused on bringing proven-risk youth into the program and addressing key risk factors such as unemployment, lack of educational attainment, and unstable living situations.¹⁶

The first step of this process is street outreach, which is conducted through UTEC's "streetworker" program. As the UTEC website explains, this work is critical because "youth who may be gang-involved, homeless, and/or out of school are difficult to reach because they do not seek out help when in crisis and are not registered in school or other after-school programs."¹⁷ Rather than waiting for these individuals to reach out for assistance, UTEC streetworkers engage young people where they are.

Streetworkers attempt to guide SSYI youth to UTEC's intensive services program while also mediating violent conflicts that may arise. They invite SSYI youth to visit UTEC in order to sample programs designed to "enhance skills, expand opportunity, and serve as positive alternatives to gang activity."¹⁸ The ultimate goal for streetworkers is to provide opportunities for SSYI youth that will help lead to healthier lifestyles.

NEXT STEPS

Once SSYI clients are engaged, the second step of the process is to enroll them in UTEC's "transformational beginnings" program. This starts with an orientation process that takes place once per month, followed by a meeting with one of UTEC's case managers, who are known as "transitional coaches." SSYI youth work with transitional coaches to complete an assessment to determine their various emotional, educational, and behavioral needs. Based on this assessment, transitional coaches help clients create a service plan for addressing issues like education, employment, and mental health.¹⁹

At UTEC, transitional coaches have a caseload of 15 young people at a time and work to sustain an intensive relationship with their clients, connecting with each one at least four times a week in the early stages of case management and at least 90 minutes a week throughout the program. Transitional coaches then follow up for two years after a client has left UTEC in order to monitor long-term outcomes. For behavioral and mental health needs, UTEC has contracted with the Mental Health Association of Lowell to provide a clinician that is on-site at UTEC for 20 hours each week.²⁰

The ultimate goal for streetworkers
is to provide opportunities for
SSYI youth that will help lead to
healthier lifestyles.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES PROGRAM

As a third step, SSYI youth who attend and persist in initial programming may then advance to the Workforce Development and Social Enterprises Program, where they receive paid work experience and opportunities for positive personal development. A unique feature of UTEC is that it runs its own business enterprises, including a cafe, woodshop, mattress recycling program, and food services.²¹ Through these businesses, SSYI youth gain work experience in an environment that is responsive to their needs.

In addition, UTEC provides ongoing opportunities for positive social development. This includes educational classes, such as a GED course, and enrichment programming, where SSYI youth have the opportunity to create art, record music, and play sports in a safe and nurturing environment.

Through these various programs, the proven-risk youth of Lowell are being provided with a broad spectrum of services that includes case management, job training, educational support, as well as mental and behavioral health services.

OUTCOMES

In FY 2016, UTEC had a client population of 168 youth, ages 16–24, participating in its intensive programming. Of this group, most had a criminal record (86%), were gang-involved (77%), or had no high school credential (80%), each of which are risk factors for involvement with violence.²² However, UTEC's programs, with the help of SSYI funding, are having a positive impact on proven-risk youth in Lowell.

89% of youth served by UTEC in FY 2016 were not arrested during the year and 98% were not convicted of a crime, while statewide 51% of formerly incarcerated youth ages 18–24 are rearraigned within one year.²³ An impressive 82% of youth who completed UTEC programming were employed two years later.

In terms of impact on gun violence, Lowell has seen positive results since the implementation of SSYI in 2012, with multiple indicators of gun-related crime moving in the right direction:

- **Nonfatal shootings declined by 61% from 2013 to 2016.**
- **Overall firearm-related activity dropped by 22% from 2013 to 2016.**
- **2016 also represented a five-year low in Lowell for firearm-related criminal activity.**
- **Gang-related criminal activity (including assault, unlawful possession of a firearm, and robbery) was down 31% from 2013 to 2016.**²⁴

89% of youth served by UTEC were not arrested and 98% were not convicted of a crime, while statewide 51% of formerly incarcerated youth are rearraigned within one year.

SUMMARY

At the statewide level, SSYI “recognizes the Commonwealth’s obligation to assist and support municipal government in meeting [the challenge of youth violence] by providing technical assistance and resources, as well as by facilitating the adoption of best practices.”²⁵ At present, far too few states are recognizing or acting on

this obligation to address urban gun violence with a strategic state and local partnership designed to engage those young people most at risk of becoming involved in violence.

With its public health approach and focus on providing a spectrum of services to proven-risk young men, SSYI provides a model for reducing levels of both violence and incarceration, saving millions of taxpayer dollars in the process. States suffering from high levels of interpersonal violence should take note of what Massachusetts has achieved with this program.

SHANNON COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVE

In 2005, the Massachusetts legislature established the Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative (Shannon CSI) in order to address youth and gang-related violence in a comprehensive manner in the state's most impacted communities.²⁶ Shannon CSI is a state-level competitive grant program designed to support the implementation of a multi-disciplinary approach to combating youth violence through coordinated prevention and intervention programs.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The enabling legislation of Shannon CSI requires communities applying for funding to demonstrate high levels of youth violence and gang problems, a comprehensive plan to work with multidisciplinary partners, and a commitment to coordinated prevention and intervention strategies.²⁷ Specifically, after the completion of a competitive grant process, funded sites must complete a needs assessment and assemble a steering committee that uses data to develop strategies in the following five areas:

1. **Social Intervention:** Social intervention programs generally involve intensive case management and street outreach work. For lower-risk youth, this can include recreational programs, positive youth development opportunities, and other mechanisms to reach young people and connect them to positive role models and constructive activities.
2. **Opportunity Provision:** Programs providing education, training, and employment opportunities for young people at high risk for involvement with violence.
3. **Suppression:** Programs consisting of close supervision or monitoring of at-risk youth by law enforcement officers. These include hot spot patrols, law-enforcement home visits, and special prosecutors.
4. **Organizational Change:** Programs created with the goal of influencing the development and implementation of policies that result in the most effective use of available resources to better address the violence problem.

5. **Community Mobilization:** Programs initiated with the goal of educating the community about youth violence trends in their city or neighborhood and involving them in strategies to confront the problem.²⁸

In general, Shannon CSI funds have been used to support regional law enforcement operations, hire outreach workers, fund job training programs, and support afterschool programs in many cities that are struggling with youth violence. Much like SSYI, Shannon CSI was designed to allow for flexibility and customization at the local level—within a set of general parameters. As a result, each community implements Shannon CSI in a slightly different manner, based on local conditions.

Shannon CSI sites must maintain an active steering committee to ensure community collaboration, consistent information sharing, oversight, and direction for the Shannon CSI grant award. Ideally, the steering committee “should represent the spectrum of organizations involved and the diversity of the community.”²⁹

Each Shannon CSI city uses grant money in different ways, customized to local conditions. Boston, for example, has used Shannon CSI funds for job training and placement for court-involved youth, analysis of firearm violence to inform police strategy, re-entry support for individuals returning from incarceration, and out-of-school opportunities for siblings of gang or group members and youth who have been targets of gang or group recruitment.³⁰

Shannon CSI cities work with approximately 170 partner agencies in order to deliver services to at-risk youth.³¹ For the current fiscal year, Shannon CSI is funded at \$6 million and is operating in 25 areas across Massachusetts. All 12 SSYI sites are also Shannon CSI sites.³²

CASE STUDY: WORCESTER

Since Shannon CSI grants allow for a wide range of youth gang and violence prevention activities, it’s helpful to zoom in on a single city for an example of how the program is implemented. With a population of 185,000, Worcester, located in central Massachusetts, is New England’s second-largest city. It’s also the most racially and ethnically diverse city in the region, with 20% of residents born outside of the US and one-third of residents speaking a language other than English at home.³³

ADDRESSING THE SPECTRUM OF RISK

Because of its emphasis on *prevention* and youth violence, Shannon CSI tends to primarily serve youth ages 12–17, in direct contrast to SSYI, which is focused on primary *intervention* and therefore serves young men ages 17–25.

In this regard, Shannon CSI and SSYI are complementary, allowing grantees to allocate resources along the prevention and intervention spectrum.

At the state level, representatives from both programs meet weekly to discuss emerging issues and ensure that the two programs’ efforts are being coordinated.

This interplay between Shannon CSI and SSYI allows grantee cities to direct resources to young people across all levels of risk, with the most intensive services being reserved for those at highest risk of exposure to violence.

A number of factors may help to explain the higher-than-average rates of violent crime in Worcester. Its poverty rate, for example, is nearly double that of Massachusetts as a whole (19% vs. 11%), as is its dropout rate (4% vs 2.5%), while its high-school graduation rate is 11% lower (72% vs 83%). The city has approximately 1,000 active gang or group members, of which 40% are under age 25.³⁴

Worcester has been a Shannon CSI site since 2006, and the program is run by the youth programs director of the Worcester Police Department's gang unit.³⁵ In order to carry out the requirements of Shannon CSI, Worcester partners with four community-based organizations: the Boys & Girls Club, Straight Ahead Ministries, the Worcester Community Action Council, and the Worcester Youth Center.³⁶

For 2016, Shannon CSI provided Worcester with approximately \$500,000, which was distributed in the following manner:

- **Youth Development (\$113,000):** 895 youth participated in development programs designed to enhance their interests, skills, and abilities, while 57 engaged in volunteer work or community service programs. The Gang Awareness for the Next Generation program, for example, connects youth ages 10–13 from gang-impacted neighborhoods with Worcester Police Department participants who facilitate summer activities, including sports and field trips, designed to show participants that they can play and work with kids who might otherwise be rivals. The purpose of the program is to “teach gang prevention, good decision making, and build healthy and positive bonds between police and the youth they serve.”³⁷
- **Case Management and Street Outreach (\$80,000):** 132 at-risk youth received case management services. As one example, the Boys & Girls Club operates a social intervention program called Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach. This program serves at-risk youth ages 10–18 and partners a case worker and a social worker with each client “to establish attainable goals and a service plan to develop life/coping skills that help prevent gang involvement.”³⁸ A job readiness program is also offered to older clients in order to help reduce the employment gap.
- **Education and Employment (\$148,000):** 109 at-risk or high-risk youth completed a subsidized summer employment program, and 24 graduated or passed a GED exam. For example, the Worcester Community Action Council's Start Our Success (SOS) program matches at-risk youth with appropriate subsidized summer employment. SOS youth have worked in a variety of areas, including recreational programs, food services for the homeless, clerical positions in the courts, and childcare.³⁹
- **Suppression (\$132,000):** The city conducted 603 law enforcement–supported home visits to at-risk or high-risk youth, while 23 “high-impact

players” were arraigned. Worcester’s Shannon CSI grant funds a program called Project Night Light, which was designed to enhance probation as a violence-suppression and prevention tool. The program involves home visits that are conducted by teams of police and probation officers and occur after a juvenile offender’s curfew.⁴⁰

In total, 1,617 youth were served by the Shannon CSI program in Worcester in 2016, including 56% at-risk youth, 33% high-risk youth, and 11% proven-risk youth.⁴¹ Of note is the lower number of proven-risk individuals, who are instead served directly by Worcester’s SSYI program.

WORCESTER RESULTS

A number of data points suggest that Worcester’s Shannon CSI program and related violence prevention activities have had a positive impact in recent years. First, for people between the ages of 10 and 24, which is the focus of Shannon CSI, from 2012 to 2016 the number of arrests for aggravated assault and simple assault in Worcester declined by 30% and 29%, respectively.⁴²

In addition, from 2014 to 2016 Worcester saw a 36% reduction in shooting victims, a 13% reduction in stabbings, and a 3% decrease in aggravated assaults.⁴³ This reduction occurred at a time when Worcester police reported fewer arrests than in any of the other previous five years.⁴⁴

As described by Worcester mayor Joseph M. Petty and city manager Edward M. Augustus Jr., “the most important aspect of this effort has been the collaboration of youth-serving agencies across our city, who are sharing information, resources, and even staffing in a combined effort to improve the lives of our young people.”⁴⁵

From 2014 to 2016 Worcester saw a 36% reduction in shooting victims, a 13% reduction in stabbings, and a 3% decrease in aggravated assaults.

SHANNON CSI RESULTS

Since Shannon CSI is a strategy focused on long-term prevention, it is more difficult to determine and evaluate its immediate impact on violence levels, as compared to a program like SSYI. A more formalized evaluation of the impact of Shannon CSI along the lines of the 2014 evaluation of SSYI would help provide valuable insight into the overall impact of the program.

That said, aggregate data from Shannon CSI sites throughout Massachusetts from 2012 to 2016 show a 19% decrease in the number of arrests for aggravated assault and a 20% decrease in the number of simple assault arrests involving young people ages 10–24.⁴⁶ Given that Shannon CSI funds are directed to the Massachusetts cities with

the highest risk factors for violence, these are meaningful reductions. Though without a formal evaluation, such results are difficult to attribute directly to the program.

SUMMARY

Both intervention and prevention programs are critical pieces of the violence reduction puzzle. While SSYI seeks to intervene with young people already engaged in violence, Shannon CSI is focused on youth at risk of going down that path.

The resources provided by Shannon CSI have also allowed some of Massachusetts' most impacted communities to improve their coordination of violence prevention services. With its emphasis on multi-agency cooperation, one of the undisputable benefits of the program, according to Worcester officials, is that "regional coordination between law enforcement and social and human services agencies has increased substantially."⁴⁷

MASSACHUSETTS SUMMARY

SSYI and Shannon CSI are providing more than \$12 million annually for violence prevention and intervention efforts across the state. These grant programs interact with each other in many cities with high rates of violence, allowing for the provision of services to young people, particularly young men of color, who are on the spectrum of risk for involvement in serious violence.

Importantly, the majority of these funds are being used to address the underlying causes of gun violence—such as poverty, lack of education, and inadequate mental health resources—rather than simply funding suppression tactics aimed at incarcerating at-risk young people. This investment in the public health approach to violence reduction pays large dividends in terms of the number of lives and taxpayer dollars saved.

At present, based on the available evidence, if a state with limited resources must choose between these two models, there is reason to believe that SSYI's proven-risk intervention strategy has a greater capacity for bringing about immediate reductions in violence levels than Shannon CSI's more generalized approach.

CONNECTICUT—PROJECT LONGEVITY

Connecticut has the fifth-lowest gun death rate in the United States.⁴⁸ Its gun homicide rate among young people ages 14–24 has fallen by nearly 54% since 2008 and is 60% lower than the national average.⁴⁹ In addition to having some of the strongest gun laws in the country, Connecticut is also one of the only states to invest directly in an evidence-based violence intervention strategy known as Group Violence Intervention (GVI). Connecticut's Project Longevity, first launched in 2012, uses state dollars to fund the implementation of GVI in New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport—cities that together account for more than 70% of gun homicides in the state.⁵⁰

Project Longevity was a response to high rates of violence seen in a handful of Connecticut cities. In order to address this growing problem, Governor Dannel Malloy, with the support of stakeholders that included Connecticut's US Attorney, a pair of influential state legislators, and the police chief of New Haven, announced the launch of Project Longevity on November 26, 2012. By 2014, the program was up and running in all three cities. As of the publication of this report, Project Longevity is funded for fiscal year 2017 at approximately \$885,000, compared to an overall state budget of more than \$30 billion.⁵¹

Despite its relatively small budget, early evaluations of Project Longevity show extremely promising results:

- **Combined gun homicides in the three Project Longevity cities have fallen from 75 in 2011 to just 31 in 2016, a more than 50% reduction.**⁵²
- **In New Haven, where Project Longevity was first implemented, and where the GVI strategy has been most successfully institutionalized, the number of fatal and non-fatal shootings were cut in half between 2011 and 2016.**⁵³

THE GVI MODEL

The Group Violence Intervention Strategy, implemented by the National Network for Safe Communities, is based on the insight that, in most American cities, an incredibly small and readily identifiable segment of the population is responsible for the vast majority of gun violence. These individuals are often affiliated with loose social networks that exist in a fluid state of competition and violent rivalry. In the context of GVI, the term “group” is used rather than “gang,” because such groups often lack the formal, hierarchical structure of traditional gangs. In cities across the country, these groups constitute less than 0.5% of a city's population but are consistently linked to up to 70% of shootings and homicides.⁵⁴

The GVI strategy calls for forming a partnership of community members, law enforcement officials, and social service providers to intervene with this high-risk population. This partnership first identifies the small population of those most at risk for involvement with violence and then brings those individuals together—in an in-person meeting known as a “call-in”—to communicate a powerful message that the violence must stop.⁵⁵

Importantly, this message comes from the moral voice of the community, often represented by clergy members, victims of gun violence, and reformed former perpetrators. Law enforcement representatives also deliver a message, in the most respectful terms possible, that if the community’s plea is ignored, swift legal action will be taken against any group responsible for a new act of lethal violence.

During the call-in, social service providers make a direct offer of meaningful and immediate help to attendees, including educational opportunities and job training. The call-in process is repeated until the intervention population understands that, at the request of the community, all promises made during the call-ins will be kept.

This “focused deterrence” strategy has led to impressive reductions in violent crime in cities across the US and is given the highest possible evidence rating by the National Institute of Justice.⁵⁶

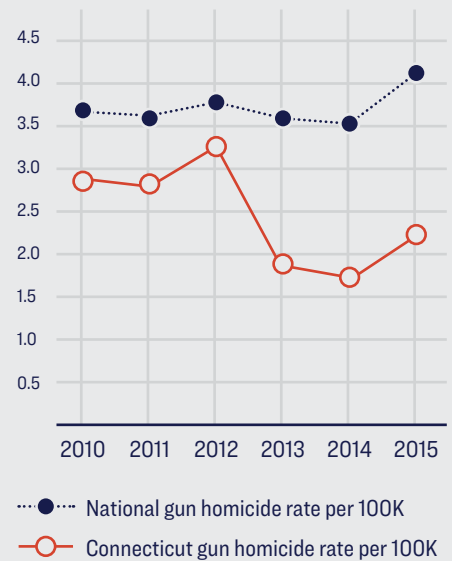
As the original Project Longevity city, New Haven’s GVI program has been in place the longest and provides an excellent example of how Project Longevity operates on the ground.⁵⁷

PROJECT LONGEVITY CASE STUDY: NEW HAVEN

Project Longevity has been up and running in New Haven, a city of 130,000 residents, since November 2012. The program’s initial results have been very impressive. **A Yale University study conducted in 2015 showed a 37% decrease in total shootings per month and a 73% decrease in group-related shootings per month.**⁵⁸ These same researchers stated that, “Three years into its implementation, our results suggest that the decrease in group-related shootings and homicides are because of Project Longevity.”⁵⁹

CONNECTICUT’S DROP IN GUN HOMICIDES

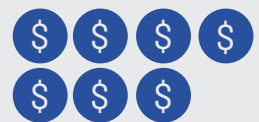
Connecticut’s gun homicide rate fell by 16% in six years, while the national gun homicide rate rose by 14%.



PROGRAM INVESTMENT



PROGRAM COST SAVINGS



At a total cost of less than \$1 million per year, Project Longevity has saved lives and generated an estimated \$7 million in cost savings for Connecticut taxpayers in its first few years of implementation.

Source: CDC WISQARS; Yale Institution for Social and Policy Studies; "Societal Cost per Firearm Injury, United States, 2010"

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

On the ground in New Haven, Project Longevity operates with two full-time staff: a project manager and a social services coordinator. These staff members report directly to the program's statewide coordinator, Brent Peterkin. New Haven's project manager since November 2014 has been Stacy Spell, a retired homicide detective with strong connections to the local community, who is seen as an ambassador between law enforcement and the residents of the impacted neighborhoods.

In implementing the GVI strategy, Project Longevity partners in New Haven first conducted a thorough review of crime data in order to identify the small segment of the population most involved with serious violence. Using this information, Project Longevity partners initiated the city's first "call-in" on November 26, 2012. New Haven has since conducted more than a dozen call-ins, reaching hundreds of high-risk individuals with an anti-violence message and a genuine offer of social support.⁶⁰

To supplement these ongoing call-ins, the Project Longevity team also conducts "custom notifications" where small teams of law enforcement officers and community members meet with particularly high risk individuals in an effort to deter violent behavior.

With such a small staff, the Project Longevity team in New Haven maximizes its impact by leveraging a wide array of partnerships with stakeholders that include law enforcement agencies, members of the local community, and social service providers.

THE ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT: COLLABORATION AND FOCUS ON VIOLENCE

On the law enforcement side, Project Longevity has helped foster an unprecedented level of inter-agency coordination around the issue of violence reduction. Under the umbrella of Project Longevity, a large group of law enforcement officials now meets in New Haven four days a week to discuss how best to respond to instances of violence and identify emerging problems.⁶¹

These near-daily meetings now include as many as 50 participants from within and around New Haven—all focused on crafting an effective response to violence.⁶²

WHY "GROUPS" INSTEAD OF "GANGS"?

"All gangs are groups, but not all groups are gangs. An exclusive focus on gangs, which is often understood to include notions like organization and leadership, will exclude a significant number of groups that contribute heavily to serious violence.

"Many (and often most) such groups will not fit the statutory definition of a gang. Nor will they meet even the common perception of what constitutes a gang. Such groups may or may not have a name, common symbols, signs or tags, an identifiable hierarchy, or other shared identifiers."

From the National Network for Safe Community's "Group Violence Intervention, An Implementation Guide"

This cooperation leads to interagency information sharing, which improves the ability of law enforcement to address and solve violent crime. Participants in these regular meetings credit them with having had a substantial impact on violence levels in New Haven.⁶³

For example, as recounted by Archie Generoso, the assistant police chief for investigations in New Haven, a young man released from juvenile detention was being tracked down by rivals intent on shooting him to death. New Haven law enforcement officials became aware of this situation and quickly helped relocate the young man to a different city, preventing potential violence.⁶⁴ When information is shared on a daily basis, this sort of creative problem solving becomes possible.

On the one weekday when the multi-agency intelligence meetings are not taking place, law enforcement officials instead host a “CompStat” meeting to discuss changes and trends in citywide crime statistics. This is open to the general public, which is not the case in many police departments. According to a local reporter, “It’s common to see [New Haven] cops coordinating with community members not only on the police matters, but on things such as turkey drives to help residents.”⁶⁵

Allowing for community participation in these law enforcement planning meetings contributes to the legitimacy of police efforts and provides an avenue for improving relations and building trust between law enforcement and the community.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY: ENGAGEMENT AND LEGITIMACY

The community itself is another pillar of Project Longevity in New Haven. Community members participate directly in the call-ins that are at the core of the strategy. Those who have been impacted by violence often speak at call-ins, testifying about their pain and impressing upon attendees that the violence must stop.

By participating directly in the Project Longevity process, community members demonstrate to those involved with street violence that it’s their neighbors and peers—not an outside police force—who want the shootings and violence to stop. This creates a legitimacy that simply cannot come from any other source. As program manager Stacy Spell explains, “The community here in New Haven was tired of the violence. When you have community members acting as ambassadors for the program and raising their hands to get involved, that’s a home run every time.”⁶⁶

To engage local residents, Project Longevity staff members have partnered with community management teams at the neighborhood level. These teams meet monthly to discuss neighborhood issues and, in many neighborhoods, opportunities for participating with Project Longevity.

SOCIAL SERVICES: ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

The provision of meaningful social services is another key component of Project Longevity in New Haven, where L. Berta Holmes is the full-time social services coordinator. Project Longevity engages with clients in a variety of ways to help meet their needs. Call-in attendees are offered an opportunity to take advantage of social services and are given Holmes' office number and told they can get in touch with her at any time.

While some call-in attendees follow up with this offer, by far the largest number of clients come from word-of-mouth referrals. For example, people serving jail time will hear that Project Longevity is available to provide assistance to them upon their release and will get in touch with staff when they return to the community.

In order to help at-risk individuals transition to a healthier lifestyle, Project Longevity has engaged a large number of service providers in the New Haven area.⁶⁷ Working with these providers, Project Longevity helps clients with employment, housing assistance, vocational training, educational opportunities, and other needs.⁶⁸ Current clients range in age from 21 to 57, and Project Longevity has almost 100 client files—although not all of these are active because clients sometimes drop in and out of the program.

According to Holmes, “For many of our clients, this is not just a second chance, but a ninth or a tenth chance.”⁶⁹ As one illustration of the program's success with social services, Holmes describes a client who was referred to Project Longevity while in prison and came to see her upon his release. She helped him obtain a construction job despite his record of 18 prior felony convictions.

“He has now joined a union, which is a big deal, and he feels like he's made it,” says Holmes. This client is now clear of parole and has maintained his job, making him far less likely to get wrapped back up in the cycle of street violence. As social activist and Los Angeles-based violence prevention advocate Father Greg Boyle has said, “Nothing stops a bullet like a job.”⁷⁰

A NOTE ON THE COST OF GUN VIOLENCE AND TAXPAYERS

Much of the cost of gun violence is shouldered directly by taxpayers. Studies show that as many as 85% of gunshot victims are either uninsured or covered by publicly funded insurance, such as Medicaid. Economists have estimated that on average, taxpayers pay about \$25,000 in medical expenses per fatal shooting, nearly \$32,000 per non-fatal shooting requiring hospitalization, and just over \$1,000 for each non-fatal shooting treated only in an emergency room. In addition, the more than \$400,000 in costs associated with police investigations and related criminal justice expenses are borne exclusively by taxpayers.

Averting a single gun homicide saves taxpayers an average of \$464,000, preventing a non-fatal shooting involving hospitalization saves taxpayers an average of \$40,000, and preventing a non-fatal shooting requiring emergency department treatment saves taxpayers more than \$9,000.

Sources: Linda Gunderson, “The Financial Costs of Gun Violence,” and Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, “Societal Cost per Firearm Injury, United States, 2010”

RESULTS: LIVES AND TAXPAYER DOLLARS SAVED

Since the implementation of Project Longevity, New Haven has seen the following changes:

- **Non-fatal shootings decreased by more than 50% between 2011 and 2015.**
- **Fatal shootings decreased by nearly 60% between 2011 and 2016.**
- **Police responded to 426 complaints of shots fired in 2011, compared to just 90 such complaints by 2015—a 79% decline.⁷¹**

Reductions in gun violence in New Haven have produced an estimated annual net savings of \$7 million in the program's first few years of operation.⁷² This means that, for every taxpayer dollar spent on Project Longevity, nearly six taxpayer dollars were saved based on results achieved in New Haven alone.

CONNECTICUT SUMMARY

With a yearly investment of less than \$1 million in the Group Violence Intervention model for its most impacted cities, Connecticut is saving lives and, at the same time, millions of taxpayer dollars generated from reduced healthcare, law enforcement, and other costs related to gun violence. Evaluations from Bridgeport and Hartford are expected in the near future, but even considering only the effects of Project Longevity in New Haven, where the level of overall shootings has been cut in half since 2011, the program appears to have been well worth the investment.

NEW YORK—GIVE INITIATIVE AND OPERATION SNUG

New York State has the third-lowest rate of gun death in the nation and the thirteenth-lowest rate of gun homicide.⁷³ From 2010 to 2015, New York's gun homicide rate fell by 23%, driven in part by a nearly 30% decline in gun homicides among young people ages 14–24. Nationally, both the overall gun homicide rate and the gun homicide rate among people ages 14–24 increased over this same period.⁷⁴

New York's comprehensive response to gun violence includes strong gun laws,⁷⁵ cutting-edge law enforcement and prosecution strategies that de-emphasize a reliance on incarceration,⁷⁶ and also a state-level investment in evidence-based gun violence prevention and intervention strategies, which is the primary focus of this report.

This investment comes in the form of two state programs: the Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative and Operation SNUG,⁷⁷ which are administered together by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). GIVE provides funding to law enforcement agencies to pursue a limited number of evidence-based gun violence reduction strategies, including GVI, while SNUG funds a public health approach to violence reduction that is based on the Cure Violence model of providing street outreach to high-risk individuals.

From 2014 to 2017, New York invested approximately \$58 million in evidence-based gun violence prevention and intervention strategies.

From 2014 to 2017, New York invested approximately \$58 million in evidence-based gun violence prevention and intervention strategies—\$46 million for GIVE and \$12 million for SNUG—an average of \$19 million per year in a state with a total budget of more than \$150 billion.⁷⁸ This level of funding makes New York one of the nation's leaders when it comes to direct investment in on-the-ground gun violence prevention programming.

According to David Kennedy of the National Network for Safe Communities, “New York's commitment to funding proven crime reduction programs based on key principles of police legitimacy, community empowerment and engagement, and strategic enforcement is groundbreaking. This is one of the rare instances where we see a state taking the lead in this work.”⁷⁹

GUN INVOLVED VIOLENCE ELIMINATION PROGRAM (GIVE)

New York's Gun Involved Violence Elimination Initiative was launched in 2014 in response to a puzzling phenomenon. From 1990 to 2014, gun homicides fell by a remarkable 88% in New York City.⁸⁰ However, during those same years, fatal shootings for all areas outside of New York City remained relatively stable.⁸¹ To help address

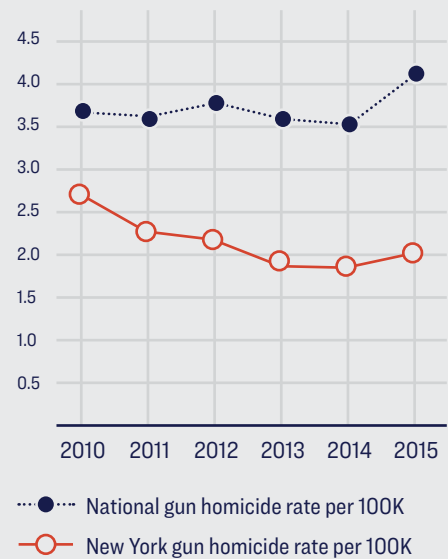
stubborn rates of gun violence in these jurisdictions, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced in February 2014 that GIVE would be launched as a key component of New York State’s comprehensive strategy to reduce gun-related homicides and assaults.⁸²

Since 2014, GIVE has provided more than \$13 million annually to law enforcement agencies in 17 New York counties. A county receiving GIVE funding is required to develop a comprehensive violence elimination plan, which must incorporate at least two strategies from the following menu of evidence-based gun violence reduction options:

- **Street Outreach:** Trained individuals with cultural competency work directly with those most at risk for violent behavior in order to mediate potentially violent conflicts and address root causes of violence by identifying clients’ needs and helping to provide access to preventive services such as educational opportunities, mental health care, tattoo removal, and employment training.
- **Focused Deterrence (Group Violence Intervention):** A partnership of community members, law enforcement, and social service providers identifies the small population of those most at risk for involvement with violence and then, at an in-person meeting known as a “call-in,” communicates a powerful message that the violence must stop and that, at the request of the community, concerted law enforcement action will be taken against the next group responsible for violent crime. To help address the root causes of violence, social services are also offered and provided to program participants that express interest.
- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED):** This strategy involves making changes to a city’s built environment that will reduce criminal activity. For example, installing exterior lighting and security cameras or cleaning up and fencing off vacant lots that tend to attract crime.
- **Hot Spots Policing:** This strategy employs a range of law enforcement interventions that focus resources on “micro locations” where crime is concentrated, including the deployment of additional on-foot officer patrols.⁸³

NEW YORK’S DROP IN GUN HOMICIDES

New York’s gun homicide rate fell by 23% in six years, while the national gun homicide rate rose by 14%.



NY COST OF GUN VIOLENCE
\$5.6 BILLION

PROGRAM COST
\$20 MILLION

The state’s \$20 million investment in evidence-based violence reduction pales in comparison to the overall cost of gun violence in New York—an estimated \$5.6 billion per year.

Sources: CDC WISQARS; New York FY 2018 State Budget; “Cost of Gun Violence in New York,” Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

GIVE was also designed to address another important aspect of gun violence prevention: building confidence in the criminal justice system by supporting policing initiatives that improve police legitimacy and foster community engagement with crime prevention efforts. As part of this, participating GIVE counties are required to incorporate procedural justice components into their comprehensive violence elimination plans.⁸⁴

According to the Division of Criminal Justice Services, procedural justice is about improving relationships between police and community members by ensuring that “interactions between law enforcement and community members are fair, and that individuals who come in contact with the criminal justice system believe they are being treated equitably during those encounters.”⁸⁵ Examples of this include conflict de-escalation training for officers, increased foot patrols where officers focus on meeting local residents and understanding their needs, and neighborhood events designed to improve community/police relations.

As explained in the 2015 GIVE Annual Report, “Building bridges between the community and law enforcement is essential, as enforcement alone cannot turn the tide against gun violence.”⁸⁶

OVERSIGHT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

At the outset of GIVE, DCJS organized a two-day statewide conference with representatives from all 17 grantee sites in order to familiarize grantees with the various GIVE strategies.⁸⁷ This included presentations from nationally recognized experts in the field of violence prevention, who covered topics such as “leadership, accountability, law enforcement legitimacy, effective strategies for targeting serious violence, engaging the private and public sector, identifying top offenders, and crime hot spots.”⁸⁸

Once grantee communities were familiar with the GIVE strategies, DCJS hosted additional technical assistance trainings to drill down on the specifics of particular approaches. For example, one such training, dubbed “Ceasefire University,” was taught by David Kennedy of the National Network for Safe Communities.⁸⁹

“Legitimacy in law enforcement is not just a nascent strategy. It is a movement. It is a movement with the potential to transform the way this nation does law enforcement, achieves community safety, and heals longstanding rifts between police and minority communities.”

Tracey L. Meares, “The Legitimacy of Police Among Young African American Men,” Marquette Law Review, 2009

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

Through the groundbreaking work of academics like Yale’s Tracey Meares, Andrew Papachristos, and Tom Tyler, there is increasing evidence that people are most likely to follow the law when they have positive interactions with law enforcement and perceive the procedures used to enforce the law as fair and just. In many urban areas with high levels of violence, community/police relations are often highly strained, decreasing the legitimacy of law enforcement efforts.

By making procedural justice a core component of GIVE, New York incentivizes police to think more critically about how they’re perceived by the communities they’re tasked with protecting and to incorporate respect and fairness into day-to-day interactions. By taking steps to enhance its legitimacy, law enforcement is building trust and improving its ability to address violent crime.

DCJS also provides ongoing technical training and facilitates cross-jurisdiction information sharing. One way in which this is accomplished is through a yearly, in-person conference of GIVE grantees, convened by DCJS. At this symposium, grantees hear from experts on a variety of topics and have a chance to share best practices from the field.⁹⁰

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

A final core component of GIVE is crime data analysis, which is facilitated through a partnership with crime analysis centers that are operated in a number of GIVE counties. In conjunction with police department-based crime analysts, the crime analysis centers⁹¹ provide real-time data and intelligence about violent crime that GIVE jurisdictions can then use to strategically guide their respective violence elimination plans. In addition, statistics regarding gun-related crimes are reported by GIVE grantees as a condition of funding and are reported by DCJS on a quarterly basis.⁹²

GIVE CASE STUDY: ALBANY

In Albany County, the most recent round of GIVE funding (July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017) provided \$801,213 to be shared by the Albany Police Department, as well as the District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, and Probation Department.⁹³ As part of its requirements as a GIVE grantee, Albany created a violence elimination plan, which incorporates implementation of the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) strategy and also street outreach work through the creation of a Prevention Services Unit housed within the Albany Police Department.

Since the implementation of these strategies, gun violence numbers in Albany have been moving in the right direction:

- **Firearm-related homicides fell from five in 2014 to just one in 2016.**
- **Firearm-related aggravated assaults dropped from 46 incidents in 2014 to 33 for 2016—a 28% reduction.**
- **The overall number of non-fatal shooting victims dropped from 39 in 2014 to 31 in 2016—a 21% decline.**⁹⁴

PREVENTION SERVICES UNIT (STREET OUTREACH)

With its portion of the Albany County GIVE grant, the Albany Police Department created an innovative Prevention Services Unit (PSU).⁹⁵ This street outreach unit consists of three social workers and five officers—one of whom is an active preacher—chosen for their experience with youth and community outreach as well as their willingness to engage the community in non-traditional ways.

The PSU specializes in doing outreach and case management with individuals who, based on crime data and community input, are most at risk for participation in violence.⁹⁶ The PSU obtains referrals from family members, the city's community policing group, and its trauma outreach team, which goes to the local hospital to meet with all victims of serious violence and their families in order to provide support and minimize attempts at retaliation.

Members of the PSU begin by opening a line of communication with potential clients, often with the help of the client's family, in order to begin establishing credibility. Once a certain level of trust is attained, the PSU team will convey the message that they can help at-risk individuals with things like obtaining food for their children, drug treatment, whatever the person may need most—even relocation services if there is a strong risk posed by remaining in a certain neighborhood.⁹⁷

GROUP VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

The other major element of Albany's violence elimination plan is the use of the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) strategy, which is overseen by Albany's anti-violence coordinator, a position entirely funded by GIVE.⁹⁸

In launching the GVI strategy, Albany PD officers used a variety of information sources including crime data, officer knowledge, social media analysis, and input from parole officers to map out the groups most involved with violent crime in Albany and to identify the list of invitees for the first call-in, which was held in July 2015.⁹⁹

The call-in was attended by approximately 25 individuals involved with violence along with roughly 100 members of the wider community, law enforcement officials, and social service providers. Moderated by Albany PD's anti-violence coordinator, the call-in featured powerful speakers from the community, who asked for the violence to stop. The social service providers told attendees about available services such as job training and educational opportunities.

Finally, law enforcement officers presented an enforcement action recently taken against a violent group and, in a respectful manner, warned the attendees that further acts of violence would lead to consequences for the responsible group. Officers asked for attendees to spread this message to their networks so that people would understand that law enforcement was focusing on violence.

Albany's second call-in was held in December 2015 and had a cohort of about 20 individual invitees.¹⁰⁰ After a third call-in was held in November 2016 and a fourth in

The PSU team conveys the message that they can help at-risk individuals with things like obtaining food for their children, drug treatment, and even relocation services.

April 2017, a total of 89 high-risk individuals had been reached directly. Between the first and third call-in, Albany went for more than a year—420 straight days—without a single homicide.¹⁰¹

SUMMARY

GIVE is unique as a state-level violence prevention model because it is focused exclusively on reducing gun violence. According to Michael Green, executive deputy commissioner for DCJS, “There’s no question the target here is shootings and homicides, and our goal here is to drive those down and save lives.”¹⁰²

Although a comprehensive evaluation is still pending, initial data from several GIVE sites is encouraging. In addition to the results from Albany, areas like Niagara Falls, Newburgh, and Rochester have seen reductions in shootings of 35%, 10%, and 7%, respectively, in the years following GIVE implementation.¹⁰³

GIVE strikes a balance by allowing grantees to pursue solutions that make sense to them, but within a limited range of evidence-based options set out by the state. DCJS then provides vital infrastructure to help maximize the efficacy of local efforts by giving technical assistance as required, facilitating data collection and analysis, and establishing a mechanism by which grantees can communicate regularly and share best practices.

Although GIVE is a more law-enforcement-centric program than the others discussed in this report, it contains a number of important provisions that encourage community-based policing, procedural justice, and improved relationships between community and law enforcement. Gun violence is a problem that requires much more than just law enforcement to address, but law enforcement has an important role to play. GIVE helps to move police strategies in a direction that prioritizes community involvement and does not rely on widespread incarceration as a solution.

Between the first and third call-in, Albany went for more than a year—420 straight days—without a single homicide.

OPERATION SNUG

New York is also one of the only states in the nation investing directly in an evidence-based violence reduction strategy referred to generically as “street outreach work.” New York’s effort is based on a model developed by the Chicago-based violence-prevention organization Cure Violence.

The Cure Violence model is a public health approach to violence reduction that identifies individuals in a given area who are most at risk for involvement in gun violence and then uses culturally competent case managers to work directly with these

individuals to help create behavior change and address the root causes of violence.¹⁰⁴ The model also calls for a local campaign to change social norms surrounding the acceptability of the use of violence.

New York State first funded street outreach programs in 2009, calling the program Operation SNUG. Since that time, SNUG has evolved, with DCJS strengthening oversight by providing training and technical assistance to help ensure the program's efficacy. Funding was initially patchy, but got back on track after state politicians, in conjunction with community members, began calling for an expansion of the street outreach strategy in the wake of a comprehensive evaluation conducted by the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), which led to a number of important structural reforms.¹⁰⁵

For fiscal year 2017–18, New York leaders agreed to an increase of the overall SNUG budget from \$4.9 to \$5.1 million, with portions of funding being directed to specific geographic areas.¹⁰⁶ As of July 2017, SNUG is using state dollars to operate street outreach programs in a total of 11 sites across New York State.¹⁰⁷

The Cure Violence model calls for a local campaign to change social norms surrounding the acceptability of the use of violence.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Each SNUG site is slightly different in size, but all sites follow the same organizational structure, with a program manager who oversees the site, an outreach worker supervisor, and a number of trained outreach workers, who each have a caseload of approximately seven to ten clients. Each SNUG site is housed within a community-based nonprofit organization that oversees implementation of the program.¹⁰⁸

Depending on size, sites operate with a yearly budget of between \$300,000 and \$600,000. Across the state, SNUG has approximately 75 staff members distributed among its 11 sites.¹⁰⁹

DCJS OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

DCJS currently has two full-time employees, Jeff Clark and Damon Bacote, responsible for overseeing SNUG sites to ensure the efficacy of operations, fidelity to the Cure Violence model, and the transmission of best practices among the 11 sites.

TRAINING

As director of training, Bacote assesses ongoing training needs by holding one in-person site visit per month with all sites. He also attends every major training event and conducts regular calls with program managers from each site as way to discuss operations and best practices.¹¹⁰

For SNUG program managers, there is a separate 40-hour course on management and supervision issues. In addition, DCJS will conduct as-needed trainings on a variety of topics. DCJS also works with researchers to conduct site evaluations for the purposes of improving the delivery of services.¹¹¹

DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Data management is an important element of SNUG. Another key aspect of the director of training's role is to help sites ensure that outreach workers are using best practices for data collection and analysis. Cure Violence provides SNUG with its comprehensive database system—used to track data and outcomes for Cure Violence sites across the country—and SNUG outreach workers are responsible for inputting a daily log to track how time is spent, the number of contacts with clients, number of mediations conducted, number of community activities organized, and data regarding levels of violence.¹¹²

COMMUNICATION AND SHARING OF BEST PRACTICES

Key oversight is also provided by Clark, the SNUG director, who has monthly calls with individual site program managers to discuss ongoing issues and identify areas of improvement. Based on regular contact and on the data reported from each site, Clark provides reviews that identify strengths and areas of improvement.

All SNUG sites are now equipped with smart televisions and video conference equipment to allow sites to see each other and share ideas. Using technology in this way helps reduce the travel expenses related to training, since there are more than 400 miles between sites like Buffalo and Wyandanch.

In addition, DCJS convenes a conference every six months in Albany for all program managers and outreach worker supervisors to come together to discuss topics like time management, dealing with trauma (not only within the community, but also within the SNUG workforce itself), crime-mapping skills, and data management.¹¹³

As of July 2017, SNUG is using state dollars to operate street outreach programs in a total of 11 sites across New York State.

SNUG SITE CASE STUDY: JACOBI HOSPITAL—STAND UP TO VIOLENCE

One of the 11 SNUG sites is located at Jacobi Medical Center,¹¹⁴ which serves the Bronx in New York City, and is known as Stand Up to Violence (SUV). As a level-one trauma center, Jacobi serves a large number of gunshot and stab victims.

As part of its SNUG program, which is overseen by program manager Erika Mendelsohn, SUV has two teams of street outreach workers and also a unique outreach program for hospital patients that is modeled on the Hospital-based Violence Intervention Program (HVIP) model.¹¹⁵

STREET OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Jacobi SNUG site has two teams of street outreach workers that focus on two different areas: the first team focuses on a territory that enters both the 47th and 49th Police Precincts, and the second focuses exclusively on territory that is located in the 43rd Precinct. These areas were chosen based on high incident rates of violence.

Both street outreach teams at Jacobi have a single outreach worker supervisor who oversees three outreach workers.

These teams are overseen by the program manager, who is a licensed social worker, and the site also employs a part-time director of community outreach, a local clergy member who has been doing community-building and violence reduction work for more than 40 years.

Outreach workers are required to complete the weeklong Violence Interruption Reduction Training (VIRT) that is put on by technical assistance providers from Cure Violence.

According to Mendelsohn, this training gives new outreach workers a strong foundation of skills, and she also notes that consistent oversight from street outreach supervisors and time spent on the streets are also key sources of training.

At Jacobi, outreach workers aim to have a caseload of between seven and ten clients at a given time. According to Mendelsohn, having a slightly smaller caseload of higher-risk clients allows outreach workers to provide more frequent contact while still allowing them to adequately collect data and track how they are spending their time—a critical element of the Cure Violence model.¹¹⁶ There is a weekly staff meeting in the Jacobi SNUG office for the entire street outreach team to gather together to discuss pertinent issues and share information.

A smaller caseload of higher-risk clients allows outreach workers to provide more frequent contacts while still collecting data and tracking time.

HOSPITAL-BASED WORK

In addition to its two street outreach teams, SUV also houses a team based on the HVIP model, which focuses on providing services to individuals who are in the hospital recovering from violent injuries. This team consists of the SUV program manager, a pediatrician who specializes in seeing trauma patients, and a “credible messenger” from the community.¹¹⁷

THE TEACHABLE MOMENT

When a violently injured patient reaches the hospital, the SUV team will receive an email alert. The three-person team then pays a visit to all recovering patients in order to introduce themselves and explain the services they have to offer. This is an evidence-based practice grounded in the notion that recovering from a violent injury presents a unique “teachable moment” in which patients are particularly open to receiving help and making behavioral changes.¹¹⁸

ADDRESSING RISK FACTORS

The team's goal is to provide whatever services a client might need in order to address the risk factors of violent re-injury. Studies show that one of the highest risk factors for future violence is being the victim of a shooting or stabbing, so these SUV clients are automatically considered to be at high risk for future injury or participation in violence.¹¹⁹ To address risk factors for future violence, the SUV team will provide screenings for PTSD and will either work directly with clients that have PTSD symptoms, or will refer clients to specialized mental health services.

For clients with long-term needs, the credible messenger's role is to continue to engage with clients over time to make sure they are getting the services and help they need. This generally happens with follow-up appointments that take place in the hospital's trauma clinic.¹²⁰

CLIENT PARTICIPATION

According to SUV, almost 100% of patients are interested in receiving at least some services, and roughly 25% of clients have "significant needs," which include issues such as homelessness or substance abuse. SUV will also help clients by alerting them to the existence of compensation through the New York State Office of Victim Services, and will assist clients in applying for compensation to cover medical bills, as requested.

Clients that come to the SUV program through the hospital are also linked with SUV's outreach workers, where appropriate, so that they can continue to be engaged and directed to services after discharge from the hospital.¹²¹ Between the street-based and hospital-based teams, SUV is providing services to at-risk clients both before and after violent injury occurs.

SPOTLIGHTING CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE: ERICA FORD AND LIFE CAMP, INC.

A lifetime violence prevention activist, Jamaica, Queens, community leader Erica Ford was moved to further action to address gun violence after the tragic murder of two children in her neighborhood. Her response was to launch LIFE (Love Ignites Freedom through Education) Camp, Inc., an organization that provides at-risk youth with the tools they need to stay in school, away from violence, and out of the criminal justice system. "It's helping them to see a different route in their journey called life," says Ms. Ford.

LIFE Camp's impact zone is a 20-block area in the South Jamaica area of New York City. In order to directly address gun violence, the program has been implementing and developing a holistic approach to violence prevention and intervention that incorporates the Cure Violence street outreach model, with great success.

In fact, **the impact zone went 569 days without a single shooting between 2015 and 2016**—in a neighborhood that previously experienced an average of 17 shootings and four gun homicides each year.

Ms. Ford has long advocated for the public health approach to gun violence prevention and was a powerful voice in advocating for the implementation of New York's Operation SNUG, which is now funding street outreach work in sites across the state. LIFE Camp recently received funding from the state to expand to an additional neighborhood, a testament to the success of this work and the important role that states can play in identifying and lifting up outstanding anti-violence efforts.

RESULTS TO DATE

While a formal evaluation has yet to be conducted, there have been promising reductions in gun violence since the implementation of SNUG at Jacobi:

- **In the three Jacobi SNUG precincts, combined shootings have fallen from 114 in 2014 to 47 in 2016, a nearly 60% reduction.**
- **In the 43rd Precinct overall, shootings have decreased from 39 in 2014 to 18 in 2016, a more than 50% decline.**
- **Shootings in the 47th Precinct have decreased by 60%—from 58 shootings in 2014 to 23 in 2016.¹²²**

Through this combination of services, the SNUG site at Jacobi has seen a reduction in violence levels each year since its initial launch in 2014 and is viewed as a model program by SNUG administrators. The entire program budget comes from state dollars that are provided through Operation SNUG.

OPERATION SNUG SUMMARY

With SNUG, New York State is recognizing that law enforcement approaches to violence reduction on their own are not enough to adequately address stubborn levels of urban gun violence. Strategies that draw on the public health framework, like Cure Violence, are also an essential part of a comprehensive response. Too often, public funds are directed exclusively to law enforcement strategies, at the expense of other community-driven solutions that focus on healing rather than incarceration. States looking to invest in evidence-based solutions to gun violence need to ensure that their portfolios are balanced with a healthy mix of prevention and intervention strategies to complement existing suppression efforts.

NEW YORK SUMMARY

GIVE and SNUG are part of a comprehensive strategy by New York State to specifically address gun violence through evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies that blend elements of law enforcement and public health perspectives. The increasing budget of SNUG is a testament to the fact that law enforcement solutions alone are not enough to turn the tide on gun violence.

In addition, the oversight provided by DCJS, which administers both programs, is a model for how a state-level grant system can provide technical support, training, and data collection assistance for local sites that are working to implement evidence-based violence reduction strategies. Although all such programs are inherently local, having a robust state oversight structure can help to create additional accountability, and networks in which best practices can be shared among grantees.

With its balanced investment in evidence-based violence reduction strategies and renewed focus on reducing gun-related violence, New York is likely to continue to build on its impressive gains in public safety in the coming years.

PART ONE SUMMARY

Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York are three of just five states in America (the others are California and Illinois) to make a direct financial investment in evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs. Evaluations show that these investments are paying large dividends—saving lives and taxpayer dollars by addressing the root causes of serious violence.

State leaders and violence prevention activists across the country should take note. If more states stepped up and embraced these strategies, then we could start to break the cycle of violence in our most impacted cities. **The urban gun violence epidemic, like the opioid crisis, is a public health emergency. Similar in scale and wreaking havoc across the country, shootings in our cities require a comparable mustering of resources and bipartisan call to action to be properly addressed.**

Cities cannot be asked to combat serious violence alone without additional resources from other levels of government. At present, not nearly enough states are investing in programs that have been proven to work.

While each state is different, state-level violence prevention and intervention programs share a number of essential features. The next section of this report discusses those key elements in detail and provides a roadmap for policymakers and advocates who want to take action.

PART TWO

Six Key Elements of
Successful State Violence
Reduction Programs

It's time for states to take action— the gun violence crisis in our cities cannot continue.

Too many people are killed or badly injured in shootings on our nation's streets each year. The United States suffered nearly 13,000 gun homicides in 2015 alone, and 63,000 more were wounded, often gravely, in nonfatal, intentional shootings.

A number of promising, evidence-based violence prevention and intervention strategies exist, as outlined in the first part of this report, but those strategies are not receiving the widespread, systemic support they need in order to be effectively scaled up in American cities. At present, only five states—California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, and New York—are directly funding these lifesaving strategies.

The status quo simply isn't working. Given the extreme humanitarian and financial cost of gun violence, more states need to step up and make this investment a standard part of their strategy for addressing serious violence.

Although violence reduction efforts are inherently local, states have an incredibly important role to play in enabling evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs in cities. In addition to providing badly needed funding for these efforts, states can also create an oversight infrastructure to help improve the efficacy of on-the-ground efforts.

The United States suffered
nearly 13,000 gun homicides
in 2015 alone, and 63,000
more were wounded.

In New York, for example, the state-funded Operation SNUG has helped create a professionalized workforce of more than 70 street outreach workers that receive standardized training and ongoing support. With assistance from the state, the 11 SNUG sites across New York regularly conduct live meetings to share best practices and are collecting and analyzing data with a uniform system.

There's no one-size-fits-all model for investing in evidence-based violence prevention and intervention strategies. However, in studying the programs in place in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, we've identified a number of key elements that should be incorporated into state-level violence reduction programs in order to maximize outcomes.

For states looking to invest in public safety by starting such a program, these six elements should be present:

- 1. Focus on High-Risk People and Places**
- 2. Implement Evidence-Based Strategies**
- 3. Provide Robust State-Level Coordination**
- 4. Conduct Regular Program Evaluations**
- 5. Commit to Long-Term, Stable Funding**
- 6. Facilitate Community Input and Engagement**

The following pages discuss each of these in close detail. With these key elements in place, a state can expect to see an immediate and measurable return on investment in terms of both lives and taxpayer dollars saved.

KEY ELEMENT ONE

FOCUS ON HIGH-RISK PEOPLE AND PLACES

Gun violence is one of the primary drivers of a city's overall violence problem, with shootings generally accounting for at least 70% of all homicides in metropolitan areas.¹ In 2016, gun-related homicides in Chicago made up 90% of the city's total killings.² If states want to help reduce serious violence, then a direct investment in programs that target gun violence is essential.

Focusing a grant program on a specific problem provides a concrete way to measure outcomes, refine strategies, and prevent mission creep, which can hurt a program by pulling it in too many directions at once. This is also a way to help address the primary safety concerns of impacted citizens. In neighborhoods where rampant gun violence makes it unsafe to be in the streets at night, a program that focuses on reducing non-violent crimes is not likely to be the best allocation of limited resources.

Research shows that gun violence in American cities is highly concentrated within specific neighborhoods and that only a very small percentage of any given population is at high risk for involvement with serious violence. In Boston, for example, a 2015 study showed that just 1% of youth ages 15–24 were responsible for more than *half* of all shootings and that 70% of total shootings over a 30-year period were concentrated in a geographical area covering only 5% of the city.³ Rapid reductions in violence levels are possible when high-risk locations and people are the focus of intervention efforts.

In order to maximize the impact of state-level gun violence reduction grant programs, resources should be concentrated on areas that are disproportionately impacted by violence and directed to individuals in those areas who are at highest risk.

FOCUSING ON GUN VIOLENCE

New York's experience with GIVE and its predecessor show how a grant program that isn't focused on a specific problem may not be the most efficient use of limited resources.

GIVE actually replaced a previous state-level grant program called Operation IMPACT (Integrated Municipal Police Anti-Crime Teams), which began in 2004 and gave state funds to local law enforcement agencies to assist with capacity for addressing crime.⁴ Although IMPACT was successful by some measures, most of its gains were seen in reductions in property crimes. While overall violent crimes were down 7.5% in New York State in 2013, in IMPACT jurisdictions, firearm-related homicides had actually increased 4% compared to the previous year.⁵

According to New York officials, while it was beneficial that IMPACT required law enforcement agencies to work together in a coordinated manner to address crime, part of the problem with the model was that it allowed grantee jurisdictions to do whatever they wanted with the funding. Nor was there a specific focus on gun-related violence, which many communities report to be their most pressing concern.⁶

The solution was to redesign the program with a new emphasis on reducing gun violence using evidence-based violence prevention and intervention strategies. GIVE serves the same 17 counties as were originally served by IMPACT, however, unlike its predecessor program, GIVE requires those jurisdictions to focus exclusively on reducing and preventing shootings. This allows GIVE administrators to use concrete metrics—the number of gun-related violent crimes in a given jurisdiction—to measure the success and efficacy of the program.

In Connecticut, the three cities of New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport account for roughly 70% of the state's gun-related homicides.

Because the grant infrastructure of IMPACT was already in place, it was not necessary to start from scratch or to build up a large amount of political will to implement GIVE. Instead, the previously existing IMPACT infrastructure was repurposed and refocused on the single issue of gun violence.⁷

Legislators and activists in states struggling with gun violence may want to look for already-existing, unfocused funding streams that could be repurposed to specifically address gun violence.

FOCUSING ON HIGH-RISK PLACES

Interpersonal gun violence is not evenly distributed throughout a state. In Connecticut, for example, the three cities of New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport account for roughly 70% of the state's gun-related homicides. Given the reality of limited state resources, a violence prevention and intervention grant program should be focused on the cities and areas most severely impacted.

In Connecticut, this was achieved through Project Longevity, which specifically funds an evidence-based violence intervention strategy in the state's three most impacted cities. With the help of a yearly investment of less than \$1 million, these three cities have seen gun-related homicides fall from 75 in 2011 to just 31 in 2016—a more than 50% reduction.⁸

Had this investment been spread out over a large number of cities, it's unlikely that such strong results would have been achieved. Focusing where the problem is most

severe takes discipline, but is the path by which the greatest number of lives can be saved in the shortest time.

In Massachusetts, both SSYI and Shannon CSI are focused on areas disproportionately impacted by violence. The executive order that established the framework for SSYI specifies that the program must be implemented in “communities with the highest number of youth homicides and serious assaults.”⁹ Using the executive order as a starting point, the initial round of SSYI funding was made available to a pool of 20 cities with high levels of violent crime.

It’s also important that available funds flow to the neighborhoods of a city that are disproportionately impacted by violence. With Shannon CSI, funding is only available to cities with high rates of violence, but, more specifically, applicants proposing “programs that target geographical locations that demonstrate high levels of gang violence”¹⁰ are given preference for purposes of awarding grants. Resources are therefore more likely to be directed to the particular neighborhoods where need is greatest.

Because serious violence can be traced to a few small pockets in any given city, spreading resources out evenly over the entire city is not the most effective use of limited resources.

Less than 0.5% of a city’s residents are consistently linked to up to 70% of the city’s shootings and gun-related homicides.

FOCUSING ON HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS

Research shows that, in cities across America, a very small and readily identifiable population—often less than 0.5% of a city’s residents—are consistently linked to up to 70% of the city’s shootings and gun-related homicides.¹¹ In order to maximize impact, it’s critical that state-level gun violence reduction grants direct resources to this high-risk population.

The SSYI program of Massachusetts provides the clearest example of this principle in action. SSYI grantees must exclusively provide services to young men ages 17–24 who are at “proven risk” of being involved in gun violence as either victims or perpetrators. In order to maintain focus on this population, each grantee must work with local law enforcement and community partners to develop a list of proven-risk youth. SSYI-funded services are only to be provided to individuals on that list.

SSYI’s proven-risk service model was developed based on research from a variety of disciplines and input from an array of violence prevention stakeholders.¹² The program’s very narrow and intentional target population was derived from crime

data showing that young men are disproportionately the perpetrators and victims of violence, and also from research in the field of developmental psychology showing that “adolescent brain development continues until age 25 and can be delayed or harmed by adverse childhood experiences, like exposure to violence.”¹³

Because this was only recognized relatively recently, many cities have a gap in the support and developmental services that are available to young men between the ages 17–24, particularly those who have already had frequent contact with the criminal justice system or have otherwise fallen through the cracks of society.

In order to address this, SSYI was designed to identify these proven-risk young men and then provide them with a continuum of social services that includes street outreach, trauma counseling, employment and educational services, and services for family members, such as group counseling and family strengthening programs.¹⁴

In the words of Massachusetts’ Secretary of Health and Human Services, Marylou Sudders, SSYI is a strategy “to engage the highest-risk youth at a time in their lives when they have few choices. Through intervention and services to support the whole person—physical, mental, and behavioral health—youth will be in a better place to make decisions that can change their lives.”¹⁵ The evidence shows that this focused approach to violence reduction is working, and in the process saving lives and taxpayer dollars.

In order to have the largest impact, policymakers should ensure that state-level violence reduction grant programs are focused narrowly on addressing serious violence by directing resources to the most disproportionately impacted places and people.

Many cities have a gap in the support services available to young men between the ages 17–24, particularly those who have already had frequent contact with the criminal justice system.

KEY ELEMENT TWO

IMPLEMENT EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

The epidemic of gun violence in America is wreaking havoc in our cities, and we need solutions that will not only work, but will work quickly. Fortunately, a handful of programs have been shown to have a large and near-term impact on levels of violent crime.

A recent review of more than 1,400 studies related to violence prevention practices confirms that GVI and recidivism reduction strategies (of which street outreach work is a subset) are two of the most effective tools for addressing serious violence in urban areas.¹⁶

This review also identified several strategies, including “scared straight” programs and gun buyback programs, which have either no impact or even an unintended increase in levels of violence. Such programs should not receive state support.

Enough objective evidence exists as to what works and doesn’t work when it comes to interrupting cycles of urban violence that there is no reason for states to give grantees license to simply do whatever they want with violence reduction funding.

Rather, an effective violence prevention and intervention grant program will prioritize the funding of evidence-based programs like GVI and risk-based street outreach. As discussed in the first part of this report, this goal can be achieved in three ways: 1) directly funding the implementation of an evidence-based practice, as with Project Longevity in Connecticut, 2) allowing grantees to choose from a menu of evidence-based options, as with New York’s GIVE Initiative, or 3) prioritizing grant applications that effectively demonstrate that their proposed program is grounded in objective evidence.

A review of more than 1,400 studies confirms that GVI and recidivism reduction strategies are two of the most effective tools for addressing serious violence in urban areas.

WHAT WORKS

There is growing consensus regarding a handful of violence reduction strategies that have been shown to produce impressive results in urban neighborhoods. In 2016, researchers working for USAID completed a meta-review of more than 1,400 studies of various violence prevention programs and were able to identify a small number of strategies that have a particularly strong evidence base.¹⁷ They also found a few programs that have either no effects or else an unintended increase in rates of violence.

GVI/FOCUSED DETERRENCE

USAID researchers found that the “focused deterrence” strategy at the heart of the GVI model “has the largest direct impact on crime and violence, by far, of any intervention in this report.”¹⁸ The authors pointed to a major study, which looked at 10 different cities implementing the model and found that 9 out of 10 showed “substantially reduced crime and violence, with homicide reductions ranging from 34% to 63%.”¹⁹ A number of other studies confirm these findings.²⁰

Moreover, GVI has a fast-acting impact on violence. In New Haven, Connecticut, for example, within a period of just 18 months, the GVI model was associated with a 37% decrease in total shootings per month and a 73% decrease in monthly group-related shootings.²¹ Similarly rapid results were achieved with the introduction of GVI in a number of other cities around America. A fast-acting intervention like GVI provides violent neighborhoods with immediate relief and taxpayers with a quick return on investment.

In light of the large body of evidence showing that this strategy has a strong effect on serious violence levels, GVI should be considered an established, evidence-based practice.

Connecticut’s Project Longevity is an example of a state funding this evidence-based intervention strategy and directing it to areas of high need. New York’s GIVE Initiative also includes GVI as one of just a few options that grantees may implement with program funding.

In New Haven, within 18 months the GVI model was associated with a 37% decrease in total shootings and a 73% decrease in group-related shootings.

RECIDIVISM REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS

The USAID study also found that “recidivism reduction intervention” programs, particularly those that incorporate elements of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), have a particularly robust record of efficacy.²² These strategies, similar to the street outreach work described above in connection with both New York’s Operation SNUG and Massachusetts’ SSYI program, are most effective when they identify high-risk individuals and then reach out with culturally competent workers in order to understand and respond to client needs.

According to researchers, “the leading interventions examined in the US made great efforts to identify and engage where the risk of violence was greatest.”²³ Researchers found strong evidence that this approach has a high impact on levels of violence.²⁴

Risk-based street outreach is the essence of the Cure Violence model, which a number of different studies have shown to be effective at rapidly reducing violent crime. A 2014 quantitative evaluation of Cure Violence in certain Chicago neighborhoods found a 31% reduction in homicide, a 7% reduction in total violent crime, and a 19% reduction in shootings in targeted districts over the course of a single year of implementation.²⁵

Researchers concluded that “this evaluation adds to a growing body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of [Cure Violence] intervention, in combination with police presence, for reducing homicide, shootings, and violent crime generally in higher risk neighborhoods.”²⁶

In Massachusetts, the results of SSYI were also felt quickly. Researchers found that SSYI cities had 139 fewer violent crime victimizations per month over a three-year, post-intervention period, compared to cities without the program. Moreover, SSYI cities in 2013 “saw a 31% reduction in aggravated assaults, as well as a 25% reduction in homicide victimizations,” compared to a just few years prior to program implementation.²⁷ These are powerful and rapid results.

Both New York’s SNUG and Massachusetts’ SSYI program are examples of state investments in the evidence-based practice of street outreach work, which is focused on reducing the recidivism of violent behavior by directly addressing the needs of high-risk individuals.

“Scared straight” programs—where participants are exposed to violent images or real-life victims of violence—may have an unintended negative impact on violent crime.

WHAT DOESN’T WORK

The evidence is also clear that “scared straight” programs—where participants are exposed to violent images or real-life victims of violence in an effort to provide a sort of warning against violent behavior—may have an unintended negative impact on violent crime.²⁸ In addition, gun buyback programs, although they can have a positive effect on community spirit, have not been shown to have any impact on levels of violence.²⁹ For policymakers acting in an environment of limited resources, evidence-based practices should always be prioritized over strategies that have not been shown to work.

INCORPORATING EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

A variety of resources exist for identifying evidence-based violence prevention and intervention practices. The 2016 USAID report is a good starting place, as it contains a comprehensive review of more than 1,400 studies on this subject. The National Institute of Justice also maintains an online database of crime prevention strategies and associated research, which is available at

crimesolutions.gov. A number of organizations have also undertaken literature reviews in recent years and have published results that are available online.³⁰ These resources should help guide policymakers in supporting the strategies most likely to reduce violence in urban areas.

There are a few models for ensuring that a state-level violence prevention and intervention program is supporting evidence-based practices. The first, exemplified by Connecticut's Project Longevity (GVI) and New York's Operation SNUG (Cure Violence), is simply for a state to decide to fund a specific evidence-based practice. The only drawback to this approach is that the selected strategy may not be the best fit in a given locality. Forcing a local jurisdiction to implement GVI without the buy-in of key local stakeholders such as a city's mayor and chief of police may be counterproductive.

There are two alternatives to this approach. The first is that taken by New York with its GIVE Initiative, where grantees select the programs they will implement, but must choose from a limited number of evidence-based options. The second is to allow grantees to adopt their own strategy, without restrictions, but to require grantees to demonstrate, via a competitive application process, how proposals are grounded in objective evidence. All other things being equal, an applicant proposing to implement a street outreach model would be favored to receive funding over an applicant that proposes to implement a "scared straight" program.

The jury is still out on a number of violence reduction strategies, but we know enough at this point that states should be directing resources to practices with the strongest empirical support. As 72,000 Americans are victims of interpersonal gun violence each year, we cannot afford to waste precious resources on programs that will not have a direct and immediate impact on violence levels.

KEY ELEMENT THREE

PROVIDE ROBUST STATE-LEVEL COORDINATION

Gun violence prevention and intervention strategies are inherently local, but state governments can play an important role by establishing an oversight structure—ideally staffed by a number of full-time employees—to help facilitate ongoing training, technical assistance, and the sharing of best practices between sites.³¹

At present, the violence reduction programs that do exist in America’s cities often operate in isolation and lack the resources to provide employees with rigorous training and other support. A breakthrough violence prevention technique in one site may go unnoticed in the rest of the state because no infrastructure exists to facilitate such communication.

In New York, the Division of Criminal Justice Services, a state agency, is providing just that sort of infrastructure by assisting GIVE and SNUG sites with regular trainings and technical assistance from top experts and also by bringing practitioners together to disseminate best practices. As a result, individual sites across New York are acting as part of a larger violence prevention network—an interconnected community of practice—rather than struggling against the tide of violence in isolation.

NEW YORK: THE OVERSIGHT ROLE OF DCJS

In New York, the GIVE Initiative and Operation SNUG are administered together by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). DCJS is a criminal justice support agency with responsibilities that include collection and analysis of statewide crime data and management of grant programs designed to reduce crime, recidivism, and victimization.³²

With its joint administration of GIVE and SNUG, DCJS provides a good example of how a state agency can give valuable support to violence prevention and intervention efforts taking place on the ground.

GIVE

GIVE strikes a balance between state and local control by allowing county grantees to choose from a limited menu of evidence-based violence reduction strategies. DCJS then provides vital infrastructure to help maximize the efficacy of local efforts by giving technical assistance as required, facilitating data collection and analysis, and establishing a mechanism by which grantees can communicate regularly and meet in-person to share best practices.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The GIVE Initiative operates on the following basic principles:

1. **Funding evidenced-based violence reduction strategies.**
2. **Setting up an information-sharing network to spread best practices.**
3. **Evaluating outcomes and adjusting strategies accordingly.**³³

For many GIVE grantees, some of the evidence-based violence reduction strategies were unfamiliar, so the initial step for DCJS in launching GIVE was to organize a meeting with representatives from all 17 grantee sites to explain the various strategies. To do this, DCJS hosted a statewide conference in February 2014 in Albany.³⁴

Once grantee communities were familiar with the overall program and its various strategies, DCJS hosted additional events to drill down on the specifics of particular approaches. Training sessions have been held with respect to each of the major GIVE strategies from which jurisdictions are required to choose when creating a comprehensive violence elimination plan.³⁵

When GIVE grantees identify a need for technical assistance in the implementation of their violence elimination plans, DCJS will contract with subject-matter experts to provide training. In 2014, for example, DCJS partnered with the National Network for Safe Communities to begin offering direct technical assistance to Albany and Newburgh to assist with the implementation of GVI.³⁶

DCJS also facilitates cross-jurisdiction information sharing as an important component of GIVE. One way in which this is accomplished is through a yearly, in-person conference of GIVE grantees, which is convened by DCJS. At this symposium, grantees hear from experts on a variety of topics and have a chance to share best practices from the field.³⁷

By providing regular training and opportunities for the sharing of best practices, the State of New York is playing an active role in supporting the gun violence reduction efforts of GIVE jurisdictions. Operation SNUG, also administered by DCJS, affords local sites similar opportunities.

SNUG

Operation SNUG is a state-funded street outreach program based on the Cure Violence model of violence intervention. DCJS has two full-time employees, Jeff Clark and Damon Bacote, responsible for overseeing SNUG sites. Their primary role is to ensure the efficiency of operations, fidelity to the Cure Violence model, and the transmission of best practices between the 11 SNUG sites.

TRAINING

As director of training, Bacote assesses ongoing training needs by conducting one in-person site visit per month with all 11 sites.³⁸ He also attends every major training event and holds regular calls with program managers from each site to discuss operations issues.³⁹

All individuals hired by SNUG street outreach programs attend a 40-hour Violence Interruption Reduction Training (VIRT) program that is put on by state-contracted Cure Violence technical assistance providers.

Major components of VIRT include “instruction on the foundations of violence intervention and reduction; communication techniques especially with potential participants who are not receptive to the [SNUG] message; risk assessment and risk reduction; crisis management; managing grief and loss; anger management; conflict mediation and resolution; making the [SNUG] pitch; community engagement; canvassing the target area... and street outreach in the target area.”⁴⁰ It’s mandatory for new SNUG Outreach Workers to go through VIRT before engaging with clients.⁴¹

For SNUG program managers, there is a separate 40-hour course on management and supervision issues. In addition, DCJS will conduct as-needed trainings on a variety of topics. For example, DCJS arranged for the New York State Office of Victim Services, which provides compensation to eligible crime victims, to meet with SNUG representatives to explain the agency’s eligibility guidelines and the resources available to crime victims and their families.⁴²

All individuals hired by SNUG street outreach programs attend a 40-hour Violence Interruption Reduction Training (VIRT) program put on by Cure Violence.

COMMUNICATION AND SHARING OF BEST PRACTICES

Oversight is also provided by SNUG director Jeff Clark, who has monthly calls with individual site program managers. Based on regular contact and on the data reported from each site, Clark provides reviews that identify strengths and areas of improvement.

With dedicated resources and proximity to the SNUG sites, DCJS is able to provide regular contact to SNUG sites. In prior years—because of resource limitations—sites were having, at most, quarterly visits with Chicago-based Cure Violence contractors in order to receive feedback and discuss best practices.⁴³ Adding state-level oversight structure has allowed for improved coordination and information sharing between the various SNUG sites.

The role of DCJS during the initial years of Operation SNUG was primarily one of a granting agency with limited oversight in the form of quarterly data submission reviews to ensure program compliance. After the program was re-established in 2014, DCJS hired full-time staff to allow for a much more hands-on oversight system.

Having full-time staff members at the state level who are responsible for supporting local programs is vital. Where possible, states seeking to implement a grant system to address urban gun violence should place responsibility for oversight of the program with an agency that has a track record of producing results. An ideal grant system will provide enough funding for effective oversight, even if that means funding one or two fewer program sites than would otherwise be supported.

As will be seen in the following section, an important part of this oversight includes working with research partners in order to conduct regular performance evaluations.

KEY ELEMENT FOUR

CONDUCT REGULAR PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

With lives on the line, we can't afford to waste time or resources on violence prevention and intervention programs that aren't working. Objective program evaluations are of tremendous value and can help confirm if a program is having the intended effect. Even the best programs have room for improvement, and a comprehensive evaluation can improve efficiency by helping practitioners to identify areas of weakness.

All too often, organizations that implement violence prevention and intervention strategies must find ways to fund evaluations of their own work. It's asking too much of front-line practitioners to bear the burden of doing demanding, lifesaving work, while also taking on the responsibilities of conducting in-depth evaluations. This is an area where the state can play a critical role by fostering and funding research partnerships.

The ideal violence prevention and intervention grant program will allocate resources to researchers to provide both program-level evaluations and site-specific performance reviews based on objective metrics. Having strong data collection and reporting systems in place from the very beginning will help ensure that researchers have access to the best possible information when conducting evaluations.

With the feedback that comes from objective evaluations, policymakers and activists can ensure that effective programs are receiving the resources they deserve.

New York's Operation SNUG provides an excellent example of a state-funded research partner providing both site-specific performance evaluations and program-wide process evaluations that lead to important structural reforms.

INDIVIDUAL SITE EVALUATION: IMPACT OF SNUG IN YONKERS

An evaluation conducted by the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and released in July 2013 took a close look at the impact of SNUG on violent crime in Yonkers—examining data from the period of project inception in September 2010 to June 2012. The evaluation found that the rate of firearm-related homicides fell in Yonkers following the implementation of SNUG, from one firearm-related homicide every two months to one such homicide every four months.⁴⁴

RIT evaluators concluded that the elements driving the success of the Yonkers SNUG site included:

- 1. Very low staff turnover.**
- 2. Heavy involvement in the program from YMCA executive leadership.**
- 3. Regular data collection and reporting.**
- 4. SNUG staff's clear understanding of the Cure Violence model.**
- 5. Locating the SNUG office and program within the YMCA, an established and respected community-based organization.**
- 6. Regular educational campaigning to raise awareness of SNUG within the community.**⁴⁵

With this combination of elements, RIT evaluators noted that the number of shooting incidents in Yonkers “decreased from 3.13 monthly shooting incidents pre-SNUG implementation to 1.5 monthly shooting incidents.”⁴⁶ Moreover, “the number of shooting victims also decreased post-SNUG implementation, with 19 fewer shooting victims per year.”⁴⁷

Site evaluations like this have a number of benefits. They help to identify best practices in sites that are performing well or areas of improvement for sites that may be underperforming. In addition, evaluations assist policymakers in understanding whether a given program is working, which is particularly important in a difficult budget environment.

When SNUG ran into budget trouble in its early years, Yonkers was one of only two sites to continue its operations without interruption.⁴⁸ This was at least in part due to the objective evidence of program results, to which advocates could point in making the case for continued funding.

Finally, such individual site evaluations add to the existing pool of knowledge about what works when addressing serious violence. This allows resources to be reallocated over time to practices grounded in objective evidence.

In addition to site-specific reviews, program-wide evaluations also have tremendous value and should be conducted regularly. Operation SNUG benefited tremendously from such an evaluation.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAM REFORMS

In the early years of SNUG, RIT released a comprehensive evaluation that focused on five different sites. This evaluation contained a number of recommended structural changes aimed at improving the efficacy of Operation SNUG as a whole. These recommendations included:

- Improving statewide oversight and management efforts to “**support accountability, provide technical assistance, and enhance sustainability.**”⁴⁹ According to the evaluators, this would “help develop an infrastructure to coordinate and support community based violence prevention efforts across the state.”⁵⁰
- Reserving SNUG for those **communities with the highest levels of gun-related violence.** When implemented in sites with lower levels of violence, RIT researchers found that sites “can lose focus, struggle with fidelity, and be inefficient in the use of resources.”⁵¹
- Stabilizing funding by **providing multiple years of funding at a time** in order to “allow development of local experience and expertise in SNUG methods and other near-term anti-violence interventions.”⁵² This would help to avoid the funding gaps that were created in the first few years of the SNUG program.⁵³
- **Prioritizing a smaller group of well-functioning programs** over expanding quickly to newer locations.
- Addressing data and evaluation needs up front by **requiring commitments and memoranda of understanding regarding data collection** from local intervention programs, police departments, and other relevant agencies. Linking programs with local researchers to collaborate with program staff on data collection protocols, data collection, and accountability.⁵⁴

Many of these recommendations were taken into account by DCJS administrators and were incorporated into a restructured version of the SNUG program that launched in 2013. For example, the 2013 request for proposals (RFP) created violent crime rate and population minimums so that new programs would be implemented in locations where need was highest.⁵⁵ Funding levels were to be determined “in part by the level of gun violence reflected in available data and the quality of the proposed project.”⁵⁶

In response to concerns about data collection, the 2013 RFP also required grant applicants to “input monthly data in the database maintained by Cure Violence staff... and provide monthly narrative reports on a template to be provided by DCJS.”⁵⁷

In addition, in order to facilitate cross-site communication and the sharing of best practices, the RFP specified that DCJS would “coordinate at least two cross-site

meetings to bring project staff from all sites together in a sharing and learning collaborative.”⁵⁸

From a structural perspective, DCJS also responded to the RIT recommendations by hiring two full-time employees to oversee the renewed SNUG program.⁵⁹ For the first time, DCJS had permanent infrastructure in place to actively support SNUG, rather than simply functioning as a clearinghouse for payments to grantees.

New York has also responded to the recommendations of the RIT evaluation by providing a much more stable source of funding for SNUG sites. Overall SNUG funding has either remained relatively stable or increased through to the 2017–18 fiscal year, allowing the number of SNUG sites to grow from two to eleven.⁶⁰

These important changes were a direct result of the recommendations made by RIT and highlight the vital role of program-wide evaluations. An ideal state-level program will budget for evaluations that examine both process and outcome metrics for individual sites and for the program as a whole.

DATA COLLECTION PRACTICES

Evaluations are only as strong as the available data, and an important role of the state is the facilitation of proper data collection. This is impossible without a well-defined data collection process. A mistake that some programs make is to only collect process data—meaning data related to how many contacts a program is making with clients. Process data can be useful, but gathering data related to outcomes is also essential. To the extent sites are implementing the same strategy, data collection should be uniform so that comparisons can be made across sites.

For example, in conducting evaluations of SSYI, researchers from AIR and WestEd found that there was a large discrepancy in how different sites were collecting and storing relevant data. In the evaluation of impacts on levels of incarceration, for example, researchers noted that “through the process of conducting the study, the research team had to exclude 29% of the data submitted by sites because of data quality issues. This suggests the need to invest in data and reporting infrastructure so the program sites and their police partners can access reliable information when they need it.”⁶¹

According to state officials, SSYI is now moving in this direction. Administrators have contracted with the University of Massachusetts to provide sites with customized

Having standardized data collection practices in place from the very beginning of the program will help increase efficiency.

software that allows for uniform data collection and analysis. This system was rolled out in April of 2017 and the state continues to provide technical assistance to sites regarding its use.⁶²

With this uniform data collection system, administrators hope to have research partners conduct evaluations that include both individual sites and more detailed cross-site comparisons in order to identify best practices. For states that may be implementing a program similar to SSYI, having standardized data collection practices in place from the very beginning of the program will help increase efficiency.

In New York, in order to assist with data collection, Cure Violence provides Operation SNUG with its comprehensive database system, which is used to track data and outcomes for Cure Violence sites across the country. SNUG outreach workers are responsible for inputting a daily log that is used to track how time is spent, the number of contacts with clients, number of mediations conducted, number of community activities organized, and data regarding levels of violence, among other items.⁶³ This standardized database allows evaluators to compare sites in an apples-to-apples fashion, which is impossible if each site is collecting information in its own unique manner.

Funding is an excellent carrot that state governments can hold out to grantees to help incentivize the best possible data collection processes.

Writing basic, uniform data collection requirements into a grant's enabling legislation or initial RFP can help to address these issues.⁶⁴ Funding is an excellent carrot that state governments can hold out to grantees to help incentivize the best possible data collection processes. By building mechanisms for research and evaluation into a violence prevention and intervention grant program, states can ensure that their investment is working as intended and having maximum impact.

KEY ELEMENT FIVE

COMMIT TO LONG-TERM, STABLE FUNDING

Short-term fluctuations or instability in state funding can cause major problems and make it very difficult for grantee programs to engage in meaningful strategic planning. In Illinois, which has funded Cure Violence for a number of years, data shows a strong correlation between state-level funding cuts and increases in rates of serious violence in neighborhoods where state-funded Cure Violence sites were forced to shut down.⁶⁵ Funding issues in both Massachusetts and New York also illustrate why this is so crucial.

State leaders creating or expanding a grant program should commit to as many years of funding as possible in order to give programs time to take root and for staff to collect data, improve operations, and plan strategically for the future.

MASSACHUSETTS—SSYI

The manner in which SSYI has historically been funded—with a general appropriation that needs to be routinely supplemented—has led to an unpredictable six-month funding cycle that makes planning very difficult and impedes the ability of SSYI sites to deliver services to clients.⁶⁶

The framework for SSYI was created by former governor Deval Patrick's executive order in 2011, and the program has since been funded with a combination of appropriations from both General Appropriations Acts (GAAs) and through supplemental budgets. The fact that the SSYI budget usually relies on a supplement each fiscal year, in addition to the idiosyncrasies of the Massachusetts budget process, has created an unpredictable funding environment. As a result, SSYI has never had stable funding for a full fiscal year.⁶⁷

According to a report issued by the Gateway Cities Innovation Institute, "Because SSYI only operated for six months in the first year of its existence, the state has essentially continued to budget for the program in six-month cycles, appropriating funds in the July 1st fiscal year budget and then requiring the passage of a supplemental budget mid-year to maintain services."⁶⁸ The problem with this supplemental process is that the passage of a supplemental appropriation is never guaranteed, and even if it occurs, it's destabilizing.

Making things worse is the fact that appropriations for a given fiscal year are passed during that same fiscal year. This means that an SSYI site will find out in March how

An unpredictable six-month funding cycle makes planning very difficult and impedes the ability of SSYI sites to deliver services to clients.

much money it was appropriated for the preceding six months, which could be under or over what was budgeted internally. This leads to unexpected shortfalls or large cash reserves that then need to be quickly spent down. The uncertainty makes it harder for program managers to plan for even the immediate future, and, as the Gateway Cities Innovation Institute has pointed out, “produces stress and uncertainty for case workers, who do not know if they will have a job or be able to live up to the commitments they make to their clients.”⁶⁹

As an example of the budget fluctuations experienced by the program, in FY 2013, only \$4 million was appropriated for the program and \$3.7 million was distributed. In FY 2014, funding was back up to \$8.8 million, although more than half of this (\$4.8 million) came from a midyear supplemental appropriation.⁷⁰ In more recent years, funding has been somewhat more stable, but there is still unpredictability because of reliance on supplemental appropriations.

For FY 2017, \$6.5 million has been appropriated, but this may still be supplemented: the governor’s recommendation for supplementing appropriations, dated August 2, 2017, requests \$3 million for SSYI, which he describes as “a violence-reduction program that saves and transforms lives.”⁷¹ So far, for FY 2018, the budget appropriates \$4.25 million, but this may still be supplemented.⁷²

Finally, changes in the procurement process have led to lags in funding. In FY 2016, for example, SSYI sites had no funding for three months while a new procurement system was put in place.⁷³ With the harms that are inflicted by budget uncertainty and instability, Massachusetts’ political leaders should endeavor to find a way to provide more predictable and reliable funding streams.

Creating a consistent line-item GAA appropriation of \$8.9 million would allow SSYI to operate at full status in the 12 existing sites without the need for supplemental budgets. This would be a large improvement over the current funding system, which creates too much uncertainty.

NEW YORK: SNUG

Despite the success of individual sites, New York State’s initial experience with Operation SNUG provides another cautionary tale of the damage that can be done by fluctuating state investments in violence reduction programs.

After the close of the first grant cycle in late fall 2011, although most SNUG sites were just starting to get established, funding lapsed completely for five of the ten sites and was reduced significantly for the other five, with a gap between grant cycles that caused major disruptions in service provision as sites scrambled for alternative funding sources.

THE IMPACT OF FUNDING CUTS

In Brooklyn, for example, SNUG grantee Man Up! Inc. was forced to lay off 10 trained staff members as a result of the 2011 funding cuts.⁷⁴ According to Man Up! Inc. founder, Andre Mitchell, “Unstable funding really cripples all the work that we had been doing.”⁷⁵ It’s easy to see how the loss of a small number of outreach workers could have an enormous ripple effect in communities where a very small percentage of individuals drive the majority of violent crime. If each outreach worker has a case load of 10–15 clients, and budget cuts force the layoff of five outreach workers, then suddenly 50–75 very high-risk clients are left without support.

In a formal evaluation, the program manager of the Bronx’s SNUG site noted that funding fluctuation during this period was a “serious problem” that caused turnover and disruptions in service. The target population of SNUG is an extremely high-risk group that has been routinely marginalized by public services, so when a street outreach worker is suddenly laid off because of inconsistent funding, that “potentially negatively impacts the trust the participants have in the program and the staff.”⁷⁶

The Bronx SNUG site was fortunate in that it was able to find alternative funding sources, including the New York City Mayor’s Office, to maintain its program and eventually scale back up to its original size. Other sites were not so lucky, and several were forced to close their doors as a result of this disruption.⁷⁷ In fact, by 2013 the number of state-funded and operational SNUG sites was down to just two: Yonkers and Albany.⁷⁸ Some sites operating in New York City were adopted by the city’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, but others were forced to discontinue services.

In recent years, as discussed above, funding has been restored to Operation SNUG, but these interruptions in services create major problems for providers and clients alike.

An investment in evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs requires a long-term commitment. While this demands political discipline, policymakers should be aware of the great potential for cost-savings that these strategies offer. If research and evaluation are built into the program, decisions about continued funding can be made based on objective evidence. A state that is unwilling to commit to several years of stable funding may very well end up doing more harm than good.

KEY ELEMENT SIX

FACILITATE COMMUNITY INPUT AND ENGAGEMENT

Addressing gun violence cannot be the sole domain of law enforcement, and many police leaders recognize that interpersonal shootings are a problem cities can't arrest their way out of.⁷⁹

On-the-ground experiences in New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts show the importance of engaging with community-based organizations, faith leaders, and community residents. Both the GVI and Cure Violence models rely on addressing root causes of violence through the provision of social services, which is often achieved through partnerships with community-based organizations.

Operation SNUG administrators in New York have found that the most successful sites are those housed in established and reputable community-based organizations. The custom notifications of the GVI strategy are most effective when respected community members and faith leaders provide a credible voice. Regardless of how it's achieved, state-level violence prevention and intervention grants should strive to actively engage community stakeholders.

It's also important to have opportunities for meaningful community input concerning the administration of a state's violence prevention and intervention program. The ideal program should have state-level grant administrators who have direct community-level experience as well as knowledge about the dynamics of street violence. **To the fullest extent possible, state-level programs should be structured to allow for community input in order to avoid a top-down system where people who are not in touch with community needs are making every decision.**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Connecticut's Project Longevity provides an example of a violence intervention program that, from the very beginning, has actively engaged the local community in an effective partnership.

PROJECT LONGEVITY: THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN NEW HAVEN

A key initial step of Project Longevity in New Haven was introducing and explaining GVI to the community and providing an opportunity for questions and feedback. In order to accomplish this, the implementation team joined with a wide array of community stakeholders to hold a community forum in December 2011. This event, called "Fighting Back: Violence in Our Cities," was attended by more than 200 local residents, including community activists, former violent offenders, students, victims of violence, and local politicians.⁸⁰

During the meeting, David Kennedy, one of the pioneers of GVI, laid out the principles of the strategy and solicited input from community members in the audience. This allowed for an open discussion about some of the community's major concerns and questions about the GVI strategy.⁸¹ In making the case for GVI directly to concerned community members, Project Longevity proponents laid the foundation for a critical element of success: direct and sustained community participation and engagement with the program.

ONGOING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

After implementation, the local community remained a pillar of Project Longevity in New Haven. To engage local residents, Project Longevity staff have effectively partnered with community management teams at the neighborhood level. These teams meet monthly to discuss neighborhood issues and, in many neighborhoods, opportunities for participating with Project Longevity.

This includes opportunities to work directly with both at-risk individuals and law enforcement officers. For example, one neighborhood recently hosted an event designed to foster racial reconciliation between the community and law enforcement. For the first part of the evening, officers baked cookies alongside community members and then enjoyed the fruits of their labor while engaging in a panel discussion and open dialogue about race relations in New Haven. This generated such a positive response that three more such events have been planned.

Community members also participate directly in the call-ins that are at the core of Project Longevity's "focused deterrence" strategy. Those who have been impacted by violence often speak at call-ins, testifying about their pain and impressing upon attendees that the violence must stop. In addition, neighborhood residents often participate in "custom notifications," where small teams of both law enforcement and community members talk directly with an at-risk individual, share important information about his or her exposure to the legal consequences of ongoing violence, and make a plea for peace.

By participating directly in the Project Longevity process, community members demonstrate to those involved with street violence that it is their neighbors and peers—not an outside police force—that want the shootings and violence to stop. This creates a legitimacy that simply cannot come from any other source.

Those who have been impacted
by violence often speak at
call-ins, testifying about their pain
and impressing upon attendees that
the violence must stop.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND INPUT

When possible, state-level violence prevention and intervention grant programs should be staffed by individuals with direct experiences with community engagement and street violence.

In New York, for example, Operation SNUG's state-level leadership team includes Damon Bacote, SNUG's director of training, who, as a former outreach worker supervisor in Mount Vernon, came to his position with substantial experience working directly in the community. Project Longevity is also a good example of this with statewide coordinator Brent Peterkin, New Haven program manager Stacy Spell, and several other people in key leadership positions having extensive experience with community-level work.

In California, the recently revamped Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant program addresses this issue by having an extremely diverse executive steering committee, which consists of a number of community members—including formerly incarcerated individuals and others with a deep knowledge of street dynamics—working together with law enforcement and other state officials to design the grant's request for proposals and then determine where funds are directed.⁸²

The ideal grant structure will require that a certain number of community members are engaged with the administration of the grant, with an emphasis on those who have direct experience with violence and/or the criminal justice system.

Programs that come from the top down and that are viewed as being implemented by a disconnected group of elites are destined to fail. Those that engage the authentic moral voice of the communities they are trying to serve, on the other hand, will have the legitimacy required to truly move the needle when it comes to reducing gun violence.

GETTING COMMUNITY BUY-IN

“If you want people in the community to help you in issues of violence, you first have to gain their respect. If you want members of a community to cooperate in concentrating resources against violent gun offenders, you need community buy-in. You need the community to believe that the police are legitimate.”

Tom Tyler, Yale Law School's Macklin Fleming Professor of Law and Professor of Psychology

PART TWO SUMMARY

Providing a source of state-level funding for evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs is just one piece of the puzzle. In order to maximize impact, states should endeavor to establish a truly comprehensive violence reduction infrastructure by incorporating the six key elements described above.

From the outset, a state program must focus as narrowly as possible on the highest-risk people and places. Resources should be invested only in violence reduction strategies with a proven track record of obtaining results. Once such strategies are in place, the state should continue to provide training, technical support, and—through research and regular evaluations—help spread best practices across program sites.

Adhering to these strategies can produce dramatic reductions in shootings, but lapses in funding can result in high turnover, massive layoffs, and site closures, which can severely damage the credibility of prevention and intervention efforts. Finally, community involvement is critical at every stage of implementation, and a half-hearted commitment from the state can cripple a program.

Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York are all incorporating some of these key elements in their efforts to address urban gun violence, and lives are being saved as a result. However, no state has yet implemented all of six of these best practices at the same time. States with the courage to make a serious effort to prevent shootings in urban areas have the advantage of learning from the experiences of these three pioneering states. By incorporating the key elements described above into a comprehensive program, states can foster the growth of a violence reduction ecosystem with the capacity to break the cycle of urban violence.

The alternative is for states to stay on the sidelines while communities continue to suffer. The way forward is clear.



CONCLUSION

With a strong commitment at the state level, shootings and gun homicides can be prevented.

The violence reduction portfolio in the vast majority of states is out of balance. Many rely solely on law enforcement to address the problem, but this approach leaves the root causes of serious violence unaddressed and has contributed to mass incarceration.

A handful of states are wisely diversifying their portfolios by directing resources to innovative, evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs that target individuals most at-risk for involvement with violence. These programs offer services and opportunities that can set young men on a new path, one that does not end at the barrel of a gun.

Given the extreme monetary and human cost of violence, this investment, if implemented properly, can yield transformational returns.

Yet we know from a comprehensive review conducted in 2017 that almost no states are making such an investment. This presents an opportunity for states with urban areas that suffer from high rates of gun violence to offer long-awaited relief to ailing communities. We should be pressing more state leaders to follow the example of places like Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York.

Beyond just financial support, states can also make a powerful difference by providing state-level coordination of local violence prevention and intervention efforts to

facilitate data collection, program evaluations, the sharing of best practices, and technical assistance. A program that combines these elements with a focus on high-risk individuals and a commitment to evidence-based practices is sure to see marked reductions in violence levels.

States need to pitch in more, but they do not need to face this challenge alone. Private corporations, local governments, and the federal government, among others, also have an essential role to play. The Google Foundation, in partnership with PICO National Network and the Community Justice Reform Coalition, recently made a \$2 million investment in evidence-based, community-driven solutions to urban gun violence, demonstrating the potential power of a public-private partnership.

Our team of experts plans to release future reports examining how stakeholders like these can most effectively support evidence-based violence reduction strategies in urban communities.

Putting it all together, as programs like the ones featured in this report are scaled up thoughtfully and strategically, we can address the injustice that has left underserved communities to cope with unconscionable levels of gun violence. As a nation, we have cowered from this issue for far too long—it's time we make a collective commitment to lift up the solutions we know bring peace.

Let's get started today.

Leverage the legal and policy acumen of our experts to develop a plan for state-level investment in violence reduction strategies. For assistance or to request the in-depth technical appendix for this report, email **lawcenter@giffords.org**



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Based on those percentages, in its first few years of operation in New Haven, Project Longevity prevented approximately 10 group-related gun homicides (estimated cost of \$488,000 per incident), 25 group-related firearm assault injuries requiring hospitalization (estimated cost of \$71,000 per incident), and 20 group-related firearm assault injuries resulting in an emergency room visit (estimated cost of \$10,000 per incident). $\$7,032,421 = (54.96 \text{ shootings} * 18.8\% * \$488,381) + (54.96 \text{ shootings} * 45.1\% * \$71,680) + (54.96 \text{ shootings} * 36.1\% * \$10,449)$. For more details on the cost-savings calculation, contact lawcenter@giffords.org to request the in-depth technical appendix to this report.

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84. *Id.*

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89. *Id.* at 8.
90. Interview with Michael Green and Michael Wood, Sept. 8. 2016.
91. Located in Albany, Broome, Erie, Franklin, Monroe, Niagara, and Onondaga counties.
92. See, e.g., “New York State Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative, Crime, Arrest, and Firearm Activity Report,” New York Office of Justice Research and Performance, Issued Nov. 17, 2017, <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/greenbook.pdf>.
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95. Interview with Katie Clark, Albany Police Department anti-violence coordinator, Mar. 15, 2017.
96. *Id.*
97. PSU has partnered with a number of local community-based organizations to help with the delivery of these services. *Id.*
98. Key partners in implementing GVI in Albany include the Albany Police Department, the Albany County District Attorney’s Office, the US Attorney’s Office, the City of Albany’s Youth and Workforce Services Department, the Albany County’s Gang Prevention Program, the FBI, DEA, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the US Marshals Service, the Trinity Alliance, and Albany County’s Re-entry Task Force. “Albany Police Holds Second Ceasefire Call-In,” Press Release, City of Albany Department of Police, Dec. 2, 2015, <https://www.scribd.com/doc/291937815/GIVE-Call-In-12-1-15>.
99. Interview with Katie Clark, Mar. 15, 2017.

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101. Interview with Katie Clark, Mar. 15, 2017.
102. Jordan Carleo-Evangelist, "Gov. Cuomo's GIVE Initiative Fights Violent Crime Upstate," *Times Union*, May 1, 2014, <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Gov-Cuomo-s-GIVE-Initiative-fights-violent-crime-5447068.php>.
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104. For more information, visit www.cureviolence.org.
105. John Klofas, et al., "SNUG Evaluation," Rochester Institute of Technology, Center for Public Safety Initiatives, July 2013, www.rit.edu/cla/criminaljustice/sites/rit.edu.cla.criminaljustice/files/docs/WorkingPapers/2013/2013-10.pdf.
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107. Interview with Damon Bacote, July 10, 2017. Note that this does not include a number of street outreach programs based on the Cure Violence Model that are run in New York City and that have not been funded directly by the state. "Cure Violence New York – (SNUG State and Cure Violence NYC Sites)," Cure Violence, <http://cureviolence.org/partners/us-partners/snug>.
108. In Yonkers, for example, SNUG is run through the YMCA. "YMCA Project SNUG," Yonkers YMCA, <http://yoyymca.org/programs/ymca-project-snug>.
109. Interview with Jeff Clark, July 17, 2017.
110. Interview with Damon Bacote, July 10, 2017.
111. Interview with Jeff Clark, July 17, 2017.
112. Interview with Damon Bacote, July 10, 2017.
113. Interview with Damon Bacote, July 10, 2017.
114. Now known as NYC Health and Hospitals/Jacobi and referred to in this report as "Jacobi."
115. Interview with Erika Mendelsohn, July 24, 2017.
116. *Id.*
117. A credible messenger is an individual who often comes from the same community as the SUV clients, and can talk and relate to clients in a way that is authentic and engaging. *Id.*
118. Rebecca Cunningham et. al., "Before and After the Trauma Bay: The Prevention of Violent Injury among Youth," *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 53 (2009): 490–500, <http://nnhvip.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/After-the-trauma-bay.pdf>; see also S.B. Johnson et. al., "Characterizing the Teachable

Moment: Is an Emergency Department Visit a Teachable Moment for Intervention Among Assault-injured Youth and Their Parents?" *Pediatric Emergency Care* 23 (2007): 553–559.

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120. Interview with Erika Mendelsohn, July 24, 2017.
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122. Data provided by Cure Violence.

PART TWO

1. In 2015, 74% of homicides in US metropolitan areas were committed with firearms. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS), “Fatal Injury Data and Non-Fatal Injury Data,” last accessed Nov. 21, 2017, <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars>.
2. Jens Ludwig, et al., “Gun Violence in Chicago, 2016,” University of Chicago Crime Lab, Jan. 2017, <http://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/projects/gun-violence-in-chicago-2016>.
3. Thomas Abt and Christopher Winship, “What Works in Reducing Community Violence: A Meta-Review and Field Study for the Northern Triangle,” United States Agency for International Development, Feb. 2016, at 27, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/USAID-2016-What-Works-in-Reducing-Community-Violence-Final-Report.pdf>.
4. “Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative,” New York State, Division of Criminal Justice Services, <http://criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/impact/index.htm>.
5. “Gun Violence Focus of New Initiative,” *Democrat & Chronicle*, Feb. 11, 2014, <http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/local/2014/02/11/gun-violence-focus-of-new-initiative/5404639>.
6. Interview with Michael Green and Michael Wood, Sept. 8, 2016.
7. Interview with Thomas Abt, Dec. 28, 2016.
8. Data provided by Connecticut Against Gun Violence.
9. Executive Order No. 534, Providing Coordinated Emergency Intervention for Youth-At-Risk, May 12, 2011, <http://www.mass.gov/courts/docs/lawlib/eo500-599/eo534.pdf>.
10. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Office of Grants & Research, “Availability of Grant Funds (AGF), 2018 Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative,” at 2, https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/10/2018_Shannon_CSI%20_AGF_Rev101017.pdf.
11. “Group Violence Intervention: An Implementation Guide,” National Network for Safe Communities, accessed Feb. 22, 2016, at 2, <http://nnscommunities.org/our-work/guides/group-violence-intervention/group-violence-intervention-an-implementation-guide>.
12. Including mayors, district attorneys, community-based violence prevention practitioners, police, school officials, and community representatives. Interview with Glenn Daly, Aug. 27, 2017.
13. P.E. Campie, et al., “What Works to Prevent Urban Violence Among Proven Risk Young Men? The Safe and Successful Youth Initiative Evidence and Implementation Review,” Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Sept. 2013, <http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/What%20Works%20to%20Prevent%20Urban%20Violence%20Among%20Proven%20Risk%20Young%20Men.pdf>.
14. Interview with Geoff Foster, Aug. 24, 2017.
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<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/newsroom/press-releases/eohhs/reduce-youth-gang-and-gun-related-violence.html>.

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26. *Id.* at 11.
27. “Governor Patrick Announces Positive Results of Administration’s Safe and Successful Youth Initiative,” Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department Office of Governor Deval L. Patrick, Press Release, Dec. 22, 2014, <http://archives.lib.state.ma.us/bitstream/handle/2452/217935/ocn795183245-2014-12-22.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
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33. Interview with Michael Green and Michael Wood, Sept. 8. 2016.
34. “Governor Cuomo Announces Funding Available to Combat Gun Violence in 17 Communities Across New York State,” New York State, Feb. 11, 2014, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-funding-available-combat-gun-violence-17-communities-across-new-york>.
35. Interview with Michael Green and Michael Wood, Sept. 8. 2016.
36. *Id.*
37. The 2016 Symposium, for example, focused on using data to analyze violent crime patterns and included break-out panel discussions on topics like community-based policing, the use of social media in understanding violent crime patterns, and recent research regarding evidence-based violence reduction strategies. *Id.*
38. This is done by conducting site visits to look at the work being done in real-time, assessing it, documenting observations, and then meeting with the site’s program director to figure out the best approach to addressing any practices that are not aligned with the Cure Violence model or VIRT training. Interview with Damon Bacote, July 10, 2017.
39. *Id.*
40. John Klofas, et al., “SNUG Evaluation,” Rochester Institute of Technology, Center for Public Safety Initiatives, July 2013, <http://www.rit.edu/cla/criminaljustice/sites/rit.edu.cla.criminaljustice/files/docs/WorkingPapers/2013/2013-10.pdf>.
41. Interview with Damon Bacote, July 10, 2017.
42. *Id.*
43. *Id.*
44. John Klofas, et al., “SNUG Evaluation,” Rochester Institute of Technology, Center for Public Safety Initiatives, July 2013, at 12, <http://www.rit.edu/cla/criminaljustice/sites/rit.edu.cla.criminaljustice/files/docs/WorkingPapers/2013/2013-10.pdf>.

45. *Id.*
46. *Id.*
47. *Id.*
48. Interview with Jeff Clark, July 17, 2017.
49. John Klofas, et al., “SNUG Evaluation,” Rochester Institute of Technology, Center for Public Safety Initiatives, July 2013, at 3, <http://www.rit.edu/cla/criminaljustice/sites/rit.edu.cla.criminaljustice/files/docs/WorkingPapers/2013/2013-10.pdf>.
50. *Id.* at 3.
51. For example, a site in Niagara Falls had low enough levels of gun violence that not enough participants in the program were at high risk for participation in violence and “more work was done with the community rather than with individuals simply due to the lack of violent individuals.” *Id.* at 9.
52. *Id.* at 4.
53. *Id.* at 4.
54. *Id.* at 3–4.
55. Part A of the RFP limited new projects to “localities outside of New York City and Onondaga County with a rate of shooting incidents involving injury that reaches 4.5 or higher and with a population of at least 60,000.” Part B specified that new projects were to be established in the Bronx, Queens, Onondaga, and Rockland counties. “N.Y. St. Reg. Notice of Availability of State and Federal Funds,” *New York State Register*, July 31, 2013, <https://govt.westlaw.com/nyreg/Document/Ia4534dcbf5391e28e3c0000845b8d3e>.
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57. “Request for Proposals, 2013,” New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Office of Program Development and Funding, at 6. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwiUm9iJz9DXAhWpg1QKHZTHAxEQFggmMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.criminaljustice.ny.gov%2Fofpa%2Fdownloadforms%2FNeighborhood-Violence-Prevention-Project-RFP-8-2013.docx&usg=AOvVaw3wDkGHnlnzPmAPZhvfFqnp>.
58. *Id.*
59. Interview with Jeff Clark, July 17, 2017.
60. *Id.*
61. Patricia E. Campie, et al., “A Comparative Study Using Propensity Score Matching to Predict Incarceration Likelihoods among SSI and non-SSI Youth from 2011-2013,” Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (2014), at 8, http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/A%20Comparative%20Study%20Using%20Propensity%20Score%20Matching%20to%20Predict%20Incarceration%20Likelihoods%20Among%20SSI%20and%20non-SSI%20Youth%20from%202011-2013_rev.pdf.
62. Interview with Susan Lange, Aug. 31, 2017.

63. Interview with Damon Bacote, July 10, 2017.
64. For example, the GIVE RFP specifically requires that “All law enforcement agencies applying to receive GIVE funding must be up to date with their submissions of Monthly Firearm Data Reports at the time this application is submitted. Agencies should note that this report is now due to DCJS 7 days after the end of the reporting period.” Moreover, all GIVE-eligible agencies “must have executed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) for user access to the ATF eTrace System and are required to ‘opt in’ to the Collective Data Sharing (CDS) option on the system.” “2017-18 Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative, Request for Applications (RFA),” New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, at 7, <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/ofpa/pdfdocs/GIVE-RFA-1-13-17.pdf>.
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66. This is likely the case because SSYI was initially funded with a supplemental grant that only covered the first six months of FY 2012 and the program has had great difficulty getting out of this six-month funding pattern. Interview with Susan Lange, Aug. 31, 2017.
67. Interview with Geoff Foster, Aug. 24, 2017.
68. “The Holyoke Safe and Successful Youth Initiative Case Study,” Gateway Cities Innovation Institute, at 5, <http://massinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/SSYI.pdf>.
69. *Id.*
70. Interview with Geoff Foster, Aug. 24, 2017.
71. See Mass. HB 3869, p. 1, 5, <https://legiscan.com/MA/text/H3869/2017>.
72. Massachusetts General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2018, Chapter 47 of the Acts of 2017, line item 4000-0005, <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2017/Chapter47>.
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74. Abigail Savitch-Lew, “From Zero Tolerance to Cure Violence: Is New York City Shifting on Gun Crime?” *Dissent*, Oct. 9, 2014, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/from-zero-tolerance-to-cure-violence-is-new-york-city-shifting-on-gun-crime>.
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78. Interview with Damon Bacote, July 10, 2017; interview with Jeff Clark, July 17, 2017.
79. See, e.g., Martha H. Gottfried, “With gun violence steadily on the rise, St. Paul police chief details strategy to city council,” *Pioneer Press*, July 12, 2017, <http://www.twincities.com/2017/06/28/with-gun-violence->

[steadily-on-the-rise-st-paul-police-chief-details-strategy-to-city-council](#) (“Axtell also stressed that police cannot ‘arrest our way out of the problem... This has to be a community-police solution,’ he said.”).

80. Melissa Bailey, “Hundreds Weigh the Meaning of ‘Don’t Shoot,’” *New Haven Independent*, Dec. 7, 2011, http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/dont_shoot_--_but_do_join_in.

81. Questions and answers included:

1. Would GVI have the effect of worsening mass incarceration for people of color?
Kennedy’s response: “By moving law enforcement away from broad, dragnet strategies and toward a much narrower focus on violence, GVI would result in fewer men of color being impacted by the criminal justice system, not more. In the GVI framework, incarceration is viewed as the option of last resort.”
2. How would GVI, which has a strong law enforcement component, be able to “help” the intervention population? Response: “The GVI model has a social services component focused on directly connecting at-risk people with the resources to help them escape the cycle of street violence.”
3. Would the strategy be effective in actually stopping murders? Response: “Yes, where implemented, GVI has generally led to a large reduction in gun-related homicides within a relatively short period of time. In addition, GVI’s emphasis on procedural justice and legitimacy can lead to a much-needed rebuilding of trust between law enforcement and the community, a factor that is also associated with decreased levels of crime.” *Id.*

For an article covering some of the common initial concerns and criticisms of the GVI approach, see Zoe Greenberg, “Brothers’ Keepers,” *The New Journal*, Dec. 16, 2013, <http://www.thenewjournalatyale.com/2013/12/brothers-keepers>.

82. “FY 2017/18 California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant,” Executive Steering Committee Membership Roster, California Board of State and Community Corrections, <http://www.bscc.ca.gov/downloads/calgripesclistupdated.pdf>.



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