

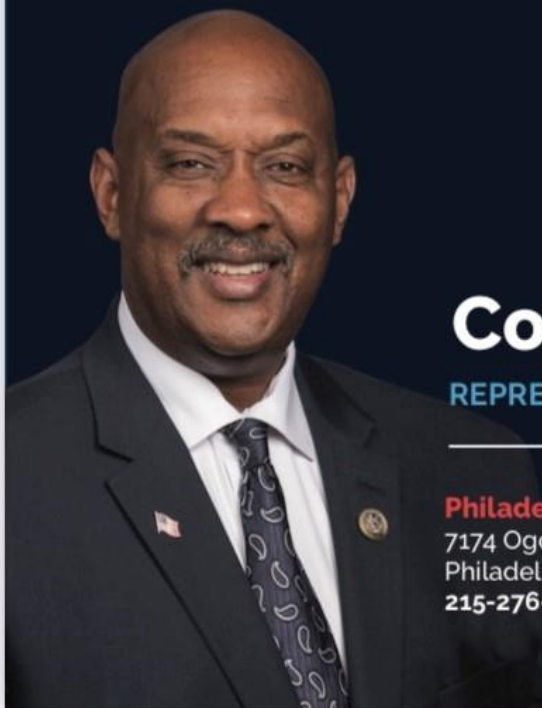


Evans Co-Leads Bill to Provide \$1 Billion to Solve Shooting Cases, Make Neighborhoods Safer

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Ending the Other Epidemic: A Plan to Fight Gun Violence

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A Plan to Reduce Gun Violence

Summary/Introduction

Philadelphia is having its worst gun violence epidemic in recorded history. In 2021, Philadelphia saw its highest number of homicides in recorded history at 562. Nearly 90 percent of those homicides were gun related. In addition, there were over 1,800 non-fatal shootings.¹ In 2019, guns were the leading cause of death for children and teens nationwide. Black men are 14 times more likely than white men to die from a gun-related homicide,² and in 2020, Black males accounted for 83 percent of gun-related homicides in the city.³ In Philadelphia, nearly 60 children and minors were killed by guns in 2020 and 2021—including an infant and 6- and 7-year-old boys.

Tens of thousands of Philadelphians are living with the emotional and mental scars resulting from decades of exposure to gun violence, along with millions of others nationwide experiencing this trauma. In Philadelphia alone, there have been over 11,000 shootings from 2015 to 2021.⁴ It is not only the non-fatal victims that are living with the trauma, but families, friends, witnesses, and countless others. Exposure does not need to be first-hand in order to result in trauma. Familial and community trauma from gun violence can be just as harmful as first-hand experience. These victims of gun violence may suffer from physical and psychological trauma, which can lead to chronic stress, increased risk of depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and cardiovascular disease.

Philadelphians living in hot spots are at an increased risk of health problems, as studies show that people who live in communities with high rates of gun violence see increased hospital visits and deaths from stress-responsive diseases. Pregnant women in these areas have an increased chance of a preterm birth.⁵ Data from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia showed that emergency room visits by children aged 0 to 19 were principally for mental health issues, such as depression, PTSD, intentional ingestion of harmful substances, and other mental health emergencies. Nearly 80 percent of those emergency room visits were from children who lived within 4 to 5 blocks of a shooting

¹ Office of the Controller (Mar. 10, 2022). Mapping Philadelphia's gun violence crisis. City of Philadelphia. <https://controller.phila.gov/philadelphia-audits/mapping-gun-violence/#/2022>.

² The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (Feb. 2021). A public health crisis decades in the making: A review of 2019 CDC gun mortality data. <https://efsgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019CDCdata.pdf>.

³ Office of the Controller (Mar. 10, 2022). Mapping Philadelphia's gun violence crisis. City of Philadelphia. <https://controller.phila.gov/philadelphia-audits/mapping-gun-violence/#/2022>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ South, E.C., MacDonald, J. & Reina, V. (Jul. 21, 2021). Association between structural housing repairs for low-income homeowners and neighborhood crime. *Jama Network Open*. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2782142>.

incident that had happened in the last 60 days.⁶ Further exacerbating the problem, residents in these neighborhoods frequently lack basic necessities such as access to health, housing, education, and employment.⁷

Those who show up in emergency rooms with gun-related injuries or who are arrested for gun-related crimes are often already suffering from trauma caused by exposure to gun violence as children.⁸ Most arrestees in Philadelphia for shooting crimes have used social services, with the most common being behavioral health services. In addition, most shooting arrestees have previously witnessed gun violence.⁹

Gun violence—the kind that happens every day—not only affects the victims, but it affects *every* citizen, even Philadelphians who live in neighborhoods not usually affected by gun violence. The costs of gun violence on the health care system, criminal justice system, insurance industry, and property values flow downstream to the common, ordinary resident. The collective costs of murders nationwide may range from \$173 to \$332 billion in legal costs, medical costs, lost wages, and destruction and devaluation of property. That can cost \$531 to \$1,020 per American in higher costs in terms of taxes, insurance premiums, and lower property values.¹⁰

In Philadelphia, the average gun-related homicide costs the city \$1.4 million for expenses such as medical response, property damage, public safety, criminal justice system, and lost earnings. Additionally, non-fatal shootings cost Philadelphia taxpayers over \$45,000 per shooting.¹¹ Using these numbers, the 498 fatal shootings and 1,834 non-fatal shootings in 2021 cost Philadelphia almost \$780 million in just one year.

Intervention and prevention of gun violence has shown to be cost saving. One researcher estimated that if a two-year intensive youth program for 100 youths cost \$500,000, and this program saved just one youth from a lifetime of drug abuse or

⁶ Penn Medicine (Sept. 20, 2021). Gun violence exposure associated with higher rates of mental health-related ED visits by children. <https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-releases/2021/september/gun-violence-exposure-associated-with-higher-rates-of-mental-health-related-ed-visits-by-children>.

⁷ Dicker, R.A., et al. (Sept. 2021). Strategies for trauma centers to address the root causes of violence: Recommendations from the improving social determinants to attenuate violence (ISAVE) workgroup of the American college of surgeons committee on trauma. *J. Am. Coll. Surg.*, 233(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamcollsurg.2021.06.016>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ 100 Shooting Review Committee (Jan. 2022). 100 Shooting Review Committee Report. <http://phlcouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/100-Shooting-Review-complete.pdf>.

¹⁰ Dicker, R.A., et al. (Sept. 2021). Strategies for trauma centers to address the root causes of violence: Recommendations from the improving social determinants to attenuate violence (ISAVE) workgroup of the American college of surgeons committee on trauma. *J Am. Coll. Surg.*, 233(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamcollsurg.2021.06.016>.

¹¹ Clay-Murray, D. (Oct. 30, 2021). Hidden costs: Gun violence, the health care aftermath, and who pays? *WHYY*. <https://whyy.org/articles/hidden-costs-gun-violence-the-healthcare-aftermath-and-who-pays/>.

violent crime, or from dropping out of high school, the program would yield total benefits of \$1.7 to \$2.3 million.¹² Further, hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) have shown to be cost-effective. A randomized clinical trial found that the HVIP saved around \$1.25 million in criminal justice costs and nearly \$600,000 in healthcare costs over two years. Other studies found that healthcare cost savings would result in an HVIP being cost-neutral if it prevented 3.5 injuries per year.¹³

Due to the gun violence crisis in Philadelphia, I created this plan with recommendations to reduce gun violence. In creating this plan, I talked with several local community leaders, organizations, and academic researchers because I believe that hearing from those on the ground and utilizing academic research and data is necessary to providing well-informed and thoughtful recommendations. Governing cannot be done in isolation. These recommendations are from a federal point of view, but they require the participation of every level of government, as well as the community, for successful implementation. Gun violence affects us all, whether it is physically, emotionally, or financially. Therefore, it is a problem that should concern every community member, and we should be doing everything we can to prevent its occurrence. We must work *together* if we truly want to prevent gun violence and save lives.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. Encourage use of evidence-based strategies by local law enforcement agencies

Evidence-based strategies, such as focused deterrence and hot spots policing, have been shown to be the most effective use of resources in reducing gun violence. This means directing most law enforcement resources to areas that have the highest rates of gun violence and implementing the use of evidence-based strategies that not only deter criminal behavior but also assist at-risk individuals in accessing services and improving relations between police and the community.

2. Invest \$1 billion in local police departments to increase clearance levels for fatal and non-fatal shootings

The clearance rate in Philadelphia is around 20 percent, leaving shooters on the streets and families without justice. Providing police departments with the resources to solve more shootings would go a long way toward reducing gun violence and

¹² Cunningham, R. et al. (Apr. 2009). Before and after the trauma bay: The prevention of violent injury among youth. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, 53(4). doi:10.1016/j.annemergmed.2008.11.014.

¹³ Purtle, J. et al. (2015). Cost-benefit analysis simulation of a hospital-based violence intervention program. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 48(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2014.08.030>.

increasing trust between the community and police. The VICTIM Act (H.R. 5768) I am co-leading would authorize \$1 billion in federal funding to help local and state police solve more shooting cases, get more shooters off our streets, and provide more help to victims.

3. Invest \$40 billion in employment and workforce development agencies and organizations

Initiatives such as summer youth jobs programs and employment assistance for adults are important in reducing gun violence. Employment and workforce development agencies and organizations that serve clients in areas with high rates of gun violence should be encouraged to incorporate community-based violence intervention strategies into their programs.

4. Invest \$5 billion in community-based violence intervention initiatives

This would provide \$2.5 billion in initiatives at the Department of Justice that encourage the use of evidence-based strategies and the collection of data on the most effective strategies for violence intervention. It would also provide \$2.5 billion to the Centers for Disease Control for public health strategies to reduce gun violence, such as hospital-based violence intervention programs, connecting people to services, and the use of trusted messengers and conflict mediators. The House-passed version of the Build Back Better Act includes \$5 billion total for these two categories of initiatives.

5. Increase resources for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and U.S. Marshals Service to prevent and respond to gun violence

The ATF, FBI, DEA, and U.S. Marshals are federal agencies that can work together to combat gun violence by use of investigations and prosecutions of gun-related crimes, disrupting the supply of illegal guns, and interrupting drug trafficking by the most violent gangs. We need to ensure these agencies have and devote adequate resources to combatting gun violence.

6. Invest \$5 billion to reduce blight and improve city environments

Investing and improving our environment has a measurable impact on gun violence. Greening vacant lots, increasing the number of streetlights, and providing a grant

program for low-income homeowners to make housing repairs have all been shown to reduce gun violence.

7. Increase coordination and collaboration of federal, state, and local agencies and organizations

Organizations and agencies often work in silos, even those that provide similar services. To ensure we are effectively identifying and helping individuals at risk for gun violence, we need the coordination and collaboration of all services relating to health, housing, employment, legal resources, education, and much more. Out of this need, the Hub model was created in Canada and has been adapted for use in Philadelphia. However, for this model to work most effectively, it needs the buy-in and participation of all relevant agencies and organizations, as well as more avenues for funding to increase personnel.

A Plan to Reduce Gun Violence

1. Encourage Use of Evidence-Based Strategies by Local Law Enforcement Agencies

There are several evidence-based law enforcement strategies, but those that have been shown to be the most effective are focused deterrence and hot spots policing. Focused deterrence is a strategy that attempts to deter criminal behavior by using certain levers. In this strategy, police and community leaders engage with high-risk individuals and communicate incentives for not engaging in criminal behavior, as well as deterrents for participating in violence. Incentives include information and access to job training, housing assistance, and drug treatment. Deterrence may include information on the penalties and negative impacts on the individual and their peers for engaging in violent behavior. Research has shown that focusing on dissuading groups from participating in criminal behavior is more effective than strategies that are strictly focused on deterring individuals.

An example of the focused deterrence strategy would include the following steps:

- identifying at-risk individuals;
- holding an intervention or focused deterrence meeting with members of the criminal group (which include family members and families of crime victims) explaining the penalties for continued criminal behavior, as well as offering support and services;
- carefully assessing available services and the provision of targeted services that are capable of engaging those typically avoidant of services;
- providing ongoing support from community members;
- developing a civilian-based board to review progress and performance measures; and
- coordinating efforts to maintain the strategy over time.¹⁴

Hot spots policing can be used in conjunction with focused deterrence. Research shows that shooters are a relatively small group of people, and that gun violence is most predominant in certain areas of the city. In Philadelphia, 2 percent of known individuals are responsible for 80 percent of the city's gun violence.¹⁵ The targeting of law enforcement resources to these areas has proven to be the most effective in reducing

¹⁴ RAND. Focused deterrence in depth. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL261/better-policing-toolkit/all-strategies/focused-deterrence/in-depth.html> (last accessed Feb. 23, 2022).

¹⁵ Dean, M.M. (Aug. 20, 2021). For some Black men and teens in Philly, relying on guns has become commonplace. *Phila. Inquirer*. <https://www.inquirer.com/news/philadelphia-gun-violence-homicides-young-men-reasons-20210729.html>.

gun violence with the most immediate effect. This type of directed policing may be more effective and have the least negative impact on community members when paired with problem-oriented policing (POP).¹⁶

POP involves police officers talking to residents while out in the field about any problems with crime and information on perpetrators. Officers then leave a business card with the residents that lists a private phone number where residents can leave tips anonymously. Officers can also inquire about crimes in monthly community meetings. Building a rapport between police officers and community members may be more easily facilitated when police officers are from the neighborhoods that they patrol and when they work with community partners to provide activities, such as youth recreational activities, mental health support, youth outreach, and housing assistance to the homeless.¹⁷

In order to encourage local law enforcement agencies to deploy such strategies, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants that go to local law enforcement agencies from the Department of Justice would need to be conditioned on law enforcement using evidence-based strategies.

2. Invest \$1 Billion in Local Police Departments to Increase Clearance Levels for Fatal and Non-Fatal Shootings

In 2020, the United States saw the biggest percentage increase in murders since 1905—and possibly ever. In 2020, over 21,000 people were murdered with guns in the United States—a 30 percent increase over 2019. At the same time that the murder rate rose, the clearance rate for murders fell by 7 percent, to 54 percent in 2020.¹⁸ Clearance rates refer to cases that end with an arrest or cases that are closed due to circumstances outside of the police department’s control, such as the death of the offender.¹⁹

¹⁶ Braga, A., et al. (2019). Hot spots policing of small geographic areas effects on crime. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 15(3), 4, 44. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1046>.

¹⁷ RAND, Problem-oriented policing. [https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL261/better-policing-toolkit/all-strategies/problem-oriented-policing.html#:~:text=Problem%2Doriented%20policing%20\(POP\),range%20of%20crime%2Dcausing%20problems](https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL261/better-policing-toolkit/all-strategies/problem-oriented-policing.html#:~:text=Problem%2Doriented%20policing%20(POP),range%20of%20crime%2Dcausing%20problems) (last accessed Feb. 23, 2022).

¹⁸ Gramlich, J. (Oct. 27, 2021). What we know about the increase in U.S. murders in 2020. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/10/27/what-we-know-about-the-increase-in-u-s-murders-in-2020/>.

¹⁹ FBI. Clearances. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/topic-pages/clearances> (last accessed Feb. 27, 2022).

In 2021, Philadelphia saw its highest number of homicides in recorded history at 562. Nearly 90 percent of those homicides were gun related. In addition, there were over 1,800 non-fatal shootings. From 2015 to 2021, there were 11,424 shootings. Fatal shootings increased by nearly 112 percent from 2015 to 2021.²⁰

In Philadelphia, for 2020, only 36.7 percent of fatal shootings and 18.9 percent of non-fatal shootings (22 percent overall) have been cleared. This is a decrease of 4.7 percent for fatal shootings and 8.1 percent for non-fatal shootings since 2015.²¹ Only 24 percent of shootings between 2015 and 2021 have been cleared.²² Raising clearance rates brings justice to more families, gets shooters off the streets, and helps increase the community's trust in police.

A review of a Boston Police Department (BPD) homicide clearance intervention over three years saw significant improvements in clearance rates when specific measures were implemented. These included the expansion of the homicide unit, the hiring of a civilian crime analyst, the addition of a second Victim-Witness Resource officer, strengthening the police department's connections to victim assistance organizations, additional training in new investigative techniques, standardized protocols to guide the different stages of a homicide investigation, and a monthly homicide unit peer review session. During the intervention period, the Boston homicide clearance rate increased by nearly 10 percent. The BPD intervention was associated with a 43.4 percent increase in the chances that a homicide was cleared.

That is why I am co-leading the VICTIM (Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods) Act with Congresswoman Val Demings of Florida. The bill would authorize \$100 million per year for ten years. The bill would establish a grant program at the Department of Justice (DOJ) to provide resources to state and local law enforcement agencies to assist them in improving their clearance rates for homicides and non-fatal shootings. Specifically, the grants provided by the VICTIM Act would be used to:

- hire and retain detectives to investigate homicide and non-fatal shootings;
- acquire resources for processing evidence, including the hiring of additional personnel;
- hire personnel trained to analyze criminal intelligence and crime trends;

²⁰ Office of the Controller (Feb. 24, 2022). Mapping Philadelphia's gun violence crisis. City of Philadelphia. <https://controller.phila.gov/philadelphia-audits/mapping-gun-violence/#/2022>.

²¹ Rhyhart, R. (Jan. 15, 2022). Data release: Gun violence clearance rates and case outcomes. City of Philadelphia, Office of the Controller. <https://controller.phila.gov/philadelphia-audits/data-release-gun-violence-trends/>.

²² 100 Shooting Review Committee (Jan. 2022). 100 Shooting Review Committee Report. <http://phlcouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/100-Shooting-Review-complete.pdf>.

- train detectives and evidence processing personnel in effective procedures and techniques; and
- ensure victim services are sufficiently staffed, funded, and trained.

Since we know that 2 percent of known individuals are responsible for 80 percent of the shootings in Philadelphia, it is paramount that we clear more fatal and non-fatal shootings and get these shooters off the street. This funding and this bill would give police departments the resources they need to solve more shootings.

3. Invest \$40 Billion in Employment and Workforce Development Agencies and Organizations

The disparities between Black and white unemployment are stark. In the first quarter of 2022, only 3.6 percent of white individuals were unemployed compared to 6.8 percent of Black individuals. It is even starker when it comes to youth. In the same quarter, white individuals aged 16 to 19 had a 9.2 unemployment rate compared to 20.3 percent for Black individuals of the same age.²³ Black Americans are also more likely to be affected by crime and the criminal justice system. Black American incarceration in state prisons is almost five times the rate of white Americans.²⁴ In 2021, 80 percent of Philadelphia’s homicide victims were Black. Around 50 percent of the total homicide victims were Black males aged 18 to 34.²⁵

Increasing employment opportunities for at-risk youth and adults is critical in reducing gun violence. Several employment models have shown success in reducing gun violence. When Chicago created a youth jobs program that recruited young people living in high-violence neighborhoods in 2012, there was a 45 percent decline in violent-crime arrests, most of which happened in the first year of the program.²⁶

READI Chicago is another example. It is a program that connects adults who are at the highest risk of gun violence involvement with up to 18 months of paid transitional jobs, as well as 6 months of cognitive behavioral therapy and supportive services. Participation in READI Chicago may reduce involvement in shootings and homicides up

²³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Apr. 1, 2022). Labor force statistics from the current population survey. https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpsee_e16.htm.

²⁴ The Sentencing Project (Oct. 13, 2021). The color of justice: Racial and ethnic disparity in state prisons. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/>.

²⁵ D’Onofrio, M. (Jan. 10, 2022). Philadelphia homicides hit historic level in 2021. *Axios*. <https://www.axios.com/local/philadelphia/2022/01/10/philadelphia-record-homicides-2021-police>.

²⁶ Heller, S., Pollack, H. & Davis, J.M.V. (Aug. 2017). The effects of summer jobs on youth violence. *Science* 346(6214), 1219-1223. DOI: [10.1126/science.1257809](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1257809).

to 32 percent. The program identifies participants by use of three referral sources: reentry from the criminal justice system, community partners, and a data-based risk assessment (conducted by the University of Chicago’s Crime Lab and Inclusive Economy Lab that identifies men who are most at risk of participation in gun violence).²⁷

It is clear that increasing employment opportunities produces a reduction in gun violence. Therefore, we need to have workforce systems—including workforce boards, American Workforce Centers, state and local agencies, and employment and training grantees—in high gun-violence areas incorporate community violence intervention (CVI) strategies into their programming. Programs created under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) receive funding from the federal government through formula funding and competitive grants, and several have already begun incorporating CVI strategies in their programs such as: WIOA Youth program, YouthBuild (which provides pre-apprenticeship opportunities for young adults in growing industries), Workforce Pathways for Youth (expands workforce development activities for teens and young adults aged 14 to 21 during non-school hours), Job Corps (nation’s largest job training program serving individuals aged 16 to 24), and WIOA Adult programs.

Many of these programs are active in Philadelphia. It is also critical to connect returning citizens to employment opportunities. Further, partnerships between state and local governments, community organizations, and colleges and universities can be useful in reaching marginalized populations.²⁸ The House-passed version of the Build Back Better Act includes \$40 billion in funding that would go toward employment and workforce development programs.

4. Invest \$5 Billion in Community-Based Violence Intervention Initiatives

The House passed the Build Back Better Act in November 2021, but it has not been passed by the Senate. This bill contains \$5 billion in funding for community-based violence initiatives, including \$2.5 billion for community-based violence intervention initiatives at the DOJ. Grants would be awarded to various entities to address community-based violence intervention and reduction. The funding would be used to support evidence-informed intervention strategies to reduce community violence; to support training, research, evaluation, and data collection on the most effective

²⁷ Heartland Alliance (Jul. 2021). READI Chicago evaluation finds reductions in shootings and homicides. <https://www.heartlandalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/READI-Chicago-Mid-Study-Analysis-May-2021-FV.pdf>.

²⁸ Notice from Angela Hanks., Acting Asst. Secretary, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Employment and Training, to State Workforce Agencies, et al. (Jan. 4, 2022). Adult and youth workforce development programs’ role in supporting community violence intervention. https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN_18-21.pdf.

strategies; and research, evaluation, and data collection on how community violence impacts demographic groups differently.

Another \$2.5 billion would go to the Centers for Disease Control to support public health approaches to reduce community violence and trauma, such as the use of:

- trusted messengers to mediate conflicts and interrupt violence;
- hospital-based violence interventions;
- school-based mental health services; and
- strategies to connect people to social, health and wellness, and employment services to reduce the likelihood of violence.²⁹

a. Hospital-based violence intervention programs and connecting people to services

Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs), as well as connecting people to social, health, and employment services have shown to be effective in reducing the chances that victims of gun violence will return to the hospital in the future with similar injuries or become the perpetrators of gun violence. Several years ago in 2012, the DOJ recommended that “hospital-based counseling and prevention programs should be established in *a*ll hospital emergency departments (EDs)—especially those that provide services to victims of violence.”³⁰ However, funding for these types of programs has been insufficient for wide-scale implementation, despite the DOJ’s recommendation and studies showing HVIPs’ effectiveness.

In 2006, almost 40 percent of one million youths aged 15 to 24 who received medical care for violent injuries returned to emergency departments in the future with violence-related injuries. As many as 20 percent of those one million youths returned to the emergency room as victims of homicide within five years. Being a victim of violence during adolescence increases the chances of being a perpetrator or victim of violence as an adult.

Experiencing gun violence, whether as a victim or witness, increases the chances two-fold that a youth will become the perpetrator of violence within two years. For youth, retaliatory injury risk among those who were victims of violence was 88 times higher than those who had never experienced violence. Therefore, young people who enter

²⁹ Pelosi, N. (Nov. 4, 2021). Fact sheet: H.R. 5376, the Build Back Better Act. https://www.speaker.gov/sites/speaker.house.gov/files/UpdatedFact%20Sheet_TheBuild_BackBetterAct.pdf.

³⁰ U.S. Department of Justice (2012). Report of the Attorney General’s National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence. <https://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/cev-rpt-full.pdf> (emphasis added).

emergency rooms with violence-related injuries must be considered as high risk for retaliation.

Consequently, many emergency rooms have been implementing violence-intervention programs (VIPs) and similar best practices to reduce the percentage of those victims who return or go on to be the perpetrators of gun violence. Evaluations of practices used for successfully transitioning youths at risk for violence to their communities has yielded “best practices,” which include evaluation of the patients’ psychosocial needs and risks they pose to the public; plans for treatment and services necessary for those needs; identification of organizations or programs responsible for services after discharge from the hospital; and coordination of the plan of services to ensure delivery and prevent gaps in care. Services most often used include mental health counseling, education, and job training.

Studies on emergency departments’ use of these “best practices” interventions have found that intervention groups were three times less likely to be arrested for a violent crime, four times less likely to be convicted of a violent crime, and two times less likely to be convicted of any crime.³¹ A San Francisco hospital that implemented a VIP for those aged 10 to 30 saw a decrease of 16 percent over a five-year period of returning victims. The parts of its VIP that seemed most effective were culturally competent and intensive case management; sufficient mental health treatment; and obtaining employment.³² Therefore, increased funding for HVIPs and programs that connect individuals to social, health, and employment services are critical components of reducing gun violence.

b. Philadelphia Ceasefire/Cure Violence: Trusted messengers and violence interruption

Data show that up to 50 percent of shootings in Philadelphia were motivated by arguments.³³ Cure Violence is a violence intervention model developed in Chicago and implemented in Philadelphia in 2011. The Philadelphia Cure Violence model uses five core components of the Chicago model: 1) community mobilization; 2) youth outreach; 3) faith-based leader involvement; 4) police department participation; and 5) public education.

³¹ Cunningham, R. et al. (Apr. 2009). Before and after the trauma bay: The prevention of violent injury among youth. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, 53(4). DOI:10.1016/j.annemergmed.2008.11.014.

³² Juillard, C. et al. (Nov. 2014). Saving lives and saving money: Hospital-based violence intervention is cost-effective. *Trauma Acute Care Surg*, 78(2). DOI: 10.1097/TA.0000000000000527.

³³ 100 Shooting Review Committee (Jan. 2022). 100 Shooting Review Committee Report. <http://phlcouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/100-Shooting-Review-complete.pdf>.

Cure Violence identifies high-risk individuals in the community and recruits them. Cure Violence staff have these high-risk individuals identify other high-risk individuals, as well as encouraging these individuals toward positive pursuits by providing services and support, such as mentoring and job training. It also involves delivering the right messages by trusted messengers. Trusted messengers often include people who are from the neighborhoods that they are targeting and/or have been involved in the same types of activities before in their lives.³⁴

The City of Philadelphia and Temple University worked together to implement and study Philadelphia Ceasefire/Cure Violence in Philadelphia's 22nd Police District. The 22nd police district is in Central Philadelphia with West Lehigh Avenue bordering it on the north, the east extending just beyond North 10th Street, West Girard Street on the south, and Kelly Drive on the west.³⁵ Over a two-year period, Philadelphia Ceasefire/Cure Violence used credible messengers from the area who served as mentors to high-risk individuals to persuade them to make positive choices, while law enforcement used hot spots policing. During this time, this area had 30 percent fewer shootings when compared to other areas that used hot spots policing without the Cure Violence model.³⁶

5. Increase resources that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and U.S. Marshals Service Devote to Preventing and Responding to Gun Violence

The collaboration and coordination of federal law enforcement agencies in combating gun violence is a critical component of reducing it. This includes investigations and prosecutions of gun-related crimes, targeting the most violent drug gangs, and disrupting the supply of illegal guns. "Virtually every crime gun in the United States starts off as a legal firearm."³⁷ In 2020, the legal sale or transfer of handguns in Philadelphia increased 125 percent from 2019.³⁸ The number of guns that were

³⁴ Philadelphia Ceasefire – Cure Violence. About. <http://www.philaceasefire.com/about.html> (last accessed Feb. 28, 2022).

³⁵ Philadelphia Police Department. 22nd District. <https://www.phillypolice.com/districts/22nd/index.html> (last accessed Feb. 28, 2022).

³⁶ Roman, C. (Apr. 13, 2021). Implementing evidence-based strategies to combat community gun violence in Philadelphia. Testimony before the Philadelphia City Council at 1:16:00. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHZMG5-2wgA>.

³⁷ Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (June 2020). Following the gun: Enforcing federal laws against firearms traffickers. Department of Treasury. <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=1622>.

³⁸ Dean, M.M. & Purcell, D. (Dec. 23, 2021). A rising tide of stolen guns helps fuel Philadelphia's gun violence epidemic. *Phila. Inquirer*. <https://www.inquirer.com/news/stolen-guns-philadelphia-violence-20211223.html>.

purchased or transferred in Pennsylvania in 2020 increased by nearly 50 percent from 2019, with the number of handgun purchases/transfers increasing by over 250,000 from 2019 to 2020.³⁹ Most guns used in crimes in Philadelphia are diverted into the city from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, but a significant amount come from other states, as well. Many of these guns are bought as “straw purchases”—meaning a person legally buys a gun for an illegal buyer.⁴⁰

The number of illegal gun possessions in communities across the country has grown exponentially. Ghost gun recoveries have increased by at least 410 percent from 2019 to 2021 in Philadelphia.⁴¹ Ghost guns are unmarked firearms or guns that can be assembled from kits that are sold without background checks.⁴² The ATF has a unique place in the federal government. It is a law enforcement agency with the same authority to enforce federal criminal laws as other DOJ component agencies, such as the FBI and the DEA. But its purpose also includes an essential regulatory function: the ATF is the only federal agency with jurisdiction to carry out regulatory oversight of the gun industry. Its two primary functions are enforcing federal gun laws and providing regulatory oversight of the gun industry.⁴³

While there is no federal gun trafficking law *per se*, there are many avenues of enforcement that the ATF may use to enforce, investigate, and prosecute the illegal possession of guns whether or not the guns crossed state lines. For example, it is a violation of federal law to straw purchase a gun for another individual. It is also illegal to give another a person a gun “knowing or having reasonable cause to believe” the person is prohibited from possessing a gun under federal law.⁴⁴ When President Biden and the DOJ announced in July of 2021 that they were sending ATF strike forces to five

³⁹ Pennsylvania State Police (2020). Firearms annual report 2019. https://www.psp.pa.gov/firearms-information/Firearms%20Annual%20report/Pennsylvania_State_Police_2019_Firearms_Annual_Report.pdf; Pennsylvania State Police (2021). Firearms annual report 2020. https://www.psp.pa.gov/firearms-information/Firearms%20Annual%20report/Pennsylvania_State_Police_2020_Firearms_Annual_Report.pdf.

⁴⁰ Cole, J. (Dec. 17, 2021). Most guns used in Philadelphia homicides come from outside the city, ATF says. *Fox29*. <https://www.fox29.com/news/most-firearms-used-in-philadelphia-homicides-come-from-outside-the-city-atf-says>.

⁴¹ 100 Shooting Review Committee (Jan. 2022). 100 Shooting Review Committee Report. <http://phlcouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/100-Shooting-Review-complete.pdf>.

⁴² U.S. Department of Justice (May 7, 2021). Justice department proposes new regulation to update firearm definitions. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-proposes-new-regulation-update-firearm-definitions#:~:text=These%20unmarked%20firearms%2C%20known%20as,permitted%20to%20posses%20a%20firearm>.

⁴³ Parsons, C., Vargas, E.W. & Bhatia, R. (Sept. 17, 2020). Rethinking ATF's budget to prioritize effective gun violence prevention. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/rethinking-atfs-budget-prioritize-effective-gun-violence-prevention/>.

⁴⁴ 18 U.S.C § 922.

cities—not including Philadelphia—to reduce gun violence by cracking down on illegal firearms trafficking,⁴⁵ I wrote a letter to President Biden stressing the need for a task force here in Philadelphia.

Further, in recent years, 80 percent of ATF's budget has been spent on redundant law enforcement activities and only 24 to 27 percent on "detering illegal firearms trafficking/violent gun crime" and "diversion of firearms from legal commerce." The ATF's criminal enforcement work frequently overlaps with work that is presently attended to by state and local law enforcement agencies and the FBI.

Combatting gun violence requires the coordination and collaboration of all federal law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, DEA, and U.S. Marshals Service, along with the ATF. It also requires that these agencies focus enough resources to this pursuit. This type of collaboration has recently been created in Philadelphia, as the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania announced in 2021 an *All Hands On Deck* initiative to support the work of the Philadelphia Police Department with signatories including representatives from the local field offices of the FBI, DEA, ATF, and U.S. Marshals, among others.⁴⁶

This initiative is being used to increase FBI investigations and prosecutions of local gun violence cases,⁴⁷ to conduct fugitive sweeps with a focus on local and state warrants for homicide and other violent crimes using the U.S. Marshals Service, and to disrupt the activities of the most violent drug trafficking gangs by the DEA.⁴⁸ We need to make sure this collaboration continues and that all of the agencies are allocating their resources properly, as well as ensuring they have enough resources to effectively carry out this initiative. For example, from 2010 to 2020, ATF's enacted budget remained essentially the same, increasing by only six percent when adjusted for inflation.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Office of Public Affairs (Jul. 22, 2021). Justice department launches firearms trafficking strike forces to address violent crime, crack down on sources of crime guns. U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-launches-firearms-trafficking-strike-forces-address-violent-crime-crack>.

⁴⁶ U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Pennsylvania (Apr. 8, 2021). Acting U.S. Attorney Williams and 15+ Philadelphia-area federal agency directors issue letter to citizens announcing initiative to combat city's gun violence epidemic. Department of Justice. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edpa/pr/acting-us-attorney-williams-and-15-philadelphia-area-federal-agency-directors-issue>.

⁴⁷ Shaw, J. (Apr. 8, 2021). Philly's U.S. attorney and other federal law enforcement leaders unveil new plan to combat the city's gun violence. *Phila. Inquirer*. <https://www.inquirer.com/news/philadelphia-federal-law-enforcement-initiative-to-combat-violence-20210408.html>.

⁴⁸ U.S. Marshals Service (May 26, 2021). U.S. Marshals bring expertise to attorney general's new effort to reduce violent crime. <https://www.usmarshals.gov/news/chron/2021/052621.htm>.

⁴⁹ Parsons, C., Vargas, E.W. & Bhatia, R. (Sept. 17, 2020). Rethinking ATF's budget to prioritize effective gun violence prevention. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/rethinking-atfs-budget-prioritize-effective-gun-violence-prevention/>.

President Biden requested increased funding for federal law enforcement agencies to combat violent crime and gun violence in his Fiscal Year 2023 budget. The funding would include:

- hiring of more ATF agents;
- providing resources for the Firearms Trafficking Strike Forces Initiative;
- supporting local law enforcement agencies in combatting gun violence;
- increasing prosecutions for those involved in violent gun crime;
- encouraging Assistant U.S. Attorneys to build partnerships and help institute evidence-based crime prevention and intervention programs; and
- increasing staffing of U.S. Marshals Service.⁵⁰

If this funding is needed to help reduce gun violence in Philadelphia and across the nation, then Congress must heed the President's request.

6. Invest \$5 Billion to Reduce Blight and Improve City Environments

Philadelphia is one of the 25 most segregated cities in the U.S.⁵¹ Segregation in Philadelphia can be traced back to housing policies and laws as shown on the 1937 Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) map created by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board. The HOLC was financed by President Franklin Roosevelt as part of the effort to slow down home foreclosures during the Great Depression. The map shows areas of the city where real estate investments would appreciate in value. The mapmakers took racial and ethnic composition into consideration. These map practices—more commonly known as “redlining”—were an unambiguous type of place-based discrimination with the intent of ensuring government financial investments would go to white and high-income locations.

This map from 1937 has turned out to be an accurate depiction of where most of today's gun violence occurs in Philadelphia—in the areas marked as “unworthy” of economic investment. Black Philadelphians have nearly a five-fold increased risk of assault with a gun than white Philadelphians. The relationship between areas of high gun violence and certain types of city residents can be understood as a result of intergenerational segregation, redlining, and socio-economic exclusion.

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of Justice (Mar. 22, 2022). FY 2023 budget request. <https://www.justice.gov/file/1487331/download>.

⁵¹ Comen, E. (Jul. 20, 2019). Detroit, Chicago, Memphis: The 25 most segregated cities in America. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2019/07/20/detroit-chicago-memphis-most-segregated-cities-america-housing-policy/39703787/>.

However, racial segregation as it relates to disparate environments in neighborhoods is a condition that is changeable.⁵² Funding of \$250 million per year for ten years for a total of \$5 billion would go to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to create a grant program for local partnerships to implement neighborhood revitalization measures in economically distressed and underinvested areas. These grants could be used for creating a housing repair program; developing vacant lots to create green spaces, constructing more affordable housing, updating parks; improving and increasing street lighting; or other purposes that have been shown to make communities safer.

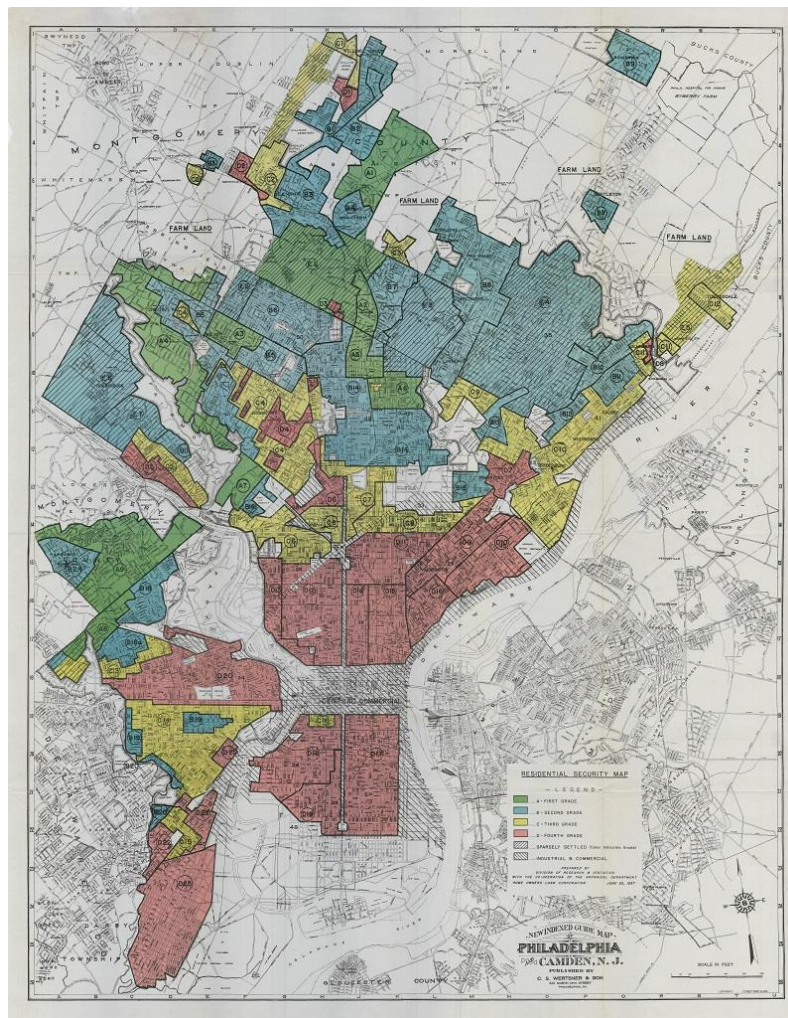


Figure 1 HOLC map 1937. Green areas were "first grade" and considered best for investment. Blue areas were "second grade" and considered still desirable. Yellow areas were "third grade" and considered declining. Red areas were too risky for investment.

⁵² Jacoby, S.F. (May 17, 2017). The enduring impact of historical and structural racism on urban violence in Philadelphia. *Social Science & Medicine*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.05.038>.

a. Creating green spaces

Cleaning up blighted vacant lots has proven to reduce crime right here in Philadelphia. In 1996, Kensington residents teamed up with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to create a revitalization effort that is now referred to as the Philadelphia LandCare (PLC) program. This program removes trash from vacant lots, grades the land, and plants grass and a few trees. A fence is installed with openings allowing residents access to the space. The fence is important because it prevents illegal trash disposal, keeps out construction debris, and is a visual cue that a person is maintaining the property. The rehabilitation of a lot takes less than a week. Lots are maintained two times per month. Since the program's inception, it has turned more than 12,000 vacant lots into green spaces representing over 18 million square feet of land.

A study looked at the effect of these greening efforts on reducing crime from 1999 to 2008 during which time PLC greened about eight percent of vacant lots. It found that crime around these new green spaces decreased, especially assaults with guns, which decreased by nine percent. The researchers further followed up with a randomized experiment and found crime fell significantly in areas near green spaces as compared to areas around blighted spaces. Shootings were reduced by 8 percent and assaults with guns were reduced by 4.5 percent. The effects were even more significant for poverty-stricken neighborhoods where green spaces reduced gun assaults by 29 percent.

The remaining 30,000 or so vacant lots would cost \$34 to \$45 million to green the spaces, plus maintenance costs. This money would not only help in reducing crimes, but it also provides decent-paying jobs and spurs entrepreneurship. The research suggests that investing \$1 in PLC would result in \$26 in net benefits to taxpayers due to reductions in gun violence, as well as up to \$333 in general societal costs, such as pain and suffering resulting from a gun assault.⁵³

b. Increasing street lighting

Street lighting has proven to have an impact on gun violence. Street lighting started right here in Philadelphia by Ben Franklin who created a candle-based streetlight as early as 1757. A randomized experiment conducted in New York City in 2016 found that placing bright light towers in some of the city's public housing developments during the

⁵³ MacDonald, J.M. & Branas, C.C. (Sept. 25, 2019). Cleaning up vacant lots can curb urban crime. *Manhattan Institute*. <https://www.manhattan-institute.org/cleaning-up-vacant-lots-can-curb-urban-crime#:~:text=Remediation%20Spreads&text=Today%2C%20a%20growing%20body%20of, scale%20structural%20investments%20from%20taxpayers>.

spring and summer reduced outdoor, nighttime index crimes⁵⁴ by approximately 36 percent and reduced overall index crimes by 4 percent.

The study also found that the economic values of crimes prevented due to increased street lighting would be approximately \$770,000 per community per year. The researchers projected that in terms of costs and benefits of additional lighting, the benefits would outweigh the costs 4 to 1.⁵⁵ The benefits of improving and increasing street lighting is clear. This funding would allow cities like Philadelphia to light up high-crime areas and reduce gun violence.

c. Making housing repairs

The root causes of violent crime in Black neighborhoods are structural and have resulted from a history of racist policies, segregation, and chronic underinvestment. This cycle of disinvestment leads to the deterioration of the physical environment of neighborhoods. These are the areas where violent crime is the highest. In Philadelphia, over 50 percent of housing units were built before 1945 and 36 percent of the city's homeowners have household incomes less than \$35,000. In 1995, the City of Philadelphia created the Basic Systems Repair Program (BSRP) that provides low-income homeowners with grants to fix their homes' structural damage. The waiting time from enrollment in BSRP to receipt of grant money has been two to three years, which, in the case of a broken furnace or air conditioner, can create unsafe living conditions.

Researchers studied the effects of this program on gun violence from 2006 to 2013. The study found that structural repairs to homes of low-income owners was associated with a nearly 22 percent reduction in *total* crime in the immediate vicinity—including a 21.9 percent decrease in homicides. Further, with every additional house that receives repairs, the crime rate continues to decrease—with the effect ceasing at four additional homes.⁵⁶ A 2017 analysis showed that over 35 percent of homes in Philadelphia needed

⁵⁴ "Index crimes" are the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports* Part 1 crimes and include murder, non-negligent manslaughter, robbery, felony assault, burglary, grand larceny, motor vehicle theft, forcible rape, and arson. However, this study did not include rape or arson. Chalfin, A. et al. (Apr. 24, 2019). Reducing crime through environmental design: Evidence from a randomized experiment of street lighting in New York City. *Crime Lab New York*. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w25798>.

⁵⁵ Chalfin, A. et al. (Apr. 24, 2019). Reducing crime through environmental design: Evidence from a randomized experiment of street lighting in New York City. *Crime Lab New York*. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w25798>.

⁵⁶ South, E.C., MacDonald, J. & Reina, V. (Jul. 21, 2021). Association between structural housing repairs for low-income homeowners and neighborhood crime. *Jama Network Open*. https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2782142?utm_source=For_The_Media&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_term=072121.

repair, and among the 15 largest metropolitan areas, Philadelphia had the third highest median cost of repairs at over \$1,600 per household.⁵⁷

HUD considers more than six million homes in the U.S. as substandard. Bettering the conditions of homes is linked to the facilitation and improvement of relationships among neighbors. Residents who live in areas with high levels of physical deterioration are more likely to have broken ties to neighbors. Improving environments has shown to increase socialization with neighbors, and strong community relations have been associated with a reduction in crime.⁵⁸ This funding would help BSRP reach more homeowners and increase its expediency. It would also allow other cities to create similar programs.

7. Increase Coordination and Collaboration of Federal, State, and Local Agencies and Organizations

Organizations and agencies often work in silos, even those that provide similar services. To ensure we are effectively identifying and helping individuals at risk for gun violence, we need the coordination and collaboration of all services relating to health, housing, employment, legal resources, education, and much more. Out of this need, the Hub model was created in Canada, spread to Chelsea, MA; and has been adapted for use in Philadelphia. The implementation of the Philly Hub was not the work of a government official or agency. Instead, it was the work of one researcher and activist, and the current director of Philadelphia Ceasefire, Marla Davis Bellamy. It was initiated in 2020 and has seen the participation of over 100 agencies and organizations throughout Philadelphia.

The Hub model deploys real-time interventions and short-term opportunities with the urgent goal of reducing circumstantial harm and incorporating the collaboration of several agencies. The model includes weekly meetings among agencies and organizations where at-risk individuals are identified and a plan of action is initiated. The goal of the Hub is to collaboratively connect at-need individuals to services within 24 to 48 hours. Types of agencies and organizations that participate in the Hub include: child welfare, community development, domestic violence, elderly, education, faith,

⁵⁷ Divringi, E. et al. (Sept. 2019). Measuring and understanding home repair costs: A national typology of households. Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. <https://www.philadelphiafed.org/-/media/frbp/assets/community-development/reports/measuring-and-understanding-home-repair-costs/0919-home-repair-costs-national-report.pdf>.

⁵⁸ South, E.C., MacDonald, J. & Reina, V. (Jul. 21, 2021). Association between structural housing repairs for low-income homeowners and neighborhood crime. *Jama Network Open*. https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2782142?utm_source=For_The_Media&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_term=072121.

health care, housing, legal, mental health, municipal, substance use, victim services, violence prevention, and youth development. Referrals for high-risk individuals can come from any of these agencies, including schools, health departments, and police departments.

The Philly Hub differs from the Hub in Chelsea, MA, in that the Chelsea model is run through the local police department. The Philadelphia Police Department has participated in some meetings, but it has not become a regular participant. This may be due to the large size and geographic jurisdiction of the police department and the difficulty in designating an appropriate police leader. Buy-in and participation from all relevant agencies, including the police department, is necessary for the Hub to work most effectively.⁵⁹

The Hub needs more avenues for funding, as it operates with very few personnel and is unable to keep up with the number of referrals. The Hub also needs regular participation from all relevant agencies and organizations to be most effective in preventing gun violence.

If an organization is interested in participating in the Philly Hub, they can fill out this form: <https://forms.gle/rJqs91FRbis4GT5w9>.

Conclusion

In Philadelphia, we are experiencing an epidemic of gun violence. Gun violence is not only a public health issue—it is also a racial equity issue. Gun homicide disproportionately affects communities of color, as Black Americans represent the majority of gun homicide victims. Every year, tens of thousands of people are killed with guns. Another 76,000 Americans are injured every year by guns totaling around 10 million individuals who have been shot and injured in their lifetimes.

In Philadelphia, teenagers, mothers, children, and even babies have been shot while shopping in a corner store, attending a graduation party, getting food from a Wawa, playing in a schoolyard, walking home from school, trick-or-treating, and—in the case of a two-year-old—while in their mother’s arms.

⁵⁹ Mendlein, A., Bellamy, M.D. & Roman, C.G. (Sept. 2021). The Philly hub: Collaboration to reduce risk. Project Brief, Temple University.
<https://liberalarts.temple.edu/sites/liberalarts/files/Philly%20Hub%20Project%20Brief%20-%20formatted%20final.pdf>.

Philadelphia saw its deadliest year in recorded history in terms of homicides in 2021. We need to make our community safer, so that children can walk to school without fear of being hit by a stray bullet and parents can stop worrying about the safety of their children.

Turning this around will take the collaboration of the federal, state, and local government, as well as community involvement. As Representative for Pennsylvania's Third Congressional District, I am dedicated to doing everything I can to reduce gun violence. But I cannot do it alone. Please join me.

Gun violence has become an epidemic, and we must work together to reduce it!