



HEALING COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

LIFESAVING SOLUTIONS TO THE URBAN GUN VIOLENCE EPIDEMIC

SMARTGUNLAWS.ORG/HEALING-COMMUNITIES

READ THE FULL REPORT

To better understand the strategies and policies described here, check out the complete edition of *Healing Communities in Crisis: Lifesaving Solutions to the Urban Gun Violence Epidemic*. This exhaustive report, created in partnership with the PICO National Network, identifies the scope of urban gun violence in America and advocates for specific, concrete approaches that have been proven to dramatically lower gun violence rates and save lives.



ABOUT THE LAW CENTER

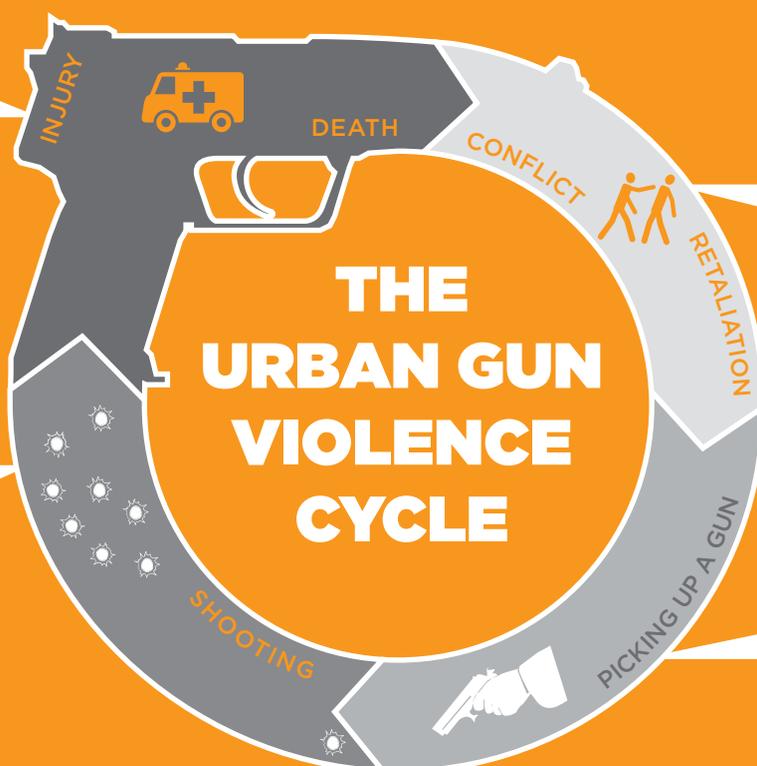
Founded in the wake of a 1993 assault weapon massacre at a San Francisco law firm, the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence is now the premier resource for legal expertise and information regarding firearms policy. We track and analyze gun laws in all 50 states, file amicus briefs in critical Second Amendment cases, write model legislation, and offer comprehensive educational resources to the public.

In 2016, the Law Center merged with Americans for Responsible Solutions, led by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and Navy combat veteran and retired NASA astronaut Mark Kelly, to form a powerful new force for gun safety that stretches from coast to coast.



For survivors of non-fatal shootings and other attacks, **HOSPITAL-BASED INTERVENTIONS** leverage a teachable moment with at-risk patients to discourage retaliatory violence.

After identifying the small number of individuals perpetuating gun violence in a given neighborhood, the **GROUP VIOLENCE INTERVENTIONS** brings the community and law enforcement together to disincentivize shootings.



To defuse conflicts before they escalate, the **CURE VIOLENCE** model employs “violence interrupters,” typically people from the neighborhood who had been formerly involved in dangerous activity but have since turned their lives around.

SMART GUN LAWS reduce the supply of firearms on city streets and help keep deadly weapons out of the hands of people who pose a strong risk of violence.

PEACE THROUGH PREVENTION

DEADLY & DISPROPORTIONATE

Nowhere is the gun violence crisis more evident than in our underserved urban communities, where homicide rates often reach 10 times the national average. Young black men are especially vulnerable—the chance of a black American family losing a son to a bullet is 62% greater than losing him to a car accident.

Urban violence has too often been left out of the national conversation about guns, even though it makes up a huge proportion of the human toll of this epidemic. (As well as the financial toll—gun

violence costs Americans \$229 billion each year.) It is morally unconscionable that in the United States today we have neighborhoods with gun injury rates on par with active warzones.

6%
of people

Black men make up just 6% of the US population...

51%
of murders

...but account for 51% of all homicide victims.

The good news is change is possible—and already happening in cities across the country. Research and case studies have shown that through a combination of low-cost, community-oriented intervention programs and much-needed firearms policy reforms, gun violence rates in urban communities can be cut *in half* in as little as two years. The solutions exist—we just need to implement them.

Murders with minority victims were 40% less likely to be solved than murders with white victims, according to a study of thousands of Los Angeles homicide investigations.

40%
less likely

INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

GROUP VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

This strategy identifies the small population—sometimes just a few dozen people—responsible for the majority of gun violence in a neighborhood. Community leaders, in conjunction with police, offer both carrots and sticks to discourage group members from participating in shootings. Boston saw a **42% decrease in murders** after implementing GVI.



CURE VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

Treating gun violence like a communicable disease, this strategy employs “violence interrupters” trained to understand neighborhood dynamics and mediate potentially deadly conflicts. At the same time, outreach workers connect at-risk individuals to social services. **Homicides fell 31% in Chicago neighborhoods** using the Cure Violence model.



HOSPITAL-BASED INTERVENTION

These interventions connect recently injured patients with culturally competent case managers who help them leave behind a violent lifestyle and avoid the retaliatory attacks that make up a significant share of urban gun violence. Using this model, San Francisco General saw **a 72% drop in injury recidivism and a \$500,000 annual savings in medical expenses.**



PROVEN POLICY SOLUTIONS

FEWER GUNS, SAFER STREETS

Easy access to deadly weapons is a key factor fueling the violence in impoverished urban areas, where it's often easier to get a gun than a computer. Smart gun laws, like universal background checks, help cut off the supply of illegal guns and ultimately decrease incidents of violence. Take California—after adopting a series of commonsense firearms laws, **the state's gun death rate fell by 56% between 1993 and 2013**, twice the reduction seen in the rest of the country.

SMART GUN LAWS

- Universal Background Checks
- Permit to Purchase Laws
- Minimum Age Laws
- Junk Gun Bans
- Large Capacity Magazine Bans
- Gun Dealer Regulation
- Bulk Purchase Limits
- Smart Gun Technology

Unfortunately, we know guns move too easily from states with weak gun laws to states with strong ones. For example, **over 50% of crime guns in Chicago originate outside Illinois, mainly from nearby Indiana**, which doesn't require background checks at gun shows or in private sales, making trafficking all too easy.

To stem the tide of gun trafficking, citizens of states with weak laws must advocate for meaningful reform.

And lawmakers in those states need to recognize that their failure to regulate firearms is directly fueling the urban gun violence crisis, contributing to a national gun death rate that dwarfs every other industrialized country.

64%
fewer guns

In states with universal background checks, 64% fewer guns are trafficked out of state.

HOW RICHMOND STOPPED THE SHOOTING

Richmond, CA, was considered one of the most violent places in America, with murder rates 10 times higher than similar cities. The vast majority of victims were young black men. In response, the city established the innovative Office of Neighborhood Safety, a government agency unaffiliated with law enforcement, to implement a combination of Group Violence Intervention, Cure Violence, and Hospital-Based Intervention programs, as well as the Operation Peacekeeper Fellowship, a mentoring program for the most at-risk individuals. In economic terms, Richmond's initiative reduced the demand side of the gun violence problem, while California's leading-edge gun laws tamped down the supply side. The results were remarkable: homicides dropped from 47 per year to 11, the lowest number on record.



75%

After implementing a comprehensive set of intervention strategies, Richmond's gun homicide rate dropped over 75%.