

# PROVEN SOLUTIONS TO URBAN GUN VIOLENCE

Each year, there are over 12,000 gun homicides and 67,000 nonfatal gun assaults in the United States. These numbers are rising, with violence heavily concentrated in particular communities. Black children and teens are nearly 15 times more likely to be shot to death than their white peers; the gun homicide rate of young black American men is nearly 20 times the national average. In just one year, gun death rate among black Americans rose nearly 11% from 2015 to 2016. Hispanic men are similarly impacted with a gun homicide rate nearly five times the national average. In 2016, over 74% of gun-related homicide victims were men of color.

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**20x** The gun homicide rate of young black men is nearly 20 times the national average.

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**5x** Hispanic men are impacted with a gun homicide rate nearly five times the national average.

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**74%** of gun-related homicide victims were men of color in 2016

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**GUN VIOLENCE  
COSTS AMERICAN  
TAXPAYERS OVER  
\$229 BILLION  
EACH YEAR**



## WHAT WE KNOW

Violence is a cycle: in studies of some urban hospitals, researchers have found that up to 45% of patients treated for injuries like gunshots were violently reinjured within five years. **People who have been violently victimized are also at increased risk of retaliating and becoming perpetrators of violence:** being shot, being shot at, or witnessing a shooting doubles the probability that a young person will commit violence in the next two years.

Such a revolving door of violence imposes enormous economic costs on American communities and taxpayers. **On average, a single gun homicide generates approximately \$448,000 in medical care and criminal justice expenses—** and most of those costs are paid by taxpayers. In total, gun violence costs the United States \$229 billion every year, with each American shouldering over \$700 of this cost annually.

## PROVEN SOLUTIONS

Evidence-based violence intervention and prevention programs designed to interrupt cycles of violence have proven to be highly effective at reducing rates of gun violence, saving both lives and taxpayer dollars. These programs are most effective when implemented together as part of a coordinated and comprehensive effort to address gun violence that is supported with local, state, and federal funding.

However, these programs are vastly underfunded, with the federal government allocating a very small amount to support these programs in select cities while the majority of states provide zero funding for violence prevention programs. **For those that do receive consistent funding, however, results are very encouraging.** In Connecticut, for example, 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; **at a total cost of less than \$1 million per year, this program has prevented shootings while generating an annual savings of \$7 million.**

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For 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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### SOLUTION ONE

#### FOCUSED DETERRENCE STRATEGIES

Focused deterrence strategies, such as Group Violence Intervention, are a form of problem-oriented policing that coordinates law enforcement, service providers, and community efforts to reduce risk of violence among the small, identifiable segment—in a given city, usually less than 0.5% of its residents—that is responsible for the vast majority of violence in most cities. These programs are associated with reductions in homicides generally ranging from 30% to 60%.

### SOLUTION TWO

#### EVIDENCE-BASED STREET OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Evidence-based street outreach programs, such as Cure Violence, treat gun violence as a communicable disease and work to interrupt its transmission among community members. These public health-centered initiatives use street outreach workers to connect with individuals at highest risk of committing or becoming victims of gun violence. Evaluations have found that these programs are associated with significant reductions in gun homicides, with some sites reporting up to 70% reductions in homicides and assaults.

### SOLUTION THREE

#### HOSPITAL-BASED VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) seek to break the cycle of violence by providing interventions at the time when victims are most vulnerable—the “teachable moment” that occurs while in the hospital in recovery. HVIPs connect violently injured patients with intervention specialists and peer counselors to provide desperately needed trauma care, case management, and other services to reduce the patient’s risk of retaliation or reinjury. Evaluations have found that patients who received HVIP services were four times less likely to be convicted of a violent crime and roughly four times less likely to be subsequently reinjured by violence than patients who did not receive HVIP services.