KEY ACTIONS FOR CITYWIDE GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION: A THREE-CITY CASE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last several decades, there has been a growing body of research about what works to reduce violence[1] and several clear demonstrations that US cities can sharply cut their homicide and shooting rates—and sustain low rates of violence. New York, Los Angeles, and Boston are a few notable examples. Yet, policymakers looking to address violence in their own context often have an unclear idea of where to start, or what is possible.

National trends (such as the 2020 rise in shootings that affected many cities) are one factor that muddies the water—some cities have had success in reducing violence simply by maintaining their existing policies while national conditions have gotten more favorable. Another confusing factor is that even cities that have reduced violence often do not know where to attribute success. They might cite an initiative that has an inconsistent definition (e.g. "Ceasefire"), point to branded programs that may or may not have been evaluated (and even if evaluated may have limited scope), or even attribute violence reduction to more basic elements, such as the total amount of money spent. In fact, the incentive for a city government is usually to mention as many things as possible—all of which may be legitimate contributors. Spreading credit is valid and important, but it makes the question of where cities really

need to spend their resources and attention more difficult to answer.

This case study looks to illustrate what recent efforts from researchers and practitioners suggest is the crucial takeaway:

Cities that take a holistic, strategic approach to violence reduction with strong management and accountability practices can drive down violence and keep violence low.

To explore this idea in depth, this case study takes three approaches:

1. Outlining six key system-building actions needed to reduce gun violence on a city scale, building off of previous extensive efforts from violence reduction professionals.

2. Using in-depth knowledge from research and practitioner work in three cities to look at each of the key actions in actual use by city government (or in some cases lack of use).

3. Providing direct quotes from city leaders that illustrate the complexity of these ideas, how cities can achieve them, and why the actions are important.

The three locations that this case study focuses on are Philadelphia, PA; Indianapolis, IN; and Baltimore, MD. These cities are all

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[1] Abt, Thomas, 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, Washington, DC (2016); Anthony A. Braga, David Weisburd, and Brandon Turchan, "Focused Deterrence Strategies and Crime Control," *Criminology & Public Policy* 17, no. 1 (January 31, 2018): 205–50, https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12353

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mid-sized and fairly representative of American cities in terms of community violence and reduction efforts.[2] The time period of focus, 2020 to 2023,[3] was also a critical time for American cities with reference to violence and social upheaval, starting with the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing through the summer with protests against police brutality across the country. These cities all had high levels of violence during these years, and put forth a concerted effort and funding commitment into violence reduction work through similar programs and city management oversight.

In each city, we asked key city leaders from city government, law enforcement, and community groups to tell us directly, through interviews, about what they found were the most important things to think about—and where cities could go very wrong by ignoring key concepts.

The main takeaway of these interviews is that the way in which cities organize, structure, and manage their violence reduction strategies is key to their success. Mayors, in particular, have enormous power to set cities up for success or failure based on the decisions they make. We have combined insights from leaders in each of these cities with a review of public documents and our own experience,

including extensive research in cities across the country. This case study details six key system-building actions for cities to undertake to achieve sustainable gun violence reductions. These actions should not necessarily be seen to occur in chronological order, but as six, potentially cyclical, steps that need to take place at some point across the city infrastructure.[4] We describe these six actions briefly below. The next section of the case study gives some brief background information on each of the cities under study. The following section provides more details on the six key actions and examines the extent to which each of the three cities took these steps in recent years. For those who are interested, the Appendices give more background on the key capacity work that inspired this project (1) and offer more context on each city, including interviewees, gun violence trends, and reduction strategies (2).

Six Key System-Building Actions for Citywide Gun Violence Reduction

1. **Commit Leadership Attention:** Establish strong and accountable political leadership.

It is essential that mayors identify gun violence reduction as a top priority. Then, the mayor must devote resources to a shared

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[2] In fact, a 2016 analysis suggested that Indianapolis was the most representative of American cities across a host of factors (see https://wallethub.com/edu/metro-areas-that-most-and-least-resemble-the-us/6109)

[3] Some updates are provided beyond this time period (early 2024) if they were relevant to actions made in the focal time period or concerns for sustainability voiced during interviews.

[4] These key actions are drawn from the California Partnership for Safe Communities white paper "Beyond Models: Exploring

Key Capacities for Sustainably Reducing City Violence" (https://thecapartnership.org/whitepaper/beyond-models-exploring-key-city-capacities-for-sustainably-reducing-community-violence/) and also overlaps with the Council on Criminal Justice's Ten Essential Actions Cities Can Take to Reduce Violence Now (https://counciloncj.org/10-essential-actions/), which shares an author. The actions described here are more long-term in focus and do not need to be thought of sequentially but are grouped thematically.

strategy and hold other leaders accountable for results. All three cities had some sort of public commitment from executive leadership to gun violence reduction, with dedication of significant funding to reduction efforts, but this commitment did not equally translate to effective political governance across the cities. Organization at the executive level can facilitate collaboration (Action 3) and effective management (Action 4). The involvement of the mayor in holding agency leadership accountable, and reorganization of executive leadership, was uniquely robust in Indianapolis and may have played a role in recent violence reductions from 2021-2023. The mayor's commitment in Baltimore was crucial for establishing and effectively implementing GVRS; yet, a brief period of decreased mayoral attention caused management and coordination to lag before a reset and refocus reinvigorated the strategy. In Philadelphia, the lack of a shared strategy and weak political governance likely hampered well-funded efforts to reduce violence. In particular, the reluctance of some key administrative officials to be directly involved in the strategic planning and vision for the city's violence reduction efforts may have hindered coordination and partnership development among programs operating at various levels (e.g., city government, grassroots/community organizations, non-profits).

2. **Understand the Problem:** Develop a data-informed problem definition.

Once gun violence reduction has been identified as a priority, cities need to collect

and analyze data to deeply understand the violence dynamics. This includes identifying the people, places, and groups most at risk for violence, and incorporating that analysis into the strategy. In Baltimore and Indianapolis, strong technical assistance support was especially helpful in defining the problem of community violence, including identifying the small number of people at the very highest risk of violence involvement. Philadelphia had issues creating partnerships and the right buy-in to get the in-depth intelligence needed to either (a) understand the city's violence dynamics fully or (b) share information with relevant partners – all of which highlights the need for Action 3.

3. **Consolidate a Cross-Sector Partnership:** Facilitate collaboration and coordination for strategy design and implementation.

A critical mass of the relevant stakeholders across government and community organizations must be working together on this issue to create the focus and consolidation of resources necessary to create change. However, cross-sector collaboration is difficult and a full-time convener or coordinating body is often necessary. None of the cities appeared to create a fully collaborative and coordinated partnership during this period. This action will likely have varying difficulties across cities, depending on the types and organization of agencies involved, but a shared strategy with real buy-in across partners helps. Indianapolis and Baltimore both had strategies that brought in community partners, local government, and law

enforcement agencies and their programs under one umbrella, and this appeared to be much more successful in creating solid working relationships than the many disparate strategies happening in Philadelphia. However, an outside entity of philanthropic and business leaders, the Civic Coalition to Save Lives, helped improve this situation at the end of this period, and similar external stakeholders could be useful in promoting partnerships when city governments are not doing so themselves.

4. **Create a Management Structure:** Build accountability through effective and data-driven operations.

With partners across agencies and organizations all contributing to gun violence reduction, a strong management structure is important to ensure accountability and sustained focus. Key elements of this structure include a full-time, dedicated coordinator and a management team that is data-driven, directly accountable to political champions, and has authorization to move a citywide strategy. Regular operational and management meetings were present in all three cities to drive this work, but management structures were stronger in Indianapolis and Baltimore than in Philadelphia due to issues completing the above actions. Baltimore created a strong structure for initial implementation, especially after some reorganization, but may have issues once their technical assistance partner pulls back, as collaboration has been heavily facilitated by personal relationships, and turnover has been quite high. Indianapolis had a strong champion

in the mayor, created new infrastructure, and had newer personnel for this type of work, which could create some unique challenges throughout the next years of the strategy, after initial success.

5. **Integrate City Resources:** Develop and invest in a strong violence reduction infrastructure.

Cities need a community violence intervention (CVI) ecosystem and law enforcement agencies focused on gun violence reduction in order to create a strong and overarching violence reduction infrastructure.

CVI organizations have been historically small, community-based, and dependent on external funding for their operations. Cities are now recognizing the need to organize and provide longer-term support for community-based organizations doing this work to make efficient use of existing resources. These CVI organizations can then create functional working relationships with cities and, under some circumstances, law enforcement agencies. The formation of the Office of Public Health and Safety (OPHS) in Indianapolis created a hub for CVI work, although there was still capacity-building work to do with other community organizations. In Baltimore, although CVI organizations were actively discussing ways to improve coordination, there were few, if any, formal operational partnerships outside of the Group Violence Reduction Strategy's weekly coordination meetings. In Philadelphia, no formal partnership existed between CVI organizations, although the city was in the process of creating model-based hubs for

programs based on Cure Violence and hospital-based violence intervention.

Local police departments should also effectively prioritize reducing gun violence by using data and human intelligence to identify the population at the very highest risk of violence and mobilizing focused enforcement operations. The police departments in Baltimore and Indianapolis had dedicated officers for the gun violence reduction strategies, but Baltimore had some initial challenges keeping focus due to understaffing and competing priorities. Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) has a place-based strategy called Operation PinPoint, but the degree to which it actually focused resources during this time was inconsistent. This was one of the first areas of attention identified by Philadelphia's new Police Commissioner in 2024. Across many of PPD's identified strategies there were questions about whether PPD used the data it collected to drive gun violence reduction strategic operations or whether PPD had structures to share relevant data with other stakeholders.

6.   Make it Stick: Undertake long-term sustainability planning and institutionalization.

Cities can do the above upfront work but then it will fall apart when a mayoral transition or significant staffing change happens because there were no real efforts to make the strategy sustainable. Sustainability planning involves taking steps to ensure a strategy can continue to operate over the long term, while institutionalization involves integrating sustainability principles into (a

city's) organizational culture and practices. Some examples of how cities can "make it stick" are by partnering with researchers for formal evaluation, acquiring long-term public funding, embedding key components in city policy, and developing shared governance with community stakeholders. Indianapolis had a big victory at the end of this period by getting strategy funding included in the

next city budget cycle. The key champion, Mayor Hogsett, was also recently re-elected, there is an external partner for shared governance, and are plans for independent evaluation of the strategy. Philadelphia had dedicated funding and conducted evaluations for certain programming, but not for an overall strategy. Baltimore had a rigorous evaluation of their strategy that arguably helped generate short term sustainability—Mayor Scott cited the evaluation results as part of his reelection campaign, which was successful. If the Mayor had not been re-elected, the strategy could have been vulnerable to large shifts in funding, staffing, management, and leadership buy-in.

These were apparent themes that came out of 13 semi-structured interviews with different city leaders. They are also aligned with a larger body of work that was funded by the Pew Foundation in 2023,[5] which studied key capacities for citywide violence reduction (details and alignment of this work to that framework can be found in Appendix 1). Some city background is provided on the three cities of interest in the next section (and more details can be found in Appendix 2), followed by additional discussion about the key actions for citywide gun violence reduction, and how the cities made progress towards them from 2020-2023.

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[5] See CPSC white paper linked in footnote 4 for full details.

Here, we briefly provide more background on each of the three cities discussed in this brief, to help readers understand the contexts that all of the key actions were, or were not, made in. Other cities may find these sections (and those in Appendix 2) useful to compare with their own contexts. These key actions can be made regardless of the demographics of the city or local government organization, for example, but some of these factors may be important facilitators or barriers to gun violence reduction action.

Key figures about these cities can be found in the table below, primarily utilizing Census data.[6] Philadelphia was the largest and most impoverished of the three cities examined here, while having an almost equal racial split in the population between White and Black. Indianapolis was the wealthiest and was firmly majority White, with the lowest levels of gun violence (homicides and non-fatal shootings) of the three cities, though still high. Baltimore was the smallest city; it was also majority Black, in the middle in terms of wealth and poverty, and had the highest gun violence levels. The mayors in Indianapolis and Philadelphia were in office since 2016, while the Baltimore mayor started in 2020.

		Philadelphia, PA	Indianapolis, IN	Baltimore, MD
Population (in 2022)		1,567,258	880,621	569,931
% of person living in poverty		22.7%	15.9%	19.6%
Median household income (2018-2022)		$57,537	$59,110	$58,349
White/Black population		45%/43%	56%/29%	28%/61%
Gun violence rate per 100,000[7]	2020	140.2	98.1	178.2
	2023*	105.9	81.0	148.4
Mayor in period of interest (2020-2023)		Kenney (2016-2023)	Hogsett (2016-)	Scott (2020-)

*Population estimates from 2022

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[6] "QuickFacts: Indianapolis City (Balance), Indiana; Baltimore City, Maryland; Philadelphia City, Pennsylvania," United States Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/indianapoliscitybalanceindiana,baltimorecitymaryland,philadelphiacitypennsylvania/PST045222

[7] Gun violence is defined here as non-fatal shootings and gun homicides. Sources: *Shooting Victims.* Dataset, OpenDataPhilly. Accessed February 19, 2024. https://opendataphilly.org/datasets/shooting-victims/; Baltimore and Indianapolis gun violence data were retrieved from the BPD and IMPD, respectively, but these data are not public.

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To combat ongoing high levels of violence, and historically high levels after the pandemic, these three cities all put some concerted effort and money into violence prevention during this period. Each of the cities examined here has some version of leading gun violence reduction strategies, including focused deterrence, Cure Violence, and hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs). Focused deterrence strategies involve understanding underlying crime dynamics and group involvement in violence and then using a blend of law enforcement, community mobilization, and social service actions to deter, and address the needs of, those individuals most involved in violence.[8] A Group Violence Intervention (GVI), or Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS), is typically a version of focused deterrence that focuses on groups or group-involved individuals. Cure Violence strategies approach violence from a public health perspective, considering it to spread similar to infectious diseases; to stop transmission involves three elements – interrupting violence directly, identifying and changing the thinking of those who may commit violence, and changing community norms around violence.[9] Another popular model is HVIPs, which try to engage violently injured patients in a trauma-informed approach to address immediate safety needs and longer-term needs across a variety of domains.[10] These are not the only types of programs occurring in these cities, but do comprise some of the most funded and studied models that are also being implemented in other cities across the U.S. The particular details of the strategies and programming around violence reduction for each city are discussed in the sections below.

Organizational Structure

Each city has a strong mayor system and a city (or city-county) council responsible for legislation. In the charts below, the organizational structure of each city is shown as it relates to crime and public safety under the Kenney (Philadelphia), Hogsett (Indianapolis) and Scott (Baltimore) administrations.

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[8] Anthony A. Braga, David Weisburd, and Brandon Turchan, "Focused Deterrence Strategies and Crime Control," *Criminology & Public Policy* 17, no. 1 (January 31, 2018): 205–50, https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12353; David M. Kennedy, *Don't Shoot: One Man, a Street Fellowship, and the End of Violence in Inner-City America* (New York, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012).
[9] Jeffrey A. Butts et al., "Cure Violence: A Public Health Model to Reduce Gun Violence," *Annual Review of Public Health* 36, no. 1 (March 18, 2015): 39–53, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031914-122509
[10] Jonathan Purtle et al., "Hospital-Based Violence Prevention: Progress and Opportunities," Annals of Internal Medicine 163, no. 9 (November 3, 2015): 715–17, https://doi.org/10.7326/m15-0586

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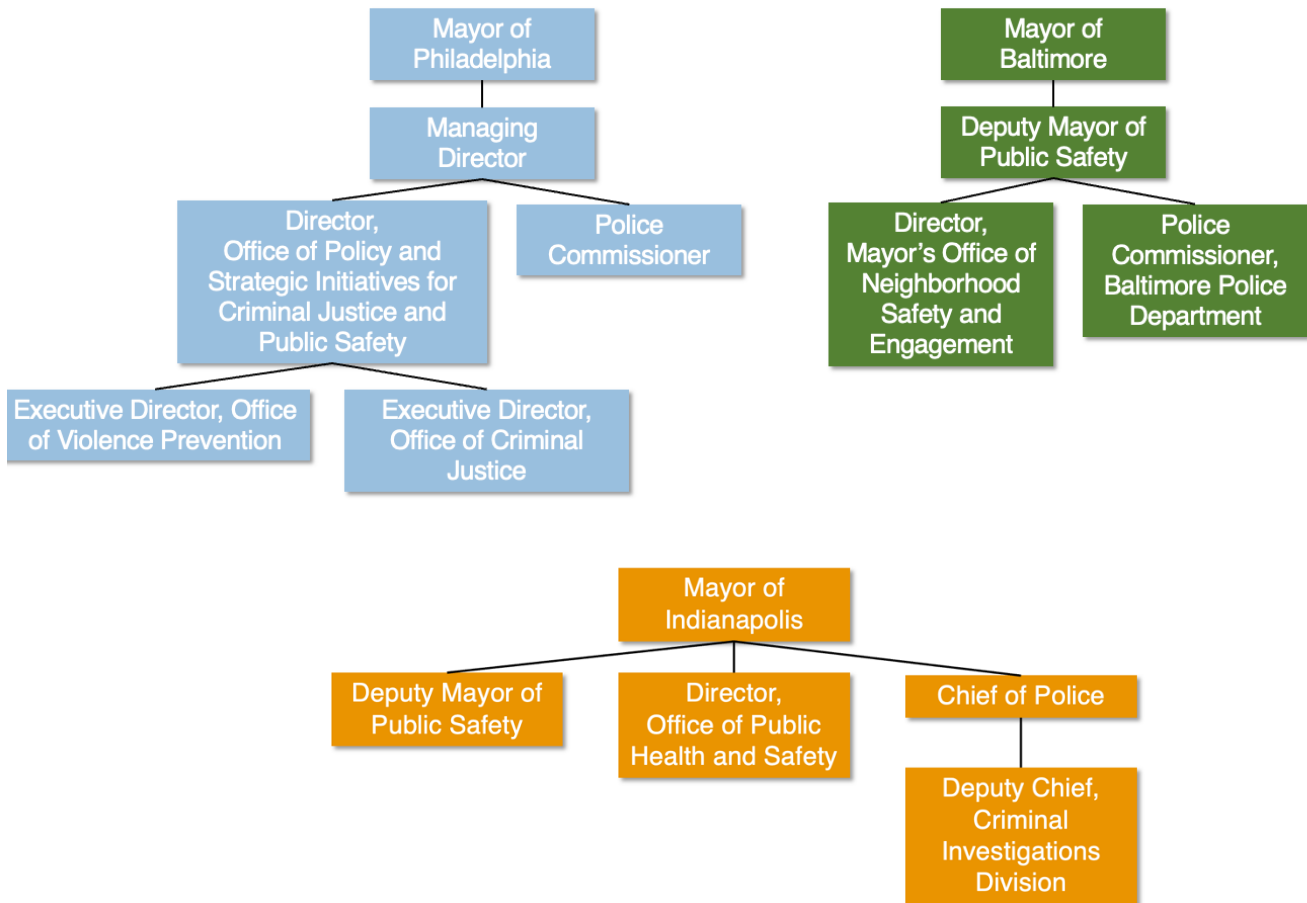
The main difference in the structure of these city governments as they related to public safety is that in Baltimore and Philadelphia authority flowed from the Mayor through the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety and Managing Director, respectively, and then to the leadership in the police and CVI-focused agencies. In Indianapolis, Mayor Hogsett strategically changed the organizational structure of the governmental bodies in charge of public safety when he came into office in 2016 with a vote from the city-county council. Previously, there was a Department of Public Safety, whose director appointed police and fire chiefs and was responsible for major decisions around public safety. This department was eliminated in 2016, and Mayor Hogsett signed an executive order that gave more responsibility to police and fire chiefs and had them report directly to him. He also created the Office for Public Health and Safety in 2017, which took over a lot of the other functions of the previous department and was the main city-based entity where funding, talent, and capacity-building were utilized to build out signification outreach and intervention organizations from scratch.

The next section provides a more detailed discussion of the key actions for citywide gun violence reduction during the time period of interest, given the context touched on above.

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SIX KEY ACTIONS –
AND HOW EACH CITY FARED

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The six key system-building actions for citywide violence reduction strategy success are discussed in more detail below, based on stakeholder interviews and document review. Specifics about how Philadelphia, Indianapolis, and Baltimore undertook these actions are also in the sections that follow.

Commit Leadership Attention

The first key action involves three main components: identify community violence as a top-priority public problem, commit to and fund a strategy, and exercise political governance. The leadership attention from the mayor on this issue is important to authorize, develop, implement, and sustain violence reduction efforts at the city level. Whether a mayor is focused on gun violence reduction, and puts their own time and city resources into these efforts, can make or break this work overall.

- Indianapolis fared the best in committing leadership attention, as Mayor Hogsett made a public commitment to reducing violence during his 2016 campaign and a commitment to the GVRS in 2021. In addition, the mayor created the Office of Public Health and Safety (OPHS) and removed the role of Public Safety Director so that the OPHS Director, and police and fire chiefs, reported directly to him. There were monthly GVRS meetings run by the mayor, who oversees OPHS, the Indy Public Safety Foundation, and the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD). Significant ARPA funding was put towards the creation of OPHS and the hiring of violence interrupters and life coaches.

> *"The mayor's involvement has been one of the biggest reasons for success, that every single month we have this detailed data-driven performance management meeting with the mayor and all of the stakeholders."*

- In Baltimore, Mayor Scott clearly made a commitment to gun violence reduction, connected it with the GVRS, and had monthly performance meetings with key agency leaders. This latter piece was a result of the governance system being reworked in 2022 because of a gulf between political authorization and operational results. Mayor Scott continued to endorse GVRS as the city's lead strategy to reduce homicides and shootings. He exercised caution in scaling the strategy, publicly committing to making implementation fidelity a precondition for expansion – learning lessons from past failures to scale promising pilots in the city. As other city crises pulled the Mayor's attention away from enforcing his vision on GVRS, lower level managers were able to pull resources away from GVRS and devote them to other initiatives. As other city crises subsided, the Mayor's attention returned to GVRS and resource allocation to the strategy became more consistent.

  > "Yeah, [GVRS] is his main talking point around violence, and he's invested heavily in MONSE, which is [the Mayor's Office's] component to it and they have a version of it in PoliceStat every two weeks now. So, there's a commitment. Is it a well-directed commitment is, I think, a different question."

- Philadelphia largely failed to undertake this action, despite Mayor Kenney making a public commitment to gun violence reduction through the Roadmap to Safer Communities in 2018. This commitment was not connected with one overarching strategy but instead multiple disconnected initiatives and there was no governance structure put in place to coordinate components and hold leaders accountable. The mayor himself often deferred leadership on the topic to other agency leads, such as the Managing Director's Office (MDO) and the PPD, but these leaders did not have authority over the entire ecosystem. There were, however, large investments in gun violence reduction initiatives during this time. And with the creation of the Civic Coalition[11] and the placement of Estelle Richman as special advisor to the mayor in 2022, the collaboration and political governance functions seemed to improve at the end of this period.

  > "I think that we [had] a mayor who cares about the issue but doesn't know how to wrap his hands around it."

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[11] As per the organization website, "The Civic Coalition to Save Lives was established by Philadelphia Foundation and the William Penn Foundation in partnership with Urban Affairs Coalition, The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Equity Alliance to help catalyze a broad civic effort to drive a focus on evidence-based and sustainable intervention strategies to reduce gun violence in Philadelphia," https://savephillylives.org/. The role of outside groups such as the Civic Coalition is worth further exploration as a factor that could help cities commit to several of the six actions.

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Understand the Problem

The second key action relates to whether a data-informed problem analysis[12] was conducted to understand the community violence dynamics happening within the city, and whether that understanding of the problem then informed the gun violence reduction strategy and data collection could be sustained after the initial analysis. Strategies must be connected to the underlying problems at hand in each city, which typically find a small number of people behind the violence, but the details and dynamics of these issues differ. Without a deep understanding of the violence problem, strategies cannot be expected to meet their goals.

"The problem analysis that was done by NICJR, to give us a good understanding of who we need to be focused on, was critical."

- Indianapolis was the best example of this action occurring. In 2021, NICJR conducted a problem analysis, which identified characteristics of high-risk individuals and six groups most involved in violence and led to a shared understanding of the problem across stakeholders. The IMPD portion of GVRS was not entirely aligned to findings from the problem analysis, but they were working towards this goal, and had the capacity to continue collecting and utilizing relevant data.

"How much have they really embraced the problem analysis? I don't know. They refer to it, yes. But have they really internalized it? I don't know."

- In Baltimore, University of Pennsylvania's Crime and Justice Policy Lab (CJP) and the California Partnership for Safe Communities (CPSC) conducted a problem analysis, which informed the GVRS methodology, but did not lead to a strong shared understanding of the citywide problem as it was only a snapshot in time of a pilot district. Additionally, there were limitations in data and group intelligence that complicated the analysis.

"[We] attempted to get a problem analysis… our conversation around what we could or couldn't do took longer than what the problem analysis would've taken."

- In Philadelphia, no large-scale problem analysis was conducted during this time period, and other attempts at community violence data analysis were not fully connected to larger strategies. PPD had some quality data and a solid research team, but the MDO did not have much data analysis structure or capacity – yet they were

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[12] A problem analysis, or Gun Violence Problem Analysis (GVPA), is "a set of analytical exercises" around shootings and homicides, which are often used to support the implementation of violence reduction strategies; "the GVPA is a research-based methodology used in dozens of cities nationally" (NICJR, 2021, p. 1: https://www.wishtv.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Indianapolis-Gun-Violence-Problem-Analysis-Summary-Narrative.pdf)

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tasked with leading and coordinating multiple violence reduction initiatives based on a variety of theories of change and focus populations.

Consolidate a Cross-Sector Partnership

The third key action involves facilitating collaboration, establishing a convener, and getting buy-in to execute a shared strategy. Citywide gun violence reduction requires a variety of expertise and resources to tackle the problem, but getting key partners aligned is not an easy task. It often requires a dedicated convener, for example a Strategy Director or Public Safety Official working on behalf of the Mayor, whose job is to facilitate this collaboration and coordinate work undertaken by partners to achieve key outcomes of the strategy. The strategy may involve separate sub-strategies that attempt to solve different parts of the problem, but these should be coordinated under the overall strategy to avoid duplication of efforts.

- Philadelphia did not have a shared strategy among all of the organizations tasked with gun violence reduction, stakeholders felt that there was no convener for shared work that has full operational capacity, and collaboration between the MDO, PPD, and CBO partners was lacking, although improving over the last year. The city did have regular shooting reviews and meetings across departments, which was partially related to the leadership direction of these agencies, but some of this collaboration was driven by the Civic Coalition and their engagement with a technical assistance provider, NICJR.

> *"[The Civic Coalition] actually brought in somebody who knew how to be effective in government to help influence how government was operating."*

- Baltimore fared better in that there is a shared strategy (GVRS), with the Mayor's Office, Baltimore Police Department (BPD), the State's Attorney's Office (SAO), and Roca, Inc. and Youth Advocate Program (YAP) (service providers) on board, but stakeholders noted that the partners were too siloed and the organization in the current convener role (Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, MONSE) was not a good fit, as their mandate was too broad for operational coordination and their communication with partners was inconsistent. There has also been a lot of turnover in key roles, which stakeholders felt could both impede and, in some cases, facilitate collaboration as people moved into other relevant roles. In addition, some key programs, such as the city's flagship outreach program Safe Streets, were not connected to the GVRS and had their own internal struggles.

> *"So, in spite of all of these great things… this work is just that difficult and that fragile that key management turnover, position and leadership changes - all of those are big shocks to the system."*

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- Indy also had a shared strategy (GVRS), and collaboration and coordination among partners was present and continually improving, but there were still some challenges with leadership, ownership, and focus within certain agencies, such as IMPD. Stakeholders identified a coordinated approach between agencies and within each agency that has effectively nurtured collaboration across diverse facets of the strategy. The first important component of this was that agencies have worked towards establishing a cross-sector goal. In addition, enhanced coordination was achieved through a structured framework involving regular inter-agency meetings, coupled with the direct engagement of the mayor in key management decisions. This included consistent attendance at scheduled meetings and active participation in organizational adjustments. Collaboration and coordination were also strengthened by the formation of the Indy Collective, a community steering committee. Finally, the Indy Public Safety Foundation (IPSF) supported coordination between law enforcement, local government, and community organizations.

> *"The collaboration is probably the biggest contributor to that in my mind. And when I say that, I don't mean just the collaboration between agencies and offices, but the collaboration within each agency as well."*

Create a Management Structure

Creating an effective management structure involves assigning dedicated full-time managers and establishing a management team, management processes, and a sustained management focus on those at highest risk of committing gun violence. Without a strong management structure, partners may lose focus and succumb to the typical "firefighting" crisis distractions that occur in city agencies. The right structure allows for accountability and data-driven actions to move the strategy forward.

- In Indy, weekly shooting reviews, weekly coordination meetings, and monthly performance review meetings were ensuring effective operational management. There were dedicated teams within IMPD and OPHS (although more stability could be achieved here as most were contracted staff), a feedback loop of information between these teams, and an accountability structure through regular meetings where the mayor could ensure performance of these teams as related to key metrics. However, improvement could be made in relation to key operational leaders below the mayor and IMPD metrics more granular than the monthly or yearly goals.

> *"And [NICJR] reports out on numbers that OPHS gives and IMPD gives. And we get held accountable for what we're doing, what we're not doing, what we need to do. And it's straight from the top down."*

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- Baltimore created an effective operational management structure, especially for the initial rollout district, but the effectiveness relied on consistent management personnel as well as work activity, which has been hard to sustain. There was a lack of experienced managers and personnel across BPD, MONSE, and SAO, and as people changed positions, which happened frequently, especially in BPD, it was often hard to find suitable replacements. Even though this resulted in the quality of implementation being uneven at times, on balance, city partners sustained effective management practices, focus on the highest-risk people, and commitment to the strategy.

> *"I do think that that initial management structure that we put in place that kind of stuck through the Western District was the right one and it's why we saw the reductions that we did."*

- Similar personnel sustainability issues plagued Philadelphia, where stakeholders reported issues with operational capacity within the MDO, who has taken on the management role of multiple initiatives aiming to reduce gun violence, and an absence of effective management processes or structures outside of regular meetings that were often getting canceled. Hiring a special advisor has helped with some of the siloing between MDO and PPD, but the city has struggled with having authority housed within a single person or structure.

> *"I feel like the police department under Ross sort of abdicated the leadership of that to MDO. And to be fair to MDO, I don't think that they were appropriately staffed with the right people to be able to be effective leaders on that topic. And then on top of that, they don't have a lot of the data."*

Integrate City Resources

Integrating city resources involves both law enforcement and non-law enforcement activities to reduce violence. Both are necessary for tackling all facets of gun violence. This means cultivating a capable CVI ecosystem and a police department focused on gun violence. While all information cannot and must not be shared, appropriate integration involves creating the infrastructure within and between these systems so that they are capturing and sharing relevant information to identify and interrupt situations likely to lead to violence. For police departments, the data infrastructure may already exist, but the challenge is to maintain focus on those at highest risk of gun violence while also maintaining a broad public safety mandate. In the absence of this infrastructure, it is imperative for agencies to build it out in a formal, sustainable way that can generate actionable insights. For community violence intervention, oftentimes the infrastructure needs help being built – in the form of sustainable funding, training and professional development, and alignment to a strategy.

Cultivate a Community Violence Intervention Ecosystem

- In Indy, the formation of OPHS led to a hub for CVI efforts, including a robust team of violence interrupters, life coaches, and outreach workers, hired and funded by the city, and at-risk fellows hired by the Indy Public Safety Foundation. Through OPHS, the CVI ecosystem was also connected with IMPD. There were also grassroots organizations in Indy focused on primary prevention and

> *"I think that you also have to take into account that the mayor with the council gave a total of $45 million through grants to grassroot orgs in Indianapolis...which I think goes into the overall goal of reducing violence, because if we're connecting people to services, then we also need to figure out how to support those services."*

the allocation of funding from the city's budget was pivotal for enabling these organizations to continue expanding their capacities, but would also benefit from more established metrics and expert support.

- In Baltimore, there were struggles with infrastructure relating to CVI. Outside of GVRS coordination meetings, there was less formalized communication between the main CVI providers related to the GVRS, with each other and BPD, and there was no executive office holding partners accountable for coordination, though stakeholders agreed this should lie with MONSE. There were capacity building efforts at these organizations, in addition to MONSE, but they still lacked personnel and resources, which contributed to competition and a scarcity mindset. Additionally, Safe Streets and the city's two largest HVIPs were not coordinated with the GVRS.

> *"Major --- was in the Western and Major --- was in the Eastern; both were champions. When they moved to different units or retired, there was radio silence, no one would return calls from [the service provider]."*

- Philly also struggled with a scarcity mindset among city agencies and the CVI programs that have been historically competing for limited funding, though there were new streams of funding that were trying to build CBO capacity. However, many CVI organizations still lack data infrastructure, accountability, and resource management. Philadelphia's

> *"If you go to the beginning of 2022, almost the entire ecosystem didn't exist. We have an Office of Violence Prevention that was founded about five years ago. But at the time it was a few people, and so there's been basically a period where you had to sort of build all the infrastructure. It didn't exist before."*

OVP, which was created in 2017, was slow to start and has not become the full convener of this ecosystem. There were efforts to improve communication and collaboration among certain types of evidence-based CVI providers, like Cure

Violence programs and HVIPs, but these were still being implemented and types of programs may still be siloed. Stakeholders also voiced concerns that both CVI and PPD were not focused on the most at-risk population, and efforts, while evidence-based, were siloed and not tied to a central strategy.

Focus on Effective Policing

- The IMPD began to emphasize a comprehensive and community-oriented strategy that went beyond traditional methods and was bought into the GVRS strategy – they had 90 people dedicated to the strategy across two teams, worked on expanding analysis and intelligence teams, and have grown to appreciate a more holistic focus for violence reduction with a space for CVI and more collaborative information sharing.

> *"I think our police department is doing a very good job of that and really looking at the numbers differently, also. Looking at those criminal homicides, really focusing in and honing in on the social network analysis and the group violence that we have in the different groups in the city."*

- The Baltimore Police Department developed critical infrastructure to support the implementation and expansion of GVRS, including the creation of the Group Violence Unit (GVU). The GVU was staffed with 30 officers and detectives, led by a lieutenant, used a unified command structure, and was trained in the required investigation, suppression, and partnership work needed to implement GVRS. However, there were issues of capacity within BPD, as BPD has been drastically understaffed (two-thirds of authorized strength in the beginning of 2024), and in combination with competing priorities, this led to implementation issues with the GVRS.

> *"And so, we put a lot of thought into how we position GVRS within the [BPD]'s structure and how do we staff it in a way that's going to make sense. So, it's not just about getting the most bodies in a unit, but it's like, do you have the right people with the right assignments in the right*

- Philadelphia PD had a place-based strategy called Operation PinPoint, that does focus on high-risk locations, but no rigorous assessment of this program has occurred yet. The PPD did have other data-driven programs and collected relevant data, but this did not always translate to strategic operations, higher clearance rates, or relevant data shared with other collaborators. For

> *"We [now] have our tactical meetings where police captains in the most vulnerable districts are sitting in with our operating departments, particularly environmental and social service departments, and now we're adding community organizations and CBOs to be in support of what is happening in PinPoint areas across the city in a way that is adjacent to law enforcement but not law enforcement heavy."*

instance, GVI used PPD data to identify potential participants, but did not regularly share relevant data with CVI organizations on the ground.

Make it Stick

Though none of the other actions are necessarily in chronological order, this important final step does come when at least some of the above actions have been accomplished, and that is to make those actions "stick." There is a strong pressure, especially once cities have seen success from their actions, to move on and work on the next crisis of the day. Other cities get distracted by firefighting before they can even see success. However, gun violence reduction should be thought of as essential maintenance for modern cities, like roads and lighting.[13] To ensure that successful strategies move forward, through mayoral transitions and staff turnover, cities need to look toward sustainability and institutionalization, through partnering with researchers for formal evaluation, acquiring long-term public funding, embedding key components in city policy, and developing shared governance with community stakeholders.

- There was some concern previously about whether an ARPA cliff would affect funding for OPHS and GVRS in Indianapolis, but the city recently devoted city dollars ($4.2 million) towards the strategy for the next budget cycle. Mayor Hogsett, the key champion for GVRS, was also re-elected for another 4 years and will support incorporating components of the strategy into policy, which will be helpful for long-term sustainability. There have been no formal evaluations of the strategy to date,

  "But the biggest part of that is getting the commitment from the mayor, which, if it's in the 2024 budget, I would imagine even if the current mayor doesn't win that whoever comes in is going to have to commit to that."

  but in the Year 1 report for the strategy NICJR found a 16% reduction in murders and a 14% reduction in non-fatal shootings year-over-year, which is promising, especially considering further citywide reductions since. there were also plans for future evaluations. Some threats to sustainability were that law enforcement was still developing long-term buy-in to the strategy and almost all of the OPHS staff were not full-time protected staff but contracted and therefore vulnerable. Faith in Indiana has been a key external entity for the start and implementation of GVRS but it remains to be seen whether they will be a sufficient governance "co-holder" of the strategy.

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[13] It is possible that taking this "essential maintenance" approach has allowed Boston (a city with relatively low rates of gun violence) to drive down homicide to historic lows in 2024—the city had just four homicides in the first half of the year. The Boston experience suggests this work is not in competition to other priorities such as community development and investment, but that it might support and make effective other priorities.

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- In Baltimore, the mayoral election raised questions for the sustainability of GVRS – for the continuation of the strategy itself and even for the future of MONSE. With Mayor Scott winning the primary election, he is presumably going to continue as mayor, but long-term sustainability is still a question. Many of the successful collaboration points for GVRS were person-based, which leaves them vulnerable for personnel transitions and leadership changes. This is exacerbated by the fact that several key positions were created with ARPA money, and there is not enough legislation for GVRS that could withstand administrative changes. In addition, the strategy will have to make changes to core components as it scales outside the pilot district, which means that key structures for management and operations will need to change and then be sustained. A rigorous evaluation of GVRS in the pilot district was positive: preliminary estimates suggest that GVRS reduced homicides and shootings in the Western District by approximately a quarter in the first 18 months of implementation, relative to what they would have been otherwise. These findings are very promising, but more personnel, resources, and focused management attention will be required to continue scaling the strategy up. While there is no external partner for shared governance currently, there is a consortium of funders supporting technical assistance and evaluation that have a vested interest in seeing the work continue.

  > *"I think that [we have to go] back to the legislation, right, because it can't just be about individuals, it can't be about [Mayor Scott] and it can't be about me. It has to be, how are we codifying the work in ways that make it undeniable?"*

- Philadelphia has also had formal evaluations of some of its gun violence reduction programming, with some positive outcomes and areas for improvement. For instance, an early evaluation of the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) found that those groups who received GVI treatment experienced a 38.6% reduction in shootings per week and those contacted at least twice experienced a 50.3% reduction in weekly shootings, but citywide violence was still high. At least one stakeholder suggested that the reduction in gun violence seen in 2023 was more of a regression to the mean than the result of any violence reduction efforts. One reason for this might be the lack of an overarching and coordinated strategy among the city's reduction efforts. This could also hamper sustainability work, with no city strategy to then incorporate into agency and city policy. The city had also committed funding to programming through the 5-year budget cycle, but this is the majority

  > *"We fail every time on scalability – scaling it and sustainment."*

of the funding for all strands of violence reduction programming, though some external grants exist and aid in sustainability. The Civic Coalition has been useful as an external co-holder of this work, and the mayoral transition the city is currently experiencing will test its ability to sustain the city's focus on near-term gun violence as an outside stakeholder. There are some additional questions about a pipeline of leaders who are capable of managing and conducting this type of work across the multiple agencies and partners needed to sustain efforts in the city, including creating necessary infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

Countless cities across the U.S. have been excited by the next new evidence-based program shown to reduce gun violence - but then years go by, excitement fades, and the program was shown to make some reductions but not fulfill the full promise of citywide change. That is because the substance of the program matters less than the functioning of the entire gun violence reduction ecosystem it enters into. By comparing the experiences of three cities actively working to reduce gun violence, this brief demonstrates the value of taking a holistic, strategic approach to gun violence reduction and systematically building capacity to manage and implement interventions. Cities need to focus leadership attention on the problem, deeply understand it, and build out the systems that will do the work to reduce it. These are not steps that can be accomplished immediately or changes that can be made overnight. However, by recognizing the importance of these system-building actions, cities can prioritize these essential areas of their gun violence reduction efforts and, ultimately, effectively do what is required to avoid more lives lost and communities harmed.

1. **Commit Leadership Attention:** Establish strong and accountable political leadership.

2. **Understand the Problem:** Develop a data-informed problem definition.

3. **Consolidate a Cross-Sector Partnership:** Facilitate collaboration and coordination for strategy design and implementation.

4. **Create a Management Structure:** Build accountability through effective and data-driven operations.

5. **Integrate City Resources:** Develop and invest in a strong violence reduction infrastructure.

6. **Make it Stick:** Undertake long-term sustainability planning and institutionalization.

Appendix 1 – Key Capacity Background and Matrix

Previous research by the California Partnership for Safe Communities (CPSC), funded by the Pew Charitable Trust, sought to identify the key capacities of cities needed to successfully and continuously reduce gun violence in communities. This work, which included extensive background research and then an examination of violence reduction efforts in seven cities over 15 years, hypothesized that what played a critical role were six overarching key capacities, listed below. The framework seeks to analyze violence prevention work by focusing on the city as a whole system, beyond the implementation of any one popular or leading model. Potential key capacities are as follows:

1)   **Political governance and public sector leadership**. This capacity includes three key elements: identifying community violence as a top-priority public problem, making a public political commitment to invest resources in an evidence-informed umbrella strategy, and holding agency leaders and external partners accountable for results through political governance.

2)   **Data-informed problem analysis or problem definition.** This capacity refers to a data-informed analysis of community violence that seeks to identify the people and networks involved in recent violence and at the highest risk of future violence, the context and motives behind those incidents, as well as the micro-places where violence is most likely to occur.

3)   **Cross sector collaboration and strategy design.** This capacity involves different government agencies and community organizations coming together to collectively focus their expertise and resources on community violence, usually facilitated by a local convener or/and coordinating body, and working to execute an evidence-informed city-wide umbrella strategy that connects various sub-strategies together in a coherent way.

4)   **Effective operational management.** This key capacity refers to the need for local management leaders, teams, and management processes specifically focused on reducing community violence through the implementation of evidence-informed strategies, which requires a full-time, dedicated director and a management team that is data-driven, directly accountable to political champions, and has power to move a citywide strategy.

5)   **Violence reduction infrastructure: CVI and effective policing.** This capacity involves two parts. The first is an effective community violence intervention (CVI) ecosystem that is able to engage the highest-risk population effectively through a shared strategy. The second is a police department that effectively prioritizes reducing gun violence by using data to identify the population at the very highest risk of violence, mobilizing focused enforcement operations, and building functional working relationships with the community and service partners also working to address violence.

6)   **Sustainability planning and institutionalization.** Sustainability planning involves taking steps to ensure a strategy can continue to operate over the long term, while institutionalization involves integrating sustainability principles into (a city's) organizational culture and practices.

Ratings that align this framework with findings for each city during this four-year period are in the following matrix.

KEY CAPACITY	DEFINITIONS	INDIANAPOLIS	PHILADELPHIA	BALTIMORE
(1) Political Governance and Public Sector Leadership	This capacity suggests that addressing community violence requires a specific type of political commitment that involves three core elements: a. Issue Identification: identifying community violence as a top-priority public problem, b. Strategy Commitment: making a public political commitment to invest resources in an evidence-informed strategy c. Political Governance: holding agency leaders and external partners accountable for results through political governance. This governance approach has to align agency leaders with the city's overall strategy, engage community stakeholders as partners and hold their focus on reducing shootings over time.	Present	Partially Present	Partially Present (Leaning Present)
(2) Data-Informed Problem Analysis / Problem Definition	This capacity refers to a data-informed analysis of community violence that seeks to identify the people and networks involved in recent violence and at the highest risk of future violence, the context and motives behind those incidents as well as the micro-places where violence is most likely to occur. a. This is most commonly conducted with police department data and intelligence, but these analyses can also be conducted with information known to CVI organizations. b. Academic researchers or technical assistance partners are instrumental partners in developing these data-informed analyses. With their support, cities can build internal capacity to sustain such analysis internally.	Present	Partially Present	Partially Present
(3) Cross-Sector Collaboration and Shared Strategy	This key capacity refers to the following: a. Collaboration: The process where different government agencies and community organizations coordinate their focus their expertise and resources on a complex issue of public importance - in this case, community violence - through a shared strategy. b. Convener: To achieve effective collaboration, a local convener or/and coordinating body is usually necessary. This is often the city government itself but can also be a powerful local institution or a formal governance structure. c. Shared Strategy: An evidence-informed city-wide umbrella strategy that connects various sub-strategies together in a coherent way. This framework should be guided by a theory of change grounded in a fact-based problem definition.	Partially Present (Leaning Present)	Partially Present (Leaning Absent)	Partially Present (Leaning Absent)

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KEY CAPACITY	DEFINITIONS	INDIANAPOLIS	PHILADELPHIA	BALTIMORE
(4) Effective Operational Management	This key capacity refers to the need for local management leaders, teams, and management processes specifically focused on reducing violence through the implementation of evidence-informed strategies. Important Elements include: a. Establishing a full-time, dedicated position(s) that can effectively manage internally (within their city agency and line of authority) and collaborate externally (with other agencies, partners, and community stakeholders) to direct the intervention and maintain momentum. b. Consolidate a management team that is (i) guided by a data-driven problem definition and theory of change; (ii) accountable directly to political champions/authorizers (iii) has enough power to move a citywide strategy. c. Create a management process to focus lead agencies on implementing the strategy, collecting and reporting performance metrics/indicators. This usually includes a cycle of weekly or monthly meetings. d. Sustaining this management focus, team and process over time so that the local partnership remains focus on the highest risk people and violence dynamics.	Present	Partially Present (Leaning Absent)	Partially Present
(5) Violence Reduction Infrastructure - CVI and Effective Policing	This key capacity refers to two specific pieces of municipal infrastructure most relevant to reducing near-term violence: a. An effective CVI intervention ecosystem that is able to engage the highest-risk population effectively through a shared strategy. This ecosystem includes a coherent theory of change, sufficient staffing, professional and organizational development, management, and data measurement capacity. Effective approaches are intensive, relationship-based, and harm reduction focused. This requires significant, ongoing funding investment and capacity building.	Present	Partially Present	Partially Present
	b. A police department that prioritizes reducing gun violence. To tackle violence, police departments must be committed to using data to identify the population at highest risk of violence, able to mobilize focused enforcement operations, and build functional working relationships with the community and service partners also working to address violence. This often requires significant organizational capacity building.	Present	Partially Present	Partially Present
(6) Sustainability Planning and Institutionalization	Sustainability planning involves creating strategies to ensure a strategy can continue to operate over the long term, while institutionalization involves integrating sustainability principles into (a city's) organizational culture and practices. This key capacity includes: a. Conducting formal evaluations - building local evidence of effectiveness. b. Securing devoted, permanent public funding to sustain strategy infrastructure. c. Incorporating violence reduction strategies into agency and city policy. Embedding violence reduction efforts in local agencies, institutions, and city policy. d. Institutionalizing shared governance - having a powerful non-governmental institution or governance structure to hold political will, technical expertise over time specific to reducing community violence.	Partially Present	Partially Present (Leaning Absent)	Partially Present (Leaning Absent)

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Appendix 2 – Additional City Background

Philadelphia

In Philadelphia, we conducted 5[14] semi-structured interviews of key stakeholders involved in violence reduction efforts between 2020 and 2023. Below is a list of the interviewees.

- o **Erica Atwood**: Deputy Managing Director/Senior Director of the Office of Policy and Strategic Initiatives for Criminal Justice and Public Safety (CJPS)
- o **Joshu Harris**: CJPS Deputy Director, Strategy and Programming (since December 2022); former Legislative Director for Councilman Kenyatta Johnson (2017-2022)
- o **Julia Hinckley**: Mayor's Director of Policy (2021-2023); former Managing Director's Office (MDO) Policy Director of Health and Human Services (2016-2021)
- o **Arun Prabhakaran**: President of the Urban Affairs Coalition; former Chief of Staff for DA Larry Krasner (2018-2020)
- o **Kevin Thomas**: Director of Research and Analysis for the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD)
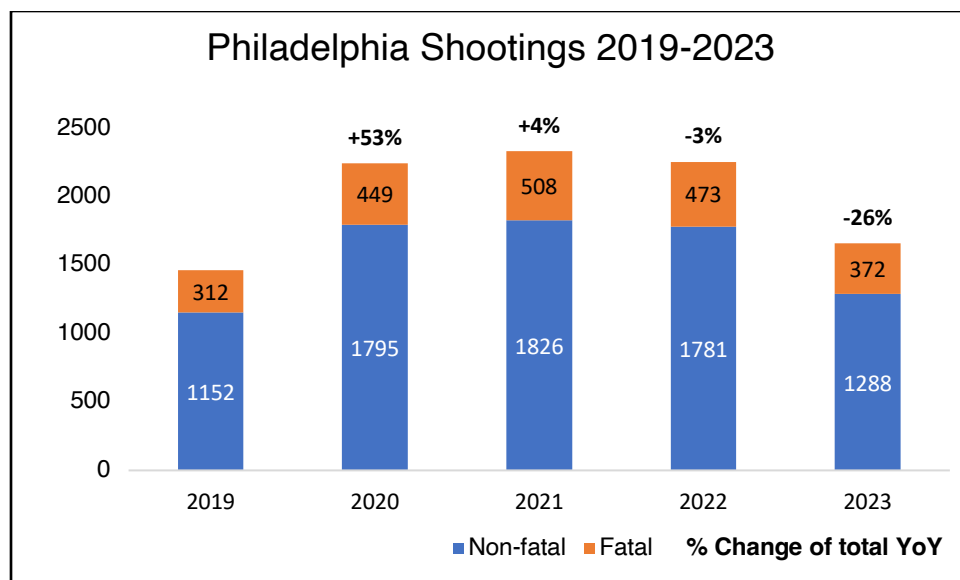
Gun Violence

The trend of shootings in Philadelphia from 2019-2023 can be seen in the figure below. Like other cities across the U.S., Philadelphia saw increases in shootings at the start of the pandemic, which grew to an all-time high in 2021 of 1,826 non-fatal shootings and 508 gun homicides, with the second highest year in 2022. Shootings dropped more substantially in 2023 (down 26% from 2022) but are still not back to pre-pandemic levels. According to data from the Delaware Valley Intelligence Center, analyzed in the evaluation for GVI, around 21% of shootings from 2020 to mid-2022 were categorized as group-member-involved.[15] Previous work, which found that group-involved shooting estimates tripled after an audit of group-member identification for an earlier iteration of focused deterrence in the city, suggests that the real percentage of group-involved shootings is likely to be much higher.[16]

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[14] David Muhammad was also consulted related to his work in Philadelphia as a technical advisor since 2022, but an entire interview was not conducted on this work because the primary focus was on Indianapolis.

[15] Ruth A. Moyer, "Assessing the Effects of the Group Violence Intervention on Firearm Violence in Philadelphia," *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, December 22, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-023-09601-w

[16] Caterina G. Roman, Caroline McGlynn, and Jordan Hyatt, "Developing and Implementing a Data-Driven Focused Deterrence Strategy in Philadelphia," (presentation, Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia, PA, November 16, 2017).

Philadelphia Shootings 2019-2023

Year	Non-fatal	Fatal	% Change of total YoY
2019	1152	312	
2020	1795	449	+53%
2021	1826	508	+4%
2022	1781	473	-3%
2023	1288	372	-26%

Source: OpenDataPhilly

Gun Violence Strategies

In early 2019, the Kenney administration launched the "Roadmap to Safer Communities" which was an attempt to create a comprehensive strategy to tackle gun violence across the city, spearheaded by the city's Office of Violence Prevention. This strategy took a public health approach and intended to focus on the root causes of violence, including structural racism, poverty, and historic disinvestment in communities. It also called for significant monetary investment to focus on community-based, trauma-informed, and law enforcement strategies to combat gun violence. An updated version of the Roadmap was released in April of 2021, which emphasized, among other priorities, funding for programs and strategies focusing on those people and places at the highest risk of experiencing violence. In fiscal years 2022 and 2023 alone, the city invested $346 million dollars in gun violence prevention efforts.[17]

Several high-profile, community-based programs were stood up to combat gun violence in Philadelphia from 2019 through 2023, including the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) program, Community Crisis Intervention Program (CCIP), Pushing Progress Philly (P3),[18] Community Expansion Grants (CEG), and multiple HVIPs.[19] Philadelphia also implemented a comprehensive set of trauma-informed innovations to address the impact of violence and overwhelming stress within the community over the last few

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[17] "Gun Violence Prevention," City of Philadelphia, https://www.phila.gov/media/20231129104001/Kenney-Administration-Progress-Report-Our-violence-prevention-efforts.pdf

[18] GVI is a focused deterrence strategy; the CCIP model is similar to the Cure Violence model in its focus on violence interruption and changing community norms; and P3 is a replication of READI Chicago, an intervention that paired CBT with workforce development and stipends among a high-risk population.

[19] "Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs) in Philadelphia: Current Practice and Future Directions," City of Philadelphia, https://www.phila.gov/media/20220822090649/PDPH_HVIP_Rpt22_finWEB.pdf

years, including expanding their existing crisis line, creating a violence prevention hotline, establishing co-responder teams, and expanding the Trauma Resource Network. The city has also increased environmental improvement and support, including street cleaning, housing repairs,[20] and vacant lot maintenance.[21] These efforts are in addition to the main gun violence reduction initiative from the Philadelphia Police Department, Operation PinPoint, which utilizes data to identify high-impact areas and guide their officer deployment.

Indianapolis

In Indy, we conducted 4 semi-structured interviews of key stakeholders involved in violence reduction efforts between 2020 and 2023. Below is the list of the interviewees.
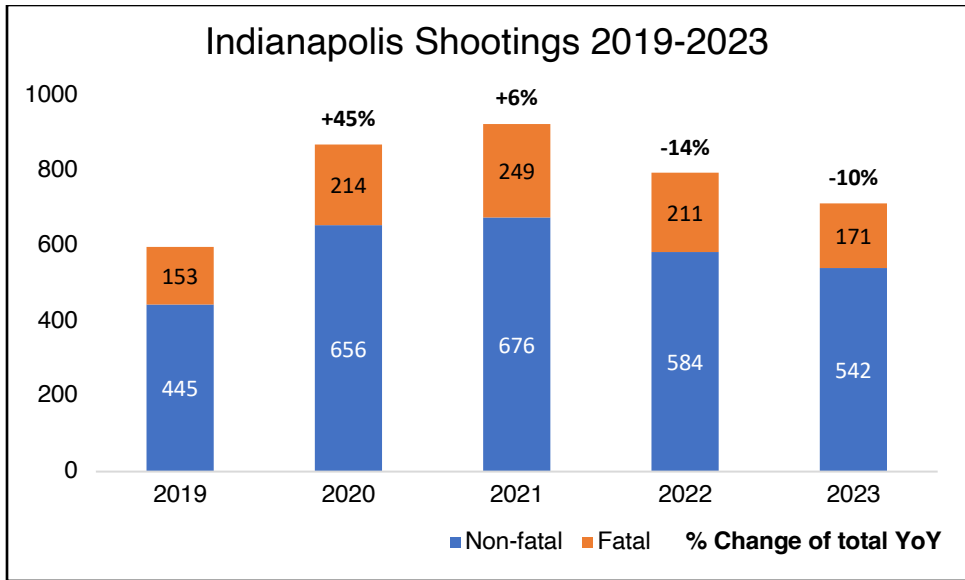
- o **Kendale Adams**: Deputy Chief of Criminal Investigations Division for the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD)
- o **Tony Lopez**: Deputy Director of Violence Reduction for the Office of Public Health and Safety (OPHS) (since early 2021)
- o **David Muhammad**: Executive Director of the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR), technical assistance provider to Indianapolis since 2018
- o **Lauren Rodriguez**: Deputy Mayor for Public Health and Safety (since December 2022); former Director of OPHS (2021-2022)

Gun Violence

The trend of shootings in Indianapolis from 2019-2023 can be seen below. Shootings had been on the rise before this graph starts in 2019, but hit their high in 2021 with 249 gun homicides and 676 non-fatal shootings. Both categories of shootings have dropped since then but have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The NICJR conducted a problem analysis in the fall of 2021 to identify individuals at the highest risk of involvement in or being victims of gun violence. The analysis revealed that a significant portion of homicides (up to 77%) and non-fatal shootings (up to 86%) between 2018 and 2020 involved group members as victims, suspects, or both.

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[20] Eugenia C. South, John MacDonald, and Vincent Reina, "Association Between Structural Housing Repairs for Low-Income Homeowners and Neighborhood Crime," *JAMA Network Open* 4, no. 7 (July 21, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.17067

[21] Ruth Moyer et al., "Effect of Remediating Blighted Vacant Land on Shootings: A Citywide Cluster Randomized Trial," *American Journal of Public Health* 109, no. 1 (January 2019): 140–44, https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2018.304752

Indianapolis Shootings 2019-2023

Year	Non-fatal	Fatal	% Change of total YoY
2019	445	153	
2020	656	214	+45%
2021	676	249	+6%
2022	584	211	-14%
2023	542	171	-10%

Legend: ■ Non-fatal ■ Fatal **% Change of total YoY**

Source: Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department

Gun Violence Strategies

In response to the escalating challenge of gun violence, Mayor Joe Hogsett unveiled the Indianapolis Violence Reduction Plan in late 2021, with the ambitious aim of annually reducing both murders and non-fatal shootings by 10%. Spearheaded by the Mayor's Office, the comprehensive strategy involved collaboration between key entities such as the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD), the Office of Public Health and Safety (OPHS), and the Indianapolis Public Safety Foundation (IPSF). The city's approach employed key elements of a focused deterrence strategy and significant investments in community violence intervention infrastructure, leveraging violence interrupters to identify individuals at the highest risk of involvement in gun violence and directing them toward intensive interventions and support services.

This multifaceted initiative received an initial boost from a $150 million infusion through the American Rescue Plan, facilitating the hiring of additional police officers, violence interrupters, and life coaches. The funds also supported investments in policing technology and grassroots violence prevention organizations. The Central Indiana Community Foundation and OPHS played a pivotal role in distributing grants to violence prevention organizations, ensuring the provision of mental health and support services for those identified as high-risk individuals. Notably, the NICJR provides ongoing technical assistance to support the design and implementation of Indianapolis' violence reduction strategy. The plan secured a more sustainable future when, in the fall of 2023, the Indianapolis City-County Council incorporated it into its operating budget,

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guaranteeing continued investments in OPHS, IMPD, and grassroots organizations providing essential support services.
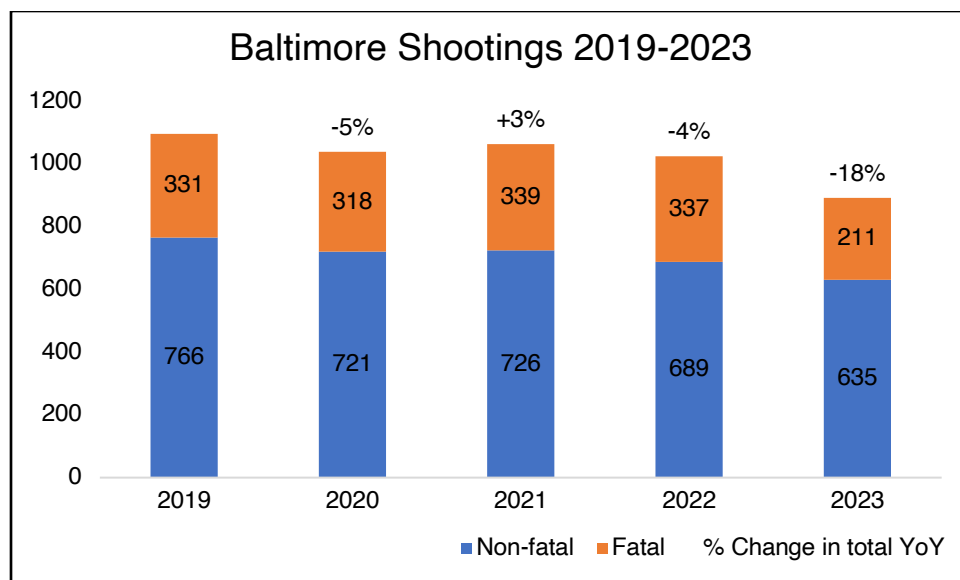
Baltimore

In Baltimore, we conducted 4 semi-structured interviews of key stakeholders involved in violence reduction efforts between 2020 and 2023. Below is the list of the interviewees.

- o **Jeremy Biddle**: Director of Violence Reduction Policy and Programs at CJP (since mid-2023); former Special Advisor for the Group Violence Reduction Strategy to the Mayor and Police Commissioner of Baltimore City (2021-2023)
- o **Shantay Jackson**: Violence Reduction Project Manager at NICJR (since 2023); former Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE) (2020-2022); former member of Mayor Scott's transition committee (2020)
- o **Kurtis Palermo**: Executive Vice President of Roca Maryland (since 2021), previously Executive Director of Roca Baltimore (2020-2021)
- o **Sarah Ritter**: Director of Administration at the Baltimore Police Department (BPD), previously in the Chief of Detectives Office and the Deputy Commissioner of Operations Office (since 2020); former Director of Programs at the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (now MONSE) (2019-2020)

Gun Violence

Baltimore has historically had one of the worst gun violence problems in the U.S., often ranking in the top three cities nationally by homicide rate. The trend of shootings in Baltimore from 2019-2023 is shown below. It is important to note that this graph only captures part of a larger trend. For eight consecutive years, starting in 2015 with the high-profile death of Freddie Gray in police custody, Baltimore surpassed 300 homicides, with shootings hovering around 700 annually. Interestingly, Baltimore did not experience the same significant increase in gun violence during the pandemic that many cities did, including Philadelphia and Indianapolis. The problem analysis for the Western District conducted in 2020-2021 indicated that 75% of homicides and shootings were related to a small number of individuals engaged in group violence. These individuals were sometimes shooting victims, suspects, or both as conflicts unfolded. The year 2023 is notable because it marks a significant departure from the norm with the largest single-year reduction in homicides in over half a century at 20%, as well as a more modest 5% decline in non-fatal shootings.

Baltimore Shootings 2019-2023

Year	Non-fatal	Fatal	% Change in total YoY
2019	766	331	
2020	721	318	-5%
2021	726	339	+3%
2022	689	337	-4%
2023	635	211	-18%

Source: Baltimore Police Department

Gun Violence Strategies

To address epidemic levels of gun violence, Mayor Brandon Scott made a public commitment to support a focused deterrence strategy in Baltimore City. Mayor Scott's crime reduction plan included an ambitious commitment to a 15% year-over-year reduction in gun violence. Once elected, Mayor Scott officially contacted CJP to conduct a thorough problem analysis of the violence dynamics in Baltimore's Western District (WD), aided by local philanthropic funding. The WD had the highest rate of homicides and shootings in Baltimore and was among the most violent police districts in America. The Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) in Baltimore is a focused deterrence strategy that involves the identification of individuals at highest risk of being involved in a shooting.

As part of his commitment to treating gun violence as a public health issue, in December 2020 Mayor Scott announced the creation of MONSE. MONSE has been serving as the leader of GVRS in Baltimore. In 2021, with technical assistance from the CJP, CPSC, and NICJR, MONSE awarded a one-year, $1.2-million contract to Youth Advocate Programs (YAP) to provide street outreach and intensive mentoring to high-risk boys and men not served by Roca. YAP and Roca, Inc. provide the primary street outreach services for GVRS in Baltimore. Additionally, with the technical assistance team's support, MONSE created a dedicated management team to lead coordination among GVRS partners. The city's strong commitment to GVRS as a violence reduction strategy was also represented in the Baltimore Police Department, as they established the Group Violence Unit (GVU), a weekly shooting review to disseminate intelligence on

group dynamics, weekly coordination meetings to support community partners, and monthly strategic enforcement meetings to support GVRS implementation.

In January 2022, GVRS officially launched in the Western District of Baltimore with the strategy's anti-violence message being communicated on-the-ground to the highest-risk individuals. GVRS expanded to the Southwestern District in January 2023 and the Central District in January 2024. The strategy will continue to expand in Baltimore, with Mayor Scott publicly supporting expansion at a sustainable rather than accelerated rate.

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