

OFFICES OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION TOOLKIT



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INTRODUCTION

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) and its partners have provided technical assistance to offices of violence prevention (OVP), offices of neighborhood safety, and other similar agencies throughout the country for more than 15 years. Building upon this experience, NICJR and partners worked with a group of OVP directors for nearly two years to organize, plan, and coordinate the creation of a National OVP Network.

Launched in 2021, [the National OVP Network](#) (NOVPN) serves as a learning community with the goal of significantly increasing the expertise and effectiveness of these agencies. The Network hosts convenings; provides trainings and presentations on effective violence reduction practices; coordinates cross-OVP learning exchanges and site visits; offers leadership and management development; and supports OVPs in growing their capacity in data collection and reporting, fund development, communications, and media relations. Through the NOVPN, NICJR also advocates for the creation and supports the development of new OVPs across the country.

This toolkit, developed with support from the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, aims to support local leaders across the country in their efforts to reduce violence, either as they develop a new OVP or strengthen an existing one. Given the unique context and characteristics of violence in each jurisdiction, the role of OVPs is continuously evolving. This toolkit combines the expertise of the NOVPN, NICJR, and Everytown for Gun Safety, to provide a valuable resource that can aid OVPs at various stages of their inception, implementation, and development. While it was primarily designed with municipalities in mind, this toolkit will also be a helpful tool for newly established state offices of violence prevention. And while OVPs can take on a broad set of violence prevention responsibilities, this toolkit focuses specifically on the work an OVP can do around community violence intervention (CVI).

1 

WHY CREATE AN OVP



WHY CREATE AN OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION?

The causes and drivers of violence are complex and addressing them requires a multifaceted approach. Violence reduction should not be the sole province of law enforcement, but rather a collaborative effort including a cross section of stakeholders. The development of the field of community violence intervention (CVI) has expanded the tools that local jurisdictions have to combat violence.

Although a few OVPs have existed for nearly twenty years, there has been a recent significant increase in the number of local government agencies focusing solely on violence reduction, including the establishment of several municipal offices and nearly a dozen state offices in recent years. These offices typically adopt a public health approach to violence reduction, an approach characterized by its collaborative and multidisciplinary nature, integrating expertise from diverse stakeholders including community leaders, public health agencies, and legislators.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) outlined the public health approach to violence prevention in a four-step process to be applied to violence affecting communities:



The CDC's methodology provides a valuable framework for new and emerging OVPs, offering a structured approach to implement context-specific violence reduction strategies. This framework is particularly beneficial for new OVPs as they establish their operational focus and objectives and it is recommended to be integrated into their main approach.

When creating an OVP, the local jurisdiction should be very clear about **what** problem(s) it is trying to solve by creating the new office, hence the importance of defining and monitoring your local challenges as an initial step. This may include:

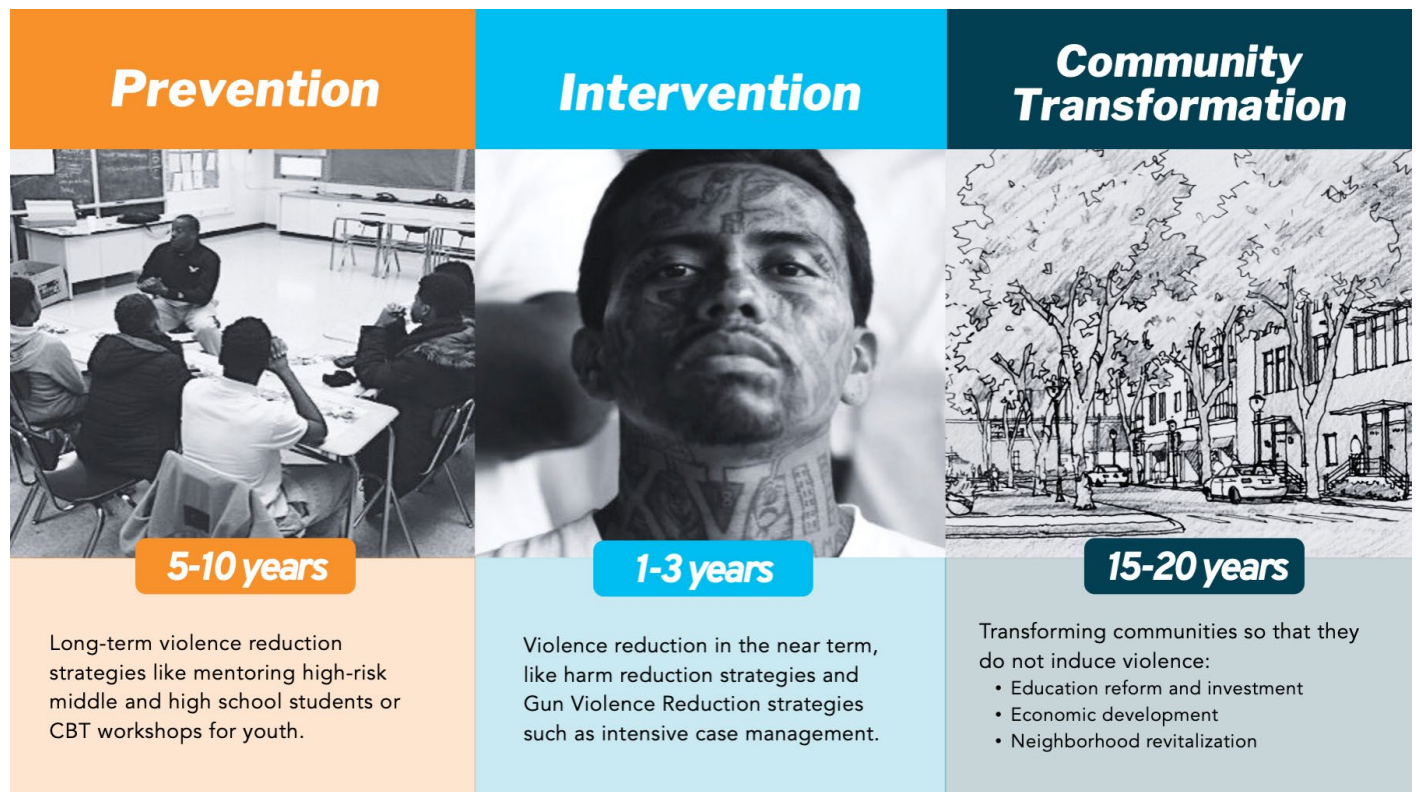
- Reducing gun violence in the near term
- Long-term violence prevention programming efforts (like youth development; reducing violence over time, but no immediate impact)
- Community transformation or environment design to address the root causes of violence (may take more than a decade to impact gun violence)
- Identifying policy gaps that enable or exacerbate gun violence (can include a wide range of issues)

Next, the jurisdiction needs to address **how** it intends to achieve its stated goals, including what strategies, programs, and services it will utilize. The activities of the new office may include one, a combination, or all of the following:

- Developing a jurisdiction-wide violence reduction plan and coordinating implementation across several agencies, potentially including technical assistance
- Hiring direct service CVI workers
- Providing grants to local community-based organizations (CBOs) to conduct CVI work or provide other services
- Data collection, analysis, and reporting on violence trends and reduction efforts
- Advocating for policy changes

The Difference Between Violence Prevention, Violence Intervention, and Community Transformation

Violence reduction efforts can be visualized as three different “work lanes” focused on interrupting cycles of violence in the near and long term. OVPs must integrate these three different areas of work to ensure a comprehensive approach to reduce violence.



An Agency Focused on Violence Reduction

Essentially, an OVP is a public safety agency focused on violence reduction, responding to the specific needs of the jurisdiction in which it resides and using a public health approach rather than an approach centered around criminal enforcement. Most commonly, OVPs focus on firearm violence, the type of violence with the highest incidence in most US cities, but some offices also collaborate with other governmental agencies to address other types of violence such as intimate partner or gender-based violence.

Offices of violence prevention have typically been championed by political leaders and established as a part of the governmental structure. Over the past 30 years, many cities, counties, and states have established their own agencies. Today, more than 70 such offices exist across the United States.

| Characteristics of an office of violence prevention | |
|--|---|
| Description |  An agency embedded within a government structure at a local, county, or state level |
| Type of funding (depending on the jurisdiction) |  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local general fund • Federal and state funding • Special taxes • Private sector philanthropic grants |

In addition to adopting a public health approach to gun violence, an emerging OVP should clearly define and prioritize its main objectives to guide its strategic planning and operational focus. According to [NOVPN](#), the main goals of these offices are usually:

- ✓ Addressing community violence holistically, focusing on both intervention for imminent threats and long-term prevention strategies
- ✓ Applying a data-driven approach by monitoring violence trends, identifying risk and protective factors, and developing targeted strategies
- ✓ Shifting the jurisdiction's focus from punitive measures to promoting overall community health, safety, and well-being
- ✓ Recognizing that community safety extends beyond policing and the criminal justice system, emphasizing community-based interventions and development
- ✓ Expanding civilian-led programs for broader community safety initiatives beyond just gun violence reduction

Some OVPs, and in particular multiple state entities, have portfolios that extend beyond CVI programming into broader gun violence prevention policy. If properly staffed and funded, these offices can take on a wide array of responsibilities, including for example helping to facilitate extreme risk protection orders, firearms dealer licensing, illegal firearm surrender policy, public education on secure firearm storage, and more. While this toolkit focuses primarily on CVI-related functions for an OVP, policymakers should also consider endorsing a broad OVP portfolio that can establish a true hub for gun safety policy. Potential non-CVI functions are summarized in further detail in [Appendix Q](#).

See [Appendix A](#) for a decision tree depicting how these areas of work impact the structure and overall functioning of an OVP.

Main Differences Between City, County, and State OVPs

City, county, and state offices of violence prevention each play unique roles in addressing community safety. Their scope, funding, and functions vary based on their jurisdictional level.

| | City-level OVPs | County-level OVPs | State-level OVPs |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| SCOPE | While responsible for violence reduction efforts across the broader jurisdiction, city OVPs commonly concentrate much of their attention on providing or funding direct services. | County OVPs implement violence prevention and intervention strategies across cities or jurisdictions within the geographical county boundaries. Their mandate stretches across urban, suburban, and rural communities. | State OVPs can operate at the largest scale, overseeing efforts over multiple counties and cities to coordinate them with the state government. |
| FUNDING | Operation usually relies on municipal budgets, special taxes, or local grants. However, they may be partially funded by state-level OVPs and federal grants. | County and state OVPs often have access to larger pools of funding, including state-level grants and federal funding. | |
| FUNCTIONS | Most city OVPs work at the community level through service provision, providing violence interruption programs, life coaching, case management, and community outreach and/or by funding CBOs to carry out these services. City OVPs often work closely with other city offices such as police and public health departments for violence reduction strategies. | County-level OVPs often develop a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and intervention, engaging in community-driven efforts and fostering regional partnerships. They may also establish coalitions and support local initiatives at the city level. | The work of state OVPs typically focuses on supporting policy development, supervision of state gun laws and programs, advocacy, research, and providing funding opportunities. Additionally, they are responsible for coordinating state and local governments as well as civil society organizations. |

Jurisdiction-Wide Coordination of Programs and Services

OVPs play a crucial role in spearheading efforts against gun violence within their jurisdictions. However, their responsibilities extend beyond direct intervention to encompass a vital coordinating function among the diverse stakeholders involved in violence prevention and intervention strategies.

Jurisdictions typically have a wide array of stakeholders—including public, private, and academic institutions—advancing strategies aimed at reducing violence. Despite these efforts, work is often siloed, with limited coordination and communication between entities. This fragmentation can lead to:

- Duplication of efforts
- Inefficient use of resources
- Gaps in service provision
- Inconsistent approaches within the jurisdiction

It is crucial that OVPs take on the role of a central coordinator to bridge the gaps between governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations. OVPs are ideally positioned to take on this responsibility, facilitating communication, collaboration, and resource allocation among stakeholders. Frequently, OVPs will coordinate directly with the following agencies:



The Importance of Funding Community Services

Community-based organizations (CBOs) play a critical role in violence reduction work. CBOs can be the primary drivers of community violence intervention and other violence prevention programs. CBOs are positioned to drive positive, long-term community transformation. The following six insights highlight the importance of uplifting community voices by funding and supporting community services:

1. Community trust

CBOs are usually staffed by local residents who understand the community's history, culture, and dynamics. This fosters trust, making community members more likely to engage with and benefit from the services. This trust also allows CBOs to engage individuals who might be hesitant to reach out to larger institutions or government agencies.

2. Investing in long-term community transformation

Funding CBOs is an investment in the community's long-term growth and well-being. These resources will enhance local job creation and the development of economic activity.

3. Understanding how to best address the community's needs

CBOs have first-hand experience with local issues and understand the implications of local dynamics. This deep understanding allows for more effective and efficient use of resources, as reflected in the implementation of geographically and culturally relevant strategies.

4. Centering community voices

By providing funding to CBOs and fostering their development, OVPs can center community voices to promote empowerment and build local leadership capacity. Additionally, this approach ensures that services and programs reflect the community's priorities and values.

5. Supporting evidence-informed and innovative practices

Many CBOs implement programs based on methodologies that have yielded positive results. Funding allows CBOs to refine, scale, and continue evaluating evidence-informed interventions, thus contributing to the body of evidence on these methodologies. Additionally, CBOs are continuously innovating by implementing geographically and culturally relevant adaptations of these methodologies into their own jurisdictions.

6. Growing the local CVI ecosystem

Funding CBOs contributes to expanding the network of direct services. It can also encourage collaboration and the creation of networks of practice between different organizations. This contributes to the end goal of achieving a robust CVI ecosystem that can provide comprehensive and coordinated support. In jurisdictions with only nascent CVI programming, funding can be essential to kickstarting this life-saving work.

Federal, State and Local Legislation to Support the Creation of OVPs

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition among policymakers of the crucial role that OVPs play in creating safer communities. This recognition has led to an increased emphasis on enacting and implementing legislation to support their creation and protect long-term functioning. At the local level, some cities have developed legislation to codify the existence of OVPs via local ordinance:



Oakland, California:

[Measure Z \(2014\)](#) not only renewed funding for violence prevention programs but also established the Department of Violence Prevention. More recently, the Oakland voters renewed the funding initiative under [Measure NN \(2024\)](#), which funds citywide community violence intervention, including violence interruption programs at approximately \$14 million per year.



Milwaukee, Wisconsin:

The Common Council passed a [resolution](#) in 2022 to create an Office of Violence Prevention within the Milwaukee Health Department.



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:

In 2017, the [Office of Violence Prevention](#) was created under the Managing Director's Office.



Minneapolis, Minnesota:

In 2018, the [City amended the Code of Ordinance](#) to create the Office of Violence Prevention housed within the Health Department.

Similarly, several states have passed legislation that supports the creation of statewide offices of violence prevention:



Maryland:

In 2024, the state of Maryland approved [legislation](#) to establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention in the Department of Health. Some state OVPs, like Wisconsin and New York's, are the product of executive orders.



Illinois:

The [Reimagine Public Safety Act \(2021\)](#) established the Office of Firearm Violence Prevention to coordinate violence prevention initiatives statewide.

These efforts demonstrate a growing commitment to institutionalizing violence reduction work. By providing legal frameworks, consistent funding, and clear mandates, these laws help ensure that OVPs can operate effectively and sustainably over the long term. However, it is important to note that the landscape of legislation and executive action supporting OVPs is continually evolving. Advocates and policymakers continue to work toward more comprehensive and sustainable support for violence reduction efforts across the country.

2 WHAT YOUR OVP WILL DO



Deciding What Your OVP Will Do

When launching an office of violence prevention, it is crucial to define its scope of work. A well-structured OVP typically includes the following key functions in its scope.

The combination of services and functions an OVP implements has far-reaching implications for its entire organizational structure and its day-to-day operations. Core functions directly shape staffing requirements, both in terms of team size and necessary expertise. For example, implementing a research and data collection, management and dissemination area require skilled analysts and researchers.

When determining its functions, an OVP must evaluate several factors to avoid duplication and identify collaboration opportunities: its specific context and drivers of violence in the jurisdiction, which government offices currently exist to address or mitigate those drivers; current and projected resource capacity, and existing violence reduction initiatives in the area. An OVP's services and work areas also influence operational processes, including communication protocols and coordination mechanisms between program components.

By conducting a thorough analysis of these factors and strategically defining its role within the broader violence prevention ecosystem, an OVP should establish an organizational structure that effectively delivers its chosen areas of work while making optimal use of available resources to reduce violence. It should not seek to supplant community-based work, but instead, fill gaps where necessary and provide training and technical assistance (TTA) to community-based organizations where areas of development exist.

Local and county OVPs:

- ✓ Partner with local, state, and federal law enforcement, health care and other agency partners, and community-based organizations in violence reduction initiatives
- ✓ Coordinate comprehensive and data-informed planning, implementation, and evaluation

State OVPs:

- ✓ Partner with local, county, and federal law enforcement and health care agencies in violence reduction strategies
- ✓ Collect and analyze state-wide data on gun violence deaths and injuries

All OVPs:

- ✓ Promote legislative advocacy for violence reduction efforts
- ✓ Regularly convene and coordinate government and community stakeholders involved in violence prevention and intervention efforts
- ✓ Lead inter-agency coordination that encourages a “whole-of-government” approach to violence prevention and intervention
- ✓ Fund and support CBOs and community-led efforts in equitable and strategic ways
- ✓ Enhance CVI efforts through funding, coordination, and capacity building
 - In some instances, an OVP may house CVI programs and staff and may provide services ranging from life coaching to diversion programming and reentry services.

Potential OVP Areas of Focus

Area 1: Provision of Direct Services

While there is a wide range of direct services that an OVP can provide, each office should provide services that are relevant and likely to be impactful to its local community, considering the available resources and specific conditions of the area. Typically, these services are provided by CBOs funded by government agencies, not by government employees directly. The following is a comprehensive list of direct services that have been historically provided by OVPs.



Street outreach and violence interruption programs employ street outreach workers to mediate conflicts and prevent retaliatory violence between individuals at risk of committing or being a victim of gun violence.



Life coaching focuses on establishing strong relationships to help high-risk individuals create life plans that address their personal needs and challenges. Once a life plan is developed, the life coach provides ongoing guidance, connects the individual to services and opportunities, and supports them in staying safe and free.



School-based violence intervention initiatives work to prevent gun violence in schools and academic institutions. These initiatives teach students and educators to recognize warning signs of violence. They also offer wrap-around support such as mental health services, emotional regulation training, mentoring, and, in some cases, conflict mediation to the student population.



Case management provides collaborative support to help high-risk individuals navigate complex systems. This work is initiated through a needs assessment, which leads to resource identification, connection with services, ongoing support, and follow-up. The goal is to improve access to specific resources, such as housing or health services. Some OVPs also have specific reentry services for formerly incarcerated individuals.



Victim services are similar to case management but are focused on the specific needs of direct or indirect victims of various types of violence.



Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a trauma-focused intervention aimed at helping people understand the implications of their behavior to change their thoughts, feelings, and, ultimately, their behavior. Sessions can be conducted individually or in a group setting. Among OVPs, CBT is often used for those affected by gun violence.



Employment assistance services utilize comprehensive assessment of skills and aptitudes to connect individuals with job readiness training and job opportunities that align with their interests.



Education and fellowship opportunities offer individuals the chance to access resources that can help them get back on track with their academic goals, if this is what they choose to pursue.



Hospital-based violence interventions identify patients at risk of repeat violent injury and link them with hospital- and community-based resources to address underlying risk factors for violence. These programs are usually located within trauma centers and emergency departments. While the hospital provides the primary care after a violent injury, OVPs sometimes offer case management to connect the patient with mental health care, financial support, and other resources.



Mental health / trauma response and support are provided by OVPs through an in-house team of specialists who provide counseling and conduct risk assessments.



Alternative responses are emergency response initiatives that redirect certain types of 911 calls to specialized teams of unarmed professionals. These initiatives, which are typically supported by OVPs, have become more common nationwide.



Implementation Insights: Richmond, CA

The Office of Neighborhood Safety Street Resource and Outreach Strategy serves as an example of how an OVP can provide direct services to a target population. The initiative's components include street and school outreach, violence interruption, public education, involvement from faith and community-based leadership, community mobilization, and criminal justice participation. Neighborhood Change Agents, who are the centerpiece of the work, focus on street/school outreach, high-risk conflict mediation, and retaliation prevention. Learn more about the initiative [here](#) and access more resources from the Office of Neighborhood Safety [here](#).



Implementation Insights: Baltimore, MD

The Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE) is responsible for the implementation of the city's public health approach to community safety. Their [Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan](#) (CVPP) outlines MONSE's role as a coordination hub between agencies, community-based organizations, neighborhood associations, and citizens. As an example, to establish the city's Gun Violence Reduction Strategy, MONSE partnered with the Baltimore Police Department, the State's Attorney's Office, and federal partners.

Area 2: Coordination, Risk Assessment, and Strategic Planning

Developing a comprehensive approach to violence reduction requires a jurisdiction-wide perspective involving other public agencies, community-based organizations, academic institutions, and the general public. The coordinated, community-based direct services provided by local and regional entities make up the CVI ecosystem of a community.

See [Appendix B](#) for a diagram on the CVI Ecosystem.

The role of the OVP is to act as a coordinator and convener that aligns stakeholders and leads them toward a comprehensive and unified approach. This can be achieved through a strategic planning process to ensure an OVP's programs and interventions reflect its mission and theory of change, while fostering collaboration across the broader CVI ecosystem. An OVP's convening power enables it to:

1. Foster strategic partnerships.

- a. Bring public agencies (such as law enforcement, public health, education) together to design and drive a unified and comprehensive approach that understands violence as a public health issue.
- b. Build bridges between agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders that traditionally operate in silos to build a mutual agenda with shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- c. Facilitate community engagement and participation and lines of communication between government and non-government stakeholders.

2. Lead data-driven management and implementation.

- a. Lead data-informed analysis and monitoring of violence within the jurisdiction.
- b. Map existing violence reduction efforts and resources within the jurisdiction.
- c. Use the data to spot roadblocks and adjust projects and plans based on their impacts and evolving community needs.

3. Strengthen the CVI ecosystem.

- a. Identify gaps in services and resources within the jurisdiction.
- b. Leverage funding and resources across stakeholders.
- c. Identify risks and areas of opportunity.
- d. Provide training and technical assistance.
- e. Establish communication channels such as recurring meetings between stakeholders.

The third section of this toolkit includes frameworks to develop a strategic planning and management approach while identifying risks and challenges. Establishing these elements will ensure successful coordination and program implementation.

Area 3: Grant Opportunities for Community-Based Organizations

OVPs play a fundamental role in investing in community-based organizations to support and sustain their implementation of evidence-informed direct services through specific sources funding and grant opportunities. As mentioned in [Area 1](#) of this section, these services are highly successful because they increase community resources, uplift community voices, and allow CBOs to contribute to interrupting cycles of violence.

Guidelines for OVPs to create and manage grant opportunities for CBOs:

1 Determine the sources of funding for CBOs.

- a. OVP: OVPs can allocate a portion of their own budgets for CBOs grant funding.
- b. State and federal: If the local government cannot allocate grants to fund CVI programs, OVPs can still communicate grant opportunities in other levels of government such as the US Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. Check out the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund [GovGrant Navigator](#) tool for opportunities.
- c. Philanthropic: OVPs can partner with external entities interested in providing funding and/or publicize private funding opportunities among local CBOs.

2 Establish funding priorities and objectives.

- a. These should be based on the unique violence reduction priorities of the OVP's jurisdiction (e.g., mental health resources for victims of gun violence), and they should guide the funding categories available. These funding priorities should be aligned with the jurisdiction's violence reduction plan ([section 3.A of this toolkit](#)).

3 Determine funding characteristics.

- a. Define grant amounts.
- b. Establish a period during which applicants can use the resources (e.g., fiscal year, calendar year, multi-year funding).

4 Establish application and selection protocols.

- a. Define application requirements and deadlines.
- b. Ensure the process is clear and accessible (e.g., include reasonable page limits, allow for attachments, provide clear instructions).
- c. Establish application submission and review processes.
- d. Create a review committee (should include community members, who can provide insights on lived experience and community needs).

5 Release a request for proposal (RFP).

- a. The RFP should be disseminated through various communication channels.
- b. In addition, the OVP should host information sessions.

6 Develop recipient contracting requirements, accountability mechanisms, and resources for continuous grantee support.

- a. Develop a written grant agreement with components such as eligibility criteria, performance metrics, reporting requirements and deadlines (both financial and programmatic), and other required criteria.
- b. Consider providing capacity building support or partnering with other governmental or non-governmental organizations to provide support during the application process and grant performance period.
- c. Establish clear channels of communication (e.g., emails, onboarding sessions).

See [Appendix C](#) for Request for Proposal samples.

Area 4: Policy Development and Implementation

OVPs may also lead policy development and implementation efforts within their jurisdiction. In their policy development efforts, OVPs should emphasize the importance of program evaluation to ensure the efficacy of their initiatives. This often involves collaborating with local academic institutions and securing grant funding for research initiatives. Additionally, OVPs must focus on developing long-term sustainability plans to ensure consistent funding and support for their programs, moving beyond the challenges of annual budgetary debates that often present challenges for violence reduction efforts.

Advocacy is a crucial OVP responsibility. A fundamental role of OVPs is to advocate for their own institutionalization, striving to be established and codified as public safety agencies at both local and state levels. OVPs can also work alongside lawmakers to support legislation that enhances violence reduction efforts within their jurisdiction.

OVP Funding Legislation: Building Sustainable Support

At the federal level, several laws and initiatives allocate funding for violence reduction efforts. Most recently the [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022](#) and [American Rescue Plan of 2021](#) provided funding for crisis intervention and CVI programs. For a full description and searchable database of federal funding opportunities, see the [Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund GovGrant Navigator](#). Across the country, states have passed implemented funding mechanisms through various legislative initiatives:



California:

In 2019, [Assembly Bill 1603](#) established the California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program (CalVIP) to provide competitive grants for violence prevention initiatives. And in 2023, Assembly Bill 28 created a new tax on firearms and ammunition, the proceeds of which go, in part, to funding CalVIP.



Maryland:

In 2017, the [Safe Streets Act](#) was instituted by the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention to provide grants to community-based organizations working on intervention and to support coordination across local criminal justice systems. A year later, the [Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund and Advisory Council](#) were established to support effective violence reduction strategies.



New Jersey:

The [New Jersey Violence Intervention Program \(2019\)](#) was created to provide grants for hospital-based violence intervention programs.

Additionally, a number of states are currently using Medicaid funds for violence reduction programs: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, and Oregon.

Area 5: Research and Data Collection, Management, and Dissemination

OVPs must prioritize documentation and data gathering to support current and future activities. This should include both an initial diagnosis to understand local violence dynamics and constant monitoring and data collection to understand the impact of the OVP's strategies and the work of the CVI ecosystem. Typically, these functions are embedded within a research division tasked with three main responsibilities:

1. Data Collection

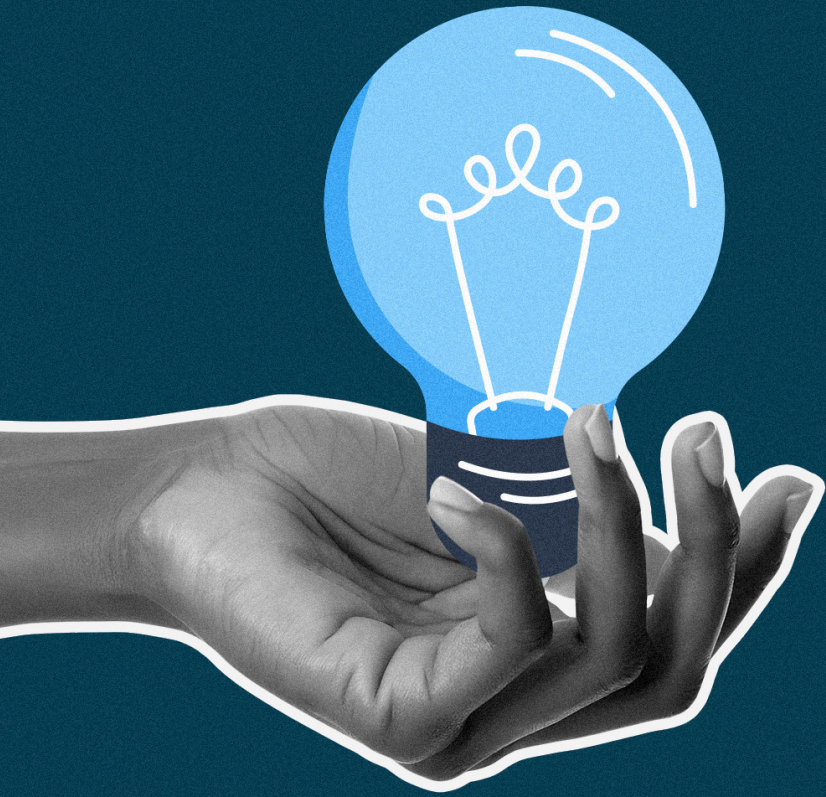
- a. Clear goals and objectives: OVPs should begin by establishing objectives for their data collection to develop a structured data collection plan.
- b. Data types of be collected:
 - i. Gun violence dynamics: For example, characteristics of perpetrators and victims, demographic data, geographic data, can provide valuable insights.
 - ii. Implementation data: Key performance indicators of violence reduction initiatives across the jurisdiction should be included.
 - iii. Qualitative data: Collecting qualitative data ensures a comprehensive analysis with greater nuance than can be provided by quantitative data alone. Local survivors, practitioners and other impacted stakeholders are a recommended starting point.
- c. Data collection methods: A variety of methods can be employed to gather comprehensive information. For example, employing surveys, gathering administrative data from various initiatives, and conducting interviews or focus groups. An OVP can also track official data published by other criminal justice system agencies and advocate for real-time public data dashboards from local law enforcement. For additional resources, see [Everytown's Local Gun Violence Dashboards Toolkit](#).
- d. Data collection timelines: Routine intervals for data collection should be established to enable OVPs to make adjustments to their strategies and interventions based on findings.

2. Analysis and Reporting

- a. Review and analysis of collected data: Establishing periodic analysis of collected data (quarterly, biannually, yearly) can provide further insights into the dynamics of violence within the jurisdiction.
- b. Program evaluation: Implementing formal evaluations of violence reduction programs and strategies allows an OVP to assess impact.
- c. Data presentation: Creating data visualizations such as reports, maps, graphs, and charts is a key component of the analysis process. It allows large and complex datasets to be transformed into more digestible informative formats ready for further dissemination to audiences with varying technical skill levels.

3. Data Dissemination and Transparency

- a. Data publication: As appropriate, data should be disseminated to the general public through various communication channels and via products that are understandable and openly available to all citizens within the jurisdiction.
- b. Collaboration with research and academic institutions: Partnerships focused on strengthening the OVP's data collection, management, monitoring, analysis, and reporting are vital for capacity building. Partnering with research institutions can enhance the rigor of analysis and evaluation efforts, as well as provide capacity building opportunities for the OVP. Notably, collaboration with academic institutions can begin before this outlined process.
- c. Community engagement: OVPs must ensure findings are disseminated within the communities most impacted by gun violence while structuring feedback processes to obtain their insights and specific perspectives to inform future efforts.
- d. Capacity building: OVPs can strive to share data collection, management, and analysis tools/training with CBOs.



3 HOW TO ESTABLISH AN OVP

IMPLEMENTATION PHASES: HOW TO ESTABLISH AN OVP

Depending on context, offices of violence prevention come in various sizes and structures. No exact recipe for the construction of an OVP exists; however, this toolkit brings together recommended phases of ideation and implementation, including practices and guidelines for both nascent and existing OVPs to consider.

A. Developing a Violence Reduction Strategic Plan

A comprehensive violence reduction plan is a guiding document that is ideally created with the participation of multiple stakeholders, ranging from agency partners to local businesses, institutions, community-based organizations, survivors, and residents. A violence reduction plan can either be developed by an OVP or include the creation of an OVP among its objectives.

A violence reduction plan usually includes the following sections:



Access a template for the development of a violence reduction strategic plan in [Appendix D](#).

Implementation Insights: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

414 Life Blueprint serves as an example of how a city can develop a community-driven, comprehensive agenda that includes clear direction for a public health approach to violence reduction. This living document contains guiding principles of the citywide strategy; a description of the local violence problem along with risk and resilience factors; and goals, strategies, and an implementation structure with priorities. The plan also includes a list of the 1,500 individuals who participated in its creation. The complete plan is available [here](#).

See [Appendix E](#) to access a collection of strategic plans developed by a number of jurisdictions across the US.

B. Building a Theory of Change

A theory of change is a framework that helps align an agency's mission with its everyday tasks to achieve desired outcomes. In the context of this toolkit, a theory of change is a roadmap to visualize how an OVP will connect their activities to accomplish agency objectives.

Why is it important for an OVP to develop a theory of change?

- ✓ Clarifies purpose and mission
- ✓ Guides strategic planning
- ✓ Enhances accountability
- ✓ Facilitates communication
- ✓ Promotes a process of constant adaptation

A theory of change usually integrates the following concepts:



The best time to develop a theory of change can vary. The most common is during the initial stages of planning. However, it can also be beneficial to create or revise a theory of change when these situations emerge:

Starting a new project:

Before launching an OVP, developing a theory of change helps ensure everyone involved understands the office's goals and how they will be achieved.

Revisiting general strategy:

OVPs should regularly review and update their theory of change and strategies.

Evaluating impact:

When preparing to measure the effectiveness of your work, having a theory of change can guide the evaluation process and clarify what success looks like.

The creation of a theory of change should be a collaborative process that involves key stakeholders, including:

- ✓ **OVP leadership and managers:** Agency leaders provide strategic direction and ensure the theory of change aligns with the mission and vision.
- ✓ **OVP staff:** Those directly involved in implementing programs bring practical insights into what interventions are likely to work.
- ✓ **Partners and funders:** Involving external partners and funders can help align the theory of change with broader initiatives and funding priorities.
- ✓ **Evaluators and researchers:** These experts can help identify key assumptions, potential risks, and appropriate metrics for success.
- ✓ **Additionally,** it is possible to involve direct recipients and the people who benefit from the OVP's work to ensure the theory of change is grounded in their needs and realities.

If the outcomes of the theory of change do not reflect your agency accurately, it is an opportunity for learning and further adaptation.

- ✓ Examine the assumptions underlying the theory of change. What factors were overlooked? Has something changed in the environment? Which implementation challenges have affected the outcomes?
- ✓ Based on this reassessment, adjust strategies and interventions to better align with the realities on the ground.
- ✓ Treat mismatches as a learning opportunity. Use the insights gained to improve future planning and decision-making.

Overall, mismatches between expected and actual outcomes can strengthen the agency's effectiveness if the manager leads the situation with a mindset of learning and improvement.

“

Ultimately, you want to determine how you will achieve your desired outcomes. As well as, which programs, services, and activities will result in the specific outcomes you are trying to achieve.

”



Implementation Insights: NYC Office to Prevent Gun Violence

The Mayor's Office to Prevent Gun Violence acts as a coordination agency that links local government initiatives, CBOs, and other external partners to address the causes of gun violence throughout New York City. Access [this link](#) to view their Theory of Change. This example shows how the theory of change framework can be adapted to align with an OVP's mission and values.

C. Deciding Who and Where to Establish an OVP: The Implications of Governance Structures

The decision to establish an OVP typically comes from government leadership. Offices of violence prevention have been traditionally created by the executive branch of a jurisdiction. Often, this leads to the OVP being housed within the executive's office. In the case of cities, mayors and city managers are often the decision makers in establishing a local OVP. Governors can also establish state-level OVPs through executive action. However, not all OVPs are situated within an executive's office. State legislators have created OVPs through statutory action, and community organizing has been critical in pushing for the creation of OVPs in many jurisdictions.

An office of violence prevention must be situated within an existing department or agency within a governmental structure. As a part of the government, OVPs are financed through public funding, which places them in the eye of public scrutiny. The specific department in which they are housed will bring specific implications to implementation.

Options for Housing a City OVP:

Option #1: Mayor's Office

- Direct leadership from the mayor can provide assistance to clear political roadblocks as well as office authority and political will for a clear mandate.
- OVPs in mayors' offices are vulnerable to political shifts with mayoral terms.

Option #2: City Manager/Administrator's Office

- The city manager has political autonomy and buy-in with local agencies, which may facilitate certain processes and collaboration.

Option #3: Public Health Department

- The department's close relationship with hospitals in the jurisdiction may support implementation of a hospital-based violence intervention program.
- The intervention scope may be limited when developing community transformation approaches, which require a multi-disciplinary approach.
- The relationship with law enforcement agencies may need to be further developed to collaborate effectively.

Options for Housing County and State¹ OVPs:

Option #1: County/State Health Department

- Some offices have effectively bridged public health and law enforcement collaboration.

Option #2: County Administrator/Executive Offices

- This approach may facilitate coordination between departments and agencies at the regional level.

Option #3: County/State Administering Agency

- This agency has been designated in the past as the primary point-of-contact and distributor of grants from the US Department of Justice.
- This agency can serve as a "neutral agency."

Option #4: Attorney General's Office

- Usually this office already engages with communities about gun violence, prosecutes gun crimes, and addresses other gun-related claims.
- Housing an OVP within an Attorney's General Office could enhance access to resources, such as State's Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, which state Attorneys General administer.

¹ For more information, review [A Landscape Analysis of State Offices of Gun Violence Prevention](#) published by the Joyce Foundation.

Naming an OVP

Selecting an appropriate name for an OVP is an important decision that follows its institutional placement. While existing OVPs across the country use various names—from office of neighborhood safety to office of community safety—the chosen name should thoughtfully reflect several key elements. The name should align with the office’s core mission and approach (for instance, incorporating public health terminology if that is the primary framework). It must also resonate with the local jurisdiction’s context, consider cultural and geographic significance, and meet community expectations. A well-chosen name not only communicates the office’s purpose but also helps establish its identity and build trust with stakeholders.

Examples of OVP names:

- ✓ Office of Violence Prevention
- ✓ Office of Neighborhood Safety
- ✓ Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement
- ✓ Office of Neighborhood Safety and Empowerment
- ✓ Office of Community Safety
- ✓ Office of Violence Prevention and Community Safety
- ✓ Office of Community Safety and Wellness
- ✓ Office for Firearm Violence Prevention
- ✓ Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods
- ✓ Office for Firearm Prevention and Intervention

Institutionalization of an OVP

The National Offices of Violence Prevention Network defines an institutionalized OVP as an office codified into law either by charter or legislative statute that receives an annual government budget and uplifts and invests in CVI to signal its permanence in the public safety system. It is common for OVPs to lack this level of security, which directly affects their future sustainability as an office. OVPs must prioritize their institutionalization by building long-term sustainability plans that are directly connected with their strategic plans. In these sustainability plans, the offices must identify local, state, and federal support for the purposes of codifying offices of violence prevention in their local context and becoming public safety agencies. Additionally, OVPs can identify existing advocacy and policy partners such as the Community Justice Action Fund, Center for American Progress, and NOVPN to support them on their path to institutionalization.²

See [Appendix F](#) for a collection of documents of examples of institutionalization efforts by jurisdictions across the country.

² In 2025, the NOVPN will be releasing a sustainability plan template. This document will be updated to include a link once the plan is available to the public.

D. Funding its Activities

OVPs typically fund their activities through a combination of three main sources: general funds, special taxes, and government (state and federal) grants. This section explores the most common primary funding sources, as well as implementation examples in various US cities.

General funds are the primary operating funds for a city or county government. These funds are allocated from the city's/county's budget and provide a stable source of funding. However, these may fluctuate given the state of the government's finances, and ongoing advocacy is required to maintain or increase budgetary allocation.

Implementation Insights: Indianapolis, IN

When the City of Indianapolis [announced](#) its Violence Reduction Plan in fall 2021, it was initially financed by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. "Mayor Hogsett's commitment of \$100 million in ARPA funds toward implementation [included] \$55 million for GVRs staffing and \$45 million for grants to CBOs providing wraparound services to people and communities at the highest risk of violence." The program's budget is now being supported with local City funds after its institutionalization.

A local tax initiative is a dedicated revenue stream, usually approved by voters, intended to support a specific purpose. After approval, a tax is applied to a specific service or goods.

Implementation Insights: Oakland, CA

The Violence Prevention and Public Safety act, also known as Measure Y, was implemented in 2004 with the objective of raising funds for community-based violence prevention programs, policing, and fire safety personnel through a parcel tax and a parking tax assessment. In 2014, Oakland residents voted to extend these measures for 10 years through Measure Z, with a focus on raising funds to address gun violence, domestic violence, and sex trafficking. In November 2024, Oakland again approved the extension of these funds in passing Measure NN. Access Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention Strategic Spending Plan [here](#).

State and federal grants are available for a wide variety of governmental agencies such as departments of public health and law enforcement agencies, among others. In recent years, some sources of federal and state funding have emerged that are specifically for violence prevention and intervention efforts. These grants normally include an application process for a local or a state OVP to receive the grants and require reporting on uses of the funds.

Examples of Sources of Federal Funding:

- ✓ US Department of Justice Office (DOJ) of Justice Programs (OJP) Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)
 - Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI)
 - Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP)
 - Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)
 - Local Law Enforcement Crime Gun Intelligence Center Integration Initiative

- ✓ US DOJ OJP Bureau of Justice Statistics National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP)
- ✓ Core State Injury Prevention Program (Core SIPP)
- ✓ American Rescue Plan Act (example of federal surge funds)

Information on additional OJP grants can be found [here](#).



Implementation Insights: CalVIP in California

The California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant program was introduced in 2017 to replace the California Gang Reduction, Intervention, and Prevention grant program, which started in 2007. [CalVIP](#) “provides funding for cities and community-based organizations with the goal of reducing violence in the city and adjacent areas.” In 2019, the Break the Cycle of Violence Act codified CalVIP and defined its objectives of improving public health and safety by supporting violence reduction initiatives in communities disproportionately impacted by violence. In 2023, the state legislature enacted AB 28, which imposes an excise tax on firearm, firearm precursor part, and ammunition sales. Revenue from this tax, estimated by state officials to be about \$160 million a year, will provide funding to the existing CalVIP program to support the implementation of violence prevention programs.

Strategies for Jumpstarting and Diversifying Funding

Securing funding for a newly established OVP can be daunting. As a first step, an OVP manager should assess current funding sources available to then develop a strategy to secure funds needed to support the office’s work. Four approaches should be considered when analyzing various sources of funding:

1. Advocate for the allocation of general funds.

- a. As an OVP manager, you can present data-driven results from existing programs to the city or county leadership to obtain support.
- b. Additionally, it is essential to build relationships with key decision-makers to continue conversations on securing funding that will ultimately support financial sustainability of the OVP.

2. Leverage grants from various sources.

- a. Research the requirements and timelines of relevant grants. When you identify a strong match, build a plan to develop an application.
- b. Applications can be strengthened by building partnerships with other agencies that work in collaboration in violence reduction efforts.

3. Initiate local tax initiatives.

- a. Begin conversations with local governmental executives to understand tax initiative implications and how support for such initiatives can be fostered.
- b. Gathering support from community stakeholders is vital to constructing a compelling case for a tax initiative.
- c. After the previous steps are completed, the OVP should develop a plan to execute an effective campaign for tax initiative support.

4. Explore public-private partnerships.

- a. An OVP can identify potential private sector partners as well as existing programs that support violence reduction efforts.
- b. Ensure transparency and accountability in those partnerships by building strong relationships with partners.

Ensuring Financial Sustainability

Ensuring the financial sustainability of an office of violence prevention requires a strategic financial approach. An OVP’s strategic plan provides the starting point for the development of a comprehensive financial plan that outlines projected

budgets and expenses over an initial fiscal year, along with tentative expenses and a sustainable vision for the following years. The financial plan should mirror the timeline of the OVPs strategic plan while emphasizing the diversification of funding sources, reducing reliance on any single source and thereby increasing resilience to potential funding changes. In addition, an OVP should prioritize the optimization of program costs, ensuring that resources are used efficiently. Implementing financial performance metrics is equally important, as these demonstrate the OVP's value and impact to governmental stakeholders and external funders, potentially securing continued or increased support.

Advancing Institutionalization of State and Federal Funding for OVPs

Offices of violence prevention can also play an influential role in advocacy to increase state, regional, and federal funding for gun violence reduction efforts. These efforts should be outlined in an advocacy strategy that articulates the OVP's mission, vision, and theory of change. OVPs should also build coalitions with other local or county OVPs and community-based organizations to amplify the message. Engaging directly with state and federal legislators is crucial, including providing information on the importance of violence reduction work and the specific needs of the OVP. Additionally, active participation in relevant policy discussions ensures that the OVP's voice is heard in important decision-making processes and keeps the agency at the forefront of developments in the field of violence reduction.

Budgeting Basics

While budgeting approaches for OVPs vary across jurisdictions, the budget structure must strategically align with and adequately fund all established work streams. The budget should be comprehensive enough to support core administration and operations, programmatic activities, and any specialized initiatives while maintaining sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging community needs. Each funding category should directly correspond to specific OVP objectives and deliverables, ensuring transparent resource allocation and accountability.

Key components:

- ✓ **Expenditures** refer to funds allocated for programs, services, and administrative and operational expenses.
- ✓ **Funding allocation** involves assigning specific budgets to each department, division, project, or initiative.
- ✓ **Revenue projections** are forecasts of income from taxes, grants, and other funding sources.

Budgeting preparation process:

- ✓ **Agency planning:** Develop a multi-year strategic plan and sustainability plan in which priorities and estimated resource needs are identified.
- ✓ **Top-down guidance:** Consider requesting guidelines on policy and funding priorities from the jurisdiction's executive leadership.
- ✓ **Budget creation:** Combine top-down guidance with bottom-up planning to create budget requests.
- ✓ **Review and revision:** Budget requests are reviewed and revised as needed.

Budgeting strategies:

- ✓ **Goal-driven:** Link budget allocations to agency goals and performance metrics.
- ✓ **Long-term perspective:** Consider multi-year implications of budgetary decisions.
- ✓ **Funding diversification:** Seek to eventually have a 70% general funding and 30% other funding source allocation over time.

Access [Appendix G](#) for a budget template designed for OVPs.

E. Creating its Components

Core OVP Functions and Essential Infrastructure

For an OVP to be fully effective, it must have adequate resources along with well-trained staff. This section outlines the main components to be considered; however, an OVP should not consider this a one-size-fits-all approach. Any nascent OVP should consider and adapt these guidelines after evaluating its available resources and funding as well as the size of its target population.

Human Resources

The Role of an OVP Director/Chief

An OVP director has the fundamental task of providing executive direction to the office and ensuring the momentum of strategies to accomplish its objectives. This person is required to manage cross-function projects and build trusting relationships among different types of stakeholders and coordinate prevention and intervention programs and projects in the jurisdiction.

See [Appendix H](#) for sample interview questions for the position of an OVP director and a program director or supervisor (in some places this may be a deputy director).

Implementation Insights: Oakland, California

Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention job posting for Chief of the Violence Prevention Department is available [online](#). This position description is a great example of the specific duties, responsibilities, and qualifications of the ideal candidate to lead an OVP.

See [Appendix I](#) for sample job descriptions on Deputy Director and Deputy Director of Data Analytics.

Team Structure and Relevant Expertise

While offices of violence prevention come in different sizes and operate within different levels of government, certain skills and types of expertise should be present within an OVP team. However, many of these skills can be adjusted into different team structures. Divisions traditionally found within an OVP can change depending on the work carried out by the OVP, however these are the most common:

Operations:

Oversees administrative, financial, and operational tasks and provides strategic management support to the OVP manager/director

Community Engagement:

Manages and coordinates communications of the OVP and direct contact with public and external stakeholders

Victim Services:

Acts as a liaison and provides case management for direct and indirect victims

Policy and Research:

Focuses on data collection and management, monitoring, evaluation, policy implementation, and advocacy

Direct Services or CVI Ecosystem Coordination:

Focuses on the provision of direct services and/or coordinates external programs within the CVI ecosystem

See [Appendix J](#) for a checklist of staffing processes and staff development guidelines and [Appendix K](#) for examples of organizational charts of jurisdictions across the country.

Employing CVI Workers

There are great benefits to directly employing CVI workers, but it can also be a significant challenge for any organization, especially a government agency. Many high-quality CVI workers will have been formerly incarcerated, and some government agencies do not allow employees to have a criminal record.

Additionally, many CVI workers may have limited professional experience in traditional professional settings. Due to prior incarceration and exposure to gun violence, many CVI workers are navigating the same trauma and healing journey as the participants they engage. Fortunately, this shared lived experience gives them the trust and credibility required to identify and engage those at the highest risk of shooting or being shot, but it also causes them to suffer from the same disconnection from opportunity and lack of access to resources. As a result, CVI is a non-traditional job that requires patience and understanding from supervisors. One former OVP Director said, “The staff who give us the greatest reach into the community are the staff who give us the greatest HR problems.”

CVI workers should receive professional development training and opportunities, including opportunities for advancement. The direct supervisor of CVI workers should be a former frontline CVI worker. Finding the right balance of giving CVI workers space and time to be credible, creative, and authentic with the community and people they are working with while also maintaining a degree of professional behavior can be challenging, and over-professionalizing CVI workers can make them ineffective. The right balance must be struck. Supervisors must observe, listen, support, coach, teach, train, and inspire—all before they admonish and then discipline. While working collaboratively to course correct behavior and ensure effective program implementation, it is important to document any actions that would lead to an escalation of disciplinary action, along with the steps taken to contribute to the employee’s success in the role. One former OVP Director said, “If I fired everyone I wanted to fire, I wouldn’t have anyone left.” That same Director said those same staff are now among the very best in the country. This demonstrates how professional development and supportive supervision can transform staff performance. However, dismissal in some cases may sometimes be necessary to ensure proper service delivery.

See [Appendix L](#) for examples on CVI workers job descriptions.

Organizational Culture and Staff Wellness

One of the keys for OVP sustainability is investing in a positive organizational culture and in the well-being of staff. Gun violence prevention and intervention is challenging and demanding work that can take a toll on staff. Positive organizational culture requires a culture of transparency, effective communication, and trust.

The Four Pillars of OVP Organizational Culture

1

Ensuring a culture of honesty, transparency, and communication

- a. Promoting active listening within teams
- b. Setting expectations and clear goals
- c. Using project management software across the agency

2

Supporting staff development

- a. Training and professional development
- b. Opportunities for staff growth and participation within the agency
- c. Developing individual professional development plans
- d. Nurturing and supporting innovative staff behavior
- e. Providing timely feedback

3

Supporting staff well-being

- a. Availability of specialized mental health services
- b. Maintaining adequate staffing to avoid work saturation

4

Adequate employment conditions

- a. Providing competitive salaries relative to the industry
- b. Ensuring transparent hiring processes

Communications

Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful OVP operations, encompassing both internal organizational dynamics and external stakeholder engagement. Within an OVP, there are two distinct types of communication:

- 1. Internal communication:** This refers to the internal exchange of information within teams, divisions, and other types of internal organizational structures. The objective of internal communication is to ensure the continuous alignment of goals, effective operations, and coordination. Examples include information sharing between an OVP's divisions, reports to managers or OVP directors, and reports to other closely related departments (social services, public health, law enforcement).
- 2. External communication:** This type of communication is intended for individuals or agencies outside the organizational structure. It should focus on education and awareness of the OVP's work with and for agencies and the community. In addition, the different audiences should be identified and segmented to develop the messaging and format tailored to each, to ensure resonance. Examples include yearly reports of achievements, outreach to community organizations, communication with media outlets, interactions with academic institutions for data sharing or collaboration, and communications to direct service recipients.

Methods of Communication

Social media and the internet have transformed the communication landscape for OVPs. Now there are many possibilities to innovate external OVP communications, and while traditional methods remain relevant, digital platforms have become indispensable. At a minimum, OVPs should establish and maintain two primary digital channels: an official website and strategically chosen social media platforms. These digital platforms serve as dynamic spaces for sharing real-time updates, resources, and success stories, while also facilitating two-way communication with the community. However, it is crucial to remember that digital methods should complement, not replace, other forms of outreach, especially when engaging with populations that may have limited internet access. Written press, radio, and television should also be included in every OVP's communications strategy.

See [Appendix M](#) for a strategic communications checklist for setting up social media accounts and websites as well as ideas for communications deliverables.

Community and Stakeholder Feedback

An OVP should regularly gather community and stakeholder feedback to ensure responsiveness to the community's needs and concerns. Methods for gathering feedback and ensuring community and stakeholder participation include the following:

- 1. Participatory action research** engages community members as co-researchers and empowers them to collect and analyze data. This approach can also be used to construct collaborative strategies to address gun violence with the community's input.
- 2. Community advisory boards** allow community representatives an opportunity to provide regular input. It is important to ensure diverse representation from different neighborhoods and demographics.
- 3. Community events** such as neighborhood walks, open houses, focus groups, town hall meetings, or public panel discussions on topics related to gun violence reduction create accessible opportunities for the community to engage with the OVP.
- 4. Stakeholder roundtables** are regularly scheduled meetings with representatives from various stakeholder groups. The goal of these meetings is to facilitate cross-sector collaboration and ensure regular communication focused on obtaining feedback.
- 5. Digital engagement through social media** can provide virtual spaces for discussion via online forums and discussion boards. Additionally, in-person events can be transmitted live through social media to obtain real-time virtual feedback and interaction.

When implementing any of these methods, it is important to ensure accessibility (language, location, time of events) and topic relevance (e.g., firearm safety information campaigns) to maximize diverse attendance and participation. Additionally, events open to the public should be promoted through multiple channels of external communication, including social media and traditional media outlets.

F. Ensuring Data Collection and a Data-Driven Management Process

OVPs should prioritize research, data collection, and data management. Data is a powerful tool that offers concrete evidence of the effectiveness of OVP programs and initiatives. As such, it can drive an OVP's sustainability efforts.

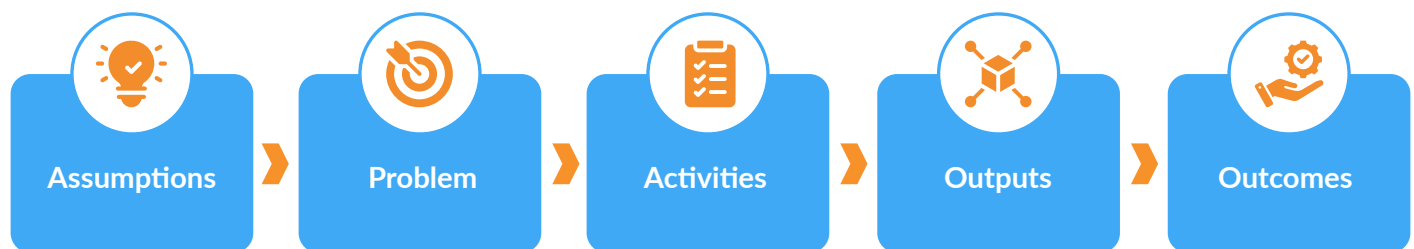
Problem Definition: Understanding Gun Violence

When launching initiatives to address gun violence, it is critical to establish an in-depth exploration of the issue as a first step. The Gun Violence Problem Analysis (GVPA) approach uses detailed data provided by the jurisdiction to examine fatal and non-fatal shootings in a specific time period (usually 12-24 months). The overall objective of the analysis is to identify the specific nature of gun violence in the jurisdiction, along with the characteristics of groups and individuals at the highest risk of being involved in gun violence. The GVPA benefits from different perspectives through partnerships between OVPs and CBOs, academic institutions, nonprofits, law enforcement agencies, and other governmental entities. This collaborative approach ensures the integration of multiple methodologies and data sources, establishing a foundation for data-driven management and data collection.

Several jurisdictions have engaged with NICJR and other partners to conduct their own GVPA. A collection of GVPAs conducted by NICJR can be accessed online [here](#).

Developing Key Performance Indicators

As mentioned above, a theory of change is based on the logic model framework, which outlines assumptions, defines a problem, identifies activities to address the problem, and lists intended results (outputs and outcomes). Using this framework, an OVP should engage in ongoing performance management to measure its organizational effectiveness and intended results. This measurement then drives continuous improvement. According to the [US Department of State](#), "Performance management is the ongoing process of collecting and analyzing information to monitor program performance against established goals and objectives and using the information to make any necessary adjustments to improve efficiency or effectiveness."



Performance indicators are measures that assess the functioning and effectiveness of any process or organizational mandate. These indicators are divided into two categories: **process-oriented indicators** and **result-oriented indicators**. These two types of indicators are useful for internal management processes as well as for coordinating and communicating externally with stakeholders.

Usually, OVPs develop these indicators from the initial conception of the agency and its initiatives to monitor performance and execute future evaluations on the effectiveness of its activities. According to the [US Department of State](#), "Sound performance management begins in program design, is conducted throughout program implementation, and is used on an ongoing basis to make informed decisions for current and future programs."

Measuring Performance and Assessing Impact

Indicators used by an OVP to track progress and results should be aligned to its theory of change. Indicators can be divided into two categories:

- 1. Process-oriented indicators:** Measure inputs, activities, and levels of efficiency
 - a. Input indicators: Measure resources used in a process such as time, materials, or labor
Example: Number of hours life coaches spent providing in-person support in the past month
 - b. Activities indicators: Track specific steps or actions within a process
Example: Number of calls to program users in the past month
 - c. Efficiency indicators: Assess how well resources are being utilized when assessing a specific objective
Example: Number street outreach workers who interrupted an active conflict in the past month
- 2. Result-oriented indicators:** Measure program outputs and outcomes
 - a. Output indicators: Measure the direct results of program activities
Example: Number of people who graduated from 12-month life coaching program
 - b. Outcome indicators: Measure the actual changes resulting from a program against a specific set of goals or objectives
Example: Number of people reinjured after suffering gun violence incident in the past 18 months

For more information on developing indicators for performance management, review the [Department of State's Program Design and Performance Management Toolkit](#).

Data Collection Mechanisms and Software Comparison

OVPs have access to a wide variety of existing governmental data that can inform their strategies and help them to measure their impact. Data that OVPs should be tracking can come from various sources: government databases, social media analytics, and demographic statistics. In addition, OVPs should plan for data collection and capture from their own organizational performance metrics and service delivery outcomes (if any direct services are provided). When properly integrated, this data repository enables evidence-based decision making that can transform violence reduction efforts through targeted interventions, strategic resource allocation, and comprehensive program evaluation. However, the collection and utilization of this data is not without its challenges and ethical considerations. Before embarking on extensive data collection efforts, OVPs should carefully consider several key implications:

- 1. Understanding and internalizing the data source:** Does the data already exist? Does it need to be monitored, collected, or captured? It is important for OVPs to understand which entity or agency is collecting the data. If the data is not yet available and the OVP has the resources to collect it, the OVP should design a robust data collection strategy.
- 2. Addressing data bias:** Who collects the data? Who decided the parameters of data collection? Is there the need for a different perspective on the data collection process?
- 3. Planning for data storage:** Which data will be needed? What does the structure of the database look like?

See [Appendix N](#) for examples of data applications and software options for data analysis and visualization.

Guidelines and Recommendations to Ensure Data Transparency and Accountability

1 Comprehensive data collection systems

- Implement standardized systems for collecting data.
- Consider both quantitative and qualitative data sources.
- Ensure data collection methods are culturally sensitive and trauma-informed.

2 Regular reporting and public disclosure

- Publish reports (e.g., quarterly, annual) on violence trends, program outcomes, and impact.
- Develop user-centered dashboards or infographics to present data in easily understandable formats.
- Host community meetings or webinars to discuss findings and gather feedback.

3 Data protection and privacy measures

- Implement robust data security protocols to protect sensitive information and databases.
- Anonymize personal data to prevent identification of individuals, especially victims.
- Comply with relevant privacy laws and regulations (e.g., HIPAA for health-related data).

4 Community engagement in data processes

- Involve community members in identifying relevant indicators.
- Train community stakeholders in data interpretation and use.
- Provide opportunities for community feedback on data collection and reporting.

5 Audits and evaluations

- Engage external evaluators to assess data quality, collection methods, and analysis.
- Conduct regular internal audits to ensure compliance with data management protocols.
- Publish audit results to demonstrate commitment to transparency.

6 Data-driven decision making

- Use collected data to inform program design and evaluation, resource allocation, and policy recommendations.
- Regularly review and update violence reduction strategies based on data insights.
- Demonstrate clear links between data findings and programmatic or policy changes.

7 Accessibility and inclusivity

- Ensure data and reports are available in multiple languages relevant to the community.
- Provide data in various formats (e.g., print, digital) to accommodate different needs.
- Offer data literacy training to community members to enhance engagement.

8 Timeliness of data release

- Establish clear timelines for data processing and publication.
- Balance the need for timely information with ensuring data accuracy and context.

9 Addressing data limitations and biases

- Clearly communicate the limitations of data and potential biases in collection methods.
- Continuously work to improve data collection to address gaps and reduce biases.
- Contextualize data within broader social, economic, and historical factors.

10 Ethical considerations in data use

- Ensure data is not used in ways that further marginalize or harm vulnerable communities.
- Regularly review and update ethical guidelines in response to emerging challenges and community feedback.

Data-driven Performance Management Process

To ensure a government agency is achieving its established objectives, a performance management system should be implemented that tracks data based on agreed-upon metrics, tied to specific goals, that is reviewed in regular accountability meetings.

A small number of strategic goals should be developed by executive leadership and their supervisors. For instance, in an OVP this could be about specific violence reduction targets and the means by which they will be achieved.

Once goals are established, metrics tied to those goals to be assessed quarterly should be agreed upon. There must be capacity for reliable and transparent data to be collected on these metrics. Metrics from each objective should be collected and presented at a regular (maybe weekly or at least monthly) Data-Driven Performance Management Meeting. These accountability meetings should be hosted by executive leadership that has oversight of the strategy or department. Agency directors or deputy directors should present or respond to data presented on their objectives at each meeting. If they have not achieved their objectives, each agency director should present a specific plan on how they intend to improve their department's performance.

So the goal may be to reduce shootings by 15% in a year through providing intervention, mediation, and life coaching to 200 people at high risk of being involved in gun violence. Metrics and data should then be collected around those goals and a regular meeting held with the key managers to review progress toward the goals. [Appendix O](#) contains an example of data and metrics to collect and report out on for a gun violence reduction strategy. In addition, [Appendix P](#) contains examples of data dashboards implemented by jurisdictions across the country.

Every Data-Driven Performance Management Meeting should conclude with a detailed plan of action in response to unmet or new objectives. The responsible executive will follow up with each agency director in the weeks between each Data-Driven Performance Management Meeting to ensure progress is being made toward achieving the goals.

G. Addressing Jurisdiction-Wide Coordination Processes

OVPs have the unique opportunity to bring together practitioners, academia, and communities in a hub of initiatives and organizations focused on violence reduction. Building upon the strategic planning cycle described earlier in the toolkit, this section addresses the different stakeholder relationships an OVP should consider prioritizing. OVPs should tailor this framework according to the conditions of their specific context, including the existence of CVI partners, OVP level of involvement in direct services, and the type of collaboration with law enforcement.

Executive's Role in Implementation

Strong political buy-in is fundamental to an OVP's effectiveness. Political leaders can champion the OVP's work which can foster investment and support for these agencies. A supportive executive can also help navigate relationships with other political stakeholders at the local, regional, and state levels. Additionally, the executive should ideally play an active role in supervising the agency's performance to ensure the OVP and its partners are effectively reducing violence and advancing prevention efforts.

Coordination with Law Enforcement

Law enforcement encompasses police departments (city or state, depending on the OVP's jurisdiction) and other justice system agencies involved in violence reduction efforts. Usually, these agencies have vital information regarding the local and regional dynamics that fuel violent conflicts as well as other types of technical expertise that may be fundamental to an OVP. Ensuring effective coordination and a respectful relationship can be beneficial for an OVP, as their field insights and datasets on gun violence could be needed for the OVP to successfully implement intervention strategies.

OVPs and law enforcement agencies should establish mutually agreed upon channels of communication and regular in-person meetings between each agency's leadership and mid-level managers. In addition, OVPs can establish or join existing criminal justice coordinating councils to work toward a more holistic approach to criminal justice.

Coordination with Other Governmental Agencies

As mentioned briefly in other sections of this toolkit, partnerships with other governmental agencies are crucial for OVPs. In some cases, they can provide a comprehensive understanding of specific challenges participants may face. Collaborative insights or indicators can be gained from departments such as education (tracking truancy and disconnection), homeless services (housing instability), and public housing (violence concentration indicators), providing a holistic approach to participant support.

Coordination with Community Providers

Close coordination with community providers is essential to ensure the alignment of the violence reduction plan and the OVP's objectives. Especially when community-based organizations are the direct service providers, channels of communication and coordination must be established to ensure the successful completion of violence reduction goals.

Coordination with Other Stakeholders

Research institutions such as universities and think tanks may serve as important thought partners to OVPs. Academia has a long history of partnering with local governments to support policy implementation and evaluation efforts. In the violence reduction field, these efforts are usually supported by private and/or public funding.

Religious leaders, faith-based groups, philanthropic organizations, and other members of the community who are recognized as working toward community well-being and who wish to be involved in violence reduction efforts are also important allies to OVPs. Similar to community-based organizations, community leaders can provide important insights because they are familiar with local dynamics and their implications for violence reduction efforts. It is important to prioritize and maintain open channels of communication with those leaders, offering them a space to provide feedback on the work of the OVP and partners.

Collaboration with the private sector, including businesses, business associations, and other groups, can also be beneficial. In the last few years, business associations' interest in supporting community violence intervention initiatives has grown. OVPs should plan to engage the business sector within their jurisdictions, with the objective of finding areas of collaboration.

H. Supporting OVPs

[National Offices of Violence Prevention Network](#)

The NOVPN is a learning community with the goal of significantly increasing the expertise and effectiveness of OVPs and other similar agencies. The Network hosts convenings; provides training on effective violence reduction practices; coordinates cross-OVP learning exchanges; offers leadership and management development; and supports OVPs in growing capacity in data collection and reporting, fund development, and communications. The Network also supports the creation of new OVPs in jurisdictions interested in developing such agencies.

In addition to this Network, OVPs also have the potential to create their own hubs and networks of similar organizations at the local, county, or state level. Communities of practice and mutual support can naturally emerge from the large number of partnerships and collaborations that exist in the context of OVP activities.³



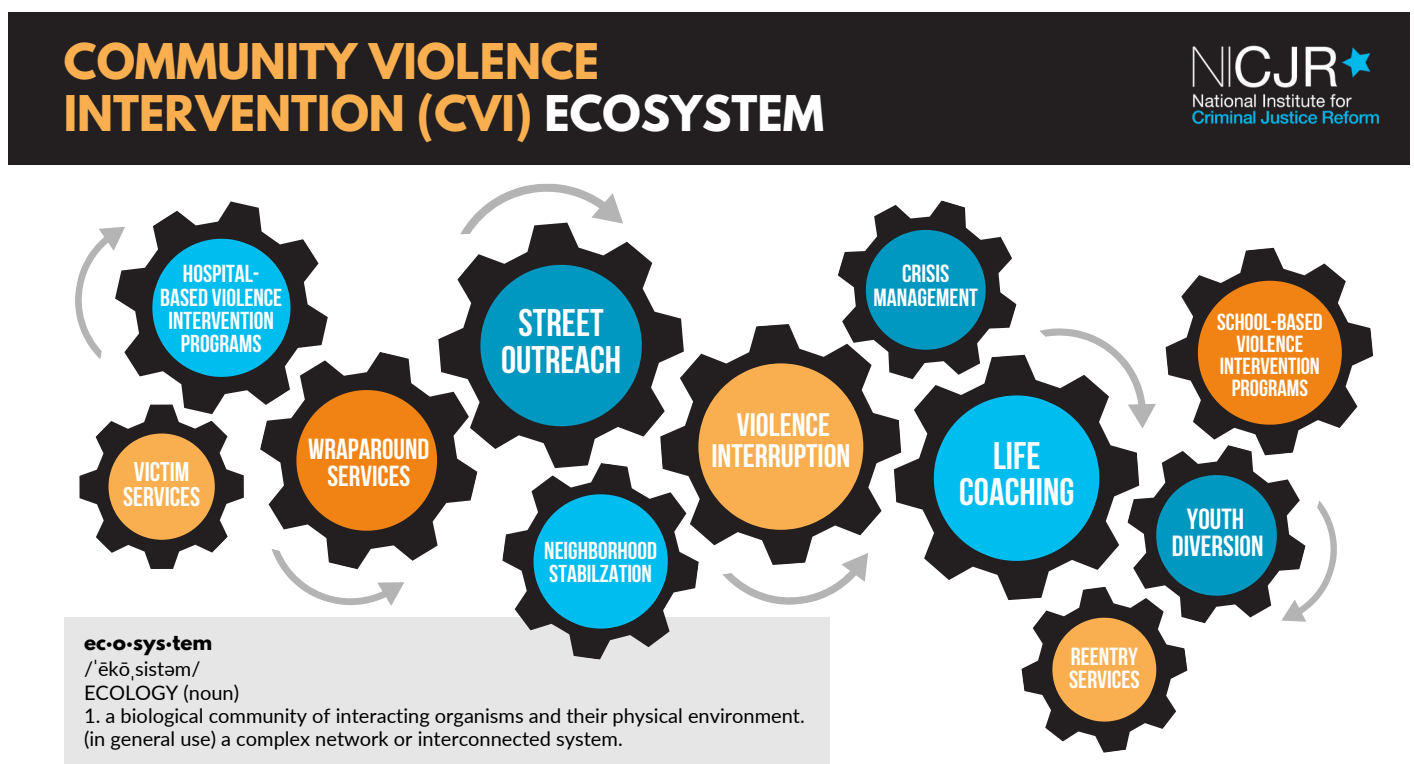
³ NOVPN will be producing a repository of national and local TTA partners in 2025.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: OVP Decision Tree

Access decision tree [here](#).

Appendix B: CVI Ecosystem Diagram



Appendix C: Request for Proposal Samples

[Birmingham, Alabama](#)

[Oakland, California](#)

Appendix D: Violence Reduction Strategic Plan Template

Access template [here](#).

Appendix E: Strategic Plans Collection

Baltimore, Maryland: [Baltimore City Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan](#)

Baton Rouge, Louisiana: [Blueprint for a Safe, Hopeful, Healthy Baton Rouge](#)

Denver, Colorado: [2023 Denver Youth Violence Prevention Plan](#)

Lexington, Kentucky: [ONE Lexington Strategic Plan 2022-2026](#)

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina: [The Way Forward: Mecklenburg County Community Violence Strategic Plan](#)

Newark, New Jersey: [Newark Office of Violence Prevention & Trauma Recovery: Strategic Plan](#)

North Carolina: [2024-2027 Community Prevention Strategic Plan: Office of Violence Prevention NC Department of Public Safety](#)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: [Philadelphia Roadmap to Safer Communities](#)

San Antonio/Bexar County, Texas: [San Antonio/Bexar County Violence Prevention Strategic Plan 2024-2028](#)

Toledo, Ohio: [Peace in Motion: Toledo's Path To Community Safety](#)

Washington, DC: [Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan](#)

Appendix F: Institutionalization Examples

Austin, Texas: [Resolution No. 20220616-086](#)

State of Colorado: [HB21-1299](#)

State of Illinois: [\(430 ILCS 69/\) Reimagine Public Safety Act](#)

State of Maryland: [SB0475](#)

State of Michigan: [Executive Order 2024-4](#)

Appendix G: OVP Budget Template

Access template [here](#).

Appendix H: Sample Interview Questions

OVP Director

- Please tell us about your experience, education, and background that is most relevant to this position.
- Have you ever managed a violence intervention program or strategy? What were some key lessons learned?
- Please tell us what you know about offices of violence prevention and other effective violence intervention models and strategies (try to determine if the candidate is knowledgeable of the violence intervention field).
- This position will have to balance working with several partners and stakeholders, including law enforcement, community advocates, service providers, and others. How will you balance working effectively with these various stakeholders?
- Have you worked with law enforcement before? Have you worked with community-based organizations before? Have you worked with faith-based organizations before? Give examples.
 - (Based on the candidate, some of these may be obvious and can be skipped. For instance, a former ED of a CBO doesn't need to ask about working with CBOs or a former cop doesn't need to be asked about working with LE).
- This position will eventually manage Outreach Workers and other community-based Violence Intervention Workers. While very valuable, these are staff who often need professional development – how would you manage and develop these staff members?
- What is your management style?
- Have you ever terminated an employee? Please tell us of a time when you had to terminate an employee.
- Do you have experience managing government agency budgets or other large budgets? What is the largest budget you have ever managed?

Program Director, Supervisor, or Deputy Director

- Please tell us about your experience, education, and background that is most relevant to this position.
- Have you ever managed a violence intervention program or strategy? What were some key lessons learned?
- Please tell us what you know about offices of violence prevention and other effective violence intervention models and strategies (try to determine if the candidate is knowledgeable of the violence intervention field).
- Tell me about a time when you had to analyze complex program data and present findings to stakeholders. What was your approach and what were the outcomes?
- How do you ensure accuracy when managing multiple budgets and tracking various funding streams? Can you provide a specific example?
- This role requires working directly with the community and other external stakeholders. Can you share an experience where you had to build relationships across different stakeholder groups?
- How do you stay current with best practices in community violence prevention and intervention?

Appendix I: Job Position Samples



I. Deputy Director of Data Analytics (shared by Baltimore's Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement)

Job Summary

The Deputy Director of Data Analytics is a middle management staff position responsible for managing and streamlining the use of data for policy, planning, and program development within MONSE. This position will oversee efforts to improve the use of criminal justice, human services, and other administrative data by transforming data into routine reports, dashboards, and geospatial analytics that inform MONSE's and partner agency's planning and operations. This role is critical in ensuring that those who live, work, and play in Baltimore have transparent access to data related to MONSE's strategic commitments. The position requires strong alignment with City of Baltimore's and MONSE's mission, values, and strategic vision, as well as demonstrated success, sound judgment, and flexibility working in a complex, fast-paced environment. The successful candidate will deliver a high-quality internal data management system that allows for as close to real time access to MONSE-required data as reasonably possible and maintain 90% system uptime.

Key Responsibilities

Executive Support

- Carry out aspects of research and data analysis projects under the supervision of senior staff.
- Apply a racial equity lens to data analysis and evaluation projects.
- Assist in the preparation of annual research agenda detailing research and strategic goals for MONSE.
- Partner with Chief of Staff and Communications Director in creation and maintenance of data library of talking points for senior staff.

Program Management

- Lead a team of data professionals.
- Manage and design the reporting environment, including data sources, security, and metadata.
- Develop project requirements and coordinates extensively with subject matter experts, technical staff, and end-users.
- Process confidential information in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.
- Perform statistical analyses for projects and reports.
- Develop graphs, detailed statistical reports, and presentations of project results and routine data needs.
- Update, implement, and maintain procedures for replicating analytic products.
- Develop project management plans, monitors timeliness of milestones that ensure adequate completion of deliverables.
- Advise on data collection and performance measurement activities for program and policy development purposes.
- Support implementation efforts through database development, conducting baseline analyses, and creating ongoing reporting frameworks.

Inter-Agency Collaboration and Community Engagement

- Serve as MONSE's primary liaison with City's Chief Data Officer.
- Coordinate with BPD, MOPI, Chief Data Officer, other agencies, and MONSE staff to implement data quality improvement strategies.
- Provide technical assistance to agency and partner agencies' staff whose data MONSE uses to program key performance indicators.
- Partner with agency and partner staff to deliver MONSE's metrics and key performance indicators necessary for grant reporting and compliance.
- Support data-related needs of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and other designated commissions/bodies.
- Serve as a liaison with academic partners on any formal evaluation or external analyses.
- Facilitate improved data and information sharing between MONSE and other City and non-city partners.

Qualifications/Skills

- A Master's Degree in Public Administration, Social Sciences or a related field and/or 5 years of relevant data analysis experience.
- Proficiency in writing complex queries and joining and appending tables.
- Familiarity with ArcGIS Online map publishing and tools.
- Experience with data visualization and graphic tools for creation of presentation materials.
- Working knowledge of data management and database design principles.
- Ability to manage large datasets, table and graph production, maps, and written analysis.
- Flexibility and capacity to manage multiple priorities with competing deadlines.
- Knowledge of social science research and investigation methodology and its application to a variety of problems.
- Familiarity with a range of statistical techniques, including multiple regression analysis.
- Ability to transform complex information in understandable information to guide use.
- Advanced knowledge of Excel, Access, PowerPoint, and statistical packages (SPSS, SAS, R, Stata, and/or similar analytical software).
- Knowledge of ESRI ArcGIS 10.x software for editing, data creation, analysis, and map production including ModelBuilder and Spatial Analyst.
- Strong quantitative skills, including an ability to use statistical programs to organize and analyze large amounts of data.
- Experience working with large datasets and relational databases.
- Experience with criminal justice system data.
- Project management experience.
- Data management and technical analysis skills.
- Business writing and documentation; visualization of summary data.
- Experience with technical assistance and applied research.
- Strong writing skills with a demonstrated ability to translate/synthesize data into clear products that are accessible to a non-technical audience.

- Commitment to using data to reduce racial ethnic and economic disparities within the criminal justice system.
- Strong leadership track record; ability to plan, organize and direct the work of others.
- Excellent verbal and written communication and presentation skills.
- Must be a pro-active, self-starter who is able to take the lead on tasks with minimal direction.
- Effective communicator with strong interpersonal skills and proven ability to develop productive, positive working relationships.
- Exceptional presentation and writing skills with ability to adapt to various audiences and formats.
- Exceptional organizational awareness and the ability to analyze and brief senior leaders.
- Consistent ability to exercise sound judgment and discretion.
- Flexible and creative problem solver with result-oriented focus.
- Strong analytic and organizational skills with demonstrated attention to facts and detail.
- Ability to collaborate with individuals at all levels of the agency.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with City officials, community and business groups and members of the public.
- High level of proficiency in Visio and MSOffice products, including SharePoint and MSProject.
- Experience applying a racial equity lens to data analysis, policy, and program evaluation preferred.
- Knowledge of and experience with qualitative data collection and analysis preferred.
- Experience working on multidisciplinary teams preferred.
- Experience working with data from human service organizations preferred.
- Knowledge of SQL, R, and/or python scripting preferred.
- Previous experience in government or public sector preferred.

II. Communication Specialist (shared by the King County Regional Office of Gun Violence Prevention)



King County

Communications Specialist III

Job Summary

The Communications Specialist III for the Regional Office of Gun Violence Prevention (ROGVP) will lead the development and implementation of comprehensive communication strategies that promote the mission and goals of the ROGVP. This role requires a dynamic, creative, and strategic communicator to raise awareness of the office's work, engage key stakeholders, and advocate for effective violence reduction policies and initiatives. This position will play a key role in public relations, media relations, publicity, issue management/strategic planning, marketing communications, employee communications, technical writing, production of communication/marketing materials, public participation, and outreach efforts to reduce gun violence within the region. This is a fully proficient professional classification, and work is performed on an independent basis.

Job Duties

Key Responsibilities:

- Identify and analyze communications needs, issues, and opportunities.
- Formulate and lead the implementation of quarterly strategic communications programs, plans, and strategies to support ROGVP's goals and initiatives.
- Develop targeted messaging for diverse key audiences, including community members, elected officials, law enforcement, media, and other stakeholders.
- Create and implement communication strategies to highlight the work of the office, raise awareness about gun violence prevention, and encourage community engagement.
- Develop specific talking points tailored to key audiences and relevant communication outlets.
- Draft and maintain public-facing and internal materials, including quarterly newsletters, event program materials, and talking points for elected officials and ROGVP leadership.
- Write blog posts for the Public Health Insider blog on relevant topics, sharing progress and updates on the ROGVP.
- Draft responses to inbound media inquiries, crafting clear and effective communication to address concerns and share key messages.
- Plan, develop, and execute social media campaigns to raise awareness of gun violence prevention initiatives and foster engagement with the community on ROGVP's social media profiles.
- Maintain and update the public-facing ROGVP webpage.
- Coordinate and promote violence reduction events, services, and programs implemented within King County, including both public-facing and internal events.
- Prepare program presentations, reports, and visual materials to effectively communicate program updates to key stakeholders, including elected leaders, community groups, and organizational partners.
- Work closely with the director and key team members to support the logistics and communications for regional violence reduction events.
- Serve as an occasional spokesperson or media liaison for the ROGVP, participating in media interviews, press conferences, and community forums as needed.
- Develop and nurture relationships with local media outlets and journalists.

- Prepare quarterly reports summarizing communications activities, engagement metrics, and media coverage to key stakeholders and government partners.
- Participate in the selection process for consultants and vendors.
- Oversee the work of consultants and vendors, ensuring deliverables are met on time and within budget.
- Identify emerging trends, public concerns, or crises related to gun violence and provide recommendations for strategic communications approaches to address these issues.
- Develop and execute communications strategies in response to urgent matters, ensuring transparency, clarity, and timeliness.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Knowledge/Skills (May vary by position)

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Communications, Public Relations, Journalism, or a related field.
- Minimum of 5 years of professional experience in communications, public relations, or a related role, with experience in public health, and community engagement strongly preferred.
- Knowledge of publication processes and the ability to manage content creation and distribution effectively.
- Proficiency in communications principles, methods, and materials, including media relations and public messaging.
- Knowledge of research methods and techniques for evaluating communication effectiveness and stakeholder engagement.
- Knowledge of presentation methods and techniques, including creating visuals and spoken content for different audiences.
- Understanding of government and community processes and structures as it pertains to public policy, gun violence prevention, and public health.
- Knowledge of budgeting techniques and principles.
- General knowledge of supervisory techniques and principles.
- Photography and videography skills.
- Negotiating and/or facilitating skills.
- Understanding of the political environment and the ability to navigate sensitive issues with care and diplomacy.
- Ability to comprehend, analyze, and interpret technical information and translate it into accessible, compelling content for diverse, non-technical audiences.
- Skills in synthesizing and communicating technical information in written, oral, or visual formats.
- Knowledge of when and how to apply different communication methods or tools to support various program needs.
- Writing, editing, and illustrating skills to produce clear, concise, and visually appealing communications.
- Proficiency in computer applications and digital tools necessary for content creation, social media management, and report generation.
- Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines while managing multiple communications tasks simultaneously.

- Strong organizational skills.
- Ability to develop both short- and long-range communications plans and strategies
- Flexibility and adaptability in a fast-paced environment, especially during crises or time-sensitive communications.

Preferred Skills:

- Experience working in public health, social justice, or violence prevention initiatives.
- Familiarity with gun violence issues and policies, particularly within Washington State or similar regions.
- Experience in crisis communication and media relations in high-profile or sensitive situations.

Licensing, Certification and Other Requirements:

- Washington State Driver's License or other evidence of mobility.
- Some licenses, certifications and other requirements determined to be necessary to meet the business needs of the employing unit may be required.

Appendix J: OVP Staffing Process Checklist

Based on the ARODS approach (attraction, recruitment, onboarding, development, and separation).

Attraction:

- Determine initial staffing needs
- Draft position descriptions
- Finalize position descriptions
- Determine where to post job(s)
 - a. Communication channels: official websites, social media, LinkedIn, email newsletters, traditional media (newspaper, radio, etc.)
 - b. Email and contact information for questions or comments
 - c. Based on role, this will vary depending on required skill sets (e.g., a data analysis position may be also posted on academic institutions job boards)
- Determine selection process
 - a. Number of selection rounds

Recruitment:

- Conduct interviews that involve cross-functional team members
- Hire for new position(s)

Onboarding:

- 90-day plan for probationary period:
 - Management expectations
 - Stakeholder expectations
 - General HR requirements

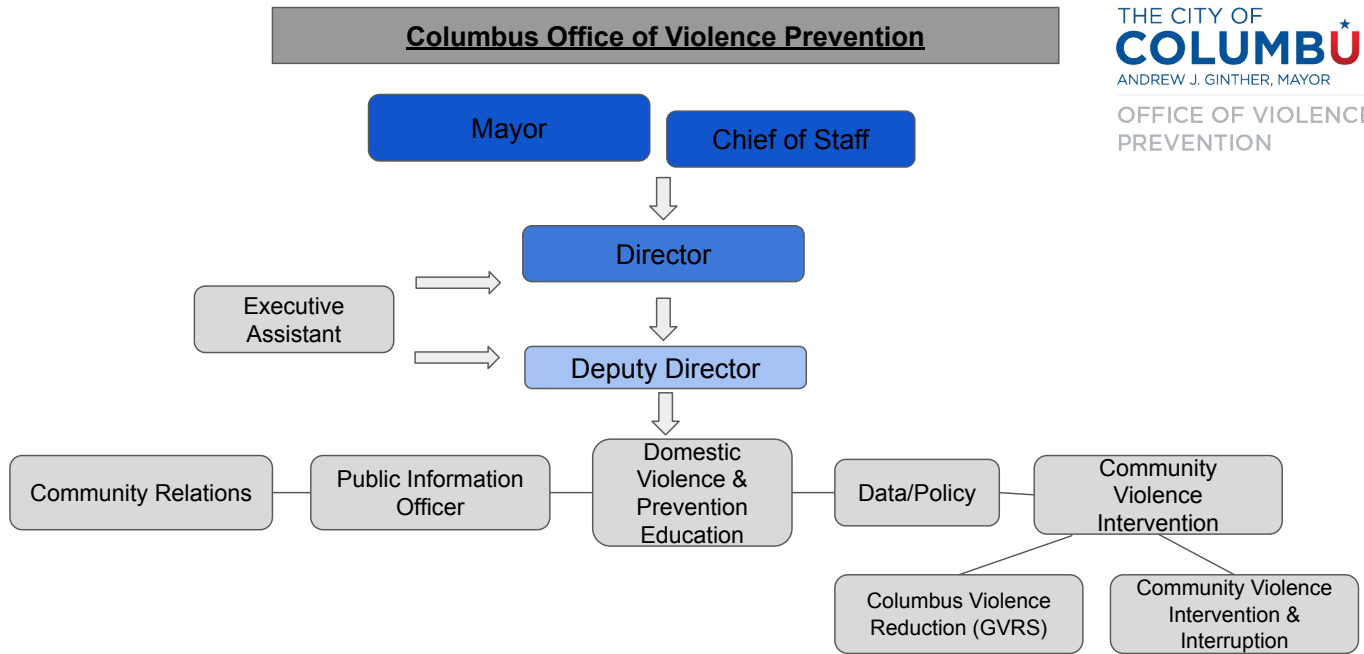
Development:

- **Staff Onboarding:** An onboarding process for new employees should be developed to cover the main components of the organization:
 - a. Addressing the OVP's violence reduction plan
 - b. Understanding the theory of change and mission and its alignment with the OVP's programs and strategies
 - c. Addressing the current OVP structure and organizational processes
 - d. Onboarding on technical tools and information systems used by the OVP
 - e. Co-creation of an individualized development plan (IDP)

- **Suggested Staff Trainings**
 - a. Gun violence as a public health issue
 - b. Trauma-informed care practices for case management
 - c. Conflict management and de-escalation
- **Performance Evaluations:** At least every year, a performance evaluation process should be conducted for employees who have been in the organization for at least 12 months. Processes can vary greatly, however, they usually include:
 - a. Performance goals
 - b. Achievements
 - c. Areas for improvements
 - d. Manager's feedback
 - e. Employee's development plan
- **Separation:**
 - a. Conducting exit interviews to understand reasons for departure and obtain additional feedback
 - b. Ensure strategies are in place for knowledge transfer into other staff members

Appendix K: Sample Organizational Chart

Office of Violence Prevention - Columbus, Ohio:



Appendix L: CVI Workers Job Descriptions

Outreach Worker:

- Locate and engage individuals identified as very high-risk (VHR) of being involved in gun violence
- Bring VHR individuals to engage with Life Coaches or Case Managers to conduct a warm hand-off to enroll into services
- Meet with high-risk individuals and groups regularly
- Get to know high-risk persons and the people who know them
- Develop relationships with influential individuals and groups in the community involved in gun and gang violence

Life Coach/Case Manager:

- First and primary duty: Develop and maintain a positive and trusting relationship with clients
- Caseloads must be made up entirely of VHR individuals, primarily identified through the Shooting Reviews or OVP Coordination Meetings
- Develop Life Plans, including Safety Plans with each client
- For the first 3-4 months of being on a caseload, have contact with clients every single day by phone or text
- In-person contact with clients 2-3 times per week
- Document all contacts, milestones, and significant developments with clients in the database system

Violence Interrupter/Mediator:

- Respond to shooting scenes to engage family and loved ones of victim(s) and provide rumor and crowd control
- Respond to hospitals to develop relationships with gun shot wound (GSW) victims and their families and coordinate victim services
- Mediate conflicts among high-risk individuals and groups
- Monitor social media to gain information on potential conflicts among groups/crews/gangs
- Develop relationships with influential individuals and groups in the community involved in gun and gang violence

Appendix M: Strategic Communications Development Checklist

Access template [here](#).

Appendix N: Data Applications

| | Data Reports | Data Dashboards | Geographical Information Systems (GIS) |
|--|--|--|--|
| DEFINITION | Provides a snapshot of data in a specific timeframe; may contain charts, graphs, and other visual aids to interpret the data set. | Information from different data sets presented in an interactive platform that provides charts, graphs, and/or other visualizations to summarize and compare the information. | Technology used to manage and map various types of data in a specific geographical area. |
| EXAMPLES OF APPLICATIONS FOR OVPS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly data reports • Program evaluation reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct services tracker dashboard • Case management dashboard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jurisdictional map of homicides and injuries by firearm • Gun violence heat map |
| MOST COMMON SOFTWARES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Excel and Word (license needed) • RStudio (open source) • Stata (license needed) • Adobe Acrobat (license needed) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerBi (license needed) • Salesforce (license needed) • Microsoft Dynamics (license needed) • RStudio: some examples are R Markdown, flexdashboard, and Shiny Dashboard packages (open source) • Tableau (license needed) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QGIS (open source) • ArcGIS (license needed) |

Appendix O: Gun Violence Reduction Strategy Data Dashboard

Primary Outcomes:

- Reduce the # of homicides by 10% from previous year
 - Track and present data year-to-date (YTD) vs previous year
- Reduce the # of nonfatal/injury shootings by 10% from previous year
 - Track and present data YTD vs previous year

Outputs:

- # of Call-Ins held YTD
- # of Call-In participants YTD
- # of Custom Notifications conducted YTD
- # of very high-risk (VHR) individuals identified through Shooting Reviews and/or Coordination Meetings

Goals & Metrics for Service Engagement:

- # and % of total identified VHR individuals connected to services who:
 - Received contact by Outreach Workers: Goal 75%
 - Track: # and % of total
 - Enrolled in life coaching: Goal: 65%
 - Enrolled for 3 consecutive months: Goal: 60%
 - Enrolled for 6 consecutive months: Goal: 50%
 - Enrolled for 12 consecutive months: Goal: 35%
 - Track: # and % of total for each of the four steps above

Programmatic Outcomes:

- # of clients enrolled in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) groups
- # of clients graduated from CBT groups
- # of clients completed employment readiness program
- # of clients employed
 - # employed for 3 consecutive months
 - # employed for 6 consecutive months
 - # employed for 12 consecutive months

Active Clients:

- # of total “active” participants
 - a. Distinguished between organizations
- # of total “participants served” YTD
- Hours spent
- # of participants who are “high-risk” defined by strategy (Problem Analysis)
- # of participants who are “gang/group affiliated”
- # of participants “previously shot”
- Hours spent with clients each month by each Life Coach
 - Goal: 80 hours spent with clients each month by every Life Coach
 - Below 60 is cause for discipline

Police Department and Prosecutor Enforcement Outcomes:

- Achieve at least 60% homicide clearance rate
 - Track and present data YTD vs previous year on homicide clearance rate
- Achieve at least 40% nonfatal injury shooting clearance rate
 - Track and present data YTD vs previous year on nonfatal shootings clearance rate

Appendix P: Data Dashboard Collection

- Baltimore, MD: [Public Safety Accountability Dashboard](#)
- Durham, NC: [Community Safety Dashboard](#)
- Los Angeles County: [Office of Violence Prevention \(OVP\) Open Data Portal](#)
- Minnesota: [Violent Death Reporting System \(MNVDRS\)](#)
- Washington: [Inventory of Firearm-Related Data for Washington State](#)
- Washington, DC: [Crime Dashboard](#)

Appendix Q: Potential Non-CVI Functions for an OVP

While this toolkit focuses specifically on the work an OVP can do around community violence intervention, policy makers should consider investing their offices with a broader set of responsibilities. Everytown for Gun Safety suggests that OVPs consider how they can build a true center of gravity for gun violence prevention policy in their jurisdictions. So many core gun safety policies require dedicated time and attention from the government in order to live up to their life-saving potential, and there is no smarter way to reduce gun violence than to set up an OVP with the tools to be an implementer in chief. Below are several critical gun safety agenda items that need to have clear owners within government, with regular and persistent attention, and should be considered as potential tasks for an OVP. As this toolkit has explored, no two jurisdictions are the same in terms of need or in terms of existing bureaucratic structure—and as a result there is not one uniform formula for which tasks an OVP should be invested with. As a rule of thumb, policy makers can analyze whether their existing system is already adept at the functions described below and whether there are other agencies better equipped to handle the implementation of these key policies. For more considerations about which of these policies is appropriate for a given OVP, Everytown for Gun Safety staff is available to discuss.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO): Extreme risk laws provide loved ones and law enforcement a process to petition a court to temporarily block a person's access to firearms in moments of crisis. And yet several state extreme risk laws have not been fully implemented—and are utilized at low level. State and local OVPs could play a role in ensuring that these life-saving laws are put to their best use. Among other tasks, OVPs can run local education campaigns, alerting residents to the availability of these laws and providing resources for how to seek an order. OVPs could also act as a facilitator, helping connect people in the community who have identified a person at risk of harm with the court or with law enforcement. OVPs could also track and publish local data about the use of ERPOs.

Firearm Relinquishment Implementation: Thirty-five states require individuals subject to a domestic violence restraining order or who have been convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence to relinquish their firearm. OVPs can work with courts and law enforcement to help ensure a process is in place to effectively implement these laws so that people who become prohibited actually do relinquish their firearms.

Firearm Dealer Oversight: In addition to federal licensing requirements, fifteen states require gun dealers to obtain a state license which creates additional oversight of the industry. The strongest state systems require background checks and training for employees, robust physical security to prevent theft, and thorough record-keeping.

Firearm Safety Information Campaigns: OVPs could run public information campaigns regarding the importance of firearm safety. These campaigns could include information on legal requirements in the state related to firearm storage, as well as best practices for firearm storage. OVPs could also run purchaser awareness campaigns on the risks that firearms pose in the home with children, including elevated risks of suicide and unintentional shootings. OVPs could also distribute gun locks.

Data Collection and Sharing: State and local OVPs could collect data for use by the city, state, and researchers to improve violence prevention strategies. Local OVPs can also use collected data for policy advocacy and public information, highlighting data that shows violence prevention policies supported by the OVP show measurable reductions in violence. Local OVPs can also coordinate with state OVPs to collect and transmit data from local sources, as well as help state OVPs identify state-wide trends and local differences.

Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) Funding Advocacy: Acting as a central hub for gun safety policy, OVPs are in an excellent position to lead on advocacy for funding dollars. These offices should hold knowledge about which GVP programs are well funded and which are under funded, should hold priorities for pulling down new dollars, should advocate regularly to local and state governments for funding, and should manage grant writing for available local, state, and federal money.

OFFICES OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION TOOLKIT



MARCH 2025

