

COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

A SUMMER TOOLKIT 2022



THE
HEALTH ALLIANCE
for VIOLENCE
INTERVENTION

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National Institute for
Criminal Justice Reform



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INTRODUCTION

As the United States enters the summer season amid an increase in gun violence, every jurisdiction bears the responsibility to keep its communities safe from harm. This toolkit offers jurisdictions effective strategies to prevent spikes in gun violence, particularly among our Black and Brown communities, which have historically been most impacted by community violence.

Over the past two years, community violence in the United States has increased sharply, with homicides rising 30% in 2020¹ and police data indicating another 7% rise in major cities during 2021.² This homicide spike has disproportionately harmed Black and Brown communities.³ **Black Americans were eight times more likely to be murdered in 2020 than white Americans.**⁴ And even within Black and Brown communities, violence is further concentrated among a small number of people who face extraordinary risk. **Over half of all homicides and shootings occur within less than 1% of the population:** Black and Brown young adults living in disinvested areas who are members of street groups (such as gangs, or more loosely affiliated neighborhood crews).⁵ According to city-level data analysis and observations from front-line violence intervention workers, the recent violence spike is concentrated among that same high-risk population.





WITH SUMMER 2022 APPROACHING, CITIES SHOULD ANTICIPATE VIOLENCE SPIKES AND PLAN COMPREHENSIVE, EVIDENCE-BASED RESPONSES.

Black and Brown school-aged youth are also particularly vulnerable to gun violence. The number of children and teenagers killed by gunfire has risen over the past two years,⁶ disproportionately affecting young people in poor Black and Latino neighborhoods.⁷ An estimated 3 million children are exposed to gun violence every year,⁸ and the percentage of high school students who reported that they “did not go to school at least one day in the past month because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school” increased 74% overall, and 84% for Black students, between 2009 and 2019.⁹

The summer season presents a special problem. It is well known to city officials, frontline workers, and researchers that homicides and nonfatal shootings spike during the warm days of summer.¹⁰ In Baltimore, for example, 39% of gun homicides and nonfatal shootings occurred between May 1 and August 31 during the years 2016 to 2020.¹¹ With summer 2022 approaching, cities should anticipate violence spikes and plan comprehensive, evidence-based responses that have been shown to work.

Developing a community violence intervention (CVI) ecosystem driven by city leadership is key to addressing rises in homicides and shootings. The ecosystem should include as much evidence-based violence reduction infrastructure as a city can provide through its community-based organizations, public health offices, and law enforcement agencies. The goal should be to coordinate and invest resources into the components of this infrastructure, with a shared vision of violence reduction, in order to maximize impact. This means ensuring that there are enough community-based, health-focused interventionists to respond to the people at the highest risk of violent victimization or harming others and make violence prevention sustainable. Strong examples of coordinated, long-term, citywide efforts include New York City's Crisis Management System,¹² Los Angeles' Gang Reduction and Youth Development initiative,¹³ the Newark Office of Violence Prevention,¹⁴ and the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.¹⁵

A range of programmatic interventions have been shown to reduce violence in the short term among the core high-risk population. These include frontline street outreach work and hospital-based violence intervention programs, focused deterrence strategies, and summer employment opportunities. There are also strong programs and prevention measures that can be implemented to address gun violence among school-age youth. These include culturally relevant and respectful youth development programs, violence prevention programs in summer schools, safe passage programs, and summer camps and parks programs. Together, these measures represent both short-term responses that intervene rapidly in violent conflicts and longer-term prevention measures that will help build safer communities. This document contains a set of tools to consider as jurisdictions assemble a comprehensive infrastructure to address violence. Cities should not wait until summer, when violence is spiking, to mobilize this infrastructure. Too often, that approach results in using harmfully overreaching law enforcement tactics. Instead, cities should build on existing

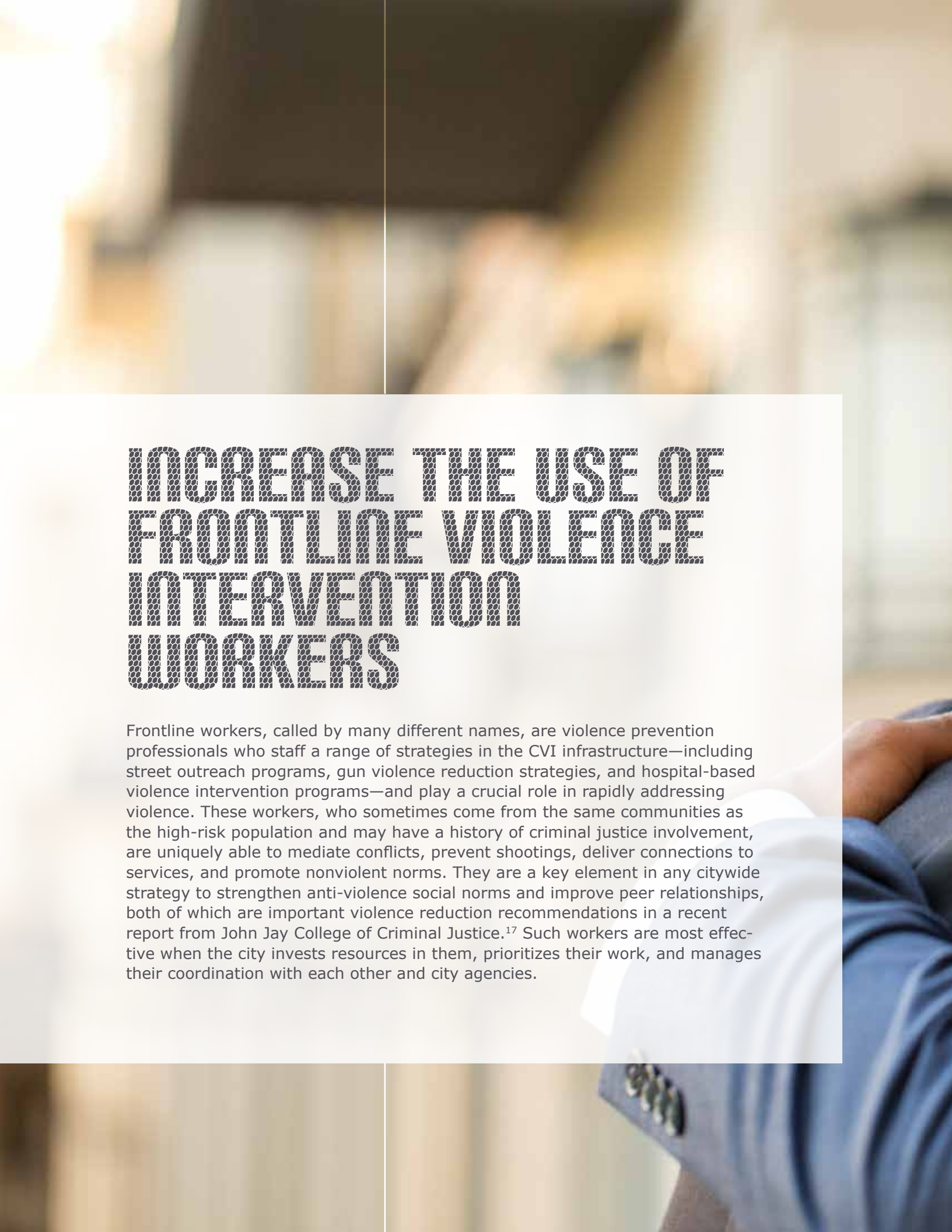
infrastructure and programming, while also adding new components, where possible, to fill the gaps in their coverage to address community violence.

The Biden-Harris administration is supporting these goals through the Community Violence Intervention Collaborative, a cohort of 16 jurisdictions committed to using American Rescue Plan funding or other public funding to scale and strengthen their CVI infrastructure. The Biden-Harris administration has made other efforts to invest in CVI, including guidance issued by the Department of Housing and Urban Development on how communities can apply to use funds from the \$3.4 billion Community Development Block Grant program to support CVI strategies and new awards from the National Institutes of Health to support CVI research and implementation projects.¹⁶ Cities can use these resources in committing to build their CVI infrastructure in preparation for summer spikes in violence. Dedicated planning and funding for CVI strategies can help stem summer violence spikes and save lives this year.

How Much Does Community Violence Intervention Cost?

Jurisdictions should anticipate spending **between \$750,000 and \$4 million per program**, depending on the size of the local area and the scale of the community violence problem. Detailed information on the cost of implementing programs that form a comprehensive community violence intervention ecosystem in jurisdictions of all sizes can be found at the following website: www.cviecosystem.com





INCREASE THE USE OF FRONTLINE VIOLENCE INTERVENTION WORKERS

Frontline workers, called by many different names, are violence prevention professionals who staff a range of strategies in the CVI infrastructure—including street outreach programs, gun violence reduction strategies, and hospital-based violence intervention programs—and play a crucial role in rapidly addressing violence. These workers, who sometimes come from the same communities as the high-risk population and may have a history of criminal justice involvement, are uniquely able to mediate conflicts, prevent shootings, deliver connections to services, and promote nonviolent norms. They are a key element in any citywide strategy to strengthen anti-violence social norms and improve peer relationships, both of which are important violence reduction recommendations in a recent report from John Jay College of Criminal Justice.¹⁷ Such workers are most effective when the city invests resources in them, prioritizes their work, and manages their coordination with each other and city agencies.



INVEST IN STREET OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Street outreach programs employ violence prevention professionals—sometimes called street outreach workers, credible messengers, or interrupters—who can mediate conflicts, interrupt cycles of violent retaliation, and connect high-risk people to services.

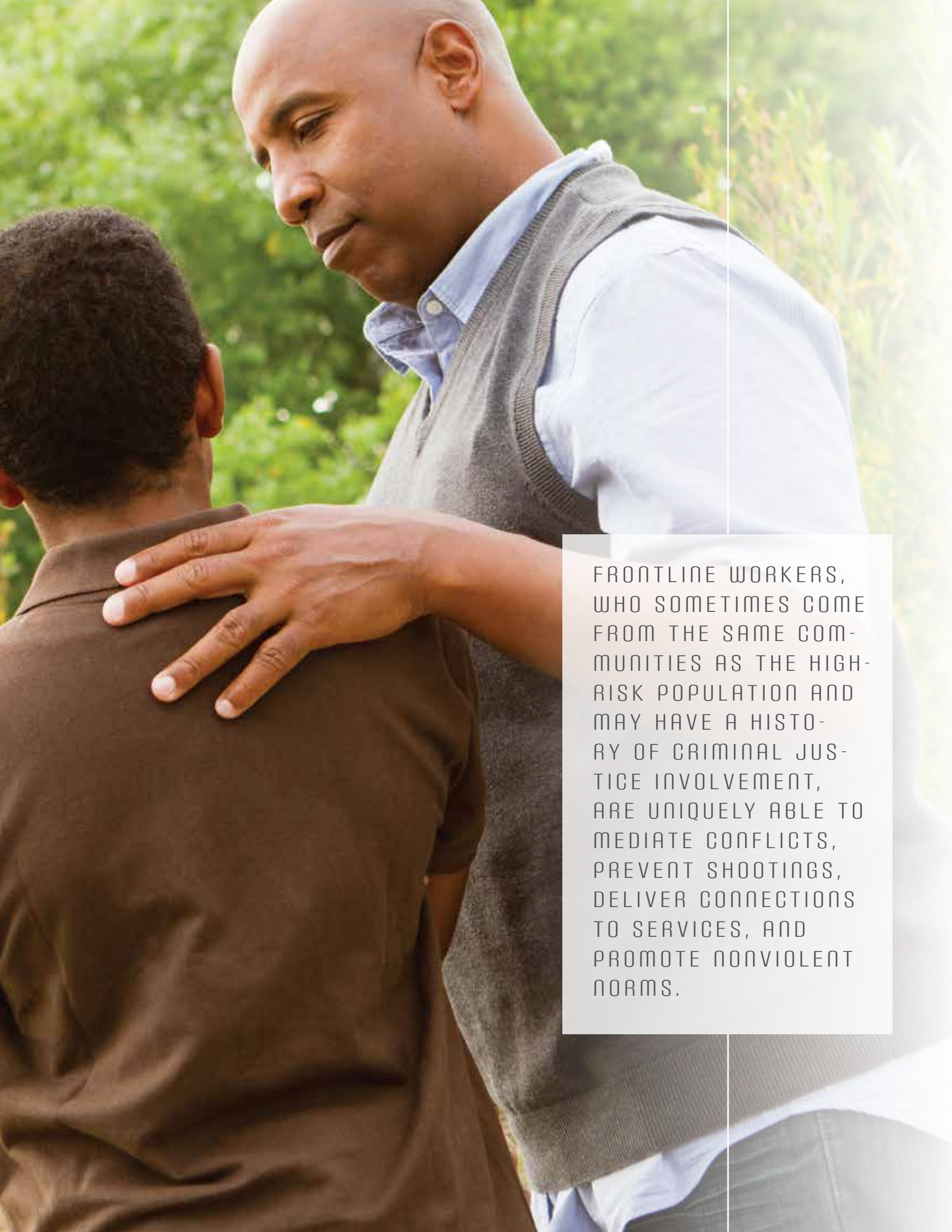
The most successful street outreach models are part of a citywide violence prevention infrastructure that offers extensive training and technical assistance from experienced providers and relies on multiple street outreach organizations to provide services. Los Angeles and Chicago both use this approach, contracting street outreach organizations through the mayor's office, providing over 100 hours of

training and professional standards through the Urban Peace Institute in Los Angeles¹⁸ and Metropolitan Peace Academy in Chicago,¹⁹ and connecting them to other city agencies to coordinate efforts, share information, and make links to services.²⁰ Other cities have successfully coordinated street outreach programs through existing Offices of Violence Prevention.²¹ Well-implemented, well-managed street outreach models have shown promising outcomes in formal evaluations, reducing violence in neighborhoods of Los Angeles,²² Chicago,²³ New York City,²⁴ and Philadelphia.²⁵

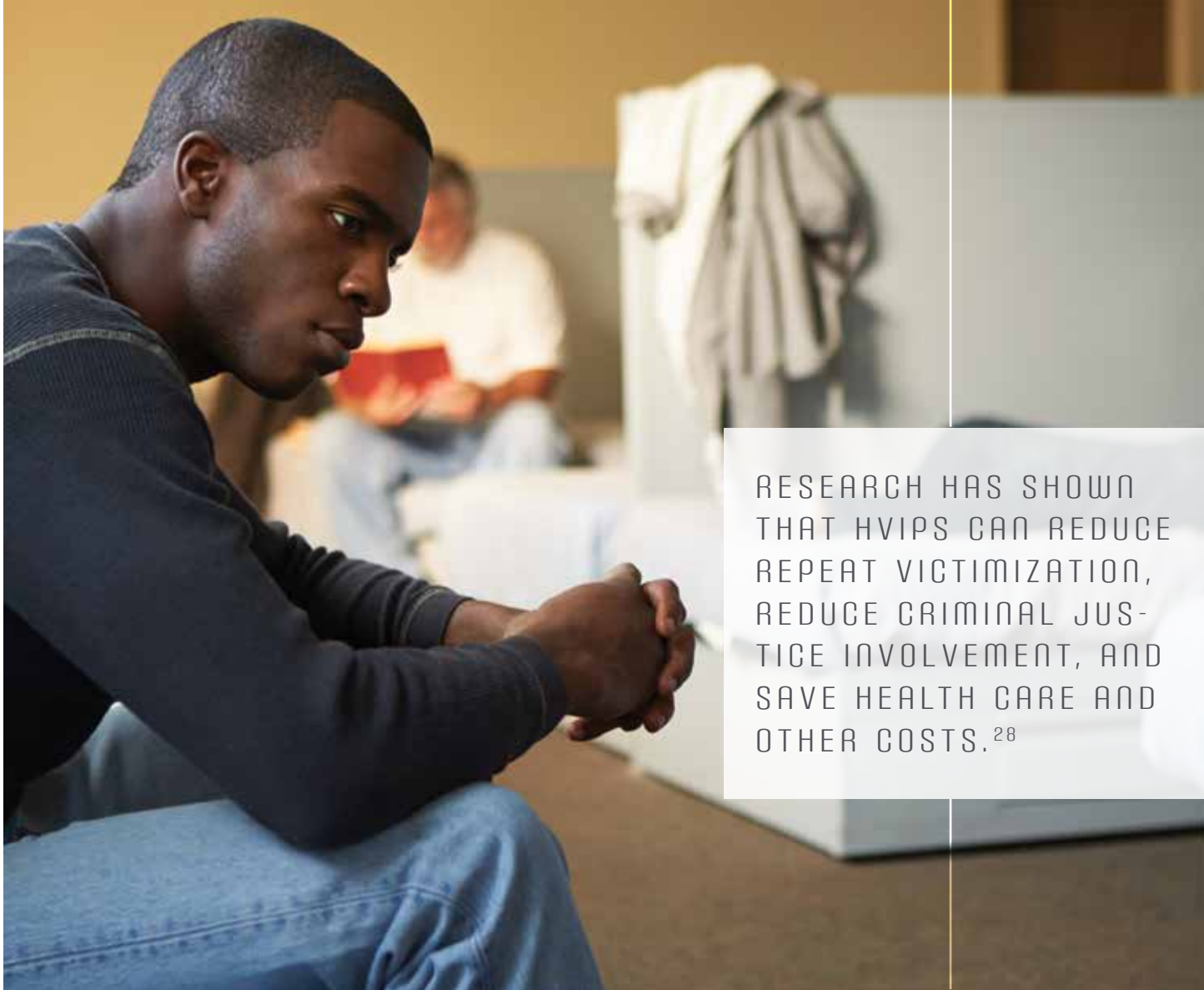
SEEK TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Street outreach work is most effective when implemented in consultation with experienced technical assistance providers. These include the Community-Based Public Safety Collective, Urban Peace Institute in Los Angeles, Metropolitan Peace Academy in Chicago, and the national Cure Violence organization.





FRONTLINE WORKERS, WHO SOMETIMES COME FROM THE SAME COMMUNITIES AS THE HIGH-RISK POPULATION AND MAY HAVE A HISTORY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT, ARE UNIQUELY ABLE TO MEDIATE CONFLICTS, PREVENT SHOOTINGS, DELIVER CONNECTIONS TO SERVICES, AND PROMOTE NONVIOLENT NORMS.



RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT HVIPS CAN REDUCE REPEAT VICTIMIZATION, REDUCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT, AND SAVE HEALTH CARE AND OTHER COSTS.²⁸

INVEST IN HOSPITAL-BASED VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) combine the efforts of medical staff, violence prevention professionals, and community-based service providers to intervene with victims of violence in hospital settings, connect them with victim services, and reduce future victimization and retaliation.²⁶ They address needs common to many victims of crime, including access to health care, case management, trauma-informed treatment, and other social determinants of health. The long-standing programs Youth ALIVE! in Oakland, California, and Project Ujima at Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin in Milwaukee provide a model for well-run HVIPs. As of 2021, there is a network of 46 established HVIPs and roughly 31 cities are interested in expanding their HVIPs. Research has shown that HVIPs can reduce repeat victimization, reduce criminal justice involvement, and save health care and other costs.²⁷ A study of an HVIP in Baltimore that provided services to repeat victims on probation or parole showed that they were less likely to be rearrested or convicted of a violent crime.²⁸ The model has been supported by the American Society of Pediatrics,²⁹ the American Hospital Association,³⁰ the American College of Surgeons,³¹ and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime (OVC).³²



SEEK TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) are most effective when implemented in consultation with experienced technical assistance providers. The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention is the only national organization that provides training and technical assistance as well as membership to HVIPs.³³

INCORPORATE INNOVATIONS

Several innovations can improve the real-time responsiveness of frontline violence intervention workers.

SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING:


Some cities have created hubs for monitoring conflicts on social media. Trained social media experts can identify conflicts that threaten to become real-world violence, and street outreach workers can be deployed to mediate and prevent violence. This innovation also includes opportunities for partnership with law enforcement, when necessary. New York City's Citizens Crime Commission has implemented social media monitoring with promising results.³⁴



SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING



MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE: Some outreach organizations incorporate mobile crisis response units, like trauma vans, that respond to shootings by bringing a range of therapeutic services directly to victims and their families.³⁵ In Queens, New York, the Life Camp, Inc. program runs Peace Mobile, an RV dedicated to mitigating conflict between street groups and providing after-incident services.



USE FOCUSED DETERRENCE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE

Focused deterrence is a framework for addressing serious crime and violence. It includes direct communication from a partnership of law enforcement, community members, and service providers to people at high risk of violent victimization and offending to offer help and deliver a message that crime will not be tolerated. It is best known for its application to addressing group-related gun violence. The strategy can make a rapid impact during the summer months.







IMPLEMENT THE GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGY

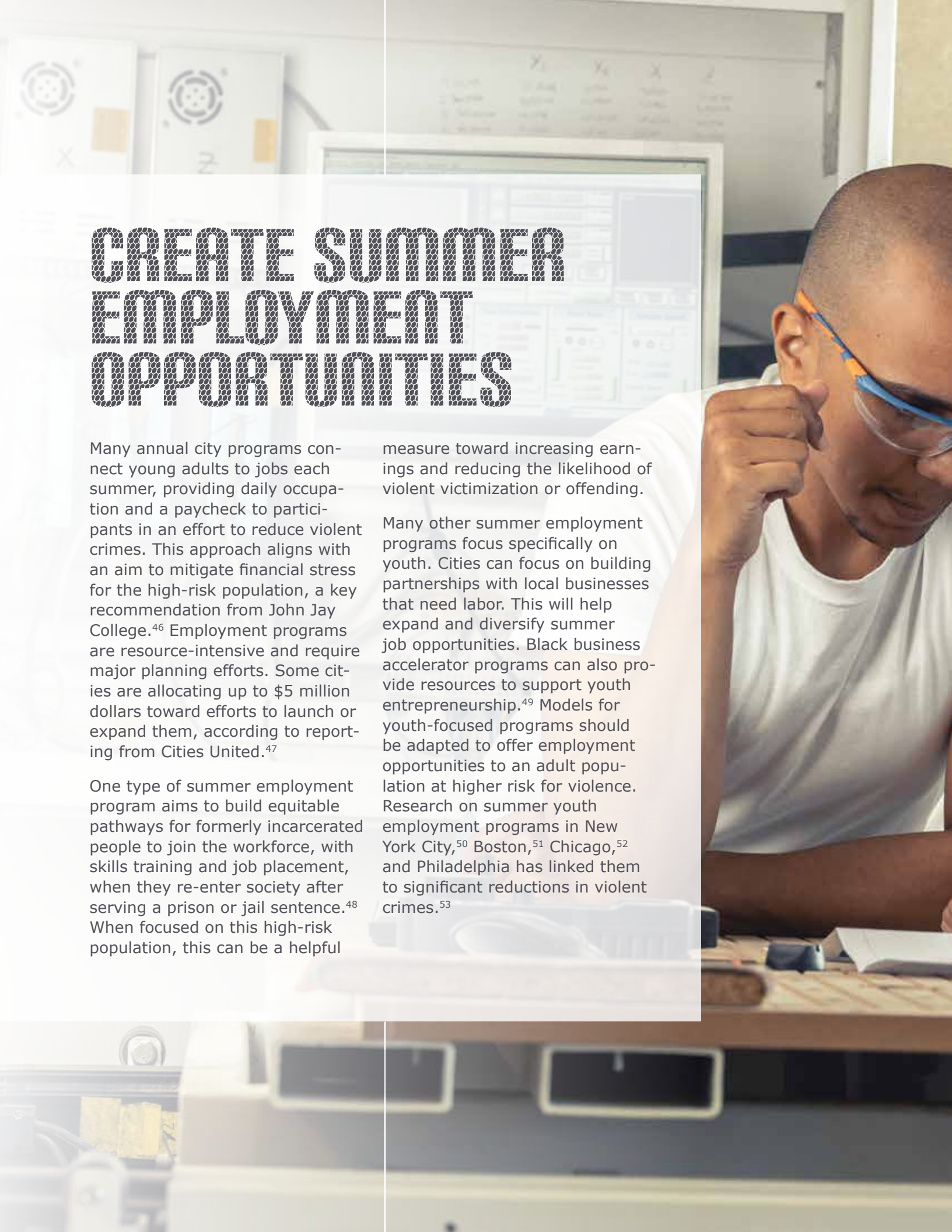
Gun Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRs), known by other names including Ceasefire and Group Violence Intervention, is a comprehensive approach that uses a data-driven process to identify the people and groups at the highest risk of committing or being involved in gun violence and deploy effective interventions with them. Initially developed in Boston in the 1990s, where it was called “Operation Ceasefire,” GVRs has evolved to include more in-depth and intensive services and supports as it has been implemented in cities such as Oakland and Stockton, California.³⁶ The strategy has four core components: data-driven identification of the people and groups at highest risk of gun violence; direct and respectful communication to those at high risk; intensive services, supports, and opportunities; and, as a last resort, focused enforcement.

The implementation of GVRs typically results in a significant reduction in community-wide levels of homicides and nonfatal shootings. Positive results are magnified when the strategy focuses specifically on the highly victimized population. In Boston, where Operation Ceasefire was instituted with a specific focus on youth, the city achieved a 63% reduction in the number of youth homicides.³⁷ Oakland’s GVRs, which was launched at the end of 2012 and concentrated on high-risk people likely to be involved in violence, resulted in six consecutive years of reductions in homicides and nonfatal shootings, culminating in a 49% reduction in both.³⁸ Other cities that have implemented GVRs-type programs have experienced similar results, including New Haven,³⁹ New Orleans,⁴⁰ and Newburgh, New York.⁴¹ Systematic reviews by the National Academies of Sciences and the United States Agency for International Development conclude that GVRs is the most effective strategy for reducing community violence.⁴²



SEEK TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Gun Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRs) is most effective when cities implement it in consultation with experienced technical assistance providers, such as the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform,⁴³ the California Partnership for Safe Communities,⁴⁴ and the National Network for Safe Communities.⁴⁵



CREATE SUMMER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Many annual city programs connect young adults to jobs each summer, providing daily occupation and a paycheck to participants in an effort to reduce violent crimes. This approach aligns with an aim to mitigate financial stress for the high-risk population, a key recommendation from John Jay College.⁴⁶ Employment programs are resource-intensive and require major planning efforts. Some cities are allocating up to \$5 million dollars toward efforts to launch or expand them, according to reporting from Cities United.⁴⁷

One type of summer employment program aims to build equitable pathways for formerly incarcerated people to join the workforce, with skills training and job placement, when they re-enter society after serving a prison or jail sentence.⁴⁸ When focused on this high-risk population, this can be a helpful

measure toward increasing earnings and reducing the likelihood of violent victimization or offending.

Many other summer employment programs focus specifically on youth. Cities can focus on building partnerships with local businesses that need labor. This will help expand and diversify summer job opportunities. Black business accelerator programs can also provide resources to support youth entrepreneurship.⁴⁹ Models for youth-focused programs should be adapted to offer employment opportunities to an adult population at higher risk for violence. Research on summer youth employment programs in New York City,⁵⁰ Boston,⁵¹ Chicago,⁵² and Philadelphia has linked them to significant reductions in violent crimes.⁵³





SUPPORT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

A range of youth development and violence prevention strategies can help address homicides and shootings during the summer months. Such strategies can contribute to the goal of engaging with and supporting youth, an important recommendation from John Jay College.⁵⁴ In developing these strategies, cities should form strong partnerships between youth and adults, gain voice and perspective from youth, and engage youth in planning and implementation, studies suggest.⁵⁵



IMPLEMENT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Culturally relevant and respectful youth development programs offer life skills and leadership training for youth in an effort to reduce risk factors for violent victimization, exposure, and offending. This training can be integrated into summer schools, summer camps, and parks programming, or they can be implemented as stand-alone programs with mentoring from community organizations, local government, and business leaders. The Violence Prevention Project aims to prevent violence by improving the conflict-resolutions skills of middle- and high-school students, improving their academic performance, and reducing their propensity toward violence and aggression.⁵⁶ The Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color has created a curriculum that

provides professional training for educators working with Black and Brown young men on leadership, family engagement, social and emotional support, and a range of other themes.⁵⁷ National models such as Cities United's Young Leader Fellowship, which has hosted several Youth Congress events for young people from across the country, can also help provide a long-term foundation for safe, healthy communities that reduce violence among Black and Brown men and boys.⁵⁸

Many cities have addressed youth development as a means to reduce violence. In Jackson County, Missouri, the Bridge Youth Violence Prevention Program provides life skills and leadership workshops designed to reduce young people's risk

factors for violence.⁵⁹ The Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center trains youth in collaborative, community-based aggression prevention programs as a way to prevent violence.⁶⁰ Assets Coming Together for Youth is a New York State Department of Health initiative designed around principles of positive youth development to make communities safer.⁶¹ Research shows that youth development programs help address violence. The Violence Prevention Project has shown reduced propensity for aggression and violence among participants.⁶² Some evidence suggests that building developmental assets among youth can reduce violence by providing young people with the relationships, opportunities, and skills they need for social integration.⁶³





INTEGRATE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMING INTO SUMMER SCHOOLS

Targeted programming in schools has been used to prevent violence by developing leadership skills, working on student communication and relationship building skills, and addressing the social settings in which violence occurs. Such programming should be adapted for use in summer schools. Every locality has a summer school structure, and integrating existing strategies into these settings can build skills and resilience for youth in order to help reduce violence. Strong models exist to support education professionals who work with youth in after-school and summer programs.⁶⁴

Across the country, cities have implemented violence prevention programs that offer mentorship, implement crisis response systems, and address group and gang violence. These include Charlottesville, Virginia; New Orleans, Louisiana; La Mesa, California; Hot Springs, Arkansas; and others detailed in a report from the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative. That report suggests that violence prevention programs in these schools have contributed to community violence reduction.⁶⁵





USE SAFE PASSAGE PROGRAMS DURING SUMMER SEASON

Safe Passage programs use school employees, social workers, and community volunteers to guide students home safely on their routes to and from school, in an effort to address gun violence and other public safety problems. Several adaptations of this approach could be useful during the summer months while school is out. Cities could consider implementing Safe Passage zones during summer school hours, and in the school districts with the highest rates of group and gang violence. Cities could also consider implementing safe passage hours and zones around locations where

summer camps or similar youth summer programming operate, especially near local parks and community centers. Finally, cities could use the Safe Havens or Safe Spot Program during the summer months, which provides an opportunity to partner with local businesses in creating safe passages, as outlined by the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.⁶⁶ The Safe Routes to School National Partnership provides practical instructions on how to implement a Safe Passage program.⁶⁷

Safe Passage programs have been implemented professionally

in Chicago and Seattle, where they provide paid employment for parents and community volunteers through the school system. A volunteer model has been implemented in Los Angeles and Philadelphia.⁶⁸ The Newark Public Safety Collaborative uses data and mapping to identify high-risk areas and employ street outreach workers from the Newark Community Street Team to provide safe routes home.⁶⁹ Multiple evaluations have found the Chicago model to be effective, where it is associated with a 19% reduction in crimes during the school year.⁷⁰



SUPPORT SUMMER CAMPS AND PARKS PROGRAMS

Summer camps and parks programs offer safe community spaces for youth to gather, often with guidance from community members and law enforcement, for recreation and education opportunities, during high-risk hours of the day, in high-risk areas of cities. Camps and programs can include community safety training and youth leadership development training. Overall, they should be designed to convey pro-peace, anti-violence norms.

In Los Angeles the mayor's office launched the Summer Night Lights and Parks After Dark programs in 2008 as part of its Gang Reduction and Youth Development initiative, making safety a core element. Law enforcement officers patrol the events, participate in activities with community members, and provide community safety training.⁷¹ New Orleans' Positive Action program offers a curriculum to build confidence, relationships, and leadership skills in a sleepaway summer camp setting.⁷² Research shows that summer camp programming can help reduce violence. In Los Angeles, serious and violent crimes decreased by 32% during the summer months between 2009 and 2013 in the areas where Summer Night Lights and Parks After Dark were implemented.⁷³ In New Orleans, a study suggests that Positive Action may be effective at reducing violent behavior.⁷⁴



INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY, EVALUATION, AND INNOVATIONS

As jurisdictions plan and implement community violence intervention strategies for summer, they should also consider how to incorporate these strategies sustainably into their year-round anti-violence planning. To that end, jurisdictions should build violence intervention infrastructure into local participatory planning and budgeting, ensuring long-term investment. This should include partnerships with training and technical assistance providers who can help practitioners implement strategies effectively and adjust implementation in real time, according to local needs. It should also include partnerships with local researchers who can evaluate and assess programs to understand what works.





Jurisdictions may also consider implementing a variety of innovative strategies that have recently been shown to increase protection for the high-risk population, with promising reductions in violence. While these take longer to implement and show efficacy, and may not show immediate impact on summer violence spikes, they could be an important addition to long-term community violence intervention ecosystems.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

Many anti-violence models make cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) an important part of their work, including some street outreach programs and HVIPs. In general, the CBT approach has been shown to reduce recidivism for violence and other serious crimes.⁷⁵ Several models have made CBT treatment a central part of their programming. READI Chicago⁷⁶ and Becoming a Man,⁷⁷ in Chicago, offer street outreach, employment referrals through reentry programs, and recreational activities to incentivize high-risk people to accept CBT treatment. Both programs have demonstrated strong violence reduction outcomes.

ADVANCE PEACE

An emerging innovation on street outreach programs is Advance Peace, a program in Richmond, California. The program employs street outreach workers to intervene in violence and enrolls high-risk participants in an 18-month course that includes mentoring, community support and services, peer fellowship, and modest stipends. The program has been associated with promising violence reductions locally.⁷⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION

Some jurisdictions have implemented environmental remediation programs that improve the physical landscape as part of a broader anti-violence reduction strategy. The most effective programs focus on specific, high-risk locations where violent crime is concentrated, such as a certain corner, liquor store, or housing development. Such programs often include installing community gardens in vacant lots or improving street lighting. Multiple studies have found that “cleaning-and-greening” efforts, such as Philadelphia’s program to restore blighted land in high-risk neighborhoods, have the potential to reduce homicides and shootings.⁷⁹

STATIONHOUSE ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS

A longer-term policy solution, stationhouse adjustment programs are a method for law enforcement agencies to address minor youth offenses. In place of criminal charges, youth receive immediate consequences, such as community service assignments or required restitution to the victim. This avoids criminalizing young people and helps them avoid the stigma of a formal record. In New Jersey, the attorney general has issued guidance encouraging agencies to implement a stationhouse adjustment program,⁸⁰ and many jurisdictions have put this approach into practice, with promising results.⁸¹



CONCLUSION

Addressing the increase in homicides and shootings, both during and beyond summer 2022, requires that jurisdictions devote resources to evidence-based community violence interventions that have been shown to improve public safety in the Black and Brown communities hardest hit by violence. This toolkit outlines a comprehensive set of strategies that should serve as a blueprint for jurisdictions seeking to bring together community-based organizations, public health offices, and law enforcement agencies in implementing strategies that work. With commitments from local leadership and support from the Biden-Harris administration to fund and strengthen community violence intervention infrastructure, communities around the country are well-positioned to build collaboration, reduce violence, and save lives.

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COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION COLLABORATIVE (CVIC)

The Community Violence Intervention Collaborative (CVIC) is an 18-month strategic initiative launched by the Biden-Harris administration that convenes mayors, grassroots community violence intervention (CVI) organizations, national funders, and federal agencies to strengthen and enhance the capacity of community-based violence intervention organizations to serve as a complimentary strategy to policing in reducing violence and creating safe communities.

This project seeks to build the capacity of Black and Brown led CVI organizations to reduce gun violence by:

- Providing training and technical assistance (TTA)
- Increasing access to funding
- Fostering collaboration in local & national advocacy

CVIC engages 64 grassroots CVI organizations, across 16 jurisdictions, in a comprehensive national training and technical assistance (TTA) program. CVIC's multi-pronged TTA program will strengthen the programmatic, organizational, administrative, and fiscal capacity of these organizations through peer learning, online clinics, hands-on training, and direct consultation.

CVIC Jurisdictions

Atlanta • Austin • Baltimore • Baton Rouge • Chicago • Detroit • King County • Los Angeles • Memphis • Miami-Dade • Minneapolis-St. Paul • Newark • Philadelphia • Rapid City • St. Louis • Washington DC

CVIC is anchored by Hyphen with four national TTA providers: the Community Based Public Safety Collective, the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention, the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, and Cities United.

HAVI

www.thehavi.org

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CITIES UNITED

www.citiesunited.org