

City of  
**Gainesville**



**Choose Peace**

**Gun Violence Must Cease**

Gun Violence Prevention Summit



**Post Event Report**

# Event Overview

Date: August 6 – 7, 2023

Venue: Hilton UF Conference Center

Ticket Price: Free

## Purpose

The purpose of this event was to focus attention on the complex issue of gun violence in our community, explore solutions through the lenses of community involvement and policymaking, and collaborate with partners. Movement in the right direction would facilitate communitywide development of enhanced communication strategies, improved leveraging of resources, and a push toward centralized data collection.

## Measures of Success

Measure	Actual
Attendance – 409 registered	360-range in attendance (two-day total)
Youth participation	75+ young people at Youth Town Hall
Collection of feedback – notecards	48 notecard suggestions
Post-event survey – hard copy and email	44 responses
Media coverage and news release	Local news reports on this event

## Attendance (estimated)

Number of Attendees	360
Number Pre-registered	409
Day One Attendance	250
Day Two Attendance	110

# Key Achievements

- This summit brought together stakeholders from all areas of community and government to engage in focused discussions around the topic of gun violence.
- The summit offered a Resource Fair, a robust folder of supplemental information materials, and a printed index of services and programs for children and families.
- Through the inclusion of a Youth Town Hall, the summit centered young voices and gathered information about gun violence in popular culture.
- This event brought together leaders and stakeholders to strategize new methods for centralizing community efforts to end gun violence, including the development of action items related to public safety, support services and policymaking.
- The summit was a call to action for the community and local leaders with the stated goal of serving as a launching pad for the development of a partnership anchored by a central clearinghouse, convener and collaborator to share data pertaining to gun violence.
- The summit closed with a recommendation to review the event at the next Joint Meeting of the Gainesville City Commission and Alachua County Commission, and to reconvene in January to examine collected data and share information.



# Contributing Funding Partners

In addition to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the City received financial support from the following partners:

- The Children's Trust of Alachua County
- Alachua County Public Schools
- Alachua County Sheriff's Office
- Coca Cola Florida



# Speakers:

## Day One

Desmon Duncan-Walker

District I Commissioner and Mayor Pro-Tem, City of Gainesville

Ed Book

District II Commissioner, City of Gainesville

Tony Jones

Former Chief, Gainesville Police Department

Pastor Kenyarda Feathers

Williams Temple Church of God in Christ

Greg Bradley

President, Mirror Image Leadership Academy

Lauryn Simmons

Junior Class Vice President, Gainesville High School

Zouzouko Doualehi

Compliance Manager, City of Gainesville Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Heather Jones

Chief Assistant State Attorney, Office of the State Attorney, Eighth Judicial Circuit

Alexandra Martinez

Director, Alachua County Crisis Center

Adrian Price

Social Acceptance Advocate

Dr. Derek Hicks

Associate Professor of Religion and Culture, Wake Forest University

Dr. Micah Johnson

Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of South Florida

Marland Perry

Youth Steering Committee, One Nation One Project

Rei Hines  
Manhood Foundation Youth Program

Jacoby Jenkins  
Manhood Foundation Youth Program

Jacquan Daniels  
Manhood Foundation Youth Program

Jordan Carter  
Santa Fe College

XIIIITH Disciple  
musical performance

## **Day Two**

Harvey L. Ward Jr.  
Mayor, City of Gainesville

Cynthia Chestnut  
At-large Commissioner, City of Gainesville

Anna Prizzia  
Chair, Alachua County Board of County Commissioners

Chief Lonnie Scott  
Gainesville Police Department

Rev. Dr. Marie Herring  
Dayspring Missionary Baptist Church

Brandy Stone  
Community Health Director, City of Gainesville

Dr. Julia Varnes  
UF College of Public Health and Health Professions

Ariel Cathcart  
Everytown for Gun Safety

Bishop Christopher Stokes  
Willie Mae Stokes Community Center

Jeffrey Weisberg  
River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding

Cynthia W. Curry  
City Manager, City of Gainesville

## Venue

The UF Hilton Conference Center has over 25,000 square feet of meeting space, including a ballroom, flexible meeting rooms, and a pre-function space. The summit's opening and closing sessions, panel discussions, the Youth Town Hall, the seated meals and the tabletop exercise were held in the Century Ballroom.

A crisis counselor was set up in the Magnolia event room. Staff worked behind the scenes in the Live Oak event room. "Community Day" workshops and "Policy Day" breakouts were held in the following event rooms: Hickory, Azalea, Hawthorne and Dogwood.



# Resource Fair

The Resource Fair in the Dogwood event room hosted tables set up and staffed by the following organizations:

- Children’s Trust of Alachua County
- IGB Education
- SF Achieve Program - Santa Fe College
- Grace to Overcome Inc.
- SPARC352
- Moms Demand Action
- Alachua County Library District
- Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention
- Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network
- Episcopal Children’s Services
- Early Learning Coalition Alachua County
- Nathan Ross, Inc.
- CareerSource NCFL
- Simply Healthcare Plan
- Florida Dept. of Probation and Parole





# Registration

The pre-registration system implemented on both days allowed the Communications Department to print nametags, sleeve them in plastic, and store them in alphabetical order in advance of the event.

## Pre-registration System

To gauge interest, select a properly sized venue, and provide adequate seating, meals, programs and nametags, and other necessary supplies, the summit operated on a pre-registration system. This relied on event promotion through social media, traditional news media and news releases to generate broad community interest. These methods were implemented for publicizing the Day One slate of events, which together comprised “Community Day.”

Day Two, labeled “Policy Day” was billed as a workshop for elected officials and professionals in the field. The public was welcome to attend and observe these discussions between stakeholders, but the goal was to enhance local government preparedness and heighten future collaborative strategies. For this day’s events, the planning committee sent personalized targeted email messaging to specific individuals and select groups of stakeholders.

## Check-in Process

Staff at the registration desk used laptops to process attendee arrivals.

Staff also answered questions about the slate of activities, sent participants to the proper event rooms, and directed media to the Public Information Officer.

Registered participants on both days received a lanyard with nametag, a folder packed with supplementary materials, an event program, a t-shirt branded with the event slogan “Choose Peace: Gun Violence Must Cease,” and a meal card.



Participants who arrived without registration also were admitted and, due to the anticipated no-show rate, received the full event package (including meal).

# Program

The Gainesville City Commission chose to hold this summit as part of their ongoing efforts to confront the rising tide of gun violence. Titled, “Choose Peace: Gun Violence Must Cease,” the event was supported by the full city commission, but arose from the staunch advocacy of Mayor Harvey L. Ward Jr. and District I Commissioner (Mayor Pro-Tem) Desmon Duncan-Walker.

## “Community Day” Schedule

“Community Day,” included workshops on violence intervention, social media and mental health, and youth and hip hop culture. The day’s culminating event, a Youth Town Hall sponsored by the Children’s Trust of Alachua County, focused on the role of drill music, a popular rap genre, and gave attendees an opportunity to share their stories.



# City of Gainesville

## RESOLUTION NO. 2023-658

**A Resolution of the City of Gainesville, Florida expressing the belief that gun violence is a public health crisis in the City of Gainesville; and further expressing the City Commission's commitment to reducing the prevalence of gun violence in our city and protecting citizens from gun violence.**

**Whereas**, gun violence is a significant problem in the United States that affects people in all stages of life and is linked to many chronic diseases and other physical, reproductive, and mental health consequences;

**Whereas**, the American Public Health Association recognizes a comprehensive public health approach to addressing this growing crisis is necessary;

**Whereas**, gun violence is the leading cause of premature death in the United States, with more than 100 Americans killed each day with a gun, and nearly 49,000 fatalities from firearms in 2021;

**Whereas**, firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States, according to data by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**Whereas**, gun violence is the number one crime among minority communities in the U.S. for the last 10 years;

**Whereas**, communities of color are statistically prone to higher concentration of crimes involving guns – for both the perpetrators and the victims;

**Whereas**, in 2022 there were 170 shots fired in the City of Gainesville, as reported by the Gainesville Police Department;

**Whereas**, in 2022 there were 47 individuals shot or injured by gunfire within the City of Gainesville, as reported by the Gainesville Police Department;

**Whereas**, in 2022 there were 10 homicides in the City of Gainesville, as reported by the Gainesville Police Department;

**Whereas**, in the first three months of 2023 there were 4 homicides in the City of Gainesville, as reported by the Gainesville Police Department;

**Whereas**, interaction with the criminal justice system has been shown to be a cause and consequence of neighborhood-level poverty, disease, social stigma, and crumbling infrastructure;

**Whereas**, those exposed to gun violence are more likely to engage in future gun violence behaviors, and firearm violence is highly correlated with behavioral health conditions, including drug and alcohol abuse and mental illness;

**Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Commission of the City of Gainesville, Florida:**

That the City of Gainesville declare that gun violence is a public health crisis affecting our entire city.

That the City of Gainesville seek to promote the reduction of gun violence through all legislative policies enacted by the City Commission; is committed to addressing and reducing gun violence and how it affects economic development, youth development, and public safety; and will work to solidify alliances and partnerships with partners that address gun violence and will encourage other entities to recognize gun violence as a public health crisis.

That the City of Gainesville establish working relationships with institutional partners including other local municipalities, health care providers, law enforcement agencies, community partners, and community members to establish an evidence-based public health response to address the underlying social, economic, and systemic factors that promote gun violence.

This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

**Passed and adopted** this 20th day of July, 2023.



## RESOLUTION 23-XX

**A resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Alachua County, Florida, declaring that gun violence is a public health crisis in Alachua County and further expressing the county's commitment to reducing the prevalence of and protecting residents from gun violence**

**Whereas**, gun violence is a significant problem in the United States that affects people in all stages of life and is linked to many chronic diseases and other physical, reproductive, and mental health consequences; and

**Whereas**, the American Public Health Association encourages a comprehensive public health approach to addressing this growing crisis; and

**Whereas**, gun violence is the leading cause of premature death in the United States, with more than 100 Americans killed each day by a gun, and nearly 49,000 fatalities from firearms in 2021; and

**Whereas**, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States; and

**Whereas**, gun violence is the number one crime among minority communities in the U.S. for the last 10 years; and

**Whereas**, interaction with the criminal justice system has been shown to be a cause and consequence of neighborhood-level poverty, disease, social stigma, and crumbling infrastructure; and

**Whereas**, those exposed to gun violence are more likely to engage in future gun violence behaviors, and firearm violence is highly correlated with behavioral health conditions, including drug and alcohol abuse and mental illness; and

**Whereas**, communities of color are statistically prone to higher concentration of crimes involving guns for both perpetrators and the victims; and

**Whereas**, in 2022 as reported by the Gainesville Police Department, there were 170 shots fired in the City of Gainesville; and

**Whereas**, according to the Florida Health Charts, Alachua County recorded 14 deaths by firearms discharge in 2020, up from 5 recorded deaths in 2019; and

**Whereas**, in 2021 there were 25 Alachua County deaths by firearms discharge, the highest number ever recorded; and

**Whereas**, in the first three months of 2023 the Gainesville Police Department recorded 4 homicides within the City of Gainesville, and

**Whereas**, on July 20, 2023, the City of Gainesville by way of Resolution declared gun violence a public health crisis.

**Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners of Alachua County, Florida:**

That gun violence is declared a public health crisis affecting our entire county. Alachua County will seek to promote the reduction of gun violence through legislative policies enacted by the Commission; is committed to addressing and reducing gun violence and how it affects economic development, youth development, and public safety; and will work to solidify alliances and partnerships with others that address gun violence and will encourage other entities to recognize gun violence as a public health crisis.

**Be it further resolved:**

That the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners will establish working relationships with institutional partners including other local municipalities, health care providers, law enforcement agencies, community partners, and residents to establish an evidence-based public health response to address the underlying social, economic, and systemic factors that promote gun violence.

# Invocation

## Welcome and Reason for Convening

## Opening Remarks and Recognition of Elected Officials

## Dinner / Panel Discussion: The Role of Community in Addressing Gun Violence

- Greg Bradley, Founder and President of Mirror Image Leadership Academy (moderator)
- Lauryn Simmons, Junior Class Vice President, Gainesville High School
- Zouzouko Doualehi, Compliance Manager, City of Gainesville Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Heather Jones, Chief Assistant State Attorney, Office of the State Attorney, Eighth Judicial Circuit
- Alexandra Martinez, Director of the Alachua County Crisis Center
- Adrian Price, Social Acceptance Advocate

## Educational Breakout Sessions

### List of Educational Breakout Sessions

- Below the Water Level
- Youth and Hip-Hop Culture
- Violence Interruption and Prevention Strategies
- Social and Emotional Well-Being and the Risk for Violence



## List of Speakers for Youth Town Hall

- Commissioner Desmon Duncan-Walker (moderator)
- Marland Perry, Youth Steering Committee, One Nation One Project
- Rei Hines, Manhood Foundation Youth Program
- Jacoby Jenkins, Manhood Foundation Youth Program
- Jacquan Daniels, Manhood Foundation Youth Program
- Jordan Carter, Santa Fe College

## Kickback / Reception

- XIIITH Disciple, musical performance

## “Policy Day” Schedule

“Policy Day” consisted of discussions focused around governance and practices. These included elected officials, educators and school administrators, business and civic leaders, and representatives from public health, local government, public safety and the judicial system.



# Invocation

## Welcome and Reason for Convening

## Opening Remarks and Recognition of Elected Officials

## Overview and Introduction to the Social-Ecological Model Sector Breakouts: A Public Health Perspective for Gun Violence Prevention

- Public Health, Healthcare and Social Services
- Elected Officials / Local Government
- Public Safety / Judicial System Stakeholders
- Educators and School Administrators
- Business and Civic Community Members

## Lunch / Keynote Speaker: Ariel Cathcart, Everytown for Gun Safety

**Tabletop Exercise:** This was an innovative approach to policymaking led by Gainesville Community Health Director Brandy Stone, MPH, CPH. Repurposing the traditional tabletop exercise—a foundational element of public safety preparedness—Stone guided participants through a series of increasingly complex health and social challenges similar to those that can underlie gun violence in a community.

## Next Steps / Where do we go from here?

- Bishop Christopher Stokes, Willie Mae Stokes Community Center
- Jeffrey Weisberg, River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding
- Cynthia W. Curry, City Manager, City of Gainesville, FL

*Special thank you to Yvette Carter (City of Gainesville Director of Government Affairs and Community Relations) and Jennifer Smart (City of Gainesville Communications Director) and the Summit Planning Committee.*

# Next Steps: Short- and Long-Term Strategy

This summit is part of a larger effort to better connect community, government, law enforcement, schools, faith-based organizations, nonprofits, and service providers. The goal is to expand collaboration and pool resources to magnify the potential impact of our combined efforts.

## Proposals Under Consideration\*

### **Gun Violence Action Plan and Task Force Discussion**

#### **Lead Motion from Gainesville City Commission (Feb. 2, 2023):**

1. Declare gun violence as a public health crisis in the City of Gainesville and that we draft a resolution to that effect;
2. Authorize the Mayor to draft a letter to the County Commission asking them to join us and declare a gun violence crisis in Alachua County and draft a resolution as well, and that they partner with us in this effort to prevent and stem gun violence;
3. We advance and lay a foundation for convening a Gun Violence Task Force; and
4. Ask staff to bring back ways that they can expand or tailor programs that we already do in the city to specifically address gun violence.

#### **Follow-up Motion from City of Gainesville City Commission (June 22, 2023):**

City Commission agenda a conversation about partnership opportunities and a task force discussion with the County, and that direct staff to bring back options for a format for a task force with minimal impact to staff.

In response to the above motions, the City Manager's Office has developed three options for consideration by the City Commission.

1. **The Gainesville-Alachua County Gun Violence Prevention Task Force (Pending discussion with the County Commission)**

The Gainesville-Alachua County Gun Violence Prevention Task Force would consist of a collaboration of City and County departments along with law enforcement, the public health community, educational institutions and community-based service providers. A lead entity



responsible for task force administration would need to be identified. That entity could potentially be the city or county. If the city is placed in that lead entity role, the Office of the City Manager – Government Affairs and Community Relations would be the administrative arm of the task force.

The task force would address the issue as a multidimensional problem with a primary focus on decreasing gun violence among youth. The American Academy of Pediatrics and American Public Health Association recognize gun violence as a public health crisis; as such, this task force model would focus on prevention and intervention to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors.

The task force membership, jointly appointed by City and County Commissioners, would develop an action plan focused on policies, programs and initiatives involving critical areas of concern.

- Decreasing gun violence with an emphasis on youth
- Working with all relevant stakeholders to create strategies to reduce the number of illegal firearms in the City of Gainesville and Alachua County
- Working with marginalized populations to provide education on gun violence, issues and solutions
- Advocating for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color
- Supporting local, state and federal programs that advance anti-gun violence initiatives

The task force would convene on a regular schedule to establish momentum, and would present periodic reports and with recommendations at scheduled Joint City/County Commission meetings. These meetings are held quarterly with a few exceptions. The next meeting is scheduled for August 28th with the County hosting this meeting. The task force tenure would be set for a specific time frame to be determined.

**Funding Consideration:**

- Redirect an undetermined amount of ARPA funding previously assigned to public safety/violence intervention programs to support a budget for this initiative.

**2. The Gainesville-Alachua County Gun Violence Prevention Task Force – Alternate Version**

This option would differ from Option 1 in that the task force membership would not be appointed by the City and County Commissions but would be selected by staff from stakeholder organizations to form a working group tasked with providing recommendations.

### **3. The Gainesville-Alachua County Gun Violence Prevention Alliance (Convener, Collaborator, Clearinghouse)**

What could potentially be referred to as the Gainesville-Alachua County Gun Violence Research Alliance (The Alliance) would consist of a consortium of local partners (membership criteria to be determined), through a memorandum of understanding, working to develop strategies aimed at stemming the proliferation of gun violence. Santa Fe College (SF) would serve as the lead organization of this Alliance. SF is interested if there is consensus in them serving in this role.

As a public institution of higher education, that has an Institute of Public Safety (IPS) and a community-based mission, SF is strategically equipped to serve in this role to apply subject matter experts and academic resources to build an effective anti-gun violence community model for research, reporting and fostering a cross-collaborative information clearinghouse for data gathering. With limited funding support from the City of Gainesville and potentially other community partners to supplement existing staff, SF would expand its operations to establish a communication network with regional stakeholders, create a template for regular reporting of data, program milestones, and serve as a clearinghouse for services, programs, and initiatives related to gun violence prevention.

The first action step would include the development of a memorandum of understanding between primary stakeholders identifying roles and responsibilities, membership criteria, funding, time frame for operation, etc.

The Alliance would convene all members on a regular schedule to be determined that would establish and foster momentum, as well as, sustain interest and accountability amongst members with the goal of increased communication and impact on reducing violence in our community through the varied strategies employed by members of the Alliance.

In summary, the Alliance would work to underpin and guide the research, community outreach, and reporting of information connected to the region's gun violence problem and its implications across our community.

#### **Funding Consideration:**

- Redirect an undetermined amount of ARPA funding previously assigned to violence intervention programs to Santa Fe College to support a budget for this proposed initiative to be provided by SF.

A recommendation discussed would be the formation of a Youth Task Force. The most effective approach to developing this may be reached as an alliance between Alachua County Public Schools, the Children's Trust of Alachua County along with one or more community based organizations, and the City of Gainesville (through the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Department). The foundational ideas that were brainstormed have included:

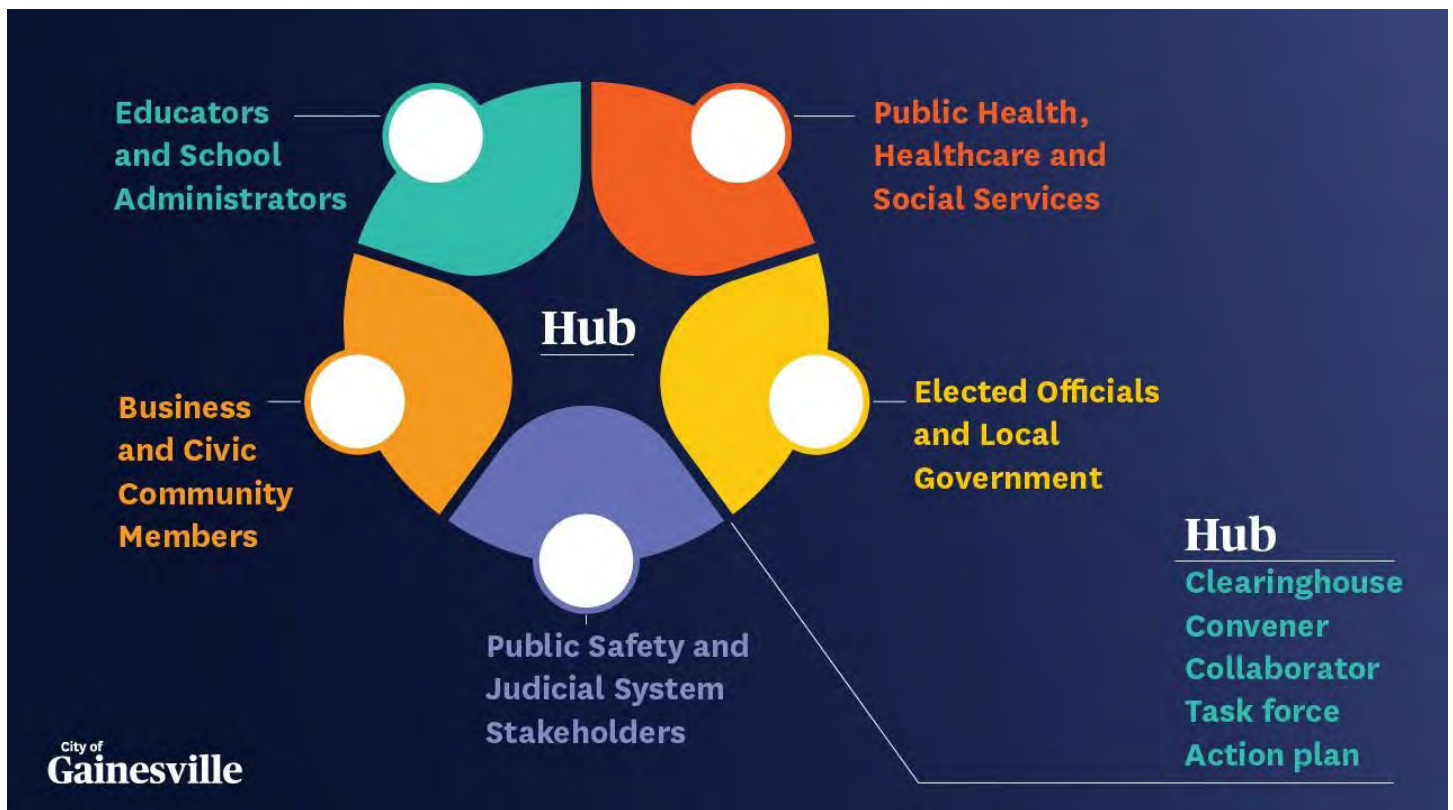
- Provide access to information and perspectives that youth may be more likely to share

with peers than adult professionals;

- Provide a participatory role for youth in the formation of plans for intervention, recreation and support services; and
- Allow youth to build community outreach and leadership skills.

\*A joint City/County meeting is scheduled for Aug. 28, 2023 at 3 p.m. in the Alachua County Administration Building. Proposals for mobilizing efforts will be discussed.

## Clearinghouse, Convener and Collaborator



## Faith-Based Input: Part of the Solution

Among those working to plan, prepare and promote the summit, were a number of community faith leaders who are guiding efforts to reduce violence in Gainesville and Alachua County. This event, along with the broader development of long-term solutions, draws on their expertise and leadership.



# A Strong Effort to Connect and Collaborate

## Feedback

Feedback from summit participants was collected through notecards distributed as part of the “Next Steps / Where do we go from here?” closing session of the program.

The notecards were used by participants to answer the question, “What is mine to do?” As a method of collecting material for future gun violence prevention work, the thoughts and proposals gathered has been transcribed and appears as follows:

1. What is mine to do? We are launching open community lives at our GNV Bridget Community Center to give youth and families space to be and get support. We’re also willing to hose of the ongoing gun violence conversations.
2. What is mine to do? Research how to better serve underserved communities with: clean water, better housing, better schools, good healthcare, good jobs, affordable housing. I will: assist underserved families with resources; find basic needs that will help people to move forward and complete their obstacles to become self-sufficient.
3. What is mine to do? Support families and community. Have groups that go into the community and develop relationships which will provide support to families through food banks, mental health counseling, community center that teaches trades for kids.
4. What is mine to do? In general, promote and advocate for staffing for law enforcement. Be available for professional education on suicide/violence risk assessment for professionals. Continue to advocate for gun safety training.
5. What is mine to do? Stay informed; learn more; seek out opportunities; community outreach; raise awareness; practice nonviolent communication; continue pressing state and local officials; coalition building; (hub) virtual newsletter and updates.
6. What is mine to do? To be present in the movement forward and assist any way possible to improve safety in our community.
7. What is mine to do? Assist in helping create the March for the 21st Peace March with our community.
8. What is mine to do? Support funding efforts at the Board of County Commissioners, Children’s Trust of Alachua County, and Library to reduce address community root cause to community violence.
9. What is mine to do? Collaborate and partner with government leaders, community leaders and youth leaders to determine how to help find solutions.

10. What is mine to do? Bring those most directly impacted/involved in gun violence to the table. Make every interaction with people count. Be a responsible role model for everyone I encounter. Speak openly, honestly and responsibly about our community needs. This discussion needs to be taken into the community at times when those communities can attend.
11. What is mine to do? Consider myself a part of the community, and take responsibility to work/help a meaningful solution. I don't have all the answers but I am a member of the community with ideas. A task force is helpful in this ongoing work.
12. What is mine to do? To ensure our Student Services and System of Care Departments are collaborating with City/County. Hold community meeting within the neighborhood where the gun violence occurs (church, apartment complexes).
13. What is mine to do? As a holistic health facilitator, advocate wellbeing. Bring a greater awareness of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and the ACE study. Committed to helping others pursue (H.O.P.E.) in wellness as an active life goal. Strong, safe and equipped youth and parent lifted initiatives. Pamela Hawkins – Grace to Overcome, Inc., nonprofit
14. What is mine to do? Be a part of the solution by staying involved. Don't wait for others to handle the problem. Do my part. Meet people where they are. Talk to the young people in my circle of influence and really find out what the real needs are. Stop sitting in our individual silos and look to the good of the order, not the good of self. Work to increase voter participation.
15. What is mine to do? Continue to collaborate with other community partners and organizations to seek solutions to address gun violence.
16. What is mine to do? Learn more about parental involvement opportunities to get parents more involved. Share resources across city and county. Strategize resource hubs. Effective structure: strategize key players to be champions of gun violence as a public health crisis to continue conversations and keep this as a forefront issue.
17. What is mine to do? Increase community outreach efforts to provide access to preventative services. Early preventative counseling services to improve communication between children and parents. Temporary/voluntary shelter for youth. CDS Family and Behavioral Health.
18. What is mine to do? Change city ordinances that will help make Gainesville safer.
19. What is mine to do? Make it easier to build modest housing in the City of Gainesville.
20. What is mine to do? Inspire university and high school students to keep educating people on the resource availability, and attempt to reduce stigmatizations regarding resource usage
21. What is mine to do? Show up as a volunteer. Speak on panels as a youth, community leader and someone who lost family members to gun violence. Organize events (community relations and outreach). Contribute as an artist (singer, poet).

- a. Suggestions for future events: Choose a time more appropriate for community members with jobs and youths who experience the problem.
  - b. Suggestions for future events: Choose a more intimate approach for communities like Duval to be a part of this so they can have actual conversations with government officials as people.
22. What is mine to do? Increase community awareness of the importance of holding our legislators accountable (vote!) for bad gun bills. Increase awareness of safe gun storage in the community. Secure sustainable funding for community violence interrupters – “Meet them where they are.”
  23. What is mine to do? Statistical empirical data to show trends in violent crime – locations/dates/time. Structure a multifaceted task force.
  24. What is mine to do? Anything in public school policy/funding to help – example: Career and Technical Education programs. Advocate for processes and procedures within schools – example: system of care.
  25. What is mine to do? Help build a gun violence task force. Help victims join the discussion. Help develop a tool for law enforcement use that’s similar to Lethality Assessment Protocol questionnaire that’s used on domestic violence calls.
  26. What is mine to do? Please help me to provide Transforming Grief programs wherever it is possible.
  27. What is mine to do? Facilitate conversation in a deep and meaningful way regarding our pain and ways we can support others. Out of our pain, with caring for others, we can give people a hand as we have all experienced challenges.
  28. What is mine to do? Serve on the task force as a resource and a facilitator.
  29. What is mine to do? Set up listening sessions with young people. Work with housing projects to set up afterschool programs. Work with Santa Fe College to lead a task force to continue the community dialogue.
  30. What is mine to do? Share my story as a gun violence survivor and share the resources available via Everytown Survivor Network and Moms Demand Action. Provide and share collaborative ideas.
  31. What is mine to do? Lethal means safety assessments, education in the community, increase partnerships.
  32. What is mine to do? Expand partnerships that participate in the public health system to address this problem. Include in the community health improvement plan a goal, objectives and strategies.
  33. What is mine to do? Contribute to the momentum and commitment behind solving gun violence issues. Take a role in programs within my area of responsibility. Also, hold

policymakers accountable for focusing on the problem. Resources are needed, including money and personnel.

34. What is mine to do? Raise awareness. I share my story about the gun violence death of my daughter and possible solutions that might have prevented it. Plus possible solutions for every kind of gun violence.

35. What is mine to do? Ensure that we (GPD) are communicating effectively with our other partners (law enforcement) to ensure that we can jointly identify at-risk offenders/victims and intervene with efficiency.

36. What is mine to do? To ensure the Police Advisory Council meets in different neighborhoods every other month to hear citizen issues, identify agencies for solutions, and provide contacts for each citizen for follow-up.

37. What is mine to do? To continue to be a beacon of light to help our juveniles who continue to perpetuate the criminal justice system. I will continue to love on our youth where they will understand their self-worth.

38. What is mine to do? Assist in identifying risk factors for potential gun violence and coordinate task force resources and response.

39. What is mine to do? Find more resources. Share more resources. Empower one another. Help one another. Provide marketing help.

a. What is the best structure to hold this? Mental Health Restoration Services; Community Intervention Training; Trauma Informed Specialists; Inter-faith Task Force; Inter-cultural Task Force; all groups working together.

40. What is mine to do? The School Board has facilities, contacts with youth and families, programs.

a. Who can hold this structure? Children's Trust with representatives from each city, county, schools, etc.

41. What is mine to do? Serve as a youth minister, community organizer and event organizer. Faith is the best structure. People have no foundation of integrity. The structure is that people need a why to choose peace. People fall into wickedness then there's no responsibility, urgency, general will or care to choose peace. These need to be a foundation and a reason to hold integrity. We need leaders in the community to lead by example.

42. What is mine to do? It is my responsibility to provide effectual, compassionate mental health services to the community of Gainesville. As a licensed therapist, I will continue training on evidence-based practices. I will continue to offer community resources to clients and patients. I have been personally impacted by gun violence, losing family members as well as the father of my daughter. My commitment to the community involves educating the Black families about sustainable tools for coping with trauma and other symptoms.

43. What is mine to do? Support community organizations with city resources and programs;

Santa Fe model.

44. What is mine to do? Help facilitate the establishment of coordinated community response to address gun violence.
45. What is mine to do? Love as God does!
46. What is mine to do? Support current youth councils to ensure they are heard and are present to share their thoughts and opinions.
47. What is mine to do? Make future decisions through the violence prevention lens in an effort to reduce gun violence.

## Feedback Form

Summit participants also received a post-event survey. This feedback form was provided as hard copy in the event folders distributed to attendees and sent via email in the days following.

- Of those who received the form, 44 sent in responses.
- Sample questions include: What should be the top 3 priorities to prevent gun violence?
- The full survey with all responses is at the back of this report.

## Community Response

Local news media covered the summit and its immediate aftermath, with a majority of those interviewed expressing interest in the conversation and support for the development of renewed gun violence prevention efforts across Gainesville and Alachua County.

- Commissioner Ken Cornell said he was very impressed by the commitment of the City of Gainesville to the topic of gun violence, as shown by the recent Gun Violence Summit. He said, “This is absolutely one of our community’s priorities, and I’m not sure how our budget really reflects that.” He made a motion to direct staff to prepare a budget analysis of what programs are included in the FY24 budget to address, directly or indirectly, the Gun Violence Public Health Emergency resolution that they passed at their August 1 meeting. (Alachua Chronicle, August 9, 2023)
- “I’m here to hear from the youth about their perspective on what’s happening with guns and the violence they are experiencing so that we as adults can better understand and resolve some of these issues,” said Dr. Bridget Lee, the director of Multicultural Affairs at



Southeastern University. (WUFT, August 6, 2023)

- Zahra Abyazenjad, whose son was shot and killed in 2019, said she's been protesting for years for a summit like this to take place. "I am so happy they're acknowledging the problem, the crisis that I've been protesting for many months," said Abyazenjad. "I think there are drugs, alcohol, prostitution involved in the city. Hopefully they find the solution they're looking for and can start the changes." (WCJB-TV, August 7, 2023)

## **Social Media and Constant Contact**

The City of Gainesville used Facebook and Instagram to share information about the Gun Violence Prevention Summit. On August 6-8, the period that included posts about the summit activities, the city's Facebook reach was 8,009 and Instagram reach was 1,875.

The city also sent out a news release at the conclusion of the summit to share an update about progress made. That release was emailed to 5,900 subscribed accounts with an open rate of 42%.

## **City of Gainesville, Gun Violence Summit Online Resources**

The city's website has a dedicated section for material related to the issue of gun violence and to the Gun Violence Prevention Summit, "Choose Peace: Gun Violence Must Cease."

The materials are located at [www.gainesvillefl.gov/2023Summit](http://www.gainesvillefl.gov/2023Summit) and include the following digital resources:

- Program Booklet
- Gainesville Gun Violence Statistics: July 1, 2021 – July 1, 2023
- National Gun Violence Statistics: 2022 – July 31, 2023
- Listing of Prevention, Intervention and Support Services in the Gun Violence Prevention Space
- American Progress Fact Sheet: Gun Violence Disproportionately and Overwhelmingly Hurts Communities of Color
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health: New Report Highlights U.S. 2021 Gun-

Related Deaths: For Second Straight Year, U.S. Firearm Fatalities Reached Record Highs

- US News and World Report: Reducing the Gun Violence Threat to Kids and Teens
- NPR Morning Edition: One way to prevent gun violence? Treat it as a public health issue
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health: New Report Offers Policy Recommendations to Address Alcohol Use as Risk Factor for Gun Violence
- The Free Press: What to do About Guns
- Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation: “True Equity Means Everyone’s Life Has Equal Value”: A Conversation with Shani Buggs
- Huffington Post: How to Actually Help After Yet Another Mass Shooting
- News Releases
  - City Commission leads area’s first Gun Violence Prevention Summit
  - Registration opens for inaugural Gun Violence Prevention Summit
  - City of Gainesville seeks solutions to local gun violence

## Supplemental Material

Supplemental material at the back of this report:

- Event Program
- Event Folder – Supplemental Materials
- Recorded Minutes – “Community Day” (Sunday, August 6)
- Panel Scribe Notes – “Community Day” (Sunday, August 6)
- Workshop Scribe Notes – “Community Day” (Sunday, August 6)
- Recorded Minutes – “Policy Day” (Monday, August 7)
- Social-Ecological Model Presentation – “Policy Day” (Monday, August 7)
- Sector Breakout Scribe Notes – “Policy Day” (Monday, August 7)
- Tabletop Exercise and Worksheet – “Policy Day” (Monday, August 7)
- Post-event Survey Results



**Choose Peace**

**Gun Violence Must Cease**

Gun Violence Prevention Summit

Sunday, Aug. 6 - Monday Aug. 7, 2023  
Hilton University of Florida Conference Center



City of  
**Gainesville**



## About Gun Violence Prevention in Gainesville

Along with many cities across the United States, Gainesville is grappling with a rising tide of gun violence. Statistics show 77 percent of total crime on the national level involves a gun. As our community historically has been on the leading edge of social movements and current events, we have an important role to play in reversing this trend.

Gainesville has launched a number of initiatives to tackle gun violence. The Gainesville Police Department's One Community approach works to build trust between officers and the neighborhoods they serve. One Nation One Project GNV aims to protect and engage young people through exposure to the arts. Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs offers Teen Midnight Basketball, Heatwave, and other athletic programs aimed at providing high-quality activities for children and young adults.

The City of Gainesville's Gun Violence Prevention Summit will take place August 6 – 7 at the Hilton University of Florida Conference Center. It will bring together stakeholders, partners and nationally recognized experts for sessions focused on community listening, problem solving and policymaking.





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## Letter from Mayor Harvey Ward Jr.

When I was sworn in as mayor on Jan. 5, 2023, I was granted a total of 1,463 days in office to make this community better. On that morning, I announced my most important policy goals. Reducing gun-related crime is at the top of that list. Our community feels a sense of urgency. Every day counts in the effort to move forward.

James Baldwin wrote, “Neither love nor terror makes one blind. Indifference makes one blind.” I promise you that while I am mayor, we will not be indifferent to gun violence.

This is one of the primary issues that we need to shine a light on as a community. I say “shine a light on” because the idea that we are going to solve it alone is not realistic. Gun violence is a national crisis. But we have to do the things we can, that we can do together, to minimize the impact in our community.

I am thankful to all who engage in this conversation. I appreciate everyone who has a hand in helping reverse the rising tide of gun violence in our city, in our state, and across the nation. It is certainly an issue that needs more direct action, and I am glad we are at a point where we can dive more deeply into that work.

The work of safety depends on many partners. We are committed to working not only with our own community members, local leaders and police, but with law enforcement and officials from around our region to begin searching for answers to this profoundly complex issue.

## Letter from Mayor Pro-Tempore Desmon Duncan-Walker

I think we can have a very candid, organic conversation about ways that we can move forward, addressing gun violence, centering community. Because what we understand is the police department has their strategy, and they will continue. But we understand clearly, and the statistics have shown, that fighting gun violence takes more than police.

There is probably not a person in this space who does not understand the fact that our approach to gun violence is going to require all hands on deck. I'm very excited to hear from our partners and neighbors about how best to engage our community in a way that will make a difference.

The solution must involve everyone. What I realize is that for every idea I have, there are hundreds of ideas the community has. Those are a valuable and essential part of our road map. As I declared in my Feb. 2, 2023 motion, approved unanimously by the City Commission, gun violence is a crisis in the City of Gainesville. It is a public health crisis. The steps we take in addressing the many root causes of that crisis is what this conversation is about.



## What are we doing about gun violence in our community?

### **Gun Violence Prevention Summit**

The City of Gainesville is responding to rising gun violence by convening a two-day summit, bringing together stakeholders, community members and nationally recognized experts. With nine people killed by guns in Gainesville in 2022, and five shooting deaths already reported in 2023, the search for solutions is infused with a sense of urgency.

The summit, scheduled for Aug. 6–7, 2023, includes sessions dedicated to policy analysis, violence prevention and group discussion. Anchored by Mayor Harvey Ward and Mayor Pro-Tem, District 1 Commissioner Desmon Duncan-Walker, the event is structured around a two-day framework to examine questions and inspire answers.

*“I have only become more determined to focus on how we can use opportunity, education and the arts to reverse this trend in our community. As a product of Gainesville, the growing occurrence of gun violence, especially the rise in incidents involving youth, is particularly disturbing to me. Addressing gun violence is a community-wide responsibility. I am confident this convening will be the beginning of a movement within our great city.”*

**—Mayor Pro-Tempore Desmon Duncan-Walker**



## One Nation One Project



One Nation One Project (ONOP) is a national initiative with Gainesville and eight other U.S. cities. The goal of ONOP is to use the arts and culture to promote community healing and well-being. This

project unites artists, local governments and community health providers. In Jan. 2022, the City Commission recognized youth gun violence as a local issue. This issue has worsened in the aftermath of the pandemic. For this reason, the City Commission decided to apply to take part in One Nation One Project and put two percent of the city's American Rescue Plan Act funds (\$648,172) towards art and culture activities to address youth violence.

Gainesville has now joined One Nation One Project. This project is part of a three-phase process. It begins with engaging the community, and collaborating on art and cultural programming.

The city has created a youth steering committee to engage local affected youth. The city has also engaged community members in the field of health, youth services and the arts.

### **Phase One:**

- Call for projects launched March 2023 (66 applications received)
- 20 small-scale arts & wellness projects were selected and funded up to \$5,000
- Engage community members to come to these events to share their ideas on how Phase Two of the project will look

### **Phase Two:**

- Projects will be larger in nature in partnership with other community institutions
- Projects are led by the information gathered in Phase One
- Applications for Phase Two will be open in Fall 2023
- The awarded projects will run until Summer 2024

### **Phase Three:**

- A large coordinated community event to showcase the work done in Phase One and Two
- Hosted in Summer 2024

## Gun Violence Prevention Summit



What are we doing?



## **Gun Violence Prevention Initiative**

The Gainesville Police Department's Neighborhood Policing Initiative, launched in 2020, trains officers and neighbors together in the areas of community problem-solving and policing.

The department actively analyzes data on calls-for-service related to homicides and shots fired, looking for patterns and other key performance indicators.

They also measure performance by speaking with neighbors who live in areas most impacted by violence.

## **Violence Prevention ARPA Funding**

1. Forensic equipment purchased includes equipment to process scenes after violent crime occurs in a neighborhood. GPD has purchased lighting, screens, ladders and other items to ensure the proper processing of a scene. Currently on order is a BrassTrax machine that compares shell casings in multiple crime scenes. GPD also has an additional forensic truck on order to provide more response to violent crimes scenes.
2. Gun buy-backs focus on providing gift cards in exchange for firearms. In collaboration with the State Attorney's Office, GPD has been able to collect more than 100 firearms during these events.
3. Meridian Behavioral Healthcare sponsorship for the Stop the Violence Rally provides needed supplies for community events to prevent violence in our community.



*“The Gainesville Police Department and I would like to encourage every member of the Gainesville community to personally take an active role in protecting our most precious resource, our children and young adults. Every life is priceless and should be treated that way. We, the family of Gainesville, Florida must guard against the acceptance of gun violence as a natural phenomenon. Know where your children are, know what they are doing and know who they are socializing with. Protect our future and teach our youth the value of human life, conflict resolution and compassion for others. End violence and live!”*

**—Gainesville Police  
Chief Lonnie Scott**





## **Gun Violence Awareness**

In recognition of Gun Violence Awareness day on June 2, 2023, the City of Gainesville joined a number of community groups in a demonstration of solidarity. Along with Moms Demand Action, M.A.M.A.'s Club and Save Our Children, city leaders and staff held an awareness gathering at the Martin Luther King Jr. Multipurpose Center.

Mayor Pro-Tem, District 1 Commissioner Desmon Duncan-Walker read a proclamation declaring Gun Violence Awareness Day in the City of Gainesville. Commissioner Duncan-Walker, who introduced the Feb. 2, 2023 resolution declaring gun violence as a public health crisis in our community, has been a strong and persistent voice in this effort.

Immediately following the ceremony, the center opened for Teen Midnight Basketball, an event series hosted by the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Department that provides a safe place for young people to engage in a fun, nighttime activity.

## Is it working?

### **Gun Buy-Back Events Take Weapons Off the Streets**

The Gainesville Police Department held three gun buy-back events in Fiscal Year 2022 to take weapons off the streets. GPD offered gift cards up to \$300 in exchange for assault rifles, pistols, long guns and revolvers. Police record the manufacturer, model, caliber and serial number of each surrendered firearm, and the collected weapons are sawed, crushed and destroyed. State Attorney Brian Kramer has also traditionally authorized amnesty from prosecution for any person participating in the event. Chief Investigator Darry Lloyd of the state attorney's office has said the events promote conversations with the community to make Gainesville safer.

*“This is a national problem with very real local consequences, and Gainesville leaders are committed to tackling this challenge locally with responsibility, compassion and transparency. Crimes connected to gun violence, including burglaries and possession of illegal firearms, are a present and growing problem in every district.”*

**—Mayor Harvey Ward Jr.**



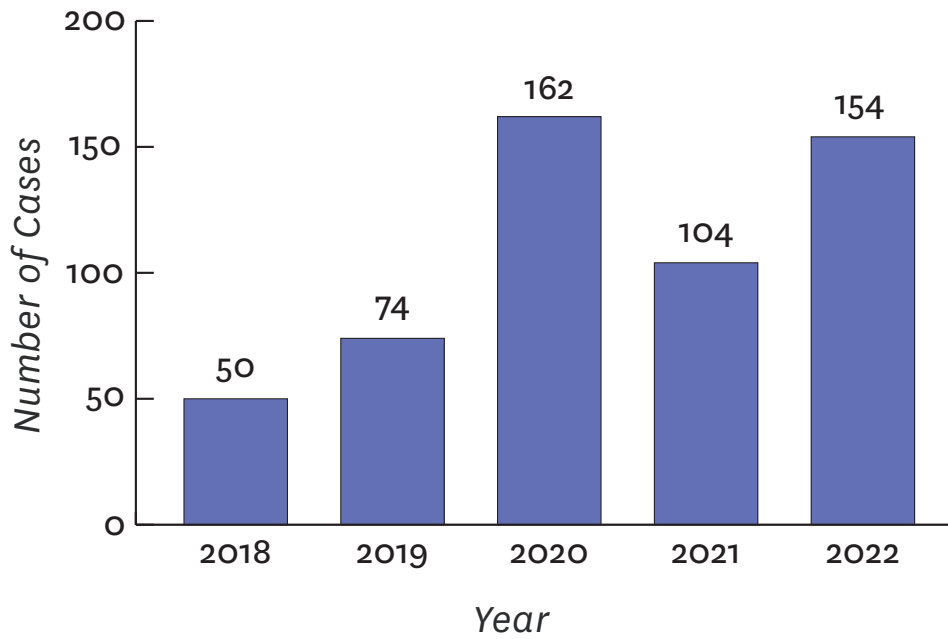
Is it working?

## Gainesville Sees No Drop in Gun Violence

Statistics show gun violence remains a problem for our community. From 2018 to 2022, there were 544 reported shootings in Gainesville, according to records from GPD. It represents an average of approximately nine shootings per month over the four-year period.

In these shootings, 169 people were injured.

### Gainesville Police Department Cases Involving Shootings





## What communities are successfully combating gun violence?

### *Gun Violence is Dropping in Oakland, California*

Last year in Oakland, California, the police department reported that shootings had declined by 23 percent. Officers had saturated the communities of east and west Oakland, both areas where shootings and homicides had been on the rise. The department relied on mandatory overtime and pulling officers from other assignments to focus on gang suppression and gun violence.

But the big change occurred when Police Chief LeRonne Armstrong called an all-hands meeting to deploy “all available resources throughout the city in a coordinated effort to enforce crimes associated with gun violence.”

During the 30-day crime plan, homicides and shootings fell by 47 percent and 33 percent respectively. Officers seized 80 guns and made 120 arrests of “very violent individuals” during the initial operation.

Collaboration with the community was also crucial. Oakland’s Operation Ceasefire program appears to be working. Through this initiative, residents identified as responsible for violent crime are called in by community leaders, clergy and law enforcement to work within the system and accept help with rehabilitation.



What Communities are Successful?



## ***Miami-Dade is Leading the Way in Florida***

Crime statistics for the first quarter of 2023 show the City of Miami is moving in the right direction. In those three months, murders in Miami declined by 36 percent. In 2022, the city had 11 homicides during that time period. This year, there were seven. Shooting incidents are down almost 60 percent compared to the same time last year. The number of people shot is down by almost 70 percent from year to year.

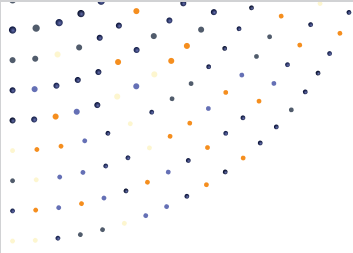
### ***So what is Miami doing right?***

Miami-Dade Police have developed a new gun violence program that puts more officers on the street, confiscates more weapons, and adds resources to investigate and prosecute homicides. The police department has good partners. Their work with the prosecutor's office and other law enforcement agencies allows for a strong and effective communications network that is doing more to keep the area safe.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is also performing well. The program brings together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve in an effort to reduce violent crime and gun violence. The core principles of PSN include: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities; supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place; setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities; and measuring the results.

These efforts are bolstered by additional new policies. Some initiatives rely on prevention, intervention, suppression and re-entry services to reduce gang activity. Others work to provide substance abuse and mental health services for those at risk in the community.





## What are they doing?

- Using federal COVID-relief money to hire more police officers
- Reopening support programs and systems that were closed during the pandemic
- Investing ARPA money in violence intervention
- Using general fund money in programs for violence intervention
- Working with community groups to focus on those most at risk
- Creating systems to identify, engage and support those in need of intervention.



# One City's Approach New York City:

What are the Other Cities Doing?



New York City recognizes gun violence as a public health crisis that emerges from a combination of causes. The Blueprint to End Gun Violence, created as Mayor Eric Adams first launched his election campaign, places highest priority on public safety and justice. Determined to remove guns from the city's streets, Mayor Adams decided the best approach is to block all the factors that contribute to the problem. This means renewing the social bonds and systems weakened during the pandemic; improving the quality of support from government and schools; and examining the laws in place at all levels—possibly revising the way those laws are interpreted and enforced.

As stated in the introduction to the blueprint, “Truly ending this crisis will require both intervention and prevention. Over the longer term, it will require a transformation of our city: growing economic opportunities, improving the education of every child, providing more access to mental health support, and so much more. Yet immediately, as this blueprint lays out, we must address the crisis of guns on our streets.”

# The Blueprint to End Gun Violence

What are the Other Cities Doing?

## ***Included in the Blueprint for Policing***

- Enhance existing public safety units with new neighborhood safety teams
- Put more officers on patrol
- Empower violence interrupters
- Use new technology to identify suspects

## ***Included in the Blueprint for Support Systems***

- Launch an unprecedented summer youth employment program
- Expand programs like the fair futures initiative
- Reallocate mental health resources where they will matter most
- Expand hospital-based violence intervention programs

## ***Included in the Blueprint for Partnering***

- Identify a dedicated anti-gun violence liaison in every city agency
- Create a quality of life task force
- Create a crime-stoppers partnership with local business leaders
- Launch sermons for safety with faith leaders



Gun Violence Prevention Summit

## What can we do to improve this in our community?

### ***Gainesville City Commission Declares Gun Violence Crisis; Reaffirms Need for Partnerships***

The City of Gainesville is sending a message to youth and families across the community: Gun violence is a public health issue. In Feb. 2023, the Gainesville City Commission approved a motion made by Commissioner Desmon Duncan-Walker to declare a gun violence crisis and to chart pathways forward. The methods would rely heavily on community involvement, public safety research, improving access to opportunity and housing, and fine-tuning or developing programs aimed at preventing and stemming gun crimes. Collecting data to chart the success of local efforts online would be the final piece of the proposal.

Commissioner Duncan-Walker based this motion on research from other municipalities, studying their successful approaches in efforts to reach young people. “Because this problem is so old, and so huge, things that worked before, they found they worked for a short amount of time and then the problem just resurges,” Duncan-Walker said. She revealed plans to engage in conversations with young people, including those who are previously justice-involved. The hope is to gain a better understanding of the experiences that have the strongest impact and greatest potential to empower communities.

In approving the motion, the City Commission reaffirmed its commitment to find solutions. Some support is already in place. In Jan. 2022, City Commissioners dedicated two percent of Gainesville’s American Rescue Plan Act funds (\$648,172) to address this problem through the arts, and the city was awarded a place with eight other U.S. communities in the first-ever national One Nation One Project (ONOP) initiative. ONOP is a groundbreaking initiative to curb gun violence, particularly in underserved communities, through wellness, intervention and exposure to the arts. This project is ongoing, with student events coordinated through the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Department.

## City Commissioners

- *Mayor Harvey Ward*
- *Mayor Pro-Tem, Desmon Duncan-Walker*
- *Commissioner At-large, Reina Saco*
- *Commissioner At-large, Cynthia Chestnut*
- *District II Commissioner, Ed Book*
- *District III Commissioner, Casey Willits*
- *District IV Commissioner, Bryan Eastman*

What can we do?

*“As we move forward with this planning process, we invite participation from our friends and collaborators. This is an important step in working together to find solutions to the problem of gun violence. My office is honored to partner with all who will take a seat at the table.”*

**—Gainesville City Manager Cynthia W. Curry**

## Committee Members

- Tametria Campbell, Department of Community Relations
- Yvette Carter, Director of Government Affairs and Community Relations
- LaShundra Coley'Hale, Department of Community Relations
- Cynthia W. Curry, Gainesville City Manager
- Pastor Gerard Duncan, Prayers by Faith Outreach Ministries
- Chief Tony Jones (former), Gainesville Police Department
- Cherie Kelly, PRCA Youth Services Manager
- Chief Inspector Jaime Kurnick, Gainesville Police Department
- Chief Investigator Darry Lloyd, Office of Eighth Circuit State Attorney
- Captain Paris Owens, Gainesville Police Department
- Amanda Powers, Department of Communications
- Chief Lonnie Scott, Gainesville Police Department
- Jennifer Smart, Director of Communications
- Brandy Stone, Community Health Director



City of  
**Gainesville**

[www.GainesvilleFL.gov](http://www.GainesvilleFL.gov)

Special thanks to the City of Gainesville Communications Department and the Department of Government Affairs and Community Relations



# Choose Peace

## Gun Violence Must Cease

Gun Violence Prevention Summit

# City of Gainesville

## Summit reference materials

- Rules of decorum
- Gun Violence: From Community Issue to Community Solutions (remarks from *Dec. 2021 Town Hall*)
- Gun violence statistics from the Gainesville Police Department
- National gun violence statistics
- Summaries of current Florida gun legislation
- List of prevention, intervention and support services
- Fact sheet from the *Center for American Progress: Gun Violence Disproportionately and Overwhelmingly Hurts Communities of Color*
- Report from *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health: New Report Highlights U.S. 2021 Gun-Related Deaths: For Second Straight Year, U.S. Firearm Fatalities Reached Record Highs*
- Reducing the Gun Violence Threat to Kids and Teens by David Levine (*U.S. News & World Report*)
- One way to prevent gun violence? Treat it as a public health issue by Rachel Treisman (*NPR's Morning Edition*)
- Report from *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health: New Report Offers Policy Recommendations to Address Alcohol Use as Risk Factor for Gun Violence*
- What To Do About Guns by Bari Weiss (*The Free Press*)
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- How To Actually Help After Yet Another Mass Shooting by Jillian Wilson (*Huffington Post*)

## Special thanks to our contributing funding partners:



CHILDREN'S TRUST  
OF ALACHUA COUNTY



**Your feedback is important to us! Scan the QR code with your phone to take the summit survey online.**



# Rules of Decorum

The City of Gainesville recognizes the importance of protecting your right to speak. The city will not prohibit public criticism of its commission, policies, procedures, programs, services, or staff.

## Decorum:

- Order must be preserved.
- No person shall, by speech or otherwise, delay or interrupt this meeting.
- Members of the public are not permitted to possess props, signs, posters, or other similar material in the meeting room.
- The presiding officer may enforce the rules of decorum.

In the event the presiding officer orders the removal of an individual or individuals, the presiding officer will take the following steps:

1. Warn the individual that their conduct is disrupting the meeting; if it continues they will be removed from the meeting.
2. If the conduct continues, revoke the individual's right to attend or speak at the meeting and direct the sergeant-at-arms or dedicated staff to remove the individual from the room.

## Disruptive Behavior:

- Using obscene, profane, or vulgar language
- Refusal to leave podium, microphone or relinquish the floor when requested
- Outburst of approval or disapproval
- Jeers or heckling which interrupt a speaker or staff
- Conduct creating danger to another's property or person
- Provoking or engaging in a fight
- Violent or tumultuous conduct threatening the safety of another



## Gun Violence: From Community Issue to Community Solutions

In recent years, the City of Gainesville has confronted rising gun violence with a combination of programs and initiatives. Listening to the community is one of the most valuable approaches. Neighbors raise concerns. They contribute new ideas. This is an important part of the solution.

On December 8, 2021, District I Commissioner Desmon Duncan-Walker held a telephone town hall on the subject of gun violence in our community. More than 1,000 neighbors dialed in.

These remarks come from that discussion.

“What do we do? **How do we respond, building those relationships, meeting people where they are?** There’s a lot of finger pointing. But I promise you, being a person from these communities, it’s not as cut and dried as it appears. When you go into the community and see some of the generational cycles of poverty, some of the generational cycles of incarceration. One of the things you try to figure out is what can we infuse in the neighborhoods? That’s bringing some of the resources to the corner. That’s getting out of our cars and going to approach the young man or young woman who may be participating in some of these activities.”  
~John Alexander, *Intervention Specialist*

### **How do we respond, building those relationships, meeting people where they are?**

“To reduce gun violence proactively, it’s best to educate and prevent access to weapons to reduce the chance of weapons being stolen. **We need to prevent unauthorized access to weapons** and make it harder to steal weapons. I suggest three methods for this: mandating information about gun safety and safe gun storage to be provided whenever a weapon is sold in the county; incentivizing biometric lock boxes; and educating kids about gun safety and the consequences of gun crimes.” ~Rob, *via Zoom*

“So many vehicles are burglarized in Gainesville, and the guns are right there in the car. The doors are unlocked, the guns are in the car. You generally find a young person comes in and takes advantage of that situation. **We can stop a lot of this by locking our cars.** Don’t give an opportunity to arm a teenager with a gun, or anyone else.” ~GPD Chief Tony Jones (*former*)

### **Our children are begging us for alternatives.**

“Afterschool programs are essential in helping us work on this problem. I have been speaking with a number of children and youth over the last several months. And youth programs in churches, grocery stores, or on the streets—one of the things they shared with me is they want something to do. They need something to do. **Our children are begging us for the alternatives. It’s our job to provide them.**”  
~District I Commissioner Desmon Duncan-Walker

### **We need to prevent unauthorized access to weapons.**

“I’ve been doing this in law enforcement for 35 years. Born and raised in this community. Seen a lot of people come and go. Kids don’t understand the consequences of what they’re doing in my opinion. They watch these video games, they pick up a gun. **When you shoot someone they’re not going to get up.**”

*~Undersheriff Joel DeCoursey, Alachua County Sheriff’s Office*

“It’s hard to inspire young people now by talking. You have to walk in front of them. They have to see it. It has to be tangible, they have to be able to put their hands on it.... I always go back to the quote I heard Chief Jones say a long time ago.

### ***We cannot arrest our way out of a problem.***

We’re all going to say the same thing. But I am encouraged, because I know that we can communicate our way out of this.” *~Caleb Young, Intervention Specialist*

“We agree that the **career and technical education opportunities and options for our friends and neighbors are very, very important.** We are expanding our workforce programs and offering them in different geographical areas of the City, County, and Bradford County, which is in our service district as well. Access has got to be convenient. The most vulnerable members of our community need for us to be the closest to them. So it’s just a matter of availing themselves of that opportunity in the most friendly and convenient fashion possible.” *~Dr. Lisa Armour, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Santa Fe College*

***Career and technical education opportunities and options for our friends and neighbors are very, very important. Access has got to be convenient. The most vulnerable members of our community need for us to be the closest to them.***

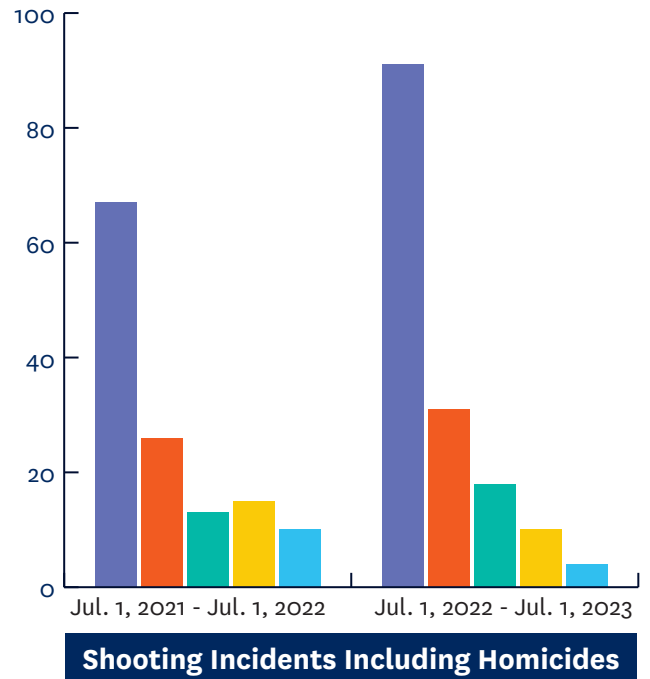
“Education is key. Education is the means of obtaining the goals they want.... I pose a question. Is the community embracing the educational system? Are we talking about paying the teachers more or just putting more resources toward schools? Because this is the point of attack, this is where we have to meet these kids. That’s where it lies.” *~Adrian Price, Social Acceptance Advocate*

***Education is key. Education is the means of obtaining the goals they want....***

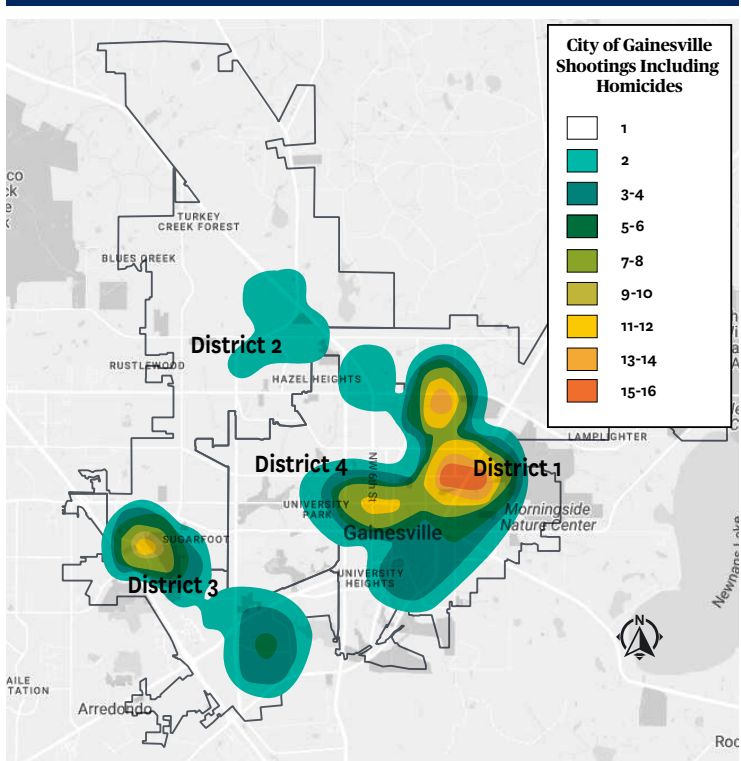
# Shooting Incidents in the City of Gainesville

July 1, 2021 – July 1, 2022 and July 1, 2022 – July 1, 2023

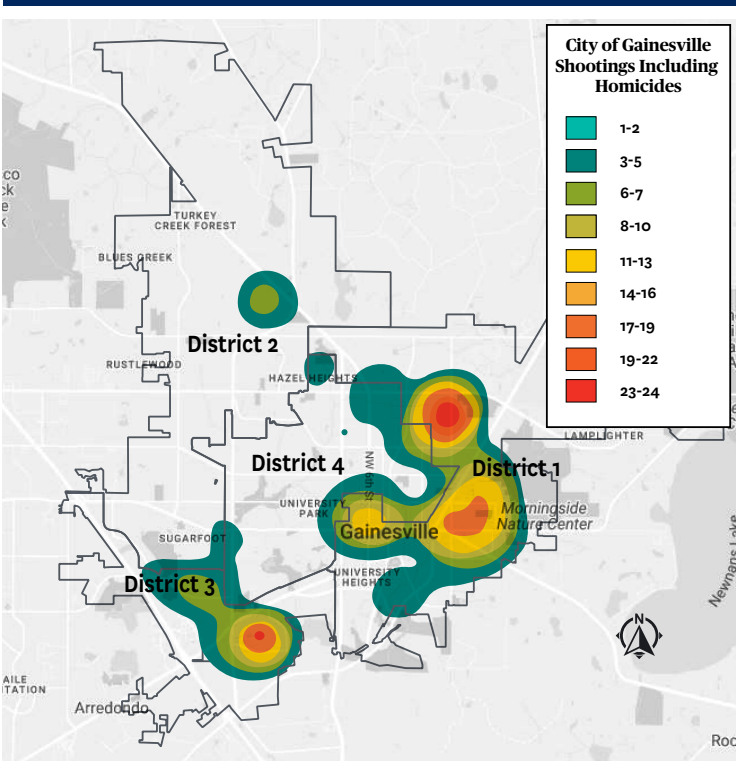
Shooting Incidents Including Homicides		
District	2021-2022	2022-2023
District I	67	91
District II	26	31
District III	13	18
District IV	15	10
On District Lines	10	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>154</b>



Shooting Incidents Including Homicides July 1, 2021 – July 1, 2022



Shooting Incidents Including Homicides July 1, 2022 – July 1, 2023



### Shooting Incidents Excluding Homicides

<b>Commission District</b>	<b># of Incidents July 1, 2021 – July 1, 2022</b>	<b># of Incidents July 1, 2022 – July 1, 2023</b>
District I	60	87
District II	26	31
District III	14	15
District IV	13	10
On District Lines	10	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>147</b>

### Homicides by Shooting

<b>Commission District</b>	<b>No. of Homicides July 1, 2021 – July 1, 2022</b>	<b>No. of Homicides July 1, 2022 – July 1, 2023</b>
District I	7	4
District II	0	0
District III	0	3
District IV	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>

## Gun Violence in the United States 2023 (to date)

Gun Violence Injuries and Deaths (Jan. 1-July 31, 2023)	
Injuries <sup>1</sup>	22,168
Homicide, murder, unintentional, defensive gun use <sup>1</sup>	11,133
Suicide <sup>3</sup>	14,058
<b>Total deaths <sup>4</sup></b>	<b>22,168</b>

Number of Children, age 0-11 (Jan. 1-July 31, 2023)	
Killed <sup>1</sup>	170
Injured <sup>1</sup>	415

Number of Teens, age 12-17 (Jan. 1-July 31, 2023)	
Killed <sup>1</sup>	878
Injured <sup>1</sup>	2,447

## Gun Violence in the United States 2022

Gun Violence Injuries and Deaths (Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2022)	
Injuries <sup>1</sup>	38,541
Homicide, murder, unintentional, defensive gun use <sup>1</sup>	20,269
Suicide <sup>3</sup>	24,090
<b>Total deaths <sup>4</sup></b>	<b>44,359</b>

Number of Children, age 0-11 (Jan. 1-Dec 31, 2022)	
Killed <sup>1</sup>	314
Injured <sup>1</sup>	681

Number of Teens, age 12-17 (Jan. 1-Dec 31, 2022)	
Killed <sup>1</sup>	1,372
Injured <sup>1</sup>	3,804

**Source:** Gun Violence Archive ([www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org))

Gun violence and crime incidents are collected/validated from 7,500 sources daily – Incident Reports and their source data are found at the [gunviolencearchive.org](http://gunviolencearchive.org) website. **Methodology and definitions** are available at <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/methodology>.

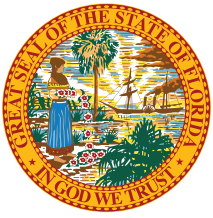
### Footnotes

1. Number of source verified deaths and injuries

3. Calculation based on CDC Suicide Data

4. Actual total of all non-suicide deaths plus daily calculated suicide deaths

All numbers are subject to change or incidents recategorized as new evidence is established and verified.



# Summaries of Current Florida Gun Legislation

**Article 1, § 8(a) of the Florida Constitution provides:** “[t]he right of the people to keep and bear arms in defense of themselves and of the lawful authority of the state shall not be infringed, except that the manner of bearing arms may be regulated by law.” Additionally, the State of Florida Statutes Chapter 790 contains many other laws pertaining to guns.

**Age/Access:** Minors under the age of 21 are prohibited from purchasing firearms; however, this does not apply to the purchase of a rifle or shotgun by a law enforcement officer, correctional officer or service member.

Persons between the ages of 18 to 21 may possess firearms.

Those under 18 may not possess a firearm except:

1. The firearm is unloaded in the minor’s home
2. They are engaged in a lawful hunting activity and at least age 16 or, if under age 16, are supervised by an adult
3. They are engaged in a lawful marksmanship competition or practice or other lawful recreational shooting activity, and are at least age 16 or, if under age 16, are supervised by an adult who is acting with the consent of the minor’s parent or guardian
4. They are transporting an unloaded firearm directly to or from one of the aforementioned events.

**Ammunition:** Possession of ammunition is prohibited by the same persons who are directly prohibited by Florida law from possessing firearms, although the background check process required by Florida law is not similarly prevented from obtaining ammunition (federal ammo purchaser prohibitions also apply). The manufacture, sale or delivery of any armor-piercing bullet or exploding bullet, or “dragon’s breath” shotgun shell, bolo shell or flechette shell are also prohibited.

**Background Checks and Procedures:** While a background check is still required to purchase a gun from a licensed dealer, it is not required for private transactions or exchanges of weapons. The Florida Constitution (Art. VIII, § 5(b)) also allows each county to require a criminal background check in connection with the sale of any firearm in that county. Alachua County, for example, requires a criminal background check on potential purchases with exceptions.

The state prohibits a licensed dealer from selling or delivering a firearm from their inventory at their licensed premises to anyone except a licensed dealer, importer, or manufacturer, without certain requirements.

**Concealed Carry:** Recently signed legislation (HB 543) removes the requirement for having a concealed firearm license to carry a concealed firearm in Florida, although you must be eligible for a Florida Concealed Weapon or Firearm License based on the criteria in Section 790.06, F.S. Having a form of identification still is required, and the penalty for not having one is a \$25 fine. Non-residents may carry concealed weapons or firearms provided they are 21 or older, and not prevented by Florida law to possess them for any other reason.

**Crimes:** FDLE is required to review available records in order to prevent people convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence offenses, who are prohibited by federal law from possessing firearms, from passing the background check required before purchase of a firearm at a licensed firearms dealer. The state agency is also required to review available records in order to prevent people who have had an adjudication of guilt withheld or imposition of sentence suspended on any misdemeanor crime of domestic violence from passing the background check, unless 3 years have elapsed since probation or any other conditions set by the court have been fulfilled or expunction has occurred.

**Domestic Violence & (Cyber) Stalking:** The purchase or possession of a firearm is prohibited by any person who is subject to a final court order that is currently in force and effect.

**Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO):** Law enforcement agencies are authorized to petition a court for a civil order preventing a person from accessing firearms for up to one year. Law enforcement officers or agencies may file ERPO petitions when they have information that a person “poses a significant danger of causing personal injury to himself or herself or others by having a firearm or any ammunition in their custody or control or by purchasing, possessing, or receiving a firearm or any ammunition.”

**Gun Dealers:** Upon the retail sale or other transfer of any firearm, the transferor must deliver a written warning to the transferee. In addition, any retail or wholesale store, shop, or sales outlet which sells firearms to conspicuously post a certain warning at each purchase counter. Records of handgun sales must be made available for inspection by any law enforcement agency during sellers’ normal business hours. “Secondhand dealers” and pawnbrokers are also required to create a record of the acquisition of any firearm including detailed description of the firearm and buyer’s identity. Other recordkeeping and registry exceptions of privately owned firearms and their owners also exist.

**Gun Trafficking:** Penalties exist if any of the following occur: any person who knowingly acquires a firearm intended for the use of a person who is prohibited by state or federal law from possessing or receiving a firearm; any potential gun buyer or transferee who willfully and knowingly provides false information or false or fraudulent identification to complete the transaction; or if any licensed gun dealer, importer, or manufacturer fails to conduct the federally required background check on a gun purchaser.

**Industry Immunity:** No legal action can occur against a firearms or ammunition manufacturer, distributor or dealer, or firearms trade association, on behalf of Florida or its agencies. Two exceptions include breach of a contract or warranty and injuries resulting from the malfunction of a firearm or ammunition due to a defect in design or manufacture. Shooting and training ranges are also immune from lawsuits if the range owner or operator has made a good faith effort to comply with the appropriate environmental management practices.

**Locations:** Persons are not authorized to possess guns on them at certain locations such as law enforcement stations, jails, courthouses, polling places, airport terminals, and pharmacies (with exceptions); they also may not introduce firearms into, and send firearms from, any hospital providing mental health services, or transmit firearms to any patient of such a hospital outside the grounds of the hospital.

**Mental Health Reporting:** FDLE is required to compile and maintain an automated database of persons who are prohibited from purchasing a firearm based on court records of adjudications of mental defectiveness or commitments to mental institutions. The state agency is also authorized, but not required, to disclose the collected data to agencies of the federal government and other states for use “exclusively” in determining the lawfulness of a firearm sale or transfer. Law enforcement officers are additionally authorized to seize firearms and ammunition from people being taken into custody for an involuntary mental health examination.

**Preemption:** Statute states that Florida occupies “the whole field” of firearms regulation. Furthermore, the text of the law subjects local legislators to personal liability and removal from office for their votes in that field. Exceptions include zoning ordinances (but not restricting sale, transfer, manufacture, etc.), law enforcement, employee duties, court, and FL FWCC. In addition, under a state of emergency, local authorities can prohibit sale, display, and possession of firearms in a public place.

**Prohibited Guns/Gun Equipment:** It is unlawful for any person to own or to have in their care, custody, possession, or control any short-barreled rifle, short-barreled shotgun, or machine gun which is, or may readily be made, operable; this does not apply to those firearms considered antique. Also prohibited are the possession, sale, importation, transfer, and distribution, of bump-fire stocks, defined to mean “a conversion kit, a tool, an accessory, or a device used to alter the rate of fire of a firearm to mimic automatic weapon fire or which is used to increase the rate of fire to a faster rate than is possible for a person to fire such semiautomatic firearm unassisted by a kit, a tool, an accessory, or a device.”

**Prohibitions on Possession:** Persons in the state of Florida are prohibited from owning or possessing a firearm if they:

- Have been convicted of a felony, or is under 24 years old and have been convicted of an act that would be a felony if committed by an adult;
- Have been issued a final injunction that is currently in force and effect, restraining that person from committing acts of domestic violence;
- Are a “violent career criminal,” as Florida law defines that term;
- Have been “adjudicated mentally defective or who have been committed to a mental institution,” as those terms are defined in Fla. Stat. § 790.065(2); or
- Are the subject of a risk protection order that is currently in force and prohibits that person from possessing, acquiring, or attempting to acquire any firearms while the order is in effect

**Vehicles:** Persons 18 years of age or older are able to possess a concealed firearm within the interior of a private vehicle, without a license, if the firearm or other weapon is securely encased or is otherwise not readily accessible for immediate use; they may also lawfully carry a long gun anywhere in a private vehicle. School districts may adopt written and published policies that prohibit the possession of concealed firearms within the interior of a private vehicle for the purposes of student and campus parking privileges. No public or private employer may prohibit a customer, employee, or invitee from possessing a legally owned firearm or ammunition locked inside or locked to a private motor vehicle in a parking lot. Employers may not inquire, take any action against, or base employment on such as well.

**Waiting Periods:** The Florida Constitution has a mandatory waiting period (with some exceptions) which is either 3 days, excluding weekends and holidays, or the time it takes to complete the required criminal background check—whichever occurs later (Art. I, § 8(b)). The provision is directed at gun shows and other events open to the public outside of retail firearms establishments. Counties are also allowed to enact ordinances requiring criminal history records checks and three to five-day waiting periods in connection with the sale of any firearm occurring on property to which the public has the right of access (Art. VIII, § 5(b)). For example, Alachua County’s local waiting period consists of a mandatory five days.



## **Listing of Prevention, Intervention and Support Services in the Gun Violence Prevention Space**

**Services and programs that have an impact in reducing violence:**

### **Alachua County**

**352-374-5204, [www.alachuacounty.us](http://www.alachuacounty.us)**

- On Feb. 27, 2018, the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution calling for statewide legislation to allow counties to pass gun control measures. The county has a number of programs to support the community and prevent violence.
- Community Agency Partnership Program supports area non-profit organizations that reduce the impact of poverty among Alachua County residents. **352-264-6707**
- CHOICES Grant Award Program assists uninsured residents by providing grant funding annually to health care providers in Alachua County to support the wellbeing of eligible county residents. **352-264-6707**
- Community Self-Sufficiency Program (CSSP) is part of the Community Stabilization Program; it provides resources to help families break the cycle of poverty and improve the quality of life. **352-264-6745**
- Community Sustainability Program (CSP) is the second part of the Community Stabilization Program; it identifies at risk communities and provides assistance for becoming independent and sustainable. **352-264-6745**
- Alachua County Crisis Center offers crisis and suicide intervention phone counseling to all residents of Alachua County. **352-264-6789**
- Foster Grandparent Program provides opportunities for low-income persons aged 55 or over to provide supportive person-to-person services in health, education, welfare or related settings to help alleviate the physical, mental or emotional problems of children having special or exceptional needs. **352-264-6730**
- Alachua County Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center provides services to survivors of interpersonal violence, sexual violence and personal injury crimes. **352-264-6760 (24-hours-a-day)**

### **Alachua County Crime Stoppers**

**352-372-STOP, [www.stopcrime.tv](http://www.stopcrime.tv)**

- Collects information on unsolved crimes, location or involvement of suspects, felonious criminal activity, and other information which may result in arrest.
- Information is received at the 24-hour anonymous tips line 352-372-7867 and is forwarded to the investigating law enforcement agency for follow-up.
- Monetary awards are given to information leading to arrest.



### **Alachua County Health Department**

**352-334-7900, [alachua.floridahealth.gov](http://alachua.floridahealth.gov)**

- Coordinates and provides individual and community health and wellness, with medical and mental health services for adults, children and families.

### **Alachua County Public Schools**

**352-955-7300, [sbac.edu](http://sbac.edu)**

- Through an ongoing partnership with local law enforcement agencies, Alachua County Public Schools has school resource officers or deputies assigned to every school.
- All public school employees and students are trained to be prepared for an active threat on campus.
- Alachua County Public Schools has partnered with the I Love U Guys Foundation in order to provide safety, security and structure for any emergency.
- School Board of Alachua County has approved a resolution and produced messaging to raise awareness about the importance of safely storing guns.

### **Alachua County Sheriff's Office**

**352-367-4000, [www.acso.us](http://www.acso.us)**

- Investigates crime, apprehends suspects and provides public safety.
- Deputies and K-9 teams work with schools to prevent firearms on premises.
- Alachua County Sheriff's Office (ASO) works with Alachua County Crime Stoppers at 352-373-STOP to take guns off the street.
- ASO provides victim advocacy services to ensure that victims of crime are treated with fairness, respect and dignity by providing assistance and services in an effort to lessen the impact of crime.

### **Black-on-Black Crime Task Force**

- Provides mentorship and education to approximately 100 youths per year as part of its crime prevention programs.
- Works to connect parents and youth with support resources.

### **CDS Family & Behavioral Health Services**

**352-244-0628, [www.cdsfl.org](http://www.cdsfl.org)**

- Interface Youth Program provides short-term shelter for young people who are temporarily homeless, have run way (or threatened to run away), are skipping school, or are having trouble following rules.
- Family Action Counseling is a 12-week program for families with children who are having behavioral issues.
- SNAP (Stop Now and Plan) is an evidence-based, cognitive-behavioral 13-week program to help children learn to manage their emotions and manage behavior.
- Independent Living Program is a case management and support program for youth aging out of foster care.
- Prevention Services include drug prevention and life skills programs in elementary and middle schools.
- Safe Place is a national network of businesses and other community establishments where youth in crisis can get immediate help; CDS sponsors and operates the Safe Place program.

### **Children's Trust of Alachua County**

**352-374-1830, [www.childrenstrustofalachua.us](http://www.childrenstrustofalachua.us)**

- Funds a full-time violence prevention coordinator at Peaceful Paths, which is the certified domestic abuse network that serves survivors of domestic violence in Alachua, Bradford and Union counties.
- Supports residents by providing access to programs that promote literacy, provide after-school learning, give

nutritional service and supplies, and offer vocational opportunities.

### **Department of Children and Families**

**866-762-2237 (toll-free), [www.myfloridafamilies.com](http://www.myfloridafamilies.com)**

- Office of Domestic Violence provides oversight on the administration of state and federally funded initiatives designed to intervene and prevent domestic violence and support survivors and their families.
- Operates a Domestic Violence Hotline, an Abuse Hotline, a Suicide Prevention Hotline, and a Human Trafficking Hotline.
- Oversees policy and funding toward ending homelessness and serving persons experiencing homelessness and recognizes and designates local Continuum of Care (CoC) entities to serve as lead agencies for the homeless assistance system throughout Florida.
- Commission on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder examines the current methods of providing mental health and substance use disorder services in the state and works to make improvements.

### **Episcopal Children's Services**

**352-240-6533, [www.ecs4kids.org](http://www.ecs4kids.org)**

- Episcopal Children's Services (ECS) helps underserved children in northeast and central Florida build a strong foundation for educational success. Working with children through kindergarten age– the most critical years for cognitive development – ECS's teachers and staff use curriculums based on the latest research and best practices to help families ensure their youngsters enter school ready to learn.

### **Family Learning Center**

**[www.gnv4all.org](http://www.gnv4all.org)**

- Organized by the Gainesville Empowerment Zone, this center on the Metcalfe Elementary School campus is aimed at providing high-quality early learning and childcare for families challenged by low-income circumstances.
- The program will improve the literacy rate, prepare children for kindergarten and narrow the achievement gap.
- This is partially funded by donations of \$350,000 each from the City of Gainesville and Alachua County in the form of ARPA funds.

### **Family Promise**

**352-378-2030, [www.familypromisegvl.org](http://www.familypromisegvl.org)**

- Provides a shelter for families with children.
- Provides wraparound services that help families obtain secure and stable housing.
- Coordinates with local churches to shelter families until permanent housing is secured.

### **Florida Department of Corrections**

**850-488-7052, [www.dc.state.fl.us](http://www.dc.state.fl.us)**

- Offers substance abuse programs that include assessment, a 35- to 40-hour educational program, an eight-week modified therapeutic community, a one-year therapeutic community, and a 10-week outpatient drug treatment program at community correctional centers.

### **Florida Department of Juvenile Justice**

**850-488-1850, [www.djj.state.fl.us](http://www.djj.state.fl.us)**

- Offers voluntary youth crime prevention programs through the Office of Prevention Services.
- Addresses the juvenile crime problems by contracting for delinquency prevention services and awarding grants to local providers throughout the state.

- Provides programs for youth who exhibit problem behaviors such as ungovernability, truancy, running away from home and other pre-delinquent behaviors.

### **City of Gainesville – Gainesville Fire Rescue**

**352-334-5078, [www.gfr.org](http://www.gfr.org)**

- Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) has a Community Resource Paramedicine Program (CRP) that works with neighbors to facilitate access to healthcare, housing, food, transportation and health education. This program also helps connect people with support services from other community organizations.
- As part of One Nation One Project (ONOP), GFR is working to increase opportunities for arts and cultural engagement in the community to promote youth wellbeing and reduce youth gun violence.
- The Public Safety Summer Camp is hosted in partnership with the Gainesville Police Department, and includes lessons in gun safety awareness and violence prevention.
- GFR first responders are trained and certified crowd managers. Required in all places of public assembly, crowd managers ensure proper safety and security is in place for events that bring large gatherings of people.
- GFR crews provide emergency medical services when responding to calls; and these are sometimes incidents of gun violence. As well as giving lifesaving care, GFR also works with law enforcement to share information about suspicious activity, weapons or other dangers.
- GFR serves as the city's Emergency Management arm with plans in place to respond to active shooters or other incidents of gun violence. By coordinating with partner agencies, GFR is trained to provide swift and effective collaborative action.

### **City of Gainesville – Gainesville Police Department**

**352-393-7500, 352-955-1818 (dispatch), [www.GainesvillePD.org](http://www.GainesvillePD.org)**

- In October 2022, Gainesville Police Department (GPD) organized an innovative approach to gun violence awareness. That December, 42 members of GPD worked together to host two weeks of community events focused on education, engagement and mobilization for a safer community.
- The Co-Responder Program is a partnership with Meridian Behavioral Healthcare that pairs uniformed officers with mental health clinicians in teams that respond to crisis calls. GPD has four active teams working to prevent unnecessary incarceration and provide community and follow-up support.
- Gun buy-back events funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) are taking weapons off the streets.
- GPD purchased new technology known as BrassTrax. This search engine helps law enforcement agencies quickly find links between firearm-related incidents across the country. This purchase also was funded by ARPA.
- The Gun Violence Initiative is comprised of a group of area law enforcement agencies that meet on a bimonthly schedule to discuss strategies and compare similarities of violent crimes in each of their jurisdictions.
- The Real Time Information Center functions as a centralized hub that helps investigations by immediately producing data related to crimes, crime patterns, suspects and vehicles.
- GPD meets regularly with pastors of local churches, along with other community members, to support neighbors who have been involved in a crime as a participant, victim or witness. This pastors' workgroup is part of a One Community initiative that works throughout the year to bring awareness to gun violence.
- The Brave Overt Leaders of Distinction Program (B.O.L.D.) provides assistance to young men in need of guidance as they navigate life situations and circumstances. Many who benefit from this program have been justice-involved, are working with educational challenges, and are unemployed or underemployed. They receive case management, life skills, and other interventions to spur personal development and growth.
- "Who's in the Box" is a GPD initiative that relies on a two-part play to dramatize for young people how personal conflicts can escalate to violent crime. An effort launched with a wide range of community partners, this is a traveling presentation. It works well when performed at schools, churches or similar locations.

- The Focused Deterrence Ceasefire Program is a collaboration between the City of Gainesville, the Florida Department of Corrections and various community partners. It is a targeted approach to help people avoid future brushes with law enforcement.
- The Police Athletic / Activities League (P.A.L.) provides mentorship, service, athletics and educational opportunities. The goal is to help young people develop positive attitudes toward law enforcement and reward good citizenship.
- My Block activities are gatherings organized by GPD to reach out and develop connections with neighbors. The main focus is at-risk youth, and the events include athletic and intercultural elements, music and food.

### **City of Gainesville – Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs**

**352-334-5067, [www.cityofgainesvilleparks.org](http://www.cityofgainesvilleparks.org)**

- The direct aim of youth athletics offered by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department (PRCA) is to provide space for children and teens to enjoy a safe, monitored and secure environment. Programs offered include Midnight Basketball and Summer Heatwave.
- Midnight Basketball is a free program offered monthly at the Martin Luther King Jr. Multipurpose Center from April to August. The events include pizza and refreshments, motivational speakers, learning activities and 3-on-3 matchups.
- Summer Heatwave is a 5-on-5 basketball program offered weekdays throughout the summer. As an inclusive activity that attracts neighborhood youth and volunteers along with local middle and high school teams, Heatwave provides a safe environment that teaches character, leadership and life skills along with training and drills.
- PRCA hosts year-round youth and after-school programming, along with summer camps and enrichment programs aimed at children and teens.
- PRCA works with community partners to provide resources to youth and their families. These include CareerSource, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Santa Fe College, Mirror Image Leadership Academy, I Got Your Back Youth Mentoring Program and the YMCA.
- PRCA offers a monthly outreach program at the Cone Park Branch of the Alachua County Library District. This group meets once a month for the Science-Oriented Activities and Recreation (SOAR) Program.
- The Cultural Affairs Division works closely with the A. Quinn Jones Center School to develop programs and activities designed to engage youth who have been affected by, have participated in, or lost friends or family due to gun violence.
- PRCA is teaming with GFR to lead the One Nation One Project GNV initiative to increase opportunities for arts and cultural engagement in the community to promote youth wellbeing and reduce youth gun violence.

### **Girls Place**

**352-373-4475, [www.girlsplace.net](http://www.girlsplace.net)**

- Provides services and support for girls (ages 5-14) by offering mental health consultation, assessment and treatment; education and early intervention to cope with potentially harmful experiences and adverse events.
- Works to refer children in need of additional support to the appropriate community resources.

### **GRACE Marketplace**

**352-792-0800, [www.gracemarketplace.org](http://www.gracemarketplace.org)**

- Homeless support organization that offers emergency shelter, food services, housing programs, street outreach, day services and medical services.

### **Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce**

**352-334-7100, [www.gainesvillechamber.com](http://www.gainesvillechamber.com)**

- Works with local organizations and businesses to raise awareness about violence and domestic violence by providing space for educational materials and supporting community efforts and campaigns.

### **HCA North Florida Hospital**

**352-333-4000, [www.hcafloridahealthcare.com](http://www.hcafloridahealthcare.com)**

- Supports community efforts and campaigns.
- Operates an emergency room that is open 24/7 and also operates three freestanding emergency care locations across the community.
- Provides acute and critical medical services for patients.

### **Helping Hands Clinic**

**352-519-5542, [www.hhclinicgv.org](http://www.hhclinicgv.org)**

- Provides funds for operating costs and program delivery of healthcare services to uninsured people who are experiencing homelessness.
- Provides supplies to fulfill pharmaceutical needs, vision care, and laboratory and imaging to people who are experiencing homelessness.

### **Howard Bishop Middle School**

- Howard Bishop Middle School works with community partners to bring resources and opportunities to students and families in east Gainesville.
- This collaboration provides outreach for those dealing with food insecurity, poverty, homelessness and wellness challenges.
- Services include academic support, healthcare, counseling and mentoring.
- Renovation of the track and tennis / basketball courts was completed in November 2021 as a Wild Spaces Public Places project through a partnership with Alachua County Public Schools.

### **League of Women Voters**

**[my.lwv.org/florida/alachua](http://my.lwv.org/florida/alachua)**

- Holds and supports events aimed at promoting gun control.

### **Moms Demand Action Alachua County**

**[www.momsdemandactionalachua.com](http://www.momsdemandactionalachua.com)**

- Moms Demand Action is a grassroots movement that promotes public safety measures to protect people from gun violence.

### **Office of the Public Defender 8th Judicial Circuit**

**352-338-7370, [www.publicdefender.alachuacounty.us](http://www.publicdefender.alachuacounty.us)**

- Works with law enforcement to represent suspects in court and help them receive a fair trial.

### **People Against Violence Enterprises (PAVE)**

**352-505-6839, [www.pavingpeace.org](http://www.pavingpeace.org)**

- PAVE promotes violence prevention education and mediation to youth and parents in North Central Florida.
- Works closely with Alachua County public schools and law enforcement to ensure student needs are met.
- Hosts an annual Stop the Violence Back to School Rally at which 5,000 students receive free backpacks filled with school supplies.

### **NAACP. Alachua County Branch**

**352-363-4483, [www.naacpacb.org](http://www.naacpacb.org)**

- NAACP has declared violence in America as a public health concern.
- NAACP has advocated for laws to help eliminate or decrease the damage and death caused by gun violence.
- NAACP advocates for and protects civil rights.

### **Partnership for Strong Families**

**352-244-1500, [www.pfsf.org](http://www.pfsf.org)**

- Provides child welfare services designed to protect local children from abuse, neglect and abandonment.
- Assists in establishing safe and permanent homes for children to live with their own families, partner families or adoptive parents.
- Offers free services and support to families and community members including financial literacy programs, clothing closets, food distribution, enrichment programs for children, infant care products and employability training.

### **Randall VA Medical Center**

**352-376-1611, [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)**

- Offers substance use disorder services to help patients overcome problems ranging from unhealthy alcohol use to life-threatening addiction.
- Offers counseling, group therapy or medication to patients seeking support.
- Works to provide transitional and supportive housing by offering many programs and services, including free health care.
- Helps veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless due to financial hardship, unemployment, addiction, depression, or transition from jail.
- Can provide access to immediate food and shelter needs, transitional and permanent housing, job training, life skills development and education.
- Assists with justice system navigation and community reentry from jail.
- VA Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program provides services and resources to veterans, caregivers, their families and VA employees to focus on health and safety in relationships.
- VA health care facilities offer same-day help and operate a Veterans Crisis Line for free, private help 24-hours-a-day.

### **Santa Fe College**

**352-395-5000, [www.sfcollege.edu](http://www.sfcollege.edu)**

- Santa Fe College's Behavioral Intervention Team trains employees to learn skills that can be used to alleviate potential incidents of workplace violence.
- Santa Fe College Police Department, Counseling Center and Risk Management work in conjunction with other offices at Santa Fe to train employees to address issues vital to the safety and security of everyone on SF property.
- Institute of Public Safety at the Kirkpatrick Center accommodates the growing need for skilled public safety personnel in Florida and nationwide.
- Santa Fe has sworn police officers on their staff and mutual aid agreements with all local law enforcement agencies in the community including Alachua Sheriff's Office, Bradford Sheriff's Office, Gainesville Police Department, UF Police Department, City of Alachua Police Department and Florida Highway Patrol.
- Santa Fe Police Department has both emergency and nonemergency numbers, along with a rumor control hotline and an online "say something" report form.

- Santa Fe utilizes several systems for timely warnings: notifications to students and staff via internal email, a banner on the Santa Fe College webpage, social media.

### **St. Francis House**

**352-378-9079, [www.stfrancishousegnv.com](http://www.stfrancishousegnv.com)**

- This program assists people and families who are experiencing homelessness by providing access to shelter.
- Assists people who are experiencing homelessness find employment and permanent housing.
- The Cold Night Shelter Program allows expanded overnight shelter and services during certain weather emergencies.

### **State Attorney's Office for the Eighth Judicial Circuit**

**352-374-3670, [www.sao8.org](http://www.sao8.org)**

- Violent Crimes Unit is a specialized unit that prosecutes violent offenses including those involving firearms or other deadly weapons.
- Domestic Violence Program helps by providing information and services to break the pattern of abuse.

### **UF Health Shands Hospital**

**352-261-0111, [www.ufhealth.org](http://www.ufhealth.org)**

- Violence prevention task force consisting of a multidisciplinary team that works to develop and implement solutions to address issues identified by UF Health.
- Mobile safety app is a free app that allows staff to connect with emergency services, send locations, sound alarms, report a tip, track shuttles and more.
- Nurse training includes a Crisis Prevention Institute and crisis development and nonviolent de-escalation training courses.
- Tools and resources are currently being developed to help staff identify and deescalate difficult behaviors when interacting with patients and visitors
- UF Health locations considered high risk are equipped with panic alarms that silently contact a security dispatcher.

### **University of Florida**

**[www.ufl.edu](http://www.ufl.edu)**

- UF Police Department is a 24-hour-a-day resource to help students stay safe on campus; it oversees security surveys for departments across campus, registers property to prevent theft, and manages crime reporting. **352-392-1111**
- Violence Prevention Hold is a program that requires all incoming students to complete a course on violence prevention.
- UF operates a multidisciplinary diagnostic and training program that provides a range of services including diagnostic evaluation and consultation for children and youth identified as having complex medical, educational, emotional, and/or behavioral problems.
- UF Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity Violence Prevention specializes in support once harm has occurred and provides prevention-focused initiatives and resources for a safer and healthier campus community. **352-273-3721**



## **Housing Assistance and Support Programs**

### **City of Gainesville Housing & Community Development**

**352-393-8618, [www.gainesvillefl.gov](http://www.gainesvillefl.gov)**

- Home Repair: Provides direct housing support by coordinating home repair services for low- and very-low income households. Rehabilitation program money can address health and safety issues; electrical and plumbing problems; installation of new windows, roof and HVAC systems; removal of lead paint; and retrofitting for those with special needs. The city oversees all work performed and pays the contractors directly upon satisfactory completion.
- Home Replacement: Provides loans to low and very-low income households for home replacement when home repair is not feasible.
- Down Payment Assistance: Provides funding to eligible homebuyers to buy a home within the city limits of Gainesville. The funding is used to pay a part of the down payment and closing costs associated with purchasing a home. Up to \$15,000 in help may be provided.
- Mortgage Foreclosure Intervention: Provides financial help to homeowners who are behind on their mortgage payments and are near foreclosure. Homeowners will work one-on-one with a city staff member to determine possible solutions for repayment.
- Financial Education: The workshop walks homebuyers through the process and gives participants helpful information including how to choose a qualified lender and inspector. Other topics include credit, budgeting, savings, mortgage loans, house selection, lenders, realtors, home inspection, home maintenance and closing day. There is no cost to attend the workshop.
- Water and Waste Water Connections: Provides grant funding to assist with the payment of costs associated with the extension, construction and connection to the city's water, wastewater and reclaimed water systems throughout the entire GRU service area.

### **City of Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area**

**352-393-8200, [www.gainesvillecra.com](http://www.gainesvillecra.com)**

- Neighborhood Paint Program: Provides free exterior pressure washing and painting services to homeowners. The eligible neighborhoods are Fifth Avenue, Pleasant Street, Porters Community, Springhill, Sugarhill, Cedar Grove II and Duval neighborhoods.
- Heirs Property Assistance: Offers probate legal assistance to heirs' property owners to clear the title to the homes so owners can take advantage of property rights. The purpose of the program is to increase neighborhood stability, grow individual and family wealth in Gainesville's underserved communities, and increase access to attainable housing.
- My Neighborhood Program: Offers \$25,000 towards the purchase of a home or lot within eligible neighborhoods. To be eligible, recipients must have lived in a program neighborhood for at least three years before 2011. The purpose of the program is to encourage strong community connections by incentivizing long-term homeownership within neighborhoods. The eligible neighborhoods are Cedar Grove II, Greater Duval, Fifth



Avenue, North Lincoln Heights, Pleasant Street, Porters, Springhill and Sugarhill.

- Home Energy Tune-Up: Through a partnership with the Community Weatherization Coalition (CWC), home energy tune-ups are available to eligible property owners (homesteaders and landlords) and renters in order to lower the energy cost burden of district residents. The purpose of this program is to encourage safe, well-designed, high-quality housing to support the existing housing stock that provides housing options for long-term homeowners and renters.

## **Outside Agencies (Housing)**

### **Alachua Habitat for Humanity**

**352-378-4663, [www.alachuahabitat.org](http://www.alachuahabitat.org)**

- Funds for the construction of new houses that are mortgaged at 0% interest. Principle payments are then returned to the program, thereby recycling capital investment. Homeowners are City of Gainesville low-income residents, who are willing to contribute sweat equity.

### **Center for Independent Living**

**352-378-7474, [www.cilncf.org](http://www.cilncf.org)**

- Construction of wheelchair ramps for persons with disabilities who currently live without proper accessibility in their own homes. Wheelchair ramp recipients are individuals with disabilities who meet federal low- to very-low-income requirements

### **Gainesville Housing Development & Management Corporation**

**352-380-9119, [www.gainesvillehousingauthority.org](http://www.gainesvillehousingauthority.org)**

- Funds are used to construct three new affordable homes for low- to moderate-income individuals and/or families within the City of Gainesville.

### **KLH Invest, LLC (The Hutchinson Foundation)**

- Funds to cover soft costs for new construction of affordable rental housing for low- to moderate-income individuals/families.

### **Neighborhood Housing & Development Corporation**

**352-380-9119, [www.gnhdc.org](http://www.gnhdc.org)**

- Funds used for the acquisition and new construction of housing that will be offered for purchase to eligible first-time low-income homebuyers in the Duval neighborhood.

### **Rebuilding Together North Central Florida (emergency repair)**

**352-373-2573, [www.rebuildingtogetherncf.org](http://www.rebuildingtogetherncf.org)**

- Provides critical home repair/rehabilitation to low-income homeowners, disabled residents, and/or veterans.

# Gun Violence Disproportionately and Overwhelmingly Hurts Communities of Color

*The lack of investment in communities of color, coupled with weak gun laws, has resulted in devastatingly high rates of gun violence for Black and brown people.*

Gun violence is a major problem in the United States as well as the key driver of the rise in violent crime across the nation.<sup>1</sup> Notably, gun violence has a disproportionate impact on racial and ethnic minorities and is highly concentrated in a relatively small number of neighborhoods that have historically been under-resourced and racially segregated. This is due to a combination of weak gun laws; systemic racial inequities, including unequal access to safe housing and adequate educational and employment opportunities; and a history of disinvestment in public infrastructure and services in the communities of color most affected by gun violence.

To reduce gun violence in these communities, U.S. policymakers must complement commonsense gun laws with investments in community-based violence intervention (CVI) initiatives and policies to address root causes of gun violence.

## Gun homicides are on the rise in the United States, with young Black and brown people experiencing the highest rates

- Young Black Americans (ages 15 to 34) experience the highest rates of gun homicides across all demographics.<sup>2</sup>
- Black Americans are 10 times more likely than white Americans to die by gun homicide.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2020, 12,179 Black Americans were killed with guns, compared with 7,286 white Americans:<sup>4</sup>
  - While Black Americans made up 12.5 percent of the U.S. population that year, they were the victims in 61 percent of all gun homicides.<sup>5</sup>
- Black Americans are three times more likely than white Americans to be fatally shot by police.<sup>6</sup>
- 60 percent of gun deaths among Hispanic and Latino people are gun homicides.<sup>7</sup>
- Young Hispanic Americans (ages 15 to 29) represent 4 percent of the population yet are victims in 8 percent of all gun homicides.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2015, half of all gun homicides took place in just 127 cities across the country:
  - Gun homicides are concentrated in a relatively small number of neighborhoods in these cities, which have historically been underresourced and racially segregated.<sup>9</sup>

## Women of color are more likely than their white counterparts to be shot and killed with firearms

- Black women are twice as likely as white women to be fatally shot by an intimate partner.<sup>10</sup>
- American Indian and Alaska Native women are killed by intimate partners at a rate of 4.3 per 100,000, compared with 1.5 per 100,000 for white women.<sup>11</sup>
- Guns are used in more than half of all homicides of women and are disproportionately used

against Black women.<sup>12</sup>

- Even when firearms are not used to kill or injure, they are used to threaten women at alarming rates:
  - 4.5 million women alive today have reported being threatened with a firearm.<sup>13</sup>

### **Nonfatal gun violence has a lasting impact on individuals and communities**

- For every gun homicide there are more than two nonfatal gun shootings.<sup>14</sup>
- From 2009 to 2018, the rate of gun-related assaults against Black and Hispanic Americans was 208.9 and 128.7, respectively, per 100,000, compared with 90.5 per 100,000 for white Americans.<sup>15</sup>
- Nine in 10 survivors of gun violence report experiencing trauma from their incident.<sup>16</sup>

### **Solutions: In addition to stronger, commonsense gun laws, policymakers must address systemic racial inequities**

- Policymakers should dismantle racist policies in policing, access to housing, education, and employment in order to address root causes of gun violence.<sup>17</sup>
- The country must invest in community violence intervention (CVI) programs:
  - CVIs focus on partnerships with those most affected by gun violence, government, and community stakeholders to bring community-specific solutions to gun violence.<sup>18</sup>
- Domestic abusers must be prevented from accessing firearms:
  - Gaps in legislation, such as the “dating partner loophole,” allow some abusers to access firearms even if they have been convicted of a domestic violence crime.<sup>19</sup>
  - In June 2022, President Joe Biden signed into law the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, a gun violence prevention package that included some, but not all, priorities to curb gun violence across the country. This package partially closed the dating partner loophole by prohibiting some dating partners convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors from owning or purchasing a firearm. However, dating partners who are issued final protective orders can still possess firearms.<sup>20</sup>
  - Women in communities of color have unique needs and challenges that prevent them from both seeking help and accessing services. Solutions should, therefore, be driven by the needs of this group.

### **Conclusion**

Communities of color disproportionately bear the brunt of gun violence in the United States. Commonsense gun laws as well as direct investments in the communities that are most affected by gun violence are crucial to ending gun violence and saving lives.

## **New Report Highlights U.S. 2021 Gun-Related Deaths: For Second Straight Year, U.S. Firearm Fatalities Reached Record Highs**

*CDC data for 2021 firearm fatalities show Black people at greatest risk for gun homicide; guns remain leading cause of death for children and teens ages 1–19 and young adults under 25*

A new report from the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions analyzing 2021 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data reveals another record year for firearm fatalities.

The 48,830 lives lost to firearms in 2021—the second year of the pandemic—is the highest number on record to date and 3,608 higher than 2020's total. Both firearm homicides and suicides reached record highs. More than half of these deaths—26,328—were due to suicide, up 2,036 over 2020 firearm suicides. The firearm suicide rate increased 8.3 percent in 2021, the highest one-year increase in four decades.

In 2021, Black people in the U.S. were nearly 14 times more likely to die by gun homicide than their white counterparts. Young Black males ages 15–34 were most at risk. They accounted for 36 percent of all gun homicides in 2021, but represent only two percent of the total U.S. population. In 2021, guns were responsible for 51 percent of all deaths of Black teens ages 15–19.

The Center, based at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, used CDC data that became publicly available this past January to analyze 2021 firearm fatalities across age, sex, race, and place. The report, *U.S. Gun Violence in 2021: An Accounting of a Public Health Crisis*, is thought to be the most comprehensive analysis of the CDC's 2021 firearm data to date.

The report comes at a time of heightened concern about gun violence in the U.S. as mass shootings and other interpersonal gun violence, as well as firearm suicides, continue to occur across the country. The report also includes evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at curtailing firearm deaths.

The authors note that an estimated 9,500 fewer people would have been killed with guns in the U.S. in 2021 if the firearm homicide rate—the number of firearm homicides per 100,000—had remained where it was in 2014, when it reached a 40-year low.

“Our country is breaking records for all the wrong reasons—record gun sales combined with increasingly permissive gun laws are making gun violence a pervasive part of life in our country, leading to a sharp increase in gun deaths,” says Ari Davis, MPP, policy adviser at the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions and the report's lead author. “Perhaps most troubling is these spikes in homicides and suicides are almost entirely connected to guns.”

In 2021, guns continued to be the leading cause of death for children and teens ages 1–19 as well as young adults under the age of 25. Young people ages 15–34 had a gun homicide rate twice the national average, accounting for three out of every five homicide deaths. This was driven by the high rate of firearm fatalities among Black people in these age groups.

For gun suicides in 2021, white males were most at risk, accounting for 70 percent of all firearm suicide deaths, while making up 29 percent of the population. People 75 and older were at the highest risk for gun suicide with a rate twice the national average.

For their report, the researchers analyzed 2021 firearm fatality data collected by the CDC's Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER) database, considered to be the most reliable national source of gun death data available in the U.S. The data, based on death certificates, reflect the primary cause of death.

In addition to year-over-year analyses, the report examined CDC firearm data from 2019 to 2021. In the first two years of the pandemic, guns alone were responsible for driving suicide and homicide rates in the U.S. From 2019 to 2021, the gun homicide rate increased by 45 percent, while the non-gun homicide rate increased by 7 percent. Black and Hispanic/Latino people experienced the largest relative increases in gun homicide rates from 2019 to 2021—up 49 percent and 44 percent respectively.

From 2019 to 2021, the gun suicide rate increased 10 percent, while the non-gun suicide rate decreased by eight percent. American Indian/Alaska Native people experienced the largest relative increases in gun suicide rates from 2019 to 2021, up 55 percent. The next highest increase was among Black people. From 2019 to 2021, the suicide rate among Black people increased 38 percent from 2019.

The report emphasizes that effective gun violence prevention laws can help reduce gun violence. In state-to-state comparisons, the authors found that the highest gun-related death rates tended to be in states with weaker gun laws and higher rates of gun ownership, while gun-related death rates were lower where gun violence prevention laws are stronger. For example, in 2021 a person living in Mississippi was 10 times more likely to die by gun violence than someone living in Massachusetts.

The report recommends evidence-based policies to address gun violence including:

- Implementing permit-to-purchase laws, also known as gun purchaser licensing.
- Using Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Extreme Risk Protection Orders—sometimes called “red flag” laws—to temporarily remove firearms from individuals determined to be at elevated risk for violence.
- Investing in community violence intervention programs.
- Adopting child access prevention laws mandating safe firearm storage in households with children and/or teens.
- Enacting stronger concealed carry permitting laws; and repealing “stand-your-ground” laws.

“Each life lost to gun violence represents a family torn apart, a community suffering,” says Cassandra Crifasi, PhD, co-director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions and a report co-author. “The data are clear that states with stronger gun violence prevention laws have lower rates of gun violence. Passage of evidence-based solutions would help end the needless suffering happening in all corners of our country.”

## Reducing the Gun Violence Threat to Kids and Teens

*Hospitals are taking the lead to stem the increase in firearms injuries and fatalities among young people.*

*By David Levine*

The United States has reached a troubling milestone: For the first time in history, the No. 1 cause of death for American children and teens is gun violence.

“I just want you all to think about that for a second,” said Dr. Joseph V. Sakran, director of emergency general surgery, associate professor of surgery and vice chair of clinical operations at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Maryland. “It’s not car crashes. It’s not cancer. It’s not poisonings. It’s gun-related injury.”

Sakran, a panelist for a recent webinar on the pediatric health threat of gun violence hosted by U.S. News and World Report, was in fact inspired to become a trauma surgeon after he was a victim himself. In 1994, he was shot in the throat as a bystander at a Burke, Virginia, playground outside Washington, D.C. “I left that morning as a healthy high school student, and then I was collateral damage after nearly being killed,” he said during the webinar.

Firearm-related injuries and suicides, as well as shootings among young people, have only increased since then. The devastating toll this is taking on families, schools and society at large is also presenting challenges for the hospitals and trauma centers treating these young patients, many of whom will need not just lifesaving but lifelong care.

In response, hospitals and health systems are taking concrete actions to reduce the toll in their communities by implementing public awareness programs, promoting gun safety, ramping up mental health services and more. Sakran, a board member with the Brady Campaign that works to reduce gun violence, noted that eight children and teens are unintentionally shot every day “in instances of what we call family fire, which is a term essentially to describe a shooting that involves an improperly stored or misused gun found in the home.” That doesn’t include the victims of mass school shootings, street shootings and other tragedies, Sakran noted. “People always ask what’s the one solution. And the reality is, there is no one solution,” he said. “It requires a multifaceted approach.”

Dr. Chethan Sathya, director of the Center for Gun Violence Prevention at Northwell Health in New York and associate trauma director at Cohen Children’s Medical Center, said one priority is getting better data, “just like we did with other epidemics, COVID-19 and so on,” to answer critical questions tied to gun violence and “to evaluate what works and what doesn’t.”

At Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, researchers tracked 15 years of gun-

related injuries and found that about half were related to unsafe firearm storage and half to community violence, with an increase in the latter during the pandemic. “How can we teach families and communities to store their guns safely?” said Dr. Regan Williams, medical director of trauma and associate chief of staff at Le Bonheur. “We’re really shifting to look more into community violence because that’s the largest driver [of gun violence] in our community right now.”

Dr. Sandra McKay, director of population health and advocacy, associate professor of pediatrics with the McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston and a pediatrician with Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital, said that, in Texas, “we have a different relationship and culture around firearm ownership.” Physicians are generally trusted by patients for “what to do with a cold,” as an example, she said, but for questions on safely storing firearms, “we were not the top-ranked person they would go to.” Instead, it was “law enforcement, family and friends, and firearm retailers. And so, what we’ve done is we’ve taken a little bit of a different approach, partnering with our firearms retailing community” on messaging, particularly regarding suicide prevention and safe storage counseling.

They “really do want to partner with us because when it comes to safety,” she said, “they see themselves as the experts. And they are.” At the same time, sellers say, “ ‘We would love to get some training from you and health care to learn about what are the red flags when someone’s struggling that we should be looking for in that point of sale.’ ”

One idea is having more retailers offer temporary out-of-home, voluntary firearm storage for a small fee. That can be an option, say, for firearms owners who are having grandkids over for the week or who have someone in the home who is struggling. Her team is trying to contact every firearm retailer in Texas to engage them, because when patients were surveyed, 40% of people said they would not know what to do if they had to remove a firearm for safety reasons, “and that’s a huge concern for us as pediatricians,” McKay said.

Sakran emphasized the need to expand training of future clinicians. “A lot of us here and across the country believe that we have a role in firearm injury prevention that cuts across the focus of clinical care,” he said, and includes educational, research and community engagement components.

McKay, who is also Huffington Fellow with the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University, agreed noting the value of workshops for pediatric physicians who are often uncomfortable having conversations around firearms with patients. More than 80% aren’t firearm owners themselves, and so she focuses on helping them feel empowered to ask key questions in a culturally sensitive way and then to work on a harm-reduction strategy.

Northwell Health similarly has added firearms questions to its universal patient screening. “Every single patient who comes into our [emergency department is asked] questions about firearm injury, risk, including access-related risk and violence-related risk,” said Sathya, who is also assistant professor of surgery and pediatrics at the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell. By “integrating screening and intervention into your clinical workflows” and taking “a comprehensive, team-based approach, not only does it improve your successive implementation

because you have multiple folks involved,” he noted, but it ensures the entire team is educated and engaged.

Sakran also emphasized nonmedical interventions to address the root causes of gun violence, including the social determinants of health that involve the conditions in which people live and grow, like economic and housing stability and access to quality health and trauma care. He also stressed the need for the medical community to advocate for change. “I think for a long time, we looked at advocacy as a dirty word, but really, it’s not. As individuals that are at the center of taking care of these patients, we have both the opportunity and the responsibility to advocate for evidence-based policies that we think are going to not just impact the outcomes of our patients but prevent them from ever becoming our patients.”

Another source of concern is that children and teens aren’t just victims; they are also perpetrators of gun violence. “I don’t think we totally know what works” in addressing this critical dynamic, Williams said. But one factor is getting help to kids before their teen years,” she said. “I really think that by [age] 14” because their scars and their adverse childhood experiences are so severe, “it’s really hard to rehabilitate them,” she noted, “so we really want to focus on [ages] 8 to 12” and figuring out how to support children in disenfranchised communities “to keep them out of that cycle of violence.”

McKay agreed on the need for early intervention: “We’ve implemented a universal screening process for social determinants of health for all children at all well-child visits” starting when they are 12 and 18 months old, she noted. During screening, families are asked if they are struggling financially, or with housing or transportation security. If they are, pediatricians are encouraged to connect them with community-based resources. “That is where pediatrics needs to continue to move to, so that we can help support children and families,” she said.

Sathya noted another screening tool called SaFETy Score “that has been shown to predict gun violence in at-risk, substance-using youth.” It includes questions about frequency of hearing gunshots and having a gun pulled. “These are questions that are highly predictive of future gun violence” and provide the opportunity, he said, to offer resources before a patient comes in with a gun injury.

Sathya emphasized the need for more centers for gun violence prevention to be established similar to those for cancer or heart disease prevention so not just frontline workers are engaged but the entire culture of the institution.

“We need buy-in and support from hospital leadership, and I think that can set the tone for where your programs go,” McKay added. For example, Children’s Memorial Hermann approved resources to distribute 10,000 cable locks to secure guns in Houston. “If your leadership is engaged, then you can start really having more resources to make a greater impact.”

“It definitely takes a community,” added Williams, who is also president-elect of the medical staff at Le Bonheur Children’s and associate professor of surgery at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. She sees hospitals as a gathering place. “We actually had a community summit



where we brought everyone together,” she said. “Everybody learned a lot about each other, which was really important,” particularly in developing the most effective programs targeting members of the community. “I don’t know the best way to teach them about firearms safety, and I don’t know how to treat all their social determinants of health and to support them. But the people that live in the community, they do.”

This commonality of purpose “often doesn’t get seen, because you see all the kind of divisiveness that’s happening on social media or on the evening news,” Sakran said, but most Americans don’t want to see children being shot and killed. No one wants to see these school shootings or the urban violence. It’s not just about the right idea, but it’s also about having the right strategy and approach.”

Williams compared firearm safety with car safety. “In the 1970s, death was really common for motor vehicles. We didn’t take cars away,” she noted. “We started collecting data on why people were getting killed and injured ... then we worked systematically to make them safer.” Now, guns are the No. 1 cause of death in children, “but we haven’t done the same thing,” she said. Yet by looking at “why people get shot, how they get shot, and then also ways to make guns safer, we really can make the community and the world safer for our children.”

# One way to prevent gun violence? Treat it as a public health issue

By Rachel Treisman

Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith was working in an emergency room as a medical student more than four decades ago when she realized that victims of violence were getting treated and then released — unlike other patients — without any sort of preventative care.

“And one night, at 3:00 in the morning, a young man just very specifically said to me that he was going to go out and cut the guy who cut him,” she says. “I thought, this is not adequate. My response is not adequate. My profession’s response is not adequate.”

Prothrow-Stith has played a key role in defining youth violence as a public health issue in the years since (her 1991 book *Deadly Consequences* is considered a classic in the field). That means focusing on prevention efforts — not only in emergency rooms, but in doctor’s offices and schools, too.

And guns are increasingly a part of that conversation.

Prothrow-Stith, who is dean and professor of medicine at the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles, remembers that when she first started out, stabbings were “the number-one way that young men were killed” in Philadelphia. The picture of violence changed dramatically in a matter of years.

“Guns in America play a huge role, especially as we start looking at weapons of war being available and the mass shootings that are taking place,” Prothrow-Stith tells Morning Edition’s Michel Martin.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recorded 48,830 U.S. firearm deaths in 2021, the last year for which complete data is available. Those include suicides — which have long accounted for the majority of U.S. gun deaths — as well as homicides.

Culturally, suicide is more common in white America and homicide more common in Black America, Prothrow-Stith notes. But she stresses that violence in general is a learned behavior.

“We don’t come out of the womb ready to commit suicide or homicide,” she adds. “And I think as a culture, [we need an] understanding that children who are hurt, hurt others or hurt themselves. And our job is not to give them a gun, but our job is to figure out how to help them heal.”

## The role of guns in America, as told by a doctor

Prothrow-Stith says it’s clear that guns turn “an everyday emotional situation” into fatal encounters.

“We know that sometimes people act differently when they have a gun in a situation, feeling

invincible or escalating a situation that they might otherwise de-escalate,” she added.

And at least when it comes to teenagers, she says, there are some similarities in the contributing factors that can lead to homicide and suicide.

Most homicides are the result of arguments between people who know each other, whether family members, friends or romantic partners, she says.

“I remember some youth workers saying, ‘Well, it doesn’t surprise me that he killed somebody because he didn’t care anything about himself, so why would he care anything about anybody else?’” Prothrow-Stith says. “If you think about that, not caring anything about yourself is a symptom of depression. It’s a symptom of a clinical illness and should be explored that way.”

### **What preventing gun violence could look like**

How would prevention work from a public health perspective? Prothrow-Stith uses the analogy of cigarette smoking and lung cancer.

First, there’s primary prevention, which involves informing the general public of the consequences of smoking. The second phase is helping smokers quit, and the third is treatment for those who have lung cancer.

When it comes to gun violence, Prothrow-Stith says the primary phase should be raising awareness and trying to increase safety.

The secondary phase is about understanding the risk factors. “How do we help children who are hurt, either because they’re victims of violence or they’re witnessing violence, especially domestic violence or gang violence, on a regular basis?” she asks. “How do we help them heal from the anger, the guilt, the pain, but also give them the strategies to move forward?”

Programs like “Big Brothers Big Sisters” are a great example of a secondary intervention because they give kids distractions, purpose and opportunities. Don’t underestimate the power of staying busy, Prothrow-Stith adds.

She shares the story of a high school student who, when asked how he stayed out of trouble, said he played football even though he didn’t especially like it. Sports gave him an excuse to stay late and bail out of late-night social events as needed.

“He had developed his own strategies for dealing with the peer pressure,” she says. “Those are the things that are very, very important for kids ‘in the thick’, if you will.”

### **Focus on what works: an assault weapons ban**

Many people are used to thinking about guns as a political issue rather than a public health issue.

But Prothrow-Stith says a more productive way to talk about it would be to start where the U.S. has seen success in the past: in banning assault weapons from 1994 to 2004.

Studies have shown a decrease in gun massacre deaths during the decade the federal ban was in place — and an increase after it expired, which Prothrow-Stith attributes to the gun industry strategically “flood[ing] the market” with assault weapons.

There are many more deaths in mass shootings when high-powered assault weapons are available, she adds.

“They are like the movies and the sequel where more people get killed in the sequel than in the first movie with these assault weapons, weapons of war,” she says. “We are seeing more and more people killed with each episode.”

Practically speaking, guns are here to stay in the U.S., Prothrow-Stith says.

“But we don’t need assault weapons,” she adds. “And I think we just zero in on that argument. And I think that’s a matter of time.”

Back to the cigarette analogy. Prothrow-Stith remembers that smoking was ubiquitous and glamorous when she was a kid, and that it took roughly half a century after the first report on its health effects for the public understanding to follow.

She is confident that the U.S. will have the same transformation with guns. “It is time again to treat this epidemic, reduce our rates and stay with it,” she says. “We’ve done it before. We can do it again ... just make our children safer.”

## **New Report Offers Policy Recommendations to Address Alcohol Use as Risk Factor for Gun Violence**

*Recommendations call upon states to enact laws that limit access to firearms by people with history of alcohol misuse and at locations where alcohol is consumed*

Researchers from the Center for Gun Violence Solutions at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health released a set of state-based policy recommendations to address the intersection of alcohol use and firearms.

Alcohol plays an outsized role in firearm fatalities. An estimated one in three individuals who committed homicide with a firearm had been heavily drinking when they murdered their victims. More than 30 percent of gun homicide victims had been heavily drinking when they were killed, and a quarter of gun suicide victims had been heavily drinking before dying by suicide.

The report's recommendations were developed with a steering committee of the Consortium for Risk-Based Firearm Policy, a group of leading experts that advances evidence-based gun violence prevention policies. The Consortium is led by Joshua Horwitz, JD, the Dana Feitler Professor of the Practice in Gun Violence Prevention and Advocacy and co-director of the Center for Gun Violence Solutions at the Bloomberg School.

The report, "Alcohol Misuse and Gun Violence: An Evidence-based Approach for State Policy," focuses on two policy areas: limiting access to firearms by a person with a documented history of alcohol misuse, such as driving under the influence, and restricting firearms at locations where alcohol is consumed. The authors based their recommendations on the latest available research on alcohol use and firearms as well as comprehensive reviews of state laws.

"The intersection of alcohol misuse and firearms can have devastating consequences," says Silvia Villarreal, director of research translation at the Center for Gun Violence Solutions the report's lead author. "These recommendations provide specific guidelines for states to limit access to firearms and address the risk of dangerous behaviors when the two are combined."

Federal law does not address the risk of alcohol and guns, and many state laws are ambiguous. Some states prohibit possession of guns using unclear criteria such as "habitual drunkard," or "while intoxicated." Bringing a gun to a place where alcohol is present is legal in many states but prohibited in others. Some states exempt concealed carry permit holders from laws prohibiting firearm possession in places where alcohol is consumed.

To limit access to firearms by an individual with a history of alcohol misuse, the authors recommend that states focus on individuals with a history of driving under the influence or other documented alcohol misuse. The authors recommend that states pass laws that prohibit the following for at least five years:

- The purchase and possession of firearms by an individual convicted of two or more instances within a five-year period of driving under the influence of alcohol or driving while intoxicated.
- Obtaining or possessing a concealed carry permit—a license required to carry firearms in public—by individuals convicted of one driving under the influence offense, and/or documented with court records to have a recent history of alcohol misuse.

To limit access to guns when and where alcohol is consumed, the authors recommend that states pass laws prohibiting public carrying or possession of firearms where alcohol is consumed, including bars, restaurants, sporting arenas, and outdoor festivals and other events. Some states already have laws that restrict firearm possession in places such as bars and restaurants; however, concealed carry permit holders are often exempt from these laws.

The report also includes additional policy considerations, including:

- Limiting the number of alcohol retailers in a particular area through licensing and zoning regulations.
- Limiting the hours and days when alcohol can be served.
- Increasing the price of alcohol by raising taxes.

“Firearm policies aimed at reducing harmful outcomes due to gun violence do not operate in a vacuum,” says Horwitz. “We must take into consideration the environment where alcohol is sold and consumed to limit the risk of potential violence.”

The report is aimed at researchers, practitioners, policymakers, law enforcement professionals, and others working to address gun violence.

## What To Do About Guns

*Enough of the despairing conversations. Here are realistic policies to ameliorate America's epidemic of gun violence.*

*By Bari Weiss*

There's an old Onion headline that came out right after Sandy Hook. Here was the headline: 'No Way To Prevent This,' Says Only Nation Where This Regularly Happens.

It's a smart, dark joke. It also has the rare distinction of never getting old.

That Onion headline resurfaces every few weeks—lately, every few days. Tulsa. Buffalo. Uvalde. Philadelphia. Chicago. And on and on and on.

If you're like me, you've had too many despairing conversations about the epidemic of gun violence in this country to count. I'm sick of those. I want to know about what can actually, practically be done.

That's why, on our most recent episode of *Honestly*, I invited two people who have thought deeply about how to curb gun violence in this country.

David French is a senior editor of *The Dispatch* and the author of "Divided We Fall," among other books. David is a veteran of the Iraq War; he is also a gun owner. Rajiv Sethi is a professor of economics at Barnard who has been researching gun violence and writing about innovative solutions to the problem—even in a country with a robust Second Amendment.

Some of the solutions they discussed with me are part of the gun-safety proposal that a bipartisan group of senators put forward just yesterday, including funding for red-flag laws; enhanced background checks for minors; and toughening laws against straw purchasing, which help deal with one of the key ways that criminals obtain guns (this is a particular passion of Rajiv's).

When I asked David what he thought of the senators' proposal, he said that, beyond the specifics, one deeply encouraging thing "lies in watching politicians be competent again." He added: "Politics should be the art of the possible, and this is what good faith compromise looks like. We'll see if it survives the ideologues in the House."

I learned so much from this conversation with David and Rajiv and suspect you will, too:

*On whether our problems with gun violence are uniquely American:*

**BW:** As of 2020, the leading cause of death among children is guns. That was also the year that

we had the highest rate of gun sales in American history. To what extent is that problem uniquely American?

**RS:** I think it's uniquely American in at least two different ways. One is statistical and one is cultural. Statistically, we have very high homicide rates relative to countries at comparable levels of prosperity. We have about four times the homicide rate of Canada and about ten times the homicide rate of the United Kingdom. Culturally, we are very different because there's a widespread belief that there's a sacred right to bear arms that's enshrined in our most cherished document through the Second Amendment. It's not just that the Second Amendment exists, it's that it's celebrated. So certain kinds of policies that other countries have adopted in the wake of mass shootings are not available to us. In those two respects, it's uniquely American.

**BW:** David, do you understand it the way that Rajiv does?

**DF:** There's one aspect that's unique and one aspect that is not unique. One thing that's absolutely, unquestionably unique is our gun ownership rate. I think it's about 120 guns per 100 people. In other words, there is more than one gun per person in the U.S. That's quite exceptional.

Where we're not all that exceptional is in the murder rate and homicide rate. There are a host of countries, especially in Latin America, but also in parts of Europe, where there is a higher murder rate than the United States, even though they have a lot lower rate of owning guns. For example, Russia has a homicide rate higher than ours and a gun ownership rate that might be about ten percent of ours. Ukraine has a homicide rate that's higher than ours and a gun ownership rate that's less than ten percent of ours. And we can really go down the rabbit hole in South America.

**RS:** Certainly, El Salvador and Panama have much higher homicide rates, but they are not economically advanced in the way that we are. I do think that the comparison with Western Europe, with Australia, with New Zealand, Canada and with Japan and South Korea, these are meaningful comparisons. These are countries that have roughly similar economic systems and roughly similar levels of prosperity and to throw El Salvador, Panama, and Latin America into the mix is perfectly accurate, but I think that it muddies the picture a little bit.

*On the state of the gun debate, 'person control,' and the Australia comparison:*

**DF:** The gun debate is in many ways a proxy for a lot of our cultural debates: We have reached a point where the two sides almost can't understand the other's perspective. But there's a pretty straightforward and compelling analysis for gun control which goes something like this: Guns, particularly semiautomatic weapons, are extraordinarily deadly. It is very easy to get them and purchase them in the United States. And how many times do we have to see somebody who's obviously not fit to own a weapon be able to so easily purchase one and then go in immediately commit murder with it? And why would putting additional hurdles in the way of a person who is a threat to themselves or other—like a waiting period, for example—be such an impediment to your right to self-defense? And what is it about preventing a weapon like an AR 15, that's very much like the M4 I carried in Iraq? Why can I get that so quickly when we've seen time and time again, people



buy these weapons quickly and then use them quickly to commit mass murder?

There's a very straightforward logic to that that's pretty compelling.

And the answer is often very unsatisfying. It is: We've tried that. It doesn't really work.

What happens when you put obstacles in the face of a purchase of a weapon is oftentimes a form of collective punishment for the law abiding—and it doesn't have any impact on the criminal. So if you're going to regulate, your regulation should impact criminals far more than it impacts the law abiding, and most gun control measures impact the law abiding far more than they impact criminals.

So in my branch of the gun rights movement, we think of much more of person control than gun control, if that makes sense. Controlling who are the people who can purchase and possess versus controlling what are the weapons available. Now, I don't believe we should have freely available machine guns or bazookas or anti-tank weapons. But among the weapons that are commonly in use for a lawful purpose, it is much more practical to aim at the people who are not fit to possess a weapon than it is to aim at the weapons that are so common and commonly used for lawful purposes like self-defense.

**BW:** Rajiv, is that what your research has borne out?

**RS:** A lot of people who are in favor of gun control would like the kind of policy that Australia implemented after the Port Arthur shootings in 1996, which killed 35 people. That shooting led to an initiative that repurchased about 20% of existing guns, banned a large number of weapons, and implemented a 28 day waiting period. It was a very muscular policy. And the research shows that that was effective in reducing homicides and suicides in Australia quite substantially.

I think one of the reasons that the gun control debate involves so much paralysis and so much talking past each other and so much misunderstanding is partly because I think the advocates of gun control don't see why we can't just do something like that. Part of the reason is the following: I've been in the United States a very long time now, but it's a gradual process of understanding my adopted country. One very important article that changed my perspective on these things was by Stanley Levinson in 1989 on the Second Amendment in the Yale Law Journal. It argued that the Second Amendment is actually part of a tradition in American society that is distrustful of authority, of government, of tyranny, and that it ought to be seen in that light, in conjunction with the other rights that are in the Constitution. So when you talk about policies that restrict the rights of legal gun ownership—even if it is banning assault weapons—people feel that it's an infringement of a right that they have as Americans. And they will powerfully resist it being taken away from them.

I think it's important to understand that that's a legitimate position. It may be a position that one disagrees with, but there is reasoning behind it. It's part of an American political tradition.

*On the NRA:*

**BW:** There's a popular perception in the mainstream press that if it wasn't for the NRA essentially owning enough Republicans in state houses and in Washington we would have more gun restrictions. Is that accurate?

**DF:** Obviously, a lobbying organization that has millions of dollars to throw around is going to have an impact. But the popular narrative suggests that the NRA has far more influence than it actually does. One piece of evidence is that the NRA is an organization in a state of crisis. It is wracked by scandal and it's got terrible leadership. It is hemorrhaging money. And yet that hasn't changed the underlying public support for the Second Amendment.

The NRA is powerful. But if it went away tomorrow, you might have the National Gun Rights League that would immediately form as the primary leadership. They're an organizational manifestation of widespread public sentiment of a very intense base.

**BW:** Rajiv, if it's not the fault of the NRA or other gun lobbyists, is it just the deep, widespread American belief in the right to bear arms without restrictions? And that this value is absolutely essential in determining who they'd vote for?

**RS:** Yes, I absolutely agree with that. The best evidence for that is actually something that David cited in a recent article of his. He talked about some of the pro-gun rhetoric that's exceedingly excessive and in fact, even offensive. You've got toddlers playing with guns, people using guns for Christmas cards, and politicians leveraging their attachment to guns because they think it would be effective. They think it'll be effective because the voters who put them in office respond favorably to it.

*On practical solutions:*

**BW:** Whether it's handguns that are killing tens of thousands of people in cities like Chicago or Philadelphia or it's these high-capacity weapons that are being used in school shootings, innocent people are dying. It seems that far too often this issue is being used as a political football and that as a result, real, meaningful reforms are not being put forward. What do you think should and can be done to stop this crisis?

**RS:** My focus is on the lost or stolen guns—the handguns that are used for most homicides in the United States. If we can do something about this, we will make a dent in the problem.

I'm going to put forward a very hypothetical scenario that might sound a bit bizarre, but it has a purpose. Imagine if the Constitution protected the right of individuals to own and operate motor vehicles so that there were restrictions on the ability of legislators to infringe upon that right. There are elements that are really key in terms of motor vehicle regulation. They are licensing liability and mandatory insurance. In terms of licensing, if you fail a vision test, you can't drive. There are eligibility criteria. With liability, if you injure somebody with your vehicle, you are responsible

for that injury and that harm. And you may be responsible even if it's done with somebody who has taken your vehicle. You are responsible for keeping your vehicle safe. And with mandatory insurance, you have to have insurance so that you can meet your obligations under that liability. If there was a Second Amendment for cars, which of these things wouldn't be able to be done? It seems to me that we could do various versions of all of these things.

**BW:** So you're saying we don't need to repeal the Second Amendment? We can keep our right to bear arms. But we can ask gun purchasers to undergo something like the process of what people do when they get a driver's license before they are allowed to get behind the wheel of a car.

**RS:** Yes. And ensure yourself against the injuries that could be caused by the firearm that you may have left laying around. Your child takes it to school and shoots somebody you are liable for not having kept it safe. That is a much more powerful incentive for safe storage than any state safe storage law with criminal penalties, in my opinion.

I wouldn't shed any tears if we got rid of the Second Amendment. I know I know that many people would. I know that it's a heartfelt issue. I don't have any particular attachment to it. In fact, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me. But I do accept that it's there, it's meaningful, it's popular, and it's part of American political tradition. And we need to understand that and acknowledge it, even if we don't necessarily agree with it. So leave that in place. Don't try to reduce ownership, but impose burdens on the owners that they might consider to be reasonable and acceptable—and that they consider perfectly reasonable and acceptable with regard to motor vehicle ownership. Cars are durable like guns. And cars can cause a lot of injury and death like guns. I would like people to think along these lines.

**DF:** The fundamental reality is if you impose anything that puts a subjectively determined governmental barrier between you and the possession of a firearm, there's going to be extreme resistance. Also, it's probably going to be deemed unconstitutional within the next thirty days because of the New York State Rifle and Pistol Association case that's going to strike down the New York State's very subjective test that it's imposed on whether or not someone can bear arms outside the home.

I do think there's a great deal of support for measures that take a look at actual behavior and objectively categorize certain kinds of behavior as disqualifying. That's the felon and the violent domestic offender. That's when someone has indicated that they're a threat to themselves or others through a red flag law. The default is I have a right to keep and bear arms for self-defense, but I can lose that right by conduct. There's a lot of support for that.

**BW:** Rajiv, you have a number of suggestions that involve new tech, like fingerprint or facial recognition. Can you tell us about those?

**RS:** It's contentious. There are these so-called smart guns where you can have biometric technologies that prevent use by others other than the legal onus. If you lose your phone it's very hard for somebody else to just use it. They'd have to go through some steps. We could have that

with firearms also. We have those technologies. You can have systems that involve bracelets, radio communication, and technology that you need to go through in order to activate your gun.

*A message to each party:*

**BW:** What do you want to tell Democrats that they are wrong about? And what about Republicans? What should they give up on and what should they focus on?

**DF:** Democrats, stop trying all or nothing. And this goes beyond gun rights. Does everything have to be big? Why not go for attainable reform? Go for reform that can get Republican votes even if it's not everything you wanted. Republicans have to stop with maximum resistance to any reforms.

**RS:** To Democrats, I would say that even if you disagree with the individual rights interpretation of the Second Amendment, accept the fact that it's not entirely unreasonable and that it has a lot of support in the population and that it's consistent with various other American political traditions and history. And because of that, understand the maximalist position. As David put it, the Australian solution is out of reach for us, so you have to think about other alternatives.

To Republicans, I would say, you talk a lot about personal responsibility, but think about personal responsibility for somebody who has left their firearm unsecured. Maybe they've left it in a glove compartment of a car and it is stolen and trafficked and taken somewhere else and results in death. There's a responsibility.

*On repealing the Second Amendment:*

**BW:** How much of this debate just comes down to the fact that whether we like it or not, America has this right enshrined in our Constitution. And that we're going to see significantly more guns in our country unless we decide to change the Constitution?

**RS:** The Constitution constrains our legislators quite considerably. I don't agree with the view that one can simply ignore the Second Amendment because of the militia clause. And I think that the honest position for somebody who would like a maximalist policy is to make the case for repeal, not the case that the Second Amendment can be ignored.

**DF:** The bottom line is we're going to have a country where people own a lot of guns. I'm someone who supports the Second Amendment. I think it is enshrining a right of self-defense. An amendment that would say you, law-abiding citizens, no longer have a right of self-defense that's meaningful, in a nation awash with weapons, would be a great injustice. So I'm against repealing the Second Amendment. I believe in a robust interpretation of the Second Amendment. But here's the good news. We don't have to crack down on the Second Amendment to do something really meaningful about gun deaths in this country.

## “True Equity Means Everyone’s Life Has Equal Value”: A Conversation with Shani Buggs

By Greg Berman

In 2019, The New York Times discovered a new trend: “Gun Research Is Suddenly Hot,” the paper of record declared. One of the up-and-coming gun researchers featured in the story is Shani Buggs, an assistant professor at the University of California, Davis.

Dr. Buggs completed her doctorate in health and public policy at Johns Hopkins University. In Baltimore, she studied community-based violence prevention programs and measured public attitudes about guns and the criminal justice system. She also worked with the Baltimore mayor’s office, the police department, and other city agencies to enhance local violence reduction strategies and policies. This work has led to her growing visibility in the field, including a recent call to consult with White House Domestic Policy Advisor Susan Rice and other Biden officials about how to reduce gun violence.

The following conversation took place in late March, not long after violent incidents in Boulder, Colorado, and Atlanta returned mass shootings to the front pages of newspapers around the country. This transcript has been edited for length and clarity.

**Greg Berman: What is your origin story? How did you get involved in this field?**

**Shani Buggs:** Prior to my current career, I spent a decade in corporate management. I found myself working for a healthcare firm in Atlanta that began to venture into the workplace-wellness space. I was helping individuals with lifestyle change and behavior modification. I decided that public health was absolutely where I wanted to be and that I wanted to obtain a master’s in public health. So, I enrolled in the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. This was the summer of 2012.

I arrived in Baltimore with a heightened awareness of violence in the city, because as I was moving from Atlanta, people expressed concern about my safety based on *The Wire*. And then, just a couple of weeks into my program, a gunman shot up a movie opening in rural Colorado, and the national media was transfixed by that tragedy. I was very aware that there were regular shootings happening in Baltimore and that it was not even garnering local attention. And so I was really shocked and outraged by the disproportionate attention and response to shootings depending on who was shot, where they were shot, and who the media and policymakers and the general public saw as being deserving of sympathy and attention.

I happened to be at Johns Hopkins, which at the time was the one academic institution in the country that had a research center devoted to gun violence. And so I shifted my focus to gun-violence prevention. This was 2012, and the conversation about gun violence as a public health issue was still very much a fringe idea. I shifted my graduate studies and ultimately my entire career. I

decided to stay at Hopkins beyond my master's program. I was accepted to the doctoral program and continued to train and work with folks in Baltimore thinking about violence reduction and prevention. For a couple of years, I worked in the mayor's office, helping the city to coordinate their violent crime reduction strategy.

**We know that some types of violence increased in many American cities over the past year. But my sense is that the pattern is not uniform—some places it's up a lot, some places it's up a little bit, and in some places it's flat. Have you taken a step back and looked at the city-by-city numbers? What jumps out at you?**

I think the thing of greatest interest is how consistently violence has spiked in cities around the country. Gun violence increased while we started to see lower rates of theft and lower rates of robbery and lower rates of rape. To your point, the data is still coming out, and we know that every city did not experience the same rate of increase, but many cities saw large spikes.

*Where we saw spikes in gun violence were places that had previously experienced higher than average rates of gun violence and that had all of the social factors that are associated with gun violence —high rates of unemployment, high rates of poverty, high rates for criminal justice contact, housing insecurity, food insecurity.*

There's a lot to unpack, and it will take months or years for us to really be able to untangle all of the many factors that were associated with last year's increase. I have some theories and some ideas, but it is going to take some time before we're able to really understand what was at play.

**Don't make me wait. Give me a theory or two.**

So, where we saw spikes in gun violence were places that had previously experienced higher than average rates of gun violence and that had all of the social factors that are associated with gun violence —high rates of unemployment, high rates of poverty, high rates for criminal justice contact, housing insecurity, food insecurity. The pandemic and the shutdown severed social ties and economic ties for many individuals. Different from other economic downturns, the pandemic really hit certain employment sectors and certain subpopulations differently. We've seen higher-income positions bounce back better than what we've seen for individuals who are at the lowest rung of economic opportunity and financial stability. And you also had social supports that were basically shut down. Violence intervention strategies were curbed. Job training, subsidized employment, mentoring, case management, financial assistance, social assistance—those were all shut down. And then the fear and anxiety and frustration over the coronavirus and the lack of trust in institutions among communities of color—I think all of those things came together in a perfect storm kind of way.

**I wonder whether you could talk for a second about what you see as the links between a history of discriminatory policy making and the communities where we see high rates of gun violence?**

There's a direct through-line. We have not invested in communities of color for decades. There's been research done on the relationship between redlining and the discriminatory housing practices of the 1930s and 1940s and how that relates to gun violence today. We continue to see that relationship, but we have not done enough research into that relationship. Increasingly, there are more people starting to connect historical factors to contemporary phenomena, particularly as they relate to structural racism. The communities that have been the least invested in and the least supported through financial opportunity, through housing stability, through quality educational systems, and through the development of our children—those are the same communities that are experiencing high rates of gun violence today.

**I've seen some data that suggests that there's been an increase in gun sales over the past year. Do you think that has any relationship to increases in gun violence around the country?**

It's an important question that we don't yet know the answer to. We know that gun sales have increased, but the data available do not tell us anything about who's buying the guns. Researchers are trying to better understand if the increase in gun sales translates to increases in gun violence. I think that's still to be determined. What we do know is that in the communities that are experiencing high rates of gun violence, firearms are still far too prevalent, including firearms that were illegally possessed, illegally sold, and trafficked into these communities prior to March of 2020. We don't yet know how many more guns there are in these communities, but it was a problem before last year.

**Let's turn to Baltimore, and let's start by talking about Cure Violence. This is a violence prevention model that has generated a lot of excitement in recent years. It is also a model that can be challenging to implement. How has the model fared in Baltimore?**

The Cure Violence model, and the theory behind it, we don't know if it actually works in every community and every city. I think what we saw in Baltimore is that there were some communities where the nature of the violence fit that model, but other communities within Baltimore where it did not.

The Cure Violence model was designed in the 1990s with the understanding that violence is contagious. It was also designed with the understanding that if you can intervene with group leaders, you can then use the social and political capital of those leaders to help curb violence among their followers.

Violence has evolved in a number of different ways since the 1990s. The Cure Violence model may not fit the times any more. In many cases, you don't have structured, hierarchical groups with traditional leaders. That's not what we see today. You have much more loosely formed, smaller groups that may be fighting against each other, even though they're under the bigger umbrella of a known gang or group.

*Individuals carry today because it's better to be caught with a gun than to be caught without a gun. People carry weapons because they perceive that the system doesn't*

*keep them safe.*

On the other hand, there are elements of the model—having credible messengers to mediate conflict and connecting individuals to services and supports to address trauma and help create lifestyle change—that are absolutely important and should be strengthened and used more widely, in my opinion.

I think in many ways, where Cure Violence had success in Baltimore, it was really on the strength of the individuals leading it and doing the frontline work. There was little city investment up until the last couple of years. The program had been supported by grants, which meant that Cure Violence was a program rather than a network of services and support. It was just kind of operating on its own. There has to be greater support, and the city just didn't provide that for the longest time. That is changing. I'm optimistic and hopeful. Because whether it's Cure Violence, or focused deterrence, or a hospital-based violence intervention program—none of these programs can really be successful at creating sustained violence reduction without a broader infrastructure of support.

**You were part of a team that did some survey research about the underground gun market in Baltimore. One of the findings that stood out for me was how many of the respondents said that they carried guns for protection because they felt vulnerable.**

We did not ask for people's status, but many of these were individuals who were very likely to be legally prohibited from carrying firearms. The fact that so many carry is alarming. They carry because they do not feel safe in their communities. And they carry despite knowing that there are legal risks if they get caught, although some of the research that we've done suggests that the legal consequences of carrying in Baltimore are inconsistent. But we have also learned that increased penalties for gun carrying do not necessarily impact day-to-day behavior. The research coming out of Chicago and coming out of the Center for Court Innovation in New York has been consistent: Individuals carry today because it's better to be caught with a gun than to be caught without a gun. People carry weapons because they perceive that the system doesn't keep them safe. That's the real story.

**You've expressed some skepticism about the deterrent effect of policing. You've also talked in other forums about the harms that over-policing can do. I'm wondering whether you think that there is a role for police to play in attempting to respond to the recent increase in gun violence.**

I believe that people should be held accountable for their actions. I believe individuals who do harm must be held accountable. There needs to be deterrent effects for risky behaviors, such as carrying a firearm. I also have healthy skepticism that policing, as structured today, is the appropriate deterrent for what I've just described.

We have handed over the idea of public safety to police. All the police can do is respond after something happens. Or they can occupy a neighborhood and be visible to deter crime. But that's not what keeps a community safe. I live in Sacramento. The police aren't keeping my community safe. My community is safe because homes are stable, the environment is healthy, and there are



opportunities for youth and for families. I'm not trying to paint this rosy, idyllic picture, but it's true.

*We also need to be investing in researchers who are engaging in community-based, participatory research that is not just extracting information from the community or studying individuals in the community as subjects.*

I think the conversation needs to focus on the fact that policing is not serving communities equally. What we have seen, over and over again, is the harm done by unethical policing. We need to be thinking about how to invest in the kinds of supports that allow for communities to stay together and stay safe and healthy. But it can't be an either/or conversation, because we still have harm being done today. And we don't have alternate systems right now other than law enforcement. If someone is harmed right now, the only number that I can call is 911. I can't access a credible messenger. I can't access a community paramedic. I can't access non-traditional mental health workers who can deescalate or support someone who's having a mental health crisis. So we have to talk about the systems that we have today, but we also need to recognize that police don't prevent violence, police respond to violence.

**So we've talked about the need to reform the criminal justice system. I'd like to pivot and talk about the ways that your field needs to reform going forward. How do researchers need to change in order to stay relevant and to pursue an agenda that's truly responsive to the problems on the ground?**

I'll start with policing because that's where we just left off. There are communities of color that have for decades said the police do not keep us safe. We have ignored that. And even today in the conversations around what we do about policing, we're continuing to ignore a non-trivial percentage of the population that are saying these people that you keep sending my way don't help me feel safe and they actually cause more harm. Ignoring those voices is effectively saying we don't value you in the same way that we value these other voices that say keep sending the police. That has to change. True equity means everyone's life has equal value. We need to recognize that we have not valued a large number of people in our community. There are a number of researchers who have been centering community voices, but the field overall has not. And there are a number of reasons why that may be true. The ivory tower is a barrier in and of itself. There is also the fact that we have focused on criminal justice outcomes, as they relate to violence prevention, rather than on health and wellbeing. If all we're doing is looking at whether the homicide numbers went up or down, then we're not thinking about the societal costs of the interventions.

There's also a problem with one- or two-year grant cycles. Some of the problems we are dealing with are decades in the making. We're not going to solve these problems with some quick studies and some quick intervention. So we need to have long-term investments in longitudinal studies that allow for community-based, community-driven strategies to gain footing, to have growing pains, and to really support the community in ways that are healing and transformative. We also need to be investing in researchers who are engaging in community-based, participatory research that is not just extracting information from the community or studying individuals in the community as

subjects.

**One of the things I have learned from doing community-based work is that communities don't speak with one voice. Within any given community, you've got people who hate the police. And you've got people who want more police. So engaging the community is not a simple matter because the community is not going to speak uniformly about issues like safety and policing that are incredibly complicated. In the desire to listen to the folks who say "The police aren't making me safe," we shouldn't compound the error by ignoring those who say, "The police do make me safe."**

Absolutely. It's messy like democracy is messy. But we have to give equal voice and equal attention to the many different voices in our community and the values that they're expressing, presuming that these are anti-racist and equitable values that they're expressing. As it relates to research, it takes time to do community-based participatory research.

*I'm hopeful that for the first time, we will have large-scale investments at the federal level into communities, specifically for violence prevention that doesn't look like more law enforcement, more punishment, more oppression.*

It takes time to engage communities in a meaningful way. If people are saying, "I absolutely want the police," we need to be asking them what they are getting from that safety and have an honest conversation about that, but we cannot ignore the people who say, "The police don't keep me safe."

**Are you feeling optimistic or pessimistic as you look to the next year or two in terms of gun violence? You started off by saying that you were attracted to this field, at least in part, because you saw that some victims got more attention than others. Arguably we're seeing that dynamic play out right now with a lot of attention to recent shootings in Boulder and Atlanta and not so much attention to the more quotidian victims of violence in places like Baltimore, Chicago, and New York.**

Unfortunately, it feels like we haven't learned lessons from last year. If you look at Atlanta and Boulder, I already know more about the victims in Boulder than I know about the victims in Atlanta.

Why is that? I don't hear the media talking about that. I don't hear them talking about the 15 people shot at a pop-up party in Chicago last weekend, or the five people shot in Philadelphia over this weekend. The mass shooting conversation that's happening right now is maddening to me because the definition that is being used—four or more killed when the shooter is perceived to be a stranger—erases the trauma that is experienced from shootings that don't meet this criteria. When multiple people are shot in any given experience, regardless if four or more die, the experience of everybody involved is not trivial. It matters. There needs to be attention and resources placed there. I've been disheartened by the way the last couple of weeks have played out in the media. The shootings in Atlanta and Boulder have just dwarfed the conversation about community violence.

But there are glimmers of hope. There are conversations happening at the federal level with both the White House and Congress around investing in community violence prevention. I'm hopeful that for the first time, we will have large-scale investments at the federal level into communities, specifically for violence prevention that doesn't look like more law enforcement, more punishment, more oppression.

Different cities around the country are thinking about how to do safety differently. How do we actually invest in people's safety rather than invest in their failure? It gives me hope. I'm hopeful that we can continue to think more broadly about what safety looks like, who deserves to be safe, and how we hold everyone accountable for wrongdoing, including those who were supposed to be in charge of making policy that keeps us safe.

# How To Actually Help After Yet Another Mass Shooting

*Gun safety advocates share the tangible ways you can make a difference if you're feeling lost, angry or traumatized right now.*

*By Jillian Wilson*

As of March 28, there have been 130 mass shootings in the United States this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive. That means there have been more mass shootings than days in 2023.

The most recent happened Monday in Nashville, where three children and three adults were killed at The Covenant School, a private Christian school, by a shooter armed with an assault-style pistol, a rifle and a handgun, according to HuffPost reports.

These mass shootings are heartbreakingly commonplace throughout the U.S., which has a “26 times higher gun homicide rate than any peer nation,” according to Shannon Watts, the founder of Moms Demand Action, a grassroots organization that fights for stronger gun laws throughout the United States. (The Gun Violence Archive defines a mass shooting as one in which at least four victims are injured or killed, not including any shooter.)

This frustrating fact is made more enraging by the realization that this doesn't have to happen. Politicians could support sensible gun safety legislation, but many of them are tied to organizations like the National Rifle Association, preventing them from doing just that. Instead, many consistently offer only their thoughts and prayers.

It feels like we're stuck in an endless cycle of despair when it comes to these tragedies that the general public has little control over. But though it's easy to feel helpless, this is a dangerous feeling that can keep change from happening. So if you want to make it change, what can you do? Below, we asked gun safety advocates share what you can do to help and how to protect your mental health in the process:

## **First, don't let your anger fizzle out.**

This feeling you have right now? Let it propel you in the weeks to come. Action is necessary all year round — not just in the wake of a horrific shooting.

“I would tell folks that the frustration, the anger, the fear that they're feeling that their kids' school could be next, to hold on to it, as hard as it is, and channel it into pushing for lifesaving laws at the state level right now,” Adam Garber, the executive director of CeaseFire PA, a Pennsylvania group that advocates for gun violence prevention through legislation and community work, told HuffPost.

Though it can feel pressing to make donations and call your political representatives in the days

immediately after a mass shooting, it's important to keep that momentum going throughout the year.

Legislators constantly hear from a small minority of gun extremists, Garber added. But they “need to hear from us, and it can't be just over the next three to four days, it needs to be ... over the next 10 months, year, two years. It needs to be consistent to really get them to recognize that they should stop listening to the minority of their voters,” Garber said.

“The system is set up for incrementalism,” Watts told HuffPost, meaning that giant change is not going to happen overnight — even after a mass shooting. “Incrementalism is what leads to revolution.”

“You also have to commit to what I call the unglamorous heavy lifting of grassroots activism,” Watts said. “Even if you only have an hour a week ... every call, every email, every conversation you have adds up, and it makes a difference.”

### **Understand that mass shootings are just one part of the gun violence problem.**

“I am grateful that people decide to get off the sidelines after a horrific shooting tragedy. I am so, so grateful,” Watts said. “But it's important that they understand this is committing to the work of activism, and it's also about looking at this issue holistically.”

Mass shootings and school shootings get a lot of publicity, but they are just 1% of the gun violence that happens in this country, according to Watts. In fact, 120 Americans are killed each day from guns, with an additional 200 per day injured, according to research from Everytown for Gun Safety, a nonprofit that advocates for gun control.

“The everyday gun violence ... disproportionately impacts Black and brown Americans,” Watts said. And the everyday violence, which includes homicide, unintentional shootings, suicide and domestic gun violence, is largely carried out by handguns.

### **Volunteer with a gun safety organization in your state.**

Gun regulations and legislation vary by state, which means what is going on with legislation in your area may be totally different for your friend 1,000 miles away.

Garber said it's important to get involved with your statewide gun violence protection organization because of the knowledge they possess. “I think these groups really know what's possible in the legislature in their state and really know those dynamics — what they need is people to hold that feeling and push with their legislators for these laws.”

If you don't know where to find your state's organization, Garber said that “there's a loose network called States United to Prevent Gun Violence that ... on their website will list many of the state organizations.”

Additionally, many national groups have local branches that can help you figure out where your effort is best spent. For example, Moms Demand Action, Brady: United Against Gun Violence and Giffords all have chapters and events throughout the country.

For Moms Demand Action specifically, Watts said if you want to get involved, you can text READY to 64433 and a volunteer will call you with information on how you can get involved in your community.

### **Or connect with a local community violence intervention organization.**

“There are a lot of partner organizations that we work with that are doing this work and have been, frankly, for decades with very little attention,” Watts said.

Specifically, Watts said this is true of community violence intervention groups, which are groups that aim to stop retaliatory gun violence before it can happen. “That is really difficult work that requires support and funding.”

So you can consider donating to or getting in touch with your community’s violence intervention group and asking what you can do to help. You can search for a local violence intervention group or even ask larger gun safety groups in your region who needs additional support locally.

Some examples include United Playaz in San Francisco; Action4Equity in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Turning the Tide Violence Intervention Program in Charleston, South Carolina; the TraRon Center in Washington, D.C.; and Cleveland Peacemakers Alliance in Ohio.

### **Donate if you’re able to offer money.**

These organizations need money to continue their lifesaving mission. “The public is the lifeblood of our work, so definitely donate if you can, but don’t stop there or, if you can’t donate, don’t stop there either way,” Garber said.

Donate to one of your community violence intervention groups or to one of the nationwide organizations that are working to end gun violence.

If you can afford it, you can set up a recurring monthly donation so you can keep the momentum going throughout the year.

### **Fight the narrative that guns make us safer.**

Many people believe the myth that guns make us safer — but the numbers show they do not. This misconception is a huge part of American gun culture, according to Nina Vinik, the founder of Project Unloaded, a gun violence prevention group.

“All of the research and evidence tell us that guns don’t make us more safe; they make us less safe,”

Vinik told HuffPost. “Homes with guns have higher rates of suicide, of homicide ... and communities with more guns have higher rates of gun violence.”

Watts said the data shows that states with weaker gun laws have more gun violence and more gun death. States with stronger gun laws have less gun violence and fewer gun deaths.

“If we want to make laws based on data, which is the job of lawmakers ... it’s how we reduce deaths in this country,” Watts said.

### **Call or write your local representative.**

“I think writing to your local legislators is really critical, and calling them up,” Garber said.

You can find out who your local representatives are by searching Find My Legislator and adding your state name. Most states have a tool that you can use to see who represents you in Congress.

You can let your representatives know that you support strong gun laws and want change in your community and nationwide. Specifically, Garber said, you can inquire about important gun safety measures such as safe weapon storage, extreme-risk protection orders and reporting lost and stolen firearms.

“We don’t know everything yet about what happened in Nashville, but these are the kinds of things we know can prevent many of the acts of violence, and I think that is a good starting point,” Garber said.

### **Vote for candidates who support gun safety.**

“We have an electoral cycle right around the corner,” Watts said.

When voting in any election, vote for candidates who back gun safety laws and vote out the ones who don’t. “We have to elect lawmakers who will act on this issue,” Watts added.

### **If you get involved, don’t forget to take care of yourself.**

According to Dr. Alexa Mieses Malchuk, a primary care physician at One Medical in North Carolina, gun violence — whether you experience it firsthand or hear about it on the news — affects your body and mind.

“It might raise some emotion, like fear, anxiety, sadness, anger, but just know there’s no one way to respond to this sort of trauma,” Malchuk said.

When dealing with the reality of the gun violence epidemic in the U.S., it’s important to rely on the coping strategies that have helped you in other times of trouble, she said. This could mean avoiding the news after a certain time at night, leaning on a support system or journaling. Additionally, make

sure you're getting a good night's sleep, eating nutritious food and drinking enough water, she said.

And if the emotions you feel start negatively affecting your daily life, it's worth reaching out to a mental health professional. Therapists can help equip you with solid coping strategies and provide you with an outlet to talk about how you're feeling. You can't take action for others if you're not taking action for yourself, too.

**Don't feel hopeless; it will lead to inaction.**

"I think so often hopelessness is a function of not understanding the progress that's been made," Watts said. "I'm frustrated by hopelessness because it leads to cynicism, which is too often an excuse for inaction — and that's exactly what the gun lobby wants. They want us to feel like this is inevitable."

Garber also said he thinks the intent is for us to feel like we don't have any control over this.

"As long as we feel helpless, I think this is in politics in general, we give up our power in this moment," he said. "So, the choice to feel hopeful, to be helpful, is a reclaiming of the power that we have as citizens, and reclaiming that power means that we can take action to save lives."





**City Commission Workshop**  
**MINUTES**

**August 6, 2023, 2:00 p.m.**  
**See Attached Notice**

Members Present: Mayor Ward, Commissioner Book, Commissioner Chestnut, Mayor Pro Tempore Duncan-Walker, Commissioner Eastman, Commissioner Saco, Commissioner Willits

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**A. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 2:12 pm.

**B. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**C. BUSINESS DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Introduction given by Tony Jones, Special Advisor for Community Relations.

Invocation given by Superintendent Kenyarda T. Feathers from Williams Temple Church of God in Christ Family Ministries.

Welcome and Reason for Convening given by District I Commissioner, Mayor Pro Tempore Duncan-Walker.

Opening Remarks and Recognition of Elected Officials given by District II Commissioner Ed Book.

Dinner and Panel Discussion: The Role of Community in Addressing Gun Violence.

Greg Bradley, Founder and President of Mirror Image Leadership Academy, moderates this panel discussion as experts from a variety of disciplines share effective methods for making the community part of the solution.

Panelists: 1) Lauryn Simmons, Junior Class Vice-President, Gainesville High School; 2) Zouzouko Doualehi, Compliance Manager, City of Gainesville Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; 3) Heather Jones, Chief Assistant State Attorney, Office of the State Attorney, Eight Judicial Circuit; 4) Alexandra

Martinez, Director of the Alachua County Crisis Center; and 5) Adrian Price, Social Acceptance Advocate.

1. Definition of gun violence - harm to self or others using a firearm, can include psychological impact to family, friends, and community.
2. What are the root causes of gun violence - those exposed to gun violence increase the likelihood of their also perpetrating gun violence.
3. Positives and shortcomings of youth programming - help provide positive male role models, but these programs need funding, all hands on deck approach because there is not one answer.
4. Why not teach Christian values in school?
5. What is the most pressing issue around suicidality and the use of firearms - A stigma still exists, our community does have resources like the Alachua County Crisis Center, but we must listen to one another and have empathy as we hear about someone's pain. Over half of suicides result from gun violence.
6. Reintegrated individuals exiting incarceration - There is still a social stigma, and licensing is restricted in most professions, (i.e. barbers, plumbers) to those without a criminal record.
7. How to teach youth communication to have better language to speak about gun violence - break it down more and be in a teenager/youth perspective, not just one solution, do not overcomplicate it.
8. What is the value of these discussions if the people in this room are not the ones perpetrating gun violence - give an open forum, and take information out into the community; each person has a circle of influence; we are here to figure out a way to bridge the gap between those who do and do not commit gun violence.
9. Address the connection between racism, marginalization, and poverty - absolutely connected, why addressing gun violence must be multifaceted, also contributes to the barriers to mental health and the stigma.
10. Will there be opportunities to address communication issues, role play, or practice and learn how to deliver the message that will be heard - parents are panicked, so talking at youth instead of with youth, slow down and listen; noted there is a community need for a workshop on this; Black on Black Taskforce have youth town halls to help facilitate the conversation.

Organizations Present: Alachua County Government; Alachua County School District; Alachua County Children's Trust; Alachua County Library District; Career Source of North Central Florida; Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County; Episcopal Children's Services; Florida Department of Probation and Parole Services; Grace to Overcome, Inc.; IGB Education Program; Moms Demand Action for Guns Sense in America; Mama's Club; Nathan Ross, Inc.; Peaceful Paths, Domestic Violence Agency; Santa Fe Achievement Program; SPARK 352; Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention; Manhood Foundation; Mirror Image Leadership Academy; Green Dot GNV; Visionaires Club; League of Women Voters; Meridian Behavior Healthcare Inc.; Horizon House; River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding; and more in the resource fair.

Recess 4:32 pm

Reconvene 6:22 pm

Yvette Carter, Director of Government Affairs and Community Relations, welcomed everyone to the youth town hall.

Marsha Kiner, Executive Director, Alachua County Children's Trust, introduced Commissioner Duncan-Walker.

Mayor Pro Tempore Duncan-Walker moderated a youth town hall panel.

Panelists, Academic Experts:

Dr. Derek Hicks, Associate Professor of Religion and Culture in the School of Divinity at Wake Forest University.

Dr. Micah Johnson, Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Department of Mental Health Law & Policy at the University of South Florida Youth Panelists.

Marland Perry, Jr., Youth Steering Committee Member, City of Gainesville One Nation One Project.

Youth Panelists from Manhood Foundation Youth Program.

Video clip of the song Who I Smoke shown. Discussion on the impacts of drill music on youth and strategies for counteracting the messaging in the music; how to reach youth who may be influenced by this music was also discussed.

**D. MEMBER COMMENT**

**E. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

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Kristen J. Bryant, Interim City Clerk

DATE: 08-06-23  
TIME: 2:29 pm  
LOCATION: Century

The Role of Community in Addressing Gun Violence  
FACILITATOR NAME: Greg Bradley

NOTE TAKER NAME: Alexandra Leon

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Initials denote speaker statements

PLEASE CAPTURE:

- Concepts & ideas
  - Healthy discussion about how community members can engage with and leave the summit with a better idea of policies/addressing gun violence issues
  - Role models, self respect, responsibility taught to younger students; needs for programs and funding, structures, and accountability when tackling gun violence
  - Gathering resources and reference points in sociology/economics disciplines to guide younger students
  - Mental health angle of the discussion: (AM) need for 24 hour crisis support, differences between listening and telling people what to do (especially directing younger children); figuring out how to direct people to reach out for support
  - Bridging gaps within sectors for resources, references, empowering figures: AP-sharing his testimony with students; in terms of students, there was an emphasis on discussing gun violence issues in a way that talks *with* them rather than talking *at* them
- Current initiatives inside various organizations
- Challenges
  - Lack of funding, accountability, or structure for programs to tackle gun violence issues

- A name and/or department for each statement

A. What does gun violence mean to you?

1. Zouzouko D.- use of firearms in robberies, crimes, harming others
2. Heather J.- criminal acts, including any act where someone is harmed physically, or mentally, with the use of a firearm including self-harm
- 3.
4. Lauryn S. - incite fear in others
5. A. Martinez- self harm and suicide angle, mental trauma by gun violence has after effects

B. What do you see as the (impacts of gun violence)?

- LS- we are exposed to overwhelming violence levels, regular and people are becoming desensitized; describes it as annoying and people using it as a normalized response

- AP- should not be used as a response; talks about formerly imprisoned individuals being re-integrated into society and having a seat at the table discussing gun violence issues; discusses stigma and notion that they can't be assisted, talks about his experience and displaying character, making his voice heard and serving as an example for people who have been incarcerated

-ZD- connection with mental health and emotional issues, being used as a response and/or to incite fear

- AM additional statement on organization's role- recognizing and not ignoring the roles that racism, poverty, and marginalization play on gun violence

Closing remarks

ZD

- Visiting rural areas' town policy sessions and inviting youth to talk about these issues, parental role to speak with them as well, assistance; including social services

HJ

- Perspective of discussing gun violence incidents after they happen; criminal justice system touching these problems, resources directing young people in the juvenile system;

AP

- Staying in touch with youth, letting young people leading each other; innovative and incorporating their passions for improved change; involved, connected, and hands-on in their lives

LS

- Communication and understanding younger people's perspectives, talking with them rather than talking at them

AM

- Multifaceted- how people owe it to their own personal lives, past traumas, etc. To address gun violence issues and learning new things

DATE: 08-06-23  
TIME: 2:29 pm  
LOCATION: Century

Role of Community in Addressing Gun Violence (cont'd)

NOTE TAKER NAME: Evan Smith

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PLEASE CAPTURE:

- Concepts & ideas
  - Current initiatives inside various organizations
    - Zouzouko Doualehi: Being in Reichert house gave us an opportunity to have a male role model in place. Taught us respect and responsibility.
    - Black on Black taskforce initiative doing youth town halls with youth in one room and adults in another room.
    - Youth employment is currently being offered over the summer for youth to have something productive to do.
  
- Challenges
  - Lack of direction for at risk youth
  - AM: Access to Mental Health treatment is inadequate in some areas and there are many stigmas surrounding mental health and suicide.
  - AP: Social stigma surrounding individuals who have been incarcerated prevents people from "getting a seat at the table."
  -
  
- A name and/or department for each statement

DATE: 08-06-23

Title or activity: Violence Intervention & Prevention

Facilitator Name: Caleb Young & John Alexander

LOCATION: Hawthorne

Note Taker Name: Willie Ortiz

## Discussion

1. What can your sector do to increase protective factors?
  - ☐ Community engagement, listening to citizens instead of telling them, educate and work alongside existing agencies
  - ☐ Give out specific responsibility, educate
  - ☐ Need strong budget, consistent funding of programs
  - ☐ Cannot do much with gun violence at local level
  - ☐ Programs to target the environment around the individual
  - ☐ Address housing affordability – abundant and attainable housing
    - i. Advocate for insurance
2. What can your sector do to decrease risk factors?
  - ☐ Clearly identify the protective and risk factors first
  - ☐ Address violent video games and music
  - ☐ Esp. East Side of Gainesville, need more to do – after-school programs, activities, training parents and kids
  - ☐ Address community trust with the police
  - ☐ Make police officers feel supported
  - ☐ Positive exposure – show people who came from poverty and ‘made it’ to show that it is possible
  - ☐ Discussion of open container
    - i. Entertainment districts – allow drinking outside
  - ☐ Discussion of Wild Spaces and Public Places
    - i. Program funding can only be spent on renovations after January 1, 2023 – social arts, conservation
    - ii. Talking AT the children about what we’re doing, instead of asking them what they want
  - ☐ Support children to prevent childhood trauma/events
  - ☐ Allow people with a criminal record to more easily get a job to reduce recitivism
3. How can your sector intervene across each level of the social ecological model to reduce gun violence?
  - ☐ Root issue of poverty – education, collaborate with schools and poor neighborhoods
  - ☐ Meeting people where they are, physically and mentally
  - ☐ Hands-on, individual attention
  - ☐ Become a facilitator/hub - show off successful organizations, help organizations/non-profit get grant funding and how to write them (know that we don’t know everything – support the organizations that are supporting our community), turn their vision into reality



- ☐ Even when funding runs dry, do not leave a gap in care - city and county can't do everything, but can support organizations in their missions
  - i. i.e., Reichert House
- ☐ Family assessment to help identify the right services

#### Summaries

- Increase after-school programs, bring them into the public housing facilities and staff with public housing people
- Identify students with disciplinary problems and working with their family one-on-one - "frequent flyers"
- Work directly with neighborhood programs
- Limiting exposure to bad things – dispensaries, pawn shops, 'multi-family housing'
- Education, addressing open container
- Getting more data from GPD on crimes to see the roots
- Financial trainings to non-profits
- City-County collaborations to address the root issues

DATE: 08-06-23  
TIME: 4 p.m.  
LOCATION: Hickory

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Below the Water Line  
FACILITATOR NAME: Corey Collins  
NOTE TAKER NAME: Gracia Fernandez

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PLEASE CAPTURE:

- Concepts & ideas
  - You Are Important
  - Change “problem” to “challenge”
  - Deep love for humanity and community
  - Empathy is what has made us
  - We need to see beyond the veil and soul
  - I’m part of the community and everyone plays a role in community
  - Contribution and collaboration is taking what I have learned back into my community
  - I’m here because I’m being directly impacted by gun violence
  - Give everyone respect, people in the community know “who is who”, but we start by giving them respect
  - Compassion and love for people no matter who they are
  - Shootings have increased in our neighborhoods
  - Want to put “commune” back into community
  - Mourning for the loss of productive life
  - All you hear is bad news, bombarded by them
  - I want to know what our city is talking about and see what real solutions we can come up with
  - Talk is talk, and we can talk about it forever
  - “Chew and chat” - let’s sit down and have a conversation
  - We need to have honesty with ourselves
  - We need to stand up for what is right
  - We have to be accountable for our kids
  - Want to learn more about what organizations within the County that offer support to victims of crises
  - Would like to hear something about the family
  - See all the research but no results – no consistency or continuity
  - Hoping this event will further encourage the community to participate
  - Here to help my community
  - Everyone is focused on being independent and self-sufficient
  - We are all one big family and we need to be taking care of each other
  - As a student, the possibility of a shooting lingers in the back of your head while walking on campus
  - State laws are making things worse
  - Friend was shot and killed by Uber driver, we need more security
  - People we’ve lost left people here to carry on their stories
  - Community development, and shared power, conflict resolution
  - When your needs are being met, how do you feel?

- Happy
  - Empowered
  - At peace
  - Accomplished
- How much of the iceberg is visible?
  - 15% vs 85% under water
  - A lot of what we see in our communities is the behavior; not what is under the water level
- Behaviors in my community:
  - Competition
  - Murder
  - Fighting
  - Disagreements
  - Theft
  - Lack of guidance
- We are here because there is a crisis in our community right now. What are some of the needs or experiences triggering?
  - Parental involvement
  - Anger management
  - Addiction
  - Homelessness
  - Mental health
  - Employment
  - Selfishness
  - Gentrification
  - Incarceration of families
  - Adultification of families
  - Human trafficking
  - Gang involvement
  - Drugs
  - Stigma
  - Trauma (generational and own)
  - Adverse Childhood Experience Test ("ACE's)
  - Toxic stress (doesn't stop and there is no relief)
  - Not talking about needs or how to get them met
  - Not talking to our kids about parasocial skills
- What do we do when our kids are struggling/resources:
  - Church
  - Mentoring programs
  - Motiv8U
- What happened that you need this protection?
- What happened to you matters
- The ability to share a story and not feel judged or sentenced
- Allow it to be about them

- Stop asking people “what’s wrong with you” and start asking “what happened to you” and “how did it impact you”
- Happened
- Impact
- Repair
- Prevent
- Accountability many times is the harshest consequence
- We have villainized emotions
- Current initiatives inside various organizations
  - Motiv8U – mobile motivation for kids
  - Challenge Day at Meridian for kids and young adults
- Challenges
  -
- A name and/or department for each statement
  - Crisis units that go out after shootings to your neighborhood people and sit down and talk (GPD)
    - Print on vehicles (phone number or contact info)
    - Bring bottles of water and sit with people to have a conversation

DATE: 08-06-23  
TIME: 4:30 pm  
LOCATION: Century

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Hip Hop Culture  
FACILITATOR NAME: Dr. Derek Hicks  
NOTE TAKER NAME: Evan Smith

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- Defining hip-hop
  - Expression of people put down by society to define who they are, their reality, what they want to be
- Impactful lines from songs
- Inherently political – push back against state-sanctioned, police violence against black bodies (WNA)
- Types of rappers: consciousness with African influence, political consciousness, pridefulness with self-affirmation
  - Black power movement
- Religion is not what you believe, but what you *do* with what you believe
- Need dialogue through hip hop, not violence
- Deplorable conditions brought out a reflection of their conditions, partly expressed through hip hop
  - Special attention to gang affiliation in hip hop



**City Commission Workshop  
MINUTES**

**August 7, 2023, 9:00 a.m.  
See Attached Notice**

Members Present: Mayor Ward, Commissioner Book, Commissioner Chestnut,  
Mayor Pro Tempore Duncan-Walker, Commissioner Eastman,  
Commissioner Willits

Members Absent: Commissioner Saco

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**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 9:13 am.

**B. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**C. BUSINESS DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Lonnie Scott, Sr. Chief of Police, welcomed everyone to day two of the prevent gun violence summit.

Invocation was given by Dr. Marie Herring, Dayspring Missionary Baptist Church.

Welcome and Reason for Convening by Mayor Ward.

Opening Remarks and Recognition of Elected Officials by City Commissioner Chestnut and County Commissioner Anna Prizzia.

Overview and Introduction to the Social Ecological Model - On July 20, 2023, the Gainesville City Commission declared gun violence a public health crisis. Gainesville Community Health Director Brandy Stone, MPH, CPH, and University of Florida Senior Lecturer Julia Varnes, PhD, give an overview of a public health approach to violence prevention as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Social-Ecological Model (SEM) will be described as a tool to develop actionable policies and practices.

Public Comment: Dr. Hicks, Bishop Stokes, Diyonne McGraw, Tina Certain.

Organizations Present: Alachua County Government; Alachua County School District; Alachua County Children's Trust; Alachua County Library District; Career Source of North Central Florida; Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County; Episcopal Children's Services; Florida Department of Probation and Parole Services; Grace to Overcome, Inc.; IGB Education Program; Moms Demand Action for Guns Sense in America; Mama's Club; Nathan Ross, Inc.; Peaceful Paths, Domestic Violence Agency; Santa Fe Achievement Program; SPARK 352; Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention; Manhood Foundation; Mirror Image Leadership Academy; Green Dot GNV; Visionaires Club; League of Women Voters; Meridian Behavior Healthcare Inc.; Horizon House; River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding; and more in the resource fair.

Sector Breakouts: A Public Health Perspective for Gun Violence Prevention This series of breakout sessions is divided by sector. Each group will brainstorm factors relative to the sphere of influence using the Social-Ecological Model. The discussions will include prevention strategies and protective factors such as safe homes, social support networks, convenient healthcare, and opportunities for engaging programs and activities.

- Public Health, Healthcare and Social Services
- Elected Officials / Local Government
- Public Safety / Judicial System Stakeholders
- Educators and School Administrators
- Business and Civic Community Members

Commissioner Chestnut - 1) afterschool programs into the public housing area, funding from GPD and landlords; CareerSource - Workforce Innovated Act, summer high & middle student jobs and beyond; 2) PSA on gun storage; student referrals working with them and their whole family; school district hired 23 social workers; frequent juvenile offenders; Duval Elementary - colocate services there for families; solve transportation; PSA in-service on how to ride the bus; 3) 64 neighborhood organizations and teach about Teen Court and other programs; city zoning limiting exposure to negative influences (i.e., dispensaries, liquor stores, multi-family housing).

Commissioner Willits - 1) open alcohol container, need more data to see the connection with intersecting gun violence; 2) protective factor - education, continued activation of youth; housing affordability, including insurance - not just the un-housed, but more the under-housed; advocate for gun sense laws with state legislatures.

Satori Days, County Community Support Services - 1) wrap-around services; community policing; positive exposure to students; parent engagement, financial literacy; reducing predatory loan programs; cross collaborations between city and county; 2) training for and by non-profit community partners.

Invocation was given by Pastor Gerard Duncan, Prayers by Faith Ministries.

Mayor Ward introduced the keynote speaker, Ariel Cathcart.

Lunch / Keynote Speaker: Ariel Cathcart, Everytown for Gun Safety.

Panel Review: Learning from Sectors. This is an opportunity to learn from the sectors. As moderator of this panel review, Mayor Harvey L. Ward Jr. will employ the following prompts to generate discussion based on the previous activity.

- How can your sector intervene with positive action items to work across each level of the social-ecological model to prevent gun violence?
- What can your sector do to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors for gun violence in our community?

Panel: Lonnie Scott, Sr., Gainesville Police Chief; Zeria Folston, Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Commissioner Cynthia Chestnut; Dr. Melvena Wilson, University of Florida Professor, Department of Health Education & Behavior; Pastor Karl Anderson, Upper Room Church of God in Christ.

Communication - between agencies and with the public, ensure people are aware of the issues with guns in the community, both within the city and surrounding areas. Coordinate communications between all law enforcement agencies throughout the community, as well as with the State Attorney and Public Defender offices.

Education - creating a new school within the district that addressed behavior and mental health and funding from all partners, incentivizing parents to be engaged, community events, and job fairs at the schools. Level of education directly related to perpetrators of gun violence.

Bishop Stokes Model - agency compliment the work with individuals to provide service to the whole family, community, and environment.

Current Resources - 1) TeensWork, which gave 220 students jobs, and there is a gap for older students; 2) BOLD Program by GPD, helps students with legal issues to get them back on track; and 3) Cease Fire program, wrap-around services for youth who are on probation and their families. Increase communications with these youth through social media and PSAs. Trade Schools opportunities to give skills to these youth.



Vocational/Technical School - Similar to Lively Technical College, BOLD program connects youth and others to these programs and gives them more than a job, rather a career. Duval Elementary - colocate services there for families.

Increase Protective Backers - education to parents that they know what is out there so they can protect their children, i.e. Drill Music. Resources are available both for the youth and parents/families, must get the word out. Utilize Gainesville's 64 community organizations to disseminate information.

Establish a Coordinated Community Response to gun violence, similar to the domestic violence response that brings all stakeholders to the table.

Normalize talking about gun violence and engage with youth on probation.

Celebrate our young people and all of their wins.

Commissioner Ed Book introduced the tabletop exercise.

Tabletop Exercise: All stakeholders have a role to play in preventing gun violence. This tabletop exercise encourages participants to share knowledge and perspectives as they work through a real-world, multi-phase gun violence scenario together. Using the Social-Ecological Model to address a series of increasingly complex health and social challenges, this activity focuses on interoperability between sectors. Led by Gainesville Community Health Director Brandy Stone, MPH, CPH.

Mayor Ward introduced the closing speaker Bishop Christopher Stokes and Jeffrey Weisberg.

Next Steps / Where do we go from here? Our final session is led by Bishop Christopher Stokes of the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center and Jeffrey Weisberg of the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding. The discussion looks at the next steps in the development of enhanced communication, improved leveraging of resources, and centralized data collection to heighten future collaborative strategies. Participants also have an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned.

Closing Remarks - City Manager Cynthia Curry and Mayor Harvey L. Ward, Jr.

Commissioner Eastman joined the meeting at 11:15 am.

**D. MEMBER COMMENT**

**E. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 4:57 pm.

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Kristen J. Bryant, Interim City Clerk

# City of **Gainesville**

Brandy Stone, Community Health Director  
Gainesville Fire Rescue - City of Gainesville

Dr. Julia Varnes, Master of Public Health Program Director  
College of Public Health and Health Professions - University of Florida

**Gun Violence Prevention Summit: Day 2**  
August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

# **A Public Health Approach to Gun Violence Prevention**

**The CDC Social-Ecological Model**

# Public Health Perspective

- Gainesville City Commission declared Gun Violence as a public health crisis.
- This declaration emphasizes the need to utilize public health concepts to identify and implement solutions to a complex issue.
- Public health promotes and protects the health of all people and their communities<sup>1</sup>.
- Includes individual and system-level approaches.

# Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Social Ecological Model<sup>2</sup>

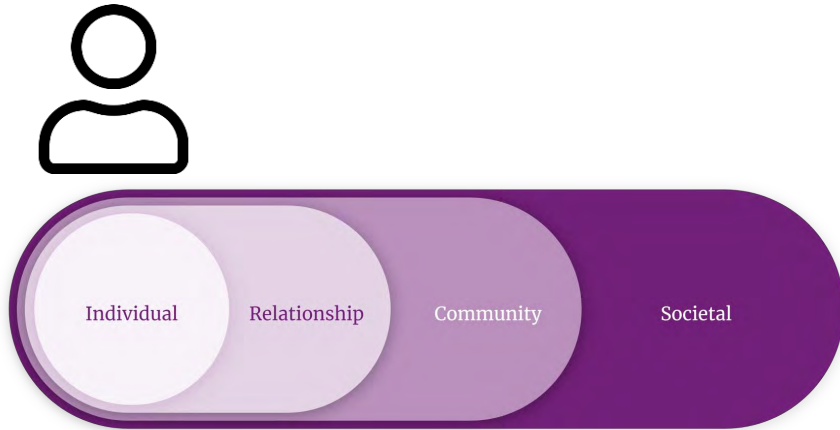


# Core Components



- Health and behavior are affected by the interaction of the four levels, and interaction of *risk and protective factors* at each of those levels.
- Exposure to these *factors* affects the likelihood of someone engaging in certain behaviors.
- For sustainable change, we must work across multiple levels

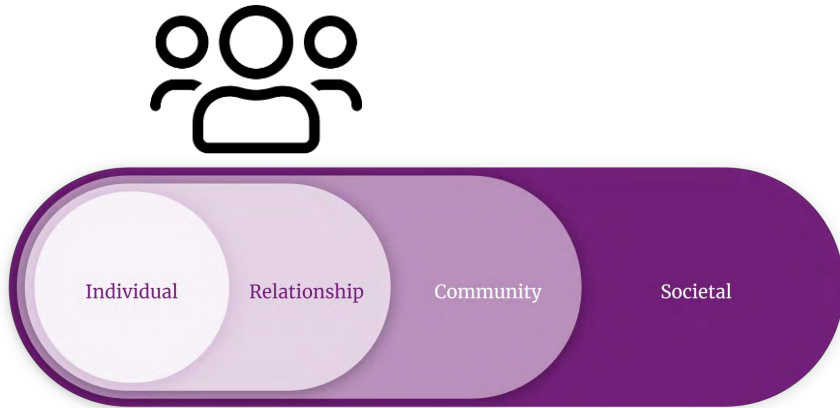
# Individual Level



- Biology and personal history
- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Skills
- **Example: A teenager has not been taught conflict resolution skills and uses their hands to solve disagreements.**

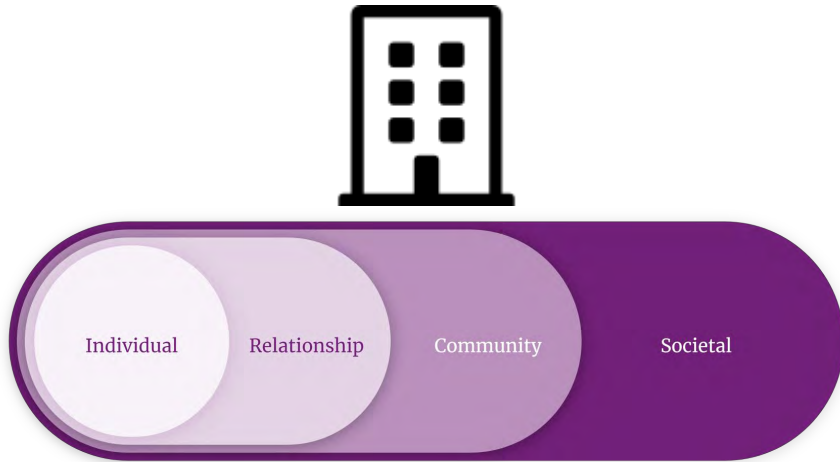


# Relationship Level



- Relationships held that may encourage or discourage a behavior
- Family, peers, partner, close circle
- People who influence the individual's behavior and contribute to their experiences.
- **Example: Teenager's peers engage in similar behavior and the family is unaware of what they are doing when out of the house.**

# Community Level



- Settings, such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, in which social relationships occur
- The physical environment plays a role here, too.
- **Example: Their neighborhood does not have many safe and accessible places for teenagers to spend time outside of school, so they fall into unproductive activities.**

# Societal Level



- Broad societal factors that help create a climate in which the issue is encouraged or inhibited
- Includes cultural norms and the health, economic, educational, and social policies that help to maintain economic or social inequalities between groups in society
- **Example: With current pop culture, music, and social media, violence and aggression has been normalized for young adults. Alcohol and other drugs have become more available which exacerbates these circumstances.**

# Risk and Protective Factors<sup>3</sup>

**Risk Factors:** Characteristics that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes.

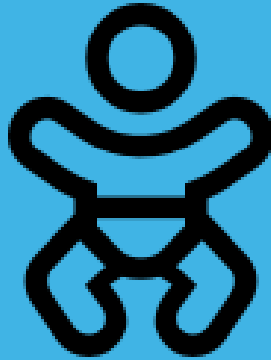
**Protective Factors:** Characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes, or that reduce the impact of the risk factor.  
May be seen as positive countering events



# Risk and Protective Factors - Examples

SEM Level	Factors
Individual	Biological & psychological dispositions, attitudes, values, knowledge, skills, problem behaviors
Relationship	Norms, activities, attachment, abuse, family/home function & behavior modeling, bonding
Community	Bonding, climate, policies, performance (academic/work/service), norms, resources, poverty level, crime, awareness/mobilization
Societal	Norms, policies & laws, sanctions

# Risk and Protective Factors



Some factors are fixed - they can't be changed.

Examples: Biology/genetics, age



Some factors are variable - they can and do change.

Examples: income, peer group, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), employment status

# Let's Look at Some Examples

## Violence Prevention - Strategies at Each Level



Desensitization to  
violence, economic  
development  
initiatives

Local job  
opportunities,  
neighborhood  
beautification efforts

Family-  
focused programs  
and mentorship

Healthy  
relationship  
education,  
life skills training

# Sector Breakouts



## Discussion:

- What can your sector do to increase protective factors in our community?
- What can your sector do to decrease risk factors for gun violence in our community?
- How can your sector intervene across each level of the social-ecological model to prevent gun violence?



# Discussion Tips

- Start by thinking of programs and initiatives that already exist within your sector
- Explore ideas and identify work that is not currently being done but is within your sectors' area of expertise
- Ensure a few people are taking notes of the main points of the conversation
- Select one representative from your sector to share our as part of the panel following lunch

# Sector Breakout Rooms

Public Health, Healthcare and Social  
Services: **Azalea**

Public Safety and Judicial System  
Stakeholders: **Dogwood**

Elected Officials and Local  
Government: **Century Ballroom**

Educators and School Administrators:  
**Hickory**

Business and Civic Community Members:  
**Hawthorne**

# Thank You.

Brandy Stone, Community Health Director – [Stonebl@gainesvillefl.gov](mailto:Stonebl@gainesvillefl.gov)  
Gainesville Fire Rescue - City of Gainesville

Dr. Julia Varnes, Master of Public Health Program Director  
College of Public Health and Health Professions - University of Florida

DATE: 08-07-23  
TIME: 10:30 a.m.  
LOCATION: Heartwood

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Business and Community Members  
FACILITATOR NAME: Andrew Persons  
NOTE TAKER NAME: Gracia Fernandez

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Overarching theme: "meeting people where they're at"

PLEASE CAPTURE:

- Concepts & ideas
  - ☒ No activities for youth between the ages of 13 – 16+ (especially during the summer)
    - Little opportunities, existing ones fill quickly
  - ☒ Large-scale program for older teenagers
  - ☒ Children's Trust has a program with opportunities for teens to work
  - ☒ Children who have trauma and "are causing the trouble" are the ones we need to reach
    - Kids who are "in the trenches"
    - Invite them to the table, but in their own territory
  - ☒ Potential gap in support/things to do
  - ☒ Link BOLD and CeaseFire programs together to provide kids with a holistic approach for mentorship/job preparation
    - Would need a different pot of money
  - ☒ Gap in bringing programs and discussions to kids we're trying to reach, and also kids within an older range
    - TeensWork has been successful within the Dpt. of Sustainable Dvlpmt, helpful in understanding what teens want
  - ☒ Community-based behavioral assessment team
    - Focus on parents as well
  - ☒ Excess alcohol consumption in teens
  - ☒ Having real conversation about locking your guns, gun-safety
  - ☒ A "Choose Peace" campaign designed by teens to help better understand how to reach the youth
    - Previously did a rap contest
    - Advertise on the platforms they are actually using
  - ☒ What else is happening during the school year that our children can be occupied with?
  - ☒ Identify the leaders and find our "Why they are out there"
  - ☒ Spaces to allow kids to "just be teenagers" without being vilified
  - ☒ With all the resources that have been put into this event, we don't have the audience who needs to be reached
  - ☒ Determine target audience, split kids into different groups
  - ☒ Can't help everyone, but there has to be a starting point

- ⊘ How are we going to use the information we collect, and what do organizations specifically need in order to make it happen?
  - ⊘ Create and establish a model for a community-based assessment team
  - ⊘ Kids who have already been recruited by gangs/at risk will need complete support
    - Key is communication
  - ⊘ Central database for people to be able to find resources
- Current initiatives inside various organizations
  - ⊘ TeensWork @ Children's Trust
  - ⊘ Santa Fe YouthBuild
  - ⊘ BOLD Program
  - ⊘ CeaseFire Program
  - ⊘ Behavioral Assessment Team at UF
  - ⊘ Community Interrupters (status unknown)
  - ⊘ Gun buybacks
  - ⊘ CareerSource, now part of the County
- Challenges
  - ⊘ Kids aren't being hired because they have records
    - Need to be given a chance
  - ⊘ We have meetings where we talk and talk with no action
  - ⊘ Listening to what youth need
  - ⊘ Generation of lowest employed teens
  - ⊘ Desensitization in media
  - ⊘ Lack of coordinating communication among community leaders, teachers, guidance counselors, etc.
  - ⊘ Discontinuation of services after funds run out
  - ⊘ Misuse/no follow up of ARPA funds
  - ⊘ Political and grant cycles are the reason there is no program follow-up
    - Create plans that will transcend
  - ⊘
- A name and/or department for each statement

DATE: 08-06-23  
TIME: 3:29 pm  
LOCATION: Hickory

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Education  
FACILITATOR NAME: Cherie Kelly  
NOTE TAKER NAME: Maggie Smart

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PLEASE CAPTURE:

- Concepts & ideas
  - Importance of education – especially for African American males
  - Early intervention and funding – use a longitudinal approach
  - Collaboration with parents
  - Mentorship – impacting a child’s life early (elementary level)
  - Impacts all children
  - Build character within society
  - In-reach
  - Lack of funding and overloaded teachers
  - Importance of voting
  - Freedom schools – summer program, builds a child from within, could be funded by municipality, kindergarten through high school, parents come to Thursday meetings
  - Negative feeling about Blackness – impact from school curriculum
  - Behavioral threat assessment and behavioral health management
  - New environments can help inspire youth
  - Risk factors:
    - Isolation
    - Home environment – challenges of a single-parent home
    - Teachers – having skills necessary to interact with students and address inequities
    - Nutrition
    - Dysfunctional family
    - Money
    - Unmet needs of children
  - Protective factors:
    - Family engagement
    - Nurturing environment
    - Conflict resolution
    - Restorative justice – holding people accountable for impact on others
    - Meeting needs
    - Integrating Black history into education from a strength-based perspective
    - Focus on prevention – proactive rather than reactive
    - Increase socio-emotional programs within schools
    - Teachers
    - Anger management classes

- How can your sector intervene across each level of the socio-ecological model to prevent gun violence?
  - Develop a new school using an existing school building to address high-risk youth using identified protective factors
  - Multi-sector funding for a new school
  - Incentivize parents to come to school events while providing skill-building opportunities for parents
  - Community events with wrap-around supports intentionally addressing youth gun violence with incentives in collaboration with schools
  - Job fair in schools for youth
- A name and/or department for each statement
  - Doug Pelton: Police chief of Alachua County Public Schools
  - Patricia Jackson: Parent
  - Lashundra Hale: CoG Community Relations Coordinator
  - Derek Hicks: Professor at WFU
  - Marie Herring: Pastor and former teacher
  - Susan Browder: Moms Demand Action
  - Kali Blount: Retired nurse and Black Hats Collected
  - John Cowart: Pastor, admin at Santa Fe
  - Jeff Weisburg: Director of River Peace
  - John Rollins: President CEO of MOTIV8U
  - Zeria Folston: Director of Equity and Inclusion for City of Gainesville
- Ground Rules:
  - Transparency: provide open and honest feedback
  - Stay on topic
  - Curiosity and listening to understand
  - Respect the opinions of others
  - Hear input from everyone
  - Get to know each other

DATE: 08-07-23  
TIME: 3:29 pm  
LOCATION: Century

TITLE OF ACTIVITY  
FACILITATOR NAME: Brandy Stone  
NOTE TAKER: Willie Ortiz

PLEASE CAPTURE:

- **Concepts & ideas**

- Interrupt cycle of violence through media literacy, education. Relationships and Conflict resolution skills at every school.
- Job opportunities for youth/community members
- Public health initiative with university, county, city, etc. Cross-partnership supporting housing, transportation, job opportunities, healthcare.
- Offering wrap-around services to various issues that ultimately lead to violence. I.e., domestic violence, poverty, etc.
- Changing culture/ social norms; credible messengers and/or proper training on violence risk assessment.
- Educate children about gun safety
- Men who are role models/can be role models should be involved in the solution
- Working upon/beyond the talks of change and working regularly towards solving an issue. Regular meetings beyond the summit. This can be a way to monitor an issue before it arises/continues to arise.
- Create a sense of altruism to help others feel a part of the change.
- Bring information/opportunities to families where they already are.
- Elect individuals who share similar values/views surrounding gun violence and gun legislation
- Co-align funding across agencies and sharing resources from other agencies and connecting families/community members. Reaching out to those agencies to further assist those individuals
- Fill available positions to have staff to carry out the work, do we increase pay, benefits, etc.?
- Increase recruitment and market available positions as well as ensure a healthy work culture within your organization
- Facilitate conversations about stigmas around using resources available to the community within the community itself.

- **Current initiatives inside various organizations**



- Resource centers through PSF has five resource centers available to community members. Resources vary from employment assistance, concrete support, counseling services, and building relationships with families. New resource center North star resource center in Lake City.
- The Gun Shop project, training gun shop owners to recognize and discuss signs of distress when individuals are purchasing guns. Developing responsible gun ownership plans. Gun owner can bring the gun back to a shop and can be held during a personal mental health or domestic crisis. (The Gun Shop project)
- Gun locks and safety training offered by the crisis line. Aimed towards veterans but open to the public. (Preventative Measures)
- High-risk model to help interrupt a possible act of violence. (Peaceful Paths)
- Be smart campaign in ACPS
- Crisis center 24/7 mobile response (Civilian only), survivors of suicide support, ACPS contacts crisis center before baker acting a student.

- **Challenges**

- Loss of PSF community center at Cone Park.
  - Community members are not brought into new initiatives or programs/ new initiatives are created before reaching out to community members for guidance/assistance.
  - Structural change needs to be a priority
  - Lack of access to healthcare services
  - Public housing
  - Lack of adequate transportation. (No transportation beyond city limits or little transportation making it hard to access various services)
  - Built environment, supermarkets, clean water, food quality.
  - Current and up to date data/statistics revolving around gun violence in Gainesville
  - Gainesville operates in a vacuum and does not reach surrounding municipalities
  - Stigmatism surrounding the use of existing resources and how it impacts your “image” or your perception around the use of those resources. Being seen as “weak” for using resources or seeking out assistance
  - Abundance of resources for veterans while there is a lack of resources for community members and/or survivors. (Gun violence, suicide, etc.)
  - Challenging to assist youth regarding gun violence/mental health when basic needs in the home are not met.
  - Challenging to reach youth when they have experienced trauma in regards to law enforcement
- ● A name and/or department for each statement

DATE: 08-07-23  
TIME: 10:45 a.m.  
LOCATION: Century

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Elected Officials / Local Government  
FACILITATOR NAME: Jen Smart  
NOTE TAKER NAME: Evan Smith

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### What can your sector do to increase protective factors in our community?

- We can partner with Career Source to take the TeensWork program and create year-round jobs for teens. This could also involve parent programs.
- We should listen to neighbors, hear what they want before providing them with solutions.
- We can bring tutors into neighborhoods so students can get help where they're comfortable and where they live. Then we can hire people who live in those same neighborhoods to assist with running the programs.
- We can identify frequent flyers at the middle school level—these are children who are having recurrent discipline issues—and we can help them and their families learn coping skills and find support services.
- We can co-locate services with the school system and partner with churches to be outside locations. Educational programs that might assist could focus on academic support for students and financial training for parents.
- The City has 64 neighborhood organizations and we can use these to build neighborhood networks to bring to families information about support services and programs and to enroll children who will benefit—while also educating their parents and families. Bishop Stokes has said you cannot fix the child then put him or her back into the same home environment.
- We also need to create an educational campaign teaching children how to ride the bus and institute a Family Fare program so families can ride RTS at lower cost or for free.
- Housing affordability is an issue and we can increase protective factors by committing to provide housing security for families.

### What can your sector do to decrease risk factors for gun violence in our community?

- We can look at data around open container and public drinking ordinances to see how these are tied to increased rates of gun violence.
- We can consider entertainment districts and work with the County to see if these districts can help reduce crime.
- We can continue to work with the governor and state legislature to arrive at common sense gun laws that will help reduce firearm risk in the community.
- We can create a hub or clearinghouse to examine policies and data, along with support services, that contribute to the risk of gun violence or alleviate that risk.

### How can your sector intervene across each level of the social ecological model to prevent gun violence?

- We can work with large partners like the County to reach out to smaller organizations, like nonprofits, to provide training on how to apply for grant funding and support, implement and administer grants, and use the funding to reach out to families and individuals in need of service.
- The Bishop Stokes model—of working as an agency that supports families to provide skills and education to complement the work done with individual children—is a manner of reaching across the levels of the social economical model. By partnering with agencies and schools, getting into neighborhoods, and from there reaching families, protective factors can be added and risk factors reduced.

DATE: 08-07-23  
TIME: 10:45 a.m.  
LOCATION: Dogwood

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Public Safety / Judicial  
FACILITATOR NAME: Pastor Gerard Duncan  
NOTE TAKER NAME: Willie Ortiz

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Questions:

Q1: What can your sector do to increase protective factors in our community?

Context

- Protective factor, associated with lowering risk factors, positive countering events
- **Educational aspect**- introducing community concepts and making them aware of gun violence; previously, no knowledge of the issue besides from surface level news coverage
- Involving them in ownership and accountability of the problem, whole community coming up with solutions and involving residential perspectives, not just police official perspectives
- i.e.- what music youth listen to in genres (i.e. songs about killing sprees, violence); video games, social media, TV → parental role, not leaving guns in children's reach
- mental health counseling, getting schools involved, parental or intergenerational trauma and parent issues → civic group and teacher support to make sure all kids are reached and not experiencing emotional damage or mental health issues
- **desensitization to violence**, killing sprees: people feeling disconnected from the issue, as though it does not affect them, until it affects their home
- example- upper middle class White family, teen reaches firearm and it ends up injuring someone on the other side of town
- giving away lock boxes to people of all income levels for free, for those who want to carry firearms in the car (member speaking, from State Attorney's Office)
- "this is not someone else's problem but our problem"
- Chief- says gun locks and boxes were provided to the community → **show kids the ramifications** of using a gun irresponsibly, imprisonment and children do not think of the long term consequences

We want to know what you are doing to capture that...

- Talking about TV PSAs, like a gun stolen from Williston and used in Gainesville-> those things are not as advertised as before, public safety announcements and advertisements: go back to grassroots and putting things out for engaging the public and dissemination of info
- (Chief)- says the media has posed challenges with advertising: **suggestions for using social media and reaching youth,**
- Judicial sector should operate as a team (ASO and GPD) rather than just working separately → laying it all out on the table (**Williston, GPD, ASO**)
- Initiating neighborhood watch programs, get stakeholders involved in those neighborhoods, working alongside corporations and forming crime prevention programs more consistently; activating capability to do those things
- **GNV fire rescue:** meeting with the City Manager, adopting community and involvement with youth, says uniform can make it harder to reach youth because they may see a gun on the hip, feeling intimidated
- Reaching them out of uniform, i.e. Lonnie Scott, youth who connected with him and did not know he was an official until towards the end of the initial meeting
- Connecting with children through socials, sports, meeting them in the middle→ 30 seconds to get their message out; programs and economic opportunities for keeping the children connected within the community
- Organizational impacts as it relates to community trust and public safety: ensuring transparency while being good at the policy aspect of it
- Listening to children from an official's perspective; going back to grassroots, "showing ourselves to them, the worst thing we can do is go into a neighborhood where people don't trust you and where you lost credibility"
- More visibility, education, and communication: community oriented policing as something that needs to be reinforced; "it takes a village," introduction of other entities and bringing back police officials as being someone that youth in the neighborhood can go to

### Moms Demand Action Statements

- "if you have a firearm, keep it secure" adult responsibility, accountability to protecting children

- Parkview Church, Alachua Parks, roles to be within the community and gaining trust because we show up, not to just be in the forefront; Peace and Action with sororities
- Messages of death not just in the minority, but suburbia like upper or middle class White children who can just walk back into their community
- “doing our best to be present”

### Additional Statements

- Bridge gap between community and the police
- Post COVID-19 implications and public views of the police, structural factors and environmental design → having employees and “more bodies in the room” working together for transparency
- “there’s no trust, there’s no respect”

Q2: How could your sector work towards increasing protective factors?

- Protective factors- association of lowering the likelihood of negative outcomes; positive impacts when mitigating negative outcomes on the community
- **Chief-** discussing children and youth with mental health issues, bringing back recognizing repercussions, conflict management, respecting authority
- Working with church officials in the community, Alachua County officials to meet with and mentor students to meet them before it gets too far off the ground
- Describes community policing as decentralized- Lt. Sergeant: decisions in the room before getting out there
- Neighborhood tailored services- getting parents involved and aware about resources
- Establish relationship: if the only time they’re interacting with youth is when there are negative consequences involved or they’re in trouble, then it is not effective
- Playing sports with the kids and having a positive relationship with them leads in a different direction, concerned with parental supervision or lack of, that is

- **Additional** – involving public D.A. office, state attorney’s office, having those conversations at a local level and consequences, time, charges are still the same
- “when artists make music about shootings, they are in the booth and can go back home to their mansions; when children are listening, they are at risk of exposure to this violence, ending up in a 3 by 5 cell”
- Importance of learning how to verbalize (**ASO, Williston**) same stories in Charlotte, talking about reduction rather than just the building: how do you build with the facts of the guns? They are coming from somewhere: how do children get guns to take pictures with? Where are those charged with drive-by shootings getting the guns from?

Recommendations- communicating the above ideas into a format for policymakers to use; any information and experiences

#### Director of Alachua County Jail

- Asking youth why they do this stuff, says they are taught to hate police officials; teaching kids that police officials are not all the bad guys, narrative illustrated, discipline tactics by parents who say “they’re going to get you” when a kid’s acting out in public and there is a police officer in uniform present

#### State Attorney’s Office statements

- Problems with teens’ invincibility mindset and not understanding permanent after effects of their lives, their family’s lives, and lives of the victim and their families
- Public defender’s office standing with schools and reaching youth whose lives have been shattered by this gun’s office
- Recent Checker’s shooting, 11 of 15 shootings dealt with by State Attorney’s office are in Alachua County, many are firearm related, and a fraction are where the defendant is African American
- Recording people who have been convicted of firearm shootings, families who have been impacted → incarcerated individuals and getting their perspectives to share with to break that barrier to get across to the youth

#### Public safety official

- Need sessions, community, resource for families; need collaborative message
- Families who need help and can have resources
- Seeing the same things that have been happening for twenty years; need to come back and look at, with key players, what programs are most effective

#### Chief Dixon

- Working with discussions since 20<sup>th</sup> century, what are the issues kids are having? They are not part of many discussions, but they are experiencing issues
- Can't start doing things with kids, feel some leeway, then back off, kids will revert to what they were doing before
- Consistency! Established communication, serious established lines so kids can trust police officials and judicial sector workers
- No matter who shows up with the inconsistency, the whole effort can and will go down
- Kids already have an opinion of police officials as Director of Alachua County Jail
- Policymakers can put the consistency in place, honesty
- Had to tell kids the truth no matter what, the one thing we have to figure out is where did we come up short (individual)? What can we do that gives more? How much initiative and self-sacrifice to help kids what they're dealing with?

#### Social terms of health and crime

- Poverty, housing, food- social terms of crime
- Social terms of health: econ, education
- Point is they intersect, by the time people get downstream- dealing with kids who have dealt with violence and instability in the home, reaching them and it will cost money
- Have to stand together and policy makers have to fund these policies
- Pay a little to get it, pay a lot more when not having those support programs in place
- County- building jails in relation to how many students knew how to reach by grade 3



## Financial implications of these programs

- Programs disintegrating, need funding
- Williston PD- children walk from school with officials on a field trip to PD, Fire Dept. educating on gun safety; take them and bring them to us
- Build the relationship, parents invited and teaching them the same thing
- Other suggestion- lap? System, identifying risk factors and warning signs for gun violence, resources because police officials are busy and funding is a problem
- Problem with reaching people to demonstrate we need funding, get parents and kids to more education, economic resources and mitigating issues at the root

## Note on truancy

- SRO- addressing issue and holding parents accountable
- Statue before where parents, if not getting kids to school or school on time, first arrest of a parent because her kids were not in school (20-something years ago)
- Implementing a statute again, related to truancy
- Williston PD- local state attorney's office and school board: student placed into another home, lack of parental accountability
- Stakeholders are not coming together and having those conversations, took weeks to get everyone's info on the same page for two students **data gap**
- Need to show things coming out of meetings: action plans!! Need influence and drive from workers from the bottom and policy funding

## Objective

- Resources to help policy makers with a concrete plan
- Transparency to get to the root of issues and staying in line with the goals for policy makers and stakeholders to know what needs to get done

## Q3: What is not being done and where are the gaps?

- See note on truancy

Valerie P.

- Cofounder of Common Purpose of Alachua, Moms Demand Action org member
- Works with the Dept. of Corrections, describes programs but there is a gap in second chance programs
- Says neighborhoods are running by inmates in the Dept., awareness of the prison system
- Funding to find a program and implement something for the work camps, second chance opportunities for those who are ultimately released from the Dept. of Corrections
- Discussions, credit for sharing their experiences
- Getting one inmate, addressing re-incarceration rates as well
- Note by moderator that Alachua county is forming program for re-entry help, requires accountability and depositories for where these will be taking place → entity organization to facilitate connections and public discussions

#### Chief Scott

- Parent and teacher roles, more contact with students than any other adult
- Need to not excuse parents from this process, many lack supervisions
- Why a 14-year-old is out downtown at 2am under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Why are parents not responding? Cooperating with superintendent
- Describes elephant in the room= staffing is not committed, competition with each other, central FL and even south FL with wages and benefits
- Improving it for significant impacts, showing what we are supporting for law enforcement; improved support for law enforcement
- **Need more resources to implement more programming**

#### Additional

- Dr. Hayes - Criminologist at UF: working on initiatives with 85 corporations
- Five, eastside initiative for Gainesville (Walmart, Wawa, Walgreens, etc.) within one sq. mi bounded on the north side, high res satellite imagery with drones to get real time data with UFPD, calls for mass reporting
- Layered approach of 3d site imaging, connecting, support from the across the country

- Mobile surveillance, command center and learning → support East GNV
- Deeply engage with faith community for three years of this program
- Idea to have a joint program , one common operative picture with layers → zooming in and out, crime placement and high impact areas
- Public facing component with parents, teachers, tracking stolen firearms
- High impact defenders linking them to crime and place,
- Commercial spots, sites and working with the practitioners, the implementers

Q4: How can your sector interact with the socio ecological model to address gun violence?

- Socio emotional learning
- See paragraph about on UF criminologist, helped to answer that question

Final thoughts

- Common operative pictures, good key performance indicators
- What is the problem and how are we measuring? Firefighter perspective; using education, engineering, enforcement for fire safety initiatives
- Recommends first thing to speak about it at each and every opportunity
- This is what we should be speaking about
- Put resources where they are needed “this is a task force problem”

Williston PD:

- new info on making a gun off a 3D printer
- **have to have policy makers thinking about it**

Additional

- elephant in the room, “chopping the head off the snake”
- “putting criminals in jail”—says this and staffing is the room in which to talk about these issues
- True jurisdictional task force: opinion- can do with less staffing, offline conversation with agency heads
- **Task force 6-8 people** putting data together to address adult offenders (Parent, adult in neighborhood or someone asking the kids to carry out the crime for them), dealing with neighborhood gangs

- Says getting out to reach youth is important but community is cop part, stats plays a role in the practitioner sides and internal or street knowledge from on the job experience
- Search warrants in the neighborhood, says need to reach adults too, does not want to ignore the adult side of dangers as well
- 44% of criminals are recidivism, 68 within 3 yrs. , 76 percent within 5.5 years → says these people can be placed in jail for extended periods of time

#### Gaps (continued)

- education, enforcement, parents having a hard time keeping up with different platforms,
- technology education for parents
- need state level work
- mental health issues, programming, support, access

Q5: How can your sector intervene across each level of the socio ecological model to prevent gun violence in an innovative way? (similar to previous question)

- concerned over non-contact shootings leading to injury and not death, suggests simple approach and says if we ignore what we can do today for the sake of maximizing engagement, education, gap in what we do operationally and collaborating across police forces, intelligence sharing, and the public → public safety, most offenders, small group commits majority of the issues
- what are we doing to share the data? Through convention, enforcement, taking people to jail
- maximizing technology; shot spotter technology telling within ten ft. where the gun went off
- regional intelligence sharing hub
- selfless collaborating of resources, talking with the juvenile system; graduate for true collaboration and less operational bickering

Worker for Probation, Retired Police Lt.

- crime stat used in, example, Ocala
- supervise 1800 people for felony probation, thirty percent between 16-24, including 14-15 years' old

- emphasized being coactive in the process and bringing new ideas to probation; people operating in silence, also talking about the re-entry hub process
- Blunt Center programming Tuesday, August 7 from 5:30 to 8:00pm - intensive prevention model to address people's needs when out on probation, supportive service needs; getting job but not keeping it (childcare, transportation, mental health needs) assistance with sustaining and retaining employment

Summarize, closing thoughts:

- 10% of population committing 90% of the crimes, offenders out there with guns and doing daily checks
- Increasing staff levels, through technology, getting quality people who want to do the job
- ShotSpotter, flock cameras, going into increases of data → overlap program with effective juvenile probation, see them all together
- Flock out with a demo, command central style program with police access, include ankle monitoring program as an objective for the future
- Make more robust the co responder program, mental health, narcotics, violent crimes all spun together → address proactively, deterrent and effective
- GPD has real time crime center, flock cameras, vigilant ALPRs, willing to share the information across and shares similar platforms with other regional crime analysis units
- Collaboration with Dr. Hayes at UF, see where they live and neighborhoods → are there patterns where offenders come from more? Services with probation, multifaceted end and starting with education, intervention, and suppression as a threefold model
- Captain West, crime analysts, GPD data analysis unit sharing what we have, want access to more cameras within the city, traffic inside businesses, and apartment complexes
- Also purchased brass tracks machine- shell casing machine can see different shell casing machines and identify/match guns
- Lt. Scott and Capt. Owen Shaw sharing that info to make differences on those ends

- Says we have to stop relying on the old modes of communication like newspapers, TV20→ advertising on social media (cookies and tracking); 14-24 year old group targeting ads for other PSAs
- Community events for younger students being easier, teens can be a more challenging demographic to reach and we can do this with social media
- Community oriented, went to churches, crime watch groups, community for police meetings
- Public opportunity, backpack drives with the community, and need to get back to all of those
- Youth comment on lack of seminars and assemblies for high school students on public safety
- Weekly teaching trips for students , reaching students 16-18
- Bringing back community policing and reaching neighborhoods



## **Tabletop Case Study Exercise**

**Facilitators: Brandy Stone and Ed Book**

**Timeframe: 2:45pm-4:20pm**

### **2:45-3:00pm - EB: Overview of Tabletop/Case Study Activities**

- What is a tabletop?
- What is the goal for today?
  - To foster between sector collaboration around prevention strategies for gun violence at each level of the social-ecological model
  - Using a real-world example to apply the information and discussions that we have been having throughout the day
- Ask folks to move so that they are at a table with multiple sectors represented
  - Public safety
  - Education
  - Local gov/elected officials
  - Public health/healthcare/social services
  - Business and civic community
- Based on the registration numbers we should have 7 people at each table, 13 tables
  - 3 local gov / elected officials at each table
  - 2 public health/healthcare/social services/education
  - 1 public safety member
  - 1 business and civic community member
- Over the next 75 minutes, you will be working through a scenario together. The scenario will be given to you in 3 phases, each with more information about the situation. With each phase, you are to identify the risk and protective factors that are at play and brainstorm collaborative, innovative solutions that could have been implemented to intervene. After each phase we will pause and allow 1-2 groups to briefly share out what they discussed. Please be prepared to do so.
- You have been given a worksheet to help guide your discussion and conversation. We will be moving quickly through this which will allow you to remain very focused on the task at hand.
- BS to pass out phase 1 at this time.

### **3:00-3:05pm – BS: Reading of Scenario**



- Read summary and scenario
- Let groups know they will have 15 minutes to work through the worksheet for phase 1
- EB to start 15 minute timer

### **3:05-3:20pm – Groups working on Phase 1**

### **3:20-3:25pm – Phase 1 Share Out – Randomly select 2 tables**

- Pass out Phase 2
- Key points: parent's out of the home frequently because of lack of economic opportunity, family was low-income, Damien was parentified young – lots of responsibility taking care of younger siblings, availability of a firearm in the home, underserved area of town, strong sense of community, solid family unit, experiencing food insecurity, good friends, spending time at parks, lack of treatment for health condition but healthy

### **3:25-3:30pm – BS reads Phase 2**

### **3:30-3:45pm – Groups work through Phase 2**

- EB to start 15 minute timer

### **3:45-3:50pm – Phase 2 Share Out – Randomly select 2 tables**

- Pass out Phase 3
- Key points: strong friendship, hanging out with older people, exposure to a different lifestyle, missing school, started selling drugs, local policy hindering economic opportunity, increasing poverty, increased access to weapons, missing school, poor behavior while in school, sent to alternative school for children with behavior concerns, contact with law enforcement, desensitization to community violence and crime

### **3:50-3:55pm – BS reads Phase 3**

### **3:55-4:10pm – Groups work through Phase 3**

- EB to start 15 minute timer

### **4:10-4:20pm – Phase 3 Share Out – Randomly select 2 tables**

- Follow-up questions
- Last minute thoughts
- Key points: continued into selling drugs, parents able to spend more time with siblings, alcohol involved, women/competition involved, toxic masculinity, low income – needed





the promised money, embarrassment and status, availability of guns, lack of monitoring in parks, trauma to family, friends, and community, re-reentry plan for young man



## **Tabletop Exercise: A Fatal \$75**

**Disclaimer:** This scenario is loosely based on a past event. Details have been changed for the purpose of this activity. Names, characters, places and incidents are used fictitiously.

On New Year's Day 2001, a 16-year-old boy, Damien Smith, shot his lifelong friend, 19-year-old Marcus Jones. The shot was fired after a fight that started just after the bars closed on Main St in the mid-sized city of Cremont, FL. Police determined that Marcus had loaned Damien money a few days beforehand. On New Year's Eve night, Marcus confronted Damien about the \$75, which resulted in an argument. The young men got in a fistfight that Marcus, being older and larger, ultimately won. Damien left the fight, got a gun, and a few hours later tracked Marcus down. Damien then shot his friend Marcus, killing him.

### **Phase 1: Background**

Damien Smith grew up in a home with 3 siblings and his parents, who were both high school graduates. They both worked 2 jobs, resulting in them getting home at 11pm sometimes as often as five nights per week. His parents often had their challenges but ultimately stayed together for their family. Being the oldest, Damien always took care of his younger brother and sisters when his parents were working. His dad had a handgun that Damien was shown at 12 years old, in case he had to use it when his parents were away. Their neighborhood was on the south side of town, which had always been underserved. Parks were barely operable, sidewalks were uneven, and past dark you could see nothing outside. Most jobs were hourly, working for gas stations or chain restaurants. Some small local businesses thrived but all the big industry was up north. His family and his neighbors were close and always helped each other out. Damien loved his parents and his siblings very much.

His mom was on WIC, but only qualified for another 6 months because of his youngest sister's age. The family was concerned where meals would be coming from, with food stamps often not providing enough to get them through the week. With a household income of about \$30,000, they often found themselves struggling.

He did fine in school but was often tired from the late nights and was usually hungry. He ate free lunch and breakfast at school. He had a good group of friends, most of whom grew up a few miles from him and in very similar homes. One of them was Marcus, an older boy who Damien clicked with at the park one day. Being older, Marcus exposed Damien to a lot of new things – driving, girls, and more kids from the neighborhood.

For healthcare, Damien usually went to the free clinics with his siblings. This was once a year. He saw a dentist a few years ago and had a good checkup. He was healthy, with only chronic ear infections to note. They couldn't afford the tubes when he was younger, so the ear infections just became a part of his pre-teen life.



## **Tabletop Exercise: A Fatal \$75**

**Disclaimer:** This scenario is loosely based on a past event. Details have been changed for the purpose of this activity. Names, characters, places and incidents are used fictitiously.

### **Phase 2: Behavioral Development**

As Damien entered middle school, Marcus started to introduce him to a new crowd of older guys. They were driving nice cars, always had a girl on their arm, and had interesting ways of making money that Damien really couldn't figure out. But he saw that they got food from wherever they wanted, had new shoes, and didn't take anything from anyone.

He started missing school once a week, skipping out to hang out with Marcus and new friends. His parents worked so much they didn't notice. Damien was still home with his siblings some nights, but during the others he was out with Marcus. One of Marcus's friends came up to Damien one night and asked him if he had ever "sold" anything before. He said no but told him if it gave him what he's seeing, he'd do whatever. He occasionally sold weed to buy food for his siblings and new clothes once or twice.

With some changes to a local policy that ended up hindering small business success on the south side, people were outraged. Tension in the community was building, households were struggling financially, and businesses were closing left and right. Community members resorted to other means to make ends meet for their families - taking low wage jobs in the north side, selling drugs, or falling into homelessness. With that, violence was becoming more prevalent. Fights in stores, arguments among families, and unsettled tabs brought out more weapons than the area had seen before.

With Damien's new line of part-time work, he continued to miss school, got in fights, and even started acting out in class. Shoving classmates over small disagreements, talking back to the teacher, and increased absences led Damien to an alternative school, Horizons Day School. Marcus wasn't far behind him, coming to Horizons for his last few years of high school.

Their ongoing ventures to continue to earn money to support their families brought them into contact with law enforcement a few times for minor incidents - One or two trespasses for being on private property, a minor shoplifting charge trying to get a hot pocket for dinner from the corner store, and a disorderly conduct for having one too many beers on a Friday night near the city park. With the current conditions on the southside, this was nothing to blink an eye at. Folks had become desensitized to the poverty and subsequent violence that seemed to be increasing every day.



## **Tabletop Exercise: A Fatal \$75**

**Disclaimer:** This scenario is loosely based on a past event. Details have been changed for the purpose of this activity. Names, characters, places and incidents are used fictitiously.

### **Phase 3: Incident and Aftermath**

Damien and Marcus' friendship continued to thrive at their new school. As many young men do, they got deeper and deeper into the game as they got increasingly dependent on the additional income. Damien's parents were able to scale back one shift a week because of his extra funds and spend more time with his younger siblings. His parents being home one more night meant he got to be out one more night a week.

One Friday night, they decided to go out to a local club to hang out with the crew. Many of them were old enough to drink, most old enough to get in. While Damien wasn't, the bouncer let him slip in with the group. Guys were passing him drinks at the table and Marcus was able to get a few from the bartender, whom he knew. Damien was dancing with a girl all night and was upset when the night started to wind down. He went to the bathroom and when he met everyone outside to leave, saw Marcus talking with that same girl. Frustrated, Damien confronted him about it. He also brought up the \$75 Marcus owed him—money to cover a sale that never happened. The young men argued back and forth until Marcus squared up and landed a punch right to the side of Damien's face. Damien jumped back up, trying to do the same as Marcus. But Marcus's size and experience quickly overwhelmed Damien.

Marcus and the rest of the crew walked away laughing, thinking nothing of the boys' scuffle. But Damien, intoxicated, embarrassed, and amped up, was feeling quite differently. He walked away from the club and went home to his sleeping family. He found his dad's handgun and went back out to the park he knew everyone would be in. He confronted Marcus again and as soon as Marcus lunged forward, Damien fired a single shot. Marcus fell and began to bleed. Everyone scattered but the two boys. Damien realized that the shot was likely heard so he ran home and returned the gun to its place.

The next day, Cremona Police began the search for the subject, but they didn't have to wait long, as Damien turned himself in by late afternoon. The guilt and sadness had overcome him, and he recognized the gravity of what had happened. Damien was found guilty of murder and was determined to be tried as an adult at his 16 years of age. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison. His family's life was turned upside down and Marcus's family would never be the same. A disagreement between friends left both families pinned against each other, a distraught group of friends, confused younger siblings, scarred the neighborhood, and cost a life.

Damien will be released at just 36 years of age, with a lot of life ahead of him. There is an opportunity for a new beginning for him and his family.

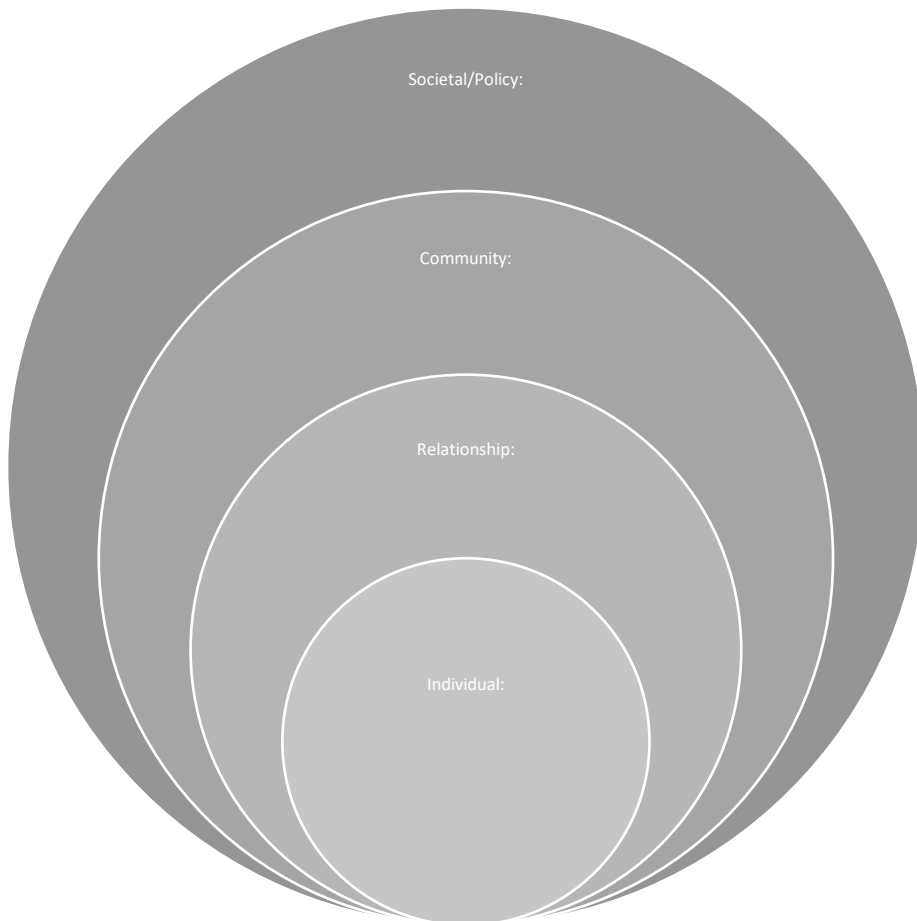
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Sector/Industry \_\_\_\_\_

**Phase 1**

Risk Factors	Protective Factors

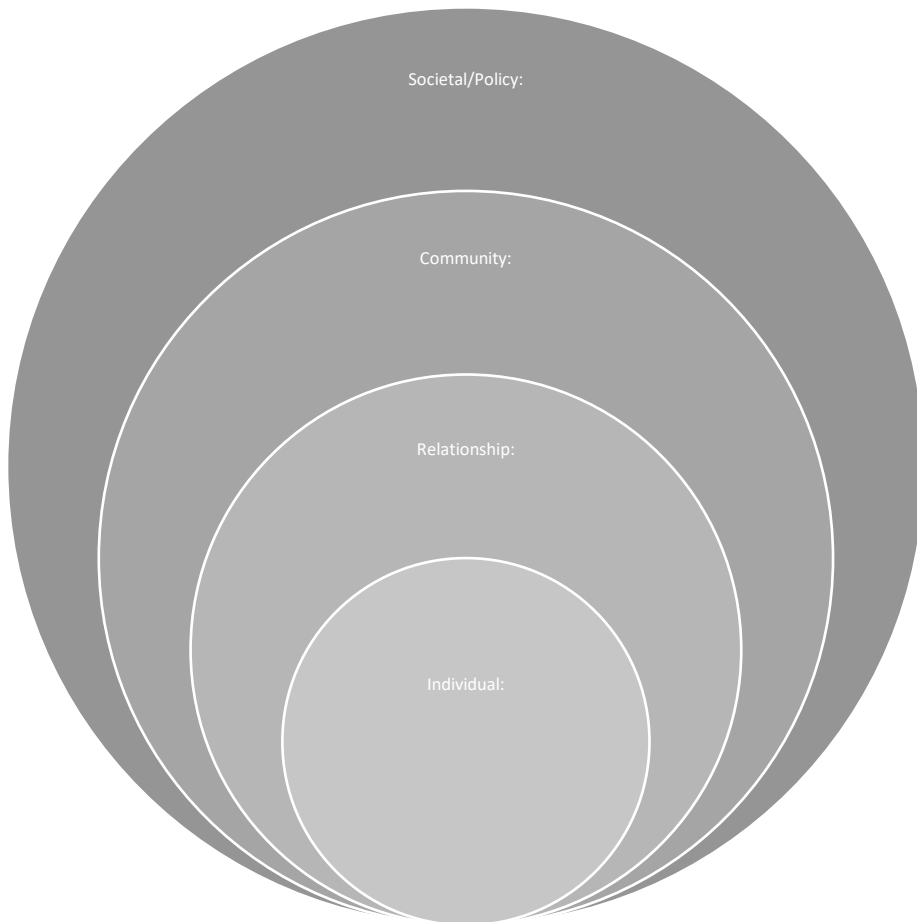
Solutions:



## **Phase 2**

Risk Factors	Protective Factors

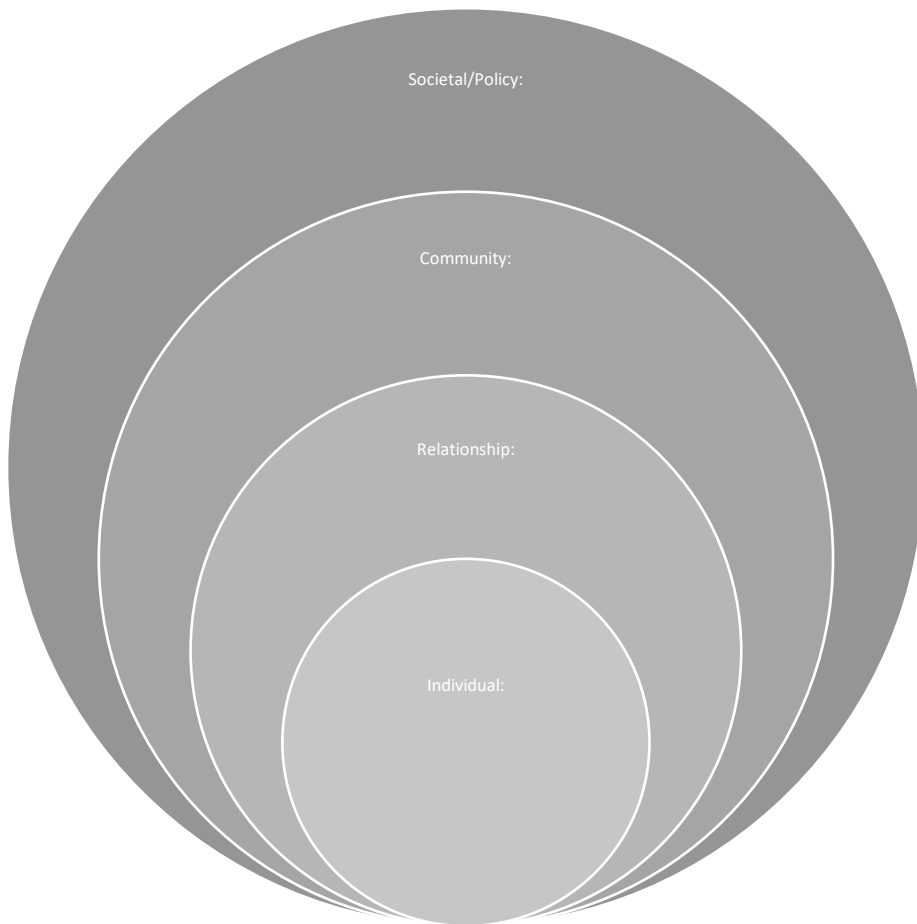
Solutions:



### **Phase 3**

Risk Factors	Protective Factors

Solutions:



City of  
**Gainesville**

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## Choose Peace: Gun Violence Must Cease

Survey Results - Gun Violence Prevention Summit

Aug. 6-7 at the Hilton University of Florida Conference Center

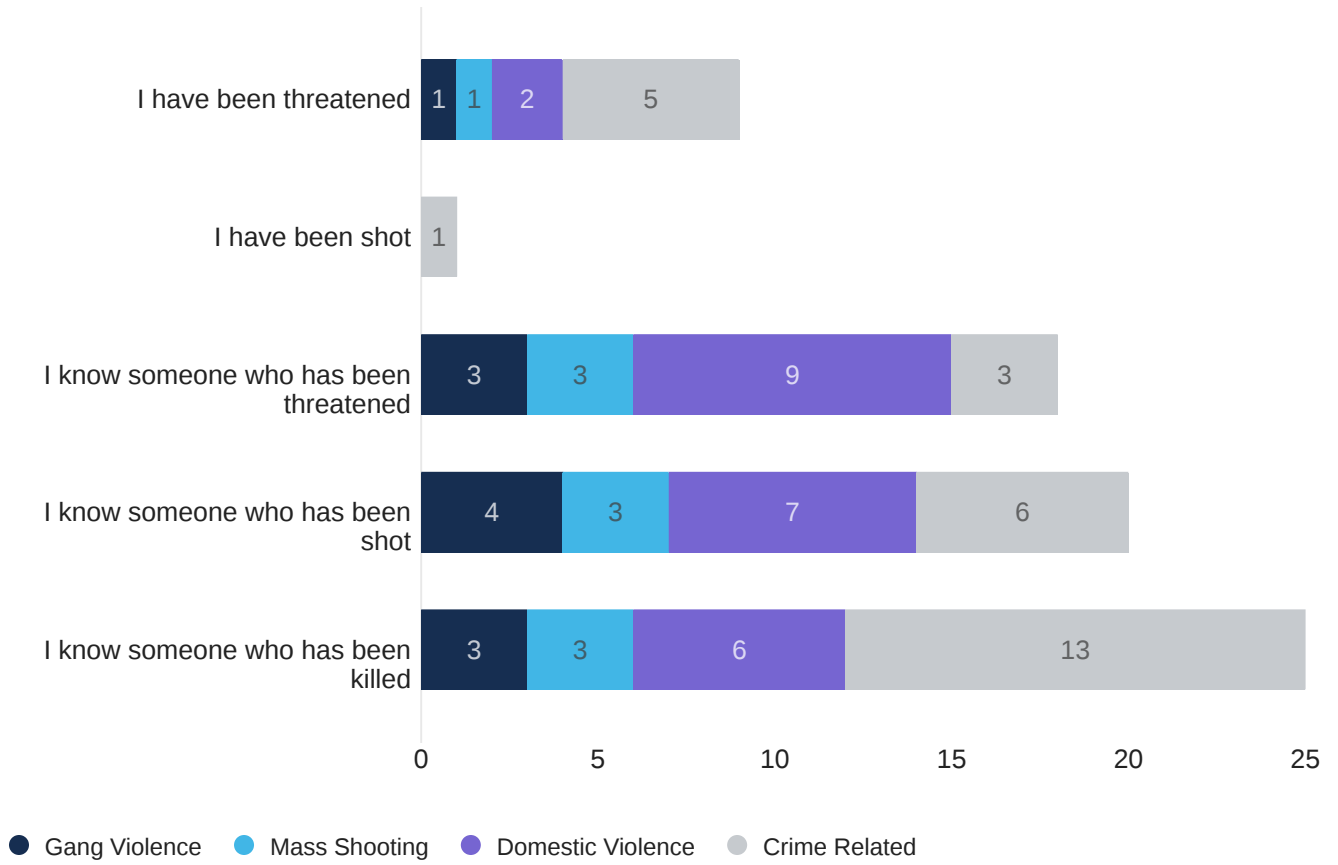
Prepared by the Office of Management and Budget

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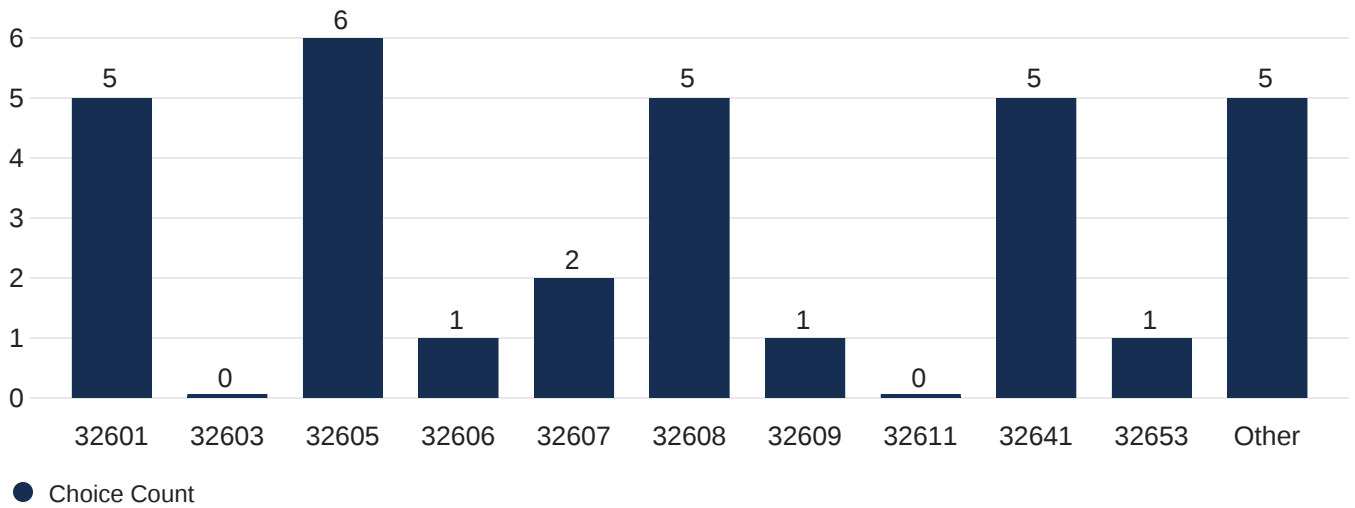


# Respondent Demographic

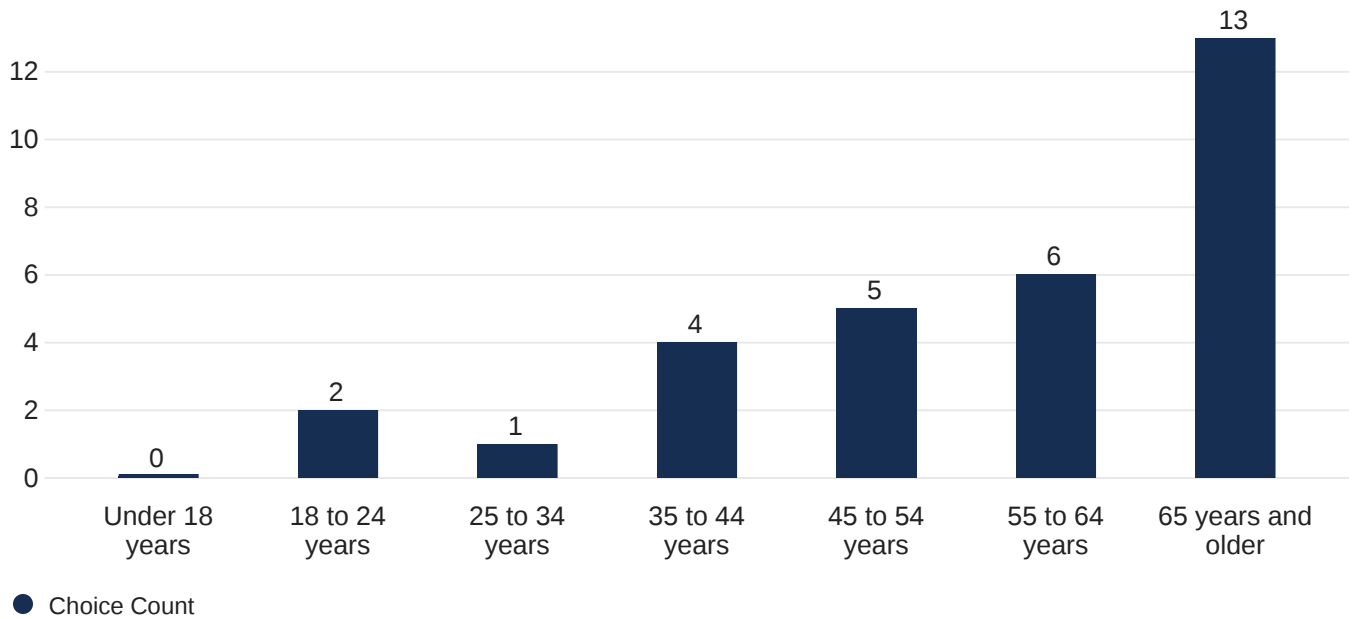
What is your personal experience with gun violence and what was the setting?



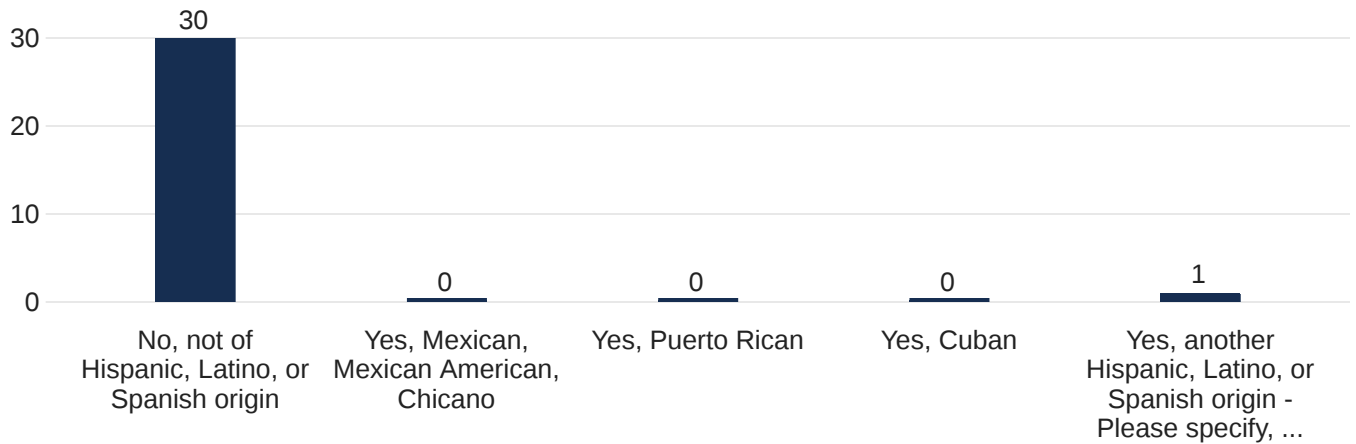
### What is your Zip Code?



### What is your age group?



### Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin or ethnicity?



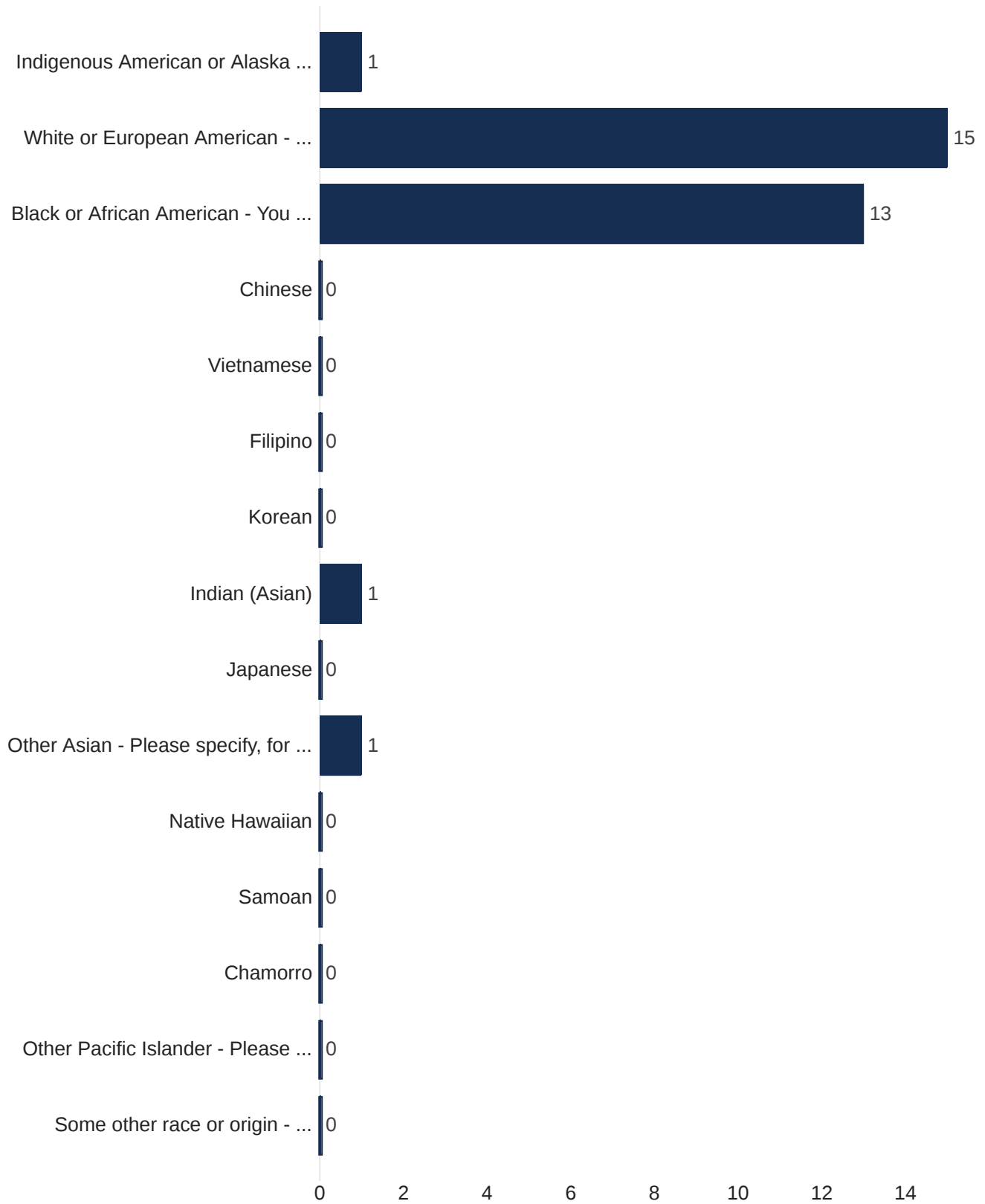
● Choice Count

Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin - Please specify, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc. - Text

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African American

# How would you identify your race or origin?



● Choice Count

Indigenous American or Alaska Native - You may choose to specify name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village or Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. - Text

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**Black**

White or European American - You may choose to specify, for example, German, Iris, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc. - Text

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**Irish**

anglo

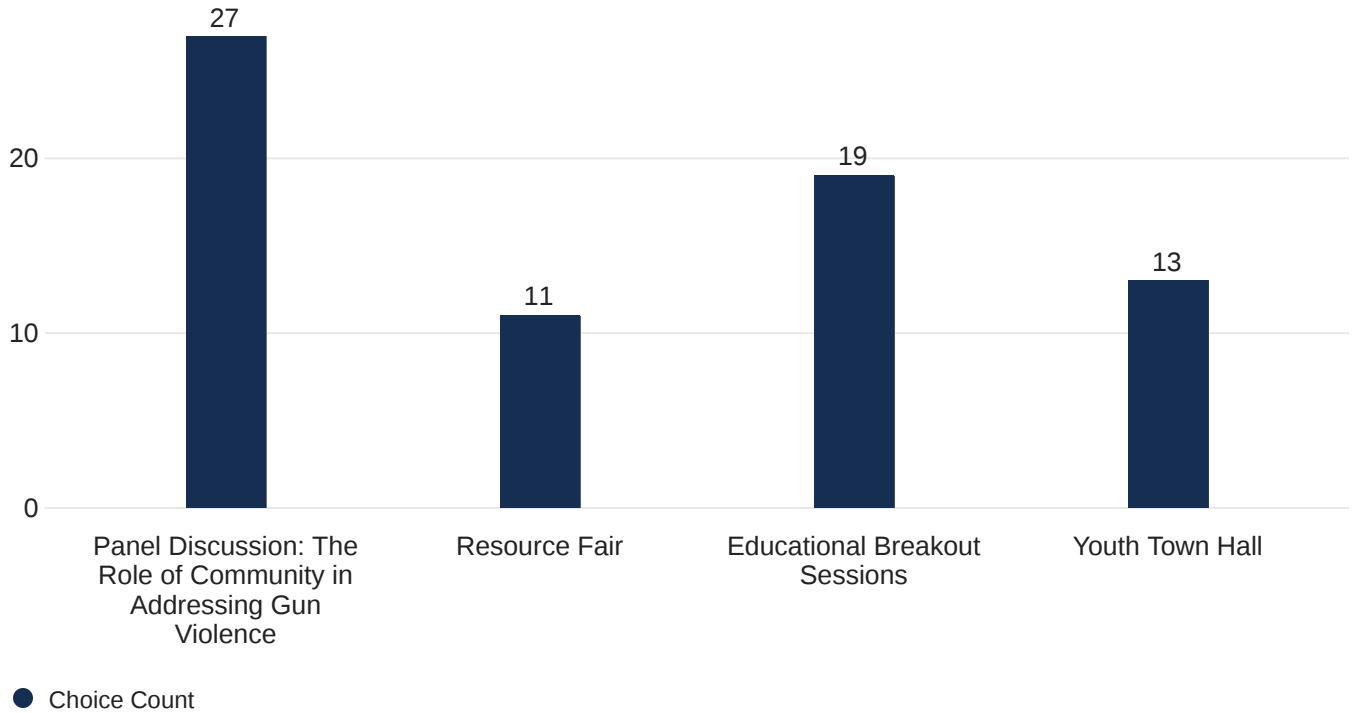
Other Asian - Please specify, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc. - Text

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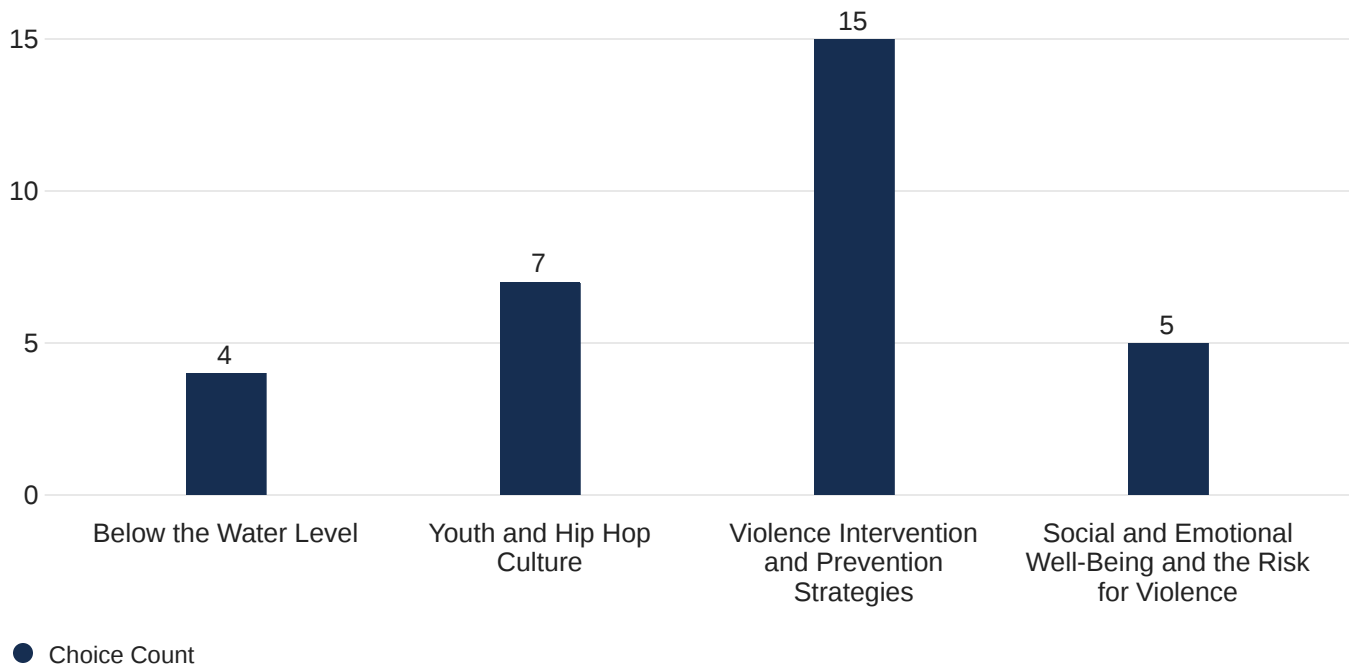
**Bangladeshi**

# Survey Results

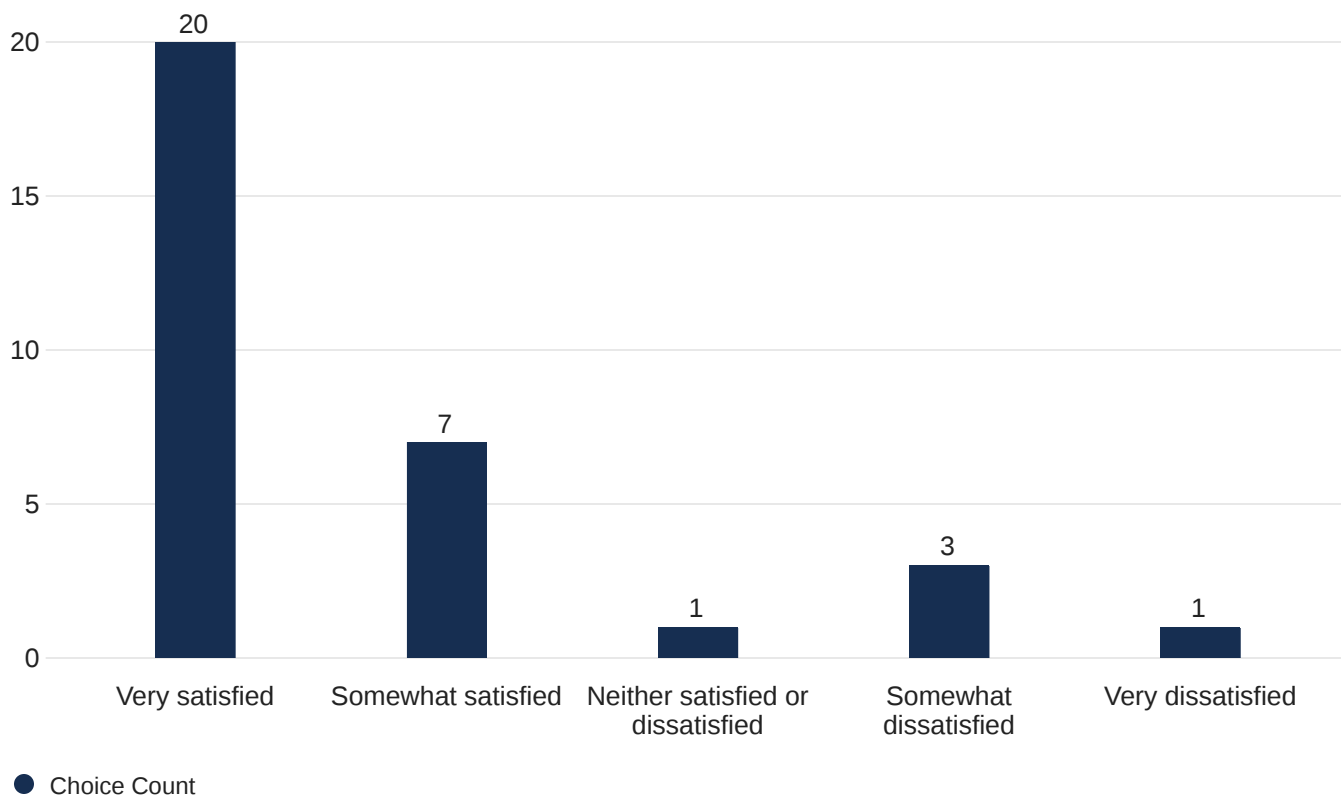
Please select the sessions you attended:



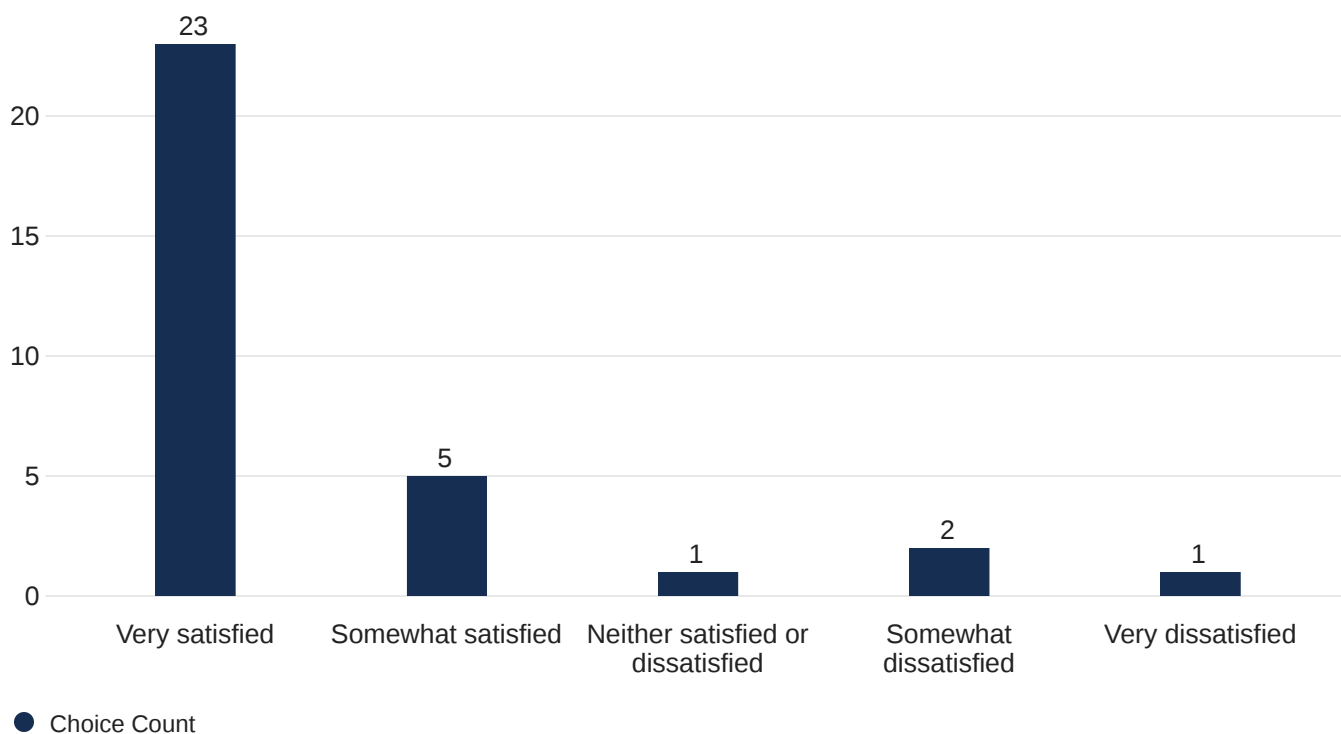
Please select the educational breakout sessions you attended:



## Overall, how satisfied were you with the summit?



## How satisfied were you with today's speakers?



## What part of the summit was done well?

What part of the summit was done well?

---

breakout session

Venue arrangements was excellent.

The lunch was lovely. The program did not meet my expectations

The complete summit was fantastic.

The entire summit was well done - from speakers to panels to moderators.

There are so many resources available to stop gun violence -- so many groups, actions are information has been gathered. It was impressive to see so many people invested in peace.

Great speakers.

Great discussion in the breakout sessions.

Good panelists, especially glad that the high school student was part of that. She was great.

Presenters at breakout session did a great job.

Collaboration of community resources.

The panel discussions provided insight from a variety of perspectives.

Comprehensive information, array & depth of partners & speakers & exceedingly professional special event prep (logos, venue, materials etc).

The entire session was a success.

It was very well planned and executed.

Breakout sessions

The setting and the materials provided. The speakers.

The variety of resources available. The opportunity to engage with youth.

Keynote speaker, tabletop exercise, panels.

The panel discussion and break out sessions were good (though there was a lot of story telling in the breakout session and there could have been more specific content).



The meal and service was very good. We were expecting a bag lunch and surprised at a full meal complete with key lime pie.

Some of the panel speaker remarks were insightful. it was good to have so many like-minded people in one space, people who are interested in stopping gun violence. There was vibrant energy with the variety of people.

The packet of material was especially good and thorough;, name tags were effective; Tshirts were a great idea. Support staff were very helpful.

Breadth of expertise

Having youth voices

Inviting out of town experts.

Speakers and giveaways

I was especially impressed with the comments from the young lady from GHS ad well as the facilitators ability to filter the rhetoric for the actual question

The speakers were very knowledgeable and very resourceful.

The entire summit was a job well done!!

I am sorry to tell you that I was unable to attended due to illness.

If there is a summary, I would love to receive that.

## What improvements would you suggest to improve future summits?

What improvements would you suggest to improve future summits?

make breakout sessions recorded and available online

Better communications, more speakers, structured programming, discussion and participations would make it a more effective event.

It would have been effective if the representatives of various community action groups and speakers were put among the general public. I was expecting more focus groups. If you have another panel discussion, I think people should write their questions on an index card and submit it to the panel. The cards could then be massed and grouped into topics.

Not having lunch before the event, having dinner after the event.

Leaving with a defined set of action items.

Charge people a small fee to attend.

Don't have a sit down dinner, and not such lavish setting.

Buffet, more mingling...cops all sat together MOMs group all sat together, youth all sat together, etc --- find ways to force more interaction of stake holders.

Find ways to get more children who are directly impacted the most by gun violence, to the youth sessions

I found it impossible to visit the Resource Fair. I went by after the breakout session but they had packed up. No time to go by during the 4:20-4:30 pm break due to needing a bathroom break. I would have had to skip the breakout to visit the Fair. I came on Mon,8/7 to hear the Keynote Speaker and there was no Resource Fair set up.

Don't know how this could have had more time but the "Community" day included very little input from community-just the brief Q&A with the panel. And the "Policy" day only invited the public to observe. So our voices were left out of that.

Please hold follow up meetings that will allow more input from the public. Still, I applaud having this summit and am grateful to the City for putting it together. And I hope some report will be issued with the conclusions or recommendations or next steps that came out of the Policy day.

Thank you for being able to give some input via this survey.

N/A

Involve more young adults and youth

Engage the youth and parents more as well as creating an incentive to keep parents accountable.

Shorten the 2nd day and nor start on a 1st Sunday

More breakout sessions.

Inform audience of time to eat. Some were not sure when to begin eating. Timely start. More info regarding the planning meeting to encourage community engagement. More time between the community event/input and the planning meetings, so that well thought-out feedback could be garnered before meeting.

The Eventbrite ticket said it was starting at 1:00 Sunday, so I hurried to get there, but it didn't start until almost 2:30. Friends were told they had to be on a waiting list and half the seats were empty. I thought the meal Sunday would be supper time, like 5 of 6. I had eaten lunch at noon. It was confusing.

Youth and directly impacted community involvement would be amazing.

I arrived early to set up a table in the resource center and then it took a while for the summit to get going, so I personally wanted to get things started sooner. It was very nice to informally talk to the people at your table and the lunch was delicious but really not necessary. (A tray sandwiches would have been fine.) Perhaps getting started sooner and then having a chance to attend a second breakout session would be a suggestion.

Spend much less time at the beginning on introductions of people who helped with the summit. This is more appropriate to do at the end. At least 1 1/2 hours were spent on this and people got restless and bored before the panel started.

Make sure the technology is working and technicians know how to use it. The mikes, esp for the audience questions, were erratic. The room has terrible acoustics at best and we missed most of what was said by both the panel and the audience questioners. Our small group is seniors with hearing problems so we were at a disadvantage. We finally gave up and left.

The town hall was unfortunately not focused enough on actual youth doing most of the talking. It was a real missed opportunity.

Having more sectors included  
No "regular people" on Monday

Serve the meal at a more expected time (dinner?).

More community broadcast

None

Continue to do these summits and allow the community to be able voice their opinions. You are on the right track.

## Who else should be included in discussions about gun violence?

Who else should be included in discussions about gun violence?

teachers!!

researchers who have evidence based solutions that they can give to policy makers

I would like to hear from distinguished local citizens about this important issue.

I was surprised that only African-American clergy were invited. Where were the Rabbi's, the Muslims, The Protestants and Catholics and the Hispanics? Are we saying that Gun Violence is something that is only in the Black community? I wonder why they were not included. I would have liked to have focus groups and then have a summary of the focus groups, this did not happen. I would like to have had some input on how to stop fear mongering from our press, when people are frightened they may lash out in gun violence.

How can we change kids mindset , how can we help them help them self.

The audience was pretty comprehensive.

More involvement by peace and justice groups and faith groups who have a commitment to non-violence and the teaching of conflict resolution (in addition to the River Phoenix Center).

What is happening in the schools to teach non-violent conflict resolution as a better way to deal with conflicts than guns.

Survivors

See above

- 1) the church
- 2) home
- 3) Businesses
- 4) State and Federal Government
- 5) School
- 6) Community Groups, individuals etc.

All faith communités, churches, synagogue, temples and mosques/Islamic centers.

More individuals who have similar experiences to Mr. Price.

No other people/groups that I can think of....

Families who are directly involved. Schools.

Families and victim's of gun violence

There were many stakeholders invited. Perhaps more of them attended on Monday for the policy discussions.

Representation seemed complete. Possibly a group of prisoners who have actually committed violence with guns but that would be difficult to arrange. Maybe a video of them at the prison telling why they used guns would be appropriate.

The price of housing.

Police and Parents.

Those who have used gun violence

UF faculty

Youth that have actually lost a relative or loved one to gun violence

Everything was covered.

If you could get the people whose actually on the streets to come in and voice their opinions of what could be handled differently to make changes. I believe change starts within the individual.

## What should be the top 3 priorities to prevent gun violence?

What should be the top 3 priorities to prevent gun violence?

funding schools, funding mental health resources, building strong employment opportunities and social security nets in our communities

community improvement, community involvement, community education

Background checks, minimum age, training

How to protect ourselves: Education about the justice system; dismantling of the stand your ground law.

1. Get our youth job employment, 2. Upward Bound Program and 3. summer employment.

Education

Gun locks

Youth intervention

youth protective factors

youth activities

Legislation to control guns, hold gun makers accountable, teaching non-violence conflict resolution, increasing gun safety—parents locking up guns, etc

Lifting communities out of poverty, providing consistent community resources, providing housing/healthcare.

Connect with the District 1 and District 2 communities and LISTEN

policy adjustments that deter or reduce, build youth value for education over violence/respect, family support systems

1) education focus on mental health services 2) policies and 3) award communities for reduction in crimes involving guns.

Youth involvement

Neighborhood involvement

Community Collaboration

Education, conflict resolution, expanded career opportunities

1. Talk to youth
2. Provide resources in community for former incarcerated youth
3. Provide youth drug court

Creative conversations around grief and loss. Connection among all ages, inter generational. More involvement among law enforcement and community members.

- focus on prevention, intervention and support services
- educate children about gun safety measures (ie the Mom's Demand Action "BeSmart" program) in the public schools
- support "gun sense" legislation and "gun sense" candidates to improve our laws

a mentor program for youth; more community oriented policing; school programs that model non-violence behavior

Price of housing, integration of racial communities, reduce easy access to guns

Parents Control

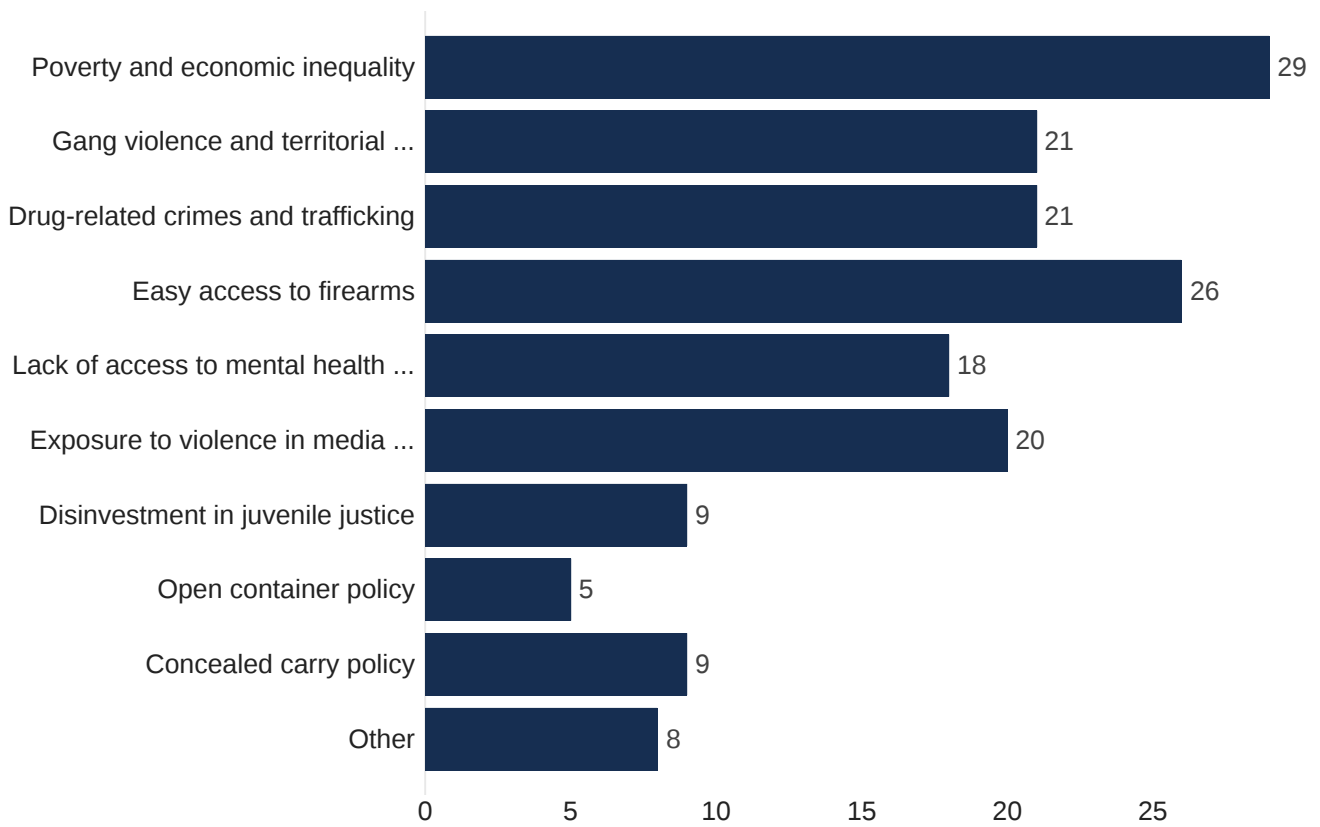
Funding changes, addressing basic needs, providing economic opportunities

Change state laws to reduce gun ownership, add a penalty for unlocked cars with guns, hire more enforcers of the crowd manager ordinance

mental health awareness, outreach and understanding of how some one is brought up or what they have been through or lived

Community, stolen guns, & minors with guns

## What do you believe contributes to gun violence in our community? (Please select all that apply.)



● Choice Count

### Other - Text

failing education system, police brutality

Lack of conversation and care

Lack of parental involvement

Solving problems with weapons trickles down from national war making and nuclear weapons. And living in a state who murders people by executing them. The nation and state models that you solve problems via violence. So no wonder our children learn to use violence to solve conflicts.

Lack of connection or isolation. Shame, anger, embarrassment which keeps people from asking for help.

lack of parental and family positive behavior

Price of housing



## What do you believe are effective solutions to prevent gun violence?

What do you believe are effective solutions to prevent gun violence?

evidence based solutions that invest in preventative methods. funding healthcare, affordable housing, high quality schools, employment opportunities, etc.

Training/counselling, mental health

Eliminating fire arms that are weapons of combat; Learning how to live in a world that is growing smaller(mental health education);

Grass roots efforts by communities to make the community more livable and enjoyable for youth - particularly at risk youth.

Promote educational alternatives. Leaders, elected, sports, religious, must behave MORALLY, non-violent strategies to solve problems practiced, carried out to set examples of solving disputes nob-violentlu. Education at all levels in all media as to strategies to create conflict resolution.

Cross sector preventive factors

See answer to top priorities. Also banning assault weapons would be beneficial. And stopping the incivility that has poisoned relationships and communication. Often coming from our "leaders". Too much Hate, not enough Love.

Ending poverty, homelessness, and hunger while providing housing, healthcare and educational/skilled worker opportunities.

Leaders connecting and listening to the community and target audience.

See question above. Must be a range of solutions that are addressed.

Increase safety in communities of color

Programs and employment

Limited gun access and affordable living, including, shelter, food, medicine, transportation.

Right now, I just do not know. I feel so ineffective.

See above response

Calling on everyone to help out, in any way they can.

-ensure that the public schools teach children about gun safety with the use of a program like the Mom's Demand Action "BeSmart" program

-let our legislators know that we want stronger gun sense legislation enacted

-provide at risk youth with summer and after school programs (ie Midnight Basketball)

see above

SHUT DOWN NRA.

Education, economics, and effective communication

More school resource officers

Showing love and support for under privileged individuals, positive role models and exposure to things bigger than just negative surrounding

Wholistic, multi service providers approach as well as income producers for the targeted population

Patrolling in the communities

## End of Report