

Last year, in response to increasing levels of gun violence and the infusion of money from the American Rescue Plan, the Mayor’s Office and City Council agreed to a \$155M investment in what the City defined as anti-violence programs for fiscal year 2022 (FY22), including \$68M in new funding and \$87M allocated to existing programs. Following [an analysis of this spending](#), our office found that only 21 percent (\$33M) out of the total \$155M investment was allocated to evidence-based intervention programs that have been found to yield short-term reductions in shootings and homicides, with the rest of the funding going towards programs that will likely take years to produce measurable reductions in gun violence.

On June 23, 2022, City Council approved the budget for fiscal year 2023 (FY23), which included \$208M in anti-violence spending as defined by the Mayor’s Office. This represents a \$54M (+35%) increase from the budgeted anti-violence spending for FY22. Similar to FY22, the majority of the anti-violence budget in FY23 is dedicated to long-term violence reduction programs. Only 17 percent of spending (\$36M) is dedicated to short-term intervention programs in FY23, a slight decline from last fiscal year.

Background

The analysis categorizes spending using three types of anti-violence investments as defined by experts in the field:^{1,2}

- *Intervention* efforts that address the immediate problem of gun violence;
- *Prevention* efforts that seek to mitigate risk of gun violence in the medium-term; and
- *Transformation* efforts that address the root causes of gun violence and improve the economic and social dynamics of communities over decades.

These categories help to frame the expectations for violence reduction

Types of Anti-Violence Efforts

Intervention Short-Term

- Strategies that address gun violence happening right now
- Focus on interruption & intervention of violence
- Targets efforts to specific individuals & groups most likely to shoot or be shot
- Results in <1 year to 3 years

Prevention Medium-Term

- Focus on addressing factors that put youth & other individuals at risk of future involvement with gun violence
- Programs include mentoring, mental health services, after-school programs
- Results in 5 to 10 years

Transformation Long-Term

- Goal of transforming communities so that they no longer induce violence
- Focus on economic development, neighborhood revitalization
- Results in 15 to 20 years

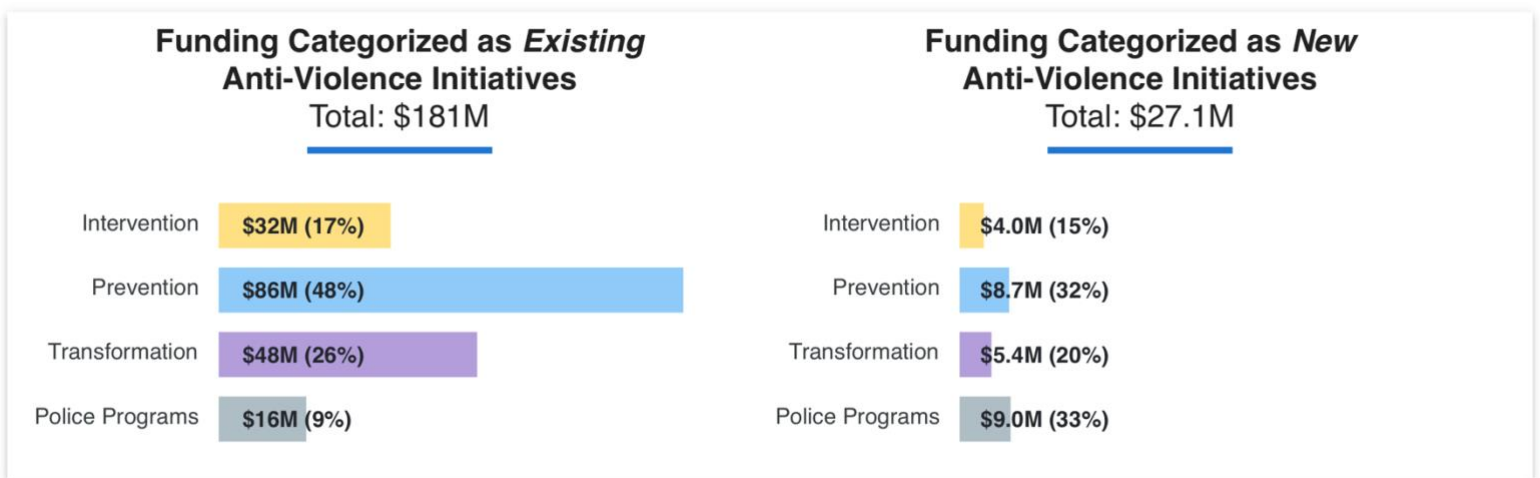
¹ The Centers for Disease Control, [Violence Prevention Fundamentals](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/fundamentals/) [\[link\]](#); Escamilla, J. (2020). *Violence prevention: Basic ideas for approaches and coordination*. Chicago, IL: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority [\[link\]](#); Muhammad, D. (2019). *Oakland Gun Violence Reduction Strategy*. The Ideas We Should Steal Conference. Philadelphia, PA [\[link\]](#); Abt, T. *Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence — and a Bold New Plan for Peace in the Streets*. (2019). New York: Basic Books.

² The categorization used in this analysis was outlined by David Muhammad of the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform during a [2019 presentation](#). The categorization is similar to the primary, secondary, and tertiary classification scheme widely used in the public health field to describe violence reduction strategies (see, e.g., the [CDC website](#) for more information).

results. It should be noted that the Kenney administration [developed its own categories](#) to describe its anti-violence spending priorities: Community Empowerment; Healing; Prevention; Employment and Careers; and Safe Havens for Youth and Families.

This analysis also uses a “Police Programs” category to describe police initiatives including reforms to the City’s 911 procedures, funding for the City’s forensics lab, and providing police officers with mobile phones. While classified as anti-violence spending by the Kenney administration, these initiatives, while important, are not specifically aimed at combating the city’s gun violence crisis. For this reason, the analysis separates these initiatives into their own category.

The charts below summarize the funding for the four categories used in this analysis, comparing funding for existing and new programs in FY23.



Key Findings

About 71 percent of the City’s total \$208M anti-violence investment in FY23 is directed toward preventive and transformational programs, while 17 percent is targeted to intervention efforts to interrupt violence in the short term. The remaining 12 percent is intended to improve police responses to behavioral health incidents and support other policing initiatives, including improvements to forensics, increased policing training, and the distribution of mobile phones to police officers.

There is a broad range of investments that the City considers to be part of its violence reduction efforts. The anti-violence budget includes:

- \$28M for after-school programs for students in pre-K through grade 12;
- \$23M for reentry and juvenile justice services;
- \$23M for efforts to mitigate police violence and reform 911 procedures;
- \$22M for anti-violence community expansion grants;
- \$21M for economic development and workforce programs;
- \$18M for community infrastructure programs;
- \$13M for restoration of Free Library services;
- \$12M for forensics and police deployment;

- \$11M for gun violence intervention programs;
- \$10M for truancy programming; and
- \$7M for the partial restoration of the Parks & Recreation budget.

The City's FY23 anti-violence budget continues to include many items that are not targeted solely to violence reduction. As an example, the City continues to include funding that restored pandemic-related service cuts to the Free Library and Parks and Recreation departments as part of its anti-violence budget. It is also including funding being used for general City operations such as a budget increase for the Free Library to support citywide 5-day library service. These are worthy investments for the City to make, however these general budget increases should not be considered anti-violence programs unless they are specifically targeted to reach the people and places most impacted by gun violence. For the purpose of this analysis, this funding is classified as prevention, as these departments play an important role in creating safe and thriving neighborhoods.

Preventive investments in other areas, such as reentry and juvenile justice services and after-school programs, typically take years to achieve a measurable reduction in shootings. Other programs, such as blight abatement and workforce development, focus on creating long-term, transformational change in neighborhoods over decades. These are important initiatives with long-term benefits to residents, but national experts are clear that the most successful anti-violence efforts are targeted to the hotspot areas where violence is most concentrated and are focused on the relatively small group of people who are most likely to be involved in gun violence.³

Only about 17 percent (\$36M) of the FY23 anti-violence budget is directed to short-term violence intervention. One of these investments is an additional \$2M in funding to expand the [Group Violence Intervention](#) (GVI) initiative and the [Community Crisis Intervention Program](#) (CCIP), which are both administered by the City's Office of Violence Prevention. With this additional funding, these programs will receive a combined \$7.1M in funding in FY23. CCIP was launched in 2018 and GVI was launched in 2020 to address increasing gun violence in Philadelphia. While GVI and CCIP are versions of evidence-based programs that have had success in other cities, it is difficult to measure the programs' effectiveness in Philadelphia as the City has not released evaluation of these programs publicly. The City recently stated that evaluations for these programs are ongoing and may take several additional years to be completed.⁴

The anti-violence budget also includes \$2M in new funding for the implementation of the Workforce READI program, an evidence-based violence intervention program that connects young men most at risk for experiencing gun violence with job training and social services. [An evaluation](#) of the original READI Chicago program found that the program lowered the likelihood of participants perpetrating or becoming victims of gun violence. The City has been conducting a feasibility study of the program in Philadelphia since spring 2021, and the pilot initiative is

³ Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. (2016). Healing Communities in Crisis: Lifesaving Solutions to the Urban Gun Violence Epidemic; National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform. (2021). Effective Community Based Violence Reduction Strategies; Abt, T., (2019). Bleeding Out.

⁴ <https://www.phila.gov/media/20220801160932/2022-SLFRF-Recovery-Plan-Performance-Report-Philadelphia.pdf>

currently slated to begin in fall 2022. The Kenney administration has stated that Philadelphia's READI program would have a minimum of 200 slots.⁵

Additionally, the City budgeted \$22.5M for its Anti-Violence Community Expansion Grant program in FY23, slightly expanding the \$20M budgeted in FY22. These grants focus on supporting mid-size organizations working in neighborhoods impacted by gun violence and must be used for projects occurring between fall 2022 and summer 2023.⁶ The grants can be used to fund new or existing programming in one of two areas: Trauma Informed Healing and Restorative Practices; and Safe Havens and Mentorship. The City failed to distribute the full allocation of Expansion Grants to community groups in FY22, using only \$13.5M of the \$20M allotment.⁷

In our review of last year's anti-violence budget, the Expansion Grants had not yet been awarded and were tentatively characterized as intervention based on the language in the program's application form. Subsequent analysis of the awardees shows that only 9 percent of the funding distributed in FY22 went to community organizations focused on intervention programs. For this analysis, we again categorize the Expansion Grants as intervention, with the hope that the City will direct more of the FY23 funding to organizations focused on short-term intervention work. As first noted in last year's analysis, the Community Expansion Grants could provide a unique opportunity for Philadelphia to expand its evidence-based community violence intervention (CVI) infrastructure in the neighborhoods most affected by gun violence. CVI organizations use credible messengers, also known as violence interrupters, to work directly with the individuals most at risk from gun violence, intervene before violence occurs, and connect them to social and economic resources. Based on the program awardees to date, grant funding needs to be more targeted to CVI organizations in the neighborhoods most impacted by gun violence that can create meaningful, short-term reductions in gun violence.

Finally, it is important to note that Philadelphia's investment in CVI programs and the associated support services is substantially lower than cities with similar, and more successful, approaches. If Philadelphia were to invest at the level of New York or Los Angeles, it would cost about \$55M annually.⁸ Even if all of the Community Expansion Grants are awarded to CVIs in FY23, the City will dedicate only \$36M for intervention-focused initiatives during FY23.

Conclusion

Despite the City's historic investment in anti-violence initiatives over the last two years, Philadelphia experienced 562 homicides, the most violent year in its recorded history. The violence has continued at a record pace in 2022, with homicides up 1% compared to the same date last year.⁹ Similar to the FY22 anti-violence budget, the majority of the FY23 budget is directed to prevention and transformation strategies with only 17 percent allocated to violence intervention. While prevention and transformation strategies are vital to long-term community development and

⁵ <https://whyy.org/articles/philly-still-weeks-away-from-completing-evaluation-of-new-anti-violence-program/>

⁶ See the [program application](#) for additional details

⁷ A [full list of FY22 awardees](#) is available on the City's website.

⁸ See the [Controller's Office report titled "Recommendations for the Use of American Rescue Plan Funds in Philadelphia."](#)

⁹ As of 11:59 PM on August 25, 2022.

addressing the systemic challenges that contribute to violence, intervention programs are critical to reducing violence in the short-term.

The City's historic level of spending to address the city's ongoing gun violence crisis demands transparency around the administration's past and current anti-violence initiatives. Though evaluations of GVI and CCIP are ongoing,^{10,11} the Kenney administration has not released any evaluations of existing anti-violence initiatives. Despite this lack of evaluation, the FY23 budget increases its planned spending on existing and new anti-violence programs by 35%. To ensure transparency around anti-violence spending, the Controller's Office recommends the Kenney administration publicly release data and metrics for its anti-violence programs. These metrics should focus on how the City's anti-violence investments are targeting the neighborhoods and residents most impacted by gun violence, as our office has called for publicly since July 2021.¹² This transparency will allow the public and City to identify the programs that are working and allocate funds accordingly. Ultimately, the City must direct more of its anti-violence budget to evidence-based violence interventions. Otherwise, the city and its residents will continue to endure tragic and historic levels of gun violence.

¹⁰ <https://www.phila.gov/2022-01-05-group-violence-intervention-progress-update-december-2021/>

¹¹ <https://www.phila.gov/media/20220801160932/2022-SLFRF-Recovery-Plan-Performance-Report-Philadelphia.pdf>

¹² <https://controller.phila.gov/city-controller-rhynhart-councilmember-gauthier-demand-action-on-gun-violence/>