

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/community-violence-interventions-not-more-police-are-the-future-of-public-safety>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

CVI programs safely and effectively reduce violence without relying on more police.

Gun violence is rising across the country in big cities and rural communities, in red states and blue ones. Especially hard hit are Black communities and other communities of color that have experienced decades of disinvestment. But more policing isn't the answer. Our overreliance on the tools of arrest, prosecution, and incarceration [has harmed communities](#) and [hasn't made us safer](#).

So, what do real solutions look like?

[Community violence intervention \(CVI\) programs](#) focus on reducing homicides and shootings by establishing relationships with people at the center of gun violence in our communities. These programs support people at the highest risk of being victims or perpetrators of violence. CVI programs acknowledge the capacity of people to make different choices and pursue other avenues for addressing and resolving conflict. And they can [save cities millions](#).

President Biden's [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\)](#) includes funding that can be used to invest in these programs, which take many forms:

The results: One analysis found that every dollar invested in an HVIP [returned between \\$10.07 and \\$15.11 worth of benefits](#) through reduced hospitalizations, reinjuries, and convictions.

The results: Cities that have invested in group violence intervention strategies, including Boston, Chicago, Indianapolis, New Orleans, Oakland, and Stockton, California, have experienced declines of [more than 30 percent](#) in shootings that result in injuries.

The results: Community-based program [Cure Violence](#) runs in cities all over the world. Neighborhoods in cities including Baltimore, Chicago, New York City, and Philadelphia that have adopted the Cure Violence model have seen shootings and killings [decrease by more than 30 percent](#). [Advance Peace](#) has programs in Richmond, Stockton, and Sacramento, California, and will launch one in New York City in fall 2021. In Sacramento, the program reduced homicides and nonfatal injury shootings [by 20 percent](#) from January 2018 to December 2019. For every \$1 spent on Advance Peace, Sacramento saved between \$18 and \$41 across emergency response, health care, and law enforcement, as well as other parts of the criminal legal system.

The term CVI refers specifically to programs and strategies working to reduce homicides and shootings that occur in our streets. It's important to note that there are many forms of violence that CVIs don't focus on including gender-based violence, sexual violence, child abuse, domestic violence, and police violence. These too demand investment and recognition.

Many cities are [using ARP funds to invest](#) in CVI programs. San Jose started a new one, while Austin, Detroit, and Seattle expanded their existing programs. New York City, St. Louis, and Washington, DC, have all committed to expanding ongoing programs and creating new ones.

Still, police department budgets remain at all-time highs. It's time for cities to invest instead in community-based solutions to gun violence like CVI programs [that have been proven to work](#).

Learn more: [Community Violence Intervention Programs. Explained](#)

SPECIAL REPORT (SINGLE)

PUBLICATION

NEWS

Transformative change, sent to your inbox.

Vera Institute of Justice. All rights reserved.