

# National OVP Network

## September 2025 Newsletter

### NOVPN Convening Recap



The fourth annual National Offices of Violence Prevention Network (NOVPN) Convening brought 155 attendees from nearly 50 jurisdictions nationwide to St. Louis, September 10-12, for learning and community building under the theme, *Harnessing Community Power: The Path to Sustainability*.

The 2025 NOVPN Convening topped more than 150 attendees for the first time, and we were welcomed by the Mayor of the City of St. Louis to open the convening. We also debuted the *OV*Piece of Your Mind reflections room, where attendees could share what this year's gathering meant to them. We are excited to have hosted 31 distinguished speakers in 44 sessions covering many topics related to violence reduction and OVP sustainability planning, and we're pleased to share that attendee feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

NICJR and its NOVPN team are incredibly grateful to everyone who attended and supported this year's Convening. Together, we engaged in heartfelt conversations, supported one another, and reaffirmed our commitment to this challenging but deeply rewarding work. We can't wait to see you all in Harris County next year!

*"Great convening! It's obvious much thought was put into organizing this meeting - from the attendees, venue, setup, sessions, and speakers. Thanks so much for bringing together such an august body of communities and leaders."*

*"The work you all are doing in this space creates the space for people like me to stay in this work."*

[2025 NOVPN Convening Photo Library](#)

[NOVPN Networking Event Playlist](#)

### Site Visits

Programming kicked off with a pre-convening day that featured site visits to the [Bullet Related Injury Clinic \(BRIC\)](#) and [Show Me Peace](#). Attendees touring the Bullet Related Injury Clinic saw firsthand how it provides holistic healing through physical and mental health care, spiritual support, and more for individuals impacted by gun violence. Show Me Peace leadership shared an overview of the organization's programming and shed light on the crucial importance of partnerships between community-based organizations and OVPs.



### Day 1

The first official day of the Convening began on an exciting note with welcome remarks from St. Louis Mayor [Cara Spencer](#). The opening session followed, with an overview of the [NOVPN Year in Review](#) and a plenary focused on defining community power. Throughout the rest of the day, field leaders covered topics such as using data to communicate impact, assessing training and technical assistance needs, and sustainability planning. We also hosted a plenary on the newly released [OVP Toolkit](#). The day closed with a session highlighting two NOVPN jurisdictions featured in the [2025 NOVPN Annual Report](#).

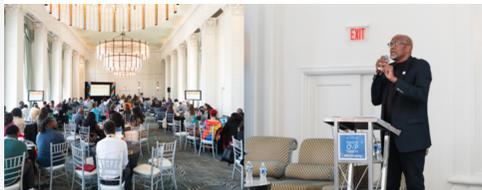


### Day 2

Day two opened with a recap of day one and a Kitchen Table Talk led by NOVPN Director [Shantay Jackson](#), giving attendees space to reflect on their time in St. Louis and raise open questions. The morning plenary led by [NICJR Executive Director David Muhammad](#) examined the question of where OVPs and CBOs fit in leading violence reduction work. After a round of panel discussions, [Greg Hodge](#), CEO of Brotherhood of Elders Network, delivered the lunch plenary entitled *Harnessing Community Power to Drive Sustainable Impact*. The day wrapped up with [Shantay Jackson](#), [David Muhammad](#), and [DeVone Boggan](#) reflecting on the first year of [NOVPN Strategic Plan](#) implementation and previewing priorities for the coming year.

The Convening concluded with a powerful call to action from [Shantay Jackson](#), who encouraged attendees to hold onto the truths they learned over the last two days and to remember that asking for help is an act of service. We closed with the exciting announcement that the fifth annual NOVPN Convening will take place in Harris County, TX!

*"Don't deny the people who love you the honor of being there to support you."*



### Trailblazer Awards

NOVPN launched the Trailblazer Award in 2024 to recognize members of the Network who are driving innovation and impact in violence reduction. The inaugural award honored [Aman Sebahtu](#), the first Coordinator for the National Offices of Violence Prevention Network.

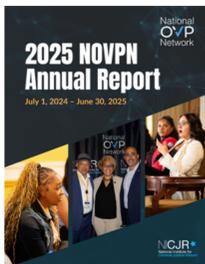
This year, the NOVPN was proud to honor three trailblazers whose pioneering spirit, bold leadership, and commitment to a holistic approach to violence reduction have made an extraordinary difference:

- [Calliana Thomas](#), Director, New York State Office of Gun Violence Prevention
- [Andrea Welsing](#), Director, Los Angeles County, CA Office of Violence Prevention
- [Latisha McNeil](#), Director, Greensboro, NC Office of Community Safety

We are grateful for each of their contributions that embody this year's convening theme. Read more about their inspiring work in the [2025 NOVPN Annual Report](#).



### 2025 NOVPN Reports



[Annual Report](#)



[Year In Review](#)

### Event Calendar

Find all important Network events here! **NOTE: Events are invitation only.** [Let us know if you haven't received an invitation.](#)

- 10/16/25-10/17/25: Midwestern Regional Convening, Cleveland, OH
- 11/13/25-11/14/25: State Convening, Providence, RI
- 11/20/25: Q4 Virtual Convening

