

HIGHLIGHTS OF **ARPA FUNDED** **VIOLENCE** **REDUCTION** **EFFORTS**

December 2023



INTRODUCTION

After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, violence surged nationwide. Responding to the urgent need to address gun violence, the White House encouraged jurisdictions across the country to use a portion of their federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocations to fund violence intervention. President Joe Biden hosted a series of meetings at the White House with experts in the community violence intervention (CVI) field and launched the Community Violence Intervention Collaborative (CVIC), which provided technical assistance (TA) and funding to local CVI groups in 16 cities.

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) was a partner in CVIC. NICJR is also the convener of the [National Offices of Violence Prevention Network](#) (NOVPN), a first-of-its-kind learning community launched in 2021 as a space to build the expertise and capacity of OVPs and other similar agencies. The NOVPN was founded by NICJR and partners with a membership of 21 established OVPs. Since then, it has grown to more than 45 agencies (including several established with NOVPN support).

NICJR also provides tailored training and technical assistance to cities, counties, and states across the US as they work to understand the nature of their local gun violence problem and enact proven, community-focused strategies to reduce that violence. In many cases, this work has been funded through ARPA dollars.

As a result, NICJR is deeply aware of the impact of ARPA funding, as well as the challenges that communities face in ensuring the sustainability of violence reduction work, as these federal funds must be obligated by the end of 2024. The following report provides a snapshot of ARPA funds—including the use, impact, and potential for sustainability—in four jurisdictions: two cities, one county, and one state.

BALTIMORE, MD

Background

The City of Baltimore has experienced more than 300 homicides annually for the last eight years, with a rate of 57.76 homicides per 100,000 residents. In response, Mayor Brandon Scott established the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE) in 2020. In 2021, the City adopted its first Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan, and in January of 2022, MONSE launched its Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRs) in partnership with the Baltimore Police Department and the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office. MONSE is tasked with coordinating city agencies and community partners in the fight against violence and ensuring accountability across the holistic violence reduction strategy. MONSE replaced and expanded the scope of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice.

ARPA Investment and Outputs

Baltimore allocated \$50 million in ARPA funding to MONSE over a three-year period, in addition to its existing \$20 million annual budget. The use of these funds has focused on the City's GVRs, CVI work, reentry services, and community healing (juvenile justice, victim services, crisis response, and trauma-informed training and service delivery). Within this allocation, \$8 million was designated for grantmaking to community-based organizations (CBOs).

Through the utilization of ARPA funds, MONSE has been able to leverage a whole-of-government approach to drive down gun violence, fund CBOs, and lower program participant recidivism rates. Notably, the city has seen a 20.5% decrease in homicides following the utilization of ARPA funds, from 278 year-to-date (YTD) homicides in November 2022 to 221 YTD homicides in November 2023. Additionally, within 11 months of implementing GVRs, the city experienced a 34% reduction in homicides in what is historically its most violent police district.



Sustainability

Two pieces of legislation will be key to ensuring the sustainability of ARPA-supported work in Baltimore:

The Tyrone Ray Safe Streets Act, which the Maryland General Assembly passed in 2018, provides \$3.6 million in annual funding for Baltimore's flagship CVI program, Safe Streets. This funding is distributed to MONSE and passed through to community-based administrators in 10 geographies across the city to support mediation and violence interruption.

The Maryland Medicaid legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2022 requires the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to provide community violence prevention services and reimbursement for those services. It also mandated that the Program establish requirements for prevention professionals seeking certification as a certified violence prevention professional, as well as requirements for entities that employ or contract with certified violence prevention professionals. The legislation also mandated that the Maryland Department of Health approve at least one accredited training and certification program for violence prevention professionals.

By leveraging these legislatively mandated Safe Streets and Medicaid funds, Baltimore can expand its citywide CVI footprint with minimal increases to CVI funding via general funds. This will allow MONSE to focus incremental funding increases to juvenile justice, reentry, and community healing. Further, with the reintroduction of results-based budgeting, Baltimore has paved the way for an incremental annual increase in general funding for MONSE, given the agency's positive communal results, outcomes, and impacts.

INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Background

In 2015, Indianapolis tallied 148 murders—the most the city had ever experienced in a single year. This deadly trend continued over the next several years, with a record-breaking number of homicides in six of the seven years between 2015–2021. In response, Indianapolis began to take steps toward violence reduction in 2018, with the creation of a Community Violence Reduction Team (CVRT) and by establishing a formal partnership with the Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF) to distribute grants to CBOs serving youth and/or providing reentry support for adults. The City also established quarterly Call-In meetings targeting individuals on probation in hot-spot neighborhoods, and the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) hosted a bi-weekly meeting of various law enforcement agencies to discuss enforcement of top-priority individuals.

While these investments were important early steps, the CVRT was significantly under-resourced given their duties, and the level of grant funding available was meager compared to comparable US cities. Additionally, services focused heavily on youth, yet young adults were the primary drivers of violence.

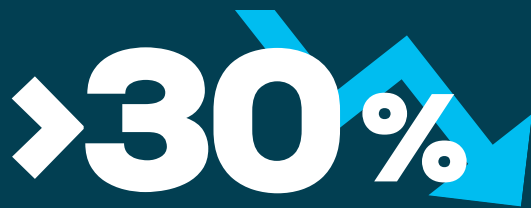
ARPA Investment and Outputs

In January 2022, in partnership with NICJR, Indianapolis implemented the Gun Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRs). Crucial to this was Mayor Hogsett's commitment of \$100 million in ARPA funds toward implementation, including \$55 million for GVRs staffing and \$45 million for grants to CBOs providing wraparound services to people and communities at the highest risk of violence. A scan of ARAP funding nationally appears to place Indianapolis as the city with the largest per capita investment in violence intervention in the country.

With ARPA funds, the City hired a full-time GVRs director, partnered with the Indianapolis Public Safety Foundation to hire 60 frontline violence intervention workers, and partnered with NICJR to provide training and TA to GVRs stakeholders. The City also greatly improved

and expanded its Call-In meetings, which were renamed Community Safety Meetings. Finally, the City provided \$45 million to CICF to award grants to local CBOs. Complementary to these efforts, IMPD dedicated more than 80 officers to two new units focused solely on reducing gun violence and established a high-quality weekly Shooting Review meeting.

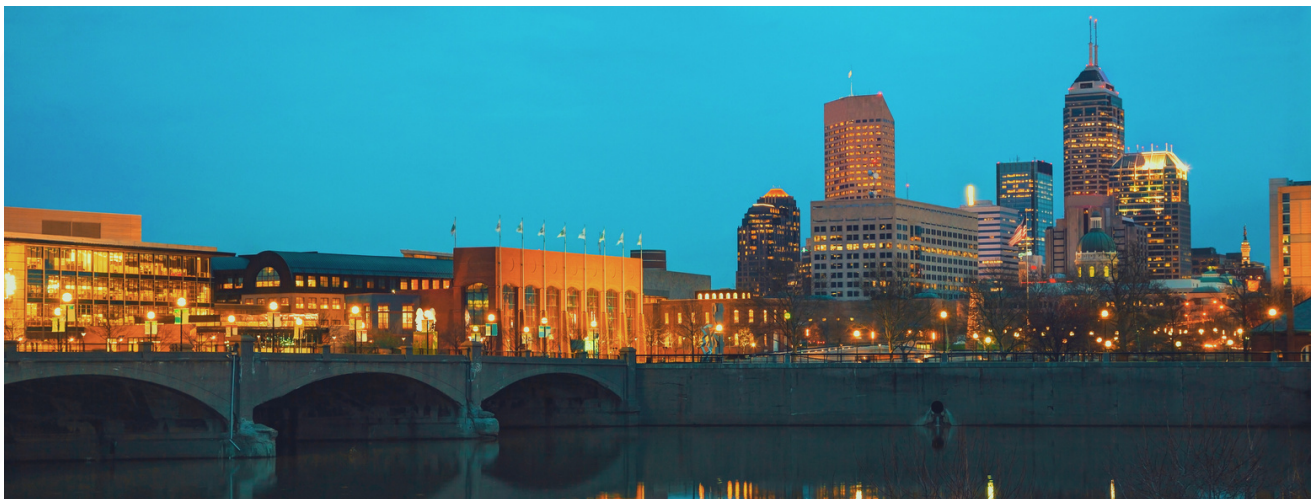
At the outset, GVRS stakeholders set a goal of at least a 10% year-over-year reduction for murders and 10% for non-fatal shootings in the first year of implementation. By the end of 2022, Indianapolis had experienced a 16% reduction in murders. According to IMPD, through December 1, 2023, the city had seen an additional 18% year-to-date reduction in murders. This means there has been a more than 30% reduction in murders since the implementation of GVRS via ARPA dollars.¹

A graphic featuring a large white arrow pointing right, followed by the text '30%' in a large, bold, white font. A blue line graph with a downward slope is overlaid on the text, ending in a blue arrowhead pointing down and to the right.

REDUCTION IN HOMICIDES
SINCE THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF GVRS VIA ARPA DOLLARS

Sustainability

These results have led to strong buy-in from City leaders that has ensured the sustainability of the Indianapolis GVRS. The Indianapolis City-County Council recently passed a bill to continue funding GVRS staffing and program costs at their current ARPA levels for at least two years.



1. [Gun violence is decreasing in Indianapolis. Yes, you read that correctly.](#)

MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NC

Background

In recent years, Mecklenburg County has grappled with a surge in homicides. Charlotte, the county seat and the most populous city in North Carolina, recorded 110 homicides in 2022, a 12% increase from 2019. The Mecklenburg County Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) was established in 2020 to reduce violence by building healthier, more resilient communities through violence prevention activities.

Prior to the addition of ARPA funding, the Mecklenburg OVP had an annual budget of \$400,000.² The majority of that budget (\$250,000) was allocated to jointly supporting a pilot Cure Violence intervention site with the City of Charlotte. The remaining funds were utilized to set up the newly formed Office; create, disseminate, and market the Office's strategic plan;³ and launch an awareness campaign about the burgeoning OVP. Prior to receiving ARPA funds, the OVP had only one full-time staff member, one Fellow, and several interns—a challengingly small staff for the scope of their intended work.



2. [National Offices of Violence Prevention Network Landscape Scan](#)

3. [The Way Forward](#)

ARPA Investment and Outputs

Mecklenburg County awarded the Office of Violence Prevention \$3,260,500 in ARPA funding in 2021. This funding has allowed the OVP to increase staffing to three full-time employees and one part-time employee (position currently vacant), in addition to retaining interns. ARPA funds are also supporting the implementation and evaluation of the Office's strategic plan in partnership with Northeastern University as well as a hot spot assessment to identify and focus resources on areas with high violence rates. Additional ARPA funds are supporting a multi-media violence prevention campaign and the 100 Youth Council, a community engagement program that gives youth from high-violence neighborhoods a platform to provide input on various OVP activities. Additionally, \$500,000 was allocated for performance-based funding to local CBOs that engage in violence prevention activities. Because many of these activities are approved but still upcoming, there are limited outputs to note at this time.

Sustainability

The OVP's work has been greatly bolstered by ARPA funding. Securing sustainable local funding is imperative for the OVP to not only maintain the momentum of ARPA-funded programs but also to retain an effective number of staff. Given the pivotal role the Office plays in executing crucial violence reduction initiatives, they are working to increase their share of the County's budget, which is currently very minimal.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Background

In 2017, the California State Legislature established the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant program, replacing the California Gang Reduction, Intervention, and Prevention (CalGRIP) Grant program established a decade earlier. Like its predecessor, CalVIP provides three-year funding to cities and CBOs to support services that have been shown to reduce community violence. CalVIP initially provided a very modest \$9 million annually in funding allocated throughout the most populous state in the country.

As gun violence spiked nationwide during the COVID-19 pandemic, California's homicide rate increased from 4.5 in 2019 to 6.1 in 2020; over the same period, the state's firearm mortality increased from 7.2 to 8.5.⁴ In 2020, the California legislature increased the CalVIP annual allocation to \$30 million.⁵

ARPA Investment and Outputs

Spurred to action by these trends, in 2021, the California State Legislature made the decision to direct \$200 million of ARPA funds to the CalVIP Grant program. Spread over three years, this constituted an increase of more than 740% for violence intervention and prevention services across the state.⁶ Amid this augmentation, 20 California cities and 84 CBOs received CalVIP funding to provide a wide array of services across the state. Although the grant period has not concluded, California's homicide rate has already started to decline. According to the California Department of Justice, in 2022, the homicide rate decreased for the first time in three years, from 6.0 in 2021 to 5.7 in 2022.⁷



>740%  **INCREASE IN FUNDING**
FOR VIOLENCE INTERVENTION
AND PREVENTION SERVICES
DUE TO ARPA INVESTMENT

4. [Crime In CA 2022](#)

5. [Update: Cities Can Apply for California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grants](#)

6. [California Violence Prevention & Intervention Grant](#)

7. [Crime in California 2022](#)

Sustainability

California has taken critical, historical steps to ensure the sustainability of CalVIP funding. In 2023, the legislature passed Assembly Bill 28: The Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Act,⁸ which establishes a permanent funding source for CalVIP, eliminating the need for ongoing reauthorizations of the grant and buffering it from future political battles and budget negotiations. Beginning in 2024, these funds will come from a new state tax on firearms and ammunition.

8. [Bill Text - AB-28 Firearms and ammunition: excise tax.](#)

CONCLUSION

This report highlights four examples among the many jurisdictions across the country that have used federal ARPA funds to implement effective gun violence reduction initiatives. City, county, and state governments must allocate general funds and other sustainable funding streams to support these life-saving measures. Additionally, as an incentive, the federal government should extend some portion of the ARPA funding as a match to local governments that allocate dollars to community violence intervention strategies.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ARPA FUNDED VIOLENCE REDUCTION EFFORTS

December 2023

NICJR★
National Institute for
Criminal Justice Reform

National
OVP
Network