



PORTLAND

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction	5
Relationship Between City Agencies' and Community-Based Organizations' Locations and Portland Gun Violence, January 2024–December 2024	6
Methodology.....	7
Portland Gun Violence Reduction Initiatives	7
Office of Violence Prevention	7
Portland Ceasefire.....	8
Building a Violence Reduction Landscape	9
Violence Prevention Ecosystem Definitions	11
Current Portland Violence Reduction Ecosystem	13
Violence Prevention	13
Academic Supports and Tutoring.....	13
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)	13
Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA)	13
Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC)	14
Portland Public Schools' Youth Violence Prevention and Response Team	14
Reaching and Empowering All People (REAP)	14
Mentoring	15
IRCO.....	15
Generations United in Action (Guía Inc.)	15
Latino Network.....	15
POIC	15
Portland Public Schools' Youth Violence Prevention and Response Team	16
REAP	16
Restorative Practices.....	16
REAP	16
Social and Emotional Learning	16
Word is Bond	16
Sports and Recreational Activities	17
POIC	17

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) Programs	17
IRCO.....	17
Latino Network.....	17
Therapy and Other Behavioral Health Services	17
Multnomah County’s Gun Violence-Impacted Families Behavioral Health Response Team	17
New Avenues for Youth (NAFY)	18
REAP	18
Workforce Development.....	18
African Refugee Immigrant Organization (ARIO)	18
Healing, Enriching, and Learning Purpose (HELP)	19
IRCO.....	19
POIC.....	19
Youth Development.....	20
ARIO	20
Guía Inc.	20
Love is Stronger	20
Word is Bond	20
Youth Diversion	21
Latino Network.....	21
Violence Intervention.....	21
Going Home II	21
Guía Inc.	22
HELP	22
Latino Network.....	22
Love is Stronger	23
Nurture Outreach Services.....	23
POIC	23
Community Transformation.....	24
Albina Vision Trust (AVT)	24
Latino Network.....	24
New Avenues for Youth.....	25
Native American Youth and Family Center	25
Strengths of Existing Violence Reduction Landscape.....	26
Challenges	27
Recommendations.....	28
Appendix A: Shared Definition Building.....	32
Appendix B: Organizations Identified through the OVP Convening.....	34

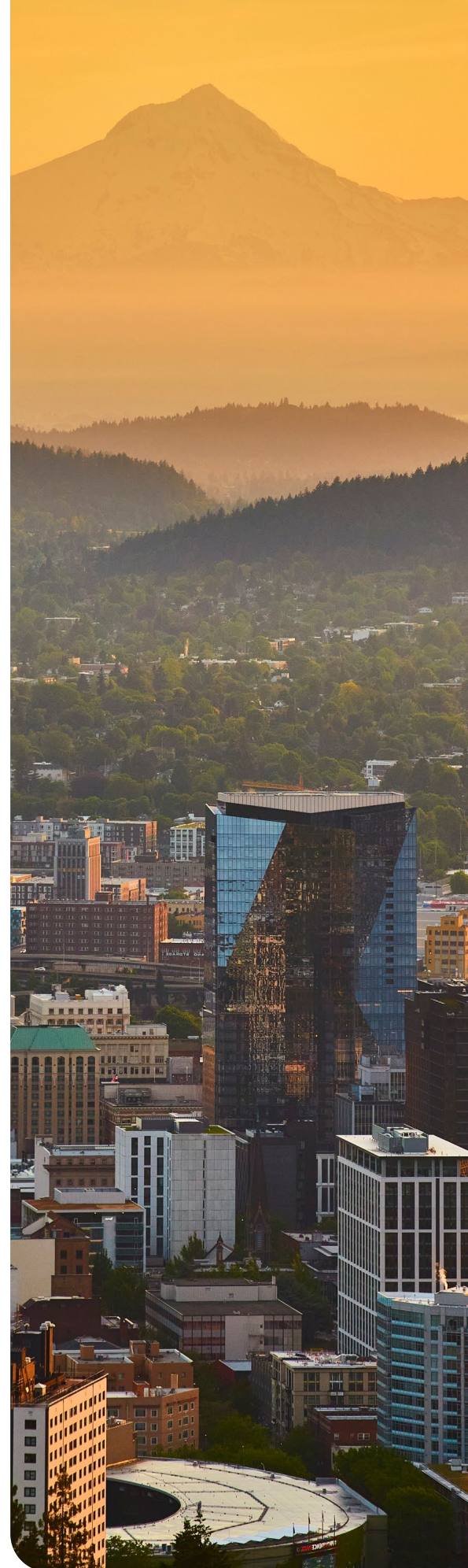
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Portland Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) commissioned the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) to analyze the city's existing community violence reduction landscape, with a focus on community-based organizations (CBOs) leading violence prevention work. This included an analysis of the City and County programs and CBOs that constitute the core of Portland's current violence reduction landscape. It also included identification of additional organizations that are important resources as the OVP and its partners work to fully build out the landscape of services.

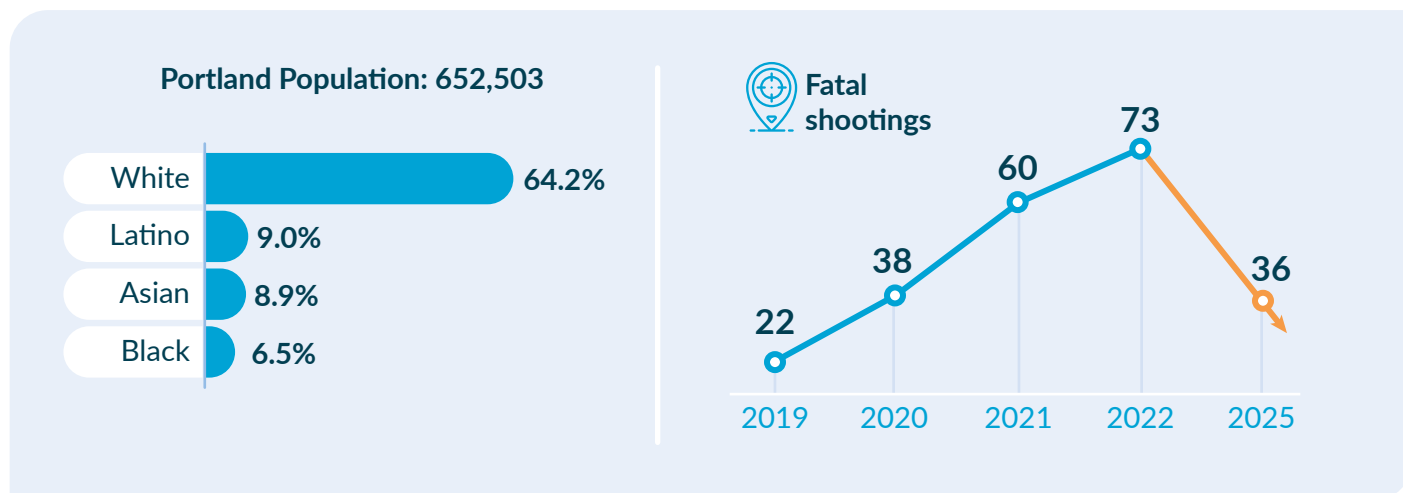
Portland's violence reduction landscape is built upon a strong foundation of community-driven violence prevention efforts. Across the city, grassroots organizations are working to address the root causes of violence by providing youth mentorship, culturally specific education, workforce development, family stabilization, and community outreach. These prevention-oriented programs create safe spaces for young people, promote prosocial activities, and help build a sense of belonging and opportunity that reduces the likelihood of future violence. Many of these initiatives are led by trusted community members with lived experience, ensuring that interventions are grounded in local knowledge and cultural understanding.

Despite these strengths, Portland's violence reduction landscape faces several key challenges. Limited coordination among community-based organizations, insufficient collaboration across systems, and unstable funding streams have made it difficult to sustain consistent, long-term programming. These challenges have created fragmentation within the system, reducing its collective ability to deliver comprehensive, sustained violence prevention and intervention.

To address these barriers, the City of Portland should continue to strengthen and expand the Office of Violence Prevention as the central coordinating body for this work. The Office should focus on uniting government agencies, community-based organizations, and residents around a shared violence reduction strategy; provide training and capacity-building support to CBOs; and ensure equitable and flexible funding opportunities across organizations of all sizes. Additionally, investment in integrated behavioral health and substance use services, as well as targeted outreach to underserved populations, will be critical to meeting community needs. With these steps, Portland can build upon its existing community infrastructure and City programming to create a more connected, sustainable, and effective violence reduction landscape.



INTRODUCTION



Portland, Oregon, is home to 652,503 residents, of whom 64.2% are White, 9.0% Latino, 8.9% Asian, and 6.5% Black.¹ There are a number of government programs and initiatives specifically focused on gun violence throughout the city, and there are many community-led organizations that serve youth and families with the goal of preventing the occurrence of violent crime.

Like many other cities across the nation, Portland experienced a spike in gun violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, the city saw 22 fatal shootings and 76 nonfatal shooting incidents.^{2,3} In 2020, Portland experienced a nearly 72.7% increase in fatal shootings, with 38 fatal shootings, and a 135.5% increase in nonfatal shootings, with 179 nonfatal shooting incidents. In 2021, the number of fatal shootings increased to 60, and the number of nonfatal shooting incidents increased to 274. While fatal shootings continued to climb in 2022 to a record 73, nonfatal shootings began to decline slightly. Since then, both fatal and nonfatal shootings have steadily decreased, with 36 fatal shootings and 116 nonfatal shootings reported in 2025, reflecting a significant reduction in gun violence from the pandemic-era highs.⁴ This trend brings Portland closer to its pre-pandemic levels of gun violence, though the city has seen a smaller overall decline compared to many other major cities across the country.

This report begins with a map of gun violence incidents in 2024 relative to the location of City agencies and CBOs focused on violence reduction, in order to visually assess the relationship between shootings and gun violence reduction efforts. Next, the report describes City initiatives, key programs, and community-based organizations focused on reducing violence. This is followed by an overview of the components of a violence reduction landscape, setting forth a framework for planning responses to community violence. Analysis of Portland's current violence reduction landscape follows, along with a brief discussion of its strengths, challenges, and goals. Finally, the report provides an overview of additional CBOs that attended the OVP Convening and could support the city's violence reduction ecosystem. The report closes with recommended next steps.

¹ [City of Portland](#)

² While all fatal shootings are homicides, not all homicides are fatal shootings. These terms are not used interchangeably in this report. The term "homicide" encompasses all circumstances of one person killing another and does not always involve a firearm. "Fatal shooting" specifically denotes a situation where a person is killed by a firearm.

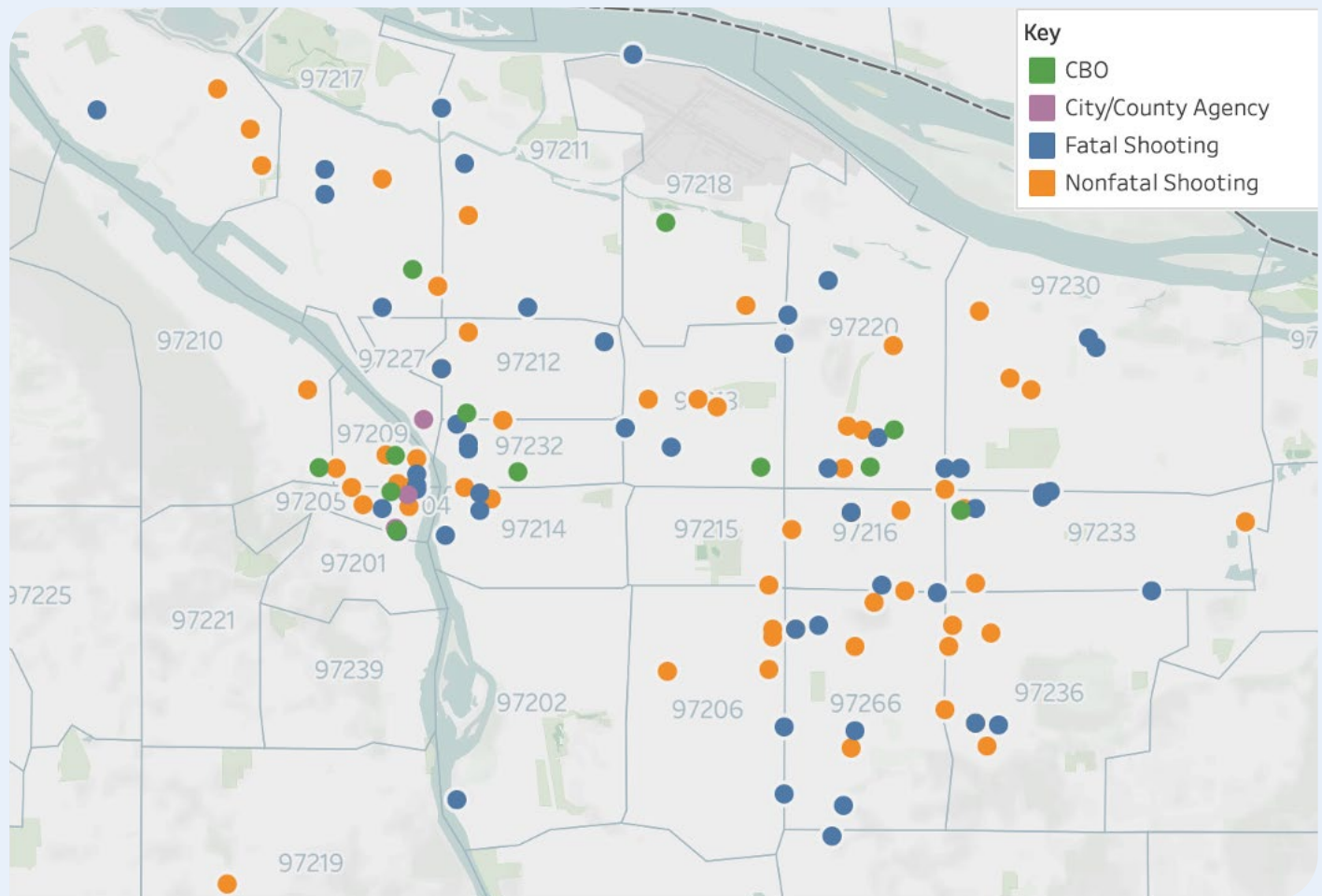
³ [Portland Police Bureau Shooting Incident Statistics](#)

⁴ Ibid.

Relationship Between City Agencies' and Community-Based Organizations' Locations and Portland Gun Violence, January 2024–December 2024

Below is a map that displays two sets of data: 1) locations where fatal and nonfatal shootings took place in Portland during 2024 and 2) sites where community-based organizations and City/County agencies supporting those affected by gun violence are physically located. CBOs are represented by green dots, programs under City/County agencies by purple dots, fatal shootings by blue dots, and nonfatal shootings by orange dots. Though a number of organizations acknowledge providing services throughout the City of Portland, many are headquartered in just a handful of zip codes. Notably, there is a lack of CBOs located within the 97206, 97266, and 97236 zip codes.

Figure 1: Map of Gun Violence and CBOs in Portland, OR, January 2024–December 2024



Methodology

In June 2025, NICJR participated in an Office of Violence Prevention Convening hosted by the City of Portland. The event engaged 19 community-based organizations and two City and County programs that were recognized by the OVP as pivotal players in mitigating gun violence. Seven of the 19 entities that participated in the OVP Convening were subsequently interviewed by NICJR to delve deeper into their approaches. Five additional entities that were identified by the OVP as part of the landscape were also interviewed, as were key OVP staff. All interviews took place between March 18, 2025, and September 5, 2025. They were conducted virtually via Zoom, and each lasted 30–60 minutes. Interviews were structured to allow for open-ended questions, authentic responses, and productive discussion. NICJR also reviewed publicly available documentation such as organization impact reports, news articles, and City planning reports to describe the organizations and efforts that compose the local violence reduction landscape.

Through the OVP convening, interviews, and document review, NICJR identified strengths, gaps, and challenges in the existing landscape. NICJR then developed a list of recommendations for the City to continue to build out the violence reduction work.



Portland Gun Violence Reduction Initiatives

Office of Violence Prevention

Established in 2006, the OVP is now housed within Portland's Public Safety Service Area and serves as the city's central hub for coordinating and advancing violence prevention efforts. The Office emphasizes priorities identified by the City Council to create a more family-friendly city and increase public safety.⁵ Today, the OVP leads a citywide strategy that connects government agencies, community-based organizations, local businesses, schools, and the faith community to address the root causes of gun violence.

A cornerstone of the OVP's work is the Safe Blocks Program, which takes a neighborhood-by-neighborhood approach to public safety. Safe Blocks is designed to empower residents in communities that are disproportionately impacted by violence and social vulnerability through the provision of free workshops and trainings, crime prevention through environmental design assessments, neighborhood improvement projects, and guidance on community engagement and event organization. By offering no-cost tools to Portlanders, the program allows residents to be involved in the promotion of public safety.

The OVP also refers individuals impacted by violence to the Trauma and Violence-Impacted Families (TVIF) Program, which is designed to support youth, adults, and families who are at risk of cyclical, intergenerational violence. TVIF is operated by the Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC) under contract with the OVP. The program conducts service assessments and connects clients with supportive programming.

⁵ Office of Violence Prevention

Complementing these efforts, the OVP manages the Safer Portland Grant Program, which funds violence prevention efforts in neighborhoods disproportionately affected by gun violence, such as Cully, Hazelwood, Eliot, and Powellhurst-Gilbert. The program supports a diverse array of initiatives, including youth mediation and mentoring, victim services, and arts-based violence prevention programming.

The OVP also hosts Community Peace Collaborative (CPC) forums twice a month. These forums bring together residents, local CBOs, and City partners for information sharing and collaboration. Gatherings can include updates from OVP staff, collaborative workshops, presentations from CBOs, and provision of recent crime data by the Portland Police Bureau (PPB).

Portland Ceasefire

Established in June 2023, Portland Ceasefire is a focused deterrence strategy designed to reduce homicides and shootings through direct and intensive engagement with those at highest risk of being involved in gun violence. The program was created in response to the rapid increase in gun violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years, much of the City's violence intervention work has been consolidated under the Ceasefire strategy. Ceasefire is intended to be a collaborative partnership between the Portland OVP, PPB, Multnomah Department of Community Justice, Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, and CBO contractors (including POIC; Going Home II; Nurture Outreach Services; Healing, Enriching, and Learning Purpose; and Generations United in Action).⁶

There are a number of components involved in Portland Ceasefire:

- ✓ weekly Shooting Reviews, where shooting incidents from the previous week are analyzed to understand violence dynamics and hotspots;
- ✓ weekly Coordination Meetings that help implement tailored intervention approaches;
- ✓ direct and respectful communication to those individuals and groups at highest risk of violence involvement;
- ✓ street-level outreach, where Violence Interrupters and Outreach Workers identify and engage those at risk of being involved in violence;
- ✓ intensive case management and referrals to services and supports; and
- ✓ focused supervision by law enforcement.

⁶ NICJR provides technical assistance to Portland for this effort.

BUILDING A VIOLENCE REDUCTION LANDSCAPE

A full violence reduction continuum is a comprehensive network that includes strategies in three domains: violence prevention, violence intervention, and community transformation. While the Portland OVP is mainly focused on violence prevention, it does also include services oriented toward violence intervention and community transformation. NICJR recommends that every jurisdiction include services that span violence prevention, violence intervention, and community transformation.

Violence prevention refers to the elimination or reduction of the underlying causes and risk factors that lead to violence, focusing on at-risk individuals.⁷ Violence prevention efforts are thus designed to prevent violence from occurring in the first place and take approximately 5–10 years to yield outcomes. Key components of violence prevention are depicted below.

Figure 2. Violence Prevention Ecosystem



Violence intervention efforts are designed to prevent the recurrence of violence or intervene and prevent the imminent act of violence among very high-risk individuals. Investment results take between 1–3 years to materialize. Key components of violence intervention are depicted below.

⁷ About Violence Prevention

Figure 3: Violence Intervention Ecosystem



Community transformation refers to the elimination of factors that give rise to violence in a neighborhood, like poverty, blight, low-performing schools, and historic disinvestment. While community transformation is a long-term strategy that can take 15–20 years to achieve, if successfully implemented, it can also be most effective at permanently reducing violence. Key components of community transformation are depicted below.

Figure 4: Community Transformation Ecosystem



Violence Prevention Ecosystem Definitions



Academic Supports and Tutoring: Structured instructional services that provide students with targeted assistance to strengthen their understanding of academic content, build foundational skills, and improve performance in specific subject areas. These services may include one-on-one tutoring, small-group instruction, homework assistance, skill-building activities, and individualized learning plans designed to accelerate student progress and close learning gaps.⁸



Mentoring: Structured, purposeful, and supportive relationship in which a more experienced or trained individual (the mentor) provides guidance, encouragement, role-modeling, and consistent support to a less experienced person (the mentee) to promote their positive development, skill-building, and overall well-being.⁹



Restorative Practices: A set of relational approaches and strategies that proactively build community, strengthen relationships, and repair harm through inclusive, collaborative processes. They emphasize accountability, healing, and the restoration of trust rather than punishment, and they aim to improve social capital, increase empathy, reduce conflict, and support the well-being of individuals and communities.¹⁰



Social and Emotional Learning: The process through which children, youth, and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.¹¹



Sports and Recreational Activities: Structured or unstructured physical, social, and leisure activities that promote physical health, social connection, skill-building, teamwork, and positive youth engagement. These activities provide safe, supervised environments that support healthy development, reduce risky behaviors, and strengthen protective factors associated with reduced violence involvement.¹²



Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) Programs: The integration of the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics into a cohesive, interdisciplinary learning model that uses creative processes, design thinking, problem-solving, and project-based learning. STEAM emphasizes real-world application, innovation, collaboration, and the development of both technical and creative skills to prepare young people for academic success, workforce pathways, and lifelong learning.¹³

⁸ U.S. Department of Education: Issue Brief: Academic Tutoring in High Schools

⁹ The National Mentoring Partnership: Youth Mentoring

¹⁰ IIRP: Restorative Practices: Explained

¹¹ CASEL: Fundamentals of SEL

¹² WHO: Physical Activity

¹³ The Kennedy Center: Growing from STEM to STEAM



Therapy and Other Behavioral Health Services: Structured, evidence-based clinical interventions delivered by licensed or credentialed professionals to address mental health conditions, trauma, emotional distress, substance use disorders, and behavioral challenges. These services include assessment, diagnosis, counseling, psychotherapy, crisis intervention, substance use treatment, and coordinated care designed to improve psychological well-being, functioning, coping skills, and safety.¹⁴



Workforce Development: Refers to a coordinated set of policies, programs, and services designed to prepare individuals for employment, support them in acquiring the skills needed in the labor market, and help employers meet their talent needs. It includes job training, education, career counseling, credentialing, and wraparound supports that improve individuals' ability to obtain, retain, and advance in employment.¹⁵



Youth Development: An intentional, prosocial process that supports young people in developing the cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and physical skills they need to thrive. It focuses on building strengths; fostering positive relationships; creating safe and supportive environments; and expanding opportunities for youth to develop competencies, confidence, character, connection, and contribution.¹⁶



Youth Diversion: A structured process that moves young people away from formal justice system involvement—such as arrest, prosecution, adjudication, or detention—and toward supportive, community-based services that address underlying needs, promote accountability, and reduce the likelihood of future offending. Diversion programs prioritize early intervention; restorative responses; individualized supports; and keeping youth connected to school, family, and pro-social environments.¹⁷

¹⁴ SAMHSA: National Behavioral Health Crisis Care Guidance

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Labor: Workforce Development Solutions

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Positive Youth Development

¹⁷ OJJDP: Diversion Programs

Current Portland Violence Reduction Ecosystem

The Portland violence reduction landscape, as identified by the Office of Violence Prevention, currently comprises 14 community-based organizations and two City programs. It is important to note that while the Portland OVP is mainly focused on violence prevention, there is programming that fits within violence intervention and community transformation.

Violence Prevention

Academic Supports and Tutoring

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) has supported Oregon's refugee and immigrant communities since 1976, helping families build stability through education, empowerment, and culturally responsive services. IRCO's school-linked and school-based programs provide comprehensive academic and behavioral support to K-12 students, particularly those whose education has been disrupted by displacement or resettlement. Through afterschool groups, tutoring, one-on-one case management, mentoring, and family engagement, IRCO helps students strengthen academic performance and ease transitions into US school systems. IRCO's 22 community schools serve as resource hubs, offering extended-day programming, food and resource assistance, and parent leadership opportunities.¹⁸

Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA)

The Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) has been a cornerstone of Portland's Native community since its 1994 founding by parent and elder volunteers. Serving over 2,000 people annually and representing more than 300 tribal communities, NAYA's mission is rooted in cultural identity, self-determination, and holistic community well-being. NAYA's Many Nations Academy is a culturally relevant, student-centered high school that integrates Native traditions, academic achievement, and college and career readiness. Students benefit from small class sizes; project-based learning; and enrichment electives such as robotics, regalia-making, and the Two Spirit Club. The school's wraparound model combines academic rigor with strong relational and cultural support, helping students stay engaged and connected to their community.



NAYA's Educational Youth Advocates provide individualized case management and mentorship for youth, focusing on the four dimensions of the Relational Worldview Model: mind, body, spirit, and context. Advocates attend school meetings and assist with tutoring, homework, and family communication while linking students from schools across Portland to community resources and cultural programming. In addition, NAYA's Educational Re-engagement Program focuses on mentoring individuals who are returning to high school to get their degree. The program incorporates elements such as one-on-one coaching, GED test preparation, transportation assistance, and childcare.

¹⁸ IRCO: Youth and Academic Services

Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC)

Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC), founded in 1967 as part of the national OIC network, provides education, workforce training, and wraparound support for youth and adults across Portland. The organization operates five alternative schools, serving students who have struggled in traditional educational settings and who are at risk of academic disengagement or justice system involvement. These schools combine small class sizes, responsive teachers, and culturally specific services to ensure each student has the resources needed to succeed both academically and personally. Through credit recovery, leadership courses, and trauma-informed supports, POIC helps students complete their diplomas or GEDs while connecting them to job pathways and mentorship opportunities that encourage long-term stability.

Portland Public Schools' Youth Violence Prevention and Response Team

Since 2022, Portland Public Schools' Youth Violence Prevention and Response Team has worked across the district's 92 schools to support students identified as being at higher risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence in their communities. The team, which is composed of two coordinators and two managers, serves as a bridge between school resources, families, and external partners to help students remain on the path to graduation. They focus especially on justice-involved youth, using a trauma-informed, relationship-based approach to connect them with academic and social supports that remove barriers to success. The team's work extends beyond the classroom to address both academic and basic needs, ensuring that students have access to food, hygiene items, and a safe space within school buildings, while also coordinating with departments focused on homelessness, racial equity, and athletics. Through events like the Youth Empowerment Summit, which brought together over 200 students for workshops on leadership and safety, the team promotes school engagement and empowers students to envision long-term educational goals.

Reaching and Empowering All People (REAP)



The Reaching and Empowering All People (REAP) organization has been a cornerstone of youth leadership and education programming in the Portland metro area since 2001. Serving more than 1,800 students annually across grades 3–12, REAP partners with schools in Portland, Gresham, Beaverton, Tigard, and other districts to close academic gaps and foster culturally responsive learning environments. Its mission is to “ignite, elevate, and engage the next wave of leaders for the future now,” supporting students in developing the academic confidence, civic awareness, and leadership skills needed to thrive.¹⁹ REAP's programs are intentionally designed to reach youth before they disengage from school or become vulnerable to violence, helping them connect their education to long-term goals.

The Solutions program, which anchors REAP's leadership and academic development model, is a 10-month, student-led curriculum that integrates civic engagement, entrepreneurship, and personal wellness while

¹⁹ REAP: About

reinforcing academic success and college readiness. Additionally, the REAP Young Entrepreneurs Program offers hands-on learning in business development, marketing, and networking, encouraging students to view entrepreneurship as a pathway to empowerment and self-sufficiency. Through these interconnected programs, REAP cultivates academic excellence, emotional resilience, and leadership capacity among historically underrepresented youth.

Mentoring

IRCO

IRCO's school-linked programming, mentioned above, supports K-12 students with wraparound services that include mentoring to ease school transitions, close opportunity gaps, and increase the number of youth graduating from high school.

Generations United in Action (Guía Inc.)

Generations United in Action (Guía Inc.) is a community-based organization dedicated to guiding high-risk youth toward brighter, more inclusive futures and addressing the root causes of gun/gang violence through mentorship, cultural connection, and pro-social community support. Guía Inc. conducts culturally specific outreach to Portland's Latino community, creating trusted spaces that affirm cultural identity and strengthen connection across generations. The organization offers one-on-one mentoring programs tailored to support youth with criminal justice system involvement. The mentorship focuses on rehabilitation, reintegration, and empowerment to make positive choices.

Latino Network

Latino Network, founded in 1996 by community advocates seeking to address inequities in education, policing, and healthcare, serves the Latino community across the Portland metropolitan area and Multnomah County. Latino Network's Padrinos program provides mentorship for youth facing challenges in their schools and communities and youth from families that have been impacted by the justice system.²⁰



POIC

POIC invites mentors from similar socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds to work with students, emphasizing the power of lived experience in building a trusting relationship. In its alternative schools, the Student Leadership program pairs older students with middle and elementary school youth, teaching conflict resolution and leadership skills while encouraging them to serve as role models in their communities.

²⁰ Latino Network: Padrinos

Portland Public Schools' Youth Violence Prevention and Response Team

Portland Public Schools' Youth Violence Prevention and Response Team centers its work on mentorship, building consistent and trusting relationships with students who might not otherwise engage with traditional school systems. Acting as mentors and advocates, team members help youth navigate academic, behavioral, and personal challenges. They focus especially on justice-involved students, ensuring that these young people have a consistent adult presence to rely on. Programs such as Dinner and Knowledge, where sports teams share meals and discussions with community leaders, give students a chance to learn from role models who reflect their lived experiences.

REAP

REAP's Renaissance program is a leadership development program for young men of color that promotes positive self-identify and self-worth through peer-to-peer mentoring, civic engagement, business innovation, and public speaking.

Restorative Practices

REAP

REAP's Reflections program incorporates restorative practices. The program promotes equitable discipline practices by offering a restorative classroom space where students learn conflict resolution, relationship building, deescalation skills, positive problem solving, and cooperative management strategies as opposed to focusing on punitive measures.

Social and Emotional Learning

Word is Bond



Founded in 2017, Word is Bond is a Black-led nonprofit that empowers young Black men aged 15–20 through programming in areas such as leadership development; workforce and career development; academic, financial, and digital literacy; and food accessibility and sustainability. Recognizing that many of its participants face systemic barriers and trauma, Word is Bond emphasizes social and emotional growth as the foundation for leadership and community engagement. Participants engage in discussions, storytelling sessions, and other activities that strengthen identity, emotional regulation, and empathy. Programs such as Level Up provide monthly pro-social events; mentorship nights; and group dialogues that encourage reflection, self-expression, and connection among peers.²¹ This programming also aligns with the local definition of life skills and emotional regulation as established by entities within Portland's violence reduction landscape (see Appendix A).

²¹ Word is Bond: Level Up

Sports and Recreational Activities

POIC

POIC integrates athletics into its educational and wellness model through Rosemary Anderson Prep’s intramural sports program. Open to students of all skill levels, the program promotes teamwork, discipline, and positive peer engagement through basketball, volleyball, flag football, soccer, and e-sports. These activities provide structured opportunities for students to connect with supportive adults and peers while building leadership, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Beyond recreation, POIC uses sports as a tool for violence prevention and personal growth, giving youth consistent spaces to develop healthy habits through fostering inclusive play, a sense of community, discipline, and team spirit.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) Programs

IRCO

IRCO’s Next Gen program introduces youth to technology and web development through hands-on training in coding and digital skills. By exposing students to tech career pathways in a supportive, culturally specific environment, the program encourages creativity, innovation, and confidence in STEAM fields.

Latino Network

Latino Network’s Ballet Folklórico program promotes Mexican culture through traditional dance classes and performances for youth. Students meet weekly to practice traditional dances from different regions of Mexico and perform at various community events throughout Portland, such as the Rose Festival Parade.



Therapy and Other Behavioral Health Services

Multnomah County’s Gun Violence-Impacted Families Behavioral Health Response Team

Housed within Multnomah County’s behavioral health system, the Gun Violence-Impacted Families Behavioral Health Response Team is the only program in Oregon specifically dedicated to providing trauma-informed therapy for individuals and families affected by gun violence. The program was established in 2022 following a root-cause analysis conducted by public health leaders that identified a critical gap in culturally responsive behavioral health care. The team delivers community-based outpatient therapy to youth and young adults aged 10–25 who have been directly impacted by gun violence. Services are offered free of charge, with no insurance required, and sessions typically take place in homes, schools, or community settings to remove barriers to care.

A small team of licensed and graduate-level clinicians provides care using modalities such as cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy, narrative therapy, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing. The program’s clinicians and outreach partners, including IRCO, Latino Network, and POIC, ensure that clients can access care in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways, particularly for Black, Latino, and refugee

communities. In addition to individual, group, and family therapy, the team offers crisis stabilization and psychoeducation, responding to community incidents and providing support for schools and families after traumatic events.²²

New Avenues for Youth (NAFY)



Founded in 1997, New Avenues for Youth (NAFY) works to reduce youth homelessness across Multnomah County, supporting young people aged 9–25 through housing, education, behavioral health, and prevention services. NAFY's integrated behavioral health programs address the trauma, substance use, and other issues that often underlie youth vulnerability to violence and exploitation. The organization's Recovery Oriented Support and Engagement and Treatment and Harm Reduction Oriented Resource Network programs offer individualized substance use treatment, while the Pathways Mental Health Therapist provides trauma-informed counseling in both office and community settings.²³ The New Day program, which serves youth at risk of or experiencing sex trafficking, combines therapy, mentorship, and mobile crisis response, engaging youth in schools, hospitals, and the community. Designed

with and staffed by individuals with lived experience of sex trafficking, this program prioritizes relational trust and accessibility, helping youth rebuild safety and stability.

REAP

REAP expanded its impact in 2022 with the launch of a Behavioral Health Program designed to meet the social and emotional needs of students and families across the Portland metro area. This program offers trauma-informed, strength-based, and relational counseling services at no cost, with both in-person and virtual sessions to ensure accessibility. The Behavioral Health team reflects the communities it serves, providing culturally responsive care for youth experiencing depression, anxiety, trauma, and related behavioral challenges. The program seeks to normalize conversations around mental health while equipping students with the skills and support needed to build resilience and stability.²⁴

Workforce Development

African Refugee Immigrant Organization (ARIO)

The African Refugee Immigrant Organization (ARIO) is a culturally specific, community-based nonprofit founded in 2020 to support Portland's African refugee and immigrant populations. Originating from youth-led efforts to address safety concerns and disengagement among African youth, ARIO was established to help families and young people navigate Oregon's social, educational, and cultural systems. Its mission centers on promoting social and economic stability through programs that foster leadership, community engagement, and workforce

²² Support for Families Affected by Gun Violence

²³ New Avenues for Youth: Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Mental Health Support

²⁴ REAP: Behavioral Health Program

readiness. ARIO's employment services include job search assistance, resume and cover letter development, interview preparation, and guidance on unemployment benefits. By combining workforce development with culturally grounded mentorship and social support, ARIO equips clients with the tools to achieve self-sufficiency, strengthen family stability, and reduce vulnerability to violence.

Healing, Enriching, and Learning Purpose (HELP)

Healing, Enriching, and Learning Purpose (HELP) was founded in 2020 by Portland residents responding to a rise in gang and gun violence during the pandemic. The organization serves youth and young adults (primarily youth of color) aged 11–21, with a focus on creating pathways to stability through employment, education, and mentorship. By integrating healing, enrichment, and learning with meaningful work opportunities that promote personal growth, HELP supports young people in building confidence, finding purpose, and envisioning a future free from violence.²⁵ Its summer employment initiative hires youth aged 16–21 to serve as mentors for younger participants, providing paid experience, leadership training, and practical skills such as problem-solving and communication. Beyond this, HELP offers GED preparation, financial education, and job placement services designed to help participants develop independence and self-sufficiency. This programming also aligns with the local definition of workforce development.

IRCO

IRCO's workforce services provide pathways to economic stability for refugees, immigrants, and low-income families through career readiness, occupational training, and job placement. IRCO provides job search assistance, resume building, interview preparation, and scholarships for vocational training. The organization also receives City funding to operate a youth gang prevention and summer workforce development program, employing youth who might otherwise be disconnected from school or work. Participants are placed with local agencies and community organizations, earning wages while gaining professional experience, mentorship, and leadership training.²⁶



POIC

POIC operates a number of employment and training programs for youth, adults, and families in the Portland community. The organization's construction pre-apprenticeship is a 12-week paid program where trainees learn about careers in construction and trade through hands-on projects, classroom instruction, and industry certifications.²⁷ The Culinary + Hospitality Emergent Fellowship Academy is a similar paid 12-week program where participants learn about food preparation, cooking techniques, safety and sanitation, and entrepreneurship.²⁸ POIC also runs a number of other industry-specific training programs in healthcare, technology, and parks and recreation. In addition, the organization offers general career coaching and support.

²⁵ [HELP: About Us](#)

²⁶ [IRCO: Workforce and Employment Services](#)

²⁷ [POIC: Construction Pre-Apprenticeship](#)

²⁸ [POIC: CHEF Academy](#)

Youth Development

ARIO

ARIO provides youth-focused activities that promote academic success, confidence, and leadership among African immigrant and refugee youth. These include open gym sessions, college field trips, tutoring, mentoring, and empowerment workshops—all of which are designed to help youth build positive identity, community connections, and resilience. Through a holistic, culturally responsive approach, ARIO fosters safe spaces for young people to grow and thrive while contributing to broader community well-being.

Guía Inc.

Generations United in Action (Guía Inc.) operates programs such as Open Gym that provide a safe and inclusive recreational outlet (including basketball and boxing) that supports healthy routines and positive peer connection. The organization also offers health and fitness sessions that promote well-being through physical activity and nutrition education. Additionally, Guía Inc.'s afterschool programming provides consistent academic enrichment, skill-building, and social-emotional development.²⁹

Love is Stronger



Love is Stronger was founded in 2020 by formerly gang-involved community members who sought to identify youth and adults involved in gang activities and provide them with resources and skills to improve their life outcomes. The organization supports youth development through programming that builds confidence, leadership, economic resilience, and civic responsibility. Its workshops focus on public speaking, self-expression, credit building, and community engagement while also encouraging young people to explore the history and resilience of their neighborhoods. Through Soldiers of Love 2025, Love is Stronger deepens its impact across neighborhoods including Cully, Lents, Central Eastside, Eliot, Gateway, Interstate, and Downtown. This youth-led initiative engages young people aged 12–24 in consistent prosocial gatherings, trauma-informed mentorship, and neighborhood-specific strategies to prevent violence and support healing.

Word is Bond

Word is Bond's youth development programming teaches practical skills in financial acuity, health, and wellness, and it engages young people in community leadership. The organization's flagship initiative, Rising Leaders, is a three-year program that blends mentorship, workforce readiness, and civic engagement. Participants begin with lessons in leadership, self-development, and community safety in year one. In the second year, they apply these

²⁹ Guía: Healthy Pro Social Spaces

skills in real-world settings via internships with Portland businesses. The final year of the program culminates in the Black Star Homecoming Expedition, a two-week cultural immersion in Ghana designed to deepen historical awareness and global identity.

Another Word is Bond program, the Spring Leadership Forum, connects youth ambassadors to national policy conversations through a week-long trip to Washington, DC, where participants meet legislators, explore historically Black colleges, and present policy proposals addressing issues in their own communities. Each trip is free of charge and includes supports such as meals, professional clothing, and stipends.

Youth Diversion

Latino Network

Through culturally specific, community-centered programming, Latino Network provides prevention, diversion, and intervention services to Latino youth and families impacted by or at risk of involvement in the justice system. The organization operates several formal diversion programs in partnership with the Multnomah Probation Department and District Attorney's Office, including Raices; Restoring Individuals, Communities, and Hope; and Resiliency through Opportunities and Success for Adolescents (ROSA). These programs offer early intervention for youth referred after an arrest. They provide individualized case management, restorative justice sessions, mentoring, academic support, and family engagement. ROSA focuses on middle school youth aged 11–14 with any criminal charges except person-to-person felonies. The program works with students referred through the juvenile justice system or schools and provides culturally responsive services such as goal setting, skill building, restitution, youth circles, and community engagement activities. Similarly, the Raices Early Intervention Program, launched in 2021, serves as a preventive pathway for youth with low-level, first-time offenses, aiming to divert them from deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system.³⁰

Violence Intervention

As noted above, Portland's OVP focuses primarily on violence prevention. Nonetheless, the OVP does support violence intervention, mainly through Ceasefire. Ceasefire activities include life coaching, intensive case management, hospital-based violence intervention, and reentry services provided by five organizations.

Going Home II

Going Home II was founded in 2014 and works to curb gun and gang violence while helping both youth and adults, ranging from 12 to 60 years old, build pathways toward stability and purpose. The organization takes a holistic approach that combines intensive case management, mentorship, reentry support, and street-level outreach to interrupt cycles of harm and support long-term transformation.

Through a contract with Ceasefire, Going Home II conducts street outreach across Portland, responding to shootings, mediating conflicts, and preventing retaliatory violence. Outreach Workers,



³⁰ Diversion Programs: ROSA and Raices

many with lived experience of the justice system, are trusted figures in the neighborhoods they serve and are on call 24/7 to provide crisis response and family stabilization after homicides. The organization's Intensive Case Management program works with individuals at the highest risk of committing or being victims of gun violence, helping them secure housing, employment, identification, and transportation while fostering positive life goals and accountability.³¹

Inside correctional facilities, Going Home II operates reentry programs Habilitation Empowerment Accountability Therapy and Pathways to Successful Choices for adults and young people under the care of the Oregon Youth Authority. These programs address decision-making, trauma, and behavioral change, providing incarcerated individuals with the skills and mindset needed to reenter the community successfully. After release, participants receive continued mentorship and access to transitional housing, weekly support groups, and practical resources that help sustain progress.

Guía Inc.



Guía Inc. also operates as a Ceasefire contractor. The organization focuses on culturally specific outreach to Portland's Latino community and utilizes intensive case management to target those at highest risk of being involved in violence. In its work with Ceasefire, GUIA's contract supports street-level outreach for individuals referred through Ceasefire, which aligns with and reinforces its broader mentorship model.

HELP

HELP, another Ceasefire contractor, complements its workforce programming with targeted support for youth at high risk of involvement in gun or gang violence. Through an intensive case management model, staff maintain frequent contact with participants, helping them navigate personal challenges and connect with stabilizing resources such as mental health care, housing, and pro-social activities. Referrals often come through Ceasefire's Shooting Review process, enabling HELP to reach youth before conflicts escalate. HELP pairs consistent relationship building with resource access and trauma-informed support to address violence risk.

Latino Network

Latino Network's intervention work centers on intensive, long-term support for youth and families affected by or at high risk of gun and group violence. Through the Community Healing Initiative, a collaborative effort with the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, POIC, and other partners, the organization provides wraparound services for youth on probation and their families, emphasizing culturally specific care, family stabilization, and community safety. The Milpa Gun Violence Prevention Program extends these efforts

³¹ Going Home II: Violence Prevention and Community Safety

to youth aged 13–19, combining mentorship, pro-social engagement, and family support to interrupt cycles of violence and foster belonging. In addition, Latino Network operates an emerging adult program serving individuals aged 18–30 who are on County probation or parole, offering reentry support, vocational guidance, and counseling to facilitate successful reintegration.

Love is Stronger

Love is Stronger intervenes directly in cycles of gang and gun violence by engaging both youth and adults through programs that promote accountability, financial independence, and emotional healing. Its Gang Veteran Positive Influencer Program provides mentorship, trauma-informed group discussions, and conflict mediation led by former gang members, emphasizing self-reflection and reconciliation. Additionally, through its Youth Gun Violence Intervention Program, Love is Stronger fosters leadership, civic engagement, and personal growth by offering workshops on financial autonomy, public speaking, and community history.

Nurture Outreach Services

Nurture Outreach Services, established in 2021, delivers violence intervention services as a contracted provider for Ceasefire. The organization uses a public health framework to address the root causes of gun violence and provide tailored services to youth and adults at the highest risk for gun-related violence. Its programs include street-level outreach, intensive case management, mentoring designed to promote behavioral change, connecting participants to social supports, and reducing retaliatory violence.³² Through credible messengers with lived experience, Nurture's outreach team identifies and engages individuals most at risk, mediates conflicts, and connects participants to essential resources such as housing, employment, and substance use treatment. Through its Intensive Case Management program, the organization offers trauma-informed counseling, life skills training, and long-term mentorship to support participants' healing and reintegration. Since its launch, Nurture has worked with the City of Portland on initiatives like the Safe Summer PDX program and has achieved measurable results, including a reduction in shootings and successful mediation of conflicts among high-risk groups.³³



POIC

POIC leads multiple intervention initiatives designed to reduce gun violence and support recovery for affected individuals and families. As a Ceasefire contractor, POIC operates an intensive case management model focused on individuals at the highest risk of involvement in gun violence, providing safety planning, de-escalation, and counseling rooted in cognitive behavioral therapy. Street outreach teams build relationships in neighborhoods most impacted by violence, connecting clients to resources and supports.

³² Nurture Outreach Services: About Us

³³ Ibid.

Through Ceasefire, the City also contracts with POIC to operate its Peer-to-Peer program, which focuses on reducing gun violence risk among people experiencing homelessness. The program relies on outreach staff with lived experience with homelessness. It provides intensive case management and targeted outreach in encampments to help participants stabilize; address safety concerns; and connect to services such as housing navigation, employment supports, education, and behavioral health care.³⁴ The Peer-to-Peer program works closely with the City's Street Services Coordination Center, which streamlines outreach and referrals for people experiencing homelessness and helps connect them to shelter options and other response services.³⁵

POIC also operates the region's only hospital-based violence intervention program, Healing Hurt People. Through partnerships with Portland's Level 1 trauma centers, staff respond within hours of a shooting or violent injury to provide bedside advocacy; emotional support; and navigation to housing, therapy, and relocation services. This early intervention helps victims and families stabilize after trauma and reduces the likelihood of further violence. POIC's Trauma and Violence Impacted Families program extends these efforts into homes and schools by offering wraparound case management, family therapy, and crisis response.

Community Transformation

Albina Vision Trust (AVT)



The Albina Vision Trust (AVT) is an organization dedicated to restoring Portland's historic Lower Albina neighborhood as a place where Black legacy, culture, and opportunity can thrive. Founded in 2020 to steward the community's long-standing vision for self-determined redevelopment, AVT leads restorative projects that reconnect people to place through housing, wealth building, and cultural revitalization. This work is guided by the Community Investment Plan that AVT launched in partnership with a team of planners, architects, artists, and economists. This three-year, community-led effort places residents at the center of reimagining Albina's

future. The organization's initiatives span housing, transportation, clean energy, and economic opportunity, including the redevelopment of the 10.5-acre Portland Public Schools headquarters into over 1,000 units of affordable housing and mixed-use community space. Through its inaugural project, Albina One, AVT is developing 94 units of deeply affordable, family-oriented housing in partnership with Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, integrating culturally specific support services and community-centered design.

Latino Network

Latino Network's Community Health Response program employs a team of certified Community Health Workers who provide culturally responsive resource navigation, Oregon Health Plan enrollment assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program support, and emergency services to help Latino families access essential care and stability. In addition, its Adult Capacity program supports individuals experiencing housing

³⁴ [Portland nonprofit expands anti-violence work to help homeless people](#)

³⁵ [Street Services Coordination Center Overview](#)

insecurity by offering rent and mortgage assistance, utility and deposit coverage, transportation support, and other critical resources that promote housing stability and self-sufficiency.

New Avenues for Youth

New Avenues for Youth's downtown Drop-In Center serves as a central access point for basic needs such as meals, showers, clothing, and case management, providing safety and consistency for youth navigating crises. Beyond immediate services, NAFY's five transitional housing programs across Multnomah County offer structured pathways out of homelessness. Programs like Moxy, Unity, and New Meadows provide young people with stable housing, wraparound case management, and workforce readiness supports. Culturally specific programs such as Unity focus on LGBTQIA+ youth, while others like Butterfly House serve survivors of sex trafficking.³⁶



In East Multnomah County, NAFY's East Connect initiative provides daily outreach and prevention services in schools and community hubs. Youth can access basic needs resources; harm reduction supplies; and navigation support to connect with housing, healthcare, and education. NAFY's Safe Place partnership extends this reach by training local schools and businesses to identify and support minors in need, emphasizing early prevention and crisis intervention. Together, these efforts strengthen housing supports, particularly in East County where access to services has historically been limited.

Native American Youth and Family Center

The Native American Youth and Family Center leads the Reimagining Justice in Cully initiative, a partnership with Multnomah County that empowers residents to reimagine public safety by addressing low-level crime, improving relationships between community members and law enforcement, and transforming public safety. The program emphasizes trust-building between police and residents, legal education, and neighborhood improvements such as lighting and sidewalks to address safety concerns in historically underinvested areas.

NAYA's community transformation efforts also extend into housing, economic development, and environmental justice. The organization has developed over 160 affordable housing units in Cully; supported the launch of Portland's first Indigenous-run restaurant; and created the Wapas Nah Née Shaku Community Garden, a hub for Indigenous food sovereignty.³⁷ This work aligns with the local definition of crime prevention through environmental design.

³⁶ New Avenues for Youth: Drop-in Day Services

³⁷ NAYA Wapas Nah Née Shaku: Community Garden

STRENGTHS OF EXISTING VIOLENCE REDUCTION LANDSCAPE

One of Portland's greatest strengths is the depth and diversity of its culturally specific violence reduction services. Groups such as the African Refugee Immigrant Organization, Going Home II, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, Latino Network, Native American Youth and Family Center, Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, and Word is Bond were all founded in response to specific cultural and historical needs. Many of these organizations have served Portland for decades and have deep ties to their communities. This foundation allows them to connect with families and high-risk individuals and deliver services that are both responsive and grounded in cultural identity.

Portland's emphasis on leadership and staff with lived experience and landscape workforce development is another strength. Many organizations intentionally recruit, train, and elevate credible messengers who have personal experience with the challenges they help others overcome. Further, POIC's Community Safety Worker model, developed in partnership with Portland State University, represents a groundbreaking approach to professionalizing this workforce. Through this two-year accredited program, Outreach Workers gain trauma-informed training, academic instruction, and on-the-ground experience while earning a livable wage.

Another significant strength is the comprehensiveness of the services provided within Portland's violence prevention landscape. The city's programming covers nearly the full spectrum of prevention strategies, from youth mentorship and education to workforce development and behavioral health. Organizations and agencies like Word is Bond, Latino Network, NAYA, and Portland Public Schools are leading prevention efforts that empower youth through leadership training, mentorship, and positive social and emotional learning. These programs help young people develop protective factors that reduce their risk of engaging in violence, while organizations such as POIC and Going Home II address violence intervention and reentry through intensive case management and street outreach.

Finally, the durability and creativity of Portland's community-based organizations are among its greatest strengths. Amid funding fluctuations and shifting political organization, these groups have adapted, innovated, and continued to meet the needs of those most affected by violence. Whether through professionalizing the outreach workforce, developing trauma-informed reentry services, or embedding cultural identity in prevention, Portland's community-based organizations exemplify resilience.



CHALLENGES

A primary challenge within Portland's violence reduction landscape is the siloed nature of operations, both among community-based organizations and between CBOs and public partners. While many groups are doing vital work, limited coordination across organizations has led to duplicated efforts and gaps in service coverage. Several violence prevention organizations serve overlapping populations without aligning or coordinating their approaches, resulting in missed opportunities for comprehensive support. Tensions sometimes arise between older, more established CBOs and newer entrants to the field, making collaboration difficult and reducing opportunities for collective problem-solving. There is also a lack of coordination in immediate shooting response, as there is not currently a plan of action for entities within the landscape to respond when an incident occurs. Without a consistent mechanism for cross-organizational collaboration, the landscape risks fragmentation that reduces its impact.

Another significant challenge is the lack of stable funding. Many organizations noted the difficulty of maintaining staff and programming when they are reliant on short-term or inconsistent grants. The absence of predictable funding contributes to staff turnover and program shutdowns, creating what some leaders described as a "revolving door" that can erode trust with community members. Organizations also expressed a strong need for discretionary funding to support flexible, client-driven needs such as emergency relocation, food, clothing, and stipends—needs that traditional grants often do not cover. Insufficient grant funding from City and County partners has also fostered competition among providers, further straining collaboration within the landscape.

Several service gaps remain unaddressed, particularly in behavioral health and substance use treatment. Many organizations described a lack of culturally competent mental health professionals who can effectively serve Black and brown communities. This gap often prevents individuals from receiving trauma-informed care following violence or incarceration. Oregon also ranks among the lowest in the nation for access to substance use treatment, leaving many individuals without support for co-occurring conditions that directly contribute to violence.³⁸

Finally, organizations emphasized the need for more targeted violence reduction services for unhoused populations. Individuals experiencing homelessness are at elevated risk of involvement in violence, but only a few programs are designed to reach this population effectively. The transient nature of homelessness, combined with the lack of safe, stable housing options, makes sustained engagement difficult and highlights a critical area for future investment.

³⁸ [How worst-in-the-nation treatment access looks for two Oregonians](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Portland OVP is well positioned to coordinate the continued buildout of a full, effective violence reduction landscape.³⁹ While this can happen in a number of ways, NICJR recommends the following steps:

1) Strengthen and standardize wraparound service planning and cross-organizational coordination for participants at the highest risk of gun violence, with a focus on meeting the immediate and long-term needs of participants.

- a) There are a number of organizations involved in violence reduction work within Portland's landscape. However, there is a real need to streamline this work and ensure all groups have access to services. To this end, we suggest the following:
 - i. Strengthen and standardize wraparound service planning and coordination for participants at the highest risk of gun violence. This should increase cross-organizational coordination to meet the immediate and long-term needs of participants.
 - ii. Organizations should be intentional in the services they provide and lean into the areas where they are most effective, rather than trying to meet all needs of every participant.
 - 1. Require each CBO to define core services vs. supporting services in contracts and scopes of work.
 - 2. Offer technical assistance to CBOs on defining core services and establishing/strengthening staffing models, caseload limits, program manuals, and partnership memoranda of understanding.
 - iii. Create partnerships and coordinate violence reduction efforts. These partnerships should:
 - 1. Provide space for information sharing, including pursuing joint funding opportunities;
 - 2. Produce collaborative and innovative strategies to combat gun violence;
 - 3. Include co-learning communities where organizations are able to engage with one another;
 - 4. Include mechanisms for transparency and accountability across partners; and
 - 5. Include a wide variety of organizations, agencies, juvenile and adult courts, and City and County stakeholders, ranging from those with evaluation, policy, research, and technical assistance expertise to those who provide direct services to participants.

2) Create a community violence emergency preparedness plan.

- a) When a shooting takes place, Portland should have a planned course of action that allows all entities within the landscape to work seamlessly together to support the victim(s) of violence as well as community members where the incident occurs.
- b) This community violence emergency preparedness plan should also inform the development of a citywide, comprehensive violence reduction strategic plan.

³⁹ The model assumes a baseline staffing level of seven full-time equivalents (FTEs), comprising a Director, Deputy Director, Data Lead, Communications Lead, Finance Manager, Executive Assistant, and Community Engagement Staffer.

- c) An example of an effective community violence emergency preparedness plan is the [Community Violence Prevention Strategic Plan](#) created by the North Carolina Office of Violence Prevention.

3) Create a violence reduction strategic plan.

- a) A violence reduction strategic plan guides stakeholders in a jurisdiction as they make intentional decisions to further develop violence reduction work that will produce near-term reductions in violence. Portland has already made strides toward the development of a strategic plan, including commissioning this Landscape Analysis, an Operational Assessment, and a third updated Gun Violence Problem Analysis that is set to be completed by NICJR.
- b) Portland's violence reduction strategic plan should include:
- i. Relevant research and data to inform decision making and
 - ii. Plans to expand and sustain violence reduction services in the community, including:
 1. Plans to further expand the geographic reach of violence reduction services as well as expand landscape offerings to include service areas that are not fully covered, potentially through contracting with CBOs doing work in these grey areas, such as the Portland-Gresham border;
 2. Plans to foster increased collaboration and coordination between violence reduction organizations and programs, government entities, and related service providers;
 3. Clear action steps and implementation milestones with proposed timelines that allow the City and County to monitor implementation progress.
 - ii. An example of an effective violence reduction strategic plan is the [Columbus, OH Safer Together Strategic Plan](#).

4) Expand access to culturally specific substance use treatment and behavioral health services.

- a) Portland should invest in integrated service models where both substance use treatment and behavioral health services are co-located with reentry, case management, and violence prevention services, to help streamline access and reduce barriers.
- b) Portland should intentionally invest in workforce development and training pipelines, including incentives and partnerships with community colleges and universities, to recruit and retain diverse practitioners and increase the number of culturally specific behavioral health providers.

5) Provide training and technical assistance to organizations already engaged in violence reduction work.

- a) Many local organizations are actively engaged in addressing gun violence and have built meaningful connections within their communities. Still, there is a clear need for more training and technical assistance to help groups develop a shared, system-wide understanding of Portland's gun violence dynamics and equip them with the tools to apply evidence-based approaches that have proven effective in other cities. To this end, we suggest the following:
- i. Provide technical assistance that may include evaluations of existing services, programs, and initiatives within these organizations; general capacity building training; recurring on-site technical support to provide consistent feedback; support in implementing program benchmarking and performance measurement tools; and intensive data collection for continuous analysis of those involved in shooting incidents.

- ii. Provide training for organizations that also includes events such as conflict resolution workshops, training on de-escalation techniques and community engagement strategies, trauma-informed care seminars, and cultural sensitivity training.
- iii. Provide the following additional recommended trainings and certifications:
 - 1. Life coach training and certification
 - 2. Health Alliance for Violence Intervention certification
 - 3. Mediation training
 - 4. Trauma-informed care training
 - 5. Violence interrupter training
 - 6. Data collection and management training
 - 7. Grant writing training

6) Strengthen and diversify funding for violence reduction services.

- a) Focus on multi-year funding models where possible, to allow service providers to maintain continuity of care, invest in staff retention, and focus on long-term public safety. NICJR's [OVP Toolkit](#) also provides a budget template for reference.
- b) Empower larger CBOs to serve as fiscal sponsors or pass-through funders to smaller, grassroots organizations that may lack the administrative capacity to manage large government contracts but are trusted by residents.
- c) Create discretionary funding pools for urgent participant needs, such as relocation, food, stipends, or emergency support.

7) Develop a comprehensive directory of Portland services.

- a) Many entities within the violence reduction landscape expressed a desire for a service directory of providers. NICJR recommends incorporating the following data fields in such a directory:
 - i. Service Type
 - 1. Restorative practices
 - 2. Workforce development
 - 3. Mentoring
 - 4. Social and emotional learning
 - 5. Academic supports and tutoring
 - 6. Youth development
 - 7. Sports and recreational activities
 - 8. STEAM programs
 - 9. Therapy and other behavioral health services
 - 10. Youth diversion

ii. Target Population

1. Children (0–12)
2. Youth (12–17)
3. Transition Age Youth / Young Adults (18–24)
4. Adults (24 and older)
5. Very high risk of engaging in gun violence
6. Gender-specific
7. Reentry
8. Homeless
9. Other specific populations

iii. Target Geographic Area

With continued commitment and collaboration between community-based organizations, City and County leadership, and the Office of Violence Prevention, Portland has the foundation to strengthen and sustain its violence reduction landscape. By implementing these strategic recommendations, the City can deepen its commitment to safety and healing. Together, these efforts can move Portland toward a future defined by safety and collective well-being.

APPENDIX A: SHARED DEFINITION BUILDING

During the Portland OVP Convening, local leaders worked together to identify shared violence reduction service priorities and associated definitions, with each organization contributing its perspective to shape a collective understanding of Portland's landscape. This collaborative effort ensured that all voices were heard and that the service priorities reflected a comprehensive view of the landscape's foundation. The following service areas were identified during the Convening:

Advocacy: Amplifying the voices and lived experiences of individuals, and amplifying communities' needs through data, art, storytelling, demonstrations of free speech (marches, protests, vigils), education, and lobbying.

Art Therapy: The utilization of media for emotional expression and regulation. Media includes visual art, music, voice, storytelling, writing, digital content, and technology. Creative flow promotes healing, provides central nervous system regulation, and can promote mind/body/spirit integration.

Case Management: Providing continuous, one-on-one assistance to an individual and family to meet their needs. This includes provision of direct services, referrals to services, and evaluation of an individual's status and areas where they may require further assistance.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design: System architecture and natural design to create or improve a built environment to increase safety. Preventative care for the community to promote cohesion and increase feelings of safety.

Emotional Regulation: Ability to understand one's own emotions, have a say in expressing them, understand others' emotions, and communicate with awareness of others' emotions. It is the ability to respond instead of reacting to one's/others' emotions.

Life Skills Training: High-level understanding of best practices to navigate day-to-day life, including emotional regulation, making smart decisions, understanding oneself, social skills, empowerment, and continuous education on various subjects.

Sports: The National Medicine Association has said that youth aged 9–18 have a 35% lower chance of being involved in violence when participating in sports. Sports programming is essential for helping youth to learn life skills and understand that they have other options. Reaching youth early is part of prevention, and sports brings youth to providers, allowing them to present other programs.

Life Coaching: Within the realm of CVI, responding and relating to individuals while supporting and coaching them toward their own definition of success and engaging them to move toward a life centered on their prosperity and safety. This work focuses intensively on individuals at the highest risk of perpetrating or becoming victims of gun violence. To ensure meaningful engagement and consistent support, each life coach maintains a caseload of no more than eight participants, providing contact at least three times per day and spending physical time with participants at least three times per week, in alignment with best practices.

Violence Interruption: An urgent, data-driven response to prevent imminent acts of violence by working directly with individuals at the highest risk of committing or becoming victims of gun violence. Credible messengers, serving as violence interrupters, operate in the community to deescalate conflicts, mediate disputes, and provide alternatives to violence. This can occur before, during, or after a violent incident, including efforts to prevent retaliation. This work is grounded in evidence-based violence reduction models and conducted in partnership with law enforcement, community-based organizations, and other system partners. Teams hold weekly shooting reviews to share real-time intelligence and coordinate responses, immediately connecting high-risk individuals with intensive services such as life coaching, relocation, mediation, and case management. Violence interrupters are also deployed to shooting scenes to support rumor control, family stabilization, crowd management, and de-escalation.

Workforce Development: Providing for youth and adults through skill building (technical skills, soft skills, and entrepreneurship), paid training, peer and adult mentorship, community building, increased experience and confidence, job references, developing workers for a specific industry, and following/setting industry pay standards.

Wraparound Services: Centralized, holistic supports designed to meet the unique needs of individuals and families, fostering safety, health, and productivity. These services aim to empower and encourage participants through comprehensive, person-centered assistance that addresses both immediate and long-term needs. Core components include case coordination, outreach, a housing-first model, and economic support, all of which work together to create safe and supportive environments within communities and schools. Wraparound services address unmet needs; provide on-site assistance in communities and on school campuses; and promote well-being through self-regulation, elevated student voice, and stronger staff connections. These programs serve vulnerable populations, including refugee and high-risk communities, ensuring participants receive the consistent care and connection needed to thrive.

APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONS IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE OVP CONVENING

Below are the additional organizations that were identified as community partners during the 2025 OVP Convening. While the current violence reduction landscape consists of the programs described above, these other organizations have been noted as being capable of filling gaps and enhancing the landscape.

Violence Prevention

Academic Supports and Tutoring

Hacienda Community Development Corporation (Hacienda CDC)⁴⁰ was founded in 1992 to serve Portland's Cully neighborhood, which was home to Oregon's largest Latino population at the time. Hacienda CDC is dedicated to advancing the social and economic mobility of all communities. The organization fosters youth success through its bilingual Expresiones afterschool and summer enrichment program for grades K–8, which provides culturally specific academic support, tutoring, and service-learning opportunities.⁴¹

The **Somali American Council of Oregon** (SACOO) is a community-based organization that works to empower the Somali community by enhancing relationships between members of the community and State and federal agencies while also promoting cultural expression and diversity.⁴² Through its youth education programming, SACOO provides tutoring and academic support to students. The organization has also hosted skill-building workshops and helped teach young people how to navigate both school and family life.⁴³

Mentoring

Dads Helping Dads was founded to empower fathers to reengage in their families' lives and strengthen their roles as parents through mentorship and peer support. The organization creates a network of fathers who learn from one another's experiences, share parenting strategies, and build confidence as caregivers and role models. Through case management, parenting classes, and group mentoring sessions, participants receive individualized guidance to improve communication, deepen family relationships, and overcome barriers such as unemployment or lack of education. These efforts help fathers not only rebuild trust within their families but also serve as positive influences in their broader communities.⁴⁴

Youth Life Skills Academy (YLSA), founded by former NBA player and University of Portland head coach Michael Holton, is dedicated to educating and inspiring youth through compassionate mentorship and structured athletic engagement. YLSA connects at-risk youth with consistent mentors who provide emotional guidance, positive modeling, and practical life coaching. Mentors lead discussions around decision-making, etiquette, and perseverance, helping participants build self-confidence and identify achievable personal goals. Through these

⁴⁰ [Hacienda CDC: About Us](#)

⁴¹ [Hacienda CDC: Expresiones](#)

⁴² [Somali American Council of Oregon: Our Mission](#)

⁴³ [Somali American Council of Oregon Instagram](#)

⁴⁴ [Dads Helping Dads: About Us](#)

relationships, YLSA encourages youth to see beyond immediate circumstances and envision brighter futures rooted in discipline, respect, and self-belief.⁴⁵

YLSA's Business of Sports initiative expands the mentorship model by exposing young people, particularly those impacted by trauma or poverty, to career pathways within the sports industry. The program provides hands-on learning about marketing, human resources, social media, and sales using the Portland Trail Blazers as a real-world example. By focusing on non-athlete roles and emphasizing communication, leadership, and teamwork, the initiative helps youth envision futures of opportunity and empowerment beyond the court.⁴⁶

Restorative Practices

Dads Helping Dads incorporates restorative justice principles into its programming to help fathers repair harm, rebuild relationships, and reenter society successfully. The organization assists participants in clearing criminal records, navigating Oregon's court system, and advocating for their parental rights. By pairing restorative justice with practical advocacy and workforce development, Dads Helping Dads helps fathers achieve economic stability and long-term family involvement.⁴⁷

Social and Emotional Learning

Hacienda CDC also promotes early childhood well-being through Sembrando Semillitas, a family-focused program for Latino families with children under age five. Sembrando Semillitas incorporates home visits from Early Childhood Educators; parenting support groups; and activities that support a child's physical, cognitive, and emotional development.⁴⁸

International Association for Human Values (IAHV) provides trauma-informed wellness and resilience programs designed to address emotional regulation and reduce stress.⁴⁹ Through its SKY Breathwork program, IAHV offers evidence-based breathing and mindfulness techniques to help students manage trauma and prevent crisis escalation. The organization partners with Lionevity Inc. to deliver these services across East Portland to youth in grades 6–12, integrating monthly wellness sessions, mentorship, and life-skills training in both school and community settings. Participants also receive holistic support such as food access, stipends, and individualized care coordination, creating stability and improving emotional well-being.⁵⁰

Sports and Recreational Activities

Youth Life Skills Academy runs multi-day basketball academies for youth aged 10–17 that are hosted in partnership with local schools and community centers such as the Charles Jordan Community Center and the Salvation Army. Each academy integrates basketball, fitness, and life skills training into a holistic model of youth development. Participants engage in basketball skill-building and fitness sessions while also learning about leadership, teamwork, and health maintenance without costly facilities or equipment. Camps include daily meals and snacks to ensure accessibility and support participants' well-being.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Youth Life Skills Academy

⁴⁶ 2025 Safer Portland Grant Recipients

⁴⁷ Dads Helping Dads: About Us

⁴⁸ Hacienda CDC: Sembrando Semillitas

⁴⁹ International Association of Human Values

⁵⁰ 2025 Safer Portland Grant Recipients

⁵¹ Youth Life Skills Academy

STEAM Programs

Day One Tech was founded in 2019 to address the need for STEM programming rooted in trauma-informed principles and cultural responsiveness. The organization has since delivered afterschool and community-based programming in more than 20 schools and multiple affordable housing sites, providing hands-on learning in robotics, coding, digital art, and music production. Day One Tech's DOTEX program exemplifies this work. DOTEX was piloted at Rockwood Preparatory Academy and uses gamification and rewards to motivate learning, allowing students to earn recognition for completing robotics, coding, and engineering challenges. The program combines interactive projects with social-emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching.⁵² The organization also operates a community makerspace in East County where youth and families can engage in technology exploration and build skills in areas such as branding and music and video production. This programming also aligns with the local definition of art therapy.

Free Arts NW uses art to engage and empower underserved youth across Portland. Founded in 2009, the organization provides arts-based programming that helps young people discover their creativity, passion, and voice while fostering stronger connections to their communities.⁵³ Through initiatives like the Mobile Studio (a unique traveling art van equipped with supplies and facilitators), Free Arts NW brings hands-on creative learning directly to parks, schools, and neighborhood events. The organization's afterschool programs and Community Free Arts Days offer opportunities for youth to explore different artistic mediums in supportive environments. Beyond teaching creative skills, Free Arts NW emphasizes mentorship, with facilitators serving as positive role models who encourage self-expression, confidence, and collaboration through the arts.⁵⁴

Free Arts NW's Voices in Bloom is a visual and storytelling arts program that empowers teens to become creative leaders and agents of change. The program begins with participants surveying their community to identify local needs and potential collaborators. A core group of teen leaders then explores themes of gun violence, justice, healing, and self-expression through the Vision Quilt curriculum. Next, these teens mentor younger children through arts-based activities that address social issues, culminating in a public showcase of youth-created art, performances, and stories.⁵⁵

Medicine Bear, led by community muralist Rodolfo Serna, integrates Indigenous art, culture, and education to promote healing and resilience among at-risk youth and families. Founded over a decade ago, the organization provides mentorship and art instruction in environments such as the Multnomah County Juvenile Detention Center, where youth engage in printmaking, screen-printing, mural painting, ceramics, and Aztec dance.⁵⁶ Medicine Bear's Brushes not Bullets, another art-based violence reduction program, pairs participants with professional artists to design murals, share cultural stories, and organize community events in high-risk neighborhoods.⁵⁷

Visioning Beyond Violence (formerly known as Vision Quilt) empowers youth and communities to confront gun violence through creative expression, dialogue, and education. Founded in 2015, the organization helps communities design their own solutions to violence by combining artmaking, storytelling, and trauma-informed practices. Its multidisciplinary approach integrates the arts with education and civic engagement, inspiring participants to become visionary thinkers, storytellers, and changemakers.⁵⁸

⁵² [Day One Tech: Current Projects](#)

⁵³ [Free Arts NW: About Us](#)

⁵⁴ [Free Arts NW: Our Programs](#)

⁵⁵ [2025 Safer Portland Grant Recipients](#)

⁵⁶ [Medicine Bear](#)

⁵⁷ [2025 Safer Portland Grant Recipients](#)

⁵⁸ [Visioning Beyond Violence: About](#)

Visioning Beyond Violence also collaborates with Lewis and Clark College to provide training to art therapy faculty and graduate students in the Visioning Beyond Violence curriculum. Individuals are trained to offer trauma-informed workshops to community members on how to creatively express their vision for a safer Portland. In addition, through classroom workshops, Visioning Beyond Violence helps students to explore the root causes and impacts of violence while creating art that serves as a tool for healing and advocacy. At Parkrose High School, for instance, first-generation college-bound seniors engaged in a creative workshop about their personal experiences with violence, culminating in an art display that elevated youth voices.⁵⁹ This programming also aligns with the local definition of advocacy.

Workforce Development

Friends of Noise (FoN) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating pathways into the music and arts industry for Portland's BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth through workforce development, mentorship, and arts access.⁶⁰ The organization provides hands-on training and paid opportunities that prepare young people for careers in live event production, sound engineering, and performance. FoN's Sound Squad Supreme program equips teens with technical skills in live sound engineering and event production while offering paid work experiences at concerts and community events.⁶¹ Participants gain both industry-specific expertise and essential soft skills such as teamwork, professionalism, and client communication. Friends of Noise also supports artistic and professional growth through programs like AMPLIFY: BIPOC Affinity Band, an eight-week mentorship and music education program for middle school youth, and Ya Heard, a monthly open mic series that provides a safe platform for young people to share their voices and creative work.⁶²

Day One Tech operates the Building Options for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS) program, an initiative that provides career training and workforce development opportunities for youth from disempowered communities. The program includes resume development, soft skills development (communication, teamwork, problem solving, and time management), management training, and participation in job fairs.

Youth Development

Project 48 was founded in 2019 and empowers foster youth through wraparound programs that build independence, confidence, and stability. The organization reaches over 1,000 youth annually across Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties.⁶³ Project 48's cornerstone Life Skills Program offers a six-week curriculum for youth aged 17–23 transitioning out of foster care that focuses on financial literacy, job readiness, and violence prevention.⁶⁴ Participants receive one-on-one case management, transportation assistance, meals, and access to job fairs and community resources—all designed to ease the transition to independent adulthood. In addition, Project 48 operates the Essential Bags Program, which delivers high-quality clothing and personal care items within 48 hours of a foster care placement or transition.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Vision Quilt 2024 Annual Impact Report

⁶⁰ Friends of Noise: Who We Are

⁶¹ 2025 Safer Portland Grant Recipients

⁶² Friends of Noise: Programming

⁶³ Project 48

⁶⁴ Project 48: Life Skills Transition Program for Foster Youth

⁶⁵ Project 48: The Essential Bags Program

Community Transformation

Alliance for a Safe Oregon is a statewide coalition of survivors of gun violence, firearm owners, veterans, healthcare professionals, and community leaders united by the shared goal of preventing gun-related tragedies and fostering safer, more resilient communities. Founded on the belief that effective solutions emerge from collaboration across diverse perspectives, the Alliance brings together Oregonians from rural, urban, and tribal communities to promote evidence-based, community-led approaches to public safety.⁶⁶ Through partnerships with those most affected by gun violence, including Black and brown residents, veterans, and young people, the Alliance advances policy and initiatives focused on firearm safety education, secure storage, youth suicide prevention, and mental health supports in schools.⁶⁷ The organization also works to strengthen violence reduction infrastructure by advocating for sustained and long-term funding for local prevention and intervention programs.⁶⁸

Hacienda CDC centers its work on transforming communities through housing and economic empowerment. Since its founding, the organization has built 11 affordable housing communities with over 900 units throughout northwestern Oregon, with plans to double that number in coming years.⁶⁹ As a Latino-led community development corporation, Hacienda expands access to affordable housing, supports first-time homeownership, and fosters financial literacy through one-on-one coaching and counseling approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Its mixed-use developments and homeownership initiatives create pathways to stability for families while building community wealth and ownership.⁷⁰ Between 2023 and 2024, Hacienda CDC connected households to over \$870,000 in downpayment assistance and supported around 2,488 residents in its affordable housing communities.⁷¹

Somali American Council of Oregon also oversees programming that supports health and wellness. The organization's elder programs focus on disease prevention, confidence-building, and self-management of chronic conditions through weekly classes. SACOO also runs a number of wellness initiatives, including distributing healthy foods, checking blood pressure for high-risk individuals, and ensuring access to medical care through a partnership with a local clinic. SACOO's broader outreach work strengthens relationships between Somali residents and local institutions, encouraging civic engagement and collaboration across diverse communities.⁷²

⁶⁶ Alliance for a Safe Oregon: Who We Are

⁶⁷ Alliance for a Safe Oregon: Keeping Kids and Youth Safe at Home and at School

⁶⁸ Alliance for a Safe Oregon: Increasing Community Safety and Preventing Shootings and Homicides

⁶⁹ Hacienda CDC

⁷⁰ Hacienda CDC: Housing and Homeownership Support

⁷¹ Hacienda CDC

⁷² Somali American Council of Oregon Instagram



PORTLAND

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES



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