

OAKLAND

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



The City of Oakland has long been at the forefront of violence prevention and intervention. After making tremendous progress and reducing violence by 50% with seven consecutive years of decline between 2013-2020, Oakland has experienced increased crime and violence since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. And while robberies and car break ins continue to climb, Oakland experienced two consecutive years of reduced homicides in 2022 and 2023.

As the City and its many partners work to reestablish its violence reduction ecosystem and address the increase in crime and violence, the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) prepared this landscape analysis to provide City leadership and other stakeholders with an overview of the initiatives, programs, and resources available to support these efforts.

Oakland was also an early adopter of key violence reductions strategies, including centralizing violence reduction services in a single city department, the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention (DVP), and implementing community violence interventions (CVI) such as Street Outreach, Oakland Ceasefire, and the country's first hospital-based violence intervention program (HVIP). Oakland has also been proactive about identifying multiple funding streams to support its violence reduction ecosystem, including local ballot initiatives that levied parcel taxes to fund violence prevention programming and community policing services; state and county funding streams, such as the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program; and an array of philanthropic resources.

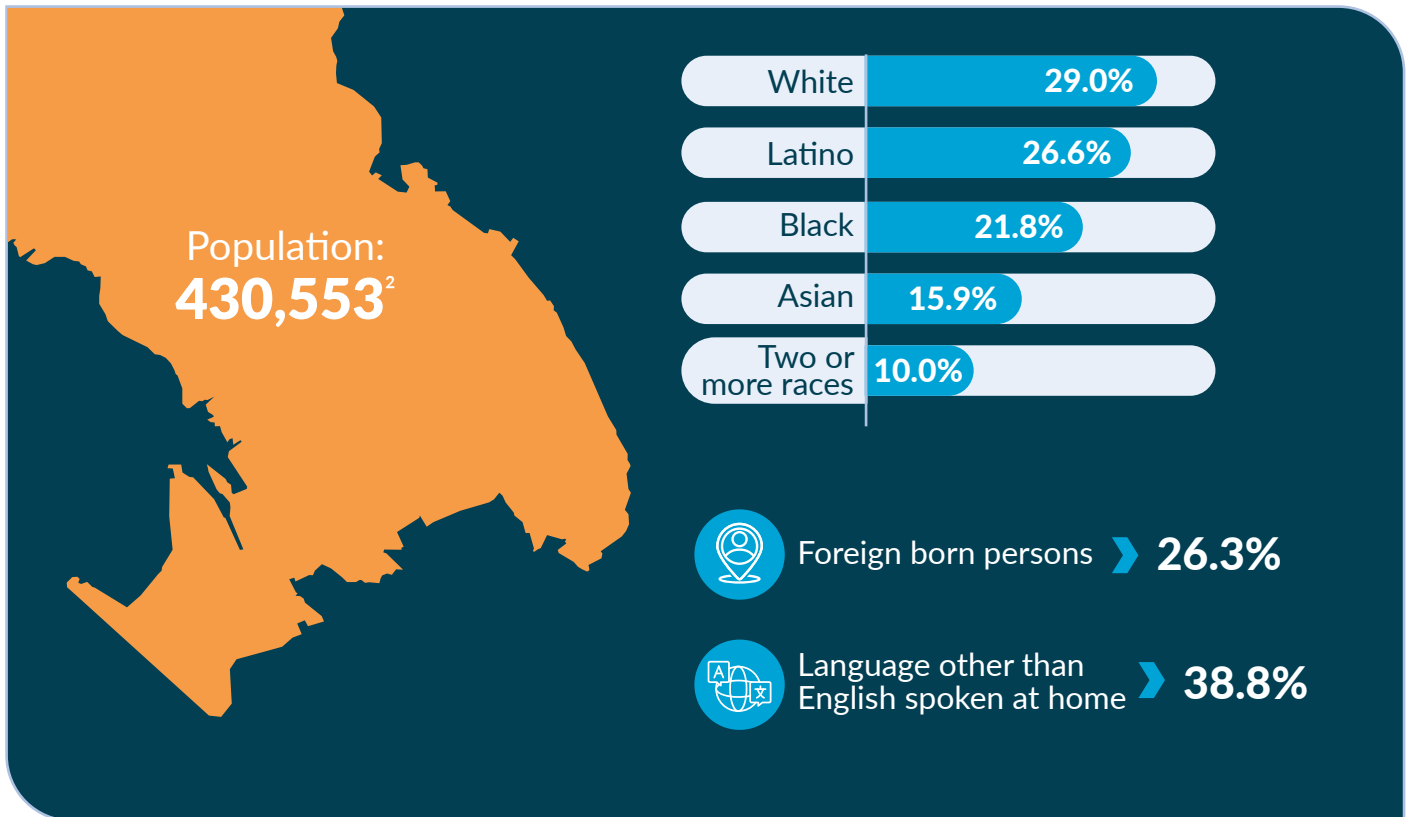
Although it took time to get all of these pieces in place, by 2013 the city was seeing clear returns. In that year, the number of homicides in Oakland dropped by 30%—a reduction that was sustained until the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020. From 2017–2019, Oakland had fewer than 80 homicides a year for the first time in several decades.¹ An academic evaluation of Oakland's flagship violence reduction initiative, known as Ceasefire, concluded that the multifaceted strategy was largely responsible for the city's significant decline in gun violence.

NICJR developed this landscape analysis through a review of an array of publicly available documentation, such as city and county planning documents, program evaluations, requests for proposals, and more. These documents were used to describe the organizations and efforts that constitute the violence reduction landscape. They were combined with interviews with government and community stakeholders, which helped shed light on the strengths to be built upon and weaknesses to be addressed as the City moves forward.

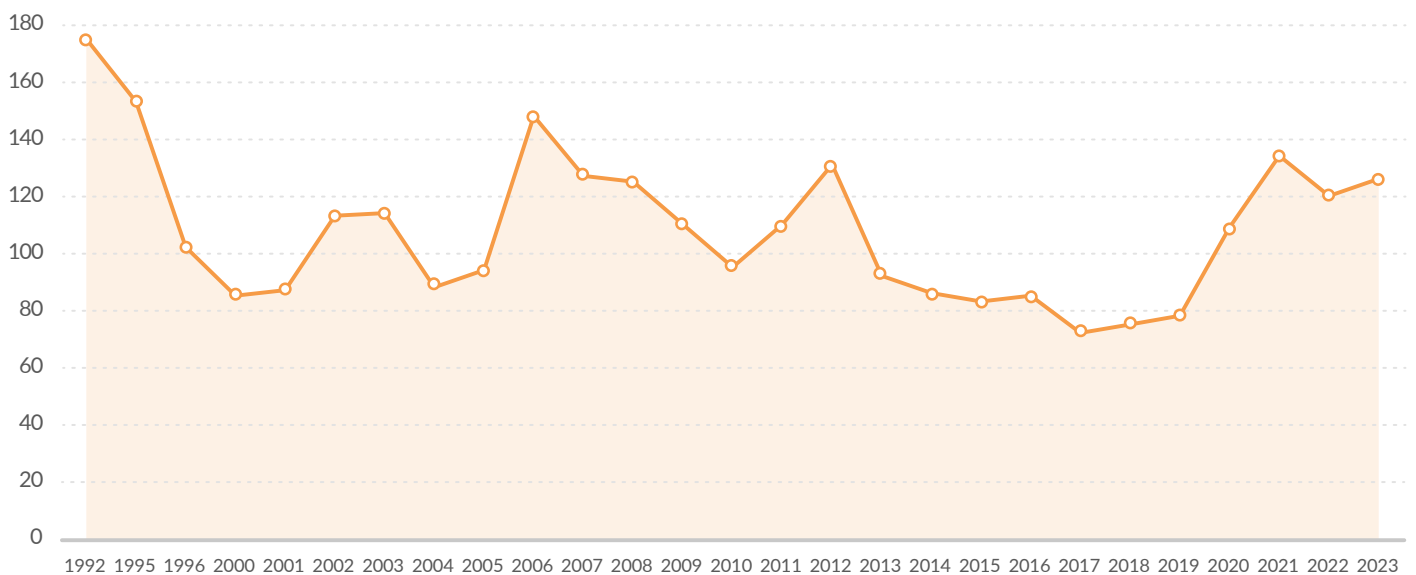
This report begins with an overview of NICJR's framework for understanding and planning responses to community violence. This is followed by descriptions of state-level policies and initiatives affecting Oakland's violence reduction efforts, city-level initiatives, key programs and community-based organizations, and philanthropic partners funding these efforts. This is followed by a brief discussion of the strengths and challenges in Oakland's violence reduction ecosystem.

¹ [FBI Crime Data Explorer](#)

OAKLAND DATA



Oakland Annual Homicides, 1992 - 2023



² Census Quick Facts: Oakland

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

The NICJR violence reduction framework around which this report is organized includes three programmatic categories: violence prevention, violence intervention, and community transformation. Each of the violence reduction organizations identified in Oakland fit within one or more of these categories.

Violence prevention refers to the elimination or reduction of the underlying causes and risk factors that lead to violence.³ Violence prevention efforts are thus designed to prevent violence occurring in the first place. **Violence intervention** efforts, on the other hand, are designed to prevent the recurrence of violence or intervene and prevent the imminent act of violence.

Both violence prevention and intervention hinge on deploying services that identify and address age- and context-appropriate risk and protective factors. Violence prevention efforts are most often targeted toward children and youth, as well as reentry populations, whereas violence intervention efforts are focused on the people who are at the greatest immediate risk of violence—typically young adults. While violence prevention is a broad field encompassing various types of programs, effective violence intervention is more narrowly defined and focused.

Prevention



5 - 10 years

Long-term violence reduction strategies like mentoring high-risk middle and high school students or cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) workshops.

Intervention



1 - 3 years

Violence reduction in the near term, like harm reduction strategies and gun violence reduction strategies such as intensive case management.

Community Transformation



15 - 20 years

Transforming communities so that they do not induce violence:

- Education reform and investment
- Economic development
- Neighborhood revitalization

³ The VPA Approach

Community transformation refers to the elimination of system-level factors that give rise to violence in a neighborhood, such as poverty, blight, low performing schools, disinvestment, and chronic unemployment. 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. Typically, there are several neighborhoods in cities with high rates of violence that do not need violence intervention programs because there is little violence in those particular communities. All neighborhoods should have a goal of not needing violence intervention programs.

Two additional, interconnected categories intersect with violence prevention, violence intervention, and community transformation: **youth development** and **reentry support**.

The **youth development** program model is designed to leverage the strengths and assets of young people while addressing their specific needs. This approach involves fostering attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills that contribute to the youth's successful transition into adulthood. Notably, youth development experiences correlate with positive outcomes, encompassing pro-social attitudes, self-efficacy, academic achievement, and readiness for employment. This complex strategy can be viewed as a form of violence prevention, as the positive outcomes serve as protective factors against the root causes of violence.

On the other hand, **reentry services** focus on assisting formerly incarcerated individuals in effectively reintegrating into their communities after incarceration. By addressing key components known as the “Big Six”—housing, employment, education, mental health services, necessary drug treatment, and establishing a positive and trusting relationship with an adult (mentor, case manager, life coach, etc.) – these services aim to reduce recidivism, enhance public safety, and improve overall individual outcomes.







LOCAL INITIATIVES AFFECTING THE OAKLAND VIOLENCE REDUCTION LANDSCAPE

Oakland Measure Z

In 2004, Oakland voters approved Measure Y: The Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act, a 10-year initiative to reduce violence in the city by funding more community policing and violence prevention services. As part of this effort, the City funded more than two dozen violence prevention programs, which were provided by community-based organizations (CBOs) specializing in areas such as street outreach, youth employment, mentoring, reentry, mental health services, and more. Notwithstanding this investment, crime in Oakland—especially violent crime—continued to increase. After experiencing 88 homicides in 2004, Oakland’s homicides surged to 148 in 2006 and did not dip below 100 again until 2010, only to increase again in 2011 and 2012. As the Measure Y sunset began to approach, the City, under pressure from residents in communities bearing the brunt of the violence, began to pivot. In 2012, Oakland began shifting its violence prevention programs away from a focus on prevention and early intervention and toward the increasing evidence base for community violence intervention. When the City’s Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act went out for renewal in 2013 (this time placed on the ballot under Measure Z instead of Measure Y), the shift toward intervention was institutionalized as the revised ballot initiative explicitly focused on “youth and young adults at the highest risk of violence as guided by data analysis.”⁴

Today, Measure Z’s violence reduction services are delivered by 21 CBOs across four service areas:⁵

-  **1**
Gun Violence Response
Which includes shooting and homicide response, violence interruption, life coaching, and employment support, with outcomes focused on helping individuals stay alive and free, meet basic needs, strengthen socioemotional skills, increase job skills, and become ready to pursue long-term goals.
-  **2**
Youth Diversion and Reentry
Which includes diversion programs, life coaching, and career exploration with summer employment opportunities, aiming to eliminate justice system contact, avoid violence, strengthen socioemotional skills, and improve education and career outcomes for participants.
-  **3**
Gender-Based Violence Response
Which helps people experiencing family violence and commercial sexual exploitation find safety and access support.
-  **4**
Community Healing
Which offers community outreach, trauma support, and grassroots minigrants, resulting in healing activities, deeper community involvement, and stronger norms around violence.

The initiative also funds several direct service positions in the Department of Violence Prevention, including several Life Coaches and Violence Prevention Coordinators as well as a Community Engagement Specialist.

⁴ Oakland Measure Z Ballot Initiative Resolution

⁵ Oakland Measure Z Reports and Evaluations

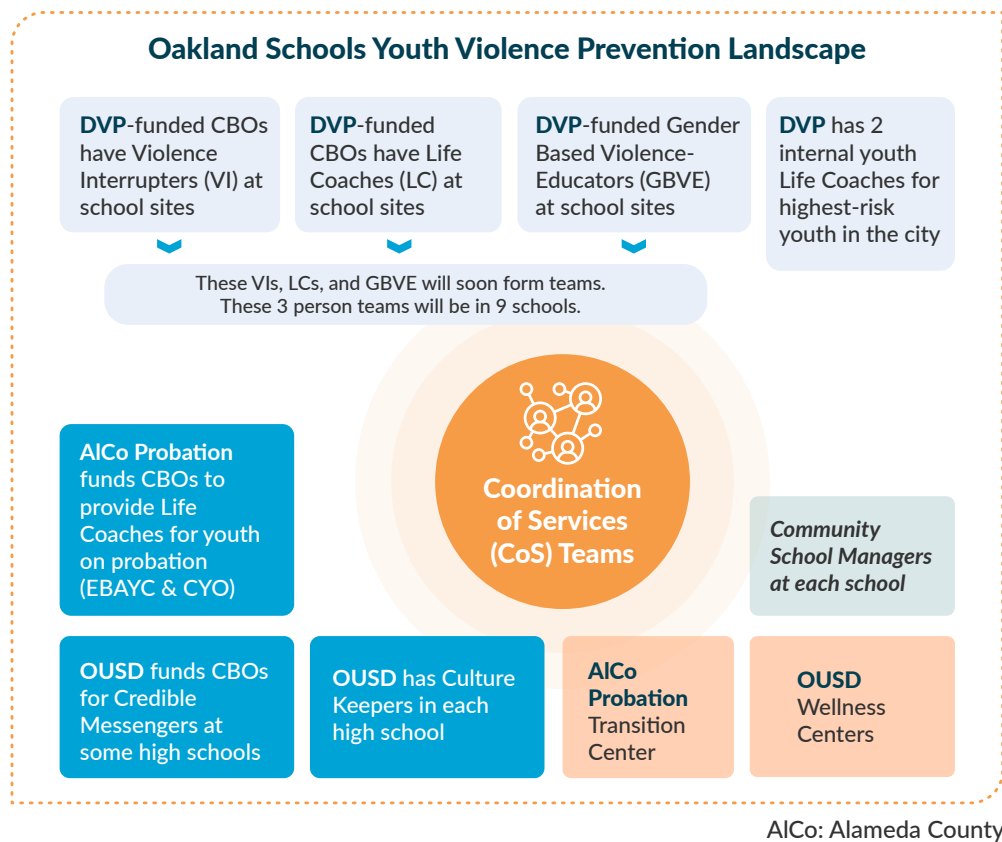
The parcel tax and City-owned parking garage fee provides approximately \$25 million per year in Measure Z spending. Two million dollars per year is provided to the Oakland Fire Department, 1% of the funds is used for administration and evaluation, and the remaining bulk of the funds are split 60% to OPD for community policing and 40% to DVP for violence intervention services.

Oakland Department of Violence Prevention

The Department of Violence Prevention was established in 2017 to elevate the City’s community service-based approach to violence reduction to better match the attention and resources dedicated to the City’s law enforcement approach to violence reduction through the Oakland Police Department. Measure Z-funded services and staff, previously housed in the City’s Human Services Department, were moved into the DVP. Additional staff were also hired to expand the work of violence intervention within DVP.

In 2023, the Department of Violence Prevention was faced with significant budget reductions. In response, Oakland City Council’s Public Safety Committee approved \$28 million in grants for 24 nonprofits such as the Youth Employment Partnership, Dads Evoking Change, and Beat the Streets Bay Area to address potential cuts to DVP grant funding. Additionally, a motion was passed to restore \$3.3 million for employment services, ensuring support for job readiness and summer employment programs for low-income youth, thereby securing essential violence prevention and community building efforts through September 2024.

DVP-funded services also support much of the violence intervention work in the Oakland Unified School District, as shown in the graphic below.



Following an audit of the Oakland Ceasefire initiative released in February 2024 and the appointment of a new Chief of DVP, the Department has begun to re-organize to better focus its internal staff on serving individuals at the very highest risk of gun violence.

www.oaklandca.gov

Oakland Ceasefire

In 2012, a group of faith leaders from Faith in Action East Bay (formerly Oakland Community Organizations), alarmed by the growing number of young men of color being killed in Oakland, met with city leaders to introduce a strategy called Ceasefire. This strategy, also known as focused deterrence, group violence intervention (GVI), or gun violence reduction strategy (GVRs), had previously been implemented in Boston, MA, where it was credited with the “Boston Miracle” that resulted in a 63% reduction in homicides.

In October 2012, the City of Oakland created the Ceasefire Oakland Partnership as a collaboration between what is now DVP, community service providers, Faith in Action, OPD, Alameda County Probation, and the California Partnership for Safe Communities (CPSC), which provided technical assistance to support the City in implementing the strategy (which included the NICJR Executive Director). Oakland Ceasefire has four core components: data-driven identification of those individuals and groups at highest risk of being involved in gun violence; direct and respectful communication to those at high risk; intensive services, supports, and opportunities to help people transition away from violence; and as a last resort, focused enforcement.

Oakland achieved a 49% reduction in homicides and non-fatal shootings in the first seven years of the Ceasefire strategy. An external, academic evaluation found that the majority of Oakland’s reduction in gun violence was attributable to the Ceasefire strategy.

A 2024 audit of Oakland Ceasefire, conducted by CPSC and NICJR, found that after a promising launch and effective implementation over several years, there was a decline in the fidelity with which the four core components were implemented, leading to a surge in gun violence.⁶

Oakland Fund for Children and Youth

The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) was established by Oakland voters in 1996 through the Kids First! Initiative (Measure K) and later reauthorized by Measure D in 2009 and again in 2020. OFCY dedicates 3% of the City’s unrestricted General Fund to support services for youth under 21 years of age.⁷ The Fund provides comprehensive support services focusing on early childhood development, student success in school through educational enrichment, youth leadership and empowerment, and physical and mental health services. These programs aim to support the holistic development of Oakland’s youth, ensuring they have access to the necessary resources and opportunities to thrive.



OFCY’s mission is guided by a strategic plan developed every three years with input from youth, parents, and service providers, focusing on creating impactful programs across the city. Their approach includes extensive community engagement and strategic funding to address the needs of Oakland’s children and youth, aiming for comprehensive support across various developmental areas.

OFCY grants out approximately \$17 million per year to CBOs and schools.

The City of Oakland is one of the few jurisdictions in the country with dedicated and distinct funds focused separately in violence prevention/youth development (OFCY) and violence intervention (DVP).

www.ofcy.org

⁶ Audit of Oakland Ceasefire

⁷ Oakland Fund for Children and Youth

Alameda County Office of Violence Prevention

In January 2023, the Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) officially launched its Office of Violence Prevention (OVP), a major milestone that built on four years of work by ACPHD and millions of dollars of funding from the Board of Supervisors.⁸ The OVP was developed in direct response to input gathered from county residents in 2020–2021 as part of the County’s community health needs assessment (CHNA), in which county residents identified community safety as one of the primary issues affecting their health and well-being.⁹ The safety issues the residents identified as part of the CHNA process were varied and included concerns such as gun violence, hate crimes, youth and young adult suicide, and family and gender-based violence. In late 2022, the County Board of Supervisors approved \$4 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to ACPHD to establish the OVP; shortly thereafter, this funding was supplemented by an additional \$3 million from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) for a youth suicide prevention project.

The OVP has established five staff positions and released an RFP in 2024 that will result in millions of dollars of funding to CBOs to provide services in the following areas: direct violence prevention and intervention services, with a focus on firearm violence, hate-motivated violence, and/or intimate partner violence; youth suicide prevention and crisis response services; and violence prevention workforce healing and wellness, to support direct services workers at violence prevention CBOs who may experience vicarious trauma through their work.¹⁰ In addition to these efforts, which are primarily focused on violence intervention, the OVP aims to serve as a convener of other government and community organizations to establish and coordinate upstream efforts that are more oriented toward violence prevention and community transformation.

Rise East (40x40)



Rise East is a \$100 million privately funded, place-based initiative aimed at revitalizing Black neighborhoods in a 40x40-block area of East Oakland over the course of a decade.¹¹ The initiative is led by Oakland Thrives, a collective impact backbone organization; the 40x40 Council, a coalition of community-based organizations in the 40x40 area of East Oakland; and Blue Meridian Partners, a partnership of philanthropists that pool resources to provide substantial investments to help scale solutions to poverty.

Rise East’s collective impact initiative is rooted in a community-driven vision to establish a Black Cultural Zone in East Oakland, emerging from more than a decade of groundwork laid by local leaders. Rise East’s effort aims to accelerate their

vision through a comprehensive 10-year plan, emphasizing deep partnerships between community-based organizations, residents, public and private sector entities, and philanthropy. The initiative’s main goals encompass ensuring the flourishing of Black children and youth, safety and enrichment for Black residents, generational housing and thriving Black families, support for Black workers and small businesses, and enhanced health and well-being for Black families.

⁸ ACPHD OVP Presentation

⁹ Alameda County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2022-2025

¹⁰ Alameda County RFP for Violence Prevention and Intervention Services

¹¹ Rise East Oakland

Rise East’s approach prioritizes racial equity, community engagement, and data-driven decision-making. Rise East’s programs include the establishment of the 40x40 Community Fund for Economic, Social, and Cultural Wellness; the 40x40 Community Data Trust for data-driven insights and accountability; investments in social capital through community ambassadors and youth-led initiatives; narrative change efforts to amplify community voices and shift mindsets; and investments in organizing and advocacy for systemic change and equity.

Rise East is anchored by four Black-led organizations: Black Cultural Zone, Roots Community Health Center, East Oakland Youth Development Center, and the Brotherhood of Elders. Rise East aims to address issues such as housing, health, education, economic empowerment, and cultural preservation to create lasting positive impacts for Black families and neighborhoods.

www.riseeast.org

Oakland Thrives



Oakland Thrives operates as a backbone organization supporting collective impact initiatives that bring together public and private funding as well as public agencies and nonprofit organizations to address deep-rooted problems in Oakland. As noted above, Oakland Thrives is currently facilitating the implementation of the Rise East initiative.¹² While Rise East is by far the largest and highest priority initiative currently being led by Oakland Thrives, the organization does operate as a convener and co-designer of other ongoing efforts to promote economic mobility, early literacy, and child and adolescent behavioral health across Oakland. To this end, they bring together government, nonprofit, and philanthropic leaders to align priorities and increase coordination, support data collection to inform decision-making, and provide funding to scale pilot programs.

www.oaklandthrives.org

¹² Oakland Thrives

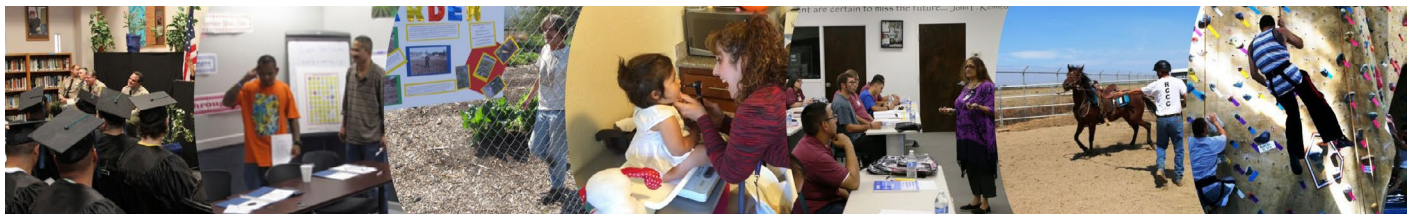
STATE-LEVEL POLICIES AND INITIATIVES AFFECTING THE OAKLAND VIOLENCE PREVENTION LANDSCAPE

Criminal Justice Realignment

Passed in 2011, Assembly Bill (AB) 109 Public Safety Realignment fundamentally altered the landscape of criminal justice in California by transferring responsibility for the incarceration and supervision of thousands of people convicted of low-level felonies from the State to the counties. Intended to reduce the prison population following a decades-long lawsuit over unconstitutional conditions of confinement, Public Safety Realignment had the added benefit of increasing the role of local government agencies and community-based organizations in establishing a local reentry system of care. This was accomplished by establishing a dedicated funding stream along with a statutory requirement to use evidence-based practices and fund community-based services.¹³

Today, Alameda County directs almost \$43 million in annual AB 109 funds to government agencies and community-based providers who work with currently and formerly incarcerated people to address needs such as housing, family reunification, transportation, family counseling, and more. In 2015, Alameda became the only county in the state to dedicate 50% of its AB 109 fund each year to community-based services. CBOs funded through AB 109 include many of those described in the Key Programs and Providers section of this report, such as Roots Community Health Center, Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (BOSS), and the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO).¹⁴

Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act and Youthful Offender Block Grant



The Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) and the Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) are State of California programs that provide counties with funding for juvenile justice-related services. Initially established as separate laws and funding streams, these two programs were amended and integrated in 2016 to provide a better coordinated continuum of services for youth and a lower administrative burden for counties.¹⁵ Today, JJCPA provides funds for counties to implement “programs that have proven effective in reducing crime and delinquency among at-risk youth and youthful offenders,” while YOBG provides funding for counties to “deliver custody and care” to youth who would have been committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) before that agency was eliminated in 2022.¹⁶

In 2023, the Alameda County Probation Department (ACPD) received almost \$13 million in JJCPA and YOBG funds. Approximately two-thirds of these funds went to the Probation Department to pay for various community supervision programs; the remaining one-third went to a mix of CBOs and government agencies across the county.¹⁷

¹³ [Assembly Bill 109 2011-2012](#)

¹⁴ [Alameda County AB 109 Contracts - July 2023](#)

¹⁵ [Assembly Bill 1998 2015-2016](#)

¹⁶ [Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act and the Youthful Offender Block Grant Program](#)

¹⁷ [2023 JJCPA-YOBG Expenditure and Data Reports](#)

California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant (CalVIP)



In 2017, the California State Legislature established the California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program, replacing the California Gang Reduction, Intervention, and Prevention (CalGRIP) Grant Program established a decade earlier. Like its predecessor, CalVIP provides three-year funding to cities and CBOs to support services that have been shown to reduce community violence. In 2019, State Assemblymember Buffy Wicks sponsored AB 1603, which tripled the total amount of funding available from approximately \$9 million annually to almost \$30 million annually, and increased the per grant cap from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million.¹⁸

In 2021, the California State Legislature made the decision to direct \$200 million of American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the CalVIP Grant Program. Spread over three years, this constituted an increase of more than 740% for violence intervention and prevention services across the state. Amid this augmentation, 20 California cities and 84 CBOs received CalVIP funding to provide a wide array of services across the state. Although CalVIP will return to pre-ARPA levels once that funding runs out, the State has taken other critical steps to ensure the sustainability of CalVIP services.¹⁹ In 2023, the legislature passed AB 28: The Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Act, which established a permanent funding source for CalVIP, eliminating the need for ongoing reauthorizations of the Grant Program and buffering it from future political battles and budget negotiations.²⁰

¹⁸ 2019 AB 1603

¹⁹ CalVIP Grant

²⁰ Assembly Bill 28, 2023-24

KEY PROGRAMS AND PROVIDERS

This section highlights key community-based organizations that comprise much of the service delivery of Oakland’s violence reduction landscape. The goal is not to profile every single community-based organization contributing to the city’s violence reduction ecosystem, but rather to call attention to the organizations that have helped build this ecosystem over the past decade and demonstrate the distribution of services within the context of NICJR’s violence reduction framework. In addition, the organizations below are primarily those that are currently active participants and service providers in the state and local initiatives described above.



Violence Prevention / Youth Development

Youth Employment Partnership (YEP)

Youth Employment Partnership, located in East Oakland, provides an array of employment and educational services for youth and young adults who are affected by poverty, foster care, the criminal and/or juvenile justice system, and educational challenges. They do this through four key program areas: job training, job placement, education, and supportive services (including housing). Job training programs for youth include both summer and afterschool jobs, while young adult programs focus on career pathways, including construction, culinary arts, warehousing and logistics, and healthcare. All YEP job training programs offer a range of other services as well, such as resume and cover letter development support and job interview skills building. They also provide an onsite high school diploma program and credit recovery programs, along with counseling and tutoring services for both high school and college degrees. In recent years, YEP has also invested in housing services, recognizing that housing instability is a common issue for their service population. To address this issue, YEP participants helped construct 12 “tiny home” housing units for young adults in their workforce training and educational programming; they also offer a 30-person dormitory for youth. YEP is funded under Measure Z’s Gun Violence Response and Youth Diversion and Reentry service areas.

www.yep.org

The Mentoring Center (TMC)

The Mentoring Center was founded in 1991 with a mission to move all youth toward healthy, successful lives regardless of the challenges they face. As the name implies, TMC emphasizes the power of mentoring to help young people unlock their full potential and grow into healthy, productive adults. Over the last 30 years, TMC has established itself as a leader in the mentoring field, impacting more than 800 agencies and training over 20,000 mentors.²¹ By promoting mentoring as a key strategy for youth development, TMC has dedicated itself to transforming lives and effectively addressing the needs of youth from diverse backgrounds. TMC's is committed to innovation, evidenced by the development and evaluation of new mentoring models and a focus on raising public awareness about the importance of mentoring.

TMC's offerings are structured around three main program areas: Training & Technical Assistance (TTA), Direct Service Programs, and EMERGE. Through TTA, TMC provides comprehensive support to mentoring organizations across the country, including training for boards, staff, and mentors, alongside organizational development and program evaluation support. This includes specialized training through the Transformative Intervention Institute and the Mentoring Institute for Trainers and Managers at UC Berkeley, both of which are tailored to those serving youth involved in the juvenile justice system. TMC's Direct Service Programs focus on Transformative Mentoring™, an approach rooted in culturally relevant cognitive behavioral principles that is designed to help youth develop healthy, productive attitudes and mental frameworks. TMC's Transformative Mentoring work involves both individual and group mentoring and includes character development, life-skills training, and support services such as educational assistance and job placement. Lastly, EMERGE is a collaborative reentry program for young women that was developed in partnership with the National Black Women's Justice Institute, Alameda County Office of Education, and Girls Inc. This effort focuses on education, mentorship, and empowerment to facilitate a transition from confinement to college and careers. Through these distinct but interconnected programs, TMC not only advocates for, but actively implements strategies that support youth in overcoming obstacles and achieving success.

www.mentor.org

East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC)

The East Bay Asian Youth Center provides services to youth and young adults reentering their communities from the juvenile or criminal justice system, with a focus on educational support, career development, and counseling. Their partnerships with public schools provide afterschool learning and attendance support, while their Shop 55 Wellness Center and Camp Thrive address health and summer education. Additionally, their Street Team offers case management and employment services, and EBAYC maintains involvement in community organizing around issues such as affordable housing and education as a facet of their holistic approach to youth development. While primarily known for their youth development initiatives, EBAYC also addresses the unique needs of the Asian and Pacific Islander communities in the East Bay, offering crucial support to this demographic during the reentry process.

www.ebayc.org



²¹ TMC: Who We Are

Young Women’s Freedom Center (YWFC)

Since its inception in 1993, the Young Women’s Freedom Center has centered support for and empowerment of young women and trans or nonbinary youth of all genders across California. The mission of YWFC is to inspire and empower systems-impacted young people to create positive change in their lives and communities, emphasizing fiscal sponsorship, operational support, coaching, and training.²²

With a commitment to meeting young people where they are, YWFC conducts outreach in jails, detention centers, and in the community, offering services to youth and young adults who have been involved in the foster care, juvenile, and criminal justice systems; lived and worked on the streets; and/or survived significant violence. In Oakland, YWFC provides life coaching and diversion services to youth and young adults who are involved with the juvenile or criminal justice system.



YWFC’s programs are organized into three areas: Investing in Young People, Advocacy and Organizing, and the Freedom Research Institute. Through Investing in Young People, YWFC offers mentorship, training, and employment to reduce recidivism and support economic and educational achievements. YWFC’s Advocacy and Organizing efforts align with the #Freedom2030 goal to end the criminalization and incarceration of young women and trans youth, focusing on family reunification, alternatives to youth incarceration, and systemic changes to reduce law enforcement’s presence in young people’s lives. Lastly, the Freedom Research Institute employs participatory, community-driven research to advocate for justice reform, led by system-impacted youth who are trained to build their own research and policy advocacy skills.

www.youngwomenfree.org

Safe Passages



Safe Passages aims to break the cycle of poverty by engaging youth and families in a continuum of services designed to promote student success and community development. With a mission rooted in social justice and equity, Safe Passages strives to ensure that educational opportunity, health services, and family support are accessible to all, regardless of race or socio-economic status. Their work spans direct services, policy advocacy, and program development to address challenges in low-income communities, such as low academic proficiency, health disparities, and high poverty rates.²³

Safe Passages’ impact is structured around four main initiatives: the Early Childhood Initiative, School Linked Services Initiative, Economic and Social Justice Initiative, and Career Pathways and Community Development. In Early Childhood, programs such as Baby Learning Communities and the Mental Health Collaborative focus on building community among families and providing support for young children’s learning and development. The

²² YWFC: About Us

²³ Safe Passages: About Us

School Linked Services Initiative includes the Elev8 Full Service Community Schools Initiative and Afterschool Programs, offering comprehensive services that support student learning, health, and family involvement. The Economic and Social Justice Initiative features programs such as Law and Social Justice Coaching, which aims to provide youth with pathways to careers in justice-related fields. Lastly, Career Pathways and Community Development emphasizes workforce and economic development to empower community residents with career opportunities and economic independence.

Safe Passages collaborates with a vast network of partners, including philanthropic organizations like the Clorox Foundation and CISCO Foundation, public system partners such as the City of Oakland and Oakland Unified School District, and numerous CBOs, to amplify their reach and effectiveness in serving youth and families.

www.safepassages.org

Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY)



Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY) was founded in 2005 to promote institutional shifts toward restorative approaches. Working from an anti-racist, anti-bias lens, RJOY provides education, training and technical assistance, and co-developed restorative justice programs with school, community, juvenile justice, and research partners. Their approach is rooted in indigenous practices that focus on understanding the harm caused, addressing the needs and responsibilities of all affected parties, and working collectively toward repairing the damage. In contrast to justice systems-based approaches to addressing violence and other forms of harm, RJOY's methodology starts by asking

who has been harmed and how that harm can be addressed together, rather than what laws have been broken.²⁴

In Oakland, RJOY provides community healing services through Measure Z. Beyond this, RJOY has established partnerships with a wide range of philanthropic, public, and community service partners, including the Clorox Foundation, Kaiser Family Foundation, and Oakland Unified School District, among others.

www.rjoyoakland.org

Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)

Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice's goal is to empower youth impacted by the criminal justice system through restorative justice and leadership development. Their approach includes healing circles, cultural empowerment, and advocacy training to tackle the root causes of youth violence and incarceration. Key programs such as "Dream Beyond Bars" and "Homies 4 Justice" provide leadership, learning, and advocacy opportunities for people directly impacted by the criminal justice system. These efforts aim to reduce recidivism and inspire societal change by fostering a sense of community and drawing on ancestral wisdom.²⁵

www.curyj.org

²⁴ RJOY: About Us

²⁵ CURYJ: About Us

Violence Intervention

Youth ALIVE!

Youth ALIVE! specializes in providing trauma-informed care and mental health services to young people affected by violence, including those reentering society. Their approach is centered around understanding and addressing the challenges faced by individuals impacted by the criminal justice system. The organization's commitment to mental health and well-being is a critical aspect of the reintegration process, contributing to the overall stability and safety of the community.

Youth ALIVE! implements a comprehensive approach to violence intervention and prevention in Oakland through initiatives focused on prevention, intervention, and healing. Through their Teens on Target program, they empower students to become leaders in violence prevention, providing workshops and advocacy training, while their Caught in the Crossfire initiative offers hospital-based support to violence victims, aiming to prevent retaliation and promote healing. Additionally, Youth ALIVE!'s Violence Interrupters proactively mediate conflicts on the streets.

www.youthalive.org

Community & Youth Outreach (CYO)

Community & Youth Outreach (CYO) is dedicated to reducing violence and fostering the development and well-being of youth and young adults in Oakland. The organization offers four programs, all of which are designed for individuals at very high risk of involvement in violence: Violence Reduction Coordination; Intensive Life Coaching; Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise (HWW) cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) groups; and Collective Healing.²⁶



CYO's Violence Reduction Coordination services are designed to identify, locate, and engage individuals identified as being at very high risk for involvement in violence. Using their knowledge of and connections to the neighborhoods where most gun violence occurs, Violence Reduction Coordinators locate these individuals and, through repeated engagement, work to convince them to engage in life coaching in order to transition away from gun violence. These same individuals are then connected to CYO's Intensive Life Coaching program, which provides young people identified as very high risk for violence with close, constant contact with a Life Coach. Life Coaches, who come from similar neighborhoods and life experiences as clients, develop detailed Life Plans that address clients' individual risks and needs, connect them to services, and help keep them safe and out of the justice system. These clients are also given the opportunity to participate in CYO's HWW program, which offers culturally relevant, trauma-informed CBT to help young people navigate decision-making, identity, and trauma; build positive life skills; and avoid harmful behaviors. Lastly, the Collective Healing program helps CYO's clients address their own trauma while contributing to the health and well-being of their neighborhoods. Clients participate in a series of listening sessions with different community members and organizations, such as law enforcement, faith leaders, business owners, and peers, to understand how their actions affect those around them and then contribute to repairing harm.

www.cyoinc.org

²⁶ CYO: Our Approach

Community Transformation

Black Cultural Zone (BCZ)



In 2014, the Eastside Arts Alliance and a group of East Oakland-based nonprofits established the Black Cultural Zone collaborative as a collective impact initiative to help keep Black residents in East Oakland. Partnering with residents, government agencies, churches, and community groups, the collective designated a 50-square block Black Cultural Zone in which they emphasized arts and art activism. In 2019, the BCZ collaborative founded the BCZ Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit corporation that works to address the cost of living that pushes Black residents out of Oakland through commercial and economic development projects that aim to increase Black wealth and business ownership, alongside Black arts and cultural efforts. BCZ is a primary contributor to the Rise East initiative, described above, which is focused on the same 50-square blocks prioritized by BCZ.

www.blackculturalzone.org

Urban Peace Movement (UPM)

The Urban Peace Movement champions the empowerment of Oakland's youth, especially youth from areas plagued by violence and incarceration. Their Healing-Centered Youth Organizing is a multifaceted approach that includes leadership development for policy advocacy, community healing to address trauma, and initiatives for systemic change aimed at social justice.²⁷ These programs are designed to nurture self-confidence, promote healing, and foster a culture of peace, contributing to the creation of safer, opportunity-filled communities. Additionally, UPM's Heal-R-Town program offers healing circles to foster community resilience, while Scratch and Fade combines wellness with cultural events for healing. UPM's DetermiNation Black Men's Group supports young Black men in leadership and social justice. Taken together, these programs aim to promote healing, empowerment, and systemic change, addressing the root causes of violence and incarceration.

www.urbanpeacemovement.org

Abode

Abode is a housing agency focused on ending homelessness by assisting low-income, unhoused individuals, including those with special needs, to secure stable, supportive housing based on a housing first model. This approach, which prioritizes stable housing as the foundation for effective support services, has proven to be more effective and cost-efficient than traditional strategies, significantly reducing instances of emergency room visits, incarceration, and chronic homelessness. Founded in 1989 in southern Alameda County, Abode has expanded its services across the Bay Area and now serves more than 15,000 individuals yearly across Alameda, Santa Clara, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, San Mateo, Napa, and Solano Counties.²⁸

²⁷ Urban Peace Movement

²⁸ Abode: Our Impact

Abode's programs are organized into two main categories: Housing Development and Supportive Services. Each addresses crucial aspects of homelessness and housing instability. In Housing Development, Abode works on creating and rehabilitating buildings to offer supportive housing, directly addressing California's housing crisis by providing stable environments for formerly homeless individuals, families, veterans, and other vulnerable groups. The Supportive Services category encompasses a wide range of on-site assistance, including job training, financial literacy, health education, and case management, aimed at helping residents achieve stability and self-sufficiency.



Among the specific programs Abode offers are Permanent Supportive Housing, which provides comprehensive services to help residents remain stably housed, and Rapid Rehousing, which offers short-term rental assistance to facilitate quick transitions into permanent housing. Additionally, targeted efforts like the Oakland Path Rehousing Initiative focus on providing support to highly vulnerable groups in Oakland.

www.abode.org

Oakland Private Industry Council (OPIC)

For more than 40 years, the nonprofit Oakland Private Industry Council has worked with public and private partners to create pathways to employment for Oakland residents, including those with employment barriers such as criminal convictions. OPIC maintains deep roots in the community and a Board of Directors whose composition reflects the diversity of Oakland, ensuring that its programs and outreach effectively meet the city's unique workforce needs. OPIC's commitment to workforce development has evolved through its years of experience administering federal and state-funded programs, initiating groundbreaking training programs like Women-In-Skilled-Trades and Cypress/Mandela pre-apprenticeship training, and, more recently, launching the 30KJOBS4OAK Initiative aimed at training 30,000 Oaklanders for various job categories.²⁹

OPIC's current programmatic efforts fall under four key areas: the 30KJOBS4OAK Initiative, the California Jobs and Infrastructure Project, the Jesse Brill Reading Project, and the Business Economic Empowerment Program. The 30KJobs4OAK Initiative is a partnership campaign designed to align the skills of Oakland residents with the needs of local employers and create high-wage, skilled job opportunities that can reduce poverty and associated issues such as crime and homelessness. The California Jobs and Infrastructure Project, developed in partnership with Congresswoman Barbara Lee and supported by federal funding, focuses on infrastructure improvement and job creation, especially in union jobs, to modernize the state's physical infrastructure. The Jesse Brill Reading Project addresses the critical need for literacy among Black and Latino children in Oakland, offering a comprehensive home-based reading program to empower parents and children with essential literacy skills. Finally, the Business Economic Empowerment Program works to support small businesses and entrepreneurs, particularly those owned by minorities, women, and veterans, by providing funding, counseling,

²⁹ OPIC: About Us

networking opportunities, and other efforts aimed at removing barriers to access contracts and opportunities. Through these initiatives, OPIC not only fosters workforce development but also contributes to the broader economic and social empowerment of the Oakland community.

www.oaklandpic.org

Catholic Charities East Bay (CCEB)



Catholic Charities East Bay has been providing support for vulnerable communities in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties since its consolidation from 36 Catholic Aid agencies in 1935. With a history steeped in service and social justice, CCEB has evolved through the decades, from aiding service personnel and engaging in civil rights activism to welcoming refugees and addressing the HIV-AIDS crisis.³⁰ Today, as a faith-based agency rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, CCEB is committed to respecting the dignity of every individual and fostering community strength. Operating with values of respect, trust, excellence, accountability, and faith, CCEB aims to transition children, youth, families, and seniors from crisis to stability and well-being.

CCEB's work is organized into five program areas: disaster emergency services, housing services, immigration legal services, mental health and violence prevention, and family preservation. Through disaster emergency services, CCEB offers case management to help families recover from devastating storms, with support from FEMA and other agencies. Housing Services focuses on keeping East Bay residents housed through rent relief and other support measures. Their immigration legal services division has opened more than a thousand new legal cases, aiding in citizenship applications and more. In mental health and violence prevention, CCEB works with schools and communities to offer trauma-informed support and restorative practices, enhancing the well-being of those affected by violence. Lastly, the family preservation program strengthens families and advocates for domestic violence victims, providing crucial in-home services. Partners like Oakland Unite and the Khadafy Washington Project / Youth ALIVE! support CCEB's mission, helping to amplify its reach and effectiveness in serving those in need.

www.cceb.org

³⁰ CCEB: Our History

Reentry Services

Roots Community Health Center

Roots Community Health Center stands as a pivotal force for community empowerment in Oakland, guided by a steadfast commitment to fostering holistic well-being and equity among all residents. Roots offers a comprehensive array of reentry services aimed at facilitating the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals in Oakland. Their approach focuses on addressing health, employment, and housing needs.³¹



Rooted in their mission to address systemic barriers and amplify cross-sector initiatives, Roots takes a multifaceted approach across four key program areas: reentry services, community health education and communication, youth programs and services, and economic mobility initiatives. Within reentry services, Roots Community Health Center provides vital support for formerly incarcerated individuals through initiatives like Healthy Measures Warm Handoff and the Safe Landing Pilot Program, assisting with benefits enrollment, health education, employment, and housing navigation to facilitate successful reintegration into society. In community health education and communication, Roots focuses on promoting well-being and healthcare access through comprehensive community health education efforts that equip individuals with essential knowledge and resources to make informed decisions about their health. Under youth programs and services, Roots addresses the unique needs of adolescents and young adults through efforts such as the Young People’s Wellness Center, which offers tailored medical, behavioral health, and health navigation services, ensuring young community members receive the support they need to thrive. Lastly, Roots economic mobility initiatives target policy and resource allocation, addressing systemic barriers to financial stability and opportunity to foster economic security and mobility for vulnerable populations. Taken together, the Roots programs and initiatives provide crucial assistance with benefits enrollment, health education, employment, and housing navigation, empowering individuals to navigate the challenges of post-release life.

As a Measure Z provider contracted with the DVP, Roots provides direct services as part of the gun violence reduction initiative and the community healing initiative. Roots also actively participates in transformative community initiatives such as Rise East 40x40, through which they are collaborating with local organizations to address systemic racism and displacement in East Oakland.

www.rootscommunityhealth.org

³¹ Roots Community Health Center

Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (BOSS)



Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency provides a comprehensive range of services to assist formerly incarcerated individuals in their reintegration process. Through a holistic approach to services, BOSS helps individuals navigate the challenges of reentry, empowering them to achieve stability and reduce their chances of recidivism, while also promoting long-term community safety.³² BOSS's multifaceted programs include the Trauma Recovery Center, which offers trauma-informed services and intensive case management; the Violence Intervention & Prevention Center, which focuses on addressing the root causes of violence through a citywide alliance; and the Social Justice Collective Fellowship, which empowers individuals with criminal records to engage in civic and political processes. Their programs

include housing assistance, job training, education, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment.

www.self-sufficiency.org

Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)

The Center for Employment Opportunities is dedicated to providing immediate, effective, and comprehensive employment services to individuals recently released from incarceration. Founded as a demonstration project of the Vera Institute of Justice in the 1970s and becoming an independent nonprofit in 1996, CEO has grown to operate in 30 cities across twelve states. Their mission is to ensure that justice-impacted job seekers have the opportunity to achieve social and economic mobility, and their vision is that anyone with a recent criminal history who wants to work has the necessary preparation and support. CEO's theory of change posits that addressing the employment needs of persons with criminal convictions at their most vulnerable point—when they are first released from incarceration—through life skills education, short-term paid transitional employment, full-time job placement, and post-placement services will significantly reduce the likelihood of reincarceration and foster a stable, productive life.

CEO's program model is structured around four key areas: reducing recidivism, increasing employment, policy and advocacy, and evidence-based outcomes. Under reducing recidivism and increasing employment, CEO offers immediate paid employment, skills training, and ongoing career support through transitional work crews that provide neighborhood beautification services, ensuring participants receive daily pay and vocational support. Their Job Readiness Training ensures individuals are prepared for immediate work following orientation, covering essential digital skills, financial literacy, and workplace communication. Transitional Employment allows participants to gain on-the-job training and daily feedback, leading to full-time unsubsidized employment. Job Coaching and Placement works in tandem with Retention Services to assist participants in becoming job ready and support them in their new roles to ensure long-term employment success. CEO's policy and advocacy efforts aim to reform laws and regulations that hinder justice-impacted individuals' success in the workforce, advocating for increased investment in reentry support and the elimination of employment barriers. Supported by evidence from multiple external evaluations and internal data analysis, CEO's programs demonstrate a significant impact on reducing recidivism and increasing employment rates among participants, underscoring the effectiveness of their comprehensive approach to reentry employment services.³³

www.ceoworks.org

³² BOSS: Mission, History, & Values

³³ CEO: Research Results

Community Works West

Founded in 1997, Community Works West has grown from its roots in arts programming within the San Francisco County Jail to become the Bay Area's primary provider of restorative justice services. Honoring the lived experiences of survivors, incarcerated people, and their communities, Community Works implements culturally responsive, trauma-informed programs rooted in restorative justice and the arts. Their dedication to transforming justice through programs and policy is guided by a deep belief in humanity and healing, and they aim to address the needs of people at any stage of justice system involvement. The organization's approach stems from their commitment to a worldview shift that places healing and accountability at the center of responses to harm and violence, recognizing the complex ways in which individuals, families, and communities experience harm through criminalization and incarceration.



Community Works West's services are designed around four key areas: Youth power, transformation, restorative reentry, and systems change. Youth power programs, such as Project WHAT!, empower youth with incarcerated parents, fostering advocacy and systemic change. The transformation segment of their work includes initiatives like the Resolve to Stop the Violence Project and the Survivor Empowerment Program, focusing on behavior change and healing for perpetrators and survivors of violence. Under restorative reentry, programs like the San Francisco Transition Age Reentry Program and the Alameda County Restorative Reentry Program blend restorative justice with cognitive behavioral therapy and artistic creation, supporting individuals in their transition from incarceration. This area is supported by the Restorative Reentry Fund's Guaranteed Income Pilot, which provides financial stability for reentering individuals. Lastly, systems change draws on direct service experiences to inform policy reform and promote restorative practices, aiming for a justice system that emphasizes healing over punishment.

www.communityworkswest.org

MAJOR PHILANTHROPIC FUNDERS OF OAKLAND VIOLENCE PREVENTION EFFORTS

As noted throughout this report, philanthropic organizations have been an important contributor to Oakland violence reduction efforts. As the city has increasingly shifted its violence reduction work to focus primarily on intervention, philanthropic funding has been essential for continuing to fund both upstream efforts, like prevention and youth development, and holistic, systems change efforts to drive community transformation. The following philanthropies have been particularly central to this work.



Akonadi Foundation

Akonadi Foundation envisions a racially just Oakland where young people of color have the support systems they need to thrive in schools and communities. Since their inception in 2000 by founders Quinn Delaney and Wayne Jordan, the Foundation has been dedicated to supporting powerful social change movements aimed at eliminating structural racism. Inspired by the youth-led resistance against Proposition 21—a racist ballot measure targeting and criminalizing young people of color—Akonadi Foundation emerged as a partner in the fight for racial justice, amplifying the voices of courageous advocates and organizers on the frontlines. Over the past two decades, the Foundation has awarded over 1,900 grants totaling \$43 million to nonprofit organizations, primarily in the Bay Area and across the country, that prioritize power building and organizing to fuel a racial justice movement.

Central to Akonadi Foundation’s approach is its emphasis on partnerships and collaborations that advance racial justice. Through initiatives such as Belonging in Oakland: A Just City Cultural Fund, the California Black Freedom Fund, and Creatives in Place, the Foundation leverages strategic alliances with public and private partners to uplift the radical imagination of Oakland’s communities of color, invest in Black-led organizations confronting systemic racism, and support Bay Area artists representing diverse cultural practices and identities. These collaborative efforts seek to create new visions of a racially just world, empower grassroots advocates, and foster collective liberation and healing.

One of Akonadi Foundation’s flagship initiatives, All in for Oakland, represents an audacious investment in people of color-led organizing, base-building, and policy advocacy to end the criminalization of Black youth and youth of color in Oakland. Through a multifaceted approach encompassing resistance, reimagining, and restoration, grant partners mobilize directly impacted communities to challenge systems of incarceration and punishment, reimagine youth justice and development systems, and restore the freedom and futures of Black youth and youth of color. By prioritizing movement building, research, organizational capacity, and policy advocacy, All in for Oakland aims to empower grassroots leaders and directly impacted people to drive enduring systems change and build a more just and equitable future for Oakland’s communities.

www.akonadi.org

San Francisco Foundation (SFF)

The San Francisco Foundation is known for their commitment to building a Bay Area where all residents have equal opportunities to thrive. Their work often includes funding and supporting initiatives that address systemic inequality, including violence prevention programs. At the core of SFF's mission lies its robust Equity Agenda, a comprehensive framework aimed at realizing a vision of a Bay Area where every individual has equitable access to opportunities for economic security, affordable housing, and meaningful civic engagement. This agenda is pursued through a multifaceted approach that encompasses strategic grantmaking, innovative investments, collaborative initiatives, and leadership programs.

In their pursuit of racial equity and economic inclusion, SFF channels significant resources into grantmaking initiatives, disbursing \$47.8 million in equity-centered program-related grants to 434 community organizations in the most recent fiscal year. These grants are strategically directed toward organizations led by and serving Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities, underscoring SFF's commitment to amplifying marginalized voices and addressing historical inequities. Furthermore, SFF collaborates closely with donors, facilitating over \$124 million in grants from fund advisors to 2,673 organizations, thus harnessing collective philanthropic efforts to drive positive social change.

www.sff.org

East Bay Community Foundation (EBCF)

The East Bay Community Foundation is dedicated to advancing a fair, inclusive, and just East Bay. They focus on several core program strategies, including arts and culture for social and racial justice, capacity building with a racial equity lens, community organizing, power building, movement building, and fostering inclusive economic models. EBCF's approach emphasizes collaboration with donors, social movements, and the community to eliminate structural barriers and advance racial equity. Their efforts in violence prevention and intervention are part of their broader mission to transform political, social, and economic outcomes for all residents of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The Foundation's grantmaking approach supports BIPOC-led efforts to transform lives, communities, organizations, and systems for social, racial, and economic justice in the East Bay area.

www.ebcf.org



The California Wellness Foundation

The California Wellness Foundation is dedicated to improving the health and wellness of the residents of California. Their approach encompasses a broad spectrum of health-related issues, including violence prevention. They recognize that community violence is a public health issue and address it by funding various initiatives and organizations working to address violence and other social determinants of health. The Foundation's work in this area involves not only direct violence prevention programs but also tackling the underlying factors contributing to violence, such as economic disparities, lack of access to health care, and systemic inequality. The California Wellness Foundation's commitment to these areas is part of their broader mission to promote a healthier California, where all individuals have access to the resources they need to lead fulfilling lives.

www.calwellness.org

The California Endowment (TCE)

The California Endowment focuses on health and wellness across California, including violence prevention efforts in Oakland. Their initiatives often involve partnering with local organizations and communities to address the root causes of violence and promote public health. TCE supports a variety of programs that aim to create healthier, more inclusive communities, and their work in Oakland reflects their broader mission to foster wellness and social justice throughout California. Their current grant funding areas are organized around three pillars: People Power, which works to develop youth and young adults from marginalized community to drive civic activism and social change; Reimagined Public Institutions, which includes justice reinvestment efforts that emphasize prevention and healing over punishment and incarceration; and Health for All, which emphasizes prevention, community wellness, and access to quality health care.

www.calendow.org

Kaiser Permanente

Kaiser Permanente recognizes that health inequities are largely shaped by historical and systemic racism, economic inequity, and chronic disinvestment in communities most in need. As a consequence, Kaiser Permanente directs resources and influence to improve conditions for health in communities most impacted by racial and social injustice and health inequities. Kaiser Permanente also has a long history in Oakland, which is home to their national headquarters and has long benefited from Kaiser Permanente's commitment to improving health and equity in the communities they serve.

For more than a decade, Kaiser Permanente has provided grants to support community-based violence prevention initiatives in Oakland and throughout California, guided by priorities elevated in their triannual community health needs assessments (CHNA). They also maintain a close relationship with city administration to align their efforts. In 2014, Kaiser Permanente supported the National Network of Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs to scale up and support communities in replicating the "Caught in the Crossfire" model pioneered by Youth ALIVE!.

In 2020, Kaiser Permanente declared gun violence a public health crisis and established the Kaiser Permanente Center for Gun Violence Research and Education. Last year, Kaiser Permanente made a landmark \$25 million pledge to expand the Center for Gun Violence Research and Education. Below are some Oakland investments in the last decade.

- Funding Youth ALIVE! since 2003. Kaiser Permanente was a key supporter for its initial hospital-based violence prevention program at Highland Hospital and later seeded the work that is now known as [Health Alliance for Violence Intervention \(HAVI\)](#). Youth ALIVE! also recently received funding through [Kaiser Permanente's Center for Gun Violence Research and Education](#).
- Co-founding Oakland Thrives, which aims to make Oakland the healthiest city in the nation. Also, providing a substantial grant to the Oakland Thrives Leadership Council (through a Kaiser Permanente fund at the East Bay Community Foundation) to support Rise East, described above.
- Funding the California Partnership for Safe Communities to help bring the Ceasefire violence-reduction model to Oakland in 2012 and to bringing the program back to the city in 2024.

DISCUSSION: ASSESSING THE STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF OAKLAND'S VIOLENCE REDUCTION LANDSCAPE

The City of Oakland has made enormous progress toward building a robust violence reduction ecosystem that integrates the work of government agencies, CBOs, and philanthropic organizations to tackle the complex causes of violence. Highlighted below are some of these strengths, in addition to opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Oakland's primary strength is its long history of successful community violence intervention efforts, becoming a national leader in how to locally fund and implement effective violence prevention and intervention initiatives. Oakland has a large array of longstanding community-based organizations.

The establishment of the DVP in 2017 was a major milestone for Oakland and remains a key strength in the city's violence prevention landscape. Although there remain an array of initiatives, programs, and efforts that sit outside of the DVP, situating City-led violence reduction initiatives in a single department has enabled Oakland to focus on the near-term intervention that has proven effective in reducing shootings and homicides. Efforts that are oriented to longer-term violence reduction have, for the most part, been situated outside the DVP, in OFCY, which focuses primarily on youth development and prevention; on AB 109 services, which focus on reentry; or on another local initiatives.

Notwithstanding the important work of the City and the DVP in centralizing violence intervention services and prioritizing CVI efforts, another major strength of Oakland's violence reduction landscape is the multiplicity of partnerships that have evolved and the unique amount of collaboration across city and county agencies and nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. In government-led efforts, such as DVP and the associated Measure Z funding, City departments operate as the primary organizers and conveners, while in community-led initiatives like Rise East, nonprofit leaders organize and convene. The ability of different entities to work together in intersecting initiatives and in varying roles, sometimes as leaders and sometimes as participants, reflects the enormous amount of work that these partners have done together over the years to ensure that everyone is focused on shared goals rather than on needing to be in charge.



Another key strength that has both resulted from and allowed for this unique array of partnerships and collaborations to occur is the diversification of funding for violence reduction activities. In addition to taking advantage of state, county, and city funding streams for violence prevention and intervention, Oakland has also seen the rise of a network of philanthropic partners committed to funding programs, services, and initiatives that support violence reduction. In some instances, this manifests through initiatives like Rise East and Oakland Thrives, while in other instances, philanthropic organizations give funds directly to many of the same CBOs as DVP in order to fund work that the City cannot fund itself. For example, DVP staff emphasized the importance of philanthropic funding for addressing trauma among frontline staff who provide violence intervention services.

Overall, while additional resources are always needed, Oakland benefits from a large array of funding as well as community organizations that focus on violence reduction. Additionally, although components of the strategy diminished after the onset of the COVID pandemic, one of Oakland's strengths is its continual commitment to the Ceasefire strategy across three Mayoral administrations.

Challenges

Despite the impressive work described above, challenges persist. One of the foremost challenges that government and nonprofit stakeholders all discussed was the trauma experienced by frontline staff, even amid efforts to acknowledge and address it. Witnessing violence, extreme poverty, and associated issues on a daily basis is extremely difficult and stressful work, and staff burnout is high.

The high cost of living in Oakland is also a challenge—one that affects both the geography of violence and the ability to respond to that violence. As former Oakland residents move to outlying areas for more affordable housing, it becomes harder to determine what constitutes Oakland's violence issues specifically, and thus how to respond. When people who live outside of Oakland engage in violence within city borders, and when people who live in Oakland engage in violence outside city borders, it is harder to determine which entities are best suited to respond and more difficult to establish a streamlined process for well-coordinated response. In addition, the high cost of living means that many of the people employed in violence reduction work cannot afford to live in the city. Long commutes exacerbate the challenge of hiring people for work that is in and of itself stressful and difficult. Further, it is difficult to implement models that center violence intervention workers' understanding of local community dynamics if both the workers and the people engaged in violence live across a more dispersed geography.

Finally, providers cited coordination as an ongoing challenge. While there are numerous organizations that work to convene and coordinate violence prevention and intervention services, these efforts can have a paradoxical result. For example, many of the same CBOs that contract with DVP also have OFCY contracts or AB 109 contracts with the county, or all three. With different initiatives having different goals and separate government contracting agencies having different service delivery requirements and data collection systems, these efforts to coordinate services across providers can end up segmenting the work being done within a given service providing organization.

Lastly, given the increased challenge of finding capable and quality staff, a recruiting competition has developed among CBOs themselves and with the DVP, creating resentments and rotating staffing shortages.

OAKLAND

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

NICJR 
National Institute for
Criminal Justice Reform

May 2024