



2024

IN REVIEW:

BUILDING A SAFER, MORE JUST NATION



Dear Friends,

As we enter 2025, there is a feeling of uncertainty, but also of hope. The fields of violence reduction and justice reform have seen amazing growth over the last few years. Numerous communities are reimagining their justice systems and investing in community violence intervention, and it's paying off: Last year, our nation saw the largest single-year decrease in homicides since record keeping began in 1960. Early reports for 2024 show similar progress, with a nearly 18% year-to-date reduction in murders nationwide as of late November.

NICJR is honored to be a part of this progress, and we're pleased to share highlights from our work in 2024. What a year it has been!



We recently announced the [Violence Reduction Management Institute](#), which will allow us to significantly impact the national pipeline of qualified leaders for the violence reduction field. This 10-month training program will focus specifically on improving the management skills of current and aspiring field leaders. We're currently [accepting applications](#), and will launch the first cohort in April or May of 2025.

We've also continued to provide crucial support and community for violence reduction leaders nationwide through the National Offices of Violence Prevention Network (NOVPM). We're closing the year with a membership of more than 70 local, state, and federal agencies. The NOVPM also published its first [Annual Report](#) and [Strategic Plan](#) in 2024. The latter lays out a clear path for the continued evolution of the NOVPM, ensuring that we're growing the depth of member engagement, developing member expertise, and increasing Network membership.

Additionally, we've engaged in major justice reform efforts throughout the US, including supporting local and state governments in reimagining juvenile justice through two federal initiatives: Community-Based Alternatives to Youth Incarceration and Building Local Continuums of Care for Youth Success. We've also collaborated with the State of Maryland to proactively engage high-risk youth through the Thrive Academy, and we released our newest report, [Developing a Positive Youth Justice System](#), while presenting at the OJJDP 2024 National Conference on Youth Justice in Washington, DC.

Finally, NICJR recently launched a Research and Practice Network on Gun Violence in partnership with Princeton University. The Network will create a sustained dialogue between researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to develop research agendas and make evidence more widely accessible to policymakers and those on the frontlines of violence intervention. The Network launched in November 2024, gathering a group of incredible experts from across the US for deep, detailed discussions on how to effectively address violence.

Through these and other efforts, NICJR is committed to continuing to build a safer, more just nation.

In partnership,

David Muhammad
Executive Director, NICJR

Violence Reduction Training and Technical Assistance

In 2024, NICJR supported more than 20 jurisdictions across the US as they worked to understand the nature of their local gun violence problem and implement proven, community-focused strategies to reduce that violence. Knoxville, Baltimore, and Oakland each serve as a great example of this work, as well as the progress that can be achieved through sustained commitment to public safety.

Knoxville, TN

Like many US cities, Knoxville saw a significant surge in gun violence during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a nearly 119% increase in fatal shootings in 2020. In response, the Knoxville Office of Community Safety and Empowerment (OCSE) was established in August 2021, and in May 2023, the City of Knoxville developed a Community-Based Violence Reduction Plan. Building on these efforts, in June 2023, NICJR began providing comprehensive training and TA to support the city's implementation of a gun violence reduction strategy (GVRs).

To date, our work has included conducting a [Cost of Gun Violence study](#) and [Landscape Analysis](#), providing ongoing support to the OCSE Director and staff, and delivering Life Coaching trainings. We also facilitated an Oakland site visit where representatives from Knoxville were able to gain firsthand insight into Oakland's more established GVRs. Additionally, we have supported the City in establishing and refining Shooting Reviews and Coordination Meetings and strengthening their data tools and processes.

Through the Landscape Analysis, we found that the handful of organizations created in response to the city's gun violence challenges tend to focus on prevention efforts with youth or long-term community transformation efforts, rather than immediate violence intervention. In response, we've worked closely with the City and key community-based organizations (CBOs) to develop and implement an Intensive Life Coaching program. We've also provided \$85,000 in NICJR Giving Initiative funding to Turn Up Knox, the CBO leading this work.

As of December 1, Knoxville has seen an extraordinary 50% year-to-date reduction in nonfatal shootings and a 5% reduction in fatal shootings.



Baltimore, MD

Baltimore has long struggled with persistently high rates of homicides and nonfatal shootings, especially in the years after Freddie Gray's murder in 2015. From 2015 to 2022, the city consistently experienced over 300 homicides and 600 nonfatal shootings annually. However, following a sharp increase in violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, Baltimore has taken numerous steps to improve public safety, including establishing the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE).

NICJR has been involved in violence reduction work in Baltimore in some capacity since 2020. Notably, our work has included supporting the City in [expanding its GVRs](#) from a few pilot neighborhoods to citywide implementation. In addition to developing a [Cost of Gun Violence](#) report, NICJR has provided a series of Life Coaching trainings to four local community violence intervention programs, collaborated with the California Partnership for Safe Communities (CPSC) to support the City in standing up and improving Shooting Reviews and Coordination Meetings. We've also supported MONSE with executive coaching and training. Additionally, we've provided TA, training, and \$480,000 in NICJR Giving Initiative funding to CBOs at the frontlines of violence reduction in Baltimore. As one of the cities participating in the Coalition to Advance Public Safety (CAPS), Baltimore will continue to receive extensive support from NICJR and other CAPS partners.



By the end of 2023, Baltimore saw a **21%** decrease in homicides

Like Knoxville, Baltimore has seen exciting results from this work. By the end of 2023, the city had experienced a more than 21% annual decrease in homicides, with fewer than 300 homicides for the first time in 10 years. Mayor Brandon Scott described this as “the largest single-year drop on record in homicides for the City of Baltimore.” This year has been similarly momentous, with the city on pace to have fewer than 200 homicides for the first time in decades. Additionally, as of December 1, the city has experienced an additional 35% year-to-date reduction in nonfatal shootings.

Oakland, CA

Oakland achieved a **34%** drop in homicides and nonfatal shootings in 2024



Through CAPS, NICJR is supporting the City of Oakland’s efforts to reestablish GVRs. While NICJR was deeply involved in the development and sustaining of the successful Oakland Ceasefire, the strategy was mostly dismantled after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. But the City recommitted to the strategy at the beginning of 2024 with support from NICJR.

NICJR and CPSC conducted an [audit of Oakland Ceasefire](#) intended to help the City Administration identify challenges and opportunities and to course-correct. NICJR also completed an Oakland [Landscape Analysis](#) and [Oakland Cost of Gun Violence](#) study.

NICJR and CPSC are now providing intensive technical assistance to the Mayor’s Office, the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP), contracted CBOs, and the Oakland Police Department. NICJR conducted a series of Life Coaching and Violence Intervention trainings for DVP staff and six community-based organizations. Additionally, NICJR has provided more than \$1.3 million in grants to Oakland CBOs as well as families served by NICJR-run programs.

The City of Oakland’s re-implementation of the GVRs Ceasefire initiative [has been successful](#). As of December 1, 2024, Oakland achieved a 34% year-to-date decrease in homicides, in addition to a 34% decrease in nonfatal shootings.

Justice Reform

NICJR works to reform and improve justice systems across the country from Hawai'i to Maryland. Each community brings unique challenges and opportunities to increase safety while improving outcomes for system-impacted youth and adults.

Assessment of Hawai'i System of Care for Juvenile Justice-Involved Youth

Hawai'i has made remarkable strides in reimagining its juvenile justice system, with a more than 80% reduction in the number of youth incarcerated statewide from 2004 to 2024. However, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth are still over-represented in the system, and the state's geography presents challenges to providing local care for youth with complex needs.



As part of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [Community-Based Alternatives to Youth Incarceration initiative](#), NICJR is helping the State to further improve its youth justice system. Through partnership with Hawaii Office of Youth Services (OYS) and the University of Hawai'i, we're blending NICJR's expertise in positive youth development with local expertise in the unique culture and geography of Hawai'i, ensuring that the work centers youth and families and aligns with local needs and priorities.

NICJR is conducting a detailed assessment of community-based organizations, government agencies, and neighborhood assets, visiting six the state's islands where we held numerous focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders, including OYS-involved youth and families. NICJR team members visited grassroots organizations such as [Hale Kipa](#) and [Ke Kama Pono](#), and we met with Mayor Mitch Roth on the Big Island and Mayor Richard Bissen in Maui County.



In February 2025, NICJR will present on our findings and series of recommendations to the state legislature, community leaders, and government agencies. The final report will include a needs assessment that compares the current system to the expressed needs of youth, families, and other stakeholders and offers recommendations based on best practices in positive youth development.

Maryland Thrive Academy

Since 2023, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) has worked closely with NICJR and the Annie E. Casey Foundation on an ambitious project to develop and implement a statewide gun violence reduction strategy for system-involved youth in Maryland. The resulting Thrive Academy is a data-informed youth development and violence intervention program that provides intensive community-based services to youth under DJS supervision who are at very high risk of being involved in gun violence.

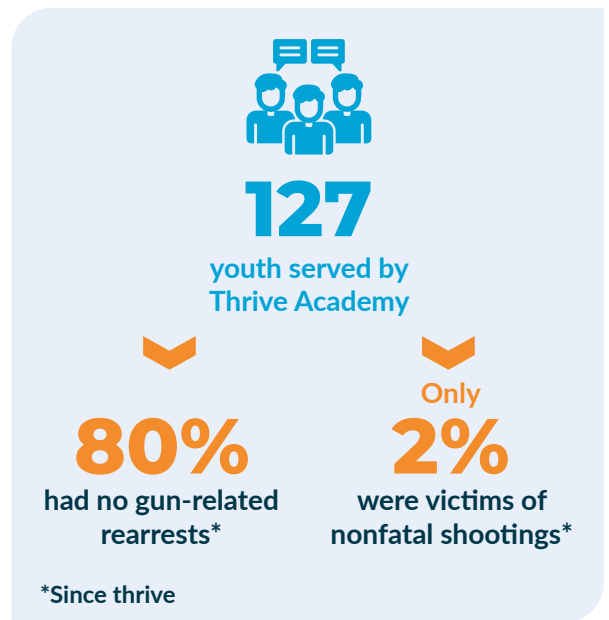
NICJR began this work by conducting a comprehensive assessment of youth involved in gun violence throughout the state and of all youth known to DJS who were shooting victims or suspects in the past three to five years. We also undertook a detailed case file review of 44 youth involved in shootings in 2023 while under DJS supervision, to better understand life course factors that can impact shooting risk but are not apparent in justice system data alone.

DJS and NICJR used assessment findings to develop the screening process for enrolling youth in the Thrive Academy. NICJR also supported DJS in designing Thrive Academy protocols for referral of identified youth to intensive community-based services, ongoing coordination across all program partners, and data-driven measurement of program progress and outcomes. NICJR also conducted Life Coaching training for three CBOs providing services for Thrive youth.

The Thrive Academy is now operating in Baltimore City and County, Anne Arundel County, and Prince George's County. After identifying a young person, DJS staff refer the youth to the CBO leading intervention services in the jurisdiction where they live. DJS and the partner CBOs meet weekly to coordinate efforts and to check on the progress of each youth.

The local CBO provides intensive life coaching to the youth and support for their family. A Life Coach who is from the same community and has similar lived experience as the youth builds a positive and trusting relationship with the young person and their family. Eventually, the Life Coach works with the youth and family to develop a Life Plan and connects them to services and supports. Thrive Academy youth also participate in "transformative travel" experiences that broaden their horizons, and they are eligible to receive a monthly financial stipend as incentive for achieving milestones.

The Thrive Academy has served 127 youth as of September 2024. Of those, four out of five youth have not had a gun-related rearrest, and only 2% have been victims of nonfatal shootings.



CHECK OUT NEWS COVERAGE OF THE THRIVE ACADEMY:

Thrive Academy making a difference

Maryland's 'Thrive Academy' recognized for its work to support youths impacted by gun violence

Life coaches mentor Maryland teens most at risk for gun violence with the message: "You're bigger than that."

Youth 'Thrive' in new Maryland violence reduction initiative

NICJR Giving Initiative

Since its fall 2022 launch, the NICJR Giving Initiative (NGI) has distributed more than \$3.8 million to 35 grassroots CBOs in nine cities and to families of youth and young adults served by programs operated by NICJR or by programs that receive our training and TA.

This support has been made possible by generous contributions from the Ballmer Group, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, Jacob and Valeria Langeloth Foundation, Microsoft Justice Initiative, Public Welfare Foundation, and Walmart Foundation as well as federal grants from the Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative RFP

In fall 2024, NICJR made our largest NGI grants to date, announcing the selection of five CBOs across the US as grantees through the [Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative \(CVIPI\)](#):



Communities
United for
Restorative Youth
Justice

Oakland, CA



End The Violence

Columbus, OH



InnerCity
Collaborative
Community
Development
Corporation

Washington, DC



Nurture Outreach
Services

Portland, OR



Operation Good
Foundation

Jackson, MS



Through funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, each organization will receive \$250,000 to implement or expand effective community violence intervention (CVI) strategies serving individuals at highest risk of gun violence involvement.

Along with funding, grantees will receive tailored training and technical assistance from NICJR and participate in a peer learning community virtually and in person over the next two years.

Organizational Growth

In 2024, NICJR continued to grow and strengthen our staff, suite of services, national presence, and organizational infrastructure. This growth included:



Adding an NOVPN Director and Director of Justice Reform to the Leadership Team



Establishing a Management Team consisting of six new people and project managers across the organization



Hiring 11 additional staff



Working with PCS Technology to establish an organizational shared drive and enhance NICJR's cyber security to ensure alignment with best practices and client requirements



Continuing to work with Jitasa, a nonprofit accounting firm, to further improve our financial infrastructure and processes



Having three staff complete the DOJ Grant Financial Management training



Formalizing annual performance reviews and developing a professional development budget for staff

Financials

Amounts that were awarded or released from restriction during FY24:

Funding amount by revenue type:

\$6.81M

Grants

\$2.33M

Contracts

\$309K

Subcontracts

\$60.6K

Donations

Funding by revenue source:

\$5.1M

Foundations and corporations

\$3.25M

Government

\$669K

Nonprofits

\$60.6K

Individual and corporate donors

A special thank you to these significant donors:

- ✓ Ballmer Group
- ✓ Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation
- ✓ Walmart Racial Justice Center
- ✓ Public Welfare Foundation
- ✓ Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative
- ✓ Jacob and Valeria Langeloth Foundation
- ✓ Joyce Foundation
- ✓ Ford Foundation
- ✓ East Bay Community Foundation
- ✓ The California Wellness Foundation
- ✓ Annie E. Casey Foundation

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