

# COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION (CVI) PROGRAMS



Violence in local communities erodes public health, causes economic disruptions, and contributes to lasting traumas. As communities around the country contend with a rise in gun violence and violent crime, community violence intervention (CVI) programs have emerged to deliver services that improve the physical, economic, and social conditions that drive violence. While there are a few well-known CVI programs throughout the country, in many communities they do not exist or are underfunded and under resourced. The federal government is uniquely positioned to support the adoption of CVI interventions that are community centered, equitable and inclusive, evidence-informed, and effective and sustainable.

## What is community violence intervention?

CVI is an approach that uses evidence-informed strategies to reduce violence through tailored community-centered initiatives. These multidisciplinary strategies engage with individuals and groups to prevent and disrupt cycles of violence and retaliation, and establish relationships with individuals and community

assets to deliver services that save lives, address trauma, provide opportunity, and improve the physical, social, and economic conditions that drive violence.

## How does CVI work?

CVI strategies take a holistic, public-health approach to violence by authentically engaging people and local community assets. These interventions focus on places where violence persists and include activities such as working with community partners to identify and transform blighted properties and land into green space that can be used as hubs for community life. Most commonly though, they engage people at the highest risk of being victims or perpetrators of violence and seek to interrupt the cycle of violence and retaliation by establishing relationships with individuals and community assets to deliver services. Trusted individuals and organizations with community credibility intervene in high-risk situations to de-escalate conflicts and connect people with mental health counseling, financial assistance, more stable housing, job and skills training, employment opportunities, and more.

CVI programs operate according to the following guiding principles:

- **Community-centered:** Approaches prioritize the needs of the community and are informed by and tailored to community residents and stakeholders.).
- **Equitable and inclusive:** Community members most affected and most disenfranchised are included in creating CVI solutions.
- **Evidence-informed:** Approaches should be built using evidence generated by multiple disciplines and a variety of methods.
- **Effective and sustainable:** Approaches must demonstrate measurable impacts on violence and community well-being, and be well-resourced over time.

## How does CVI work?

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There are currently various types of community-based programs being implemented across the country to reduce community violence:

- **Street Outreach:** Street outreach strategies employ credible messengers who make connections, build relationships and develop trust with individuals at highest risk of involvement in violence to reduce violence, prevent retaliatory violence, and promote peace in the community.
- **Focused Deterrence:** Individuals at highest risk of perpetrating violence are carefully selected to receive concentrated law enforcement attention and, simultaneously, offers of concentrated social services to address their needs.
- **Hospital-Based Violence Intervention:** Multidisciplinary programs that typically combine the efforts of medical staff with trusted community-based partners to provide safety planning, wraparound services, and trauma-informed care to violently injured people and to stop retaliation in the community.
- **Environmental Crime Prevention:** Engage community stakeholders to identify places of persist violent crime and identify opportunities to transform the physical environment, such as addressing blight, changing foot/traffic patterns and greening space to inhibit crime, violence and disorder.
- **Other programs:** Safe Passage Programs, Individual and Community Trauma Response, Youth Engagement and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).

## What has been LISC's involvement?

*LISC is a national non-profit housing and community development intermediary with offices in 38 different cities and a national rural network of 146 organizations.*

*For more information about CVI, please contact Nicole Barcliff at [nbarcliff@lisc.org](mailto:nbarcliff@lisc.org).*

- **DOJ Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative:** Worked across DOJ agencies and with DOJ leadership to establish a common definition for CVI and a [CVI checklist](#) with accompanying fact sheets; provided support to prepare CVI grantees for DOJ CVI solicitations.
- **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP):** Training and Technical Assistance Provider for [Comprehensive School-Based Approach to Youth Violence and Victimization](#); hosted a webinar – [Introduction to School-Based CVI Partnerships](#) – to introduce schools and community based partners to violence prevention and engagement approaches.
- **Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA):** Collaborated with CVI experts to increase CVI learning; Participant in webinar series on [Community Violence Strategies \(CVI\) Implementation](#); Training and Technical Assistance Provider for the [Building Lasting Capacity for Violent Crime Reduction in Rural Communities Program](#).
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) STRIVE Action Council:** Leadership team member of the STRIVE Action Council. Webinar series participant focused on the role that place plays in youth health and safety.
- **Everytown for Gun Safety:** One of four subject matter experts to support the Everytown Community Training Institute.
- **Executive Office for US Attorneys (EOUSA):** Developed and presented webinar series for the EOUSA and Project Safe Neighborhood (PSN) sites on ways that CVI strategies can support their violence reduction efforts.
- **My City at Peace:** Co-sponsored Summer Season of Peace Conference, bringing together national experts, faith leaders, law enforcement, CVI leaders and concerned community members to discuss CVI Resources for community-based organizations and practitioners.

## What can Congress do?

- We encourage Congress to robustly fund CVI strategies at:
- **\$200 million** for the Office of Justice Programs' (OJP's) Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) in the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill; and
- **\$250 million** for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Community and Youth Violence Prevention program to fund a new Community Violence Intervention Initiative in the Labor, Health and Human Services and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.