



SPECIAL REPORT

MAYORS WORK TO STOP
CRIME AND GUN VIOLENCE

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INTRODUCTION

As crime and gun violence continue to rattle the country, DMA is releasing a Special Report highlighting the important work of Democratic Mayors, the Biden-Harris Administration, and other partners to stop crime and gun violence and make communities safer. In the wake of continued violence, many claim that nothing is being done, but that could not be further from the truth.

Democratic Mayors and the cities they lead are taking strong actions to stop crime and gun violence.

This report illustrates the many ways Democratic Mayors and cities are taking crime seriously - holding people who commit violent crimes accountable, implementing proven violence prevention programs and strategies to stop crime before it happens, and fighting for vital gun safety reforms that will effectively stop the flow of guns into our cities.

As critical partners, the Biden-Harris Administration has taken bold actions to reduce gun violence through policy, legislation, and Executive Order and continues to strongly advocate for more action to be taken. And key national partners have created valuable resources to help guide cities' efforts, including communications.

The Democratic Mayors Association is proud to share these examples and applauds the ongoing work of Mayors, the Administration, and partners nationwide in addressing crime and gun violence.

The hard work continues, and we know with Mayors leading the charge, sustained change can happen. We hope this Special Report provides a road map for how to approach this intractable problem.

The Democratic Mayors Team

BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE

Since taking office, President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have prioritized and done everything within their power to reduce gun violence by enacting a series of executive orders and a key piece of legislation, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

In May, President Biden also announced ongoing actions his Cabinet has or will take regarding the implementation of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, including keeping guns out of dangerous hands, improving school safety, improving access to mental health care, and expanding community violence interventions.

Read more [here](#).

In March, President Biden announced an Executive Order that would help keep guns out of dangerous hands, hold the gun industry more accountable and initiate additional actions to make cities safer and support communities impacted by gun violence.

Specifically, the Executive Order does the following:

- Increase the number of background checks by ensuring that all background checks required by law are conducted before firearm purchases, moving the U.S. as close to universal background checks as possible without additional legislation.
- Improve public awareness and increase appropriate use of extreme risk protection (“red flag”) orders and safe storage of firearms.
- Address the loss or theft of firearms during shipping.
- Provide the public and policymakers with more information regarding federally licensed firearms dealers who are violating the law.
- Use the Department of Defense’s acquisition of firearms to further firearm and public safety practices.
- Help catch shooters by accelerating federal law enforcement’s reporting of ballistics data.
- Improve federal support for gun violence survivors, victims and survivors’ families, first responders to gun violence, and communities affected by gun violence.
- Advance congressional efforts to prevent the proliferation of firearms undetectable by metal detectors.

Read more [here](#).



MAYOR LEVAR STONEY RICHMOND, VA

Establishing Richmond's first ever Positive Youth Development Fund

Mayor Stoney recognizes that in order to truly curb crime and gun violence in the city of Richmond, stakeholders must take a comprehensive approach addressing both prevention and intervention techniques. To provide targeted, age-appropriate, and culturally relevant support to youth in Richmond, Mayor Stoney created Richmond's first-ever **Positive Youth Development Fund** to help reduce crime and gun violence among Richmond's youngest residents. The PYD Fund supports citywide programming that offers prevention activities for youth ages 12-19 and their families; professional development opportunities for community-based organizations administering citywide programs; and the coordination of services and fiscal management for all parties involved. So far, the PYD Fund has served 426 Richmond youth through summer programming; of the youth participants involved in PYD programming, 99% of those surveyed said there was an adult in the summer program that they listened to and respected and 95% shared the summer programs helped them build better relationships with friends. This prevention effort provides youth with positive, safe, and engaging opportunities during their out-of-school time and encourages healthy mentorship relationships with adults they can look up to.

The Summer Initiative

In 2022, in partnership, the City of Richmond and the Richmond Police Department initiated a proactive plan to suppress gun violence, June through September. Their plan used crime data to define micro hotspots where crime occurs, increasing visibility and patrol in these areas. During the initiative, the city saw a 54% reduction in homicides citywide and a 27% reduction in the focus areas known for violent crime. The Summer Initiative was so successful that it has continued in 2023.



MAYOR KATE GALLEGO PHOENIX, AZ

The city of Phoenix launched a major **crime reduction plan**, with a focus that includes the most violent offenders and prohibited possessors. In the first week of the plan, the department and its partners conducted a targeted enforcement operation that resulted in:

- More than 580 arrests / 420+ for felonies
- Nearly 520,000 fentanyl pills off the streets
- More than 5 pounds of methamphetamine
- Seized more than 40 weapons all of which were taken from prohibited possessors.

Read more about the plan [here](#).



MAYOR SATYA RHODES-CONWAY MADISON, WI

The City of Madison is taking a comprehensive approach to reducing violence in its community. It is using a **public health lens** and its efforts are led by or in partnership with Public Health Madison Dane County (PHMDC). PHMDC has led on crime and violence prevention by funding organizations focused on this work including the Dane County District Attorney's Office – Crime Response Program which provided Bluetooth panic buttons on phones of victims of violent crimes who remain at risk for further/escalating violence, as well as the African Center for Community Development, Inc. program aimed at reducing domestic violence among African Immigrant communities in the City of Madison and Dane County by partnering with DV service providers for training and by providing direct service through partnerships with Madison Black Nurses.

Also, as part of a broader strategy to mitigate conditions that contribute to youth violence, the City for the second summer in a row is investing \$420,000 of federal funding it received through the State and Local Recovery Funds component of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) into **youth violence prevention-focused summer programming**. The target population is youth and young adults ages 14- 26 who previously have been, currently are, or at-risk of being involved with the juvenile justice system. In its first year, all three supported programs exceeded participant goals with a focus on future planning, volunteer work, employment and skill development including financial skills.

The Madison police department has taken on **stratified policing** with a focus on shots fired which they have successfully decreased by 15%; stolen autos successfully decreased 26% from the 3 year average; and crime reduction in the downtown entertainment district, taking guns from vehicles and individuals by targeting well known problem areas and being strategic about officer visibility.

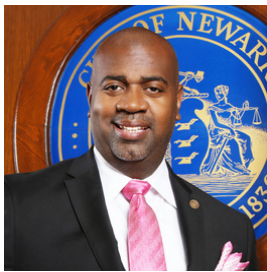
Further MPD is working with local, state and federal partners as part of the **Gun Violence Reduction Initiative (GVRI) and Operation Safe Streets programs**, both designed to reduce firearm violence and remove illegal firearms from the streets. MPD is also hosting Community education forums related to firearms, specifically around leaving firearms in vehicles being a target for theft later to be used in crimes. Additionally, MPD is working in coordination with Public Health Madison Dane County – the entity leading the violence prevention coalition and roadmap to reducing violence – on the **Isthmus Safety Initiative** and the **Mayor's Violence Prevention team**.



MAYOR JUSTIN M. BIBB CLEVELAND, OH

Mayor Bibb recently announced a comprehensive plan for additional investments in public safety. The **Raising Investment in Safety for Everyone (RISE) Initiative** is a portfolio of multiple strategic investments, partnerships, enforcement efforts, and technology enhancements that include:

- Established a \$10M Violence Prevention Endowment Fund through ARPA.
- Expansion of Violent Reduction Task Force targeting known hot spots
- Investments in our police department through increased pay and recruitment and retention incentives
- Increased partnerships with regional stakeholders and federal agencies.
- Deploying technology such as the Real Time Crime Center, increased hiring of crime analysts, and camera monitoring software.



MAYOR RAS J. BARAKA NEWARK, NJ

Mayor Ras J. Baraka is taking several approaches to decreasing violence and improve public safety in Newark. Following the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the national outcry for justice, he established a **new city department, the Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery (OVPTTR)**, and its division, the **Brick City Peace Collective (BCPC)**, to effectively address violence and improve community and police relations in the city. OVPTTR/BCPC staff includes a multi-disciplinary team that consists of licensed clinical social workers who are located at each of the Newark Police Department precincts to provide counseling and connection to services to residents in need, community outreach workers, credible messengers, public administration, and public policy personnel. Public safety efforts through the department include emergency responses to shootings, high-risk interventions, employment opportunities, community outreach events, and the convening of partners in the city's public safety ecosystem to strategize and collaborate on anti-violence initiatives.

This year's efforts include granting \$12 million of American Rescue Plan Act funding to community organizations to further support anti-violence work such as youth mentoring programs, trauma recovery services, and safe passage initiatives; more funding will soon be allocated to address domestic violence and further high-risk intervention efforts. Additional efforts include hiring over 140 at-risk and high-risk youth and adults to gain work experience in City departments and local small businesses through the Summer Safe Academy, hosting weekly community events such as Cypher on the Corners to highlight local music artists, outdoor water park, and skating events, where staff members share information on social/mental health services. Moreover, peacekeepers in each of the City's wards were hired as high-risk interventionists through the **One Hood program** to deter and intercept violence before it occurs on the ground.

Mayor Baraka's strategies to improve public safety efforts have resulted in reducing homicides by 55 percent since his first term, and by 35 percent in the last year, and bringing homicides to a 60-year low. In recognition of this accomplishment, Former President Barack Obama named Newark as one of four cities nationwide to be designated as a My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Model Community. Read more [here](#).



MAYOR LUKE BRONIN HARTFORD, CT

Mayor Bronin and the City of Hartford have focused both on prevention and accountability. To help break cycles of violence, Mayor Bronin's team established a **city-wide hospital-based violence intervention program** to help victims of violence heal both emotionally and physically, and to connect them to long-term treatment and support; expanded partnerships with community violence interrupters, like Hartford's **COMPASS Peacebuilders**; and has invested in new individualized intervention efforts to support both adults and young people most at risk of involvement in violence. In addition, **Hartford's Re-entry Welcome Center** has served more than 1,000 formerly incarcerated Hartford residents get connected to housing, employment, and mental and behavioral health services.

At the same time, the city has continued to focus on strengthening law enforcement's ability to close cases and bring closure to the community in the wake of violence. Supported in part by a DOJ grant for Smart Policing, the Hartford Police created a **non-fatal shooting team**, which dedicated additional detective resources to non-fatal shootings and focused on building trust and relationships with victims of violence. As a result of that work, the HPD more than tripled the arrest rate for non-fatal shootings in recent years, while at the same time taking a record number of illegal guns off the street. In addition, Mayor Bronin led a statewide coalition of mayors who successfully advocated for a change in state law that would increase accountability for repeat, serious firearm offenders responsible for so much of the violence in Hartford and other communities.



MAYOR LATOYA CANTRELL NEW ORLEANS, LA

Mayor LaToya Cantrell has tasked her team to be aggressive, holistic, and have a multi-agency approach to public safety, treating it as a matter of public health. In 2023, the Cantrell administration spearheaded the approval of an aggressive \$32.5 million plan of action to bring about generational investments toward public safety, mainly focusing on recruitment and retention. This included providing signing and retention incentives to join the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD).

Using preliminary data from NOPD through July 29, comparing data from 2023 to 2022, efforts continue to show progress. Total crimes against persons are down 19%

- Murders are down 21%
- Armed robbery is down 31%
- Non-fatal shooting incidents are down 15% and
- Non-fatal shooting victims are down 17%
- Carjackings are down 44%

To achieve some of these trends, NOPD partnered with the Louisiana State Police to run **Operation Golden Eagle 3.0** from May 22, 2023, to the end of July. Enforcement efforts were concentrated in the 5th and 7th Police Districts. During this time, they seized 36 weapons, made 49 felony arrests and 18 narcotics arrests. As of July 29, NOPD has confiscated 1,748 guns so far this year, compared to only 1,511 at this time last year, which is a 15.6% increase.

Homicide is the leading cause of death of children in New Orleans, and Louisiana has the highest rate of injuries and deaths from unintentional shootings by children. The New Orleans Health Department (NOHD) has received \$100,000 in additional funding to start **a campaign to distribute free cable gun locks.**

Additionally, NOHD launched the New Orleans Mobile Crisis Intervention Unit (MCIU), first-of-its-kind initiative integrated into the OPCD 9-1-1 system and operating as the fourth arm of the City's first responder system to provide a rapid response to behavioral health calls where weapons or violence are not involved. This allows NOPD officers some relief in attending to calls for service. From June to July, MCIU handled 334 total calls (5.9 calls per day average).



MAYOR ANDRE DICKENS ATLANTA, GA

Atlanta **Mayor Andre Dickens** has a balanced, whole-of-government approach to public safety — **One Safe City**. The plan addresses the root causes of crime while also tackling gangs, guns and drugs. One of the most recent success stories—for the second summer in a row — is **Operation Heat Wave**. The Atlanta Police Department’s operation spans 16 weeks joining local, state and federal law enforcement partners to target offenders in the most violent prone areas in metro Atlanta. As of the end of July, the operation resulted in 43 arrests, 29 guns recovered, 22 gang members arrested, and 7 gang charges.

Mayor Dickens also hosted the second year of his **Midnight Basketball series**. The basketball seasons engage young people ages 18 to 25 from 7 p.m. to midnight at recreation centers in communities with higher percentages of gang activity. Through healthy competition, participants not only learn de-escalation skills, but also have access to services to obtain a GED, find a career path, clear a failure to appear and even get a free haircut. Statistics showed overall crime was reduced in the areas during Midnight Basketball games.



MAYOR CAVALIER JOHNSON MILWAUKEE, WI

In Milwaukee, multi-pronged efforts to reduce violence are producing positive results. When compared to the previous year, homicides are down by about 25% so far in 2023.

Mayor Cavalier Johnson's approach is guided by his personal experience growing up in some of Milwaukee's most challenged neighborhoods. He has augmented traditional law enforcement with outreach and engagement targeted to younger residents. **Milwaukee's Office of Violence Prevention** works in neighborhoods throughout the city to defuse impending problems. That office also works collectively with existing community groups to offer positive alternatives and to strengthen neighborhoods.

Significantly, Milwaukee has refocused on the **root causes of crime and violence**. An example of that is **Camp Rise**, a program offering positive direction to young people between the ages of 10 and 13. Founded in 2022, Camp Rise has introduced hundreds of young people to opportunities and alternatives in a summer program specifically tailored to children who are vulnerable to negative influences. A unique aspect of Camp Rise is the stipends paid to those who attend. Participants learn that showing up and participating can be financially rewarding.



MAYOR VAN JOHNSON SAVANNAH, GA

Through a whole person and a **whole of community approach** that views public safety as a community-wide opportunity instead of a policing problem. The City of Savannah through aggressive measures to recruit qualified people to serve as police officers, a new **Office of Safety of Engagement (ONSE)**, a new **Behavioral Health Unit (BHU)**, its enlistment of credible **community messengers**, and its **engagement of its faith community**, Savannah has experienced a significant decrease in violent crime. The City has also hired a Deputy Savannah Attorney designated as an Assistant United States Attorney to pursue federal charges for applicable violent crimes specifically.

Read more about the city of Savannah's efforts below:

- [The Tide: Drastic decline in Savannah murder statistics](#)
- [GPB: Drastic decline in Savannah murder statistics](#)
- [WSAV: Savannah homicides down by 76% compared to last year, despite similar number of shootings](#)
- [WJCI: Savannah homicides plummet by 75 percent](#)
- [WTOC: Savannah Police seeing fewer homicides, assaults this year](#)



MAYOR TISHAURA O. JONES ST. LOUIS, MO

Mayor Tishaura O. Jones is implementing a **holistic approach to public safety** to make neighborhoods safer, addressing root causes of crime in her community while holding those who do commit crime accountable. With Missouri's gun laws some of the weakest in the nation, St. Louis is deploying every tool in its toolbox to keep families safe. Through **deterrence, intervention, and prevention work**, the City of St. Louis bucked rising crime trends, experiencing a 25 percent drop in homicides from 2020 to 2021. In 2022, Mayor Jones opened the city's **first Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)**, which marshals resources across City government to coordinate all the initiatives at its disposal to address crime in neighborhoods and prevent gun violence.

Using American Rescue Plan funds, OVP has expanded community violence intervention work to more neighborhoods in St. Louis. As they closed out July, person crime in the city is at its lowest point in a five-year span, and the city's homicide rate is 10 percent below the previous year. While there is far more work to do, Mayor Jones is reimagining public safety and deploying innovative new solutions to address long-standing problems.



MAYOR INDYA KINCANNON KNOXVILLE, TN

Public safety is **Mayor Kincannon's** top priority and she believes in a **multi-faceted approach** to help make neighborhoods safer. "Public safety is not just the job of police officers. Residents truly establish social norms and expectations, they can be eyes on the street, and intervene when something is awry, before it escalates to violence."

As a result, Mayor Kincannon created a **new cabinet-level position** of Director of Community Safety and Empowerment to develop strategies and solutions around violence interruption. As part of that work, the City has partnered with Thomas Abt and the Violence Reduction Center at the University of Maryland. In addition, working with Chief of Police Paul Noel, the City is implementing a **co-responder model that partners licensed mental health professionals with officers** to intercede in challenging situations. These efforts are augmented through increased police accountability with body-worn cameras and **Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) training**, a peer intervention program to prevent mistakes and misconduct. Significant increases in compensation and strategic partnerships have also been implemented to recruit and retain expertise within the police department.



MAYOR SHERMAN LEA ROANOKE, VA

Mayor Sherman Lea and the City of Roanoke have implemented a **comprehensive Gun Violence Framework**. The framework is a multifaceted approach to combating gun violence funded by grants from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and the American Rescue Plan Act. The approach consists of the Roanoke City Police Department (RPD), Rapid Engagement of Support in the Result of Trauma Team (RESET), Gun Violence Prevention Commission (GVPC), a council-appointed board, Youth and Gang Violence Prevention Unit, Community Partners, and the Star City Safe, Whole of Government Response to Gun Violence. All volunteers, officers, and city staff involved in these efforts work collaboratively to prevent, intervene, and suppress gun violence. The Star City Safe, Whole of Government Response to Gun Violence, has presented operational and administrative problems, as city policies conflict with barrier crimes and prior offenders working with youth.

The RPD is **using research and data to identify and employ multiple offender-based strategies**. They are partnering with federal task forces and Virginia State Police, as well as utilizing shared technologies with regional law enforcement for real-time, accurate information sharing. Further, RPD is facilitating community partnerships to better engage and build relationships with city residents. The RESET Team is a volunteer team, led by the RPD, which provides prevention and intervention services through community outreach in neighborhoods after traumatic events. The GVPC studies the issue of gun violence with the City of Roanoke and recommends strategies for prevention, intervention, and response to reduce gun violence within the City and address its effects. The GVPC has spearheaded multiple initiatives including several gun buyback events, supported evidence-based programs with community organizations for evidence-based programs, and distributed over 8,000 free gun locks.

The Youth and Gang Violence Prevention Unit is an intervention team, who works one-on-one with youth in the criminal justice system by providing intensive case management, along with mentoring and mitigation programs. The Star City Safe, Whole of Government Response to Gun Violence is a strategic initiative, offering a new and innovative response in the City of Roanoke that encompasses city departments, such as Human Resources, Parks and Recreation, and Libraries, who provide prevention programs, such as a teen apprenticeship job program and mentorship. Mayor Sherman Lea states, "All these efforts and programs are part of the wide-ranging framework for addressing and responding to the increase of gun violence in the City of Roanoke. The framework's focus on prevention, intervention, and response is critical to address current and future violent acts. However, additional support from the federal and state government on gun control and enforcement will aid the City of Roanoke in greater success".

Read more [here](#).



MAYOR QUINTON LUCAS KANSAS CITY, MO

Mayor Quinton Lucas takes a bold approach to reducing violent crime, holding gun manufacturers accountable in court, enacting creative local legislation in the face of preemption, and supporting grassroots organization with municipal funding. Under Mayor Lucas' leadership, Kansas City became the first municipality in more than a decade to sue a gun manufacturer, resulting in the ATF revoking the company's license to manufacture.

Although state preemption hampers Kansas City's ability to enact local gun control measures, Mayor Lucas' tenacious advocacy for common sense gun reform, at all levels of government, has not faltered. Mayor Lucas led the passage of **local ordinances banning the possession of firearms by minors** and domestic abusers. He introduced **legislation** to prohibit the transfer of bullets to minors and outlaw the possession of a semi-automatic weapon modified into a fully automatic weapon using a switch or a chip. Mayor Lucas also **championed and expanded the capacity of community violence intervention organizations and programs**, investing \$30 million into Kansas City's violence prevention landscape. The funding will be used to pay stipends to returning residents, restorative summer programming for youth, fostering strong neighborhood connection, and more.



MAYOR HEIDI LUEB TIGARD, OR

Tigard Downtown Focused Patrol Officer

Like many communities across the country Tigard is facing an ever-evolving challenge between its unhoused community, businesses and residents in our community. In concert with its Police Chief, it identified an officer to be specifically assigned to its downtown core and work directly on these issues. The officer immediately went to work connecting with businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, its downtown business association and other stakeholders to make sure we understood the issues from their viewpoint.

They worked with local service providers to connect those in need to appropriate assistance. Additionally, the officer was now also able to address some of the other livability and blight issues in our downtown core including the arrest of some local vandals responsible for over 40 different acts of vandalism in and around the downtown area. This approach to collaborative policing has created a new sense of ownership for those who live and work in the downtown core. The assignment of even one officer has made a notable impact on livability and safety in the downtown core.

Tigard Police Department Commercial Crimes Unit

A year ago, the police department identified a gap in service being provided to Tigard's business community. When crimes were reported, if the crime couldn't be resolved by the end of the officer's shift, it wouldn't be investigated. A plan was created to bridge this gap by providing enhanced police services to the business community.

The City used an incremental increase in business license fees to pay for officers to focus on cases where businesses were the victims of crime. The business community was in full support of this and remains extremely supportive of the unit and their work. This is the only police unit like this in Oregon. Today this unit has grown to include a sergeant and three detectives who work a wide range of cases from simple employee thefts all the way to interstate, federal level, Organized Retail Crime (ORC) investigations.

In addition to the investigative work, the team provides training on active threat, target hardening, personal safety, and much more to members of our business community. This relationship between the business community and the police department has built good will and made the community safer.



MAYOR CHOKWE ANTAR LUMUMBA JACKSON, MS

In Jackson, **Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba** is continuing **comprehensive efforts** to address public safety in both the short and long term. The Mayor understands the need for a robust, professional police force that is committed to the safety and human dignity of its residents. He also realizes the City cannot simply police its way out of violent crime. He is committed to an approach that is more **preventative, one that addresses the root causes of violent crime before it occurs.**

Under his leadership, the City of Jackson has increased salaries for its officers, brought in body cameras and a whole fleet of patrol cars, and opened the city's **first-ever Real-Time Command Center**. He has also secured funding from the National League of Cities and Wells Fargo Foundation to open an **Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery**, the first of its kind in the Capital City and state of Mississippi. This gives the City the ability to approach public safety in a preventative way by addressing the causes and trauma of gun violence while also normalizing relationships in the community.

Dramatic change will not occur overnight, but the City of Jackson has begun to see a significant decrease in violent crime, and it follows these proactive and humane efforts to approach public safety with all voices at the table.



MAYOR VI LYLES CHARLOTTE, NC

As the Mayor of Charlotte, **Vi Lyles** is working in collaboration with the City Council and city staff on several initiatives aimed at stopping crime and gun violence in the city. One of their top priorities is the implementation of the **Safety and Accountability for Everyone (SAFE)** Charlotte plan, which was adopted by City Council in October 2020 to reimagine a safer Charlotte. As part of this plan, they launched the **Community Assistance: Respond, Engage, Support (CARES) Team** in 2023. This civilian-led response unit consists of licensed clinicians being deployed to certain 911 calls for service for low-risk mental health, substance abuse and homelessness issues.

Another key initiative under the SAFE Charlotte plan is the **Alternatives to Violence** effort. This public health model focuses on detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying and treating individuals at high risk of involvement in violence, and changing social norms that exacerbate violence in the community. The program is currently being evaluated by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to measure its effectiveness in the Beatties Ford Road/ Rozzelles Ferry Road Corridor. Additionally, they partnered with the United Way of Central Carolinas to administer city grants through the SAFE Charlotte Grant Program, supporting community-based organizations in promoting safe communities and addressing violence. Charlotte is also collaborating with Atrium Health's Hospital Violence Intervention Program (HVIP), which offers comprehensive wraparound care to predominately support victims of youth violence, addressing healthcare access, food security, workforce development and housing stability.

By investing in these community-based violence prevention programs and adopting a public health approach, the City of Charlotte is committed to building a safer and more equitable community for all residents. For more in-depth information on these initiatives and its progress, please visit the City's [website](#).



MAYOR DANIEL J. MAHONEY JACKSON, MI

In Jackson, Michigan **Mayor Mahoney** meets once per month with a group of law enforcement officials including the local police department, sheriff's office, officers from surrounding townships, state police and our prosecutor along with a group of community leaders. This group hosted **two Summits to Reduce Violence** and in 2021, the City of Jackson entered into a contract with Group Violence Intervention (GVI). The **City of Jackson Group Violence Intervention** (also called GVI) unites community leaders around a common goal: to stop gun violence and keep Jackson's highest risk citizens alive and out of prison.

GVI is a partnership among community leaders from law enforcement, government, education, civil service, health-care and faith-based agencies. Based on a proven model developed by David M. Kennedy, director of the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, GVI advocates direct, sustained engagement with street groups that cause the majority of Jackson's gun violence. The strategy empowers community members to set clear moral standards against violence in their communities and reclaim a voice in the way they want to live. It coordinates the efforts of local, state and federal law enforcement to focus crime prevention efforts on the groups most associated with gun violence. GVI also draws on the expertise of social service providers to offer group members a path away from violence.

The impact of these efforts has led to a reduction in gun homicides from 7 in 2021 to 4 in 2022 a 57% reduction. Also, total gunshot victims are down from 31 in 2021 to 14 in 2022, a 45% reduction and the City is committed to reducing those numbers even further in the coming years.



MAYOR ANDY SCHOR LANSING, MI

Ending Gun Violence & Strengthening Our Community

Imagine if every person had someone they could truly trust. Someone who understands what they're going through, a person to step in when tensions are rising to potentially devastating and deadly levels. Imagine providing proof there is an "other side" of the desperate survival situations many people face.

In response to increasing firearm violence in Lansing, Michigan, the Michigan Public Health Initiative has partnered with Advance Peace and the Ingham County Health Department to establish an **Advance Peace Peacemaker Fellowship**. The approach uses the evidence-based practices of street outreach, mentoring, intensive case management, life skills training, cognitive behavioral therapy, and subsidized employment to engage those at the center of gun violence.

The Advance Peace Lansing Peacemaker Fellowship is committed to ending gun violence and promoting neighborhood safety and social cohesion by investing in the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals at the center of gun violence. Our goal is to reduce gun-related violence by 40% in Lansing, Michigan over the next three years.

Lansing Police Department Social Work Unit

When people are going through a mental health crisis, they call 911, which sometimes doesn't help. The Lansing Police Department is the first department in the state of Michigan to staff a **Social Work Unit** within its Department. The Police Social Worker functions as a bridge between the Police and the City's many agencies who work to serve the homeless, mentally ill, and addicted citizens.

Through a federal grant, the Lansing police department is implementing a new program initiative **Lansing Crisis Assessment Team** to better help serve mental health crises in collaboration with social workers and police officers.

Police social workers will be teamed up with crisis-intervention-trained officers and the Lansing fire department and they will respond to crisis calls. This can be anything ranging from people experiencing mental health issues to someone dealing with homelessness.

LCATs will work with mental health and social welfare services to get people the right care as opposed to putting them in the criminal justice system.



MAYOR CAROLINE SIMMONS HARTFORD, CT

The City of Stamford is consistently ranked one of the safest cities in New England and this is due in part because of the collaboration between City officials and the Department of Public Safety, Health, and Welfare, the Stamford Police Department, and the city's nonprofit and social service providers.

Within the Stamford Police Department, there is an emphasis on community policing and community-based violence prevention programs. Within the last year, the City of Stamford, in partnership with the Stamford Police Department and Stamford Police Association, re-launched the **Stamford Police Activities League** at the Chester Addison Community Center. The Center provides sports, recreation, and educational programming for youth and is also the location for the first library branch to open in over 20 years on Stamford's West Side.

Community policing and community-based violence prevention programs are cornerstones of the Stamford Police Department's efforts to reduce and prevent crime in our City. Stamford Police Community Outreach Officers have a presence at many community events, especially those focused on health and wellbeing and education. The Department's **Crime and Gun Stoppers Program** has expanded and helped to get illegal guns off our streets. The Department has also partnered with **Liberation Programs**, an organizing providing treatment and prevention services for substance use and mental health disorders, on deflection efforts. These efforts prioritize first responders to connect individuals experiencing mental health and substance use challenges to community-based treatments, as an alternative to arrests.

The City continues to seek state and federal funding to support these initiatives and in December 2021, secured a three-year \$550,000 federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to integrate another social worker within the Police Department to help respond to non-criminal related calls and expand outreach and training.

Recognizing that the pandemic has exacerbated the mental health challenges faced by many in our community, Mayor Simmons, in partnership with over a dozen nonprofit mental health and human service providers, created the **Stamford Youth Mental Health Alliance**. The YMHA is a network of nonprofit organizations, as well as the Police Department and the Stamford Public Schools, who are committed to identifying best practices and trauma-informed strategies that will facilitate a comprehensive system of intervention and support for our community's youth.



MAYOR HARVEY WARD GAINESVILLE, FL

Mayor Harvey L. Ward Jr. recognized the crucial importance of stemming gun violence in his first State of the City address. “When I was sworn in as Mayor, I was granted 1,463 days in office to make the Gainesville community better. Reducing gun-related crime is at the top of the list of urgent priorities. James Baldwin wrote, ‘Neither love nor terror makes one blind. Indifference makes one blind.’ While I am Mayor, we will not be indifferent to gun violence.”

On July 20, 2023, the Gainesville City Commission passed a **resolution recognizing gun violence as a public health crisis**. This is just one of the initiatives City leaders are implementing to locally reverse this nationwide trend. With the help of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, the Gainesville Police Department (GPD) has held gun buy-back events, taking an initial haul of 75 weapons off the street while providing \$13,200 in gift cards. GPD also has purchased forensic equipment to process crime scene evidence and more quickly solve violent crimes. To provide opportunities for young people, Gainesville joined eight other U.S. cities in the **One Nation One Project (ONOP)** initiative steered by the National League of Cities. Gainesville chose to use the power of arts and culture to address issues surrounding youth violence. Since its inception, Gainesville’s ONOP program has provided grants of up to \$5,000 to 20 projects that support youth engagement in the arts and promote wellbeing through the reduction of youth gun violence.

To further build upon these efforts, Mayor Ward and his colleagues on the City Commission launched a **two-day Gun Violence Prevention Summit**. With the theme “Choose Peace: Gun Violence Must Cease,” the summit on August 6-7, 2023 operates through two lenses. The “Community Day” centers on youth with the aim of examining the role of music and culture in the choices young people make. The “Policy Day” features a workshop for elected officials, government leaders, professionals in education, healthcare, law enforcement and the justice system, and the business community. These two days garnered substantial funding and collaborative support from local partners, and more than 400 participants registered to attend.



MAYOR COREY WOODS TEMPE, AZ

The Tempe Police Department initiated a **Violent Crime Reduction (VCR)** plan that began at the end of July 2023. The purpose of this plan is the suppression/deterrence of violent crime and serious injury motor vehicle collisions to enhance response to the city's Vision Zero initiative. Both will be accomplished through community partnerships, education, intelligence gathering, intelligence-led enforcement, and high visibility patrols. Additionally, investigatory resources, including personnel and equipment, will be deployed to the area to provide real-time intelligence, surveillance, and high visibility deterrence. The goal is to improve community safety and feeling of safety through lawful proactive policing based on consent, reasonable suspicion, and probable cause.

Intelligence, crime data, and vehicle collision data from January 2023 to July 2023 indicated an operational area needing focused deterrence and crime suppression. Crime data will be analyzed over the next three to six months to determine our operational strategies' short-term and long-term effectiveness. Rather than basing deployment and operational approaches on assumptions, theory, or potential biases, the Tempe Police Department uses **Evidence Based-Policing (EBP)** strategy and data to drive policy decisions. The accurate, complete, and timely data collection and analysis is critical to the Police Department's strategy. In addition to data collection and analysis, strategic and tactical analysis efforts will be vital to understanding the linkages between activity, specific events, and potential persons or groups involved in criminal activity. Ideally, the application of EBP practices strategically places resources where they are needed to prevent crime, rather than placing resources in multiple locations expecting effective progress.

DMA PARTNER RESOURCES

Center for American Progress Action Fund: Recommendations for Successful Democratic Messaging on Crime

Throughout the spring and summer of 2022, CAP Action conducted multiple rounds of polling and qualitative research to explore voters' attitudes toward crime. This guide aims to provide Democrats with clear guidance on how to better communicate on crime and outlines the best messaging frame from research, as well as communications strategies for reducing Democrats' disadvantages on the issues.

Center for American Progress: The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, 1 Year Later

In celebration of the one-year anniversary of the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, CAP released a new report highlighting how this law has closed gun law loopholes and implemented new gun violence prevention policies, as well as made significant investments in school and community safety that are saving lives. The report includes recommendations for how states and localities are passing and implementing extreme risk protection order (ERPO) laws, leveraging funding opportunities to support the safety and well-being of young people, and expanding access to mental health services.

UnitedOnGuns - Mass Shooting Preparedness & Response: Resources For Mayors, City Managers, and Locally Elected Officials

Mass shootings are increasing across the nation. Unfortunately, no community – large or small, urban or rural, conservative or progressive – is immune. The unsettling fact is that a mass shooting could happen in your community at any time. As Mayor, you need to prepare for the next one. The following guide includes The Mass Shooting Protocol and Playbook: Resources for Elected Officials, A Mayors Role: Responding to a Mass Shooting, and Take Action Now: How to Prepare for a Mass Shooting.

DMA PARTNER RESOURCES

Everytown for Gun Safety - Gun Violence Talking Points

Everytown for Gun Safety has provided a messaging framework about how to discuss gun violence in America, gun violence and crime trends, and why gun safety laws work. The messaging also includes key polling data from Johns Hopkins University, CNN, and Fox News.

Vera Action - Mayors Can Lead the Way on Safety, Accountability, and Justice: Messaging Guidance for Talking About Crime

Too often, politicians and pundits pit safety, accountability, and justice against each other; the conventional wisdom is that you can have one but not all three. But that conventional wisdom is wrong. New research from Vera Action finds that communities want elected leaders to reject the scare tactics that many use to fearmonger about crime and to have instead an honest conversation about solutions that prevent crime in the first place. Vera Action conducted more than five national public opinion research rounds, including right after the 2022 midterms and exit polls in the recent Chicago and Philadelphia mayoral races. The following guide provides five recommendations from research on how mayors can own the message that we all deserve safety, accountability, and justice.



About the Democratic Mayors Association

The Democratic Mayors Association is comprised of mayors in cities of 30,000 or more - a diverse coalition of innovative leaders who get things done.

As a 527 organization, we mobilize mayors on behalf of progressive issues and unite them with a common voice to take on the most critical challenges communities face. We convene local leaders with private sector and labor partners to develop creative solutions.

We tell the story of why Mayors Matter.

democraticmayors.org.

For more information, please contact
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