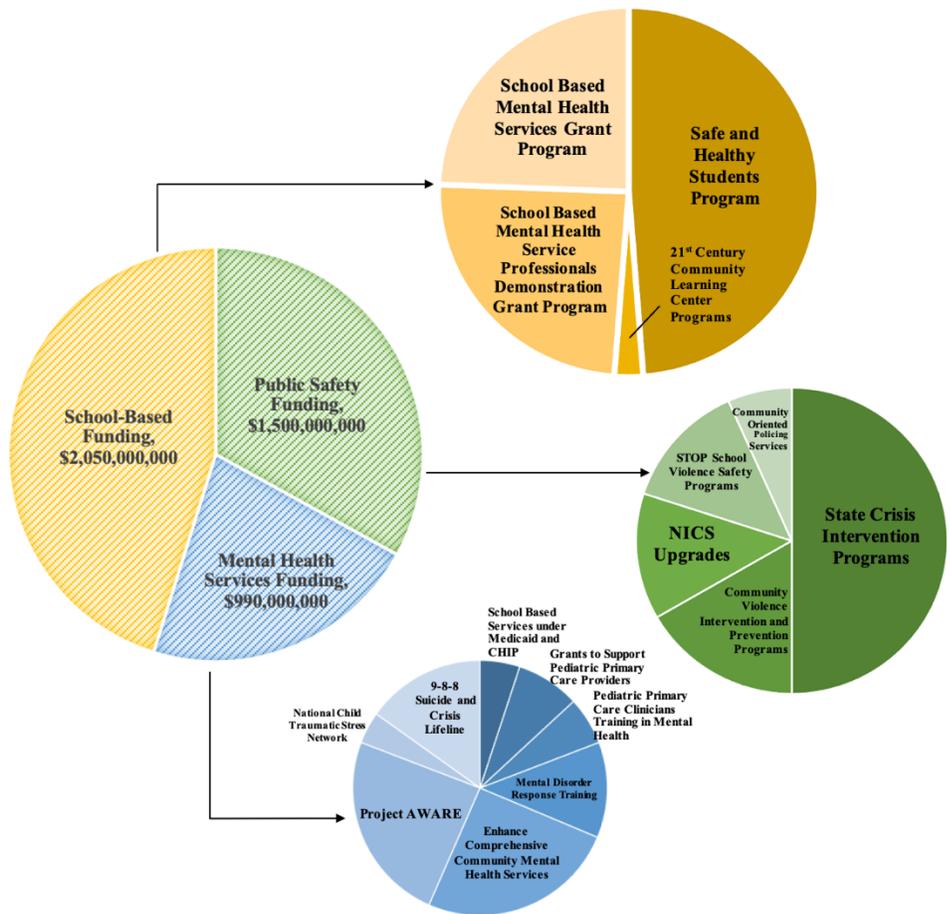


A Mayor's Guide to the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act

By Sarah Thompson¹

Introduction

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA)² was signed into law on June 24, 2022. The BSCA was passed to reduce gun violence and improve mental health resources in communities and schools. It includes over \$4.5 billion in funding, which can be separated into school-based funding, public safety funding, and mental health services (see diagram). This guide highlights the provisions most applicable to mayors and local officials in each of these areas, and how to access the funding.



Summary of Legislation

Key provisions of the BSCA include:

- Clarifies who needs a federal license to buy and sell firearms,
- Enhances background checks for purchasers under 21,
- Protects unmarried domestic violence victims by narrowing the “boyfriend loophole,”
- Provides funding for states to implement extreme risk protection order (ERPO)

programs,³ drug courts, and other crisis intervention programs,

- Funds anti-violence community initiatives, and
- Expands access to community and school-based behavioral health services for children and families.

Provisions Applicable to Local Officials

Community gun violence, suicide, and school-based violence are leading causes of gun injury and death, especially among young Americans. The BSCA provides funds mayors and local officials can use to establish initiatives that could reduce these forms of

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² The BSCA can be found [here](#).

³ Research has shown that ERPO laws reduce suicide by temporarily removing guns from someone when they are in crisis. Anecdotal evidence suggests ERPOs may prevent mass shootings.

gun violence and save lives. Key provisions, categorized into three focus areas, include:

Community Gun Violence Prevention:

Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative:⁴

- \$250 million in funding until expended.
- [This initiative](#) funds evidence-based programs that “prevent and reduce violent crime in communities by supporting comprehensive, evidence-based violence intervention and prevention programs, . . . based on partnerships among community residents, local government agencies, victim service providers, community-based organizations, law enforcement, hospitals, researchers, and other community stakeholders.”⁵
- Check [here](#) for available funding.

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS):⁶

- \$100 million in funding until expended.⁷
- This grant program authorizes the director of COPS to make grants to States and units of local government to fund “coordination with local law enforcement, training for local enforcement to prevent student violence, security measures, emergency notification technology, and any other measure that may significantly improve security.”^{8 9}

⁴ The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) [defines community violence intervention](#) (CVI) as “an approach that uses evidence informed strategies to reduce violence through tailored community-centered initiatives.” See the website for more details on the CVI approach and the guidelines.

⁵ See [here](#) for more information.

⁶ Information about COPS can be found [here](#).

⁷ This funding is specific to COPS; the BJA also provides grants under title V of the Stop School Violence Act but for different purposes. There is also funding provided for this through the BSCA. See STOP School Violence School Safety Programs on following page.

⁸ See sec. 502(b)(5)-(9).

⁹ A state or unit of local government, in using an awarded grant, may use the grant to contract with or

- Check [here](#) to apply for funding in 2023.

Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program

- \$750 million in funding over four years.
- [This program](#) provides “funding for the creation and/or implementation of state crisis intervention court proceedings, extreme risk protection order programs, and related gun violence reduction programs/initiatives.”
- Only states may apply. If awarded, states must pass through 40% of funding to local governments.¹⁰
- View state allocations [here](#).

Improvements to Mental Health Services:

Expansion of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) Demonstration Program:¹¹

- The BSCA authorizes 10 additional states to be selected every two years to conduct demonstration programs to increase access to community based behavioral health services.¹²
- CCBHC’s are required to serve all consumers regardless of ability to pay.
- The application can be found [here](#).

Mental Health Awareness Training:

- \$120 million in funding over four years.
- This funding can be used to train community members and first responders “to appropriately and safely respond to persons with mental health challenges and or disorders.”¹³
- Grant recipients may include community non-profit agencies, school districts, colleges/universities, and hospitals.

make subawards to local educational agencies, nonprofit organizations, or units of local government.

¹⁰ See [here](#) for more information.

¹¹ Expansion of program first authorized in the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014.

¹² This funding could potentially fund a center to provide services to community members to help them recover from the trauma caused by gun violence.

¹³ This funding could help reduce police-involved shootings. See [here](#) for more information.

- MHAT grants should be available in 2023. Check [here](#) for updates.

Promotion of School Safety:

21st Century Community Learning Center Programs:¹⁴

- \$50 million in funding for existing program.
- This program funds “community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children.”^{15 16}
- Awards are provided to State Education Agencies. Local education agencies and nonprofit organizations may apply to states for subgrants.
- Find your state contact [here](#).

STOP School Violence School Safety Programs:

- \$200 million in grants administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).
- BJA may award grants to units of local government for the purpose of “training school personnel and students to prevent student violence, development and operation of anonymous reporting systems for threats of school violence, the development and operation of school threat assessment teams and specialized mental health crises response training, and any other measure that may improve violence prevention.”^{17 18}
- Check [here](#) for grant status.

The BSCA also provides two grant programs (see below) to increase the number of mental health services providers in schools. These

programs could help students in crisis and (potentially) prevent mass shootings.

School Based Mental Health Services Grant Program:

- \$500 million in funding.
- Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) may award grants to state and local education agencies “to increase the number of credentialed mental health services providers providing school-based mental health services to students.”¹⁹
- Applicant information available [here](#).

Mental Health Services Professional Demonstration Grants:

- \$500 million in funding.
- OESE may award competitive grants “to support and demonstrate innovative partnerships to train school-based mental health service providers for employment in schools and local educational agencies.”²⁰
- Applicant information available [here](#).

¹⁴ In addition to promoting student achievement, research has shown that after-school and summer programs can reduce shootings involving youth.

¹⁵ See [here](#) for more information.

¹⁶ For a more complete list of projects that may be funded, see [here](#).

¹⁷ See sec. 502(b)(1)-(4).

¹⁸ The additional funding will allow BJA to make 75-80 additional awards in the upcoming year.

¹⁹ See [here](#) for more information.

²⁰ See [here](#) for more information.