



Executive Order

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Governor's Office

Executive Order 2024-02 – Office of Gun Violence Prevention

Date: September 9, 2024

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Josh Shapiro".

By Direction of:
Josh Shapiro, Governor

WHEREAS, Governor Tom Wolf issued *Executive Order 2019-06, Reducing Gun Violence*, establishing the Office of Gun Violence Prevention (Office) within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) on August 16, 2019; and

WHEREAS, gun violence is a multi-layered public safety and public health issue that must be addressed through a comprehensive and coordinated approach, informed by data and research; and

WHEREAS, unintentional firearm injury is also a leading cause of death among children and adolescents in the United States, and research shows that securing firearms and other gun safety practices can effectively prevent these injuries; and

WHEREAS, more than 1,600 individuals die as the result of gun-related injuries in Pennsylvania each year, and Pennsylvania's firearm fatality rate is significantly higher than rates within other portions of the Northeast Region of the United States; and

WHEREAS, frequent shootings impact the communities in which they occur, resulting in grief and trauma, uncertainty around safety, and other devastating effects; and

WHEREAS, a significant portion of Pennsylvania's suicide rates involve firearms, highlighting the critical need for mental health support and gun safety measures; and

WHEREAS, gun violence intersects with domestic violence, with over 4.5 million women reporting they have been threatened with a firearm by an intimate partner, and nearly half of all mass shootings are linked to domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth must be committed to deploying all necessary resources to reduce gun violence and keep weapons out of the hands of those not legally permitted to possess them and those with an intent to do harm to themselves or others; and

WHEREAS, the White House's Safer States Initiative encourages states to establish an Office of Gun Violence Prevention to coordinate new policies, programs, and resources across state agencies and with local and federal governments, among other responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, Sections 501 and 502 of *The Administrative Code of 1929 (71 P.S. §§ 181, 182)* require administrative departments and the several independent and departmental administrative boards and commissions to coordinate their work and activities with other departments, boards, and commissions.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Josh Shapiro, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other laws, do hereby order and direct as follows:

1. Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

There is hereby reestablished within the PCCD the Office, which shall work to build safer communities across Pennsylvania by supporting policies, strategies, and programs designed to better understand, prevent, and reduce gun violence in the Commonwealth. The Office shall be led by a Director, who shall be an employee of PCCD, reporting to PCCD's Executive Director, and who will be responsible for overseeing the Office's efforts. The Office shall:

- a.** Coordinate with PCCD's Commission and Advisory Committees, and relevant offices and staff, to align and advance efforts to prevent and address gun violence in the Commonwealth, utilizing recommendations made by the Special Council on Gun Violence's Report and nationally recognized best practices.
- b.** Convene an advisory group of national, state, and community experts, as well as a broad range of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, survivors of gun violence, Community Violence Intervention (CVI) experts, physical health care and behavioral health practitioners, community-based organizations, law enforcement, public safety professionals, victims' services programs, public health professionals, the PCCD and Advisory Committee members, and other state agencies to help inform the Office's work.
- c.** Coordinate with PCCD and the Governor's Office to identify and apply for nonstate funding to aid in the research, analysis, funding, and implementation of statewide gun violence intervention and prevention strategies.
- d.** Working closely with federal, state, and local partners, conduct timely data collection and research regarding firearm-related injuries, fatalities, and incidents.
- e.** In conjunction with PCCD's Office of Victims' Services, identify strategies for improving services and support for gun violence victims (including witnesses, relatives, classmates, coworkers, or other associates of individuals who have been killed, injured, or threatened by gun violence), as well as address the

intersections of gun violence with domestic violence and intimate partner violence.

- f.** Spearhead the development of a comprehensive youth gun involvement and violence reduction plan for the Commonwealth, including developing forums for hearing directly from youth on motivations for gun possession.
- g.** Coordinate and advance evidence-based and trauma-informed CVI strategies across the Commonwealth, including hospital and community-based violence intervention programs.
- h.** Create and maintain a network of CVI and gun violence reduction programs across Pennsylvania through the PA Peace Alliance and other collaborative initiatives, when determined by the Office to be appropriate.
- i.** Coordinate statewide technical assistance and training focused on violence intervention, prevention, and CVI strategies and best practices.
- j.** Collaborate with Pennsylvania’s Department of Health’s (DOH) Division of Violence Prevention, Department of Human Services (DHS), and other key stakeholders to support the development and implementation of public awareness campaigns and other strategies to increase knowledge and adoption of resources related to gun violence prevention, including firearm safety practices like safer storage and child access prevention strategies.
- k.** Develop a gun violence prevention plan for the Commonwealth and a corresponding strategic plan for the Office.
- l.** Create and maintain a comprehensive online Gun Violence Data Dashboard and resource hub, informed in part by the DOH, to serve as a “one-stop-shop” for data, research, and statistical information regarding gun violence in Pennsylvania.

2. Division of Violence Prevention.

The Division of Violence Prevention (Division), housed within DOH, shall assist the Office to help reduce gun violence from a public health perspective. The Division will collaborate with the Office and shall continue to administer DOH’s existing violence prevention programs.

3. Gun Violence Data Dashboard.

PCCD, DOH, DHS, the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and other Commonwealth entities may establish data sharing agreements and protocols necessary for the creation of a Gun Violence Data Dashboard (Dashboard), which shall be administered by the Office. The Dashboard will collect and provide publicly available public health and safety data related to firearm injury, fatalities, and crime, including the scope, frequency, and locations of firearm-related violence, and the populations affected. This work will build upon existing data collection and analysis efforts supported by PCCD and DOH, including DOH’s efforts to enhance the Pennsylvania Violent Death Reporting System and its Violence Data Dashboard.

4. **Executive Agency Responsibilities.**

In addition to the foregoing, the following Commonwealth agencies will provide support to assist in understanding the causes and prevention of gun violence.

- a. **DOH** will advise the Office on public health strategies to prevent and reduce gun violence, including gun safety strategies (such as safer storage practices) that can prevent injury and death resulting from firearms. In addition, DOH will advise on local implementation of Suicide Death Review Teams pursuant to Act 101 of 2022, 71 P.S. §§ 557-557.7, provide data to the Dashboard, and make recommendations to prevent future firearm-related injuries and deaths in Pennsylvania.
- b. **DHS** will direct the Suicide Prevention Task Force to make recommendations on actions to reduce suicides by firearms, as well as actively explore potential mechanisms for using other funding sources under the Department's purview to provide support for individuals who have experienced, or who are most at risk for experiencing, gun violence. These recommendations should include an analysis of other states' resources to support, expand, and sustain hospital-based violence intervention programs, community-based violence intervention programs, and other evidence-based strategies.
- c. **PSP** will advise on law enforcement-related strategies to prevent and reduce gun violence, as well as on how to enhance and expand its current efforts to identify and deter potential sources of gun violence. PSP will also provide PCCD relevant criminal incident data sets as permitted by law, for analysis to support the efforts of the Office.
- d. **Department of Community & Economic Development** will advise the Office, in collaboration with PCCD, on community revitalization needs and projects that could assist in reducing gun violence in those areas most impacted by gun violence.
- e. **Department of Education** will coordinate with PCCD on issues related to youth-focused and school-based initiatives to support CVI and other violence prevention initiatives. The Department may provide relevant publicly available data to the Office, as requested, and develop guidance, educational materials, and other resources in collaboration with the Office and other state agencies.

5. **Implementation.**

All Commonwealth agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction are directed to take all steps necessary to implement this Executive Order.

6. **General.**

This Executive Order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law. Nothing in this Executive Order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the authority granted by law to an executive department, agency, or the head thereof. This Executive Order is not intended to, and does not create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the Commonwealth, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

7. Effective Date.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by the Governor.

8. Rescission.

Effective immediately, *Executive Order 2019-06, Reducing Gun Violence*, is hereby rescinded.