Pennsylvania
Commission on Crime
and Delinquency

2025

Pennsylvania Office of Gun Violence Prevention

INITIAL REPORT & STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Part I: Developing & Advancing a Coordinated, Effective Statewide Gun Violence Prevention Strategy

Goal 1: Improve Interagency Coordination & Community Engagement

Objective 1.1: Serve as a forward-facing state Office for gun violence-related resources and information, supporting and elevating state and local efforts to address this complex issue through policies, programs, and strategies.

Objective 1.2: Assemble a robust, diverse Advisory Group to help inform Pennsylvania's gun violence prevention strategy.

Objective 1.3: Convene experts and stakeholders to share insights and findings, including through a Pennsylvania Gun Violence Prevention Symposium or similar events.

Objective 1.4: Identify a Director to lead the Office with experience and expertise aligned with key strategic priorities.

Goal 2: Enhance Pennsylvania's Investments in Gun Violence Prevention

Objective 2.1: Identify and pursue actions to adapt, increase, and sustain state-level investments in gun violence prevention and intervention strategies, with an emphasis on resources reaching community-based organizations supporting direct work with impacted individuals in both the short- and long-term.

Objective 2.2: Bolster Pennsylvania's victims' services infrastructure to ensure resources are available to help individuals and communities heal.

Objective 2.3: Nurture and develop public-private partnerships to expand opportunities for securing philanthropic and private funding supports to augment state investments in CVI and gun violence prevention strategies.

Goal 3: Improve Gun Violence-related Data, Research & Evaluation

Objective 3.1: Gather, analyze, and communicate comprehensive data on firearm-related injuries, fatalities, and criminal activity in Pennsylvania to offer policymakers insights on emerging trends.

Objective 3.2: Invest in gun violence-related data analysis and research, including evaluation of statewide and local initiatives.

Part II: Addressing Gun Violence through Prevention, Intervention & Healing

Goal 4: Invest in Youth Safety & Well-being

Objective 4.1: Develop a comprehensive youth gun involvement and violence prevention strategy for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in consultation with youth, youth-serving organizations, and other key partners.

Objective 4.2: Identify and share best practices for supporting youth impacted by gun violence and to address increasing rates of firearm suicide among young people.

Objective 4.3: Increase investments in youth-focused programming where kids feel safe, supported, and inspired.

Goal 5: Promote Safer Gun Ownership Practices

Objective 5.1: Increase awareness of secure firearm storage and safer firearm use practices among Pennsylvania gun owners, especially first-time gun owners and those living in households with children.

Objective 5.2: Reduce barriers to gun owners obtaining devices to secure firearms and firearm safety training, including financial costs associated with these practices.

Objective 5.3: Require secure storage practices for gun owners in households with children through Child Access Prevention legislation.

Goal 6: Advance Firearm Suicide Prevention & Postvention Strategies

Objective 6.1: Use available state funding sources to support local firearm suicide reduction and response efforts, including prevention, intervention, and postvention supports.

Objective 6.2: Increase attention to the issue of firearm suicide among broader suicide prevention efforts and state-level policy discussions.

Goal 7: Support Effective Community Gun Violence Prevention & Intervention Approaches

Objective 7.1: Increase and sustain state-level investments in community violence intervention (CVI) approaches, with a goal of providing predictable, reliable funding for organizations and people providing critical services.

Objective 7.2: Thoughtfully expand law enforcement strategies, with an emphasis on approaches that can reduce the number of unsolved gun crimes and homicides.

Objective 7.3: Establish and enhance programs that help individuals and communities heal in the aftermath of gun violence, including hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs), Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs), and Resiliency Centers.

Goal 8: Reduce Domestic Violence Homicides & Shootings

Objective 8.1: Stabilize and enhance Pennsylvania's victims' services and compensation infrastructure to address the needs of gun violence survivors.

Objective 8.2: Strengthen protections provided through Act 79 and increase adoption of evidence-based domestic violence homicide prevention programs by increasing resources and technical assistance, with a goal of improving consistency of implementation statewide.

INTRODUCTION

PA's Office of Gun Violence Prevention

In 2019, Pennsylvania was one of the first states in the country to designate a state-level Office of Gun Violence Prevention.[1] In the years since, more than a dozen states – in addition to numerous cities and municipalities – across the United States have established dedicated Offices of Violence Prevention.[2]

In September 2024, Governor Josh Shapiro signed Executive Order 2024-02, re-establishing the Office of Gun Violence Prevention within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD).

PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention is charged with taking a comprehensive approach to address gun violence as both a public safety and public health crisis. The Office's responsibilities center on five key areas:

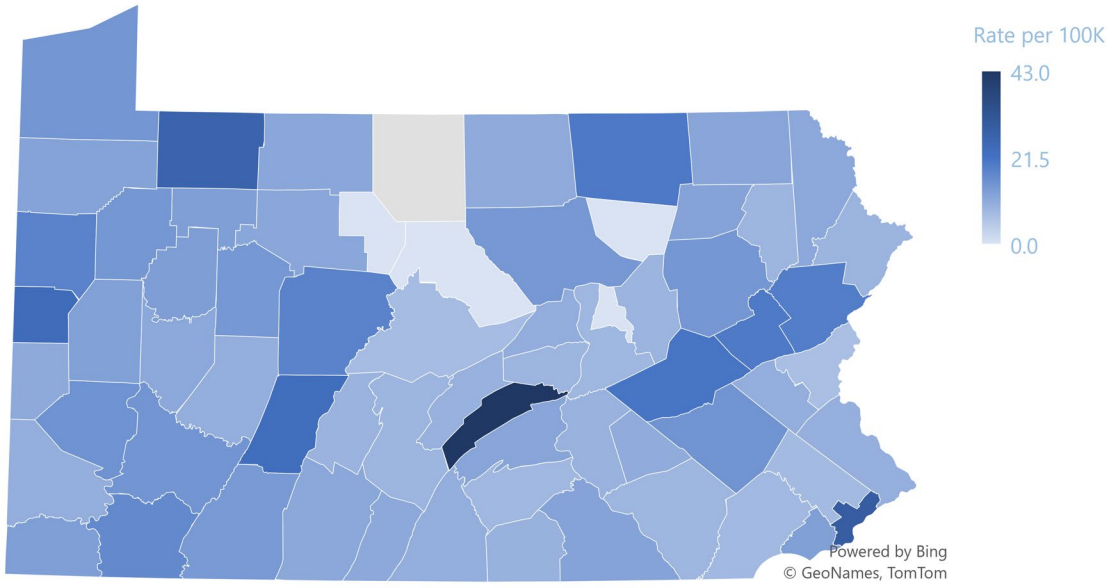
Key initiatives of the Office include:

- **Convening a stakeholder Advisory Group**, bringing together experts, survivors, healthcare workers, law enforcement, and state and local agencies working to address gun violence.
- **Develop a comprehensive Gun Violence Prevention Plan** for the Commonwealth focusing on youth involvement, domestic violence, firearm suicide, and other issues.
- **Develop a Gun Violence Data Dashboard** to serve as a "one-stop-shop" for data and research on gun violence in Pennsylvania, building on the Department of Health's Violence Data Dashboard and PCCD's Gun Violence Grants & Data Dashboard.
- **Training and technical assistance** to promote awareness of violence prevention and intervention strategies, including community violence intervention (CVI) best practices.
- **Support victims of gun violence** in collaboration with PCCD's Office of Victims' Services, building on the agency's Resources for Gun Violence Victims Initiative.
- **Promote firearm safety** by working with the Departments of Health, Human Services, and other stakeholders by increasing awareness of secure storage practices.

Gun Violence in Pennsylvania

Gun violence claims the lives of more than 1,500 Pennsylvanians each year, and injures thousands more.[3] According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2022, the latest year data is available, more than 1,900 Pennsylvanians were killed as a result of firearm-related injuries – a rate of nearly 15 deaths per 100,000 residents.[4] Despite increases in homicides during that year, more than half of firearm-related deaths in Pennsylvania in 2022 resulted from suicides.[5]

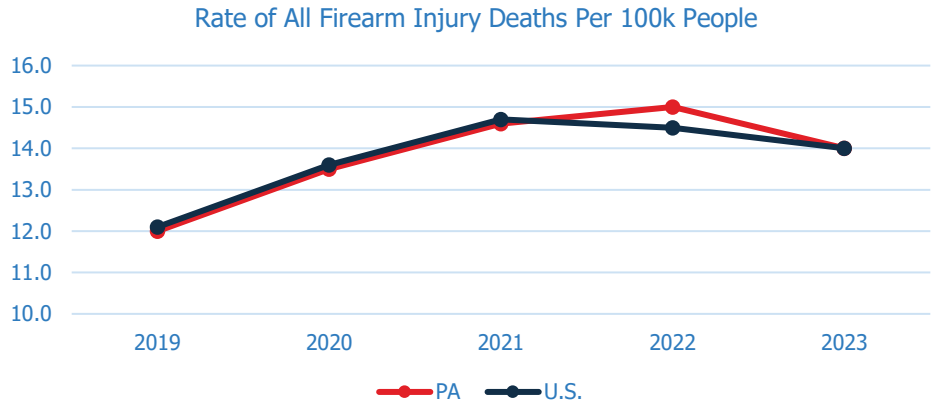
Firearm Injury Death Rate per 100k People by PA County, 2023[1]



While gun violence impacts communities across the Commonwealth – from big cities to rural towns – its impacts are disproportionately felt by marginalized individuals and communities, especially Black Pennsylvanians.[6] Firearm injury is especially concentrated in Pennsylvania's poorest neighborhoods[7], and among youth of color.[8] Firearm injury and death also disproportionately impacts men, who account for nearly nine in 10 injuries and fatalities.[9]

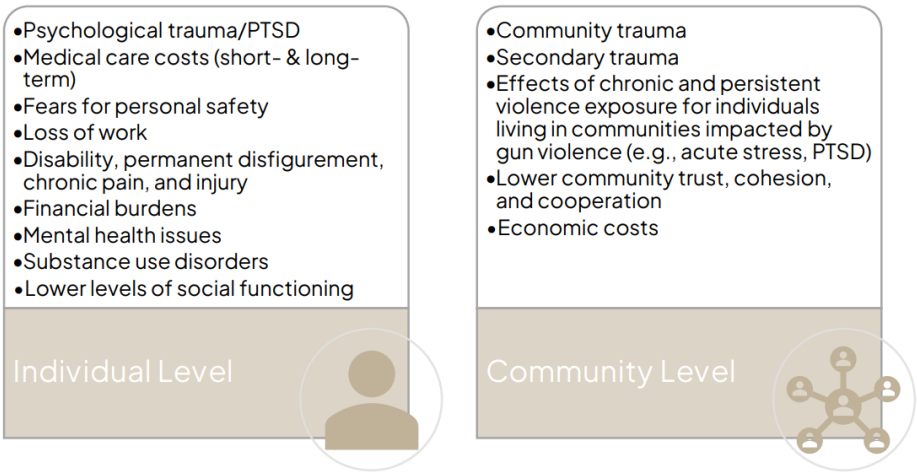
[1] *Data source: Provisional data from the CDC.

According to provisional data from the CDC, in 2023, the number of firearm deaths in PA dropped for the first time in four years.[2]



Gun violence takes an immeasurable human toll, cutting short lives and resulting in ripple effects of trauma, grief, and fear. Victims and co-victims often report acute and chronic impacts of in the aftermath of gun violence, from physical disability to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to a lost sense of safety and security.[10] A recently published report from Everytown for Gun Safety found **far-reaching impacts of gun violence on individuals and communities**, as well as barriers to critical resources and supports that can facilitate healing and recovery.[11]

Impacts of Gun Violence on Individuals & Communities[12]



Crime victims survey data from the Alliance for Safety and Justice (ASJ) echoes these impacts, finding that **victims of violence were significantly more likely to experience PTSD, bankruptcy, life-threatening illness, disability or chronic illness, as well as anxiety and depression**.[13] Another recent survey by ASJ found that more than a third of victims/survivors wanted to relocate because of their victimization, but only half were able to do so.[14]

In addition to these human and societal costs, gun violence takes an economic toll as well. Analysis of hospitalization data suggests **that firearm-related injuries result in more than $300 million in annual**

[2] *Data source: Provisional data from the CDC.

costs to the Commonwealth when accounting for healthcare costs, lost wages, and more. Pennsylvania's firearm-related fatality rates are on par with the national average, but higher than most neighboring states.

Firearm-related Fatality Rates in Pennsylvania & Neighboring States, 2022

State	Population	Number of Firearm Deaths	Rate of Firearm Deaths Per 100k People
Delaware	1,018,396	124	11.90
Maryland	6,164,660	813	13.48
New Jersey	9,261,699	468	4.99
New York	19,677,151	1,044	5.27
Ohio	11,756,058	1,831	15.64
Pennsylvania	12,972,008	1,941	14.74
Virginia	8,683,619	1,316	14.83
West Virginia	1,775,156	311	16.19

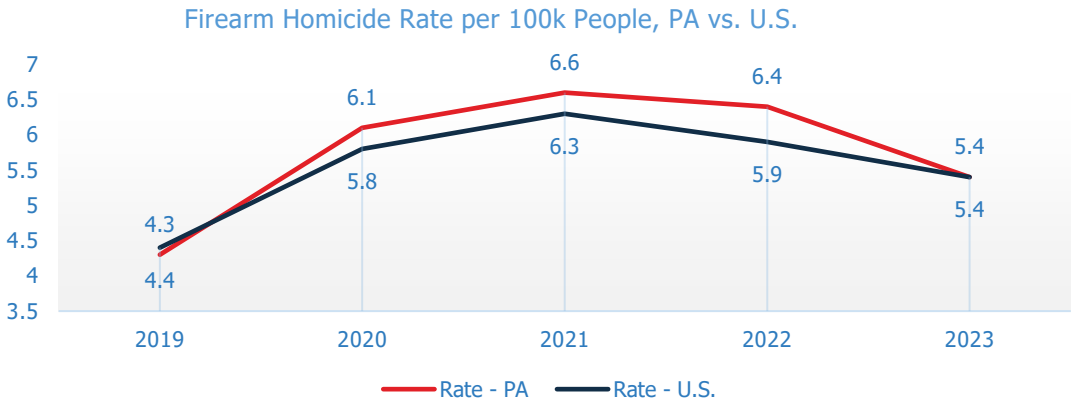
Community Gun Violence

A significant share of violent crime in Pennsylvania involves firearms; in 2022, guns were involved in 84% of homicides, 46% of robberies, and 32% of aggravated assaults.[15] While homicides decreased 16% across Pennsylvania in 2023 compared to the prior year, with additional reductions expected in 2024, community gun violence remains elevated in many jurisdictions.[16]

Crimes Committed with Firearms in 2022 in Pennsylvania[17]

Type of Crime	Total	Firearms	Percent Involving Firearms
Homicide	1,202	1,004	83.5%
Robbery	8,871	4,111	46.3%
Aggravated Assault	21,943	7,016	32.0%

Homicide rates have sharply decreased in PA, outpacing national decline.[3]



[3] *Data source: Provisional data from the CDC.

Data from crime gun tracing efforts indicates that states with more permissive gun laws, like Pennsylvania, are common "exporters" of crime guns in other states with stricter laws. According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), in 2023, more than 17,000 crime guns were recovered and traced in Pennsylvania; nearly 59% of these guns came from in-state (9,969).[18]

Source of Crime Guns in Neighboring States, 2023[19]

State	Number of Crime Guns Traced	In-State Crime Guns	Out-of-State Crime Guns	Out-of-State Crime Guns from PA
Delaware	1,434	749 (52%)	685 (48%)	131 (19%)
Maryland	10,332	3,252 (31%)	7,080 (69%)	330 (5%)
New Jersey	4,619	667 (14%)	3,952 (86%)	532 (13%)
New York	11,413	1,506 (13%)	9,907 (87%)	599 (6%)
Ohio	20,543	15,195 (74%)	5,348 (26%)	150 (3%)
West Virginia	2,130	1,171(55%)	959 (45%)	51 (5%)

What the Research Says: Policies to Address Homicides & Other Violent Crime[20]

An evaluation of research on gun policies recently conducted by the RAND Corporation found evidence that the following policies can reduce firearm homicides and community gun violence:

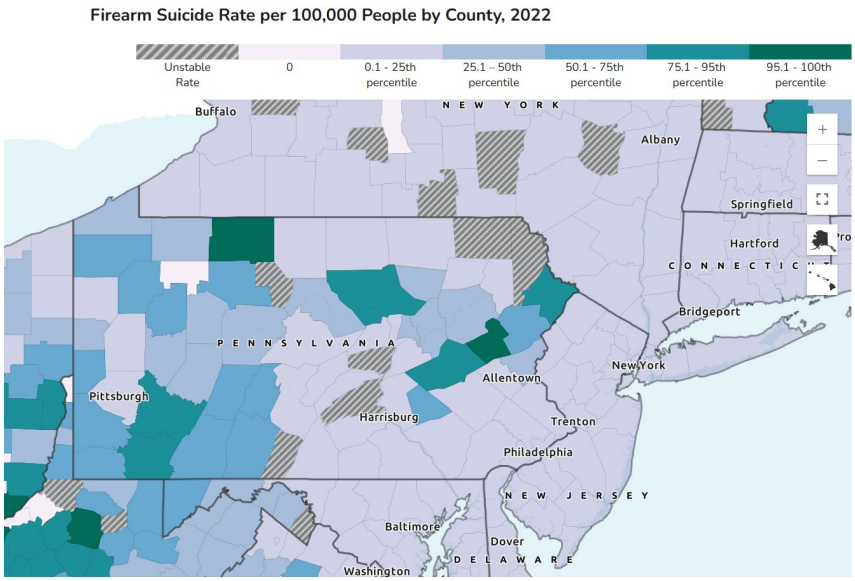
- **Supportive evidence:** Child Access Prevention laws
- **Moderate evidence:** Background checks; prohibitions associated with domestic violence; surrender of firearms by prohibited possessors; waiting periods
- **Limited evidence:** Prohibitions associated with mental illness

Research has also linked more permissive concealed carry laws, such as "permitless carry" or "shall-issue" laws, with increases in homicides and other violent crime.[21]

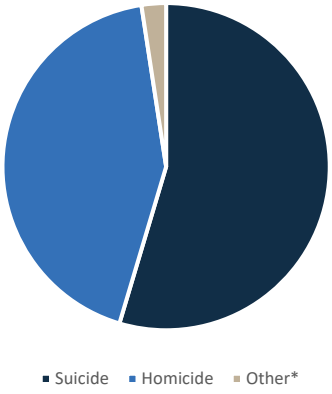
Firearm Suicide

Suicide remains the leading cause of gun-related deaths in the U.S. and in Pennsylvania; in 2022, 55% of gun deaths were suicides.[22] Firearms are an especially lethal means of suicide; while only 5% of other means result in death, approximately 90% of suicide attempts with firearms do.[23] Since 2018, the rate of firearm suicides among Black Pennsylvanians has nearly doubled (3.3 deaths per 100,000 in 2018 vs. 5.8 in 2022).[24]

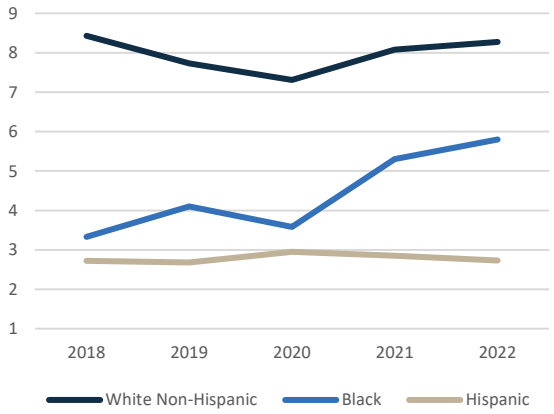
Firearm suicide rates in PA remain elevated and continue to increase.[4]



PA Firearm-related Deaths by Intent, 2022



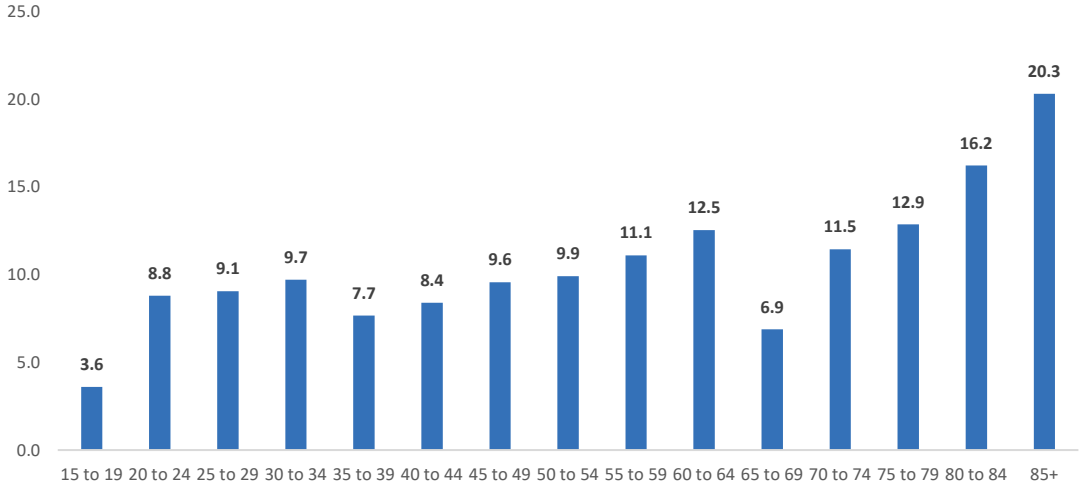
PA Firearm Suicide Trends by Race and Ethnicity, 2018-2022



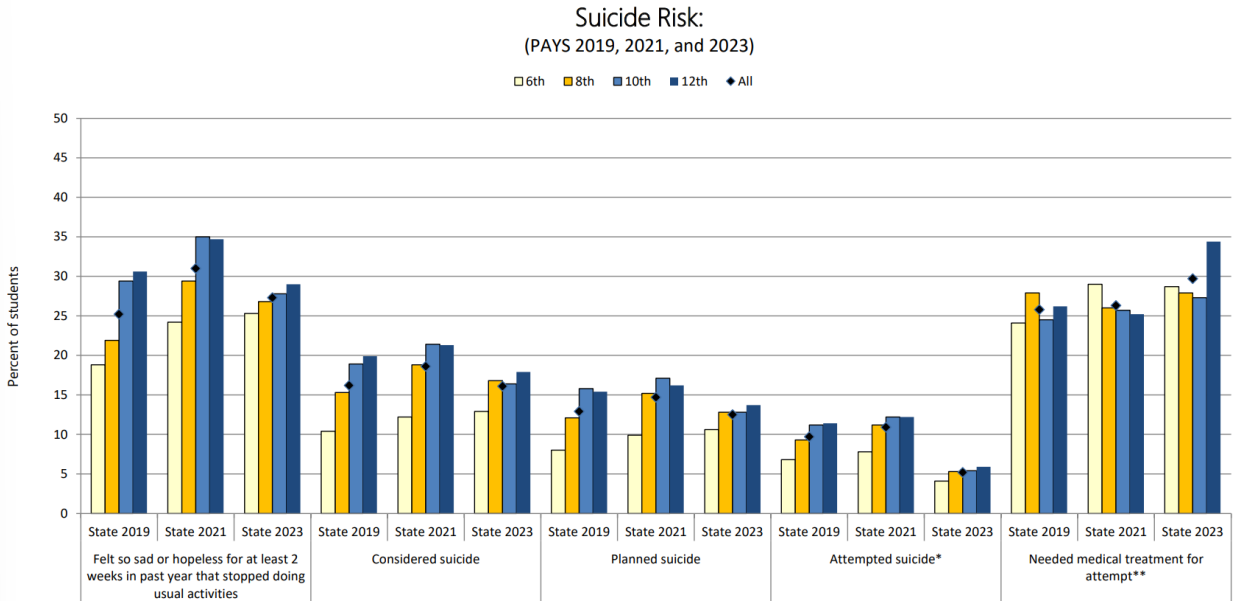
Older Pennsylvanians are more likely to die by firearm suicide, but risk levels are high across most age spans.[25] Firearm suicide rates among children and young adults have been increasing in recent years,[26] and data from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) shows that many young people are struggling with thoughts of self-harm and suicide. In 2023, more than one in 10 middle and high schoolers surveyed said they considered or planned suicide in the past year.[27]

[4] *Data source: Provisional data from the CDC.

Firearm Suicide Rate by Age Group in PA, 2022



Suicide Risk Among Pennsylvania Youth, 2019-2023



What the Research Says: Policies to Reduce Firearm Suicide[28]

An evaluation of research on gun policies recently conducted by the RAND Corporation found evidence that the following policies can reduce firearm suicides:

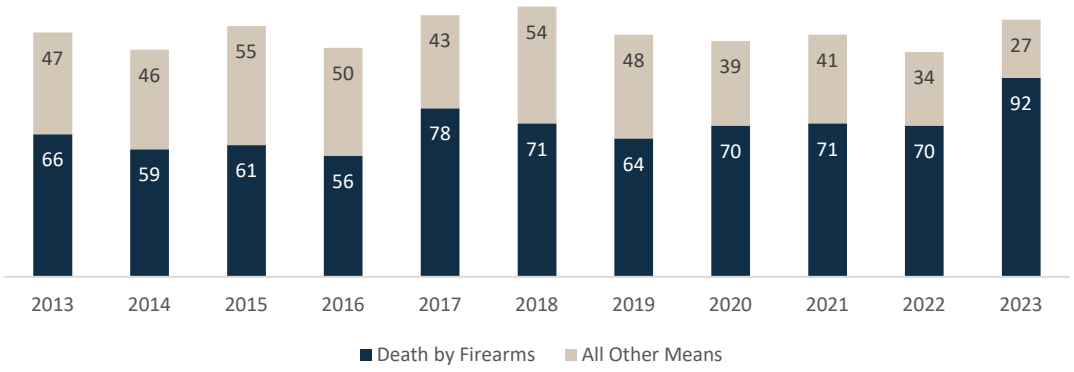
- **Supportive evidence:** Minimum age requirements for purchasing and possessing firearms; Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws
- **Moderate evidence:** Waiting periods
- **Limited evidence:** Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs)

Domestic Violence & Intimate Partner Violence

Decades of research confirm the deadly intersections of gun violence with domestic violence and intimate partner violence. Over half of intimate partner homicides in the U.S. involve firearms, and homicide is the leading cause of death during pregnancy and postpartum.[29] In addition, a significant majority of mass shootings in the U.S. have been domestic violence-related, and use of a firearm in domestic violence homicides significantly increases the risk of multiple fatalities.[30]

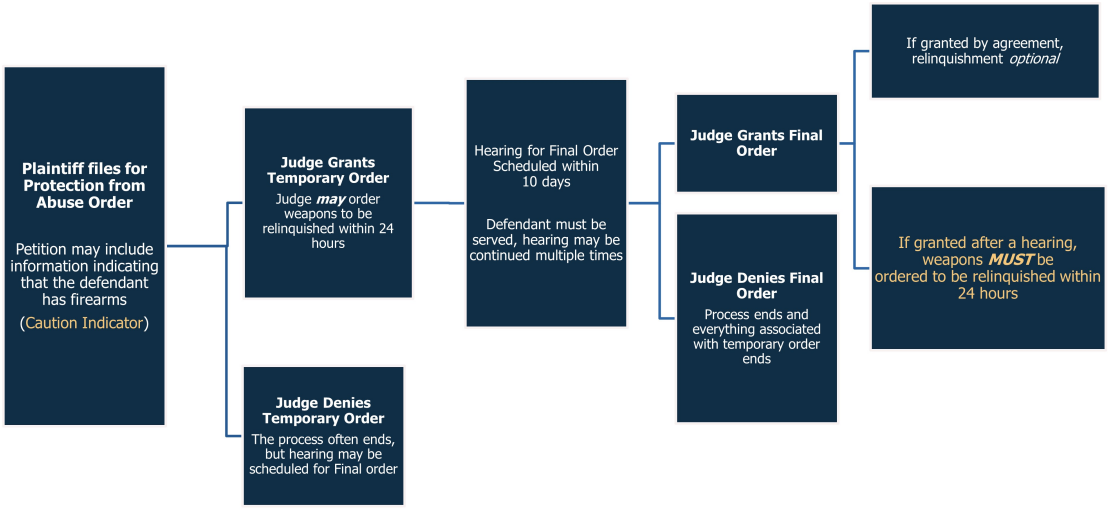
In 2023, three-quarters of domestic violence homicides in Pennsylvania involved firearms.[31] And while the overall number of homicides statewide decreased in 2023, the number of domestic violence homicides increased by 14%.[32]

***Guns** have been used in the majority of **domestic violence homicides in Pennsylvania** over the past decade.* [33]



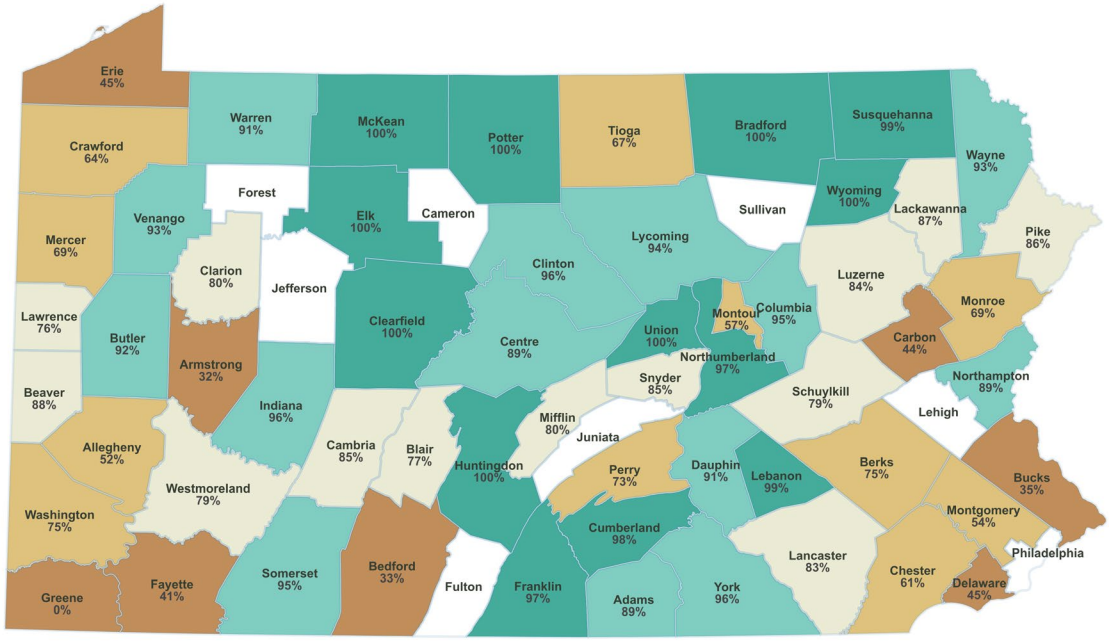
Pennsylvania is one of 29 states that require the surrender of firearms and other weapons by individuals subject to protection orders or convicted of domestic violence offenses.[34] Act 79 provided groundbreaking protections for domestic violence victims in Pennsylvania when it was enacted in 2018. The law restricts access to firearms among Protection From Abuse (PFA) defendants and individuals convicted of domestic violence, and mandates that all final PFA orders issued after a hearing require the relinquishment of firearms, ammunition, and weapons by defendants and also established new procedures for this process.[35]

Pennsylvania's PFA process *provides the* ***option*** *for judges to order the relinquishment of weapons in temporary orders and final agreements and* ***requires*** *relinquishment within 24 hours in final orders granted after a hearing.*[36]



Research conducted by PCCD examining data from PSP's Protection From Abuse Database (PFAD) found that the number of protection orders with weapons cautions and weapons relinquishment orders has been increasing since the law took effect in April 2019; however, there are significant variations in implementation practices across counties. [37]

Statewide, ***80% of final PFA orders issued in 2023 resulted in weapons relinquishment****, with significant variation among counties.*[38]



Stakeholders echoed concerns about that variability, pointing to a need for more standardized court-based protocols and practices that ensure domestic violence survivors can confidently seek safety and justice.

What the Research Says: Policies to Reduce Domestic Violence Homicides[39]

An evaluation of research on gun policies recently conducted by the RAND Corporation found evidence that the following policies can reduce domestic violence homicides and shootings:

- **Moderate evidence:** Prohibitions associated with domestic violence; surrender of firearms by prohibited possessors

Youth Gun Involvement & Violence

Firearm-related injuries are the leading cause of death among children and adolescents in the United States.[40] Between 2011 and 2020, Pennsylvania lost 1,151 children and young adults between the ages of 10 and 19 to gun violence.[41]

Rates of firearm injury and death among youth have increased in recent years, and accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic; Pennsylvania's rate of firearm deaths among children and adolescents increased 55% from pre-pandemic (2017-2019) to pandemic (2020-2022) years.[42] Black children and adolescents are more likely to experience nonfatal firearm injuries or witness gun violence than their White peers.[43] Exposure to gun violence can have ripple effects for youth and entire communities, resulting in significant physical, mental, and financial impacts.[44] In addition, justice-involved youth – especially formerly detained youth – face increased risk of gun violence victimization.[45]

Gun violence and youth access to guns were top concerns among youth-serving system practitioners and community stakeholders surveyed by PCCD in 2023.[46]

"We need to start by asking youth 'How do you keep yourself safe?' It gets at the root causes of a variety of behaviors, including gun carrying… We need to start with why children don't feel safe leaving home, not the response to that feeling of being unsafe." *– Youth advocate and expert on juvenile justice reform*

Researchers have found that exposure to neighborhood shootings increases the number of mental health-related visits by children and youth to emergency rooms.[47] Children and adolescents exposed to neighborhood violence also have greater unmet physical and mental health care needs.[48] There is also emerging research linking community gun violence and growing rates of firearm suicide, especially among youth of color.

What the Research Says: Strategies to Reduce Youth Gun Violence

RAND's examination of research on impacts of gun policies and associated outcomes found supportive and moderate evidence that safer storage laws like Child Access Prevention laws reduce self-inflicted firearm injuries and fatalities, unintentional firearm injuries and deaths, as well as gun homicides and firearm suicides among youth.[49]

In addition, an evaluation of research on gun violence and youth/young adults conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) found evidence of risk and protective factors related to youth gun violence perpetration:

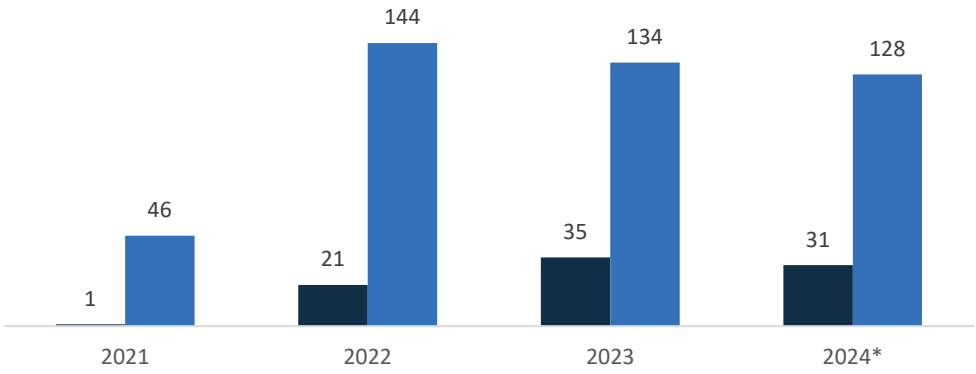
- **Risk Factors:** Exposure to violence and victimization; history of violence and aggression; access to and availability of firearms; poor future orientation and antisocial beliefs and attitudes; substance use; involvement in crime and delinquency and/or having peers who engage in these behaviors; family factors, including parental involvement and engagement; community factors (e.g., poverty, etc.).

- **Protective Factors:** Family attachment and parental monitoring/engagement; positive relationships with trusted and supportive adults; individual protective factors (e.g., religious beliefs, empathy, prosocial aspirations, etc.); community-level protective factors (e.g., connection levels, vibrant public spaces, etc.).

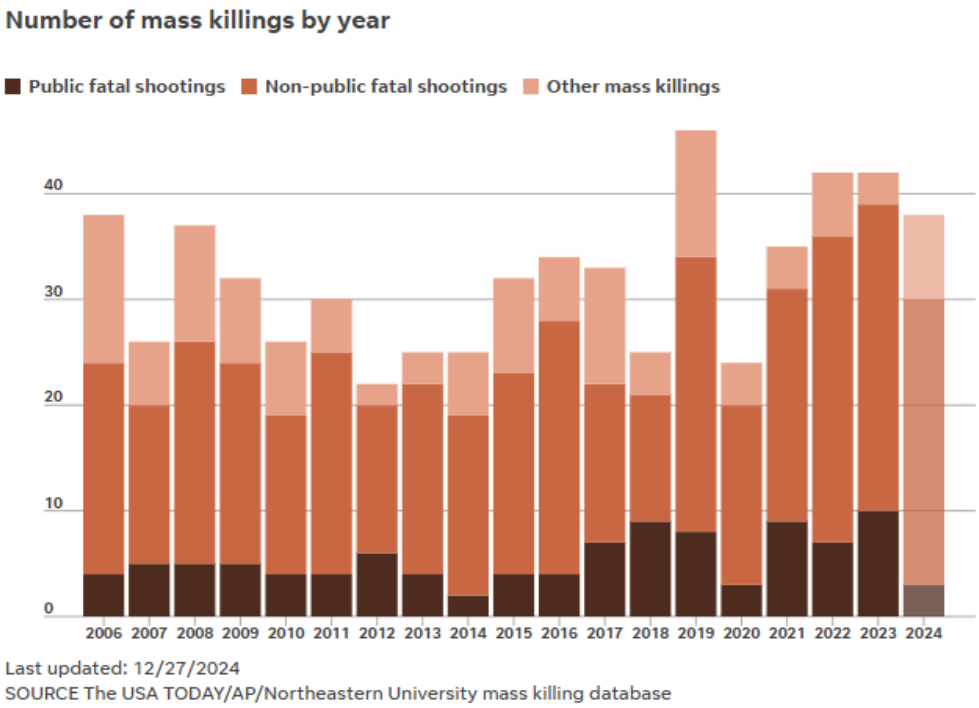
Mass Shootings

"Mass shootings" vary in definition, but generally involve incidents that injure or kill at least four people, excluding the shooter.[50] According to data from the Gun Violence Archive, there have been 110 mass shootings in Pennsylvania since 2021, killing 88 people and injuring 452 more.

Since 2021, 540 people in PA have been killed or injured in 110 mass shooting incidents.[51]



While public mass shootings garner significant media coverage, they represent a small portion of mass violence incidents in the U.S.[52] Many mass shootings, especially those with fewer than four fatalities, stem from community violence, and tend to receive less attention.[53]



What the Research Says: Policies to Prevent & Respond to Mass Violence

An evaluation of research on gun policies recently conducted by the RAND Corporation found evidence that the following policies can reduce mass violence incidents and improve responses in the short- and long-term:

- **Limited evidence:** Bans on the sale of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines; licensing and permitting requirements.

Unintentional Shootings

While they comprise a relatively small portion of firearm-related injuries and fatalities, unintentional shootings remain a significant concern. Data reported by Everytown Research & Policy found that, nationally, 2023 was the worst year on record for unintentional shootings involving children.[54] In 2024 there were at least 13 unintentional shootings in Pennsylvania involving youth, resulting in 5 deaths and 8 injuries.[55] Analysis of hospitalization data by PCCD found the number of accidental injuries increased by 46 percent – exceeding 1,000 injured per year – between 2016 to 2020.[56] Both accidental and assault-related injuries rose to record levels during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in significant short- and long-term costs and impacts for individuals, health care systems, and communities. [57]

What the Research Says: Policies to Reduce Unintentional Firearm Injuries

An evaluation of research on gun policies recently conducted by the RAND Corporation found evidence that the following policies can reduce unintentional firearm injuries:

- **Supportive evidence:** Child Access Prevention laws

EARLY FINDINGS & KEY THEMES

Stakeholder Engagement Efforts

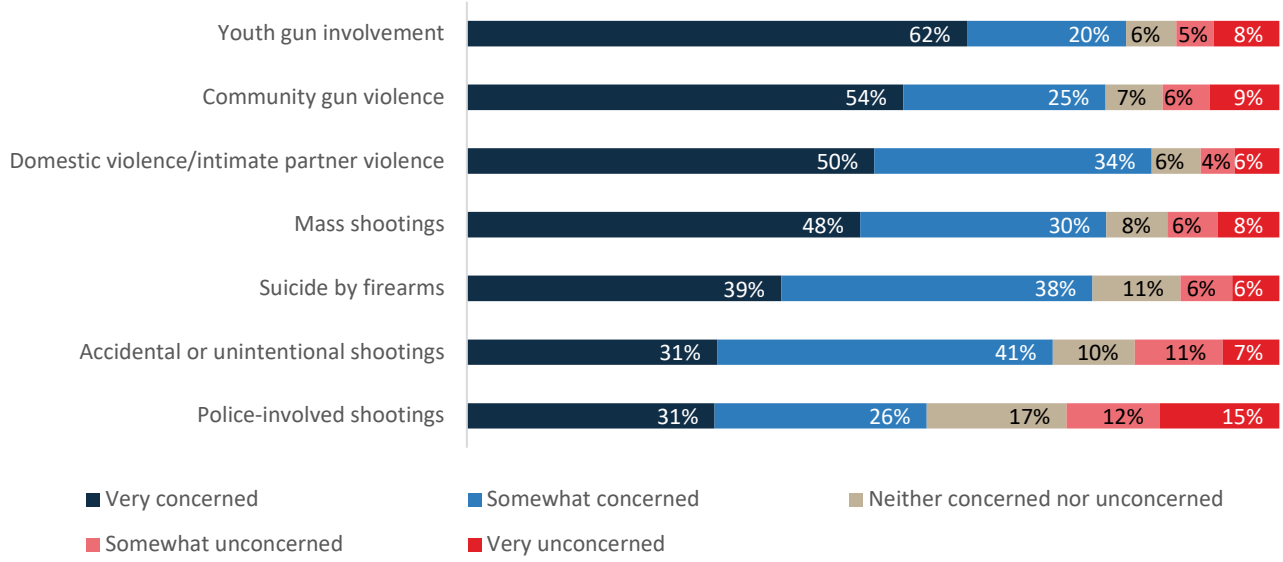
In its first 100 days, PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention gathered feedback from nearly 900 Pennsylvanians to assess the effects of gun violence and identify potential areas for improvement. PCCD used the four "pillars" to organize early stakeholder engagement efforts and community listening sessions to help inform the development of the Office's 2025 Strategic Plan. The Office heard from more than 800 community members through a Gun Violence Prevention Stakeholder Feedback Survey and hosted four listening sessions between October and December 2024.

Early Themes & Key Findings

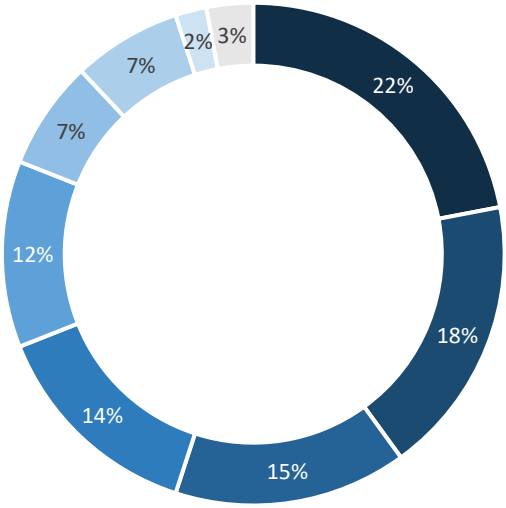
Many stakeholders engaged by PCCD expressed serious concerns about the impacts of gun violence on youth, families, and broader communities and offered ideas for how Pennsylvania might address these issues moving forward. Of the 812 people who responded to PCCD's online Gun Violence Prevention Stakeholder Feedback Survey:

- Nearly half said gun violence affected the safety and well-being of their community a lot (23%) or somewhat (24%).
- More than half of respondents said they were very concerned about youth gun involvement (62%), community gun violence (54%), and domestic violence and intimate partner violence (50%).
- Mass shootings ranked somewhat higher than firearm suicide as a top concern among respondents, despite the fact that suicides account for the majority of gun deaths in the Commonwealth and mass shootings remain statistically rare.

***More than half of people** responding to PCCD's survey said they were **very concerned** or **somewhat concerned** about all forms of gun violence, especially domestic violence (84%) and youth gun involvement (82%).*

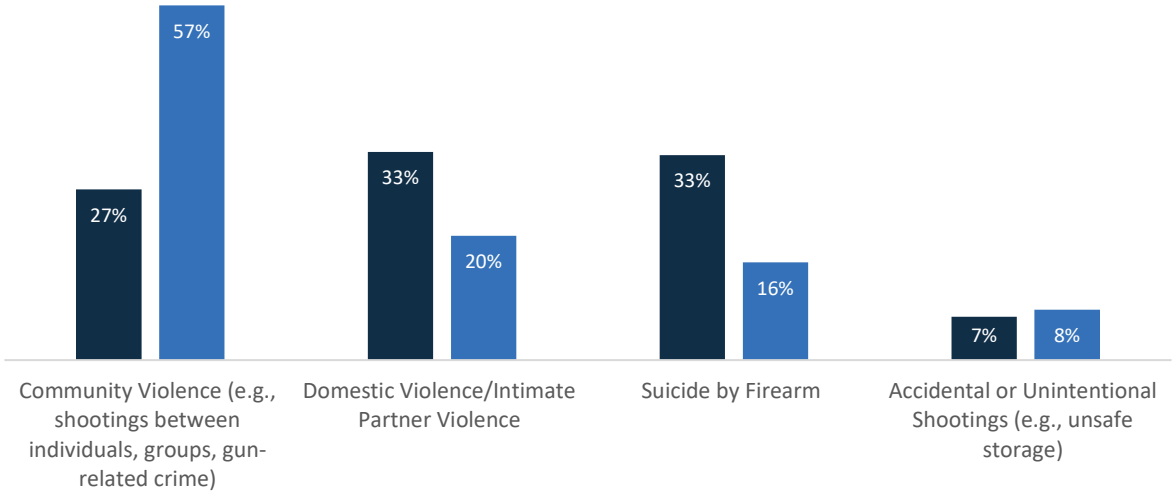


*More than **four in 10 people** responding to PCCD's survey said they or someone they knew had been **impacted by gun violence** (43%).*

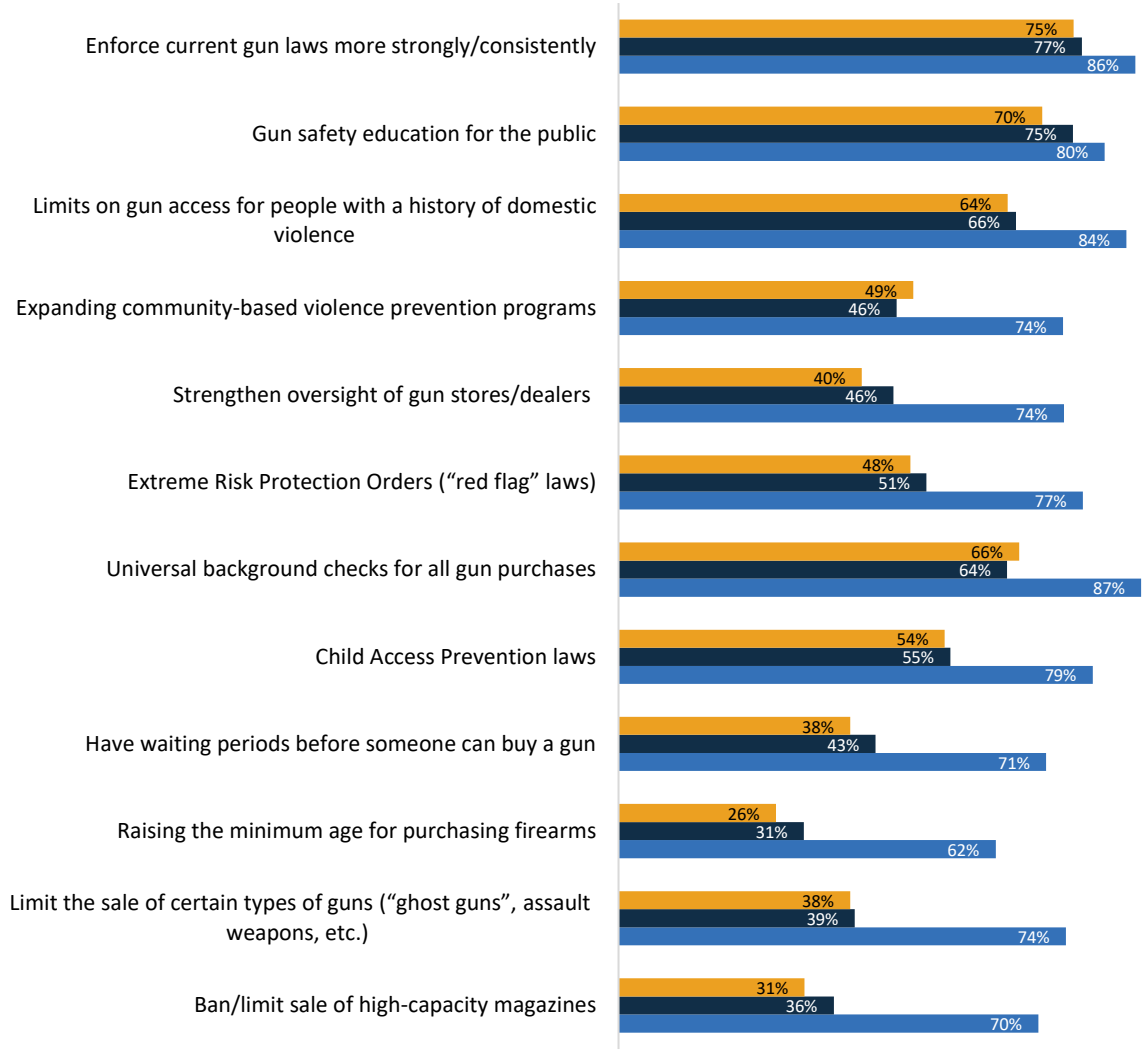


- **22%** said someone close to them was harmed or killed by gun violence
- **18%** experienced gun violence in their community
- **15%** lost someone close to them to suicide by gun
- **14%** said someone close to them was threatened by a gun
- **12%** said they witnessed gun violence
- **7%** experienced gun violence in a school, workplace, or public setting
- **7%** experienced domestic violence involving a gun
- **2%** were directly harmed (e.g., shot, physically injured)
- **3%** - "Other" impacts

***Rural respondents** were more likely to identify **domestic violence** and **firearm suicide** as top issues, while **urban respondents** overwhelmingly said **community violence** had the biggest impacts in their community.*



***Rural respondents** and **urban respondents** both expressed **strong support** for enforcing existing gun laws more consistently, gun safety education, limiting gun access for domestic abusers, and universal background checks. These policies also enjoyed broad support among survey respondents who identified as **gun owners**.*



In addition to survey respondents, PCCD hosted four listening sessions, reaching approximately 80 individuals representing public safety, public health, victims' services, education, community organizations, mental and behavioral health, and more. These listening sessions focused on understanding drivers of statewide and local gun violence trends, including community gun violence, firearm suicides, domestic violence and intimate partner violence involving firearms, as well as unintentional shootings and mass violence incidents.

Several of the policies that Pennsylvanians expressed support for echo areas of common ground explored by the RAND Corporation as part of its *Gun Policy in America* initiative, which found shared levels of agreement among experts favoring both permissive and restrictive gun policies for ideas like state prosecution of prohibited possessors seeking firearms, expanded mental health prohibitions, surrender of firearms by prohibited possessors, and firearm prohibitions for individuals subject to domestic violence protection orders.[58]

Recommendations for OGVP's Strategic Priorities

Across stakeholder engagement efforts to date, the following themes emerged as early strategic priorities and focus areas for the Office of Gun Violence Prevention in the year ahead:

- Opportunities for the Office to serve as a "go to" for gun violence-related information, resources, and action at the state level.
- Facilitate authentic and ongoing community engagement practices to inform the Office's work.
- In light of accelerating and expanding gun ownership,[59] driven primarily from a desire for self-protection and safety, opportunity to reframe and amplify messaging of commonsense gun violence prevention and firearm safety and take a "harm reduction" approach to safer firearm ownership practices to reduce firearm-related injuries and fatalities.
- Take stock of the current landscape of laws, policies, and regulations before pursuing new ones – and identify areas where policy and legislation gaps are creating harms, especially areas of common ground.
- Revamp state-level funding approaches to reduce barriers and focus resources where they are needed most, and where they are most likely to be effective, from upstream prevention to evidence-based intervention strategies to supports for individuals' and communities' healing and recovery.
- Need to address growing levels of firearm-related injuries and deaths among children and teens through upstream prevention programs and youth-centered engagement strategies that address "root causes," offer safe spaces for young people to connect with trusted adults, and provide youth-specific resources year-round.
- Seek resources and identify policies and practices to strengthen protections for victims of domestic violence and intimate partner violence provided by Act 79 of 2018.
- Elevate and support best practices for prevention, intervention, and response/recovery and increase available technical assistance and training resources.

OGVP 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Part I: Developing & Advancing a Coordinated, Effective Statewide Gun Violence Prevention Strategy

Goal 1: Improve Interagency Coordination & Community Engagement

Context: More than a dozen states across the U.S. have established offices of violence prevention (OVPs) to coordinate and implement policies, strengthen prevention efforts through resources and technical assistance, and prioritize gun violence as an issue within state government and the broader public discourse.[60]

1. **Objective 1.1: Serve as a forward-facing state Office for gun violence-related resources and information**, supporting and elevating state and local efforts to address this complex issue through policies, programs, and strategies.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Administrative Host regular check-ins with other state agencies (as part of Advisory Group and Executive Committee sessions) to understand key issues, highlight current state initiatives, and identify gaps/opportunities.

2. **Objective 1.2: Assemble a robust, diverse Advisory Group to help inform Pennsylvania's gun violence prevention strategy.** Pennsylvania has the opportunity to assemble one of the largest state-level coalitions of gun violence prevention champions and stakeholders in the country, with an emphasis on reaching a broad and diverse set of individuals who live across Pennsylvania's rural, urban, and suburban communities.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Administrative Establish an online interest form where stakeholders can request to serve on the Advisory Group and/or stay connected to the OGVP's work in other ways (e.g., receive email updates, etc.).
        ii. Administrative Once Advisory Group is established, recommend hosting informal monthly calls with all Advisory Group members as an opportunity for updates from PCCD and an opportunity for members to raise questions, issues, etc., for the Office and the "good of the group."
        iii. Administrative Develop and disseminate recurring communications to update Advisory Group members and other stakeholders on progress and opportunities for input.
        iv. Administrative Establish an "Executive Committee" of Advisory Group members who will provide regular advice and guidance to the Office's Director. This smaller group of individuals (approximately 15-20 members) representing each of the key areas identified in the Executive Order will meet regularly as a small group and individually with the Office's Director, as needed, to help inform ongoing strategy discussions at the state level.
        v. Administrative 'Segment' Advisory Group members into topic-specific/role-alike workgroups (e.g., firearm suicide prevention, research and data, law enforcement/public safety, etc.) to facilitate more focused discussions down the road.

3. **Objective 1.3: Convene experts and stakeholders to share insights and findings, including through a Pennsylvania Gun Violence Prevention Symposium or similar events.** This event would provide an opportunity for professional development, connection, and support for individuals working to address multiple forms of gun violence across the Commonwealth, and to showcase the early progress and accomplishments of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and its partners.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Administrative Host additional community listening sessions.
        ii. Administrative Convene statewide gun violence prevention summits in partnership with local jurisdictions to connect individuals working on this issue, highlight best practices, and offer networking and connection opportunities.
        iii. Administrative Support youth-led forums to inform and advance the Commonwealth's gun violence prevention strategy.

4. **Objective 1.4: Identify a Director to lead the Office with experience and expertise aligned with key strategic priorities.** Addressing funding gaps and implementing funding reforms, exploring and recommending statewide policies and initiatives to reduce barriers to resources for gun violence survivors and communities, and leading collaborative interagency efforts are among the key roles the Director can play.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Administrative Conduct a national search to find an exceptional leader to oversee Pennsylvania's Office of Gun Violence Prevention.
            1. This individual should ideally have expertise in gun violence prevention (from a public health and/or public safety lens), familiarity with funding and grantmaking strategies, as well as experience managing statewide initiatives with buy-in from public sector and community partners.
        ii. Administrative Once hired, the Director will work closely with counterparts at PCCD as well as with other state agencies to develop an updated Strategic Plan for 2026 and beyond.

Goal 2: Enhance Pennsylvania's Investments in Gun Violence Prevention

Context: Increased public investments at the federal and state level to support community violence intervention (CVI) and other gun violence prevention strategies have been critical, but challenges remain. Public funding – like the grant programs administered by PCCD and other state agencies – plays a critical role in supporting local gun violence prevention efforts. However, many stakeholders pointed to hurdles faced by community-based organizations in accessing and utilizing grant funds, from limited capacity to pursue funding opportunities, competition with other organizations for limited dollars, and the reimbursement-nature of state grants. In addition, stakeholders noted gaps where dedicated public funding is limited, such as firearm suicide prevention and response efforts, secure storage practices and mechanisms, etc. As federally-designated Pennsylvania's State Administering Agency (SAA), PCCD – and, by extension, its Office of Gun Violence Prevention – is uniquely positioned to identify and advance funding strategies that braid and deploy federal and state funds using a strategic and collaborative approach to address these challenges.[61]

1. **Objective 2.1: Identify and pursue actions to adapt, increase, and sustain state-level investments in gun violence prevention and intervention strategies,** with an emphasis on resources reaching community-based organizations supporting direct work with impacted individuals

in both the short- and long-term. PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention can play a role in identifying and implementing strategies to adapt state funding models to the needs of organizations and communities responding to evolving gun violence trends and person-level needs.

a. **Recommended Approach:**
    i. Administrative Funding Analyze current funding sources and gaps to identify where funding may be insufficient or absent, especially in communities where gun violence levels are high (including firearm suicide rates).
    ii. Administrative Funding Assess state government grantmaking policies and practices to identify ways to improve program outcomes.[62]
    iii. Administrative Funding Coordinate among state-level grantmaking agencies to reduce duplication of funding efforts and identify gaps that can be addressed by relevant agencies' funding streams.
    iv. Administrative Funding Policy Identify strategies to promote recurring and more predictable, reliable, and sustainable funding for gun violence prevention, intervention, and response services by exploring models from other states' CVI programs as well as programs administered in Pennsylvania that provide recurring, non-competitive funding to support local services.
    v. Administrative Funding Identify new state-level revenue sources to support CVI as well as Pennsylvania's broader victims' services and compensation infrastructure.
    vi. Administrative Funding Continue to prioritize resources to advance technical assistance, training, and capacity building supports.
    vii. Administrative Funding Seek federal and private funding to augment resources for statewide gun violence prevention strategies.

2. **Objective 2.2: Bolster Pennsylvania's victims' services infrastructure** to ensure resources are available to help individuals and communities heal.

a. **Recommended Approach:**
    i. Funding Legislation Advocate for federal legislation to reform funding mechanisms for the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Grants and Compensation programs, which provide essential resources for states and local victims' services agencies.[63]
    ii. Funding Policy Continue to advocate for reforms to the federal Anti-Terrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP), which deploys supplemental funds in the wake of mass violence incidents, to increase available resources for communities experiencing acute and chronic mass violence.
    iii. Funding Legislation Policy Explore and pursue alternate state funding sources for victims' services programs and compensation to diminish reliance on fines and fees and shore up resources for these critical programs.
    iv. Funding Legislation Policy Enhance resources available to support safety-seeking expenses, such as relocation expenses as well as safe and stable housing, which can be critical to helping survivors heal in the wake of victimization.[64] As an example, this might include expanding resources for property-related enhancements, such as security systems, repairs from damage resulting from crime, etc., to help crime victims feel safer in their homes. This could also include working with partners at the Department of Community and Economic Development to explore strategies to address barriers for gun violence survivors related to housing, relocation, etc.

3. **Objective 2.3: Nurture and develop public-private partnerships** to expand opportunities for securing philanthropic and private funding supports to augment state investments in CVI and gun violence prevention strategies.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Funding Policy Use private funding to provide more flexible "start-up" and operational funding for community-based organizations.
        ii. Funding Policy Address emergency funding needs for participants and clients.
        iii. Funding Legislation Policy Augment resources available for victims' services programs and Pennsylvania's Victim's Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP), including providing for costs that are necessary for increasing victim safety but may not be eligible, such as replacing door locks, addressing higher housing and relocation costs, etc.

Goal 3: Improve Gun Violence-related Data, Research & Evaluation

Context: The Governor's Executive Order tasked the Office of Gun Violence Prevention with a number of responsibilities related to data, research, and information sharing. This includes coordinating with federal, state, and local partners to conduct timely data collection and research regarding firearm-related injuries, fatalities, and incidents. The Office is also responsible for creating a new, comprehensive Gun Violence Data Dashboard and resource hub providing information on gun violence in Pennsylvania, building on PCCD's Gun Violence Grants & Data Dashboard and DOH's Violence Dashboard. In addition, while many agencies track data on firearms, injuries, deaths, and violent crime, this information can often be siloed and incomplete. As an example, Pennsylvania ranks poorly in statewide compliance with the National Incident-based Reporting System (NIBRS), which can provide important details on gun-related crimes that are not currently captured by the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) System. Furthermore, increased participation by counties and enhanced state-level capacity for Pennsylvania's Violent Death Reporting System (PAVDRS) could enhance the quality of data on firearm deaths, leading to more actionable data and insights to improve responses to gun violence.

1. **Objective 3.1: Gather and analyze comprehensive data** on firearm-related injuries, fatalities, and criminal activity in Pennsylvania to offer policymakers insights on emerging trends.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Administrative Establish metrics to track and measure progress, based on available datasets and input from Advisory Group and Executive Committee, state agency partners, etc.
        ii. Administrative Strengthen Pennsylvania's data infrastructure by executing interagency data sharing agreements with state agencies to support the development of a statewide Gun Violence Data Dashboard.
        iii. Funding Legislation Policy Explore legislation or other policy mechanisms to codify and require timely data reporting through NIBRS (law enforcement) and PAVDRS (public health), including funding necessary for staff infrastructure and compliance.

2. **Objective 3.2: Invest in gun violence-related data analysis and research,** including evaluation of statewide and local initiatives.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Funding Administrative Leverage current state-administered resources and pursue available federal or private dollars to increase data and research efforts, such

as jointly developed grant applications or reserving currently available funds to support these efforts.

ii. Funding Legislation Policy Utilize a portion of Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grant funds to support ongoing research and programmatic evaluation efforts.

Part 2: Early Recommendations for Addressing Gun Violence through Prevention, Intervention, and Healing

Goal 4: Invest in Youth Safety & Well-being

Context: When youth feel unsafe and unprotected in their communities, they may choose to access and carry weapons as a means of increasing personal safety, despite the fact that gun carrying increases risk of violence exposure.[65] Exposure to neighborhood violence doubles the likelihood that adolescents will resort to gun carrying,[66] often as a means of personal protection and in response to perceptions that other youth are carrying guns.[67] In addition, increasing rates of suicide – including firearm suicide – among Pennsylvania youth, and especially Black youth and youth of color, are cause for significant concern and attention. Youth who experience grief from losing a friend or family member or those who have witnessed or survived gun violence can often struggle to process their emotions and access youth-specific supports that can help them communicate their needs and access resources.[68]

1. **Objective 4.1: Develop a comprehensive youth gun involvement and violence prevention strategy for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,** in consultation with youth, youth-serving organizations, and other key partners.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Administrative Policy OGVP should facilitate the development of a comprehensive youth gun involvement and violence prevention strategy.
        ii. Administrative Policy Work with other state agencies to analyze youth-focused data as part of the Commonwealth's Building Continuums of Care for Youth Success Initiative, with a focus on data points indicating areas of risk and need for youth related to gun involvement and gun violence.
        iii. Administrative Policy Explore gun safety education and other youth-focused interventions using a harm reduction approach to address increased levels of gun access/carrying among youth driven by fear and desire for self-protection.
        iv. Administrative Policy Finalize recommendations in spring 2025 and include as part of a broader Commonwealth gun violence reduction strategy (summer 2025).

2. **Objective 4.2: Identify and share best practices for supporting youth** impacted by gun violence and to address increasing rates of firearm suicide among young people.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Administrative Policy Address increasing rates of youth suicide, including suicide by gun, among young people – especially youth of color – by working with relevant state agencies and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive

suicide prevention curriculum and corresponding awareness and education campaigns for delivery in schools.

ii. Administrative Policy Spearhead collaboration among youth-serving state agencies should also collaborate to develop guidance for effectively supporting traumatized students who have survived gun violence through school-based interventions and other programs (PDE, DHS, DOH, PCCD, OVA).

3. **Objective 4.3: Continue and increase investments in youth-focused programming** where kids feel safe, supported, and inspired.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Funding Legislation Policy Increase resources provided by state agencies to support youth-focused prevention, intervention, and healing supports, such as through PCCD's newly-created Building Opportunities through Out-of-School Time (BOOST) Grant Program and Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grants.
        ii. Funding Legislation Policy Prioritize funding support for community organizations working with elevated risk youth and young adults to offer them alternative options and supports.

Goal 5: Promote Safer Gun Ownership Practices

Context: A national survey conducted by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that only about half of all gun owners use secure firearm storage practices for all their firearms.[69] Research has shown that secure storage practices – such as those encouraged by education campaigns like Project ChildSafe and Be SMART or mandated by Child Access Prevention laws – can have a significant impact in reducing injuries and fatalities associated with both suicide and unintentional shootings.[70] While gun cable locks are provided as a standard part of handgun sales in Pennsylvania and through other community-based distribution means, some stakeholders pointed out that gun owners do not always know how to use these devices and that most gun owners prefer to use larger devices (such as gun safes and lockboxes) instead of cable locks and smaller devices. Many stakeholders also reinforced the need for Pennsylvania to take a "harm reduction" approach[71] to encourage the increased adoption of safer firearm storage among gun owners, especially those in households with children or other vulnerable people.

1. **Objective 5.1: Increase awareness of secure firearm storage and safer firearm use practices among Pennsylvania gun owners,** especially first-time gun owners and those living in households with children.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Administrative Policy Expand and update existing firearms safety videos and other resources available through the PA State Police (PSP) to include information specifically designed for new gun owners with limited experience handling firearms, as well as explicitly including information about where individuals can obtain safer storage devices like cable locks, secure lock boxes, etc., from law enforcement and non-law enforcement sources.
        ii. Funding Legislation Policy Increase resources for firearm safety training programs and awareness/education campaigns, with an emphasis on reaching underserved populations and individuals/households with heightened risk for firearm-related injury.

iii. Funding Legislation Policy Explore strategies to engage gun shops/FFLs and other partners to promote firearm safety and secure storage options, with attention paid to commonly cited barriers (e.g., liability concerns).

iv. Administrative Policy Funding Support data collection and research to examine the impacts of firearm safety training programs.

2. **Objective 5.2: Reduce barriers to gun owners obtaining devices to secure firearms and firearm safety training**, including financial costs associated with these practices.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Funding Legislation Policy Explore development of state programs to offset costs of secure firearm storage devices (e.g., gun safes, lock boxes, cases) for Pennsylvania residents, such as through tax credits or other mechanisms.
            1. Virginia adopted a similar Firearm Safety Device Credit program in 2023, which gives gun owners the opportunity to receive a credit of up to $300 per year on state individual income tax returns when they purchase an eligible secure firearm storage device; Virginia appropriated $5 million to support this initiative, which provides rebates on a first come, first serve basis.
        ii. Administrative Policy Funding Work with the PA Department of Health (DOH) to examine impacts of secure storage and training pilot sites and explore state-level funding mechanisms for increasing use of secure storage devices and firearm safety training programs.

3. **Objective 5.3: Require secure storage practices for gun owners in households with children through Child Access Prevention legislation.**
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Legislation Policy Develop Child Access Prevention legislation that account for barriers to obtaining secure storage devices as well as risks of disproportionate enforcement within communities of color.

Goal 6: Advance Firearm Suicide Prevention & Postvention Strategies

Context: Although the majority of gun deaths are suicide related, and firearms remain a leading cause of suicide death, stakeholders shared concerns that state-level resources to support local suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies were insufficient. A need was heard to coordinate and align resources and data to better inform statewide suicide prevention efforts.

1. **Objective 6.1: Use available state funding sources to support local firearm suicide reduction and response efforts,** including prevention, intervention, and postvention supports. Ohio has invested federal funding from the Garrett Lee Smith Grant and Byrne SCIP funds in LOSS Teams, providing funding to support local outreach activities as well as statewide training and technical assistance. Pennsylvania's Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA) also recently received a federal grant to expand the use of LOSS Teams in the Commonwealth to improve responses in two pilot counties. Collaborate with the Pennsylvania Departments of Health, Human Services, Military & Veterans Affairs, and Education to coordinate information and resources related to suicide prevention.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**

i. Funding Administrative Policy Leverage existing discretionary grants (such as PCCD's FY 2024 Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program funds) to fill current funding gaps, such as investing in evidence-informed firearm suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention protocols (e.g., Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors/LOSS Teams[72]).
ii. Funding Administrative Policy Explore strategies to improve schools' implementation of suicide prevention and response policies, including student awareness and education programs, mandated by Act 71 of 2014.

2. **Objective 6.2: Increase attention to the issue of firearm suicide among broader suicide prevention efforts and state-level policy discussions**.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Administrative Policy Participate in state-level task forces, teams, and working groups to identify cross-agency strategies for reducing firearm suicides (e.g., DHS' PA Suicide Prevention Task Force, DMVA's Governor's Challenge Team, etc.).
        ii. Administrative Policy Identify opportunities to increase visibility of firearm suicide as a pressing issue requiring the attention of the general public as well as policymakers, such as through press conferences, legislative hearings, data and research reports, etc.
        iii. Administrative Policy Consider strategies for disseminating information and resources through state-run programs that engage individuals who may be at higher risk for self-harm or suicide.
        iv. Legislation Policy Explore adoption of evidence-based policies through legislation that can reduce firearm suicides, including waiting periods for firearm purchases and extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) in collaboration with suicide prevention experts, law enforcement, gun owners, and other key stakeholders.

Goal 7: Support Effective Community Gun Violence Prevention Approaches

Context: Pennsylvania has taken steps to invest in community-led gun violence prevention approaches as well as law enforcement supports and gun violence investigation and prosecution strategies. In addition, Pennsylvania has increased enforcement activities to disrupt gun trafficking and straw purchases, as well as adopted crime gun tracing programs like the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General's Track + Trace initiative and the Pennsylvania State Police's electronic record of sale (EROS) expansion. Despite these efforts, less than half of gun sale records in Pennsylvania are currently transmitted electronically to PSP through EROS.[73] As Pennsylvania looks to enhance these efforts, there are opportunities to learn from lessons in past federal and state public safety grantmaking strategies to expand resources for efforts at both the community and systems levels. Furthermore, as the landscape of victims' services and compensation programs in Pennsylvania and across the nation face an uncertain funding future, the ability to provide lifesaving and life-changing supports to crime victims is in jeopardy.

1. **Objective 7.1: Increase and sustain state-level investments in community violence intervention (CVI) approaches,** with a goal of providing predictable, reliable funding for organizations and people providing critical services.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**

i. Funding Legislation Policy Continue to support and elevate CVI strategies through state grant programs like Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP).
ii. Funding Legislation Policy As part of its broader efforts to reform state grantmaking structures to support CVI,[74] explore opportunities to provide recurring, noncompetitive investments in organizations offering high-quality, impactful, trauma-informed services to individuals and communities experiencing high levels of gun violence, similar to how PCCD currently administers its federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Grant funds.
iii. Funding Legislation Policy Advocate for changes to the Office for Victims of Crime's guidelines for use of federal Anti-Terrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP) funds, which are deployed to communities in the wake of mass violence incidents. (As currently written, the definition of "mass violence" excludes many incidents involving community gun violence.)

2. **Objective 7.2: Thoughtfully expand law enforcement strategies,** with an emphasis on approaches that can reduce the number of unsolved gun crimes and homicides.
   a. **Recommended Approach:**
      i. Funding Administrative Policy Expand support for the Track + Trace initiative, eTrace, forensic firearm examination, gun dealer inspections, and other law enforcement-led capabilities to reduce gun trafficking, straw purchasing, and help law enforcement trace weapons used in violent crimes.
      ii. Funding Administrative Policy Identify and respond to emerging public safety threats involving firearms, in partnership with PSP and the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, as well as local law enforcement agencies, through funding, policy, and information sharing methods. These efforts will help identify developments and trends related to crime guns and illicit firearm marketplaces.
      iii. Administrative Policy Work with PSP, PAOAG, and other partners to monitor implementation and impacts of these initiatives by providing data to incorporate and publish in OGVP's Gun Violence Data Dashboard, as appropriate.
      iv. Legislation Policy Develop legislation requiring the reporting of lost and stolen firearms, with an emphasis on enhanced civil liability provisions and other incentives[75] that may improve compliance rates and outcomes.

3. **Objective 7.3: Establish and enhance programs that help individuals and communities heal in the aftermath of gun violence,** including hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs), Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs), and Resiliency Centers.
   a. **Recommended Approach:**
      i. Funding Administrative Policy Leverage federal FY2024 Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) award to increase the number of HVIPs statewide and identify state-level mechanisms to scale and sustain these evidence-based programs.
      ii. Funding Administrative Policy Use federal Byrne SCIP funds to pilot a Resiliency Center in a Philadelphia-based neighborhood that has experienced chronic and acute levels of mass violence (part of PCCD's Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Initiative).

iii. Funding Administrative Policy Explore strategies to establish and fund additional TRCs in Pennsylvania (currently only one in place in Harrisburg).

Goal 8: Reduce Domestic Violence Homicides & Shootings

Context: Pennsylvania's network of local victims' services programs, including domestic violence programs, are heavily reliant upon federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Grant funding to provide ongoing supports for crime victims, including survivors of gun violence. Stakeholders shared stories of how shootings can create a surging demand for resources, including behavioral health, crisis response, and victims' services and compensation. Demands for these services have outpaced available funding for programs, which have declined in the wake of federal VOCA funding cuts.

Act 79 provided groundbreaking protections for domestic violence victims in Pennsylvania when it was enacted in 2018. Research conducted by PCCD examining data from PSP's Protection From Abuse Database (PFAD) found that the number of protection orders with weapons cautions and weapons relinquishment orders has been increasing since the law took effect in April 2019; however, there are significant variations in implementation practices across counties.[76] Stakeholders echoed concerns about that variability, pointing to a need for more standardized court-based protocols and practices that ensure domestic violence survivors can confidently seek safety and justice.

1. **Objective 8.1: Stabilize and enhance Pennsylvania's victims' services and compensation infrastructure to address the needs of gun violence survivors.**
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Funding Legislation Policy Stabilize and sustain victims' services and compensation infrastructure. Implement recommendations from the Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Initiative's statewide needs assessment and recommendations (expected in March 2025).
        ii. Funding Legislation Policy Advocate for federal reforms to stabilize and increase VOCA funding, such as through passage of legislation like the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act, which would add the False Claims Act to sources of revenue for the Crime Victims Fund, which supports VOCA Grants.

2. **Objective 8.2: Strengthen protections provided via Act 79 and increase adoption of evidence-based domestic violence homicide prevention programs** by increasing resources and technical assistance, with a goal of improving consistency of implementation statewide.
    a. **Recommended Approach:**
        i. Funding Administrative Policy Prioritize funding and work with our state partner, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV), to increase statewide adoption of evidence-based domestic violence homicide reduction strategies like the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) by counties and the Pennsylvania State Police.
        ii. Funding Administrative Policy Provide resources (including funding, training, and technical assistance) to improve counties' implementation of Act 79 of 2018, with particular attention to increasing timeliness and consistency of weapons relinquishment protocols.
        iii. Administrative Legislation Policy Explore ways to support formation and work of local domestic violence fatality and near fatality review teams.

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