Leveraging State & Federal Funding for Local Violence Intervention & Prevention Efforts

PREPARED BY NICK WILSON FOR THE MARYLAND VIOLENCE PREVENTION COALITION

mdpgv.org/coalition
Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition (MVPC) is a coalition of organizations with a joint mission of reducing violence and improving living conditions in underserved Maryland communities. Using a community-led approach, we seek to empower the voices often neglected and educate elected officials and the public about urgent community needs.

The coalition formed in 2018 to coordinate education and advocacy efforts to support Delegate Brooke Lierman’s bill to increase state funding for local violence prevention organizations. Del. Lierman brought together a diverse group of organizations and individuals with a shared interest in expanding public health approaches to violence reduction. The coalition helped pass the bill through both chambers and Governor Hogan signed HB 432 into law.

The 2018 law established the Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (MD VIPP), but the program has been inconsistently funded in recent years. During the abbreviated 2020 session, the coalition supported Senator Jill Carter and Del. Lierman’s bill to allocate modest funding to MD VIPP community-based violence reduction strategies like Baltimore's Safe Streets program, Roca, and Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs. SB 708 successfully cleared both chambers, but was vetoed by Governor Hogan along with many other criminal justice reform bills. Despite the setback, the growing coalition continues to share information and collaborate on advocacy and education during the dual public health crises of COVID-19 and violence.

The coalition is co-chaired by Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence and the Community Justice Action Fund and seeks to elevate the work of groups working on the ground in Baltimore and across Maryland to prevent and interrupt violence. MVPC is composed of more than 50 community members including activists, social service providers, healthcare practitioners, survivors of gun violence, policy advocates, legislators, concerned citizens, violence prevention practitioners, researchers, and scholars.

The coalition meets weekly to develop policy recommendations, advocate for legislation and funding to reduce violence, as well as promote system-wide changes and approaches necessary for communities most impacted by violence to thrive. We believe that Maryland will not arrest or prosecute our way out of our challenges with violence. Many root causes of violence are the result of generational trauma, structural racism, denials of opportunity, and systemic under-investment in our state’s youth, families, and communities.

As policymakers and political leaders explore innovative ways to direct resources beyond policing, MVPC strongly recommends that funds for public safety be directed toward saving lives in black and brown communities most impacted by violence through investments in evidence-based programs. These programs not only reduce violence and enhance public safety, but also improve social and health outcomes across entire communities.

We recommend investing in community-based violence intervention and prevention organizations, cognitive behavioral therapy programs targeting those most at-risk, violence survivor support services, and Hospital-based Violence Intervention programs. Including these program areas and public health approaches in the larger discussions taking place is critical to finding a path toward improved public safety and beginning the long process of addressing the inequity in our criminal justice system.

For more information about MVPC, including how to join our growing movement or engage our coalition as thought partners for meaningful change, you can contact our co-chairs Liz Banach at liz@mdpgv.org and Greg Jackson at greg@cjactionfund.org.

If you have questions about this funding guide, contact Nick Wilson at nickbruin@gmail.com.
FUNDING MARYLAND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Gun violence continues to devastate Maryland families and communities during the COVID-19 epidemic. Sheltering-in-place has not led to a reduction in community and domestic violence and the communities hardest hit by violence are also the most vulnerable to COVID-19.

Local violence intervention and prevention programs are a proven and cost-effective approach to reducing violence and saving lives. Community-based organizations are working tirelessly to both keep the peace and prevent the spread of coronavirus in some of Maryland's most vulnerable communities. In addition to spreading anti-violence messages, the staff and volunteers of local violence intervention programs are amplifying public health information about the virus, encouraging social distancing, and connecting those at the greatest risk of both violence and COVID-19 to critical resources.

Unfortunately, state funding for violence prevention has been inconsistent, at best. In 2018, Governor Hogan signed legislation establishing the Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (VIPP). This program ensures that more violence interrupters are able to serve the communities at the highest risk for gun violence. The program has been severely underfunded in past years, limiting the number of people that it can reach. In response, this year the legislature passed SB 708 to allocate $3.6 million to critical programs reducing violence and an additional $3 million to Safe Streets.

Despite several hundred supporters contacting Governor Hogan, we were disappointed to learn that he vetoed the modest VIPP funding bill. The Hogan Administration's decision to veto these proven methods of violence reduction is shortsighted and will only serve to exacerbate violence in communities, at a time when these communities are already battered by a global pandemic.

Maryland needs to adequately fund local violence prevention organizations more now than ever. Vulnerable clients are currently facing additional challenges including loss of employment, housing, food insecurity, misinformation about COVID-19, lack of access to reliable communication like phones and internet, and widespread fear and anxiety. Outreach workers are also facing additional challenges during the Coronavirus crisis, including building trust while social distancing and wearing masks.

It is vital that Maryland addresses its violence problem to grow our economy. The annual direct economic costs of Maryland gun violence is an estimated $1.2 billion. States that have invested in community violence prevention and seen economic savings include California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, and New York. For every dollar Boston has invested in violence intervention programs, taxpayers have saved seven dollars. New Jersey recently announced $20 million in federal Victims of Crime Act funds for hospital-based violence intervention programs and Virginia recently passed the Virginia Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention Fund, which is similar to Maryland's VIPP.
The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need for more robust public health strategies to effectively address public health crises in our communities. It takes long-term solutions to solve long-term problems and Maryland is not investing as much as it needs to see sustained impact. The state government needs to step up, but in the meantime, there are federal dollars available.

This resource highlights the following opportunities for non-profit organizations, cities, and states to leverage federal resources to fund critical violence intervention efforts:

- Coronavirus Relief Fund
- Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
- Community Service Block Grant
- FEMA Emergency Management
- Project Safe Neighborhoods
- Additional funding resources

**MVP LINKS**

Response to Governor Hogan’s Veto of SB 708
COVID-19 Letter to Governor Hogan
Petition Asking Hogan to Sign SB 708

**RECOMMENDED READING**

Grants Available for Maryland Nonprofits
Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention
COVID-19: What Nonprofits Need to Know
Maryland Nonprofits
Maryland COVID-19 Resources Guide
Public Policy Partners
Investing in Intervention
Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence
When the Shootings Don’t Stop
The Trace

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020. In addition to the much-publicized Paycheck Protection Program for small businesses and $1,200 stimulus checks for qualifying taxpayers, the legislation appropriated $150 billion for a Coronavirus Relief Fund to assist state and local government response to the public health emergency.

Only state, local, and tribal governments are eligible to apply for the Coronavirus Relief Fund. However, violence prevention organizations and their supporters can educate city, county, and state-level policymakers about the need to include community violence prevention efforts when applying for resources through the Coronavirus Relief Fund. If you are interested in pursuing this funding opportunity, it is important that you move quickly because state and local agencies will be applying shortly.

In general, these funds are intended to be used by governments to pay for unexpected costs resulting from COVID-19. Approved uses of Coronavirus Relief Fund disbursements include, but are not limited, to:

- Acquisition and distribution of medical and protective supplies, including gloves, masks, and sanitizer;
- Communication and enforcement of public health orders;
- Technical assistance to local authorities or other entities on mitigation of COVID-19-related threats to public health and safety;
- Public safety measures undertaken in response to COVID-19;
- Quarantining individuals;
- Care for homeless populations;
- Medical expenses;
- Food delivery expenses;
- Compliance with COVID-19 health measures.
The Victims of Crime Act of 1984 established the federal Office of Victim Services to provide direct assistance to victims of crimes. VOCA funds come from the federal Crime Victims Fund, which is financed by fines paid by federal offenders rather than tax dollars. The Crime Victims Fund is then disbursed through the states in two forms: Victim of Crime Compensation Funds and Victim of Crime Assistance Funds. The Victim of Crime Compensation Funds are direct payments made to individuals to reimburse them for costs associated with their incident. This covers a variety of items ranging from medical expenses to funeral services.

In an April 2020 guide recommending ten things Mayors can do to prevent gun violence during the COVID-19 epidemic, Everytown for Gun Safety encouraged mayors to "ask city staff to invest time and thought into state and federal grant opportunities for city gun violence prevention. Non-essential city staff can enroll in grant-writing webinars and conduct outreach to local gun violence prevention programs to assess their current and projected funding needs." Baltimore Mayor Jack Young signed on to the report's recommendations.

**Recommended Reading**

Coronavirus Relief Fund Guidance for State and Local Governments  
U.S. Department of Treasury

Coronavirus Relief Fund Frequently Asked Questions  
U.S. Department of Treasury

The CARES Act Provides Assistance for State and Local Governments  
U.S. Department of Treasury

Resources for Youth and Families During COVID-19  
Maryland Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services

Grants FAQ: COVID-19 Impact  
Maryland Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services

Funding Community Violence Prevention Through The CARES Act  
Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence

Protecting Americans from Community Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic  
Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence

Federal regulations require states to spend at least 10% of victim assistance funds to victims of sexual assault, victims of domestic violence, victims of child abuse, and underserved victims of crime. States have flexibility in defining “underserved victims of crime,” but the US Office for Victims of Crime has called the following groups underserved: victims of gang violence, victims of violent crime in high crime areas, victims of physical assault, and survivors of homicide victims. States have broad discretion on the remaining 60% of funds and can grant VOCA funds to non-profit organizations assisting crime victims. State administering agencies (SAA) have up to four years to spend VOCA funds.

When the Crime Victims Fund reached $10 billion in 2014, Congress raised the annual appropriation cap so states could increase spending on victim assistance programs. In recent years, the amount distributed to crime victims has averaged two to three billion annually. Since the cap was increased, many states have not been able to spend all of the VOCA funds they were allocated.

Community-based violence prevention and intervention nonprofits should collaborate with states and cities to access these unused federal funds to assist gun violence victims and prevent community violence.
Maryland's VOCA funds are administered by the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services, which announced $132 million in grant funding opportunities on April 22, 2020 for law enforcement, youth services, victim agencies, and direct services. A month later, the SAA announced $1.8 million in federal VOCA funding to victim service providers to address COVID-related challenges in serving vulnerable populations in Maryland.

Maryland violence prevention advocates and stakeholders should educate the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services and other state agencies about the benefits of investing a portion of VOCA funds in violence intervention efforts in our underserved communities.

Community violence nonprofits can apply for VOCA funding independently or in partnership with cities, hospitals, and other local organizations. Applying for VOCA victim assistance funds can be challenging for small organizations, especially nonprofits without a history of complex grant-management activities. Recommendations for states to encourage community violence prevention organizations to access federal funds and ease the burden of compliance include:

- Allocate a portion of VOCA funds to support victims of gun violence, hospital-based intervention programs, trauma recovery centers, and impacted communities;
- Provide outreach and assistance to community-based organizations during grant application process and compliance management;
- Suggest that state and local government agencies and hospitals receiving VOCA funds partner with local violence prevention and interruption organizations;
- Create or assign a pass-through entity that directs VOCA funds to community violence prevention and intervention organizations.

Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs) across the country have successfully accessed VOCA funds to provide services to victims of violent injuries when they are being treated at the hospital and post-discharge. HVIPs use a trauma-informed approach to promote healing and prevent retaliatory violence when victims are especially receptive to making positive life changes.

In addition to addressing a victim's exposure to violence and desire to retaliate, HVIPs provide access to trauma therapy and social support to treat the long-term mental health consequences of firearm injuries. Intervention Specialists offer case management services, connect uninsured patients with public benefits, and help victims obtain VOCA compensation. In 2014, California passed a law that permitted these “Violence Peer Counselors” to be reimbursed for victim services with VOCA compensation funds.

Accessing VOCA funds can improve the sustainability of HVIPs and help them grow to serve more clients and save more lives. For example, Project Ujima is a Milwaukee-based HVIP that has received VOCA assistance dollars for years from the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Office of Crime Victim Services. On January 29, 2020, New Jersey announced it was awarding $20 million in VOCA grants to fund nine HVIP programs for 21 months. The nonprofit Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI) also received a VOCA grant to provide training, technical assistance, and grant management support to all nine sites in New Jersey. Virginia took similar steps earlier this year and announced funding for seven HVIP sites.

Maryland may want to look at New Jersey as a model for a comprehensive state-wide approach to VOCA funding and community-based violence organizations should explore ways to increase collaboration with local hospitals.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Funding Chief
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Email: justice.schisler@maryland.gov
Revitalizing older neighborhoods and established communities; leveraging CDBG funds with other public assistance programs and private resources; directing growth to existing population centers; providing essential public services to low and moderate income persons; encouraging collaboration with state, federal and local programs focused on community development, economic development and planning efforts; supporting initiatives that preserve affordable homeownership; supporting capital and non-capital investments that support the homeless; supporting initiatives and activities that benefit those serving or who have served in the U.S. armed forces.

The Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) provides funds to reduce poverty, address the needs of low-income people, and provide services related to employment, education, housing, healthcare, transportation, nutrition, emergency services, and linkage to anti-poverty programs. The amount of CSBG funds from the US Department of Health and Human Services allocated to Maryland’s DHCD is based on a statutory formula, which is then given to seventeen designated Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and two agencies.

An additional billion dollars was added to the CSBG program when the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. These supplemental funds are intended to respond to the consequences of increasing unemployment and economic disruption caused by COVID-19.

Maryland-specific objectives of the CSBG program include:

- Revitalizing older neighborhoods and established communities;
- Leveraging CDBG funds with other public assistance programs and private resources;
- Directing growth to existing population centers;
- Providing essential public services to low and moderate income persons;
- Encouraging collaboration with state, federal and local programs focused on community development, economic development and planning efforts;
- Supporting initiatives that preserve affordable homeownership;
- Supporting capital and non-capital investments that support the homeless;
- Supporting initiatives and activities that benefit those serving or who have served in the U.S. armed forces.

HELPFUL MARYLAND LINKS:

- VOCA Overview
- Staff Directory
- Grant Management System Help
- Tips & Guidance
- Help Videos

RECOMMENDED READING

Current Funding Opportunities
Office for Victims of Crime

Fund for Healing: VOCA Grants for Violence Reduction
Everytown for Gun Safety and Cities United

Funding Opportunities
National Network to End Domestic Violence

Hospital-based Violence Intervention: Practices and Policies to End the Cycle of Violence
Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI)

Keys to Collaboration between Hospital-based Violence Intervention and Cure Violence Programs
Healing Justice Alliance

Shrinking Victims Fund Signals Tough Times
Roll Call

Gun Violence Work Could Use Billions of Dollars in Victim Assistance Funds
Juvenile Justice Information Exchange

SAFE STREETS KEEPS THE PEACE

#FUNDPEACEMD
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) funds are intended to stabilize and strengthen Maryland communities by increasing affordable housing opportunities, improving infrastructure, and expanding opportunities for persons of law and moderate income.

CDBG funding has two parts: the Entitlement Program and the States and Small Cities Program. The Entitlement Program is directly administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD) and provides federal funds to the following “entitlement” communities:

- Anne Arundel County
- Baltimore County
- Harford County
- Howard County
- Montgomery County
- Prince George County
- Annapolis City
- Baltimore City
- Bowie City
- Cumberland City
- Frederick City
- Gaithersburg City
- Hagerstown City
- Salisbury City

Approximately 70% of CDBG funds are spent on “entitlement” counties and cities. The remaining 30% from the States and Small Cities Program is administered by Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Funds DHCD receives from the federal government can be used in any Maryland town except the above “entitlement” jurisdictions.

CDBG projects typically involve housing, economic development, or public facilities (water/sewer, streets, child care, senior or community centers, shelters). Projects must benefit persons of low and moderate income, eliminate slum and blight, or meet an urgent need of recent origin that threatens public health and safety. Both public and private organizations are eligible to be grant subrecipients.

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RECOMMENDED READING

Maryland CDBG Program Policies and Procedures Manual, Fiscal Year 2020
Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Dev.

Community Services Block Grant Information Memo
Administration for Children and Families

About Community Services Block Grants
Administration for Children and Families

CSBG Cares Act Supplemental Admin Guidance
Office of Community Services
Mitigation activities related to slowing the spread of COVID-19; Integration of emergency management and public health operations; Planning for alternate care sites; Logistics and management planning for distribution of food, water, shelter, medical services, and transportation; Implementation of community lifelines; Disaster financial management; Domestic travel.

In response to COVID-19, FEMA announced a Coronavirus-specific supplement to the regular FEMA Emergency Management Performance Grant Program. This program will provide funds to assist state and local emergency management agencies with “preventing, preparing for, and responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.” Maryland was allocated $1,843,219.

Examples of acceptable uses for FEMA EMPG supplemental funds include:
- Mitigation activities related to slowing the spread of COVID-19;
- Integration of emergency management and public health operations;
- Planning for alternate care sites;
- Logistics and management planning for distribution of food, water, shelter, medical services, and transportation;
- Implementation of community lifelines;
- Disaster financial management;
- Domestic travel.

In addition to EMPG, FEMA funds community recovery from major disasters through the Public Assistance Grant Program. Public Assistance is FEMA’s largest grant program and has given over five billion dollars since 2017 to local governments, states, and nonprofit organizations.

Examples of approved uses of Public Assistance funds include:
- Alternate care sites such as hotels;
- Wrap-around services;
- Case management, and child care for shelter facilities;
- Meals for emergency workers;
- Medical care and transportation;
- Outreach materials, including flyers, PSAs, and newspaper campaigns.

Maryland Emergency Management Agency
Camp Fretterd Military Reservation
5401 Rue Saint Lo Dr.,
Reistertown, Maryland 21136
Phone: (410) 517-3600
Fax: (410) 517-3610
Email: mema.maryland.gov

Recommended Reading

Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Emergency Management Performance Grant Program COVID-19 Supplemental (EMPG-S)

Bringing Resources to State, Local, Tribal & Territorial Governments

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: Public Assistance Simplified Application

Public Assistance: Local, State, Tribal and Private Non-Profit

Above resources from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), US Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a nationwide initiative formed in 2001 to increase partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors to coordinate efforts to enforce federal firearm offenses. The Department of Justice program expanded upon its initial focus on prosecution to also prioritize engaging local governments, social service providers, and community groups to prevent gun violence and increase police legitimacy.

PSN’s Innovations in Community-Based Crime Reduction Program supports efforts to help neighborhoods address crime and improve community safety. This program provides funding for a “consortium of criminal justice, community, and/or human service partners” to develop a crime reduction strategy in “persistently distressed neighborhoods that face significant violent and serious crime challenges.” Successful examples of PSN interventions include Richmond’s Project Exile, the Boston Operation Ceasefire Program, and DOJ’s Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative.

Each state’s PSN program is required to develop effective relationships with community leaders and encouraged to partner with local prevention and offender reentry programs. Project Safe Neighborhoods Strategic Action Plan Template includes the following as key community partners:

- Outreach workers
- Social service providers
- Trauma centers
- Faith communities
- Neighborhood associations
- Foundations

For fiscal year 2019, Maryland was allocated $327,496 in Project Safe Neighborhoods funding. This is separate from the Baltimore Police Department’s award of $2,830,272 for ten additional BPD employees under the Department of Justice’s Operation Relentless Pursuit program. Since US Attorneys are given large discretion over how to spend PSN funds, advocates should consider pursuing PSN funding for violence reduction programs.
# Additional Funding Resources

**Grants Available for Maryland Nonprofits**
Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention

**COVID-19: What Nonprofits Need to Know**
Maryland Nonprofits

**Greater Baltimore Covid-19**
Emergency Response Fund

**Chronicle of Philanthropy**

**FoundationCenter.org**

**Grants.gov**

**Grants Alert**

**Grant Gopher**

**Grant Siren**

**Grant Station**

**Nonprofit Times**

**Philanthropy News Digest**

**SAMHSA.gov**

**SAMHSA COVID-19**

**Youth Today**

### Figure 6: Sources of Initial and Ongoing Funding

#### Initial Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private Funds</th>
<th>Public Funds</th>
<th>In-Kind Contributions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insurance foundations</td>
<td>City and State Departments of Public Health</td>
<td>ER staff time</td>
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<tr>
<td>State foundations</td>
<td>Monies diverted from police/criminal justice system</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community-based foundations</td>
<td>Hospital foundations</td>
<td>Donations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital foundations</td>
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</table>

#### Ongoing Funding

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<tr>
<th>Private Funds</th>
<th>Public Funds</th>
<th>In-Kind Contributions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Way local funding</td>
<td>City funding, such as the General Fund</td>
<td>Individual donations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance foundations, such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield</td>
<td>Local tax initiative funds; Department of Public Health</td>
<td>Donations from religious organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Wood Johnson Foundation</td>
<td>Department of Behavioral Health; budget earmarks</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>State foundations</td>
<td>State: Department of Public Health; Department of Commerce; Governor's Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community-based foundations</td>
<td>Federal: Victims of Crime Assistance; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP); Department of Justice; Department of Education; Bureau of Substance Abuse; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); National Institutes of Health (NIH); National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH); Medicaid/Medicare billing codes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital foundations</td>
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<td>Hospital funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Events</td>
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<td>Hospital seasonal giving campaigns</td>
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<td>Reimbursement for services</td>
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Source: NNHVIP & Youth Alive
## Gun Violence Intervention Programs That Are VOCA-Eligible

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs</th>
<th>Street Outreach Programs</th>
<th>Trauma Recovery Centers</th>
<th>Gun Violence Victim Services[^1]</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate emotional, psychological, physical, and mental health of the victim</td>
<td>• Crisis intervention</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Safety Planning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Addressing physical and mental health</td>
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<td>Personal advocacy and emotional support</td>
<td>• Case management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Information, referrals, follow-up</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Identifying victim needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Assessing impact of crime on victim</td>
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<td>Mental health counseling</td>
<td>• Outpatient therapy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• May provide outpatient therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer-to-peer support</td>
<td>• Available</td>
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<td>Public awareness</td>
<td>• Educating shooting victims, their families, and the community about the cycle of violence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engaging with communities disproportionately impacted by gun violence before and after violence occurs</td>
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</table>

Source: Everytown for Gun Safety and Cities United

[^1]: These services are available through VOCA grants.

[^2]: VOCA = Violence-Of-Origin in Crime Act