

OFSVP Firearm Violence Prevention Program Report



Report pursuant to [ESSB 5693\(128\)\(110\)](#) Chapter 297, Laws of 2022 (state fiscal year 2023 supplemental operating budget)

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Report to the Legislature

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Executive summary

Overview

In 2020, the Legislature created the Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention (OFSVP) in the Department of Commerce (Commerce). One of the roles of OFSVP is to support and coordinate the implementation of evidence-based firearm violence intervention programs across the state.

Since it was launched in 2021, OFSVP has distributed funds in communities throughout Washington to support local efforts to prevent and intervene in firearm violence. We prioritize investments in underserved, historically disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities while building violence prevention and intervention capacity through engagement, outreach, and technical assistance. We use data validated by community partners and researchers to inform funding decisions.

This report summarizes the outcomes and evaluation of the firearm violence intervention programs funded, supported, and evaluated by OFSVP during fiscal year 2023 (July 1, 2022 June 30, 2023).

Funding summary

At the governor's request, the Legislature provided OFSVP with a significant increase in funding to support firearm violence intervention, prevention, and planning grants throughout the state¹. One section of the budget directed OFSVP to fund services resulting from King County's Shots Fired program. Another section directed funding toward evidence-based intervention services for youth at high risk to perpetrate gun violence and who reside in areas with high rates of gun violence. In two places, this budget proviso included direction for OFSVP to "complete an evaluation ...and provide a report to the governor and the appropriate legislative committees" for the programs supported with this funding. For simplicity, we combined those reports into this single document. The relevant language from [ESSB 5693\(128\)\(110\)](#) is:

(110) \$971,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and \$3,561,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for the department to continue starting up the Washington state office of firearm safety and violence prevention, including the creation of a state and federal grant funding plan to direct resources to cities that are most impacted by community violence. Of the amounts provided in this subsection:

(a) \$100,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and \$600,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for community-based violence prevention and intervention services to individuals identified through the King County shots fired social network analysis. The department must complete an evaluation of the program and provide a report to the governor and the appropriate legislative committees by June 30, 2023.

(b) (i) \$450,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and \$1,800,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for a grant program through the office of firearm safety and violence prevention for evidence-based services to youth who are at high risk to perpetrate gun violence and who reside in areas with high rates of gun violence. Priority shall be given to:

A) One site serving in Yakima County, one site in South King County, one site in Federal Way, and one site in Tacoma;

B) Sites that partner with the University of Washington public behavioral health & justice policy division to deliver culturally relevant family integrated transition services through use of credible messenger advocates;

¹ Funding was in the fiscal year 2023 supplemental budget, [ESSB 5693\(128\)\(110\)](#), Chapter 297, Laws of 2022.

C) Sites that partner with the University of Washington Harborview firearm injury and policy research program for social impact evaluation; and

D) Sites that partner an organization focused on evidence-based implementation management identified by the department.

(ii) The department must complete an evaluation of the program and provide a report to the governor and the appropriate legislative committees by June 30, 2023.

As directed, the remaining \$1,161,000 in this supplemental budget proviso was provided to and used by OFSVP to continue to stand up the office and to support the OFSVP grant programs in particular.

Introduction

In the fiscal year 2023, OFSVP directly or indirectly funded seven firearm violence intervention programs that provide services to youth using various evidence-based programs and tools. Two of the funded programs implemented family-integrated transition services using credible messengers advocates²; under (110)(b)(B), these programs received support (funded by OFSVP) from the University of Washington Public Behavioral Health and Justice Policy Division.

All of the programs received technical assistance from a consultant funded by OFSVP under (110)(b)(D) and were evaluated by the University of Washington's Firearm Injury and Policy Research Program through funding provided under (110)(b)(C). We share the breakdown of this funding distribution in the table below.

(110)(a) - Prevention and intervention services to individuals identified through the King County shots fired social network analysis.

King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office	\$ 450,000
Choose Freedom (subcontract)	\$ 240,000
Burien BRAVE (subcontract)	\$ 200,000
Maike and Associates, LLC	\$ 50,000

(110)(b) - Evidenced-based firearm violence intervention programming (including programs serving South King county, Federal Way, and Tacoma)

Harborview Medical Center	\$ 378,630
City of Tacoma (subcontracted to multiple programs)	\$ 400,000
BIPOC Apostrophe	\$ 399,002

(110)(b)(B) - Family integrated transition services using credible messengers advocates

Walk About Yakima	\$ 400,000
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² "Credible messengers are neighborhood leaders, experienced youth advocates and individuals with relevant life experiences whose role is to help youth transform attitudes and behaviors around violence." ([Credible Messenger Initiative | dysr \(dc.gov\)](https://www.dysr.org/credible-messenger-initiative/))

Community Passageways \$ 400,000

UW Public Behavioral Health and Justice Policy Division \$ 300,000

(110)(b)(C) - Social impact analysis

UW Firearm Injury and Policy Research Program \$ 156,487

(110)(b)(D) - Evidence-based implementation management

Evidence Based Associates \$ 200,000

Fiscal year 2023 was the first year OFSVP had meaningful funds available to support community firearm violence intervention programs. Much of the progress and lessons learned - including implementation of the recommendations from the University of Washington - will be incorporated into future grant solicitations and contracts.

King County Shots Fired Grant [ESSB 5693\(128\)\(110\)\(a\)](#)

Research has consistently shown that while prevalent and persistent, firearm violence is intensely concentrated within small, identifiable social networks. Firearm violence spreads within these networks, meaning that the closer a person is to a victim or perpetrator of firearm violence, the more likely they are to be a victim of firearm violence themselves.³ Using arrest data from nine law enforcement agencies, analysts with the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (KCPAO) use social network analysis (SNA) to understand the networks of firearm violence in King County and to identify those individuals who are most at risk of becoming gunshot victims in those cities, communities, and neighborhoods most impacted by firearm violence. Individuals are then identified who are at elevated risk of being victimized. For intervention and prevention services, KCPAO refers high-risk individuals to its subcontractors, Choose 180 and the City of Burien Building Resistance and Violence Education (BRAVE) program. The expectation is that participation in the services will deter individuals from further participating or being victims of firearm-related crimes.

- [Burien's BRAVE Program](#) is a violence intervention program that stems from the core principle that youth and community must work together to define shared goals and provide youth with the tools for achievement. Working with the Highline School District, the BRAVE program and the YMCA Alive and Free program offer intensive case management services and resource navigation to promote protective factors and identify and address the safety and social gaps of the youth enrolled in the program.⁴
- [Choose 180's Choose Freedom Program](#) is a community-based approach to reentry from incarceration for violence prevention and healing. Team members hold group sessions in detention facilities and the community to build relationships, learn from each other, and heal from trauma. Choose 180 focuses on individuals age 12-24 who live in King County and have been impacted by incarceration and/or gun violence.⁵ For their work with the KCPAO, Choose 180 conducted entry assessments to assist in developing individualized goal plans and establish baseline data, conducted exit assessments to assess attitudinal and behavioral changes, and offered skill development classes.

³ [King County gun violence data - King County, Washington](#)

⁴ [Seattle YMCA Violence Prevention Programs](#)

⁵ [Choose 180, Choose Freedom](#)

Outcomes

Individuals at risk of gun violence were identified through a Social Network Analysis completed by the King County Prosecutors Attorney's Office (KCPAO). Once KCPAO identified an individual, they referred the person to BRAVE or Choose 180. BRAVE staff would attempt to contact the individual at school and the Choose 180 team would try to contact the individual in the community.

- Fifty-eight referrals were made from the KCPAO.
- Twenty-nine additional referrals were from community members who heard about the program.
- Five individuals referred from KCPAO Social Network Analysis could be contacted to enroll in services.
- Twenty-nine individuals who self-referred were enrolled in services.

Challenges

The KCPAO reported significant challenges and low enrollment numbers. The primary challenge was locating individuals referred from the KCPAO Social Network Analysis. By the time the analysis was completed, the contact information was outdated, leaving outreach workers with no way to contact the individual. BRAVE and Choose 180 made diligent attempts to locate these individuals at last known cell numbers and addresses, reaching out to family members, email, social media, and utilizing people finder platforms without success.

Opportunities

The KCPAO has unique access to data, which can be used to guide community services. BRAVE and Choose 180 are committed to working with youth and violence prevention. Over the next two years (2023-2025), KCPAO plans to do the following to continue improving the program:

- Continue to work with Choose 180 to identify ways they can better support community-based referrals. Choose 180 reports greater success with community referrals over referrals from KCPAO.
- Work with BRAVE to overcome unique challenges to work with youth who attend Highline School District. Shortening the timeline between the incident and referral will help alleviate this problem.
- Solve structural issues by hiring a full-time analyst for community-based prevention work and upgrading computer systems.

Violence Intervention Grants ESSB 5693(128)(110)(b)

Commerce distributed much of this grant funding through a competitive process to support evidence-based services to youth at high risk of perpetrating gun violence who reside in areas with high rates of gun violence. The competitive process prioritized sites in Yakima county, south King county, Federal Way, and Tacoma and sites that implemented family-integrated transition services in partnership with the University of Washington Public Behavioral Health and Justice Policy Division.

Harborview Medical Center - \$378,630

Hospital-based Violence Intervention (HVIP) ⁶ connects victims of firearm violence to services when they come to the hospital for treatment of their injuries. HVIP is how Harborview Medical Center seeks to interrupt the cycle of retaliation and supports patients and families caught up in firearm violence. This multidisciplinary program combines the efforts of medical staff with trusted community-based partners to provide safety

<https://www.thehavi.org/what-is-an-hvip>

planning, service, and trauma-informed care to violently injured patients. This collaboration includes intervention, case management, and follow-up services while addressing the Social Determinants of Health⁷.

Outcomes

From January to June 2023, Harborview Medical Center treated 260 patients who presented in the emergency room with firearm-related violence injuries. Of the 260 patients:

- 83% of injuries were assault related.
- 8.1% of injuries were accidental self-inflicted injuries
- 8.5% of injuries were fatal.
- 44.6% of the patients identified as Black/African Americans, 11.2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 22.7% White, 15.8% Latinx, 2.7% Native American and 3.1% identified Multiple.
- 56.3% were firearm injuries of individuals ages 12-30 years old.
- 70.2% of the patients came from King County.
- 40% of the victims accepted referrals to community resources.

Community Passageways \$400,000

This project aimed to serve 30-40 youth and young adults impacted by firearm violence. The funding also supported administrative and operational capacity to reduce firearm violence among youth and young adults of color at risk of or involved in firearm violence and firearm-involved legal cases. This project sustained Community Passageways' implementation of family-integrated transition (FIT) services, partnering with the University of Washington Public Behavioral Health and Justice Policy Division.

In addition to providing services to at-risk individuals, the contract required Community Passageways staff to:

- attend training provided by the University of Washington Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health,
- attend Credible Messenger (CM) training,
- train new employees on the Apricot fiscal management platform,
- improve case management and data quality across programs,
- monitor program fidelity for evidence-based services, and
- improve financial monitoring and invoicing.

Outcomes

The contract required Community Passageways to report on performance and outcome measures, including:

- Number of youth/young adults identified as being high-risk
- Number of families/clients enrolled or retained.
- Number of new youth/young adults enrolled in the program
- Number of youth/young adults provided with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Multisystemic Therapy (MST), and/or Family Integrated Therapy (FIT) interventions
- Number of youth/young adults' connected services
- Number of meetings with technical assistance (TA) provider, date, and type of TA provided
- Number and dates of training

⁷ [Social Determinants of Health - Healthy People 2030 | health.gov](https://www.health.gov/healthypeople2030)

The information submitted by the contractor indicated that 39 families were receiving services as of June 30, 2023, and that training of staff was conducted approximately once a quarter but did not provide meaningful data on outcomes from this project.

Walk About Yakima \$400,000

The Walk About Yakima (WAY) program administered by the Dispute Resource Center of Yakima and Kittitas Counties partners with the Yakima Police Department, Yakima County Juvenile Court, the University of Washington Public Behavioral Health and Justice Policy Division, and other partners to reduce gang violence in Yakima.⁸

Based on the Crown Heights Save Our Streets evidence-based model, the WAY program aims to reduce firearm violence among high-risk youth and young adults through violence interrupter and outreach programs.⁹ The program uses mentors to connect high-risk young people to program services. Additional wraparound supports assist youth in overcoming barriers ranging from conflicts to housing instability and provide redirection away from firearm violence.

In collaboration with the WAY program, over the grant period, the Yakima Police Department and Gang Unit and other community and system partners identified 40 youth and young adults as high-risk. Twenty-nine customer notifications were completed. Customer notification occurs when a mentor and a law enforcement officer personally contact individuals to offer services and resources to change behavior patterns before another firearm incident occurs.

Individuals enrolled in the WAY program met with mentors. They participated in the University of Washington Family Integrated Transitions (FIT) program. The primary goal of the FIT program is to enhance self-management of emotions, become aware of thoughts and behaviors, focus on reducing the risk of out-of-home placement, reduce delinquency, including firearm carrying and use, and treat behavioral health disorders, including substance use and abuse.

Outcomes

- Of the 40 individuals contacted, 31 chose to enter programming and services.
- Eight individuals graduated from the program.
- Mentors made 1,185 youth and young adult program participant contacts through community events and other targeted outreach.

BIPOC Apostrophe Foundation - \$399,002

This new program uses the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) program¹⁰ to reduce firearm violence by identifying young men of color, ages 17 – 24, at the highest risk of engaging in or being a victim of firearm violence. Once these youth and young adults are identified, street outreach workers contact the youth/young adults to engage them in the program and offer intensive case management services. Through the implementation of an evidence-based approach, the project provides a holistic approach, which included connecting an estimated 45 young adult males to mental health, educational, and/or employment readiness services during the grant period.

⁸ [Community Partnership — Dispute Resolution Center \(drcyakima.org\)](https://www.drcyakima.org)

⁹ [Save Our Streets Crown Heights \(sos.crownheights.org\)](https://www.sos.crownheights.org)

¹⁰ Program Profile: Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) (Massachusetts) | [CrimeSolutions](https://www.crimesolutions.com), National Institute of Justice ([ojp.gov](https://www.ojp.gov))

Program activities

From November to December 2022, BIPOC Apostrophe¹¹, using King County Social Network Analysis information, identified neighborhoods in the Renton, Kent, Federal Way, and Rainer Beach classified as low- to high-crime areas. By identifying neighborhoods impacted by high-violence crimes, BIPOC Apostrophe determined how to distribute its Street Outreach program.

The Street Outreach team contacted individuals in known hang-out areas and apartment complexes where gang violence was prevalent. The team also contacted faith-based communities in those locations as a source of information about the neighborhood.

Outcomes

- Street Outreach teams connected with local high schools in South King County and continued to contact high-risk individuals and pass out flyers about gun violence.
- From December 2022 – June 2023, the Street Outreach team handed out more than 1,830 flyers about gun violence. It contacted 60 individuals in high-risk neighborhoods to offer case management services.

City of Tacoma - \$400,000

Through this project, the City of Tacoma subcontracted with five violence reduction organizations to support services to reduce firearm violence and gang activity to high-risk youth and young adults and their families. This project incorporated a range of services, including case management, street outreach, mentorship and peer support, mental health and substance use treatment, skills-building activities, community action work, non-legal advocacy for clients, and support and resources for family members.¹²

Tacoma's subcontractors included Big Homie Ministries and Tacoma Urban League, who were subcontracted to increase the number of service providers; weave together a fabric of services tailored to the unique needs of communities and neighborhoods throughout Tacoma; incorporate credible messengers into existing service delivery to reach populations that traditionally will not work with city-funded service providers; provide support for families impacted by gun violence; and prevent and reduce youth violence and gang activity.

- Big Homie Ministries¹³ program aims to reduce violence and unite youth and young adults in Pierce County. Big Homie Ministries' clients receive support and intentional one-on-one services to help them disengage from antisocial behavior. The goal is to develop tools to navigate difficult circumstances, build new skills, deconstruct unhealthy behaviors, and engage in alternate income sources. This organization served 33 individuals using FIT.
- Tacoma Urban League (TUL), Male Involvement Program¹⁴ is a youth violence prevention program for middle school males of color. The program teaches alternate options for reducing conflict, managing anger, and avoiding violence through structured dialogue, culturally specific exercises and group mentoring.¹⁵ This program targets individuals in the City of Tacoma under the age of 24 residing west of Tacoma Mall, in the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods. They also focused on incarcerated youth and other youth living outside the City of Tacoma limits. Still, they are actively involved in criminal activity inside the Tacoma city limits and verified by the Tacoma Police Department. This program served 36 individuals using FIT.

¹¹ [Home - BIPOC Apostrophe](#)

¹² [Youth and Young Adult Violence Reduction - City of Tacoma](#)

¹³ [The Big Homie Program](#)

¹⁴ [Middle School Transitions \(thetacomaurbanleague.org\)](#)

¹⁵ [Middle School Transitions \(thetacomaurbanleague.org\)](#)

- [Big Brother Big Sisters \(BBBS\)](#)¹⁶ anti-violence advocates provided group mentoring sessions to youth and young adults under 24 in distressed neighborhoods. They worked with parents and guardians of youth impacted by violence. By working with credible messengers, [BBBS engaged many youth who usually would not participate in BBBS programming.](#)
- [Community in Schools \(CIS\)](#)¹⁷ provided services in Tacoma’s highest-need schools and in areas identified in the City of Tacoma’s Gang Assessment. CIS works with youth at risk of expulsion or removal from school and includes conversations about gun violence.
- [Consejo Counseling and Referral Services](#)¹⁸ provides service to middle and high school-aged youth. Outreach workers offered school-based peer groups for youth impacted by gun violence and who engaged in antisocial behavior at school.

Technical assistance and training support

To support community partners, OFSVP provided training and technical assistance to help outcomes. Through a competitive process, Evidence Based Associates was selected to build organizational and programmatic capacity and sustainability; support the development and implementation of work plans to ensure fidelity of services and program delivery; and provide oversight of and support for data collection, outcome analysis, and reporting to funded Intervention programs.

Evidence Based Associates offered all grantees opportunities to engage and participate in Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) support activities that were designed to address common challenges associated with implementing evidence-based programs. These opportunities included baseline assessments of readiness to implement evidence-based programs, model-specific training, data collection and management training, and assistance with referral management. Grantees were not required to utilize TTA resources, resulting in grantees reaching out for TTA support when they experienced a challenge. This resulted in an uneven utilization of TTA resources during this grant period.

Through this experience, OFSVP learned the importance of ensuring geographically localized and culturally relevant training assistance to meet grantees’ needs with robust and supportive resources.

Evaluation of Youth Firearm Violence Intervention Programs

Throughout the fiscal year 2023, the University of Washington Firearm Injury and Policy Research Program worked with the funded programs described above, conducting a year-end assessment of the youth firearm violence and intervention programs outlined in this report. The evaluators focused on four significant efforts emerging in Community Violence Intervention (CVI): Theory of Change Development, Workshop Facilitation, Qualitative Interviews, and Measurement CoDevelopment.

CVI programming is rooted in strength, resilience, joy, and collective efficacy in communities. The Theory of Change is a synthesis and visual depiction of how and why a program or intervention is thought to work. The main components of a CVI program include the central element of the program, the overarching mechanisms

¹⁶ [Big Brother Big Sisters](#)

¹⁷ [Communities In Schools of Tacoma \(ciswa.org\)](#)

¹⁸ [Consejo – Counseling and Referral \(consejocounseling.org\)](#)

by which the program influences desired outcomes, and the context in which the program operates. Theory of Change models are designed to support clear communication about complex and multifaceted interventions, guide program evaluation, support dissemination of information, and facilitate scale-up to support a larger community.

Program activities using the Theory of Change model include:

- Community engagement - supporting individuals not enrolled in any particular program through organized events and outreach services to provide resources, raise awareness about the program, and recruit participants.
- Case management, wraparound services - agencies support clients and their families in accessing resources and meeting their needs and personal goals.
- Cognitive behavioral intervention - programs designed to shift an individual's mindset and support behavior change.
- Stipend, direct financial support - providing direct financial support to clients and families.
- Employment, education, and life skill development - support programs that provide opportunities for access to education, employment and professional and life skill development.
- Conflict mediation, crisis intervention, and response - programs that support mediation services to intervene in conflicts and respond to crises in the community.
- Mentorship - programs that allow staff to engage continuously with clients and their families to build positive, trusting relationships that foster prosocial growth.
- Staff services - funding to support training and services to organizations providing services in the community.

Lessons learned

The lessons learned in this evaluation period were:

- Understanding the context in which CVI programs operate is vital to understanding and evaluating their efficacy.
- All the programs in this evaluation are connected to these critical elements:
 - use of culturally competent staff and credible messengers with lived experience,
 - providing comprehensive support for the social and economic needs of youth and their families,
 - focus on relationship building, and
 - supporting holistic health and well-being of the individual in need of services.
- Measurement is a key challenge in program evaluation. Evaluation requires intensive formative work to identify what information to collect, how to collect it, and how to analyze it to reflect the work accomplished and gaps that remain.

Recommendations based on the evaluation for future program funding

Based on feedback from program providers, the lesson learned is that funders need to focus on strength-based indicators such as how services are provided, the health and wellbeing of clientele, and the structural determinants of safety instead of highlighting antisocial outcomes resulting from crime and violence.

Program provider recommendations are:

- Seek input from and involve community members in determining processes and outcome measures.
- Grant funding should support Community Violence Intervention program capacity and resources through longer funding cycles and partnership investment.

- Researchers should acknowledge and aim to redress “top-down” research approaches rooted in white supremacy that have caused community harm and mistrust.
- Researchers should partner with other Community Violence Intervention programs to co-develop meaningful evaluations with the organizations they serve.
- Researchers and funders should continue engaging with CVI programs to determine accessible and efficient data collection processes.