GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

A new Philly coalition has joined the fight against gun violence

By Sammy Caiola · November 25, 2022

Police investigate at a crime scene in October, 2021. (6abc)

Working on a solution to gun violence and want to share it? Get in touch with gun violence prevention reporters Sammy Caiola and Sam Searles.

A coalition of Philadelphia philanthropies, business groups, nonprofits, and academic institutions are stepping in to combat the city's gun violence crisis with a new infusion of funding.

The Civic Coalition to Save Lives has been in the works for about a year, said Pedro Ramos of the Philadelphia Foundation. The Philadelphia Foundation is leading the charge, along with the William Penn Foundation, the Urban Affairs Coalition, the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, and the Philadelphia Equity Alliance. There are several dozen other groups on the list of supporters, a mix of universities, churches, law firms, health systems, environmental groups, and arts institutions.

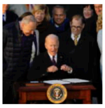
"When we bring the civic, business, and philanthropic communities to the table and have a better understanding of the city strategy and what effective gun violence intervention looks like, we think we can be more effective at bringing resources to bear and help with those areas," said Ted Qualli, spokesperson for the Philadelphia Foundation.

WHYY thanks our sponsors — become a WHYY sponsor

WHYY thanks our sponsors — become a WHYY sponsor

Top Stories

COURTS & LAW
Grand jury investigating abuse allegations at Delaware County Juvenile Detention Center chooses not to recommend charges


POLITICS & POLICY
Biden signs gay marriage bill at White House ceremony

HEALTH
A major drugmaker plans to sell overdose-reversal nasal spray Narcan over the counter

WHYY thanks our sponsors — become a WHYY sponsor

Organizers would not provide a dollar amount for how much funding the coalition will funnel into combatting the crisis, but said they are actively fundraising for the cause. Their model is based on similar coalitions that have successfully helped bring down violence rates in Oakland and Indianapolis.

Philadelphia's homicide total has been climbing consistently since 2015. There were 562 homicides in the city last year, and there have been 465 in 2022 so far, almost all of them committed with a gun.

Qualli says the coalition is working closely with the City of Philadelphia to determine which already-existing gun violence prevention efforts – currently laid out in the Roadmap for Safer Communities – should be bolstered and which yet-untried strategies can be introduced. He says they also consulted David Muhammad, National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, on the strategy.

The first step, organizers said, will be creating a "detailed problem analysis" to pinpoint the set of risk factors that identify people at greatest risk for being involved in gun violence, and deliver interventions such as job opportunities, mental health services, and financial assistance.

Related Content

COMMUNITY

'Not On the Same Page': Community Crisis Intervention Program review shows only short-term success and lack of leadership

A few weeks ago, a report commissioned by the Office of Violence Prevention revealed that CCIP staff are undertrained, and often overwhelmed, and lacking cohesion.

4 weeks ago

In Oakland, members of a similar coalition discovered that just 0.1% of the city's population was responsible for the majority of gun violence – approximately 400 people, according to the Oakland Police Department. The analysis determined that an individual most likely to be involved in a shooting in Oakland had four of the five following characteristics:

- A young Black or Latino man ages 18–35.
- A member of an active crew/gang/group in Oakland.
- Extensive criminal justice involvement.
- Previous shooting victim.
- Has a close friend or family member who was shot in the past twelve months.

The City of Oakland then invested public dollars in community organizations that could provide social services to these high-risk individuals to prevent them from re-offending. Oakland's homicide tally dropped from 126 to 71 between 2013 and 2017, a period in which community groups and the government were working together on a comprehensive strategy.

Leaders in the new Philadelphia coalition believe they can use a similar strategy to narrow down potential shooters. Qualli said that while the city's roadmap supports many programs that aim to prevent violence in the long term, there aren't enough that effectively disrupt violence happening now.

"Everything that we've learned over the last six, nine months of this journey tells us that if you want to bend the curve in the near term, the focus needs to be on intervention," he said. "This is the area where we're now bringing some additional resources."

WHYY thanks our sponsors — become a WHYY sponsor

An August city spending audit from the Office of the Controller found that only 21% of the total FY 2022 investment was "allocated to evidence-based intervention programs that have been found to yield short-term reductions in shootings and homicides, with the rest of the funding going towards programs that will likely take years to produce measurable reductions in gun violence."

A 2021 analysis from the department finds Philadelphia spends just $6,000 per shooting victim on violence intervention, compared with roughly $24,000 per person in Los Angeles and $26,000 per person in New York City.

And a recent evaluation of the city program that is focused on direct intervention with potential shooters found that it is falling short on its goals.

Pedro Ramos, president of the Philadelphia Foundation, said the new coalition strives for a world where all voices are at the table, to make a sustainable and executable plan.

"They understand what the outcomes are, they don't feel like things are changing every couple of years," he said. "They understand they're being invested in and they're making an investment."

There are already grassroots gun violence prevention efforts across the city. Many of them are spearheaded by mom-and-pop nonprofits and neighborhood leaders who say they operate on shoestring budgets, with the occasional boost from city grants, which are largely short-term and can be difficult to access.

In response, other coalitions are striking up. This October, the Black Clergy of Philadelphia launched the 57 Blocks Project, referencing the 57 historically redlined streets in Black and Brown neighborhoods where homicides are most frequent. This group will focus on environmental improvements, youth services, and trauma-informed care.

Working on a solution to gun violence? Share it with us.

What solutions to gun violence should WHYY News cover? What stories about the crisis should we know about?

0/250

Your contact info

Reporter Sammy Caiola may be in touch to discuss your experience.

Name

Email address

Zip code

☑ Sign me up for your daily newsletter

☐ Please don't publish my name

☐ I am over 16 years old

☐ I accept the Terms of Service

Submit

Powered by Hearken | Terms of Service | Privacy Policy

Stop and Frisk:
Revisit or Resist
Temple University
Klein College of Media and Communication
WHYY

Stop and Frisk: Revisit or Resist

Explore diverse perspectives and solutions to Philly's gun violence crisis. Could beefing up this controversial police tactic help keep the city safe?

Ways to Listen

Share this

WHYY is your source for fact-based, in-depth journalism and information. As a nonprofit organization, we rely on financial support from readers like you. Please give today.

Part of the series

Gun Violence Prevention

View the series

You may also like

STOP AND FRISK: REVISIT OR RESIST • COMMUNITY

5 solutions to Philly's gun violence crisis

Guest hosts Sam Searles and Kole Long asked two community leaders, a clinician, a high school student, and a city public safety staffer for their solutions to gun violence.

11 hours ago

COMMUNITY

Moms Bonded by Grief host holiday party for those who lost loved ones to gun violence

A holiday party in South Philadelphia Sunday sought to empower and unite mothers and young kids who've lost loved ones to gun violence.

2 days ago

COMMUNITY

Violence-free zone? House of Umoja looks to 70s-era peacemaking practices to keep teens safe

The House of Umoja has been credited with helping to quell Philly's gang violence crisis in the 1970s. Now it wants to train a new generation of peacemakers.

4 months ago

▶ Listen 5:41

About Sammy Caiola

Sammy Caiola is WHYY News' first-ever gun violence prevention reporter.

Read more

@SammyCaiola ✉ scaiola@whyy.org

Want a digest of WHYY's programs, events & stories? Sign up for our weekly newsletter.

Enter your email here

Subscribe

53% Together we can reach 100% of WHYY's fiscal year goal

Donate →

Learn about WHYY Member benefits →

Ways to Donate

WHYY PBS npr

WHYY provides trustworthy, fact-based, local news and information and world-class entertainment to everyone in our community.

WHYY offers a voice to those not heard, a platform to share everyone's stories, a foundation to empower early and lifelong learners and a trusted space for unbiased news. Learn more about Social Responsibility at WHYY. It's how we live.

Contact Us

Philadelphia	Delaware
215.351.1200	302.516.7506
talkback@whyy.org	talkback@whyy.org

Our Programs

- A.I. Nation
- Billy Penn
- Check, Please! Philly
- Community Conversations
- Consider This
- Delishtory
- Eleanor Amplified
- Flicks
- Fresh Air
- Good Souls
- Half Vaxxed
- House Concert Series
- March On
- Movers & Makers
- On Stage at Curtis
- PlanPhilly
- The Pulse
- Real Black History
- Schooled
- Serum
- StateImpact
- Stop and Frisk: Revisit or Resist
- Things To Do
- Voices in the Family
- You Oughta Know
- Young Creators Studio
- Your Democracy

Inside WHYY

- About
- Meet Our Newsroom
- Employment
- Sounding Board
- N.I.C.E. Initiative
- Contact Us
- Sponsorship
- Directions
- FCC Public Files
- FCC Applications

Follow Us

Sign up for a Newsletter →

© WHYY MMXXII **Privacy Policy** **Terms of Use for WHYY.org**

WHYY is partnered with