

Civic Coalition to Save Lives

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June 2024

Q&A with National Urban Fellow Anthony Shaw

For the past 14-months, National Urban Fellow and Philadelphia native, Anthony Shaw has been working with the Gun Violence Intervention Coordination Center (GVICC) while simultaneously pursuing a Master's in Policy Management from Georgetown University's McCourt School for Public Policy.

During the prestigious mid-career leadership program Tony supported a portfolio of GVICC partners by providing technical support and strategic assistance to ensure they are able to deliver effective programming without hindrances. He was instrumental in the

successful implementation of the City's Public Housing Authority (PHA) pilot program to provide emergency public house assistance to individuals enrolled in intervention programs.

We sat down with Tony to ask him about his experience as a National Urban Fellow, the impact of GVICC and his thoughts on public-private partnerships to influence policy, promote community engagement, and effect positive change.

You recently graduated with your Master's in Policy Management - congratulations! How did you become involved with the Civic Coalition to Save Lives and the Gun Violence Intervention Coordination Center?

I became involved with the Civic Coalition to Save Lives and the Gun Violence Intervention Coordination Center through the National Urban Fellowship Program. The National Urban Fellowship Program is a 14 month career accelerator for mid-career professionals dedicated to racial equity and social impact. During the 14 months, NUF Fellows complete a Master's in Policy Management at the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University in Washington, D. C., attend NUF leadership development seminars, and are paired with a senior leader in government, non-profit, philanthropic or corporate sectors. I was placed at the Civic Coalition to Save Lives and the Gun Violence Intervention Coordination Center with Estelle Richman as my mentor and Ted Qualli from the Philadelphia Foundation as my liaison after a series of interviews and a dual ranking process. I ranked them and the GVICC project as my top choice and I was elated to learn that Estelle and Ted ranked me as their top NUF Fellow candidate. Moreover, gun violence intervention is a policy interest of mine and the opportunity to support the work being done to reduce gun violence in Philadelphia, my hometown, seemed serendipitous.



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Tell us about your work providing technical support and assistance. What did that entail and who did you work with?

The Gun Violence Intervention Coordination Center supports both hospital violence intervention programs and community violence intervention programs in Philadelphia that offer programs and service to offenders and victims of gun violence. As a public policy fellow at GVICC, I provided technical support to our partner organizations by analyzing gun violence data, researching best practices and staying up-to-date on the latest research on gun violence intervention strategies that could be incorporated into our partners’ work, assisting with program design, and connecting them to other stakeholders to build partnerships and collaborations to further the organization’s goals.

What gives you hope that gun violence reduction strategies focused on intervention will be successful in Philadelphia?

I am very optimistic about gun violence intervention in Philadelphia for the following reasons. First, Philadelphia’s gun violence reduction strategies have been working. Fatal gun violence rates in Philadelphia have decreased every year since 2021 through the concerted efforts of the Mayor’s Office, the city’s Gun Violence Reduction Programs such as GVI, the community policing strategies being implemented by the police department and the community and hospital violence intervention programs.

Second, research shows that non-carceral community-based intervention programs such as Beat the Block, Pushing Progress Philly, and EMIR are extremely effective at reducing urban gun violence because they provide their program participants with supports and programming that help them address the root causes of gun violence such as unemployment, housing insecurity, and even anger management through workforce development programs, therapy, entrepreneurship programming, legal aid assistance and advocacy.

Finally, I am extremely encouraged by the election of Mayor Parker and the appointment of Police Commissioner Bethel because they are experienced public leaders who have a deep understanding of Philadelphia and are united in their vision to make Philadelphia safer. Their respective safety plans are comprehensive and reflect a thorough understanding of effective gun violence reduction strategies, the inner-workings of Philadelphia’s city government, and community interests.

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What are some of the most rewarding experiences you've had during your fellowship, and how have they influenced your perspective on addressing gun violence through a collaborative, evidence-based approach?

Although there have been many rewarding experiences, the two that were the most meaningful to me were visiting Temple's Violence Intervention Program and attending the workforce development listening sessions at Pushing Progress Philly and Beat the Block. As a policy analyst and researcher, I have noticed that the stakeholders closest to the issue of gun violence – victims, shooters and gun violence intervention program staff – are often not at the table when the discussions to solve gun violence occur.

My placement at GVICC presented me with numerous opportunities to hear and learn directly from the unique perspectives of gun violence program participants and providers throughout the mentorship. Those experiences provided me with a more nuanced understanding of the social determinants of urban gun violence as well as possible policy solutions for the urban gun violence problem. For example, David Muhammad from the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform and consultant to the Civic Coalition to Save Lives, Thomas Abt author of *Bleeding Out*, and Dr. Anthony Braga, Director of the Crime Justice Policy Lab at University of Pennsylvania have all found that urban gun violence is concentrated spatially – repeating in the same places over and over again – and are committed by a small subset of the population. However, being able to supplement existing research and data with comments from the listening sessions ensures that GVICC's gun violence intervention recommendations are both evidence based and specific to the city of Philadelphia.

What comes next for you?

After I complete the National Urban Fellowship in July, I am going to take a few weeks to rest and refresh before beginning the PhD in Social Welfare program at the School of Social Policy and Practice at the University of Pennsylvania as the Gloria Twine Chisum Fellow. I will continue researching urban gun violence in addition to the racial wealth gap, and health disparities in Black communities. Ultimately, I want to work at a foundation overseeing their research and guiding their investment strategies to reduce barriers to upward mobility for historically marginalized groups.

THANK YOU!

The Civic Coalition to Save Lives extends our appreciation to Tony for sharing his expertise and passion in furtherance of our collective goal to reduce gun violence in Philadelphia.

We are also grateful to Comcast for their support of the National Urban Fellow program and for underwriting Tony's fellowship.