



GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

THE FRAMEWORK TO ADDRESS GUN
VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND
INTERVENTION IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

2022





City Hall
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Richmond, VA 23219

 [RVA.gov/RVAGVPI](https://www RVA.gov/RVAGVPI)





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Letter from Mayor Levar M. Stoney

My Fellow Richmonders,

Over the past few years, your city government has been working alongside the community on a framework to address gun violence. This work has been intentional and strategic-- engaging the communities most impacted by gun violence and experts who have been leading efforts to reduce violence. I am proud of our collaborative effort to organize a "both/and" approach to gun violence that is specific to the needs and circumstances within the City of Richmond.

Let me start with what we know. We know that, just like in cities across the country, Richmond is experiencing an increase in gun-related violence. We also know that Richmond's youth are both engaging in violent behavior and being impacted by violence. We also know that gun violence is occurring in concentrated areas of our city, most predominantly in neighborhoods that include public housing and have a higher concentration of poverty.

Through engagement of community members, experts, and research, we know that we need both "soft" and "tough" approaches to address these issues. Specifically, we need both police enforcement and intervention and community prevention programs that are evidence-based to wrap their arms around our youth and their families. It cannot be "either/or." We will only solve gun violence by working TOGETHER in a coordinated and strategic manner.

Let me reassure you -- no one is sitting idly by and waiting for gun violence to occur in our communities. Thousands of people are working to prevent gun violence every day -- from teachers, police officers, doctors, coaches, social workers, faith-based leaders, parents, and guardians. These are our unsung heroes. But, in order for lasting change to occur, we need both the immediate response and sustained efforts to address the root causes of crime.

Furthermore, we need fewer guns on the street. We need stronger gun regulations. We need all residents, in every neighborhood to lock up their guns in their homes and cars. We need to give people a second or third chance if they have made a mistake in life. If you are a landlord, we need you to rent to people who have paid their debt to society. If you are a business owner or human resource professional, we need you to advocate for hiring individuals who are qualified for the job, regardless of their past. Let's remove the barriers to thriving as a community-wide network of partners.



That is why in the City's Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention report you will find a comprehensive overview of this both/and approach that demonstrates our commitment to addressing both the short- and long-term needs of our community. By implementing these strategies, the City of Richmond seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- In partnership with other city agencies and the community, reverse the increasing trend in reported gun violence;
- Reduce the annual number of victims of violent crime;
- Increase community trust and engagement with the Richmond Police Department; and,
- Address root causes of crime that contribute to violence

That being said, it is also critical that we acknowledge that not all of these efforts will work right away. Gun violence cannot be solved overnight. It takes time, sustained resources, and dedicated partners to curb violence. Your City is committed to this effort. We will not stop -- and we ask that you join us in this effort. We will only solve gun violence by working TOGETHER in a coordinated and strategic manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Levar M. Stoney". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke at the end. Below the signature is the printed name "Levar M. Stoney".

Mayor

City of Richmond, Virginia



Executive Summary

In May 2021, Mayor Levar Stoney, along with all members of the Richmond City Council, declared gun violence a **public health crisis**.

As part of this declaration, Mayor Stoney also formally announced an effort to bring a diversity of stakeholders around the table to collaborate on solutions to curb gun violence in the city. Partnering with members of the Richmond community, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), VCU Health System (VCUHS), and Richmond City Health District (RCHD), the City of Richmond established a working group to explore an evidence-based public health response to address the underlying socioeconomic and systemic factors that promote gun violence.

This collaboration, informally known as Richmond's Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Framework, is designed to guarantee that those directly impacted by gun violence, community members, and direct service providers have an opportunity to be heard by the Mayor, the Richmond City Council, and the City's Administration and includes key elements such as:

- hospital-based crisis intervention and intensive case management for families, friends, and survivors of violence
- community-based credible messengers program and trauma response
- grassroots support to build capacity
- the establishment of a shooting and homicide review board to better understand the issue of gun violence, and prevent future shootings





GVPI Working Group

This working group, along with members of Mayor Stoney’s Administration, provided a list of recommendations. Mayor Stoney’s Administration has since reviewed such recommendations and is implementing them in a coordinated effort with community-based partners, the Richmond Police Department, Human Services Division, the Richmond City Health District, and VCU Health System.

Finally, it is critical to acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to gun violence. It takes a holistic approach - both the need for police interventions to reduce the number of illegal guns and human services to provide necessary support systems for families. Additionally, the Stoney Administration is focused on addressing many of the root causes of crime – from infrastructure, housing, schools, health, transit, workforce, and connectivity to life-affirming social networks. That is why within this report, readers will see a holistic “both/and” approach to addressing gun violence.

“***The GVPI Working Group served as a catalyst for city-wide, intentional, and coordinated action.***

- Reggie Gordon, Esq.
Deputy Chief Administrative
Officer

Our Challenge



The City of Richmond, like many other cities in the United States, is experiencing an uptick in gun violence. Last year alone, Richmond experienced the highest rate of gun violence in 15 years with 90 homicides.

New [data](#) that was released in December 2021 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed that 2020 was one of the deadliest years on record for the United States, with the highest rate of gun violence since 1994. In the midst of the ongoing pandemic, more than 45,000 Americans were killed by a firearm in 2020. The gun violence increase in 2020 did not affect communities equally. While the rate of gun deaths increased 5 percent for whites relative to 2019, it increased 21 percent for Latinos, 33 percent for Native Americans and 35 percent for Black Americans.

In 2021, Everytown published a [study](#) on the economic cost of gun violence in the United States that found that we are paying \$280 billion per year for gun-related violence. These costs include hospital treatment, ambulances, police response, long-term physical and mental health care, forgone earnings from disability or death, criminal justice costs, and quality-of-life costs for pain and suffering over a victim's lifespan.



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Our Youth Worldwide

Furthermore, firearms are the leading cause of death for American children and teens, with more than 18,000 children and teens shot and killed or wounded on a yearly basis. Specifically, Black children and teens are 14 times more likely than White children and teens of the same age to die by gun homicide. According to the most recent analysis by the CDC, Virginia has 1,041 gun deaths every year, with a rate of 11.9 deaths per 100,000 people. Additionally, one-quarter of all gun homicides in Virginia occur in three areas: Richmond, Norfolk, and Newport News.



Our Youth in Richmond



In Richmond, gun violence has a far more significant impact on young people, with the rate of firearm deaths for youth ages 10 through 24 being more than three times the national rate in 2017.

In 2021, the RPD took 1,316 reports related to youth victims of crime and 135 youth offender/arrests of crime. This is an historic high for the City of Richmond (see Figure 1). For these reasons, we know that many of our local efforts need to be focused on youth.

Furthermore, we also know that most gun-related violence occurs in several concentrated areas of the city, which means that many of our prevention and intervention efforts also need to be targeted toward these areas. See Figure 2.

Figure 1

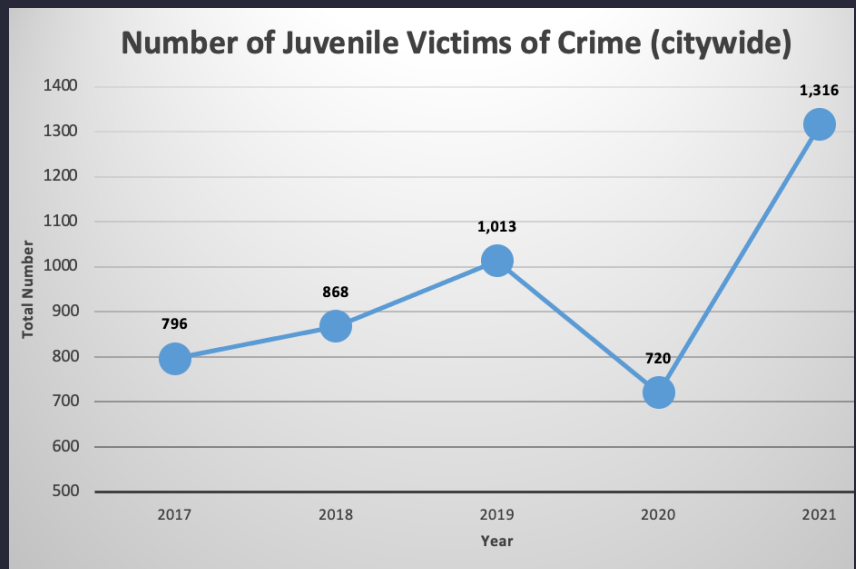
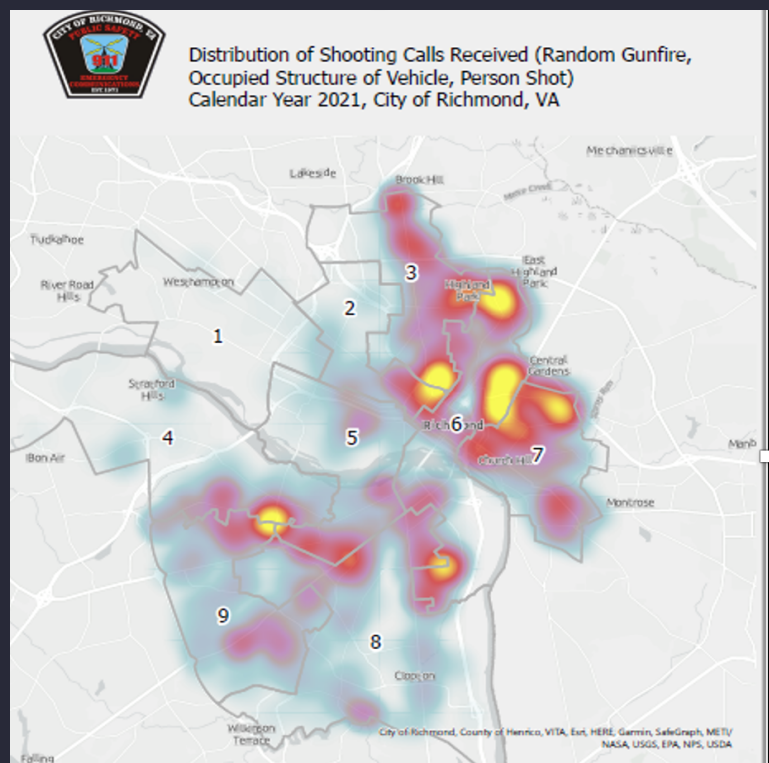


Figure 2





Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Framework

(GVPI) Framework



The Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Working Group collaborated to create a unique GVPI Framework for Richmond. This Framework serves as the Stoney Administration's starting point for addressing gun violence. With the assistance of the Human Services Division and the Richmond Police Department, additional recommendations were also incorporated into this report and overall GVPI strategy.



Additional themes discovered during the GVPI Working Group meetings include:

- Planned and purposeful gun violence prevention strategies, especially for our youth
- Need to employ credible messengers with lived experience
- Ensuring Human Resource hiring practices allow for such hires
- Asset mapping of current resources (public, private, and non-profit)
- Support (funding, training, and technical assistance) for community and grassroots organizations
- Greater engagement and coordination with partners, such as RRHA, VCU, and local businesses
- Building trust and cultural awareness between the City of Richmond, its partners, and residents





Addressing Our Challenge: A Comprehensive Set of Recommendations

Implementing the GVPI Framework requires a comprehensive, coordinated strategy. This Framework assumes that violence is not an unsolvable problem, but rather a **public health crisis** that is treatable and preventable through an intentional, coordinated, and sustained effort. Although we recognize that gun violence is not solvable overnight, the Stoney Administration will continue to focus on implementing this all-hands-on-deck strategy and ensuring accountability to build safer communities.

Coordination and Community Engagement

It was first discussed in the Stoney Administration's Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety that there needed to be a human services aspect to public safety – someone to help coordinate efforts between the community, Richmond Police Department, and the Human Services Portfolio. This recommendation was later discussed by the GVPI Working Group and then included in Mayor Stoney's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget as a new full-time employee (FTE): Community Safety Coordinator.





The Community Safety Coordinator

The Community Safety Coordinator (CSC) will focus on the fundamentals of the city's Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Framework, including engagement, prevention, intervention, training, and supportive services for victims as well as perpetrators of gun violence. The CSC will also host community conversations and focus groups that involve community members in steps toward halting violence in our communities. Lastly, the CSC will utilize best practices in communications and marketing to ensure transparent communications with residents regarding GVPI efforts and resources.

Meet Mr. Samuel Brown, Sr.

In January 2022, the DCAO of Human Services hired Samuel Brown to fill this role after a competitive search. Samuel previously worked at the Peter Paul Development Center before joining the City of Richmond as part of the Human Services core team, reporting directly to the DCAO for Human Services and alongside the Office of Children and Families, Office of Equity and Inclusion, Office of Aging and Disability Services, and Office of Immigrant and Refugee Engagement.

Mr. Brown's work as the Community Safety Coordinator has already paid off. During a walk in the Gilpin Court community in early 2022, Mr. Brown was approached by a young man who offered his story. He had been a victim of gun violence twice, made some bad decisions in his affiliations, but recognizes that his future is in his hands. He indicated that if community centers were open with late hours, and plenty of positive youth development programs, less young people would pursue less safe lifestyles.

This young man also stated that some of the violent crimes committed were a result of housing insecurity for many young men of color in the city. He asked how hard it would be to establish housing, workforce development, and "earn as you learn" for young men in the City of Richmond. He was fervent in this point because he too desired to have access to such housing and workforce programs. He was able to pay for CDL training on his own and now desires to pursue truck driving, but noted that other young men may not have the same level of intention.



Additional duties of the CSC include:

- Creating a comprehensive GVPI resource guide that maps current assets and shares available wrap-around supports
- Regular public information sharing, such as through an electronic newsletter, paper flyers, and community meetings
- Establishing a GVPI webpage on the RVA.gov site
- Coordinating with RPD on public service announcement campaigns

“ They need our help. And working with our partners and networks of community support, we will. ”



Steering Committee and Coordinated Stakeholders

In order to ensure smooth implementation and coordination between all of the key GVPI stakeholders, it was recommended that a steering committee be formed. This committee will be organized by the Community Safety Coordinator and include representatives from the City of Richmond, VCU Health, RCHD, RPS, and community partners.





Prevention

It was made clear during conversations with community members and experts that gun violence prevention efforts must be a top priority. Specifically, we must provide targeted, age-appropriate and culturally relevant support to youth ages 10 to 24. This section will cover the CDC best practices we will leverage to prevent youth violence.



Establish a fund to support youth violence prevention programs partnering with community-based organizations.

We will allocate \$1 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to establish a “Positive Youth Development and Youth Violence Prevention Fund.” NextUp RVA will serve as the City’s fiscal agent to disperse funds to community and grassroots organizations to support the following focal areas:

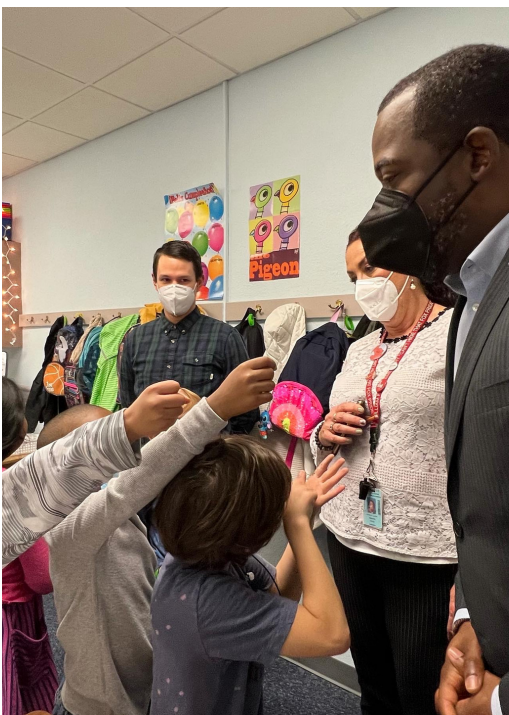
- Accessible out-of-school time programming;
- Parenting supports;
- Mental, behavioral and socio-emotional supports for youth;
- Academic enrichment opportunities for youth; and,
- Mentorship opportunities for youth.

Not only will NextUp serve as the City’s fiscal agent for these resources, but they will also ensure training and technical assistance are provided to community organizations to ensure high quality programming is provided to Richmonders. Training and technical assistance were also heavily emphasized by the GVPI Working Group.



Expand access to child care and preschool.

\$1 million will be invested in the stabilization and expansion of high-quality child care and preschool across the City of Richmond. \$500,000 will be made available to eligible nonprofit and charitable organizations through direct grants from the Office of Children and Families; an additional \$500,000 will be disbursed by Smart Beginnings of Greater Richmond in order to support private businesses like family day homes that offer these services but are ineligible for grants from the City.



Grant awards will be made to eligible applicants based on a number of criteria, including but not limited to their registration and/or license status with the Commonwealth; their ability to leverage grant funds to return to or exceed pre-pandemic enrollment levels; their participation in Virginia Quality, Virginia’s voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System for early learning programs; their capacity to complete reporting requirements; and their accessibility to low-income Richmonders.

Eligible costs include but are not limited to: tuition subsidies, talent acquisition, professional development, hiring bonuses, retention bonuses, school supplies, furniture, and classroom renovations.



Establish the groundwork for Universal Pre-K.

\$200,000 of ARPA funds will be dedicated to research and personnel necessary to address systemic barriers to universalization of preschool for all 3- and 4-year-old children in Richmond. Research will include a community survey as well as a cost modeling and financing strategies study.

Support home visiting programs.

Home visiting is a proven family-strengthening strategy where programs partner with parents to support healthy family functioning and positive parenting. The City of Richmond will invest \$200,000 into the expansion of Family Lifeline's Children's Health Involving Parents (CHIP) program. Through this program, families of young children will receive two to four visits each month. Each visit will last approximately an hour and typically occur in a family's home. Home visits support healthy families by focusing on parent-child interactions, development centered parenting, family well-being, and protective factors.

Continue to fund the "We Matter RVA" program.

In 2021, the City of Richmond received \$500,000 from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to pilot a new approach to youth gun violence prevention. We Matter RVA is focused in communities that are most impacted by gun violence in the City of Richmond. We Matter RVA creates a partnership among Richmond Public Schools, Communities In Schools, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities (PRCF) and mental health providers to support participants. Currently, the program includes 40 middle school students selected from River City and Martin Luther King, Jr. middle schools. Most participating youth are in 7th grade with the expectation that they'll continue with the program until they complete middle school in June 2023. There are a few exceptions where 8th grade students were registered due to siblings in the program or extreme traumatic experiences, such as witnessing a sibling or parent's murder by firearm.

Each 5-10 week session, running afterschool and again over the summer, includes a \$500 incentive check for participants.

The first session of the We Matter RVA program ran from November to December 2021.

Caregivers provided the following feedback by survey:

"Everything seems to be going well. My child comes home happy and excited about everything she is doing and learning."

"The program is a success! I love how my son gets excited to attend the sessions. I also love how you guys interact and teach him different skills"

"[The program] help my son to meet people cause he wasn't a people person. Thank you"



Continue to Expand the Impact of the Community Ambassador Program.

Using \$500,000 of ARPA funds, we will expand the number of our community ambassadors and the resources available to them to ensure greater community reach and impact. These ambassadors will coordinate their efforts with the Human Services team, including the Community Safety Coordinator, to ensure Richmonders in need are being quickly connected to resources.

Continue to support youth-focused workforce development through the Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB).

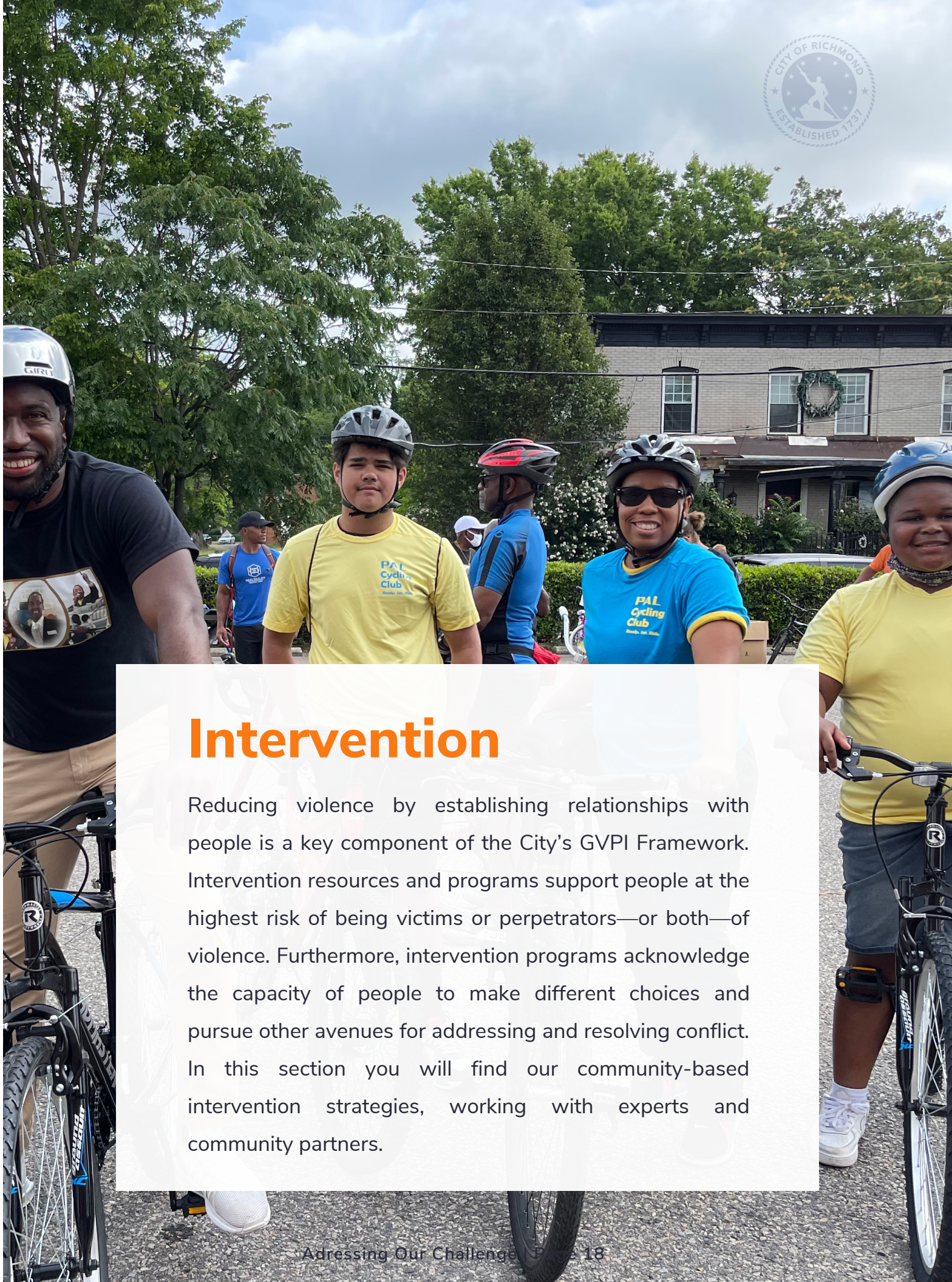
The Richmond OCWB was the first in the nation and is a Robert Wood Johnson Culture of Health Prize Winner. Using ARPA funding, the OCWB will invest dollars specifically for youth employment and workforce opportunities:

- \$250,000 for workforce development/employment services for 18-24 year olds; and,
 - \$250,000 to expand the Mayor's Youth Academy.
-

Establish the first City of Richmond Children's Fund.

In Mayor Stoney's FY 2023 budget, he proposed \$500,000 to establish a Children's Fund that will allow us to be responsive to the ever-changing, post-pandemic landscape of out-of-school time — this includes afterschool and summer programs, youth employment opportunities, as well as early childhood. The Fund will supplement existing non-departmental investments, and help us address unexpected needs that would otherwise prevent us from serving as many kids possible.





Intervention

Reducing violence by establishing relationships with people is a key component of the City's GVPI Framework. Intervention resources and programs support people at the highest risk of being victims or perpetrators—or both—of violence. Furthermore, intervention programs acknowledge the capacity of people to make different choices and pursue other avenues for addressing and resolving conflict. In this section you will find our community-based intervention strategies, working with experts and community partners.



Hospital-based Intervention*

The City of Richmond recognizes that addressing gun violence requires strong partners, which is why we are lucky to have the commitment of VCU Health System to work alongside the city in this comprehensive effort.

The mission of the VCU Health Injury and Violence Prevention Program (IVPP) is to reduce and prevent injuries through ongoing education, training, research, and community outreach throughout central Virginia. IVPP has been providing services since 2007. IVPP's goals are to coordinate and develop injury and violence prevention programs and activities throughout the healthcare system and community; to prevent injuries and violence through the implementation of evidence-based programs and the development of resources targeting populations that experience trauma; and to serve as a leader for injury and violence prevention on the local, regional, national, and international level through multidisciplinary, collaborative, and evidence-based strategies. IVPP has several programs to respond to and help our community with injury and violence.

Bridging the Gap (BTG) is a hospital-integrated program for high-risk patients, ages 10-30, aimed at reducing recidivism, re-injury, and subsequent healthcare costs associated with violent injuries. BTG employs intervention specialists who provide a brief in-hospital intervention and family-based wraparound services for up to a year post-discharge. Additionally, BTG works with partnering organizations to identify positive social networks and connects participants to mental health supports. BTG intervention specialists assist all intentionally injured patients admitted to VCU Health regardless of program eligibility; providing them with community resources and referrals that benefit victims of crime prior to discharging from the health system.

* It should be noted that VCU's trauma response is nationally recognized.





Violence Interrupters

The City of Richmond will employ three violence interrupters and one violence interrupter manager, who will be hired using RPD resources (available full-time positions and funding), but work alongside Human Services staff, such as the Community Safety Coordinator and Community Ambassadors. Violence interrupters must be credible messengers – people who are from the communities they serve and who have similar experiences to those who are committing acts of violence. Violence interrupters utilize personal relationships to address ongoing disputes, which may prevent them from escalating into further acts of violence. This is a joint effort between RPD and Human Services. These Violence Interrupters will work in neighborhoods most impacted by gun violence.





Law Enforcement Intervention

In 2021 alone, the RPD removed 947 illegal guns off Richmond streets. In the first months of 2022, officers have already removed 314 illegal guns. Additionally, RPD homicide closure rate is above the national average. In 2021, RPD's closure rate, or Incident Based Reporting Clearance, was 57.78 compared to the national average of 54.4.

Based on the types of incidents in the City of Richmond, RPD finds that the following three factors play a significant role in the increase in gun violence:

1. The readily accessibility of firearms;
2. Social-media's ability to exacerbate conflicts; and,
3. Mental health.

So far in 2022, RPD has encountered more pre-teens who either possess a firearm or are severely injured or killed by firearms. In high density neighborhoods, such as our public housing complexes, gun violence, victimization, and trauma have plagued families for generations. The influence of social media platforms disseminate messages to large audiences that sometimes initiate conflict and acts of retaliation. These incidents of reoccurring violence have overwhelmingly impacted the mental health of those exposed and impacted. While some normalize, others tend to imitate the violent acts and behaviors, which is why both prevention and intervention tactics are necessary.

The Department will continue to work with the community using the actions outlined below. Yet as detailed in this report, this challenge cannot be solved by this Department alone. It will require significant action from all levels of government to stop the flow of guns into our city and address the significant trends reported by RPD.





The Richmond Police Department

The Richmond Police Department will deepen its work by:

- Improving officer recruitment efforts, such as attending university and college career fairs and offering new incentives, and removing barriers to entry for new officers, such as some exam requirements.
- Increasing RPD officer salaries in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget to ensure they are consistently competitive with the region and implement a number of tools to assist with officer retention and appreciation, such as awards for effectively utilizing de-escalation methods on-duty.
- Holding town halls across the city to engage residents and commit to strategic community policing, based on the unique needs of specific neighborhoods.
- Continuing the efforts of Operation Red Ball, a task force of Richmond detectives and officers working to preempt violence in the city, which play a critical role in making necessary arrests and recovering firearms.
- Implementing a gun buyback program and gun safety campaign using \$500,000 of ARPA funds. RPD will work with community partners and non-profits to implement multiple gun buyback events and education campaigns around responsible gun ownership.
- Explore new technology to identify those involved in crime and ensure timely and appropriate responses.



- Supporting community programming, such as:
 - RVA League for Safer Streets
 - Late Night Basketball for youth, partnering with Richmond Public Schools and Parks & Recreation
 - Boys & Girls Club Teen Site Partnership
 - Working with community partners to offer programming related to drones, cooking, STEM, and E-Gaming
 - Fairfield Boys & Girls Club Equestrian partnership
 - After-school Homework Help
 - Spring STEM partnership camps – Fairfield, Hillside, Gilpin
 - Richmond Police Athletic League Activities
 - Law Enforcement Intervention Focusing on Education -- LIFE Program was created to reduce the school-to-prison pipeline effect within the City of Richmond. It is a partnership between the RPD Police Chief and RPS Superintendent to reduce the disparity of in-school juvenile arrests
 - Young Adult Police Commissioners
 - Mirror Me
 - Virginia Rules Program
- Prioritizing community policing efforts around high crime areas based on data.
- Increasing funding available for GUN250 program. Currently, the GUN250 program will reward up to \$1,000 to individuals who provide information on crimes that result in an arrest. The goal of this program is to help keep illegal firearms off the streets and out of the hands of criminals.



Additional Partners and Resources

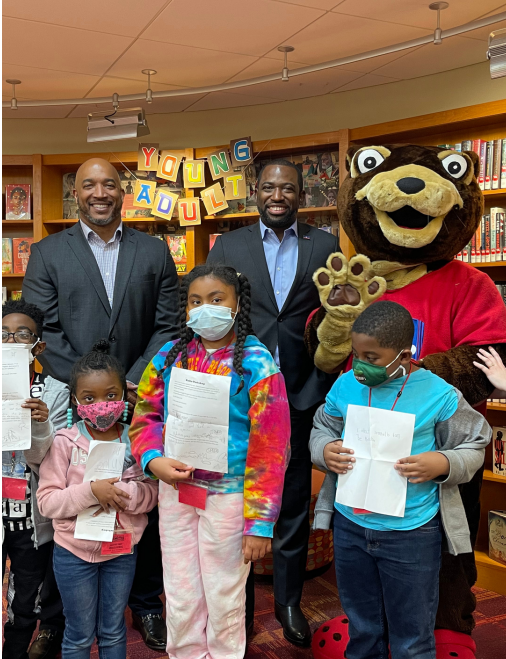
Richmond Public Schools

Richmond Public Schools is committed to the GVPI efforts to eradicate gun violence among Richmond's youth and will continue to collaborate with community partners to support our youth. RPS is dedicated to:

- Helping students develop the CASEL defined core social emotional learning (SEL) competencies including self management, self awareness, social awareness, relationship building and responsible problem solving and decision making through the intentional instruction of SEL curriculum,
- Engaging in restorative practices with students experiencing conflict to de-escalate tensions prior to violent disruptions in schools or the community,
- Participating in the regional Students in Gangs (SIG) monthly meetings to mitigate gang violence among youth in RVA and the surrounding counties,
- Conduct collaborative home visitation intervention between RPD and RPS for students directly impacted by gun violence.

Richmond Department of Justice Services

The Department of Justice Services (DJS) is a critical partner in reducing the prevalence of gun violence, particularly among youth and young adults, in the City of Richmond. As part of the Department's Virginia Juvenile Crime Control (VJCCA) grant application for Fiscal Year 2023, the Department is involved in detailed collaborative efforts with the State Department of Juvenile Justice, the Commonwealth Attorney's Office; and, the 13th District's Court Services Unit to incorporate effective and proven evidence-based prevention and intervention programs for court-involved youth. All the programs being reviewed for implementation are supported by the Office of Justice Programs- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).



Trauma Healing Response Network

Working with the Richmond City Health District, we are working to create a Trauma Healing Response Network. A Trauma Healing Response Coordinator position will play a key role in coordinating the interdisciplinary team of responding providers who can together fill gaps and meet needs. These providers are grassroots organizations and individuals who are able to wrap their arms around communities that have experienced the collective trauma of community violence. Our goal is to create a more robust, connected and holistic service of care where residents feel more cared for and connected post event. This Network will be established through the allocation of \$500,000 from the City of Richmond.

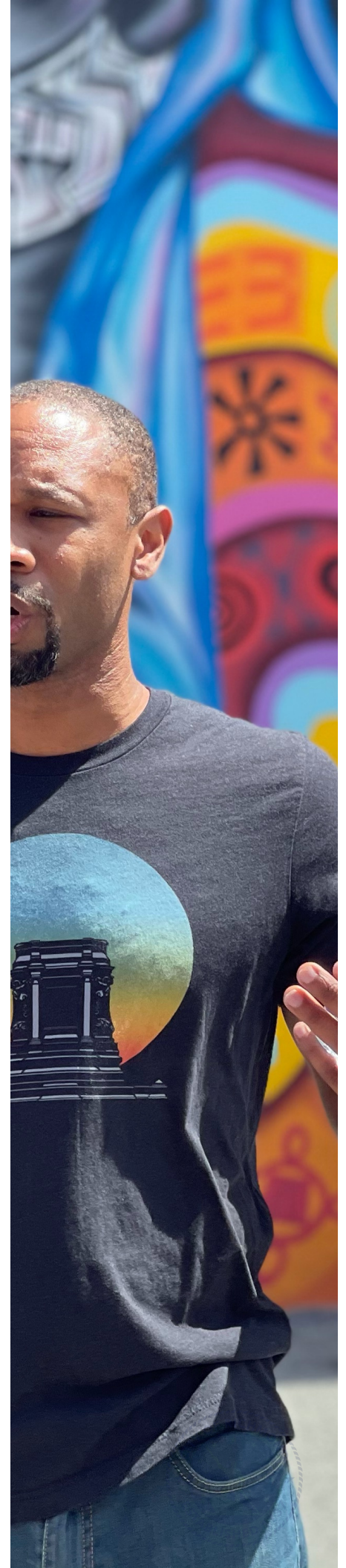
Youth and Gang Violence Assessment Grant

Currently, the City of Richmond is conducting a Youth and Gang Violence Community Assessment. The assessment is funded by a \$25,000 grant awarded by the VA Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and approved by the Richmond City Council. This assessment will help the City more deeply understand the needs and challenges facing our youth. Using the assessment data, the City will develop a community-based plan of action for the identification, prevention, and intervention of youth and gang violence. The corresponding plan, which will be funded using a \$300,000 grant awarded by the Virginia Office of the Attorney General, will reflect either new program implementation or existing program enhancement. The assessment is currently underway and is being led by the City's Community Safety Coordinator.

Homicide Review Committee

A Homicide Review Committee brings together law enforcement, community members, and service providers to examine firearm violence within the community. A committee established in Milwaukee was associated with a 52 percent reduction in homicides. The ultimate goal is to build trust between all stakeholder groups.

The City of Richmond is still further evaluating this recommendation.





Addressing the Root Causes of Crime

Even though the City of Richmond is being proactive in its immediate efforts to decrease the occurrence of gun violence through strategic, evidence-based prevention and intervention tools, we also know that addressing the root causes of crime is critical long-term work the city must also undertake, which has been found to correlate with a reduction in community violence.

The Stoney Administration is committed to improving the quality of life for ALL Richmond residents. Thus, using the City's Richmond 300 Master Plan, Equity Agenda, Affordable and Equitable Housing Plan, and the Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety's Report, we are investing ARPA dollars and general fund dollars to make citywide improvements to residents' quality of life.



Continuing to make historic investments in Richmond Public Schools.

Including the proposed Fiscal Year 2023 budget for RPS, the Stoney Administration has increased RPS' budget by \$51 million – or 33 percent – since 2017. The Stoney Administration also built three new schools in historically Black and Brown neighborhoods, which were completed in 2020. Mayor Stoney has also created space for consistent collaboration and clear communication between the RPS Superintendent and the Stoney Administration, which is imperative to ensuring our kids are cared for during and after the school day. The City understands how critical it is to put our kids first, and we remain committed to that effort.

Supporting the expansion of community center access and partnerships.

Utilizing \$78 million of ARPA funds, the city plans to build or refurbish four community centers in qualifying census tracts. These centers include:

- Calhoun Center
- Southside Community Center
- TB Smith Community Center
- Church Hill Community Center

These community centers will include state of the art recreation and community facilities in the center of neighborhoods, provide after-school and summer programming for youth, serve as host sites for USDA food programs, and include adult and senior programming for surrounding residents. In total, these centers will be within a 10-minute walk for approximately 100,000 Richmond residents in the city's 9th, 8th, 7th, 6th, 4th, 3rd, and 2nd Council Districts. Moreover, the Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities wants to expand their impact by partnering with the private and non-profit sector to provide additional services to residents – right within their community.



Establishing a Community Resource Center at City Hall.

Using a recommendation from the Homelessness Advisory Council, in 2022 the City will complete the construction of a Community Resource Center on the first floor of City Hall. This walk-in Community Resource Center will serve Richmond City residents, whether housed or experiencing a housing crisis, to ensure they are connected with triage, case management, and mainstream resources and services to meet their identified needs. Additionally, the Community Resource Center will assist in making connections to other systems of care located throughout the region and other Human Services resources.

Funding workforce development opportunities out of the Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB).

Given that the Richmond OCWB is a Robert Wood Johnson Culture of Health Prize Winner, the City found it appropriate to use \$1 million of ARPA to support both youth and adult workforce initiatives through the OCWB. The OCWB will invest:

- \$250,000 for a new Returning Citizen Guaranteed Income Pilot;
 - \$250,000 for workforce development/employment services for 18-24 year olds;
 - \$250,000 to expand the Mayor's Youth Academy; and,
 - \$250,000 for skills and trades development programming.
-

Establishing the first ever Health Equity Trust Fund.

Using \$5 million of ARPA funds, the City is partnering with the Richmond City Health District to establish the first ever Health Equity Trust Fund. This fund will work to address documented health inequities in Richmond. The priority areas include:

- COVID-19
- Substance Use and Treatment
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Access to Care and Health/Wellness Education
- Maternal and Child Health
- Chronic Disease and Underlying Conditions
- Food Security

The City also recently received a \$4 million grant from the US Department of Health & Human Services to address health equity and literacy. This program will be coordinated between the Richmond City Health District and City's Human Services Division.



Enhancing Non-departmental Support for Safety Net Providers and Youth Mental Health.

In Mayor Stoney's proposed Fiscal Year 2023 budget, we increased funding for all of our local safety net providers, such as Daily Planet, and organizations that support work around improving youth mental health, such as ChildSavers. Ensuring our most vulnerable residents have access to health and wellness services is critical to overall community health and safety.

Ensuring Equitable Mobility.

Not only did the Stoney Administration ensure the establishment of the Pulse, but Mayor Stoney has committed to ensuring that all Richmonders can ride GRTC buses for FREE. The Stoney Administration has also worked diligently since 2017 to safely expand pedestrian access to walking trails and bike lanes and ensure crosswalks and sidewalks are expanded and maintained.

Most recently, the Central Virginia Transportation Authority (CVTA) has dedicated \$113 million to create the Fall Line Trail, which will connect Ashland to Petersburg, going right through the City of Richmond. This trail will increase the community's opportunity to get outside, create additional dedicated biking and walking infrastructure, and encourage economic activity. Multi-use bicycling and walking trails not only provide safe, separated spaces for people to get around or enjoy being active, but also can offer profound economic boosts to an area. For example, the Indianapolis Cultural Trail in the heart of Indianapolis' downtown opened in 2008, and since then the area has experienced over an estimated 11,000 new jobs, creating a \$1 billion estimated economic impact.





Investing in Affordable and Quality Housing and Diverting Evictions.

Using ARPA funds as a catalyst, the Stoney Administration has committed \$10 million per year to affordable housing projects in perpetuity. Since taking office, Mayor Stoney has increased funds available for affordable housing projects by over 1,200 percent. Moreover, under Mayor Stoney's leadership, the city established the first ever Eviction Diversion Program, which has diverted approximately 1, 178 evictions between October 2019 – December 31, 2021.

Additionally, the Stoney Administration has retooled and revitalized the City's code enforcement team to ensure that neighborhood housing and safety issues are addressed using a cross-department approach. Evidence shows that access to stable, quality housing, the revitalization of vacant lots, and addressing blighted and abandoned property reduce the presence of gun violence.



Expanding Access to Green Space.

Research shows that access to green space and nature not only improves mental health, but can help reduce crime in the surrounding neighborhoods. That is why in September 2020, Mayor Stoney announced the addition of five new park spaces in South Richmond. The Green Team, a collaboration of community organizations, climate experts, and city employees, found that South Richmonders lack walkable access to green space and also experience some of the hottest temperatures in the City. The Stoney Administration is continuing these efforts by allocating \$13.5 million in ARPA funds to nature trails and the acquisition of new green space.

Investing in Infrastructure Improvements.

The Stoney Administration is committed to improving Richmond's infrastructure using a Complete Streets approach. Since Mayor Stoney took office, we have:

- Invested millions more into citywide paving. Starting in Fiscal Year 2020, the City increased the paving budget from \$3 million to \$15 million. Now, using a combination of city dollars and monies from the Central Virginia Transportation Authority (CVTA), the City has been able to maintain higher funding levels and concentrate on areas that have not been resurfaced in the last 20 to 30 years;
- Invested \$1,570,000 in new sidewalks and \$2,100,000 in sidewalk repairs;
- Repaired/replaced 472.9 miles of alleys;
- Established 55 new miles of bike lanes;
- Installed 357 streetlights generated from 96 citizen requests (does not include developer or CIP installations). Furthermore, DPU Electric Utility is in the process of converting all City owned streetlights to LED. DPU installed 7200 Cobrahead lights in 2021, and has installed 8500 total since beginning the conversion. The CIP LED Conversion budget has a 5 year total spending of \$9.7M;
- Provided over 2,000 Vision Zero enhancements, such as crosswalks; and,
- Allocated \$2 million in ARPA funds for enhanced street lights and security cameras.

Additionally, since early 2020, a citywide team has been researching potential smart technology solutions that the City may want to consider implementing. The project is still in the investigative and strategic development phase; however, we know that smart technology solutions exist to enhance public safety, including video surveillance, gunshot detection systems, and people/vehicle analytics.



Promoting economic empowerment through equitable economic development.

The Stoney Administration will soon introduce its Strategic Plan for Equitable Economic Development (SPEED). A top priority of SPEED is to make meaningful progress toward erasing the long-standing racial disparities in education, poverty, housing, and health. The most direct path for achieving these aims is to make the City more competitive for investment and jobs. More specifically, the plan calls for prioritizing investment and job creation in neighborhoods that historically have not experienced comparable economic opportunity. Each of the plan's initiatives are designed to build a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable economy for Richmond.

The below projects utilize this framework, including:

- Casino in Southside
- City Center in Downtown
- Diamond District along Arthur Ashe Boulevard

All of these projects also align with the efforts defined in the comprehensive Richmond 300 Master Plan. Richmond 300 was awarded the 2021 Daniel Burnham Award for a Comprehensive Plan from the American Planning Association. This award recognizes an innovative plan that helps create a more prosperous and equitable community for current and future residents and raises awareness of the importance of planning. "Richmond is a prime example of how planning can help a community begin to overcome past wrongs like redlining and practices that unfairly excluded specific populations from access to opportunity," said Kristen Asp, AICP, 2021 APA Awards Jury Chair. "This plan, combined with their laser focus on implementation, is an example for other communities around the country on how planning can and should address systemic racism."





Legislative Priorities

In order to be able to address gun violence, we need action from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Federal Government. We need every level of government to step-up and take the necessary actions to make our communities safe.



The City of Richmond has implemented a number of new policies, authorized by the Commonwealth of Virginia, to assist with preventing gun violence.

These include:

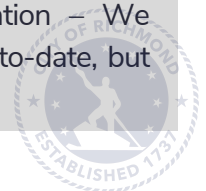
1. Prohibiting guns on city property, such as in parks or City Hall
2. Requiring lost or stolen firearms be reported within 24 hours (or be fined)

Mayor Stoney has also called upon the Virginia General Assembly to enact the following:

1. Restrictions on large capacity ammunition magazines;
2. A waiting period between the time of purchase and the actual physical transfer of a firearm;
3. A law requiring gun owners or purchasers to obtain a license;
4. A prohibition on individuals convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors possessing firearms or ammunition;
5. A ban on the open carrying of firearms on public property;
6. Appropriations providing for ongoing community violence intervention funding through allocations from the Commonwealth of Virginia's general fund to ensure the sustainability of such intervention programs; and,
7. Establish the first Center for Firearms Violence Intervention and Prevention

Mayor Stoney is also calling upon Congress to enact the following:

1. Universal Background Checks – Current federal law does not require background checks on sales between unlicensed parties. This means that people with dangerous histories can easily circumvent the system by purchasing their firearm online or at a gun show.
2. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Reform – Congress needs to confirm Steve Dettelbach for ATF director, which can help ensure the ATF works to keep our communities safe. Having a strong director at the ATF will also assist with implementing President Biden's new ghost gun regulation. ATF estimates that approximately 45,000 ghost guns have been recovered at crime scenes since 2016, with more than 19,000 ghost guns being recovered in 2021 alone.
3. Sustained Financial Commitment to Fund Community-based Gun Violence Prevention – We appreciate the funding that the Biden Administration has allocated towards this effort to-date, but the Administration must ensure that line of funding continues in the future.





Police Accountability

Whereas law enforcement is part of the solution to gun violence, it is also critical to hold officers accountable. That is why the Stoney Administration is committed to establishing a Richmond-specific Civilian Review Board (CRB), in addition to other public safety reforms. The purpose of a CRB is to provide legitimacy, transparency, and accountability to the Richmond community and RPD. As such, the Stoney Administration has proposed an ordinance to establish a Richmond-specific CRB, which is currently being considered by the Richmond City Council.

The ordinance would establish a 7-person Civilian Review Board, empowered to review the Richmond Police Department's internal investigations of the most serious cases and all citizen appeals of RPD internal investigations. The CRB will be independent of the Police Department, and have the right to request subpoenas and hire outside investigators. The Mayor recommends supporting the first iteration of the CRB with a full time employee and an initial annual budget of \$204,199.



How You Can Help

The success of the City's GVPI Framework and reducing gun violence depends on help from YOU. We cannot do this alone. Below are several ways that you can help us in this effort:

- **Gun violence prevention begins at home.** If you own a firearm, PLEASE do not leave a firearm unattended in your car or unlocked in your house. It is critical that a gun is safely stored – meaning that it is locked and unloaded.

As a reminder, the City of Richmond requires any person who loses a firearm or has a firearm stolen to report the loss of theft within 24 hours to the Richmond Police Department. If such actions are not reported in 24 hours, there is a civil penalty of \$125 for the first offense and \$250 for any subsequent offense.

- **Crime Stoppers and GUN250** are programs that seek the help of the community to solve crimes. When residents have information about a crime that has occurred in the City of Richmond, they are asked to call Crime Stoppers at 804-780-1000. Residents do not have to give their names or testify in court. As part of this effort, the City will also reward individuals who provide information on crimes that result in an arrest. This program is called GUN250 and will reward up to \$1,000 to help keep illegal firearms off the streets and out of the hands of criminals. Tips may be offered anonymously by using the smartphone P3 Tips application or by calling Crime Stoppers at 804 780-1000.
- **Utilize or register your organization on [HELP1RVA](https://help1rva.org).** Help1RVA is a new, centralized social needs navigation service for Central Virginia (Richmond and surrounding counties). The City is collaborating with local partners to create a single website and hotline directory of services to support low-income residents, including in the areas of food, housing, childcare, and employment. Please visit help1rva.org to learn more.
- **If you want to learn more about how you or your organization** can coordinate with current GVPI efforts, or you have resources you want to contribute to this effort, please contact the Community Safety Coordinator at Samuel.BrownSr2@rva.gov.



ONE RICHMOND

Our hearts break each time we hear about the loss of life and the trauma caused by gun violence. Meanwhile, we know that lifesaving miracles and interventions happen every day in Richmond. Somewhere in Richmond, right now, someone is alive due to a mentor, a coach, a pastor, a neighbor, a big brother or big sister who intervened just at the right moment to help divert that person from situations that would have placed their life in jeopardy. We have no way to quantify how many times this has happened, this kind of everyday prevention and intervention will not make the news, but we know it occurs.

To you unsung, unknown, angels, guardians, parents, and teachers who have saved a life – **THANK YOU.**

APPENDIX A: Members of the GVPI Working Group

Michel Aboutanos VCU Health Injury And Violence Prevention	Racheen Gause Whitcomb Community Ambassador	Ci'Zhai Minor Creighton Community Ambassadors
Carol Adams Richmond Police Department	Larry Gilliam Hillside Community Ambassadors	Valaryee Mitchell Office of Community Wealth Building
Kwame Adeyemi CryoRVA and Guiding Lights	Rhonda Gilmer Richmond City Justice Services	Robert Morris RVA League For Safer Streets
Olivia Allison VCU Healthy Communities For Youth	Reginald E. Gordon DCAO	Cynthia Newbille 7th District Councilperson
Darrell Anderson VCU Health Injury And Violence Prevention	Michelle Gregory Resident/Parent	Kevette Rose Whitcomb Community Ambassadors
Eddie Barlow	Tiffany Hanks Gilpin Community Ambassadors	Taequan Smith VCU Health Injury And Violence Prevention
James Braxton VCU Health Injury And Violence Prevention	Ralph Hodge Second Baptist Church	Dan Stembridge Challenge Discovery Projects
Chenice Brown Mosby Community Ambassadors	Rachelle Hunley VCU Health Injury And Violence Prevention	Latrice Steward Fairfield Community Ambassadors
Ramona Brown Resident/Parent	Osita Iroegbu Mayor's Office	Reid Stowe VCU Healthy Communities For Youth
Derek Chapman Interim Director, VCU Center on Society and Health	Kyle Jacobs Virginia State University	Ralph Stuckey Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority
Spence Cochran Richmond Police Department	Tonia Jacobs Resident/Parent	Terri N. Sullivan VCU Health
Emmanuel Crawford Gilpin Community Ambassadors	Sunshine Konzen Creighton Community Ambassadors	Will Teeples VCU Healthy Communities For Youth
Keisha Cummings 2 Love LLC	Ann-Frances Lambert Richmond City Council	TJ Thompson
James Davis Office of Community Wealth Building	Jackie Lawrence Virginia Department of Health	Nicholas Thomson VCU Health Injury And Violence Prevention
Torey Edmonds Community Outreach Coordinator	Khalif Lewis Fairfield Community Ambassadors	Amy Vincent VCU Health Injury And Violence Prevention
Sheryl Garland VCU Health/Chief of Health Impact	Shanel Lewis Virginia Department of Health	Angela Woodson Hillside Community Ambassadors

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RVA.gov/RVAGVPI

