

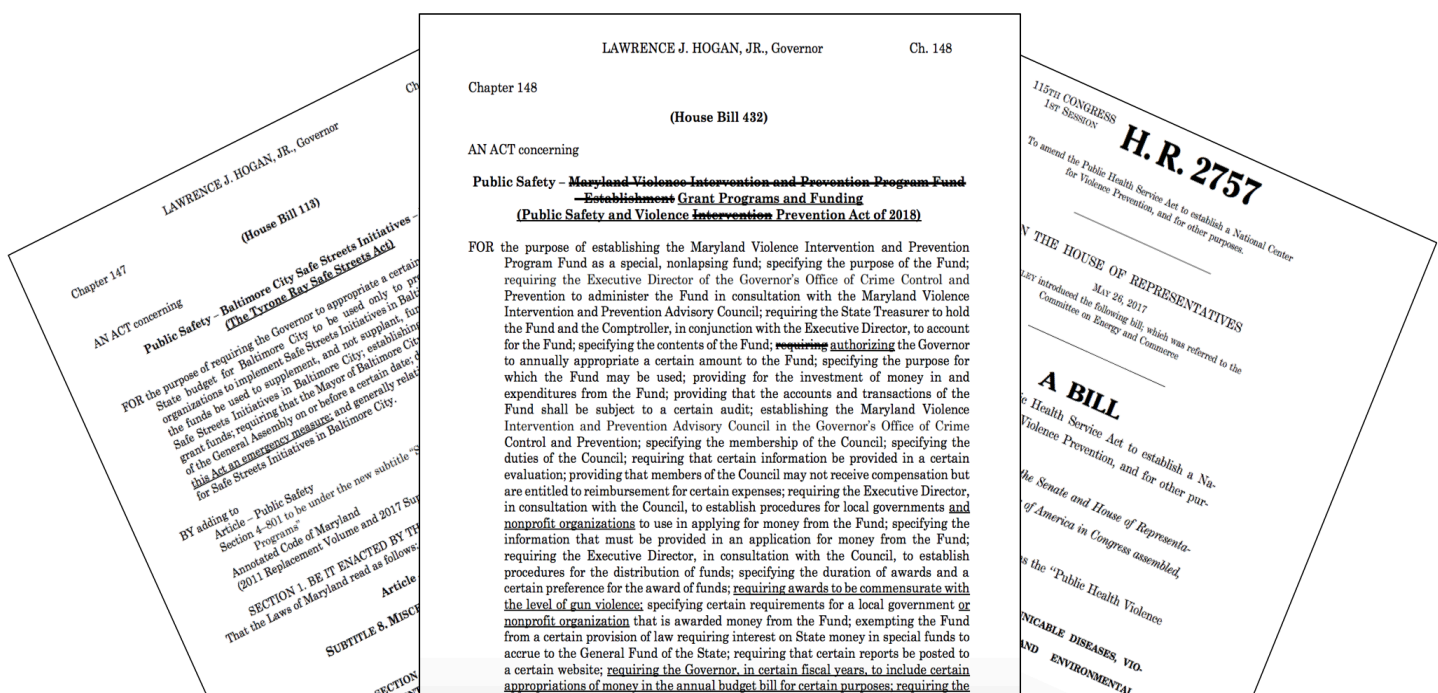
State-level Policy Brief

Developing and advocating for state-level investments in health-based violence prevention

February 2019

Budgets are a reflection of societal values and priorities. Organizations and advocates across the United States are working at local, state, and federal levels to change the understanding of and approaches to violence so that it is addressed as the urgent health issue that it is. While numerous legislative leaders have recognized violence as a health issue and embraced evidence-based solutions, these evidence-based efforts must be backed by meaningful and sustained funding allocations in city, state, and federal budgets if significant strides are to be made in addressing the violence epidemic.

The resources and action steps identified in this document are based on previous and ongoing legislative efforts and are intended to inform new policy development and advocacy across the country. A handful of states have now established dedicated funding to support health-based violence prevention work, including California, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New York, and, most recently, Maryland. This document includes brief descriptions of these funding initiatives, lessons learned and best practices for funding programs, and key steps and recommendations for anyone looking to advocate for similar strategies. The hope is it will act as a guide for advocacy at city and state levels to develop policies that are specifically responsive to communities most impacted by violence and support necessary evidence-based health intervention strategies. As a collective of experts from across the country, the Movement towards Violence as a Health Issue sees state policies as essential to addressing the violence epidemic and promoting safety, health, and equity.



Key Steps for Policy Development and Advocacy

Making the case for legislation that supports the health approach to violence prevention involves multiple steps and considerations. Outlined below are key steps that will aid in the development, advocacy, and implementation of local, state, and federal legislation. Communities and states already engaging in this work will likely have many of these components in place and should progress to the appropriate step based on the opportunities, relationships, and resources available.

Step 1 - Gather data/evidence

Not only is data a critical component of evidence-based programming, presentable data on both regional and program specific outcomes are essential for informing legislators and building a convincing case for investment. Using data as a foundation, organizations and advocates can develop a compelling argument for establishing more sustainable funding opportunities to expand and strengthen existing programs and establish new programs in areas disproportionately impacted by violence.

- Incorporate news coverage as a tool for garnering support and leverage. Be sure to monitor local news outlets for coverage of the issue and specific health-based approaches.
- Examples of key data points - broken down by age, race, gender, sexual orientation, income, location, region/county, etc. for all parties involved in violent incidents:
 - Number of homicides
 - Number of shootings
 - Trends in violent crime over last 5 years
 - Number of witnesses (if available)
 - Hospital data on violent injuries
- Collect information and data on the cost of violence. This information can be challenging to find, but influential. If available, information on costs are typically collected separately based on type of violence. An example of a state-wide cost analysis specific to gun violence in Maryland produced by the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence can be found on the resources page. Potential sources for this information include:
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - City, county and/or state-wide open access databases
 - Police data
 - Local and state health departments
 - Hospitals

Step 2 - Identify existing health-based programs and efforts

Existing programs and initiatives are critical advocacy and policy development partners. They are well-positioned to provide evidence and testimony, to conduct advocacy and community outreach, and to lead expanded initiatives. While some program representatives may not be involved in the core group developing the policy proposal, their support can play a definitive role in gaining buy-in from communities and representatives. When identifying these programs, it is important to develop criteria for inclusion. This includes evaluating the extent to which programs are health-based, evidence-informed, committed to equity, community-based, and connected to multiple agencies.

- To identify the right programs and ensure they meet criteria for inclusion as evidence-based violence prevention programs:
 - Talk with community members about which programs are active and credible, particularly among those at highest risk for involvement in violence
 - Coordinate with city and state agencies, such as mayor's offices and health departments, to assess existing programs and ongoing efforts
 - Research existing school, hospital, and community intervention and prevention programs and review any available qualitative and quantitative data
- Existing program implementers and oversight entities may include:
 - Community-based organizations (CBOs)
 - Hospitals
 - Schools
 - Faith-based organizations
 - Public health departments (both local and state)
 - Mayor's offices

Step 3 - Identify and coordinate with partners

Policy development and advocacy is most successful when it is conducted through a process of collaboration and multi-organizational input. Identifying key partners and stakeholders will ensure a diversity of perspectives, expertise, and experience and produce more comprehensive legislation.

- Schedule regular calls/meetings with partners to maintain momentum, facilitate effective information sharing, coordinate efforts, and create opportunities to recruit additional partners.
 - The schedule for calls and meetings will depend on the timeline of the legislative process. During the development and introduction of a bill, it is

recommended to meet or have calls at least weekly with a point person tracking and communicating any progress to all partners.

- Develop criteria for inclusion and recruitment for partners (i.e. involved in violence prevention, connected to political leaders, connected to community/community-based, health-focused, committed to equity, advocacy experience, access to data, connected to media partners, etc.).
- In addition to public health and hospital representatives consider including representatives from businesses, advocacy groups, schools, faith-based organizations, related community-based organizations, law enforcement, government agencies, and most importantly, people impacted by violence.

Step 4 - Connect with policy advocacy groups

Policy advocacy groups and lobbyists who are already working on issues related to violence in your area can be great partners. Their knowledge and experience of the local legislative landscape and resources can add credibility and efficiency to the process of developing a bill.

- Identify potential policy advocacy groups and lobbying organizations by searching for mentions in news coverage of related issues, reviewing press releases on aligned legislations from legislators, and searching through local and national violence prevention networks and associations.
- Connect with existing advocacy and/or lobbying groups working on issues aligned with violence prevention either directly or tangentially. These groups can provide knowledge specific to the local legislature, legislative process, and connections to legislative staff.
- Partner to leverage any media connections these groups have to help increase news coverage of the issue and bill to raise awareness and public support.

Step 5 - Find legislators to champion a bill

The proposal and introduction of a bill will require sponsorship from a legislator who can champion the issue, gain support from their colleagues, and provide guidance on advocacy efforts. Occasionally, there are legislators already working on similar topics and/or who have a personal connection to the issue of violence, which often strengthens their commitment to the issue. Once a legislative champion has been brought on board, their legislative staff will become key partners as they work on the issue and provide guidance on various steps, including conducting outreach to other legislators likely to support the bill. Outreach should be conducted to gain bi-partisan support and sponsorship as this greatly increases the likelihood of getting legislation passed and effectively implemented.

- Strategies for identifying potential champions:
 - Search for press releases, public statements, and news coverage to determine if there is a legislator already concerned about the issue of violence and invested in addressing it as a health issue and/or supporting local evidence-based programs.
 - Review previously introduced and/or passed legislation that is aligned with your efforts to identify legislators who have sponsored or supported similar efforts (i.e., issues related to public health, criminal justice reform, various forms of violence, trauma, inequalities, etc.).
 - Contact existing health-based violence prevention and intervention programs to understand if they already have connections to legislators who have supported their work.
 - Identify which legislators represent communities, regions, and districts disproportionately impacted by violence.
 - Research backgrounds of potential champions to understand if they have previous experience within the medical field, public health, or other area that may connect them to the health approach to violence.
- Review the voting history of potential sponsors as you begin setting up meetings with legislators and their staff members to understand their priorities, focus areas, and the committees they serve on.
- Research the region potential legislative sponsors represent to ensure any outreach or background information is relevant and includes details on the conditions and context of the communities within their region.

Step 6 - Understand your state and local legislative processes

Each state and jurisdiction operates differently as does each politician. Understanding relevant legislative processes, requirements, and timelines is key to determining what the essential steps are to help promote your policy. By working with people who have experience in this area, time and energy can be directed towards what is most necessary and likely to be successful.

- Research and understand the processes and procedures related to the development, introduction, review, and passage of legislation as they are often unique to each municipality and state. This can include specific timelines for submission and review, bill language and budgeting, committee assignments and hearings, and legislative sponsorship. These details can be found on government websites, such as on the site for specific legislative committees.
- Attend to detailed requirements for committee hearings (i.e., how many copies of a written testimony must be submitted for review by a legislative committee,

how to address committee members in written and oral testimony, evidence and testimony submission deadlines, etc.).

Step 7 - Draft legislation

Using existing language to craft legislation will help create a united front towards supporting health approaches. Each bill must be tailored to the unique needs of the state and highlight components of the priorities of the legislative sponsor in order for the bill to have a chance at success.

- Identify national and local organizations that may be able to assist with drafting legislation (i.e. think tanks, legal advocacy organizations, lobbying agencies, etc.).
- Pull from existing legislation in other states or localities (see examples in chart below), draft bill language and/or key components
- Once drafted, share the document with legislators and other partners for review and eventual translation into specific bill language. A substantive draft with supporting research makes it easier to gain buy-in from legislators and their staff.
- Know what aspects are negotiable vs. essential for the success of the policy. Drafts will change throughout the entire process.

Step 8 - Prepare testimony

Organizations or individuals may be called upon to present oral or written testimony to support legislation. Depending on funding and regulations, this testimony may need to be purely educational (not taking a position on a bill). This testimony has the power to influence decision makers and ultimately the passage of the bill.

- Draft written and oral testimony that is brief and to the point with supporting data and evidence. Be sure to check for any specific guidelines that may be posted to committee websites. Policy makers will be reviewing a large amount of information and will be considering many bills within the same committee hearing - meaning that testimony should include the most crucial information and be presented in a way that will be convincing for the committee members.
- Invite local partners, programs, and advocates to submit testimony as well and provide them with templates, if necessary.

Step 9 - Conduct follow-up and maintain advocacy efforts

Following the introduction of legislation, it is essential to remain involved as the bill undergoes review and editing by other legislators. While numerous changes will likely be made throughout this process, consistent communication and collaboration with the bill's sponsor and other partners can ensure that the core elements of the strategy remain in place. Grassroots support from local organizations, programs, and communities is essential for this step and all preceding steps.

- Assist bill sponsor and their staff with any outreach, policy revisions, research, and additional advocacy. Legislative staff work on numerous bills at the same time making it critical to provide additional communication, coordination, and research support throughout the development of the bill.
- Monitor progress of legislation through the legislative body's website and through the sponsor's legislative staff to ensure consistent progress and prevent any unwanted alterations to the bill's purpose and language.
- Encourage partners to meet with legislators and their staff and conduct outreach to legislators, especially those on committees reviewing the bill and any who may be hesitant or resistant to the legislation. Having involvement from a range of individuals, communities, organizations, agencies, and experts strengthens outreach efforts.
- Build grassroots advocacy efforts by developing materials and guidance for community members interested in contacting elected officials and relevant committee members.
- Develop and share scripts that can assist people with contacting elected officials through calls, emails, letters, face-to-face meetings, and social media.
- Maintain and grow public support through regular communication through emails and social media to provide updates on the status of the legislation. Engaged supporters can help hold elected officials accountable and ensure timely progression of a bill through the legislative process.

Step 10 - Celebrate success

It is important to celebrate success as a bill is drafted, introduced, and passed. This can help sustain and build momentum and grow public awareness around both the issue of violence and the strategies supported by the legislation. These celebrations are an opportunity to:

- Highlight the efforts of the bill sponsor(s) and supporters
- Maintain collaborative efforts with partners developed throughout the process
- Gain media coverage of the issue and evidence-based solutions
- Build more support and raise public awareness
- Share information to assist other efforts in your state and across the country

Easy Ways to Get Started

The following are some simple action steps that can be taken to gain buy-in and raise awareness among elected officials and others:

- Call your governor or representatives and ask that they support health approaches to violence prevention. Follow-up with an email that includes links to sample legislation ([the Maryland bill](#)), the [Movement towards Violence as a Health Issue](#), and examples of local work.
- Attend town hall meetings to share information on evidence-based violence prevention strategies and as elected officials to support these health approaches. Discuss how other states and cities are seeing reductions in violence and that your city/state needs to invest in improving safety, health, and equity. Use the language and examples from this document that will work best based on your elected official's platform and current work. Providing handouts for elected officials, staff members, and interested residents is always useful.
- Use the email template on the following page for contacting local, state, and federal elected officials. There are numerous places to enter region and organization specific information and the text should be adapted as needed.
- Write an op-ed or infuse language about the need to support this work within your sphere of influence (schools, community organizations, faith institutions, businesses, etc.). A link to an example of an op-ed that you can draw from and tailor for your audience can be found in the resources section of this document.
- Share information about the proven results of health approaches to violence prevention within your networks to raise awareness and gain support for these efforts. This can prove to be a key component of pushing elected officials to consider these approaches and incorporating them into their platforms, especially during election years. Changing the conversation and the understanding around violence to that of a health issue can help build momentum for necessary change.
- The Movement's previous brief, *Communicating About Violence as a Health Issue: Health Messaging and Guidance for Spokespeople*, should be used as a guiding toolkit for all communication and outreach efforts. That brief and additional resources can be found on the Movement's website at: violenceepidemic.org.

Dear **(insert elected official, representative, or staff member)**,

I am contacting you to request a meeting with you to discuss **(insert name of your program)** and the Movement towards Violence as a Health Issue. **(Insert brief information about your program here and include a link to a website if applicable)**. The Movement towards Violence as a Health Issue consists of over 500 individuals representing more than 150 organizations across the country dedicated to activating the health approach to violence prevention. The initiative, which began in 2015, is led by Former Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher, Former Dean of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Dr. Al Sommer, and CEO/ Founder of Cure Violence Dr. Gary Slutkin. The Movement has seen considerable success in changing perceptions, implementing systems changes, and developing policy solutions to sustain the work.

As the epidemic of violence continues to impact communities across our region and throughout the country, there is an urgent need for sustainable state-level investments in the evidence-based health strategies that are proven to reduce and prevent violence. Numerous states have already instituted funding strategies that can act as models for **(insert state name)**. Additionally, the Public Health Violence Prevention Act (HR 2757), federal legislation introduced by Congressman Quigley (IL), provides a strong framework for local efforts that would further the goals and opportunities of health-based prevention strategies.

At **(insert name of program or organization/agency)**, we fundamentally view violence as a health issue. We would be happy to provide you with the most recent data and research that demonstrates the impacts of health solutions to the violence epidemic that is claiming thousands of lives every year in the United States and traumatizing far more.

I would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss this further and explore some potential solutions based on efforts being undertaken in other states. **(Insert some potential dates)**. Please contact me with any questions at **(insert contact information)**.

Sincerely,

(Insert name and title)

State Legislation Overview

Examples of state-level funding strategies that have been implemented over the past several years are briefly described below. Some of these strategies are explained and analyzed in much greater detail in a 2017 report by the Giffords Law Center, *Investing in Intervention: The Critical Role of State-Level Support in Breaking the Cycle of Urban Gun Violence*. Each of these funding strategies is unique and adds to our understanding of best practices and how future legislation can be structured to best fit the local context and support local health-based and cross-sector violence prevention efforts.

MARYLAND - Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund	
Year passed/ launched:	2018
Purpose:	Establishes state funding stream to support programs implementing evidence-based and evidence-informed health programs proven to prevent and reduce violence
Appropriation:	Range of \$0 to \$10 million \$5 million allocated for FY 2019
Key details:	Bill language specifically calls on violence to be addressed as a health issue Prioritizes communities disproportionately impacted by violence Makes local governments and nonprofit organizations eligible for funding Includes mandatory involvement of an advisory council Establishes a unified and centralized evaluation plan for all funded programs
MARYLAND - The Tyrone Ray Safe Streets Act	
Year passed/ launched:	2018
Purpose:	Requires the Maryland Governor to appropriate funding in the annual state budget to supplement existing funding for community-based organizations to expand and implement the Safe Streets program in Baltimore City
Appropriation:	\$3.6 million

Key details:	<p>Provides emergency funding support for a proven health approach to prevent violence (Cure Violence replication program)</p> <p>Specifically notes that funding is only to be used to supplement, not supplant, existing funding for the program</p> <p>Requires the Mayor of Baltimore City to provide an annual report on the effectiveness of the Safe Streets program to committees of the Maryland General Assembly</p>
MASSACHUSETTS - Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI)	
Year passed/ launched:	2011
Purpose:	Created a multifaceted, community-based strategy for eliminating serious violence among high-risk, urban youth ages 14 to 24 that combines public health and public safety approaches.
Appropriation:	\$8.1 million (2018)
Key details:	<p>Created investment in public health strategy to address gun violence</p> <p>Works with young people at highest risk of involvement in gun violence</p> <p>Provides grant funding to cities with disproportionate rates of violence</p> <p>Emphasizes priority for programs working with young people at “proven risk” of direct involvement in violence</p>
MASSACHUSETTS - Shannon CSI	
Year passed/ launched:	2006
Purpose:	Supports a multi-pronged approach to address a community's gang and youth violence problem using five strategic areas: social intervention, suppression, opportunity provision, organizational change, and community mobilization.
Appropriation:	Up to \$5.2 million

Key details:	<p>Supports a research component comprised of Local Action Research Partners (LARPs) and Statewide Research Partners (SRPs)</p> <p>LARPs provide strategic, analytic, and research support to individual sites</p> <p>The SRPs provide support to the Office of Grants and Research (OGR, the LARPs, and all funded sites and partners with a LARP Awarded through competitive process overseen by the Justice and Prevention Division</p> <p>The Research and Policy Analysis Division provides support to the Shannon CSI Initiative in the form of data collection and analysis</p>
NEW YORK - Operation SNUG	
Year passed/ launched:	2009
Purpose:	Provides funding for the operation of 11 SNUG sites across the state that are replicating the Cure Violence Model
Appropriation:	\$4.78 million for 2019
Key details:	<p>Utilizes culturally appropriate violence interrupters and street outreach workers to stem local violence in a targeted area</p> <p>Supports hospital-based programs that work directly with community leaders</p> <p>Provides funds to specified neighborhoods, precincts, or other geographically defined areas experiencing high rates of gun violence and work through community-based organizations, residents, and other individuals that are well positioned to work with youth and young adults at highest risk for involvement in violence</p> <p>Requires data collection and analysis in conjunction with numerous partners, including law enforcement</p>
ILLINOIS - Community-based Violence Intervention and Prevention Services Programs	
Year passed/ launched	2018
Purpose:	Supports programs focused on intervening with violent incidents and preventing future occurrences of violence
Appropriation:	\$7.5 million

Key details:	<p>CBVIP services programs support the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convene or expand an existing community coalition to ensure that service providers and all potential participants are aware of violence prevention resources available in community - Develop collaborative partnerships to ensure that clients' immediate needs are met - Provide pro-social activities for the community - Public education and awareness building of program services through materials, presentation, and events - Direct services, including street intervention/interruption through active outreach and engagement, counseling and therapy, case management, and youth development
PENNSYLVANIA - Gun Violence Reduction Initiative	
Year passed/launched:	2018
Purpose:	Funding through competitive grants for municipalities seeking to implement evidence-based gun violence reduction programs
Appropriation:	\$1.5 million
Key details:	<p>Resulted from listening sessions between communities impacted by violence and the Governor and state representatives</p> <p>Grants to be awarded through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)</p>
COLORADO - Community Crime Victims Grant Program	
Year passed/launched:	2018
Purpose:	Creates a five-year pilot program to expand community-based support services for community crime victims and other interventions aimed at reducing repeat victimization
Appropriation:	\$4.1 million total (\$880,000 per year)
Key details:	<p>Recognizes violence as a public health problem</p> <p>Identifies previous victimization as a risk for future involvement in violence</p> <p>Has a specific focus on working with communities of color, men, and young adults</p> <p>Funds are directed to those with close ties to those at highest risk, including non-profits, schools, tribal agencies, and individuals.</p>

Elements of Impactful Legislation

Distribution of funding:

- Ensures that individuals impacted by violence are involved in decision making processes.
- Involves representatives from the health sector, including hospitals, health departments, community clinics, etc. to maintain a health-focused approach.
- Allocates funding to municipalities based on their proportionate need, rather than dividing evenly among regions.
- Employs language in legislation (e.g., “disproportionately impacted by violence”) that helps establish guidelines for the entity responsible for distributing funds.

Focus on equity - addressing the needs of your local community:

- Involves and garners support from those most impacted by violence in the region in policy and program development. This helps to ensure that their voice is represented and that the funding will be implemented in a way that will be sure to benefit them and their communities.
- Advances a multi-pronged approach in which multiple agencies are held accountable in working to reduce the gap in health outcomes.
- Ensures sustained funding so organizations have the opportunity to maintain and grow their work to meet the needs of their communities. As violence decreases, the work must evolve and ensure that residents are not displaced and benefit from newly introduced opportunities.
- Does not stipulate matching funds and/or decreased funding over time, as this may not be viable for communities that are historically disenfranchised or experiencing disinvestment (as disproportionately the most violent communities are). Instead, find ways that the city or state can continue investing (i.e., impact bonds, tax increases, hospital community benefit dollars, VOCA funding, emergency preparedness funding, etc.).
- Includes specific considerations for the impact that violence and the policy itself have on inequities in order to effectively promote equitable outcomes.

Evaluation:

- Ensures effective implementation of evidence-based models by including specific independent evaluation requirements for programs that receive funding, including data collection, monitoring, and reporting.
- Allocates specific funding for an independent evaluation of all funded programs in an effort to provide a necessary source of feedback and to measure the success and experiences of grant recipients.

- Makes oversight entity responsible for implementing a third party independent evaluation for the purposes of centralizing evaluations, ensuring consistency, and allowing programs to focus entirely on core operations and implementation.

Oversight of Implementation:

- Ensures oversight and accountability for the proper implementation of any funding program through the use of an advisory board or some other means.
- Involves community members, impacted individuals, advocates, subject matter experts, and agency representatives in any advisory council or community oversight board.
- Details the structure and responsibilities of an advisory board/council if applicable.
- Promotes educational activities and outreach to ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding of how and why violence is a preventable health issue.

Requirements of programs to be funded:

- Includes eligibility requirements and/or considerations within the bill's language to help provide guidance to the future oversight entity and ensure that funding is awarded to programs using health-based strategies. Suggested program requirements include:
 - Has a proven track record of achieving violence reduction outcomes or is an adaptation of a model proven to work elsewhere
 - Has a demonstrated grounding in a health approach
 - Utilizes evidence-based or evidence-informed practices
 - Receives training and technical assistance from local, national, and/or international experts to ensure grounding in evidence-based practices
 - Has a demonstrated ability to reduce inequities caused by and/or perpetuated by violence

Sample Bill Language from MD H.B. 432

As one of the most recent state-level policy successes, Maryland's H.B. 432 stands as a great example of how legislation can lead to promising sustainable investments in evidence-based health strategies for violence prevention. Numerous Movement Partners played key roles in the development and advocacy of this bill and continue to be involved in ensuring its proper implementation. A link to H.B. 432 can be found on the resource page of this document. Below are some highlighted recommendations for effective legislation and sample language quoted directly from this bill:

Include specific purpose of the fund or funding strategy being established:

“(1) Support effective violence reduction strategies by providing competitive grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations to fund evidence-based health programs or evidence-informed health programs; and (2) evaluate the efficacy of evidence-based health programs or evidence-informed health programs funded through the fund.”

Define evidence-based health programs:

“A program or an initiative that: (1) is developed and evaluated through scientific research and data collection; (2) uses public health principles that demonstrate measurable positive outcomes in preventing gun violence; and (3) is implemented by a nonprofit organizations or public agency.”

Define evidence-informed health programs:

“A program or an initiative that is: (1) based on public health principles; (2) capable of being studied and evaluated through research and data collection; (3) for the purpose of reducing gun violence; (4) directed to influence factors determined to affect gun violence; and (5) implemented by a nonprofit organization or public agency.”

Specify desired parameters for the use of funds:

“The Fund may not be used to: (1) supplant funding that would otherwise be available for violence intervention or prevention programs; or (2) fund suppression activities by law enforcement.”

Ensure that preference in the awarding of funding is congruent with regional need:

“Preference shall be given to local governments or local nonprofit organizations: (1) that are disproportionately affected by violence, as determined by the council...”

“Funding awards shall be commensurate with: (1) the levels of gun violence in the jurisdiction served by the local government or nonprofit organization.”

Non-Legislative Funding Strategies

While pursuing the establishment of sustainable funding streams through legislation is the central focus of this brief, additional funding sources might be available without passing a new law. These resources should also be explored as some budget line items or existing grant programs may be adapted to be made accessible for local health-based violence prevention programs and strategies. If that is the case, determine the

right person to talk to (i.e., mayor, city councilperson, governor, health commissioner, state's attorney, state representative and/or their appropriate staff). This might include discussions with the state Victims of Crime office, the department of health, and/or other agencies. As detailed below, numerous states, for example, are now leveraging Victims of Crime Act funding to provide support to health-based violence intervention programs. When exploring the best strategy for your region, it is important to consider the long-term sustainability of the funding source and how best to ensure it.

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Funding

The federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is a large and growing source of federal dollars intended to serve, compensate, and rehabilitate victims of crime. Some states have effectively leveraged these funds to support violence intervention programs, like hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs), that serve violently injured crime victims.

States receive federal VOCA dollars through two main programs: VOCA assistance grants and VOCA compensation grants. The federal government provides VOCA assistance grants as annual block grants to the 50 states to be re-distributed to agencies and organizations that provide services to crime victims. Through the VOCA compensation program, the federal government also generally reimburses each state on an annual basis for 60% of the state's costs in compensating crime victims for the cost of certain eligible services, such as trauma counseling following a violent crime.

Due to changes in the federal funding formula for VOCA assistance grants, the size of the VOCA assistance block grant provided to each state annually roughly quadrupled from FY 2014 to 2015 alone. The size of this grant was increased again by more than 80% between FY 2017 and 2018. This large source of funding presents an important opportunity for states to direct more resources to programs that serve violently injured crime victims at high risk of retaliation or reinjury. Innovative pilot programs like one launched in California in 2014 have also authorized victim compensation funds to be used to reimburse certified violence prevention professionals for providing crisis intervention, case management, and peer support services to crime victims.

Pennsylvania is another state using VOCA funding to support violence prevention efforts. In the past year, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) released \$48 million in grant funding to organizations that focus on providing services to victims of crime across the state. Within that total amount, the governor announced that \$4.1 million would be going directly to hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) and related violence prevention programs in Philadelphia.

PENNSYLVANIA - Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)	
Year passed/launched:	2018
Purpose:	Provides funding support to programs that provide services and advocacy for victims of crime across the state
Appropriation:	\$48 million
Key details:	Competitive grants were created with the use of federal VOCA funding Recipients include hospitals and community-based organizations that serve victims of community violence and their family members Governor announced \$4.1 million was awarded to hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) and related violence prevention programs in Philadelphia

Resources

Example of an op-ed:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/healthcare/337441-violence-should-be-treated-as-a-health-issue>

Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence's report on state-level investments:

<http://lawcenter.giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Investing-in-Intervention-02.14.18.pdf>

Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence's report on the economic cost of gun violence in MD:

<http://lawcenter.giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Cost-of-Gun-Violence-in-Maryland.pdf>

Healing Justice Alliance Trainings:

<http://www.healingjusticealliance.org/trainings/>

Hospital-based Violence Intervention Program Resources:

<http://nnhvip.org/resources-2/research-information-for-resource-page/>

Pointers for preparing written and oral testimony:

http://www.citizenadvocacycenter.org/uploads/8/8/4/0/8840743/guidelines_for_preparing_writing_and_giving_testimony.pdf

Massachusetts Safe and Successful Youth Initiative:

<https://commonwealthmagazine.org/criminal-justice/anti-violence-funds-jeopardized-house-senate-flap/>

Massachusetts Safe and Successful Youth Initiative Briefing:

<https://www.air.org/project/safe-and-successful-youth-initiative-massachusetts-ssyi>

Massachusetts Shannon CSI Grants:

<https://www.justicegrants.info/GrantDetails.aspx?gid=39579>

Illinois Funding:

<http://www.icjia.state.il.us/grant-programs>

Colorado legislation:

http://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018A/bills/2018a_1409_enr.pdf

Colorado report that led to legislation:

https://www.ccjrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CCJRC_victims_speak33118-Final-2.pdf

This document has been prepared by The Movement towards Violence as a Health Issue. The Movement, which was formed in July of 2015, consists of over 500 individuals representing more than 150 organizations across the country dedicated to activating the health approach to violence.