

Gun Violence Prevention Milestone Report

December 2021 – Following a significant increase in gun violence in the City of Gainesville, District 1 Gainesville City Commissioner Desmon Duncan-Walker hosts a virtual Town Hall to address the topic of gun violence. The more than 1,000 community members, stakeholders and partners in attendance speak about the trauma of gun violence, the need for safe places and opportunities for youth and families (especially those with criminal justice involvement), and partnering with community-based efforts and organizations.

Spring 2022 – The Gainesville City Commission votes in favor of applying to participate in One Nation One Project (ONOP), a national art and wellbeing initiative. Partners include the University of Florida College of Arts, University of Florida Health Shands Arts in Medicine and the Alachua County School Board. The city’s chosen focus is youth gun violence, following a noted uptick in incidents in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fall 2022 – The National League of Cities (NLC) Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (IYEF) competitively selects Gainesville along with eight other cities across the country as the inaugural cohort for the newly launched ONOP initiative. Gainesville begins work on the plans for the two-year project.

Winter 2022 – ONOP GNV is assigned to co-lead Cherie Kelley, Youth Services and Education Programs Manager for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs, and Brandy Stone, Community Health Director with Gainesville Fire Rescue.

January 2023 – At the request of the Gainesville Police Department (GPD), the City Commission approves purchase of a new high-tech tool for solving gun crimes using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The Brasstrax Acquisition Station is a \$144,853 search engine for identifying spent shell casings.

February 2023 – The City Commission passes a motion to:

1. Declare gun violence a public health crisis and draft a resolution to that effect;
2. Authorize the Mayor to draft a letter to the Alachua County Commission asking them to also declare a gun violence crisis, draft a mirror resolution and partner with the city in this effort;
3. Advance and lay a foundation for convening a Gun Violence Task Force;
4. As staff to bring back ways they can expand or tailor programs already in place to specifically address gun violence.

The city’s Youth Steering Committee begins convening on a monthly basis, led by Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs, to inform ONOP GNV and the city’s efforts around gun violence.

May-August 2023: ONOP GNV moves forward, providing grants of \$5,000 to 20 local organizations and artists to facilitate projects that address youth gun violence. Funding comes

from a donation to the ONOP national network. Data collection from youth participants focuses on safety, preferred activities and health resources in their communities.

June 2023 – The City Commission requests a conversation with Alachua County to discuss partnership opportunities and the task force concept. There also is a request directing staff to bring back options for a format for a task force with minimal impact to workload.

July 2023 – The City Commission passes a resolution declaring Gun Violence as a public health crisis and discusses three options for laying a foundation for convening a task force.

August 6-7, 2023 – The City of Gainesville hosts the region’s first gun violence prevention summit. Titled, “Choose Peace: Gun Violence Must Cease,” the two-day event draws an estimated 400 participants. Sessions include policy analysis, violence prevention and group discussion. Mayor Pro-Tem Desmon Duncan-Walker anchors day one, featuring a youth town hall centering young voices. Mayor Harvey L. Ward Jr. anchors day two, featuring workshop activities for thought leaders and professionals in the field.

August 2023 – The City and County Commissions move to direct city and county staff to partner with Santa Fe College on a community-based Gun Violence Task Force with recommendations brought to the boards by Nov. 1, 2023.

Gainesville Police Department establishes the Gun Violence Unit. Conceived as a temporary operation, the unit evolves into a permanent initiative comprised of one sergeant and four officers with the sole focus of reducing gun violence. The unit works with partner agencies, including the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office, to cross jurisdictional lines and share resources with positive results. To date, the unit has worked 11,800 hours at an estimated cost of \$560,000.00. Staff salaries and benefits for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2025 are anticipated in the range of \$357,464.00.

September 2023 – ONOP GNV launches its Phase 2 call for projects, funding arts and wellbeing programs informed by the recent data collection with the goal of further addressing youth gun violence. This funding opportunity provides grants of up to \$45,000 per project, for a maximum of six projects through August 2024.

The City Commission addresses open container restrictions in a special meeting on Sept. 14, 2023 and other policy suggestions made by Commissioner Book are explored.

The City Commission passes the Fiscal Year 2024 budget with an allocation of \$150,000 for gun violence prevention programming and an allocation of \$250,000 to provide support for intervention and prevention programs for at-risk youth in the community.

November 2023 – ONOP GNV project award recipients are announced. Aces in Motion, BLSSD Future, Community Impact Corporation, Dream on Purpose, Hippodrome Theatre and the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center receive grants.

December 2023 – The search process begins for the city’s first Gun Violence Intervention Program Manager, to be housed in the Community Health Division of Gainesville Fire Rescue.

January 2024 – ONOP GNV Phase 2 begins, along with partner projects involving Alachua County Public Schools, UF Shands Arts in Medicine and UF College of the Arts. The city selects leaders from ONOP GNV to participate in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Data Track program to enhance performance metrics and storytelling.

In a joint City and County Commission meeting, the City Commissioners move to:

1. Refer to staff the task of identifying the current steps and existing stakeholders at both the county and the city;
2. Refer to staff the task of identifying the activities that are occurring related to the local gun violence crisis and ask staff to return within 60-90 days with a report of activities that are occurring, including but not limited to each of the January 2022 executive summary of “10 Essential Actions Cities Can Take to Reduce Violence Now” from the Department of Justice (DOJ);
3. Ask staff to return within 60-90 days with a report on the immediate, short-term and long-term recommendations that could serve as a draft plan for both commissions to begin to consider.

Gainesville Police Department, Gainesville Fire Rescue, Alachua County Crisis Center and Victims Services begin “Community Care Call Outs” to respond with trauma-informed resources to neighborhoods recently impacted by gun violence.

February 2024 – Following mid-year decisions by the Gainesville Regional Utility (GRU) Authority Board to reduce General Fund revenues and the impact this has on previously budgeted gun violence prevention efforts, the City Commission votes to reallocate \$150,000 in ARPA funds from administrative services to provide gun violence prevention programming. The \$250,000 previously budgeted for intervention and prevention programs for at-risk youth in the community is not restored.

The City of Gainesville, Alachua County and Santa Fe College staff begin meeting to discuss a joint partnership to collaboratively identify and implement gun violence solutions, spurred from the August 2023 Gun Violence Summit. An MOU to formalize the partnership that will be known as the Community Gun Violence Prevention Alliance is initiated to outline expectations.

At a meeting of the joint City and County Commissions, city staff presents “Gun Violence Steps and Strategies” to recap progress to date. This includes a review of city initiatives impacting gun violence, involved stakeholders, and a summary detailing the city’s utilization of steps that follow the strategy of the “10 Essential Actions Cities Can Take to Reduce Violence Now.”

March 2024 – Brittany Coleman begins as the City of Gainesville’s first Gun Violence Intervention Program Manager.

The City Commission approves the execution of the MOU to establish the Community Gun Violence Prevention Alliance.

April 2024 – In her role as Gun Violence Intervention Program Manager, Brittany Coleman begins attending community events and engagements, drafting program plans and identifying potential grant funding opportunities to expand the initiative.

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners moves to execute the Alliance MOU, as does the Santa Fe Board of Trustees.

ONOP GNV hosts the “Career Influencer Showcase x Arts and Culture.”

May 2024 – In providing a gun violence prevention update to the City Commission, staff announce the new citywide initiative known as IMPACT GNV. City Manager Cynthia W. Curry temporarily assigns the B.O.L.D Program to IMPACT GNV to support the efforts. The city begins the contracting process with the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center to partner on a violence interrupter program (\$45,000) through the Gun Violence Prevention Programming ARPA allocation.

The Alliance MOU is officially signed and executed by all parties.

On May 6, city staff attend a Joint County/Children’s Trust of Alachua County (CTAC) Board meeting at which representatives from Cure Violence make a presentation. County Commissioner Anna Prizzia moves to direct staff to work with the CTAC and the City of Gainesville to determine potential budget needs for implementing the Cure Violence model in Alachua County.

County Commissioner Cornell, a member of the CTAC Board, directs CTAC staff to work with the City and County Manager to provide up to \$250,000 of one-time funding to enhance community-based gun violence prevention efforts; this includes a request to return with recommendations within 30 to 60 days for immediate allocation. The motion carries 6-0.

City staff develop a grant proposal to submit to the DOJ’s Community-Based Violence Initiative Grant Program, with letters of support from Alachua County Community Support Services, the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office, the River Phoenix Center for Peace Building, the Public Defender’s Office and Santa Fe College. An application also is submitted to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs to address Arts Programs for Justice-Involved Youth. If awarded, both grants would provide community-based services and opportunities for justice-involved youth.

June 2024 – The first meeting of the Alliance stakeholders is held. Discussion topics include an overview of the Alliance and its goals; an introduction to IMPACT GNV and current efforts, including grant submissions; and a SWOT analysis of local gun violence efforts.

The city holds a Sunshine Meeting on June 20, 2024 between Mayor Harvey L. Ward and Commissioner Desmon Duncan-Walker to discuss gun violence prevention initiatives.

For Gun Violence Awareness Month, IMPACT GNV hosts an awareness and outreach campaign that highlights ONOP GNV productions including, “Lend Me Your Ears,” a series of youth monologues produced by the Hippodrome, We the People and Project YouthBuild. IMPACT GNV also

collaborates with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to host a “Wear Orange” event at the MLK Center to coincide with Teen Midnight Basketball. IMPACT GNV additionally works with community partners to produce a Safe Choices booklet for youth. During the month of June, over 300 gun locks donated by the VA Medical Center are distributed at community events, churches and to community partners.

The City of Gainesville Youth Steering Committee has dinner with Mayor Harvey L. Ward to share about their work over the last year and a half and discuss their solutions to youth gun violence.

July 2024 – ONOP GNV’s final event, the “Summer YOU!th Celebration” occurs on July 27, 2024 at the Cotton Club Museum and Cultural Center and Depot Park. The culminating celebration is produced by Marion Caffey, Gainesville native and longtime producer of Amateur Night at the Apollo. During this period, ONOP GNV completes the Bloomberg Harvard Data Track process.

The city’s Gun Violence Intervention Program Manager begins bi-weekly meetings with Alachua County Community Support Services staff to share updates and opportunities for collaboration on initiatives.

The City Commission receives a presentation on the IMPACT GNV structure; ongoing community engagement and outreach; and the full execution of the violence interruption agreement with the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center. The Willie Mae Stokes Community Center partners with NSpire FL for violence interruption services.

The second meeting of the Alliance stakeholders is held and includes: an in-depth look at the Alliance MOU; a review of the SWOT analysis conducted at the June meeting; a list of summer camps with slots for youth; an introduction to the City of Gainesville’s Youth Steering Committee; an introduction into Alachua County’s Small Grant Initiative; a report about Alachua County’s Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Small Grant program under development; and a brainstorm of CTAC proposal funding ideas.

August 2024 – ONOP GNV Phase 2 and partner projects conclude and subsequent data analysis begins. The Youth Steering Committee appears before the City Commission to present their work on the causes and solutions to youth gun violence in Gainesville.

The Alliance core team begins meeting on a bi-weekly basis to discuss funding proposals and meeting agendas.

The third meeting of the Alliance stakeholders is held and includes: a discussion of stakeholder funding priorities; an update confirming the CTAC board approved the \$250,000 rollover to FY25; and updates from IMPACT GNV as well as the county’s small grant program. There is a recap of the ONOP GNV final event and discussion of the Youth Steering Committee’s presentation. Alliance efforts include reviewing website proposals and looking into strategic planning consultants.

September 2024 – The fourth meeting of the Alliance stakeholders is held and includes: data updates from the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office and the Gainesville Police Department; an

update on the Alliance's strategic planning proposals with a presentation from the city's Office of Equity and Inclusion on the results-based accountability process; a review of the CTAC draft funding proposal (including violence interruption, strategic planning, grant program and technology carts); and the collection of feedback from stakeholders on the CTAC draft funding proposal.

As a result of the August 2024 presentation to the City Commission, City Manager Cynthia W. Curry recommends ARPA funding be allocated to support the Youth Steering Committee's recommendations. Commissioners approve this recommendation.

On September 23, 2024, city staff lead the presentation of the \$500,000 gun violence prevention proposal to the CTAC Board of Directors. Alliance partners from Alachua County and Santa Fe are present to answer questions. Two of the proposed funding items are not approved, and the board requests the Alliance return to a future meeting with a proposal reprogramming those unapproved dollars to other initiatives.

October 2024 – At the start of the new fiscal year, the B.O.L.D. Program is permanently assigned to Gainesville Fire Rescue. Positions are updated to more accurately reflect the program's work under IMPACT GNV. Recruitment begins for the B.O.L.D. part-time staff specialist and for a full-time entry-level intervention specialist. B.O.L.D. is providing targeted services to community members most at risk of gun violence and providing access to educational and job readiness opportunities. B.O.L.D. also is working with the A. Quinn Jones Center to provide services to selected youth and assist them in finding job opportunities, completing court-ordered sanctions and providing mentorship.

On October 1, 2024, city staff are made aware via the DOJ grant website that Cure Violence Global (CVG) was awarded the Community-Based Violence Initiative Grant. County staff were notified as partners of the Alliance and led city staff to the DOJ website, which indicated the grant was awarded for CVG to work specifically with Gainesville, FL and Charlottesville, VA. County staff indicate they were unaware of why the award was specifically for Gainesville, FL.

The fifth meeting of the Alliance stakeholders is held and includes: a presentation on the solutions for youth gun violence by the City of Gainesville's Youth Steering Committee; a strategic plan proposal update; and an update on the CTAC funding proposal to with a feedback opportunity for the reprogramming of remaining funds.

November 2024 – On November 4, 2024, city staff lead an update to the CTAC Board of Directors on the \$500,000 funding proposal. The final allocation is approved. Staff from Santa Fe and Alachua County are present as Alliance partners.

Item	Cost	Number	Total
Grant-Funded Projects	Up to \$33,000 each	TBD	\$222,850
Grant Manager	\$45,350	N/A	\$45,350
Strategic Planning Consultant	\$30,000	N/A	\$30,000
Violence Interrupter Program and Training	\$150,000	N/A	\$150,000
Additional Facilitator for the City of Gainesville’s Youth Steering Committee	\$4,750	N/A	\$4,750
Santa Fe Administrative Assistant	\$21,500	N/A	\$21,500
Technology Hub Carts	\$7,200	7	\$50,400
Youth Steering Committees in Two Additional Alachua County Municipalities	\$21,000	2	\$42,000
Total			\$500,000

The sixth meeting of the Alliance stakeholders is held and includes: a presentation from NSpire FL on their violence interruption work in partnership with the Willie Mae Stokes Center. NSpire FL, directed by Caleb Young, has provided hundreds of hours of community outreach, engagement and violence interruption in communities with high rates of gun violence. To accommodate increased efforts, NSpire has grown to a team of five trusted messengers and has partnered with Girls Can Do It Too and the Gainesville Housing Authority to provide mentorship and leadership skills to youth in Forest Pines.

Additionally, the Alliance announces that remaining CTAC funding has been approved. Updates from IMPACT GNV and the county’s gun violence grant program are given.

December 2024 – On December 3, 2024, IMPACT GNV is notified its application to the DOJ Community-Based Violence Initiative Grant program was not accepted. One of the considerations noted was “geographic diversity.”

Alliance members meet with Cure Violence Global staff on December 6, 2024 to discuss a presentation that CVG will make at the upcoming Alliance stakeholders meeting. City staff are informed that CVG will give an overview of their model. Staff recommend to CVG that some context as to why they are presenting should also be provided, noting that CVG is not yet authorized to discuss the grant award in detail.

The City of Gainesville’s Youth Steering Committee meets Shaquille O’Neal at A Very GNV Holiday Parade Dignitary Brunch.

On December 11, 2024, CVG attends the Alliance meeting and presents an in-depth overview of their application to the DOJ Community-Based Violence Initiative Grant as well as the role their national partners will play in providing support, technical assistance and consulting throughout the grant period.

The City of Gainesville has worked collaboratively with partners from multiple sectors to address the complex issue of gun violence, especially over the last three years. There has also been a significant financial investment in the work, with over \$323,000 of ARPA dollars allocated to gun violence programming; the hiring of a full-time position; increased support for GPD’s suppression efforts including over \$621,000 in ARPA funding for Violence Intervention; and over \$648,000 dedicated to One Nation One Project GNV, among others. The efforts involve multiple city departments and span prevention, intervention and suppression initiatives with the goal of improving quality of life for Gainesville residents. The combination of these efforts and outside partnerships have resulted in a significant decline in gun violence numbers.

As of November 30, 2024, Gainesville Police Department reports the following related to gun violence:

GPD Gun-Related Statistics*				
Crime	Jan. 1 – March 31	April 1 – June 30	July 1 – Sept. 30	Oct. 1 – Nov. 30
Stolen Firearms	21	32	25	20
Firearms Seized or Recovered	64	72	68	43
Number of Shots Fired	45	35	25	14
Persons Shot or Injured by Gunfire	13	15	8	2
Homicide Victims	5	2	0	0

Looking closely at GPD data, since May 2024, the city has had zero homicides. From January 1 – November 30, 2024, GPD has reported a total of eight homicides (seven are gun-related). This is a 33% reduction from the identical 2023 timeframe, in which 12 homicides occurred (source: NIBRS). As compared to the three previous months, the city has seen a 50% reduction in the numbers of individuals shot or injured by gunfire and a 28% reduction in the numbers of shots fired calls (source: Gun Related Statistics – RMS).

Additionally, since the BrassTRAX system went online in December 2023, approximately 301 shell casings related to around 210 different cases have been entered, including some for local, state and federal partners in the area. These casings were mostly from cases being handled by the Gainesville Police Department, but also included cases from the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office, the University of Florida Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The results have provided a number of presumptive correlations including one recently tying a seized weapon in Gainesville to casings collected at a homicide scene in Orange County, FL in 2023. In addition, a correlation earlier this year was instrumental in tying a subject firing a weapon during a “shoot-out” in an apartment complex to an earlier armed robbery in which the victim was shot. The ability to enter shell casings into the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network in a fraction of the time it takes the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to do so is a great benefit

to the agency. The cost of the Brasstrax machine is \$144,853.00 with an ongoing yearly maintenance of \$17,196.60.

As reducing gun related violence GPD's first public safety priority, the Police Chief allocates approximately 80% of his overall focus to that end, or approximately \$160,000 of his annual salary.