



C A L I F O R N I A

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

A Strategic Plan to Sustain California's Record Progress Against Gun Violence

Part II: Recommendations

Office of Gun Violence Prevention

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Introduction

For a generation, California has been developing a comprehensive blueprint for gun violence prevention that has powered the state's long-term transformation from a state with exceptionally high rates of gun violence three decades ago, to a state with average rates of gun violence one decade ago, into a state that now has substantially lower rates of gun violence than the rest of the nation on average — and, as a result, substantially lower rates of homicide and suicide overall. This blueprint remains an unfinished work in progress, but it has driven gun violence in California to historic lows in recent years. If, for the past decade, the rest of the U.S. had the same firearm death rate per capita as California's 2024 record low, there would have been 185,000 fewer Americans killed by firearms in one decade alone and hundreds of thousands fewer nonfatal shootings.¹

California has achieved transformational progress against gun violence in a relatively short period of time. As recently as 2010, a child under 18 was more likely to die from bullet wounds in California than in the rest of the U.S. on average. By 2024, a child in the rest of the nation was nearly three times as likely to die from bullet wounds as a child in California.

This progress has been driven by some enduring values. California has refused to normalize inaction in the face of epidemic levels of preventable violence and loss. California has committed to a comprehensive response. California has continued to preserve robust firearm commerce — over four million firearm transactions were recorded through licensed dealers in California from 2021-2025² — while placing reasonable, constitutional guardrails on the firearm industry's basic profit motive to sell as many weapons and related accessories to as many people as possible, no matter how dangerous. The state has invested in research and data-driven improvement. And importantly, California has not declared mission accomplished. California has continued the work of building and refining a gun violence prevention blueprint for the state and nation.

This report outlines recommendations for continuing to build on that blueprint over the next five years.

Assembly Bill 1252 (2024, Wicks) codified the responsibilities of the California Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP), including to advise the Attorney General, provide technical assistance to gun violence prevention stakeholders, help direct public safety grant-making, and publish "data and policy reports that highlight best practices, identify policy gaps and barriers to success, and make recommendations to the Legislature and other stakeholders about strategies, policies, and priorities for preventing gun violence."³ That legislation also required the OGVP to publish a report to the Legislature in 2026 outlining a strategic plan to reduce gun violence over the next five years, including recommendations on "legislation, improvements to statutory implementation, and increased programmatic funding necessary to achieve sustained reductions in gun violence in California."⁴

In April 2026, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention published the first part of that strategic plan report, titled: "[A Strategic Plan to Sustain California's Record Progress Against Gun Violence, Part I: Where We Are, How We Got Here, What We Need](#)."⁵ That Part 1 report provided a comprehensive foundation of data and policy analysis to show how in recent years, California became safer from gun violence than any other time on record, driven by particularly large reductions in firearm homicide from 2022 to 2025 for young men of color, and, relatedly, in cities implementing community violence intervention (CVI) strategies with state and federal funding support.

Based on that data, Part 1 emphasized the need for much stronger state and local investments in four priority areas to offset devastating funding cuts at all levels of government, and build our most impacted communities' prevention capacity. These four priority areas include:

1. **Community violence intervention and trauma recovery services** focused on interrupting cycles of retaliatory shootings and protecting gun assault survivors and others at very high risk;
2. **Domestic violence intervention and victim services** focused on protecting survivors of family and intimate partner violence;
3. **Implementation and enforcement of court protection orders**, including by ensuring dangerous individuals ordered by a court to relinquish their firearms quickly and safely comply; and
4. **Disrupting the interstate gun trafficking and ghost gun manufacturing operations** fueling a growing majority of gun crime and violence in our state.

This Part 2 report is a companion, final chapter of that strategic plan. It expands on the four priority recommendation areas described above, and provides additional recommendations on legislation, implementation, and funding and resource priorities for state and local policymakers, advocates, law enforcement and prosecuting agencies, city attorneys and county counsel's offices, grant-making agencies and philanthropy, and other health and safety stakeholders. Readers are encouraged to read Part 1 first for a detailed foundation of data and policy analysis about gun violence in California, and about why there is such a pressing need to build gun violence prevention capacity through state and local budgets over the next five years.

This is a very challenging moment for gun violence prevention efforts due to harmful federal actions and severe funding cuts to gun violence prevention programs at all levels of government. However, this strategic plan seeks to do more than counteract those cuts, or merely sustain California's gun violence rates at current levels.

California could achieve far more by following the recommendations in this plan, and treating gun violence prevention as a stronger budgetary priority. Reducing California's firearm homicide and assault victimization rates by another 30–50% below recent record lows would be an ambitious but achievable goal; it would bring California's firearm homicide rates in line with the rates other large, safer states like New York and Massachusetts have already reached.⁶ The impact would be measured in families kept whole, communities freed to reclaim public spaces, and thousands more brutal tragedies prevented each year. Achieving that goal will require stronger investment, strategic focus, and a broad commitment across many systems to build a culture of safety through prevention, protection, and accountability together.

This report starts with a single overarching recommendation that anchors the strategic plan, and 74 specific recommendations in 18 areas. This report includes a brief "Part 1 Recap" section below, followed by a "Recommendations Summary," and then a more detailed "Discussion & Explanation" section describing all of the report's recommendations.

Because many of this report's recommendations require increased state or local investment, policymakers will likely have to prioritize and choose among them depending on the availability of necessary resources.

This plan emphasizes as a top priority the need to strengthen state and local investments in community violence intervention initiatives, especially through the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant program.



Part 1 Recap

In 2024, the most recent year of final data available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), California achieved its lowest per capita rates of firearm death, firearm suicide, and firearm homicide on record — and opened the largest gap ever recorded between our state and the rest of the nation on all three measures. Recent reductions since 2022 were driven by especially large declines in firearm homicide victimization for young Black and Hispanic men and teens. Homicide data reported to California DOJ indicates that this record-setting progress continued into 2025; the number of firearm homicides reported by California law enforcement agencies fell 19% from 2024 to 2025.⁷

Part 1 documented how California’s recent progress has been driven in part by comprehensive efforts to address the proliferation of ghost guns in crime since 2022. For most of the last decade, crime gun trends in California have been driven by trends related to ghost guns (unserialized firearms assembled or 3D printed by unlicensed manufacturers from products designed to circumvent background checks and other protections). Part 1 and this report emphasize the need for continued policy and enforcement focus on this threat, especially to curb the proliferation of 3D printed ghost guns.

Part 1 also emphasized how California’s progress was accelerated by historic — but now declining — levels of state, local, and federal investment that built impacted communities’ capacity to staff teams and programs focused specifically on reducing gun violence. From 2022 to 2025, California strongly increased investment in community violence intervention (CVI) initiatives focused on interrupting cycles of retaliatory street violence, and in protection order and firearm relinquishment programs designed to ensure survivors requesting court-ordered safety protections are better protected from gun violence and coercive control. Many communities implementing new and strengthened CVI strategies cut firearm homicides by more than half in about three years.

These strategies did not merely reverse pandemic-era increases; they helped drive gun violence to new record lows, especially for the populations that have historically suffered the highest rates of homicide. These results were achieved on relatively modest budgets: some other states spending four to nine times more per capita on CVI grant programs have achieved even larger reductions and/or lower rates of gun homicide than California.

Part 1 also emphasized that California’s progress is now at risk. Many of the initiatives that drove historic reductions from 2022 to 2025 are, or soon will be, grappling with severe state and local budget cuts at the same time the federal government is walking away from its role in funding gun violence prevention and victim care.⁸ More cuts loom in the years ahead, as one-time investments launched under President Biden or Governor Newsom expire. In some California cities that recently lost federal and state funding for CVI initiatives, there are signs that gun violence is increasing in 2026 amid recent service cuts.⁹

Part 1 also highlighted two trends in the data that merit additional policy focus and resources:

First, California has been impacted by an enormous nationwide surge in domestic violence-related gun violence, particularly affecting women and children of color. This national surge in female and child-victim homicide is driven almost entirely by increased firearm violence. California’s policies have helped avert the much larger spikes seen across the rest of the U.S. on average, but stronger investments in domestic violence victim service and intervention programs are needed, as well as more consistent implementation and enforcement of court protection orders to separate adjudicated abusers from firearms.

Second, California’s effective policymaking and investments in firearm industry oversight have helped to significantly reduce the share of crime guns traced to California dealers; a large majority of firearms recovered from crime in California now cannot be traced to a California dealer sale. Illegal ghost gun manufacturing and interstate gun trafficking pipelines, especially from Arizona, Nevada, and Texas, play a leading role in fueling gun violence in California. As the federal government dismantles federal law enforcement capacity to investigate gun trafficking and illegal ghost gun manufacturing offenses, additional state and local resources and enforcement focus are needed to fill the vacuum.

In conclusion, Part 1 emphasized that California has made historic progress in reducing gun violence and that this progress is now colliding with a difficult budget climate, funding cuts, and a federal government exacerbating the conditions for violence. To overcome these challenges and achieve sustained reductions in gun violence over the next five years will require renewed commitment and investment in a comprehensive strategic plan.

Strategic Plan Recommendations Summary



1. **As a top overarching recommendation for this strategic plan:** Invest much more in gun violence prevention specifically, and ensure scarce resources are directed first to the highest-impact strategies focused on the people and places at greatest risk.
2. **Invest in Community Violence Intervention (CVI) and trauma recovery as a permanent pillar of public safety and victim care.**
 - a. As a top priority, California’s state policymakers should significantly expand investments in community violence intervention (CVI) initiatives through the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program. This report recommends that California double its state-level investment in CalVIP Grants to at least \$110 million per year for the next five years, combining dedicated Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Special Fund revenues (about \$55 million annually) with matching General Fund or other revenue necessary to sustain and scale this program’s impact.
 - b. Local policymakers should strengthen investments in CVI strategies and build a permanent and accountable CVI infrastructure at the city and county level.
 - c. Policymakers, grant-makers, and implementers must protect what makes CVI effective and unique by ensuring scarce CVI resources are focused on preventative interventions with those at highest imminent risk.
 - d. State and local policymakers should tighten eligibility requirements for CalVIP and other gun violence prevention-related grants, or significantly increase prioritization based on project need, to ensure scarce gun violence prevention investments are directed to communities with the highest rates of homicide and firearm assault.
 - e. State and local policymakers should invest in the CVI workforce and field to support the success and sustainability of CVI initiatives.
 - f. Following recommendations developed by the National Office of Violence Prevention Network, local Offices of Violence Prevention and other partners should develop coordinated strategies for cross-jurisdictional collaboration, including for relocating individuals in danger while ensuring continuity of care.
 - g. Trauma centers that regularly serve gun assault patients should establish hospital-based or hospital-linked violence intervention programs (HVIPs), following best practice recommendations from technical assistance providers such as the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (formerly the National Network for Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs).
 - h. State and local policymakers should sustain funding for Trauma Recovery Centers that provide formal mental health and other wrap-around services for underserved survivors of violent crime.
 - i. State policymakers, the Department of Health Care Services, and Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans should work to address low reimbursement rates and other barriers that have effectively prevented California from implementing a legislatively mandated Violence Preventive Services Benefit to provide CVI services to gun assault survivors in Medi-Cal’s care.

- j. Following recommendations from the California Commission on Behavioral Health, public health and behavioral health service agencies should integrate CVI and related trauma recovery counseling services into behavioral health prevention strategies.
- 3. Invest in Domestic Violence Intervention and victim services, including by protecting existing victim services, launching new investments in domestic violence homicide intervention, and integrating firearm risk assessment into domestic violence response.**
- a. State and local policymakers should provide additional investments necessary to offset federal funding cuts and shortfalls impacting domestic violence victim services, including shelters, safety planning supports, and legal aid to assist survivors with obtaining court protective orders.
 - b. State policymakers should establish and fund a new high-risk domestic violence intervention grant program modeled on CalVIP to help California’s most impacted communities address surges in domestic violence-related homicide and gun violence. Local policymakers and public safety stakeholders should develop, fund, and implement high-risk domestic violence homicide intervention initiatives at the local level.
 - c. Across all systems that serve and interact with domestic abuse survivors, leaders should ensure organizational policies and practice treat the intersection of domestic violence and firearms as a public safety priority. Evidence-based danger assessment tools that assess for access to firearms should be integrated into domestic violence response and safety plans.
- 4. Strengthen implementation of court protection orders to improve safety outcomes for survivors, especially by improving service and firearm relinquishment compliance, and providing survivors with direct electronic access to information about their order.**
- a. State policymakers should appropriate funding necessary to authorize California DOJ to establish and maintain an automated protected person notification system, as multiple other states have done, to provide survivors who obtain protective orders with direct electronic access to information maintained in state law enforcement databases about their protective order case, including: whether the order has been properly reported into the database, whether it has been successfully served, when it expires, and whether it has been violated.
 - b. Law enforcement agencies should adopt and robustly implement new policies and procedures mandated by Assembly Bill 451 (2025, Petrie-Norris) to promote effective service and enforcement of all firearm-prohibiting protection orders. Local policymakers should dedicate funding and staffing resources to promote implementation of these requirements based on best practice models.
 - c. State policymakers should renew expiring funding for the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program and/or establish and fund a new related grant program focused on improving implementation, service, and enforcement of court protective and restraining orders in cases involving firearms or high risk of homicide, with a focus on firearm relinquishment compliance.
 - d. All counties should consider developing Protection Order and Survivor Safety coordinating councils or task forces to identify and address gaps in service, record-reporting, and enforcement of protection orders that include firearm relinquishment provisions.

- e. Law enforcement agencies should identify and address barriers to accomplishing service of protection orders, and “prioritize service and enforcement of protection orders above other responsibilities that do not have comparable safety consequences.”
- f. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to authorize all local law enforcement agencies mandated to serve these orders to receive reimbursement for doing so on an equal basis.
- g. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to clarify that across all firearm-prohibiting protective order case types, courts can and should access or receive information maintained in the Automated Firearms System (AFS) and other criminal history and protective order databases, to inform the court’s findings about whether the respondent likely possesses firearms and has lawfully relinquished them.
- h. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to require prosecuting agencies to develop standard protocols for responding to notifications of firearm relinquishment noncompliance from the court. With or without this mandate, prosecuting agencies should coordinate with law enforcement partners to prioritize investigation, response, and potential prosecution of cases involving firearm relinquishment noncompliance, unlawful attempts to purchase firearms or ammunition in violation of a protective order, and other violations indicating escalating dangerousness.
- i. Firearm relinquishment stakeholders must ensure people who become prohibited from possessing firearms relinquish *all firearms*, including firearms such as ghost guns that are not recorded or registered in the person’s name in law enforcement databases. This should be emphasized in training and protocols for ensuring firearm relinquishment compliance, especially in protective order cases. State policymakers should also consider expanding DOJ Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) teams’ authority and staffing to support more firearm relinquishment task force partnerships focused on recovering illegally possessed firearms identified in APPS *and* based on other indicators of unlawful possession too.
- j. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to authorize prosecutors to request, and require courts to consider issuing, firearm-prohibiting Criminal Protective Orders in hate crime cases, including in cases where a defendant has demonstrated a danger to a community or large groups of people instead of specific targeted victims.
- k. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to require prosecuting agencies to make reasonable efforts to notify victims and witnesses when the court issues a Criminal Protective Order naming them as protected parties.
- l. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to provide a standard process for enforcing and registering in the California Restraining and Protective Order System (CARPOS), all tribal or out-of-state court orders that are defined as “protection orders” under the federal Violence Against Women Act or that are equivalent to a Gun Violence Restraining Order.
- m. State lawmakers should pass legislation to authorize parties to electronically file court papers and participate in hearings remotely across all civil protection and restraining order types. (Relevant provisions are included in The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act and Assembly Bill 2179 (2026, Patel)).

- n. State lawmakers should pass legislation to prohibit courts from maintaining blanket court rules that require protective order petitioners to provide pre-filing notice to an abusive partner or dangerous individual of their intent to request ex parte protective order protections before filing their request with the court. (Relevant provisions are included in The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act and Assembly Bill 1657 (2026, Rogers)).
- 5. Strengthen implementation of the Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO), and behavioral threat assessment and risk management interventions, especially to prevent mass shootings, hate-motivated shootings, and suicide.**
- a. Following recommendations in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s GVRO 10-Year Progress Report, law enforcement agencies, city attorneys, and county counsel should prioritize efforts to improve awareness and implementation of the GVRO as a critical public safety tool for proactively intervening to prevent mass shootings and other firearm violence, suicide, and injury.
 - b. Local law enforcement agencies should designate GVRO coordinators and/or develop streamlined partnerships with city attorneys and county counsel to proactively advise, assist, and represent law enforcement petitioners through the GVRO process, especially for navigating the civil court forms-filing and hearing process required for longer-term GVROs. Local governments should provide dedicated resources to build this local GVRO implementation expertise and capacity.
 - c. In accordance with Assembly Bill 2621 (2024, Gabriel), law enforcement agencies must ensure their written GVRO policies and procedures are updated to reflect current law, prepare officers to identify GVRO cases, and navigate procedural requirements for obtaining, serving, and documenting all three types of GVROs.
 - d. State lawmakers should consider requiring that peace officers receive basic training about the GVRO process, and additional or alternative interventions for addressing dangerous firearm access, as part of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requirements.
 - e. State and local policymakers should consider dedicating additional funding and staffing resources for California DOJ and other partners to expand behavioral threat assessment investigation and response, with a focus on preventing mass shootings and targeted terroristic attacks.
 - f. State policymakers should pass legislation to update an outdated section 8102(c) of the Welfare and Institutions Code, which can be a source of dangerous confusion for law enforcement officers seeking to prevent a dangerous individual from possessing firearms after they are released from an involuntary mental health hold.
 - g. State lawmakers and advocates should monitor implementation of new legislation enacted in 2025 (AB 1344, Irwin), which authorized District Attorneys in four counties to serve as GVRO petitioners as a temporary pilot program, to determine whether the program should be expanded, continued, or subject to additional limitations.
- 6. Strengthen firearm eligibility standards to ensure people with significant histories of dangerous criminal convictions *in California* cannot purchase or possess firearms for a temporary period.**
- a. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to ensure people convicted

9. Robustly implement and strengthen California’s ghost gun laws, and prioritize proactive policy and enforcement efforts to address the fast-growing role that 3D printed ghost guns play in fueling gun violence.

- a. Law enforcement agencies, prosecuting agencies, city attorneys, county counsel, and other stakeholders should prioritize proactive implementation and enforcement of California’s newly enacted ghost gun laws, including Assembly Bill 1263 (2025, Gipson) and Senate Bill 704 (2025, Arreguín), against entities that cause, facilitate, aid, or abet the unlawful manufacture of ghost guns and other illegal firearms and devices.
- b. State lawmakers should pass legislation to amend Penal Code section 27520 to state in more explicit plain language that this statute prohibits straw purchasing and gun trafficking conduct, and applies when a person acquires, assembles, or manufactures a firearm for the purpose of unlawfully selling or transferring that firearm to another person without a dealer transaction and background check.
- c. State lawmakers should pass legislation to amend Penal Code sections 27530 and 29180(d) to prohibit “offering to sell” an unserialized ghost gun or a privately manufactured firearm.
- d. State and local policymakers, research universities, and philanthropic foundations should consider providing institutional support and incentives to develop technological solutions to the 3D printed ghost gun issue. State lawmakers should also consider adopting legislation that, at a minimum, places liability on manufacturers after a delayed implementation period for harms caused by a failure to integrate reasonable available safeguards to prevent 3D printers from producing ghost guns or machine gun conversion devices.

10. Strengthen California’s firearm background check processes.

- e. State lawmakers should pass legislation to require firearm purchasers to pass a fingerprint-based background check, instead of a name-based check.
- f. State lawmakers should pass legislation that generally requires courts to enter information about court-ordered firearm prohibitions into law enforcement databases maintained by California DOJ when courts order individuals not to possess or acquire firearms as a condition of pretrial release or diversion.

11. Strengthen California DOJ’s capacity to implement firearm industry oversight, consumer protection, and other gun violence prevention responsibilities.

- a. State policymakers should continue to maintain and prioritize funding to support the California DOJ Bureau of Firearms’ vital public safety functions, including firearm dealer inspections and enforcement.
- b. State and local policymakers should pass legislation to prevent irresponsible dealers from being authorized to apply for a new firearm dealer license after their authorization to sell firearms has been revoked for unlawful conduct.
- c. State policymakers should consider passing legislation to require firearm dealers to conduct regular inventory checks, certify all dispositions have been reported to DOJ, and promptly notify DOJ of any firearms that cannot be accounted for in their inventory.
- d. State policymakers should pass legislation to strengthen requirements for gun show

promoters, especially to ensure gun show vendors comply with new consumer notice and age and identification verification requirements for the sale of products commonly used in ghost gun manufacturing.

- e. State policymakers should pass legislation to authorize California DOJ to share information about deceased gun violence perpetrators' firearm transaction history with surviving victims of gun violence and victims' family members, upon proper application, to promote transparency and accountability.
- f. State lawmakers should continue to prioritize funding for the California DOJ's Firearm Information Technology Systems Modernization (FITSM) Project to improve and streamline public safety functions.
- g. State lawmakers should continue to prioritize funding for California to implement its responsibilities under Assembly Bill 1506 to investigate officer-involved shootings.

12. Protect and strengthen restrictions on the sale and manufacture of uniquely dangerous weapons.

- a. Public safety stakeholders should continue to implement and enforce new laws designed to address the proliferation of machine-gun conversion devices and firearms converted into automatic machine guns.
- b. State lawmakers should pass legislation to update California law's definition of restricted assault weapons.

13. Prioritize and invest in efforts to increase clearance rates for firearm homicides and nonfatal shootings, with a focus on interrupting cycles of retaliatory gun violence.

- a. Local policymakers and law enforcement agencies should dedicate more resources and personnel to investigating and solving firearm homicides and nonfatal shootings, with a focus on preventing gun violence. Law enforcement agencies should consider establishing dedicated teams focused on responding to and investigating nonfatal shootings based on models developed in cities such as Denver and Columbus.
- b. State policymakers should fund the Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Grant Program to support efforts to increase clearance rates for shootings. This grant program was legislatively authorized through Assembly Bill 28 (2023, Gabriel) but has not been funded.
- c. State and local policymakers, and law enforcement agencies, should continue to integrate and strengthen investments in co-responder and tiered dispatch models that deploy non-sworn personnel, CVI or behavioral health professionals, and other community partners to some calls for service, independently or with law enforcement co-responders, to provide more effective interventions and free law enforcement resources to focus on clearing shootings and other public safety priorities.
- d. State policymakers should consider passing legislation to establish new implementation timelines for microstamping mandates under Senate Bill 452, if microstamping firing pins are not commercially available from licensed microstamping component producers by July 1, 2027. State and local policymakers and philanthropic funders should also consider funding grants to scale production and optimization of microstamping firing pins by entities

that pass California DOJ reliability testing standards and obtain a state license to produce microstamping components.

14. Promote safe firearm storage, especially around children and teens, and promote efforts to temporarily store firearms outside the home during periods of suicidal crisis or other acute risk.

- a. Public health and safety stakeholders should prioritize efforts to improve norms around safe firearm storage, including through plain language public education campaigns from trusted messengers, counseling by pediatricians and other healthcare providers, and free or low-cost distribution of certified firearm safety devices.
- b. Suicide prevention stakeholders should promote awareness and utilization of new California laws designed to help families voluntarily transfer firearms to firearm dealers or other lawful adults for temporary safekeeping in periods of crisis.
- c. Law enforcement agencies should develop programs that encourage interested community members to temporarily transfer firearms to the agency for suicide prevention or safekeeping purposes.
- d. Law enforcement agencies and other eligible petitioners should consider requesting Gun Violence Restraining Orders against individuals who pose a significant danger of causing firearm injury by unlawfully failing to secure firearms, especially from unsupervised children or teen household members exhibiting significant warning signs of violence.

15. Promote safety in schools and through schools by expanding investments in school-based violence prevention, behavioral health services, and multidisciplinary threat assessment and management teams, and by embedding social-emotional learning and cognitive behavioral intervention into the school curriculum.

- a. State and local policymakers and education agencies should seek to promote gun violence prevention through expanded investments in school-based CVI or behavioral health services, and multidisciplinary behavioral threat assessment and management teams, in districts most impacted by gun violence.
- b. State and local policymakers and school districts should integrate evidence-based social-emotional learning and cognitive behavioral intervention programs into the school curriculum to build students' skills at conflict resolution, self-regulation, positive relationships, and social norms against violence.

16. Implement targeted place-based strategies that seek to reduce gun violence by transforming highly impacted communities' built and social environment.

17. Invest in gun violence prevention research.

18. Promote impact-oriented grant-making to reduce gun violence.

- a. State and local policymakers, grant-making agencies, and other funders should seek to ensure gun violence prevention-related grant programs prioritize impact first and reduce counter-productive administrative burdens and barriers to entry.

- b.** State policymakers should consider allocating some gun violence reduction grant funds outside the competitive grant model to a select number of cities or counties that have had chronically high rates of homicide and firearm assault.
- c.** State policymakers should consider updating the Board of State and Community Corrections' (BSCC) name and mandates to reflect that BSCC is currently the primary administering agency for most public safety and violence reduction-related grants in California, and consider other efforts to consolidate gun violence prevention-related grantmaking responsibilities.



Recommendations: Background & Discussion

1. **As a top overarching recommendation for this strategic plan: Invest much more in gun violence prevention specifically, and ensure scarce resources are directed first to the highest-impact strategies focused on the people and places at greatest risk.**

Achieving statewide reductions in gun violence in all its forms, and for a state as large and diverse as California, requires a comprehensive and holistic framework. It also requires tough choices to triage limited resources and capacity where they are needed most urgently.

Many of this report's recommendations are based on a simple assessment: The most effective gun violence reduction programs and strategies in the state and nation operate under conditions of severe funding scarcity, instability, and constraint, especially in the most impacted communities grappling with concentrated poverty and gun violence. Gun violence prevention resources are too scarce, and they too rarely reach the people and places in greatest danger. California could achieve larger, sustained reductions in gun violence over the next five years by combining comprehensive gun safety legislation with stronger and strategically targeted investments.

Therefore, this report strongly recommends that state and local policymakers do two things at once: (1) significantly increase the investments and staffing resources dedicated to preventing gun violence, and (2) ensure scarce resources are directed as effectively, equitably, and efficiently as possible to prevent the most harm. This generally means that:

- Gun violence prevention resources should be directed first to programs and strategies that have a specific goal of reducing gun violence, and that measure their impact accordingly.¹⁰
- Gun violence prevention resources should be directed first toward programs that focus with specificity and intensity¹¹ on the people at highest risk of victimization, perpetration, and/or involvement in gun violence in the near future in the communities most impacted by violence.
- Gun violence prevention-related grant-making should enable both impact and accountability by resourcing grant recipients for multiple years and at a scale necessary to achieve and demand reductions in violence.

This is how communities across California recently achieved record reductions in gun violence, as Part 1 described. They focused scarce resources around the specific goal of reducing gun violence; built teams and partnerships accountable for achieving that goal; and implemented data-driven strategies to identify and reach the people at highest imminent risk.

While this approach may sound relatively simple, it has too rarely been the norm in practice, as discussed below. Assembly Bill 1252 (Wicks) requires this strategic plan report to include recommendations "identifying gaps and barriers to success and highlighting and proposing strategies to replicate best practices" for preventing gun violence. This report will return to this overarching recommendation throughout because experts with a strong record of success in designing and implementing gun violence reduction strategies have emphasized it as both a key ingredient for success and a challenge to maintain.¹²

Scarcity vs. An Abundance of Safety¹³

California invests billions in state and local funds annually in important broad-based public programs that can reduce risk factors for homicide and suicide, and build healthier, safer communities, such as: anti-poverty, housing, and workforce development programs; behavioral health and substance abuse treatment; criminal justice and reentry programs; crime victim assistance; afterschool, youth mentorship, and child development initiatives; lead abatement; site-security investments for houses of worship, schools, and nonprofits; investments in parks and recreational facilities in underserved communities, among many others.

However, in California and most other states, relatively little public or philanthropic funding is specifically focused on preventing gun violence or homicide, especially for those at highest risk. Even less funding is directed toward programs or strategies that treat reductions in gun violence in our most impacted communities as a core measure of success.

That changed — temporarily — when state, local, and federal leaders responded to record surges in gun homicide during the pandemic by providing a short-term burst of investment in gun violence reduction initiatives. Through the American Rescue Plan Act, the federal government provided a one-time surge of \$360 billion to state and local governments to stabilize public services.¹⁴ The Biden Administration urged local leaders to use these funds to improve public safety and prevent violence, and many focused on implementing effective crime prevention and violence reduction strategies;¹⁵ from 2021 to 2025, the number of cities and counties with local Offices of Violence Prevention implementing or funding community violence intervention programs nearly quadrupled.¹⁶ The Biden Administration also enacted the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, providing another \$15 billion in federal investment for gun violence prevention, mental health, and crisis intervention programs. At the state level, California significantly increased its General Fund investments in CVI and firearm relinquishment programs over the same period.

Most of these state and federal investments began to reach California's communities in 2022 and helped to drive gun homicide rates to record lows even as non-firearm homicides remained virtually flat and poverty rates rose.¹⁷ Experts have increasingly pointed to this burst of investment as the leading cause of recent crime and violence declines from 2022 to 2025.¹⁸

California could sustain its safety progress by sustaining and building on these investments.

However, except for small line-item appropriations to two specific organizations, California's Budget Acts have included no General Fund investments in gun violence prevention-focused grants or local initiatives since 2023.¹⁹

Importantly, in 2023, California enacted the Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Act (Assembly Bill 28 (Gabriel)), which established a permanent Special Fund for gun violence prevention and victim services funded through a modest excise tax on firearm industry retailers. That new Special Fund made its first funding allocation for the 2025-26 Fiscal Year. Assembly Bill 28 represents a historic commitment to public safety and victim care but has generated about \$55 million per year instead of the approximately \$150 million per year projected,²⁰ leaving an annual gap of approximately \$100 million for gun violence prevention. Instead of bolstering California's previous funding commitment to gun violence prevention, this revenue has so far been used to partially replace lapsed General Fund investments at a much lower level. As Part 1 detailed, some other states facing their own fiscal challenges are spending at least four to nine times more per capita on gun violence prevention-related grants compared to California.²¹ California's national leadership on gun violence prevention is strongly reflected in its statutes, and policy innovation, but not in its budgeting today.

The consequence is that many highly effective gun violence reduction initiatives continue to operate under conditions of severe funding scarcity and instability. California’s city-led Offices of Violence Prevention, and their community-based partners, have developed nation-leading models credited with driving some of the largest reductions in homicide in our country.²² They must still spend an enormous portion of their time fundraising for small short-term grants, and trying to mitigate the impact of on-again-off-again funding cycles, to build small teams responsible for intervening with those at highest risk of being murdered.²³ These offices could accomplish much more if they were able to focus on preventing gun violence full-time with larger teams.

This strategic plan emphasizes many other opportunities for state and local policymakers and philanthropy to invest in building gun violence prevention capacity. Even before the Trump Administration acted to defund gun violence prevention, victim service, law enforcement, and mental health programs,²⁴ in California and nationwide, there were far too few community violence intervention professionals working to heal and protect gun violence survivors at high risk of being shot again and killed; too few domestic violence specialists working to help survivors separate from dangerous abusers and reach shelter and safety; too few court or law enforcement personnel working to identify when dangerous individuals subject to court protective orders are in illegal possession of firearms and facilitating compliance or accountability; too few law enforcement teams dedicated to serving protective orders and recovering firearms from people who cannot lawfully possess them; too few behavioral health specialists in our schools able to identify and counsel students exhibiting strong behavioral warning signs of violence or suicide; too few detectives working to clear a majority of shootings; too few investigators working to disrupt the largest gun trafficking pipeline in North America funneling crime guns from Arizona to our state.²⁵

This plan seeks to address these and other resource and capacity gaps to achieve sustained reductions in gun violence.²⁶

A Gun-Violence-Reduction-First Approach to Reducing Gun Violence

California should significantly increase investments in strategies that are specifically focused on, and accountable for, reducing gun violence because those strategies can quickly and dramatically improve public safety and contribute to many other measures of societal progress. As violence prevention expert, Thomas Abt, writes: “Anti-violence efforts are not a substitute for broader and deeper efforts to remedy economic and social injustice — they are, rather, an essential aspect of them.”²⁷

To ensure these efforts are actually funded and accountable for reducing violence, policymakers, grant-making agencies and funders, and other stakeholders must recognize that gun violence is not just a symptom of other societal challenges. It is also a cause of those same challenges and of self-reinforcing cycles of retaliatory shootings that compound them.²⁸ Suffering adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can increase risk of gun violence, and gun violence is also a tragically frequent ACE; between 1999 and 2020, an estimated 430,000 American children suffered the traumatic childhood experience of losing a parent to firearm injuries.²⁹

Many traditional prevention and enforcement efforts treat gun violence as the downstream effect of other societal challenges, like mental illness and ACEs, poverty and unemployment, illegal drug markets, and gang affiliation. These efforts may help reduce violence indirectly by addressing other challenges at the community level, but they rarely treat reductions in gun violence as an outcome measure of success and they are therefore, typically less effective and efficient at saving lives as many of the violence intervention strategies facing devastating cuts today.

For example, in recent years, California has invested billions of dollars in important adult and youth behavioral health initiatives. A 2025 report from the California Commission on Behavioral Health noted

that programs supported by these investments “make virtually no mention of violence as a related outcome. Despite the established relationship between violence, trauma, and behavioral health, California’s behavioral health funding and programs have not been leveraged to promote trauma-informed violence prevention strategies. . . Firearm violence is a persistent threat to behavioral health, but California is not treating it that way.”³⁰

Stronger investments in programs accountable for reducing gun violence could improve behavioral health. Survivors of gun violence and their family members suffer high rates of PTSD and psychiatric disorders, isolation, and loneliness.³¹ Preschoolers assessed for Head Start programs exhibit lower levels of attention and impulse control and lower preacademic skills after a homicide near their home, likely due to the effects of parental distress.³² Minors are much more likely to be seen in emergency departments for acute mental health symptoms after a shooting in their neighborhood.³³

Stronger investments in programs accountable for reducing gun violence could help address community poverty too. Researchers tracking the long-term economic mobility of children raised in households at the same poverty level over time and in different cities found that “poor children across the country have worse outcomes in more violent places,” and that poor “children who reached their crucial teen years at more violent times fared worse than children growing up in the very same places during periods of greater peace.”³⁴ In other words, “More violence meant poor kids were less likely to advance up the economic ladder.”³⁵ Economist and researcher, Jens Ludwig, explains: “it is enormously difficult to do community economic development in a neighborhood where there is uncontrolled gun violence. . . Gun violence drives people and businesses out, which leads to further gun violence, which leads to more people and businesses leaving.”³⁶

Stronger investments in programs accountable for reducing gun violence could also promote physical health and well-being. A report from the Los Angeles County Public Health Department documented how fear of gun violence kept residents in the most impacted neighborhoods from engaging in outdoor physical activities or allowing their children to play at local parks, contributing to disproportionately high rates of obesity, chronic stress, and chronic disease.³⁷ People who witnessed or were victims of violence with a weapon as adolescents were found to be 44% and 73% more likely to develop hypertension in adulthood, respectively.³⁸

Stronger investments in programs accountable for reducing gun violence can also dramatically improve public safety because community violence shootings commonly lead to cascading cycles of retaliatory shootings and repeat shootings targeting the same surviving victims. Effectively intervening in this cycle with one survivor can prevent multiple shootings and homicides. A large majority of shooting victims survive a gun assault injury, and those survivors are at least 60 times more likely to be shot again and killed compared to the average California resident; among shooting survivors who died within five years after leaving a major California trauma center, about 80% were killed in a subsequent shooting.³⁹ Researchers also document how “being shot, shot at, or witnessing a shooting doubles the probability that a young person will commit a violent act themselves within two years.”⁴⁰ Devone Boggan, who pioneered one of the nation’s most successful gun violence reduction initiatives in Richmond, California, notes that “[s]tructural inequities fuel the conditions where violence can take root. Unchecked violence fuels its own cycle, independent of those inequities. Gun violence is driven by gun violence. Until we learn to respond to it in healthy, human ways, the cycle continues.”⁴¹

As a result, this strategic plan recommends a gun-violence-reduction-first approach to reducing gun violence. This requires prioritizing investment in programs and strategies that use reductions in gun violence as a measure of success. As Thomas Abt writes, we must treat violence “first rather than last” because “indirect measures are generally inadequate to deal with highly concentrated social phenomena like [community gun] violence.”⁴² Devone Boggan similarly calls for “making peace the priority” in prevention policy and investment.⁴³ And the California Commission on Behavioral Health

recommends that “[p]rioritizing [violence intervention] strategies will likely have the biggest return on investment for bolstering Californian’s mental health and wellbeing in the face of firearm violence, and with a relatively small investment compared to the larger and more sweeping reforms to address the poverty, structural inequality, and unmet needs that are also fueling the cycle.”⁴⁴

This gun-violence-reduction-first approach requires strategic discipline to ensure scarce resources reach those in greatest danger, and are not spread a mile wide and an inch deep in a manner that dilutes impact and accountability.⁴⁵ In legislative appropriations, program design, and grant allocations, decisions about how to prioritize service populations and geographies frequently determine whether it will be someone’s job to keep a shooting survivor on a structured pathway to safety and non-violence, or whether that job will exist at all.

To ensure investments are strategically focused on the people and places at highest risk, policymakers, grant-makers, and philanthropy may be guided by these data-driven principles:⁴⁶

- **Some people’s behaviors indicate uniquely high risk of victimization and/or perpetration of gun violence.** Many of the people at highest risk of victimization and/or perpetration have been repeat survivors of violence and abuse, meaning that effective violence intervention often involves victim or witness protection and safety planning, trauma recovery and cognitive behavioral interventions, and efforts to interrupt patterns of retaliatory community violence or escalating domestic abuse.
- **Within communities most impacted by concentrated poverty and violence, most interpersonal shootings are perpetrated by a small percentage of the population with identifiable behavioral risk factors.** Interpersonal gun violence imposes an enormously unequal toll on communities grappling with concentrated poverty and violence. But within these communities, the vast majority of people are traumatized witnesses to the gun violence around them, and are not high risk for perpetrating gun violence themselves. Prevention or enforcement strategies that treat large swathes of impacted communities as high risk, or that seek to prevent gun violence by reaching the whole community proximate to the violence, are often diluting their efficiency and effectiveness at the expense of the people in greatest danger *and* the broader community’s safety.⁴⁷
- **With the right strategy and capacity, communities can prevent tragedies by proactively identifying and intervening with individuals at highest risk.** In many contexts, effective gun violence reduction strategies use data and relationships to proactively assess and identify individuals at risk, and intervene to prevent further harm. These strategies incorporate behavioral risk assessment and management principles, often combining high-intensity interventions (daily check-ins and counseling, etc.), protective and risk reduction measures, and enforcement accountability when necessary.
- **These highly effective strategies require funding and staffing capacity. They do not implement themselves.** To implement violence reduction strategies effectively, public agencies and community-based partners require people and capacity, which means they require meaningful, stable funding. They need to hire and retain talented staff and build organizational structures and partnerships to effectively assess risk, coordinate, and intervene.
- **Alongside interventions with those at highest risk, firearm access and industry oversight policies, including background checks, play a critical role in preventing uniquely dangerous people from accessing firearms and ammunition.** Comprehensive gun violence prevention efforts require a combination of effective intervention with those at highest risk and effective gun safety policies and enforcement efforts to prevent uniquely dangerous and violent individuals from keeping and possessing firearms.

- **It has been difficult to sustain long-term public and philanthropic investment in strategies focused on the people and places at highest risk. That must change to achieve sustained reductions in gun violence.** Communities have often struggled to sustain highly effective gun violence reduction strategies after a leading champion leaves office or a one-time grant period ends. The people and places at highest risk are often those with the least political and economic power, and there are often more influential voices advocating to redirect resources toward other sympathetic people or places at lower risk, or away from gun violence prevention entirely. As a result, many cities nationwide have cycled through years of targeted investment and progress, followed by funding cuts or strategic drift, and surging violence again. **A core mission for this strategic plan is for California’s state and local policymakers to commit to building a much more permanent and stable pattern of sustained, strong, and strategic investment that prioritizes the needs and safety of those at highest risk of gun violence.**

2. Invest in Community Violence Intervention (CVI) and trauma recovery as a permanent pillar of public safety and victim care.

- a. As a top priority, California’s state policymakers should significantly expand investments in community violence intervention (CVI) initiatives through the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program. California should at least double its state-level investment in CalVIP Grants to \$110 million per year for the next five years, combining dedicated Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Special Fund revenues (about \$55 million annually) with matching General Fund or other revenue necessary to sustain and scale this program’s impact.**

A top priority for reducing gun violence over the next five years is to secure stronger and more stable state and local investments in CVI initiatives, especially after the federal government has walked away from its role in funding CVI and victim care.

California’s Break the Cycle of Violence Act, Assembly Bill 1603 (Wicks), codified the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program in 2019. CalVIP is California’s only dedicated source of state funding for CVI efforts. This grant is administered by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) through an Executive Steering Committee that includes the California DOJ’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

As Part 1 documented through data and case studies: historic levels of state, local, and federal investment in CVI initiatives from 2022-2025 played a very significant role in driving California’s recent reductions in firearm homicide among young men of color. Through CalVIP grants, California invested more state funding in CVI initiatives in three years than over its previous history combined and helped launch and expand key gun violence reduction and victim service initiatives in many of our most impacted communities. (California awarded \$227 million in CalVIP Grants through the 2021-2023 Budget Acts; this funding supported CalVIP programs from 2022-2025). Young men and boys of color who have been shot or shot at, or who are closely connected to a recent victim of gun violence, are the priority population for many CalVIP-supported programs. Many of the cities that successfully competed for these grant funds reported record reductions in homicides and shootings during this period, which helped California reduce statewide firearm homicide rates for young Black and Hispanic men by 48% and 52% respectively from 2021 to 2024.

However, as discussed in more detail in Part 1, California has invested zero General Fund dollars in the CalVIP program since the 2023 Budget Act. Since 2025, the CalVIP program is now relying entirely on Assembly Bill 28 Special Fund revenues that are insufficient to meet demonstrated need.

For the 2026-2029 grant cycle, BSCC received CalVIP applications collectively seeking nearly \$1.1 billion over three years, but only had sufficient funding to award capped grant awards totaling about \$107 million over three years to about 10% of these proposals. This is about half the amount that California’s budgets invested in CalVIP Grants for the 2022-2025 grant cycle, even as the number of CVI initiatives requesting state funding support nearly tripled due to federal funding cuts, growing awareness of the importance of CVI strategies, and California’s efforts to eliminate barriers to entry that had previously kept many CVI programs and local governments from being able to apply.

As a result, the vast majority of high-scoring CVI initiatives applying for CalVIP grants around the state are now receiving no state funding support, and there is essentially no reliable federal funding source for these CVI initiatives in California either. Part 1 provided a list of a dozen California cities that implemented effective CalVIP-supported initiatives from 2022-2025 and recorded large reductions in gun violence, but have now lost state and federal funding support. Many more community-based organizations were also left unfunded; less than 4% of community-based organizations applying for

2026-2029 CalVIP Grants under the particularly competitive “large scope” project category were able to receive grant awards.

As a result, there is an enormous gap of hundreds of millions of dollars per year in unmet need for effective CVI gun violence reduction initiatives in California.

California’s Budget Acts should reflect our state’s leadership in building and sustaining highly effective CVI initiatives in our most impacted communities. California lawmakers should significantly increase state funding for CalVIP Grants to match the much higher levels of investment in some other states with lower rates of firearm homicide.⁴⁸

Increasing California’s current state-level investment in CalVIP Grants to at least \$110 million per year for five years through a roughly equal combination of General Fund and Special Fund revenues would allow the CalVIP program to provide critical funding support to about 30% of the highest scoring grant proposals requesting CalVIP Grant support to implement CVI initiatives in our most impacted communities. This amount would still be far less than some other safer states are investing in CVI initiatives per capita,⁴⁹ but would represent a desperately needed first step to sustain and strengthen CVI initiatives’ capacity to engage, heal, and protect gun violence survivors and others at highest risk.

While this strategic plan includes dozens of other recommendations, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention recommends prioritizing investments in CVI through CalVIP or similar funding streams as a top priority. It is the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s assessment that increased investment in CalVIP and CVI initiatives would be the most effective and cost-effective additional investments the state could make to reduce gun violence over the next five years, provided funds are awarded with fidelity to California’s Break the Cycle of Violence Act. That law requires the CalVIP program to support CVI initiatives in California’s highest need communities that demonstrate the strongest likelihood of reducing community gun violence during the grant period, through initiatives that are “primarily focused on providing violence intervention services to the small segment of the population that is identified as high risk of perpetrating or being victimized by community gun violence in the near future.”⁵⁰

b. Local policymakers should strengthen investments in CVI strategies and build a permanent and accountable CVI infrastructure at the city and county level.

This strategic plan emphasizes that the state of California should be a much stronger funding partner to help build gun violence prevention capacity in communities grappling with concentrated poverty and gun violence, where local governments often have an unequal tax base with which to address these challenges through local resources alone.

However, CVI initiatives’ long-term success also requires strong and sustained local investment, leadership, and coordinating infrastructure. Cities and counties should prioritize efforts to provide stronger and more stable investments in CVI initiatives that are built to last for their communities — not as a short-term strategy tied to one mayor, city manager, or grant period, but as a permanent component of the jurisdiction’s public safety infrastructure and budgeting.

In recent years, many more California cities and counties have established local Offices of Violence Prevention or Neighborhood Safety to implement CVI strategies focused on the highest risk population, in coordinated partnership with other agencies and service providers. City and county governments should provide dedicated, stable funding to build these offices’ core capacities, following recommendations from leading experts and technical assistance providers in this field, such as the National Office of Violence Prevention Network’s “Offices of Violence Prevention Toolkit,” the U.S. Justice Department’s (now-archived) “CVI Implementation Checklist” and CVI implementation

resources,⁵¹ the Crime and Justice Policy Lab at the University of Pennsylvania (formerly the California Partnership for Safe Communities),⁵² Cities United,⁵³ the Urban Peace Institute,⁵⁴ and the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention.⁵⁵ These CVI initiatives should generally be championed by, and accountable to, city or county leadership at the highest levels to ensure sustained impact.

Local government should also seek to establish permanent funding streams to sustain these efforts. Cities such as Oakland and Bakersfield have achieved significant reductions in gun violence through CVI initiatives supported by a combination of state funding and local tax measures that generated revenue dedicated to CVI initiatives.

City and county leaders should also focus on building key capacities to ensure sustained impact. Experts with the Crime and Justice Policy Lab (formerly the California Partnership for Safe Communities) have helped develop and implement many of California's highly effective city-led CVI initiatives, and have published important research and best practice guides focused on identifying the key local capacities cities require to sustainably reduce community violence.⁵⁶ Their findings emphasize that "rather than viewing community violence prevention as a program that cities can buy or fund and 'plug in', community violence is a durable problem that local government prioritizes, develops specific infrastructure for, and actively manages in partnership with community stakeholders."⁵⁷

Their research identified six core capacities high-performing cities built to achieve sustained reductions in gun violence:

"(1) **POLITICAL GOVERNANCE.** This capacity is present when city executives such as mayors and city managers - moved to action by a combination of advocacy, political will and public crisis - identify community violence as a top priority, make a public commitment to an evidence-informed city-level strategy, and hold agency leaders and external partners accountable for violence reduction results through political governance.

(2) **DATA-INFORMED PROBLEM ANALYSIS.** This is present when a city uses data to identify people and networks involved in recent violence and at the highest risk of future violence, the context and motives behind those incidents, and the micro-places where violence is most likely to occur. Academic researchers and technical assistance organizations are instrumental partners in developing these data-informed analyses.

(3) **CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION ON A SHARED STRATEGY.** This is present when government agencies and community organizations collectively focus their expertise and resources on addressing community violence through a joint strategy. To achieve effective collaboration, a local convener or/and coordinating body is usually necessary. Ultimately, various sub-strategies must link together in a coherent umbrella strategy guided by a shared theory of change.

(4) **EFFECTIVE OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT.** This is present when a city establishes a formal management structure to drive its strategy. This includes a full-time director position(s) and management team that are accountable to political champions and powerful enough to move a citywide strategy. This team utilizes a performance management process to implement the city's chosen strategy(s) and reports performance metrics/indicators to city executives and public stakeholders.

(5) **EFFECTIVE VIOLENCE REDUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE.** This capacity can be divided into two pieces of municipal infrastructure most relevant to reducing near-term violence:

(a) An effective CVI ecosystem. A CVI ecosystem needs to be able to engage a city's highest risk of violence population effectively and at scale. Such an ecosystem includes a coherent theory

of change, sufficient and sustained funding and staffing, an organizational and leadership development strategy, and management and data measurement capacity. Effective approaches are intensive, relationship-based and harm-reduction focused. This requires ongoing investment and capacity building.

(b) A police department committed to reducing gun violence and building legitimacy (effective policing for violence prevention). This is present when the local police department uses data to identify the places and people where risk of violence is hyper-concentrated, engages in problem-oriented policing approaches, builds functional working relationships with community intervention partners also working to reduce violence, mobilizes focused enforcement operations when necessary, and systematically works to improve homicide and shooting clearance rates. This also often requires organizational capacity building.

(6) SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION of effective violence reduction strategies. These are present when cities:

- Conduct formal evaluations to build local evidence of effectiveness;
- Secure devoted, permanent public funding to sustain strategy infrastructure;
- Incorporate violence reduction strategies into agency and city policy; and
- Develop shared governance through a powerful non-governmental institution or collaborative that is able to hold political will and technical expertise over time, and across political administrations, specific to reducing community violence.”⁵⁸

While many CVI initiatives are implemented through city-level Offices of Violence Prevention and their community-based partners, county policymakers should also play a much stronger role in supporting and funding CVI initiatives in their most impacted jurisdictions, such as by:

- Making grant awards to CVI partners or directly employing CVI professionals, especially to serve unincorporated areas or communities without dedicated local CVI infrastructure.
- Serving as an intermediary for other partners who may not have the organizational capacity to apply for state or federal grants, or may not be eligible to apply for funding opportunities open to county governments.
- Playing a convening and coordinating role between multiple jurisdictions’ CVI initiatives and for connecting CVI professionals to county-administered behavioral health and other services.
- Supporting data collection and problem analyses that bridge public health and criminal justice data to identify the people and places at highest need.
- Investing in regional capacity-building for the field of CVI, such as through funding CVI workforce development and grant management trainings or CVI training and certification programs.
- Serving as a regional hub for processing Medi-Cal reimbursement documentation for affiliated CVI service providers (see further discussion below).
- Using data and policy analysis to elevate the need for county-level investment in gun violence reduction strategies and inform CVI-focused investments by all jurisdictions in the county.⁵⁹

Launched in 2019, the Los Angeles County Office of Violence Prevention, within the Department of Public Health, is developing a model for implementing these and other gun violence prevention efforts at the county-level, including by investing in CVI initiatives in communities that are unincorporated or otherwise underserved by city and nonprofit services throughout the County.⁶⁰ This Office is one of a just a few county-level agencies in California focused specifically on preventing gun violence, and for the 2026-2029 grant cycle recently became one of the first three county agencies to receive CalVIP grant awards.⁶¹

c. Policymakers, grant-makers, and implementers must protect what makes CVI effective and unique by ensuring scarce CVI resources are focused on preventative interventions with those at highest imminent risk.

Public investment in gun violence prevention has often left a chronic funding gap for CVI strategies seeking to interrupt cycles of violence among people in greatest imminent danger, including the majority of gunshot victims who survive, and who are at extremely elevated risk of being shot again and killed. That is the unique gap that CVI initiatives are designed to fill. Protecting CVI initiatives' funding, strategic focus, and fidelity to evidence-based models focused on individuals at highest risk is vital to these programs' long-term impact.

This can be a challenge to sustain in practice. Well-intentioned proposals to divert scarce gun violence prevention funding toward programs serving lower risk people and places are regular features of the legislative and grant-making process at all levels of government. Within a year after California enacted historic legislation guaranteeing some Special Fund revenue for survivor-focused CVI initiatives in our most impacted communities, the Legislative Analyst's Office outlined options for the Legislature to address funding shortfalls for other unfunded mandates, including to divert most state funding away from CVI initiatives to fund a one-time statewide behavioral health training for school employees instead.⁶² To continue a metaphor offered in Part 1: these efforts are akin to directing a fire truck carrying limited water to hose down every house near a fire instead of aiming squarely at the house where the fire is blazing now.

Part 1 described in detail how the City of Oakland has been both a leading model for CVI success, and a cautionary example of how disinvestment and strategic drift away from the people and places at highest risk can jeopardize community safety. After Oakland implemented a CVI model (called "Ceasefire") and achieved very significant reductions in homicides and shootings, its strategy fell apart for multiple years and gun violence spiked. To understand why, in 2023, the Mayor requested an independent audit by the gun violence prevention experts who had helped develop and implement Oakland's CVI model. That audit concluded: "The City of Oakland [had] gradually walked away from the Ceasefire [CVI] strategy, notably in 2020 [when] there was a clear shift away from ensuring that the components of the Ceasefire strategy were focused on groups and individuals at the highest risk of gun violence; and that the strategy was implemented with sufficient quality to impact citywide violence . . . During the audit process, we found that . . . each essential element of the strategy was significantly watered down, resources stripped away, or refocused. As a result, the Ceasefire strategy no longer impacted citywide levels of violence in Oakland and as such the City of Oakland has not been effectively implementing the Ceasefire strategy since 2020."

Since early 2024, under new leadership in Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention, Oakland has taken significant steps to reinvest in CVI and renew its focus on individuals at highest-risk — namely, individuals who have at least three of the following four risk factors:

- 1) The individual is connected to a street crew or group.
- 2) The individual has been intentionally shot, stabbed, or shot at before.

- 3) The individual has a history with the criminal or juvenile justice system.
- 4) In the past six months, the individual has had a close friend or family member shot or arrested for a shooting.⁶³

Since then, Oakland has recorded historic progress once more, cutting firearm homicides by 49% in two years and reducing city-level homicides to the lowest number since 1967.⁶⁴

Reflecting the lessons of this progress, state and local leaders and implementers should ensure CVI programs are empowered to remain focused on intervening with those at very highest risk, and that CVI programs' intake and service delivery models use standard risk assessment tools and respond to real-time gun violence dynamics.⁶⁵ This is especially key until funding and staffing levels grow significantly to enable a broader approach that would not, in practice, draw scarce resources and intervention capacity away from protecting shooting survivors and others at highest risk today.

- d. State and local policymakers should tighten eligibility requirements for CalVIP and other gun violence prevention-related grants, or significantly increase prioritization based on project need, to ensure scarce gun violence prevention investments are directed to communities with the highest rates of homicide and firearm assault.**

At a time of deep funding scarcity for CVI and other gun violence prevention programs, public investments should be targeted on the communities with the highest rates of homicide and firearm assault.

Most of California's public health and safety investments and competitive grant programs are traditionally made available through competitive grant processes to all cities and/or counties in the state, or have been allocated to specific jurisdictions identified in the Budget — without prioritizing funding for communities that have the highest rates of homicide and gun violence. "Project need" is a key scoring criterion for many competitive grant programs, but in practice, many relatively well-off communities with relatively low homicide rates have developed best practice models to drive violence down even further and have proven highly successful at demonstrating project need and outcompeting more heavily impacted communities.

To direct CalVIP grant funding toward highest need communities, the Break the Cycle of Violence Act directed BSCC to develop a list of cities that are "disproportionately impacted by gun violence" and eligible to compete for CalVIP funding based on having the highest rates and/or numbers of homicides or firearm assaults in the state for at least two out of the last three years. This was an important step. As described in more detail in Part 1, this language has helped focus CalVIP resources much more narrowly and strategically than many other public safety funding streams on a number of high-need communities that have not otherwise been primary recipients of public safety funding in California, including smaller and higher-poverty communities in the Central Valley, Inland Empire, and East Bay with some of the state's highest rates of gun violence.

However, recent amendments to the CalVIP statute opened eligibility to counties, including some that have relatively low rates of homicide or firearm assault, as long as there is at least one city of any size in that county that is "disproportionately impacted by gun violence." Relatedly, these amendments opened eligibility to tribal governments located in those counties, regardless of their homicide rate. The CalVIP statute also makes cities eligible for CalVIP funding if they have a relatively large number of homicides even if their overall per capita rates are below the statewide average. Opening eligibility to county and tribal governments is overall a positive step toward building CVI capacity in more jurisdictions. However, very scarce CVI investments should be even more narrowly focused on communities with the greatest need for additional resources to address the impact of homicide and firearm assault.

Accordingly, state lawmakers should make small revisions to the CalVIP authorizing statute or budget control language to further tighten the eligibility requirements for CalVIP. At a minimum, cities and counties with per capita homicide or firearm assault injury rates below the statewide average should not be eligible for CalVIP funding when there is only sufficient revenue to fund 10% of CalVIP proposals.

Additionally, greater emphasis should be placed in the grant scoring process for CalVIP and other state and local public safety grants on a community's rates of homicide and firearm assault over multiple years and the community's demonstrated need for additional resources to address these especially devastating safety challenges.

In the near-term, state and local policymakers should also consider prioritizing funding support to the handful of cities, counties, or nonprofit CVI programs that have lost, or will soon lose, federal CVI grant support due to federal actions to warp the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI), if those grantees were not among the 10% of applicants that successfully applied for state CalVIP grant support for the 2026-2029 cycle. This would help to ensure continuity of CVI services and mitigate the harm caused by federal action to dismantle CVI investments and capacity.

e. State and local policymakers should invest in the CVI workforce and field to support the success and sustainability of CVI initiatives.

Because CVI initiatives have faced chronic and severe funding challenges, it has been difficult to develop longer-term strategies for developing the CVI field and workforce more broadly. Frontline victim-serving CVI professionals are often hired to perform dangerous and traumatizing work responding to shootings and de-escalating violent disputes for low pay, with unpredictable hours, few benefits, and unstable employment tied to short-term grant cycles.

In recent years, expanded investments in CVI grant programs at the state and local level have also supported related efforts to expand the CVI workforce and promote its success and sustainability. State and local policymakers and philanthropic funders should continue to build on these recent investments to strengthen CVI infrastructure and the workforce pipeline as a key part of building CVI strategies into a more permanent pillar of our public health and safety systems.

Pursuant to California's Break the Cycle of Violence Act, the CalVIP Grant program sets aside up to 5% of its funds to invest in the field of CVI, instead of specific local CVI initiatives. California's Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) began to award most of these set-aside funds in 2025, including through competitive grants for programs that train and certify CVI specialists to expand the field of frontline CVI professionals; provide technical assistance to help plan, study, and improve new CVI initiatives; help grantees manage data collection requirements; and to help CVI programs receiving CalVIP grants provide mental health and wellness activities to sustain frontline violence prevention professionals in their often traumatizing work.

More robust state investments in CalVIP and CVI initiatives would allow BSCC and other state or local agencies to also make stronger, longer-term investments to support the success of the CVI field too, including by appointing a state CalVIP program director or CVI-focused office at BSCC to support implementation of CalVIP Grants, as proposed by Assembly Bill 2378 (Gabriel, 2026), and/or hiring additional CVI experts focused on program development and impact.

State and local investments could also help promote partnerships with leading CVI training providers to develop CVI certification programs at state and community colleges. This would help expand the field of CVI professionals and leaders through our educational institutions and promote efforts to standardize professional licensing and credentialing for the CVI workforce.

Local policymakers can similarly support the success of the CVI workforce, including by investing in training and certification organizations, providing mental health and wellness supports for frontline professionals, and prioritizing improved salary, benefits, and retention incentives for this workforce.⁶⁶

In recent years, a coalition of CVI-implementing organizations and advocates successfully advocated for the City of Los Angeles to boost minimum salaries for at least some certified CVI professionals employed by the City to about \$60,000 annually. Other advocates have called for CVI organizations to implement a minimum annual salary of at least \$40,000 per year for this important public safety work.⁶⁷ These salary boosts can be challenging for CVI organizations grappling with chronic funding scarcity and budget cuts. But building salary and career pathways to attract and retain high-performing professionals over the long-term is important for the success and sustainability of CVI strategies, especially because these strategies rely on credible messengers building trusting and protective relationships with people at highest risk over the long-term. Retaining those professionals and relationships is important for sustaining peace in our streets. State and local grant-makers should seek to encourage CVI organizations to raise salaries for essential frontline workers, and prioritize their wellbeing and sustainability. Stronger and more stable investments in CVI initiatives more broadly would both benefit from, and contribute to, these related investments in the CVI field.

- f. Following recommendations developed by the National Office of Violence Prevention Network, local Offices of Violence Prevention and other partners should develop coordinated strategies for cross-jurisdictional collaboration, including for relocating individuals in danger while ensuring continuity of care.**

Cycles of community gun violence often cross city and county lines, but under-resourced CVI initiatives are often understandably hyper-focused on analyzing and addressing gun violence dynamics within their own jurisdiction's borders, and may struggle to provide emergency relocation and other services to gun violence survivors across jurisdictional lines. Some survivors at very high risk may be safer, less likely to promote retaliatory violence, and more receptive to transformational behavioral intervention, counseling, and service referrals, etc., if they are relocated to another jurisdiction away from a person, group, or gang threatening their life.

The National Office of Violence Prevention Network is refining recommendations for CVI-focused initiatives to coordinate across jurisdictional lines more effectively, and ensure that relocating a high-risk survivor to another jurisdiction ensures continuity of intensive care, protection, and intervention services. CVI initiatives should seek to develop stronger capacity to coordinate across jurisdictional boundaries based on these and other best practice recommendations.

Coordinated cross-jurisdictional efforts should ensure risk assessment efforts analyze and address regional dynamics fueling gun violence across city and county lines, and coordinate with CVI partners across the state to provide intensive CVI services in the setting and community that is most conducive to survivors' safety, recovery, and desistance from violence.

- g. Trauma centers that regularly serve gun assault patients should establish hospital-based or hospital-linked violence intervention programs (HVIPs), following best practice recommendations from technical assistance providers such as the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (formerly the National Network for Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs).**

Many gun assault survivors are at extremely high risk of violent reinjury and death, as described in more detail in Part 1. Healthcare professionals describe seeing a "revolving door" of gun violence in which gun violence victims are treated, stabilized, and then discharged back into the community, only to return to the hospital or morgue soon after being shot again or killed.⁶⁸ The first year after surviving an initial gun assault victimization is an especially dangerous time for many survivors.⁶⁹

Hospital-based or hospital-linked violence intervention programs (HVIPs) play an important role in keeping these violently injured survivors safe and alive after they are discharged from the trauma center. HVIPs employ certified trauma-informed CVI professionals as “credible messengers” tasked with engaging gun assault survivors at the hospital bedside or as soon as possible after hospitalization. They seek to turn this traumatic event into a “golden opportunity” to interrupt the cycle of violence, and develop safety plans, protective relocation services, cognitive behavioral interventions, peer support and mentorship, and other interventions.

The CalVIP Grant Program has been a major source of state funding to replicate and expand HVIP programs, but as a result of funding cuts to CVI and victim service programs at all levels of government, large regions of California with higher rates of firearm violence are currently unserved by any HVIP program.

Even when these programs continue to operate for some patients, limited staffing capacity can also lead to service gaps and missed opportunities for lifesaving interventions. Recent studies show that even in hospitals with an HVIP, a majority of eligible patients with firearm injuries do not receive violence intervention services.⁷⁰ Evaluators analyzing the U.C. Davis Medical Center’s HVIP program noted that before the trauma center received CalVIP grant funding, nearly one-quarter of eligible gun assault patients at the trauma center identified as high risk of reinjury were missed and received no contact from the HVIP program because there was no staff coverage or violence prevention professional availability during those patients’ admission to the hospital.⁷¹ That evaluation reported in 2024 that “this gap has since been addressed with subsequent funding support” from CalVIP grants that have since expired.⁷² However this and other effective HVIPs are now grappling with staffing and service challenges once more, as they were not among the approximately 10% of applicants able to successfully apply for continued CalVIP funding for the 2026-2029 grant cycle.

Trauma centers should recognize the critical role they can play in keeping gun assault patients safe and alive after discharge and should seek to leverage all available funding streams — including competitive grants, Medi-Cal (see below), philanthropy, or other funding sources — to ensure gun assault patients at high risk for subsequent reinjury receive effective HVIP services as a standard of care starting in the hospital setting during stabilization and recovery, or as soon as possible thereafter.

h. State and local policymakers should sustain funding for Trauma Recovery Centers that provide formal mental health and other wrap-around services for underserved survivors of violent crime.

Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs) were first developed in California as a model for providing free, comprehensive, trauma-informed mental health care and wraparound case management services through a centralized resource hub for crime survivors from underserved backgrounds too often left behind by traditional crime victim systems. TRCs serve a broader range of victims than HVIPs and CVI initiatives, including survivors of sexual assault, human trafficking, domestic abuse, hate crimes, and family members of homicide victims killed in circumstances unrelated to community violence; as a result, they are less specifically focused on interrupting cycles of community violence shootings. TRCs also generally provide more formal mental health services than HVIP programs, with multidisciplinary teams including licensed psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, as well as peer support and outreach paraprofessionals.

However, TRCs are complementary to HVIPs and incorporate closely related services for some overlapping patient populations by providing intensive trauma recovery and wrap-around case management services for underserved victims of violence.⁷³ Like HVIPs, TRCs provide a coordinated link between health systems and crime victim systems.

Research indicates that crime survivors served by TRCs experience better outcomes related to mental health and quality of life than survivors who do not receive TRC services, including reductions in reported symptoms of depression and PTSD; survivors receiving TRC services are also much more likely to successfully apply for victim compensation, to return to work after the crime, and to cooperate with law enforcement to solve the crime.⁷⁴

California has been a national leader in expanding the TRC model, supported by state grant funding. Sustained and expanded investment in Trauma Recovery Centers, and longer-term grant cycles, would help build a stronger ecosystem of gun violence prevention and recovery services focused on healing survivors in our most impacted communities.

- i. State policymakers, the Department of Health Care Services, and Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans should work to address low reimbursement rates and other barriers that have effectively prevented California from implementing a legislatively mandated Violence Preventive Services Benefit to provide covered CVI services to gun assault survivors in Medi-Cal's care.**

In 2022, California became one of the first states to enact legislation to authorize CVI professionals to receive reimbursement through public health insurance systems for providing counseling, case management, trauma recovery, and aftercare services to gun violence survivors and others at highest risk insured by Medi-Cal. Assembly Bill 1929 (Gabriel) directed the California Department of Health Care Services to establish a CVI-focused “violence preventive services benefit,” which the Department rolled out as part of its larger Community Health Worker Services program. The overwhelming majority of survivors hospitalized or treated in emergency departments in California for gun assault injuries receive health insurance coverage through California’s Medi-Cal (Medicaid) program for low-income residents, so this Medi-Cal CVI services benefit represented a potentially important ongoing funding opportunity to integrate CVI services into health systems’ responses to community gun violence.

In theory, this legislation opened the door for CVI-implementing organizations, hospitals, and service providers to contract with their county’s Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans to receive ongoing reimbursement at a contracted rate for providing CVI-related counseling services to Medi-Cal-insured gun assault patients and others at very high risk of community gun violence. To be eligible for coverage and reimbursement under this program, CVI-related “violence preventive services” must be recommended by a licensed health care provider and must be provided to a Medi-Cal-insured client or patient who is a survivor of community violence, has been chronically exposed to community violence, or who is otherwise identified by the licensed healthcare provider as high risk for violent injury from community violence. To be eligible for coverage and reimbursement, these services must also be provided by violence prevention professionals who have been trained and certified by approved training programs. Currently, two training programs have been designated as approved training programs for the purposes of this program — the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI) and the Urban Peace Institute (UPI) — meaning that CVI professionals trained and certified by one of these two entities may become eligible to provide covered CVI-related services under Managed Care Plan contracts. Those two entities successfully applied for CalVIP service contracts in 2025 to train and certify more CVI professionals, which should help expand the number of certified professionals that may be eligible to provide Medi-Cal reimbursable services.

This Medi-Cal reimbursement stream could provide a stable, health system-linked funding source for effective CVI interventions, especially for Hospital-based Violence Interventions, to supplement unpredictable cycles of competitive grant funding streams. This could allow the state to leverage federal Medicaid cost-sharing, and support cost-effective interventions focused on keeping gun assault survivors in Medi-Cal’s care on a trajectory away from violent re-injury and death.

However, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention found just one CVI program statewide that has received any Medi-Cal reimbursement through this benefit to date, multiple years after it was first implemented. That program has received only a few thousand dollars after navigating significant implementation hurdles and costs. Other programs, especially in Los Angeles County, have actively engaged Managed Care Plans to try to receive reimbursements for CVI services through this program.

Implementation of this Medi-Cal CVI counseling benefit has been effectively impeded so far by a combination of low reimbursement rates, strict program limitations, and burdensome administrative barriers to entry for the vast majority of CVI-focused public agencies and nonprofits that have not previously billed Medi-Cal for health-related services.

Notably, after Oregon and Illinois adopted similar legislation to reimburse CVI services through their states' Medicaid programs, those states' Medicaid agencies set minimum reimbursement rates for CVI services, respectively, at nearly double and triple the rates set by California's Department of Health Care Services for the same services in California.

The Giffords Center for Violence Intervention, the California Wellness Foundation, and the California Children's Trust published a comprehensive implementation guide to this Medi-Cal violence preventive services benefit in 2023.⁷⁵ That implementation guide noted that most CVI services in California are provided by community-based nonprofit organizations that do not have any experience billing Medi-Cal, and that the combination of low reimbursement rates, administrative burdens, limitations on billable services, and restrictive barriers to entry had impeded implementation of this benefit: "Under these minimum rates, the new benefit covers only a portion of the cost of providing services . . . Research seems to indicate that 10% to 20% is most likely. The more pressing question is not whether the benefit covers program costs — it clearly does not — but whether it even covers the administrative costs of billing Medi-Cal. In layman's terms, is the juice worth the squeeze?"⁷⁶

Ensuring this Medi-Cal program fulfills its promise will require a comprehensive effort to tackle multiple barriers, including by: increasing reimbursement rates; promoting alternative reimbursement models (like bundled or capitated per-patient rates) that minimize administrative burdens and reflect the fact that CVI services require intensive interventions with a smaller number of patients; increasing stakeholder education and support about how to access Medi-Cal reimbursement; and promoting use of hub provider models in which city or county health agencies, hospitals, or offices of violence prevention with stronger administrative capacity can become the lead hub agency responsible for billing county Managed Care Plans for services provided by affiliated CVI partners.⁷⁷

Federal funding cuts to Medi-Cal may further hamper California's ability to raise minimum rates for these services and will likely reduce the number of gun assault survivors eligible to receive care through Medi-Cal. However, a continued effort to make this funding stream more accessible and workable for CVI service providers, especially those linked to hospital-based interventions for gun assault patients, should be an ongoing priority for hospitals, local health departments, offices of violence prevention, and other stakeholders working to integrate CVI into health systems.

j. Following recommendations from the California Commission on Behavioral Health, public health and behavioral health service agencies should integrate CVI and related trauma recovery counseling services as a core part of behavioral health prevention strategies.

In 2025, the California Commission on Behavioral Health (also known as the Behavioral Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission) completed a comprehensive research and stakeholder engagement process examining the relationship between firearm violence and behavioral health challenges. The Commission published an important report summarizing its findings, which emphasized that California's strong investments in behavioral health initiatives "have not been leveraged to promote trauma-informed violence prevention strategies. . . . Firearm violence is a persistent threat to behavioral health, but California is not treating it that way."⁷⁸

To address that gap, the Commission recommended that California “must incorporate violence prevention as a priority of public behavioral health funding and programming.” The report also recommended that “the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) should integrate violence prevention as part of its population behavioral health prevention strategy,” and that local behavioral health jurisdictions should “implement strategies that break the cycle of trauma and violence, promote recovery and resilience, and prevent future violence. These approaches should be person-centered and prioritize Californians at greatest risk.”⁷⁹

In a handful of counties, local public health departments have established county-level Offices of Violence Prevention to fill critical gaps in CVI service coordination and delivery. But this is not yet the norm for most counties with persistent challenges with community gun violence. Similarly, while California’s Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) generates billions of dollars annually for public (mostly county-administered) behavioral health services through a surtax on very high incomes, very few BHSA funds have supported trauma recovery and violence intervention services for survivors grappling with severe trauma and related behavioral health challenges.

Legislation introduced in 2026, the Trauma Healing and Resilience Investment for Victimized and Exposed Youth (T.H.R.I.V.E.) Act (AB 2247, Elhawary), would direct the State Department of Health Care Services to administer grants to lead public agencies to ensure youth survivors of gun violence aged 25 and under receive mental health and counseling services upon request. As a result of funding challenges, this legislation has been narrowed to propose a pilot program in four counties. As of the date of publication for this report, the THRIVE Act has not yet identified a funding source for this more limited approach — underscoring the degree to which existing investments in public and behavioral health have left critical gaps for gun violence prevention and survivors’ recovery.⁸⁰

Over the next five years, public health and behavioral health systems should leverage available behavioral and public health funding streams to fill gaps in the CVI ecosystem and ensure survivors of gun violence receive mental health, counseling, and other trauma recovery services, consistent with the California Commission on Behavioral Health’s recommendations.

3. Invest in Domestic Violence Intervention and victim services, including by protecting existing victim services, launching new investments in domestic violence homicide intervention, and integrating firearm risk assessment into domestic violence response

- a. State and local policymakers should provide additional investments necessary to offset federal funding cuts and shortfalls impacting domestic violence victim services, including shelters, safety planning supports, and legal aid to assist survivors with obtaining court protective orders.**

As discussed in more detail in Part 1, federal actions have contributed to significant cuts and shortfalls to funding streams that support essential domestic violence victim services.⁸¹ These cuts are occurring at a particularly dangerous time, as the nation has experienced an enormous surge in domestic violence-related shootings over the past decade.⁸² To help address this challenge, the California Attorney General sponsored the California Victims of Crime Act (AB 2432, Gabriel), which was enacted in 2024 to establish a supplementary state-level funding source for victim services through financial penalties on corporate misconduct. But there is not yet sufficient revenue in this new special fund to sustain domestic violence victim services facing severe cuts today.

To address and offset these federal funding shortfalls, domestic violence survivor advocates are prioritizing efforts to renew temporary state funding to sustain existing victim services, like legal support, safety planning, and shelter for domestic violence survivors. These services help survivors access effective pathways to safety away from circumstances where they may be at very high risk of homicide or coercive control involving firearms.

Echoing a consistent theme for this strategic plan: state and local policymakers should seek to ensure public investments in these services first prioritize the needs and safety of survivors at highest risk in the most impacted communities. Recent increases in domestic violence-related homicide have been driven almost entirely by surges in *firearm*-related homicide, especially for Black and Hispanic women in California. Other data published in Part 1 shows significant variation in rates of female-victim homicide and rates of domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance involving firearm use or threats across California's counties. Grantmakers should seek to prioritize funding to protect domestic violence services in these communities.

Many of California's domestic violence grants have also traditionally been allocated through small one or two-year grants. Efforts to provide larger, longer-term grants and reduce administrative barriers for funding matches and annual re-application would help ensure that service providers can spend as much of their time and resources as possible serving survivors in danger and building longer-term hiring and safety strategies.

- b. State policymakers should establish and fund a new high-risk domestic violence intervention grant program modeled on CalVIP to help California's most impacted communities address surges in domestic violence-related homicide and gun violence. Local policymakers and public safety stakeholders should develop, fund, and implement high-risk domestic violence homicide intervention initiatives at the local level.**

The recommendation above is focused on sustaining existing domestic violence services to offset federal funding shortfalls. Additional resources are also needed to more specifically respond to national surges in domestic violence-related gun violence impacting survivors in California. As Part 1 described in more detail: in California, the per capita rate of domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance (such as 911 calls) involving the use or threatened use of firearms doubled between 2014 and 2024.⁸³

Modeled on the success of the CalVIP program and CVI initiatives, state and local policymakers should establish and fund new initiatives focused on proactively identifying and intervening with individuals at highest risk of victimization or perpetration of domestic violence homicide in the near future.⁸⁴ In other words, California should create a “CalVIP for domestic violence,” and local communities should implement and fund these models at the local level.

In 2026, a number of domestic violence-focused programs applied unsuccessfully for CalVIP grants to implement initiatives focused on intervening with individuals at highest risk of domestic violence homicide; those programs were not eligible for the CVI-focused CalVIP program, but could contribute to broader sustained reductions in gun violence over the next five years if state and local policymakers prioritize implementation of these models and support new parallel “CalVIP for domestic violence” funding streams to expand them.

These new domestic violence-focused funding streams should support coordinated and multidisciplinary preventive and protective interventions, like the “High Point Model” or Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center’s “Domestic Violence High Risk Team (DVHRT)” Model, that work to reduce risk of domestic violence homicide or near-lethal assault with individuals at highest risk. Like CVI initiatives, these strategies rely on the insight that many intimate partner homicides can be predicted and prevented by coordinated, multidisciplinary teams of dedicated public safety professionals.

Based on the successful model of the CalVIP grant program, new state and local funding for domestic violence intervention initiatives should be focused on where these resources are needed most: reaching individuals at highest risk in communities with the greatest need, based on rates of domestic violence-related homicide, female-victim homicide, and/or domestic violence calls for assistance involving use or threats with firearms.⁸⁵ Part 1 included data to help identify the counties most impacted by domestic violence involving firearms.

- c. Across all systems that serve and interact with domestic abuse survivors, leaders should ensure organizational policies and practice treat the intersection of domestic violence and firearms as a public safety priority. Evidence-based danger assessment tools that assess for access to firearms should also be integrated into domestic violence response and safety plans.**

As Part 1 detailed, large recent increases in female and child-victim homicide across the U.S. have been driven almost entirely by increases in firearm violence. To reverse this surge in domestic violence-related shootings and shooting threats, courts, law enforcement, victim service, and other safety stakeholders must prioritize efforts to reduce domestic violence homicide by addressing abusive individuals’ dangerous access to firearms.

The section below includes many more specific recommendations focused on that priority through improved implementation, compliance, and enforcement of court protective orders. In recent years, California has passed important legislation requiring courts and law enforcement agencies to follow best practices in this area,⁸⁶ and has made important progress in promoting firearm relinquishment compliance.⁸⁷

But the reason these legislative mandates are necessary in the first place is that many court, law enforcement, and other justice and safety stakeholders nationwide often fail to treat domestic violence and abusers’ access to firearms as a leading justice and safety concern in practice.⁸⁸ As discussed in more detail in the section below, survivors seeking safety through court protective orders or criminal justice systems too often encounter passive, siloed, and reactive honor systems that leave dangerous and adjudicated abusers in unlawful possession of firearms. Even when abuse survivors testify about very dangerous conduct, some courts issuing protective orders may view it as law enforcement’s role to identify whether a dangerous person possesses firearms in violation of the court’s protective order, while law enforcement may view compliance with civil court orders as the court’s responsibility or lower-level enforcement priority.⁸⁹

Policy and investments play a critical role by establishing clear legal requirements and funding staffing positions dedicated to protective order implementation, firearm relinquishment, and survivor safety. But the communities developing best practice models for preventing domestic violence-related shootings have also relied on strong leadership in court administration, law enforcement, prosecuting agencies, and other organizations, to shape agency norms and procedures around a culture of safety through proactive prevention. This leadership distinguishes compliance-motivated jurisdictions that are merely seeking to satisfy new legislative mandates from those that are more comprehensively problem-solving and integrating firearm risk assessment and homicide prevention into every aspect of domestic violence response.

Court staff, law enforcement, victim service providers, family law attorneys, and other stakeholders who interact with domestic abuse survivors, or fund domestic violence services, should be robustly trained about the important role they can play in preventing homicide by assessing for and addressing firearm access in domestic violence cases. The statistics below show that domestic violence plays a significant role in homicide risk, and that an abusive person's access to a firearm is the leading risk factor for intimate partner homicide:

- Most female homicide victims are killed in connection with family or intimate partner violence incidents preceded by patterns of escalating abuse.⁹⁰ Most victims are killed with firearms.⁹¹
- Child homicide victims are most commonly killed by an abusive parent.⁹² From 2018-2022, eight times as many children were killed in domestic violence incidents in the U.S. compared to school shootings.⁹³
- Domestic abusers' access to firearms endangers many other victims. About 20% of people killed in homicides connected to intimate partner violence are "corollary victims" who do not have a family or intimate partner relationship with the perpetrator, such as an abuse survivor's new romantic partner, family member, friend, coworker, or first responders.⁹⁴
- A history of family or intimate partner violence, stalking, or extreme misogyny is a significant risk factor for committing public mass shootings.⁹⁵
- Many mass shootings are committed as acts of family annihilation. Researchers have found that 59% of children killed in mass shootings involving four or more deceased victims were killed by a family member, compared to 12% killed by a stranger, and 7% killed by a classmate.⁹⁶
- As discussed in more detail in Part 1: when comparing males who had abusively injured their partners to those who killed their partners, researchers found that an abusive person's direct access to a firearm in the home or through employment was the strongest risk factor for intimate partner homicide — substantially more dangerous even than a prior history of nonfatally strangling the victim.⁹⁷

This means that courts, law enforcement, victim service, and other safety stakeholders can make an enormous difference for survivors' safety when they prioritize efforts to effectively assess for and respond to dangerous firearm access in cases of intimate partner violence, stalking, family violence, and child abuse.

Evidence-based danger assessment tools that assess for access to firearms should be integrated into domestic violence response and safety plans. Victim service providers, attorneys, court staff, and public safety personnel should seek to proactively solicit specific information from survivors about whether the abusive person possesses or has access to firearms, or has threatened to harm them or others with firearms. A number of screening tools and implementation guides are available to assist in that task:

- The California courts have adopted a standard research-based screening tool for use in recognizing danger of homicide in cases involving intimate partner violence called the “Bench Guide for Recognizing Dangerousness in Domestic Violence Cases,”⁹⁸ which assesses for firearm access and other homicide risk factors. This screening tool lists some of the factors that are most commonly present in intimate partner violence cases involving risk of serious harm or death. The Judicial Council of California has supported important recent efforts to train court personnel and other safety stakeholders about these risks and best practices for assessing and responding to dangers involving firearms, supported by Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program federal grant funds administered through BSCC.
- The California DOJ and the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training have published a similar “Domestic Violence Lethality Risk Assessment for First Responders” tool that should be integrated into domestic violence response, including to identify access to firearms.⁹⁹
- Domestic violence experts from Pierce’s Pledge have published a “Toolkit for Legal Decision-making in Child Custody and Visitation Cases” outlining recommendations for family law attorneys, judges and court staff, attorneys, mental health practitioners, and others working with families involved in high-conflict separation or custody disputes to provide information about firearm risks, assess dangerousness, craft safer parenting and child custody or visitation plans, and in appropriate cases, consider voluntary and involuntary pathways for temporarily separating abusive individuals from firearms during periods of heightened danger to adult abuse survivors and their children.¹⁰⁰

Service providers and law enforcement should also be informed about the range of safety intervention options under California law for addressing dangerous individuals’ access to firearms. They should also be informed about the potential safety and enforcement gaps in these laws, and help survivors develop safety plans accordingly.

4. Strengthen implementation of court protection orders to improve safety outcomes for survivors, especially by improving service and firearm relinquishment compliance, and providing survivors with direct electronic access to information about their order.

To achieve sustained reductions in gun violence, this report outlines a comprehensive set of recommendations below focused on ensuring court protection orders like Domestic Violence Restraining Orders are consistently served, documented, and enforced. (California law generally uses the terms “protection order,” “protective order,” and “restraining order” interchangeably.) This is a leading implementation challenge nationwide, requiring proactive coordination between courts, law enforcement, and other stakeholders to protect survivors and the public.

Under California law, protection order processes empower people in danger to present evidence of dangerous conduct to a court to obtain court-ordered safety interventions designed to defuse conflict, promote safe separation from abusive relationships, limit dangerous individuals’ contact with targeted victims, and protect children from an abusive parent in appropriate circumstances. In California, protection orders also generally include provisions to address dangerous individuals’ access to firearms while the court order remains in effect; these orders prevent the person subject to the order from passing firearm-related background checks for a temporary period, order them to relinquish all firearms within 24 hours to a licensed dealer or law enforcement agency, and require them to provide forms to the courts signed by that dealer or law enforcement agency verifying that the person relinquished all firearms within 48 hours of receiving notice of the order.¹⁰¹ Protection orders are the most common way that a California resident becomes legally prohibited from keeping firearms they already possess,¹⁰² and are an essential component of California’s gun violence prevention framework, as described in more detail in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s report, [“Pathways to Safety: California’s Nine Court Protection Orders to Prevent Gun Violence.”](#)¹⁰³

In addition to these practical safety measures, protection orders can send a strong signal that legal authorities will not tolerate further violence or abuse, and that victim-survivors are not on their own. This can help disrupt abusive power dynamics that involve terror, isolation, and control, and empower survivors to effectuate law enforcement responses if dangerous conduct continues. Research reviews have concluded that protection orders “are associated with reduced risk of violence toward the victim,”¹⁰⁴ especially where they include effectively enforced provisions to restrict the restrained person’s access to firearms;¹⁰⁵ that survivors who obtained multi-year protection orders reported significantly lower levels of violence while the protection order was in effect, and significantly fewer emergency department visits and police incidents after obtaining a protection order.¹⁰⁶ These can be important pathways to safety.

However, in the absence of coordinated efforts to promptly and consistently serve protection orders, document them in court and law enforcement databases, and facilitate firearm relinquishment compliance, dangerous individuals too often receive a dangerous signal — that they may enjoy relative impunity to ignore court mandates, threaten survivors, and deter further help-seeking. Firearm relinquishment requirements provide an early first test. After an abusive person is ordered to relinquish all firearms within 24 hours and verify compliance with the courts, they may be emboldened to violate the order and escalate dangerous conduct if they receive little proactive guidance about relinquishing firearms and little follow-up contact or consequence for failing to comply.

In the context of a criminal conviction, California laws adopted through Proposition 63 in 2016 require assigned probation officers to coordinate firearm relinquishment compliance efforts for the court when a defendant is convicted of a crime that disqualifies them from firearm possession. Prosecutors and defense attorneys are also active participants in the criminal court setting, and should be actively involved in promoting firearm relinquishment compliance.

However, in the context of most civil court protection order proceedings, there is typically no one like a probation officer with designated responsibilities to coordinate firearm relinquishment efforts, inform newly prohibited people about how to comply with firearm prohibitions, or identify and respond to noncompliance. As a result, survivors seeking court-ordered safety protections from violence, threats, and abuse may continue to be exposed to significant dangers from individuals who remain illegally armed. This can be especially dangerous in the context of domestic violence, as discussed above.¹⁰⁷

A high-profile gun violence case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2024, *United States v. Rahimi*, highlighted the dangers survivors face when all stakeholders — from courts, law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim service providers — do not effectively coordinate to ensure relinquishment compliance.¹⁰⁸ In that case, public reporting indicates that a domestic abuse survivor provided testimony to a Texas court that the father of her young child had brutally battered her, fired his firearm toward her, and threatened to kill her if she told anyone.¹⁰⁹ She reportedly testified that his abuse had previously “sent [her] to the emergency room,” that he had broken her phone and taken her keys to prevent her from seeking help,¹¹⁰ and told the court, “I need a protective order because I am afraid that [he] will kill me and my son.”¹¹¹ The court found that he had committed domestic violence and was likely to do so again and issued a Domestic Violence Protective Order against him that ordered him not to possess firearms for the duration of the protective order. He was present in court and received notice of that order, but he did not comply. He remained in unlawful possession of firearms for about 11 more months, during which he repeatedly violated the protective order and committed at least six more shootings in his community, including in multiple road-rage incidents and by shooting into an occupied residence and at an occupied vehicle.

This case received significant attention in the press about the abuser’s Second Amendment claims before the Supreme Court, and research showing the strong link between domestic abusers’ access to firearms and risk of homicide. But there was relatively little public attention to the underlying facts of this case, which showed a failure of court protection order systems to effectively protect a survivor and her community from gun violence. In this case, a young mother sought court-ordered protection from someone she credibly feared would kill her and her son, but apparently encountered enforcement through a passive, uncoordinated, or reactive honor system that left a very dangerous person out of custody and illegally armed for nearly a year. Important investigative reporting by CalMatters and others has documented similar cases, with tragic outcomes in California and other states.¹¹²

Policymaking and investments in protective order and firearm relinquishment programs seek to prevent these outcomes and better protect targeted survivors and the public.

In recent years, the California Legislature has enacted nation-leading legislation to require courts, law enforcement, and prosecutors to take a much more proactive and coordinated role in promoting protective order implementation and firearm relinquishment compliance.¹¹³ These new laws generally require all local law enforcement agencies to serve protection orders upon request in their jurisdiction, and to facilitate relinquishment immediately at the time of service. They also require courts issuing protection orders to make findings on the record about whether the restrained person likely owns, possesses, or controls firearms and, if so, to provide specific guidance to the restrained person about how to relinquish those weapons. The court must then make subsequent findings about whether that person has complied with firearm relinquishment requirements and provided proof-of-relinquishment to the court in a timely manner.¹¹⁴ If the court finds that the restrained person owns, possesses, or controls firearms and has failed to comply with firearm relinquishment requirements, these laws generally require the court to immediately notify appropriate law enforcement officials and report that violation to the local prosecuting attorney.¹¹⁵ For domestic violence-related cases, the law also states that “law enforcement officials so notified shall take all actions necessary to obtain those and any other firearms or ammunition owned, possessed, or controlled by the restrained person and to address any violation of the order with respect to firearms or ammunition as appropriate and as soon as practicable.”¹¹⁶

These new requirements provide a strong foundation, but implementation remains uneven. The Legislature has also provided important one-time grant funding to support these efforts that will expire in 2027 or 2028 for most grantees.

As described in more detail in the recommendations below, California must build on these important efforts over the next five years through legislation, expanded implementation, and additional investments dedicated to improving safety outcomes and access to information for survivors requesting court-ordered safety protections.

- a. State policymakers should appropriate funding necessary to authorize California DOJ to establish and maintain an automated protected person notification system, as multiple other states have done, to provide survivors who obtain protective orders with direct electronic access to information maintained in state databases about their protective order case, including: whether the order has been properly reported into the database, whether it has been successfully served, when it expires, and whether it has been violated with respect to firearms.**

California voters can check their voter registration information online and sign up for proactive communications about the status of their ballot. But survivors of violence and abuse who obtain court protection orders do not have similar direct access to vital information about the court order issued to keep them safe. This lack of information can be dangerous and disempowering, especially when survivors are seeking to confirm that their order has been reported to law enforcement databases and served, so that violations can be effectively enforced.

California and most other states have adopted automated systems that allow victims of crime to register to receive timely notifications about changes in a convicted offender's custody status, including when an offender has been released or escaped from custody.¹¹⁷

Building on similar electronic platforms, some other states have also developed automated notification systems or web portals allowing protection order petitioners and protected parties to access critical information reported into court or law enforcement databases about their own case. These systems typically allow survivors to register an account that verifies that they are protected by an active protection order and sign up to access information and received automated notifications when their order has been recorded as served, when there are upcoming hearings or expiration dates on their order, and in some states, when a restrained person has failed a background check indicating that they attempted to acquire firearms in violation of the order.¹¹⁸

This transparent access can also help survivors identify and address implementation and record-reporting gaps that may impact their safety. For example, this portal could help alert a survivor that their protection order record has not been properly reported to law enforcement databases at all, or that there is a typo in the restrained person's name or the court order's expiration date that must be corrected to ensure proper enforcement. This portal could also help alert survivors of the need for appropriate safety planning or coordination with law enforcement if they receive information that the protection order has not been served on the restrained person, or that a dangerous restrained person has attempted to unlawfully purchase firearms or ammunition they are prohibited from possessing.

Through reports published in 2024 and 2025, the California DOJ proposed that the Legislature pass legislation authorizing the Department to establish an automated protection person information portal and share otherwise confidential information reported by courts and law enforcement agencies into the California Restraining and Protective Order System (CARPOS) with survivors requesting information about their own protection order case. In response, the Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 1363 (Stefani) in 2025, which among other things, authorizes DOJ to establish this portal "subject to an appropriation by the Legislature." California DOJ has not yet received any funding to develop and implement this

project, and has therefore not been authorized to do so.

California lawmakers should appropriate ongoing funding for California to join the growing list of states that have invested in protective order notification systems to promote survivor safety and empowerment. Cost estimates indicate that California DOJ could implement a robust notification system for about \$3 million per year.

To provide more flexible options for developing and permanently funding this system, state lawmakers should also amend the law to authorize DOJ to pursue grants or other funding sources to support this project, in addition to appropriations by the Legislature.

The California DOJ and Giffords are co-sponsoring The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act this year (AB 1753, Stefani), which includes a package of over a dozen proposed reforms that will be described throughout this report that were developed by the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and survivor advocates to improve safety outcomes in the protective order process. This legislation includes a provision authorizing California DOJ to pursue grants or alternative funding sources to launch a protected person information system.

- b. Law enforcement agencies should adopt and robustly implement new policies and procedures mandated by Assembly Bill 451 (2025, Petrie-Norris) to promote effective service and enforcement of all firearm-prohibiting protection orders. Local policymakers should dedicate increased funding and staffing resources to promote implementation of these requirements based on best practice models.**

In 2025, California enacted Assembly Bill 451, developed by the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and survivor advocates, to require most law enforcement agencies in the state to develop, adopt, and implement written policies and standards by January 1, 2027, “to promote safe, consistent, and effective service, implementation, and enforcement of court protection and restraining orders that include firearm access restrictions[.]”¹¹⁹ The Office of Gun Violence Prevention published an information bulletin in March 2026 informing law enforcement agencies about the specific elements that must be included in these policies.¹²⁰

Law enforcement agencies should coordinate with survivor advocates and victim service providers, court staff, and other protection order stakeholders to develop locally-tailored policies required under Assembly Bill 451, and importantly, to ensure these policies are meaningfully implemented in practice to address longstanding barriers impacting survivor safety.

Local governments should also be proactive partners in funding and implementing efforts specifically focused on ensuring protective orders provide meaningful protection from gun violence. One local model was developed by prosecutors and law enforcement in Seattle’s King County, in Washington State, nearly a decade ago. According to the National Resource Center for Domestic Violence and Firearms:

In 2016, 56% of [domestic violence protective order-related] firearm surrender orders in Seattle were completely ignored. A \$1 million appropriation from the City of Seattle and King County allowed for the creation of the Regional Domestic Violence Firearms Enforcement Unit to improve compliance with firearm surrender orders. The Unit consists of 12 people, including Seattle Police Department officers, King County Sheriff’s Office deputies, a Seattle Assistant City Attorney, and King County Deputy Prosecutors, paralegals, and victim advocates. The Unit manages the data entry, service, tracking, and enforcement of the surrender orders as well as the receipt, storage, and return of surrendered firearms across King County. The dedicated staff meet regularly to review surrender orders from the court and target the most urgent cases . . .

The success of the Regional Domestic Violence Firearms Unit has been immediate and significant. The number of firearms recovered by the Unit between January 1, 2018 and November 30, 2018 was 466. This number reflects firearms recovered by law enforcement, not firearms voluntarily surrendered by respondents who received information from the Unit on how and where to surrender. To place this number in context, 124 firearms were turned in in all of 2016.¹²¹

A research review found that, respondents subject to domestic violence protection orders were over three times more likely to relinquish firearms and verify relinquishment compliance after implementation of this program.¹²²

Some California communities have built on this Washington State model by also incorporating efforts to expand courts' role and capacity to ensure relinquishment compliance as well. For example, in 2022, following a multidisciplinary convening focused on identifying gaps in protective order implementation,¹²³ San Mateo County invested \$2 million over two years from a local sales tax measure to expand a collaborative partnership between courts, law enforcement, and prosecuting agencies, with the specific goal of "keeping guns out of the hands of individuals who are deemed to be an immediate risk to themselves or others."¹²⁴ The program focused on expanding court self-help centers' ability to assist survivors in navigating protective order processes and providing accessible information to newly prohibited people about the firearm relinquishment mandate and how to comply. The program also expanded court and law enforcement capacity to review information about which respondents have firearms; schedule compliance review hearings in all protective order cases in which respondents have failed to provide receipts to the court timely verifying firearm relinquishment; promptly report noncompliance to local law enforcement and prosecutors; and increase local law enforcement and prosecutors' capacity to respond to noncompliance and quickly recover prohibited people's firearms. In the first two years of the program, this program facilitated the relinquishment of 410 firearms from people who became legally prohibited from possessing them pursuant to protective orders.¹²⁵

Inspired by these local firearm relinquishment models, California lawmakers made important one-time General Fund investments in building local firearm relinquishment capacity through the 2022 Budget Act, which directed the Judicial Council of California to establish the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program as a temporary demonstration project.

These efforts have shown that even modest investments focused on hiring teams dedicated to protective order implementation and compliance can play a significant role in improving safety outcomes for survivors. As described in more detail below, these recent state and local investments have allowed some communities to recover thousands more illegally possessed firearms each year from individuals found by a court to be a danger to themselves or others. However, it is telling and unfortunate that there have been so few examples of these relinquishment models previously in California and nationwide.

Local policymakers and public safety stakeholders should prioritize efforts to ensure local law enforcement agencies robustly implement Assembly Bill 451 and related mandates, and earn survivors' ability to trust in the court protection order process.

- c. State policymakers should renew expiring funding for the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program and/or establish and fund a new related grant program focused on improving implementation, service, and enforcement of court protective and restraining orders in cases involving firearms or high risk of homicide, with a focus on firearm relinquishment compliance.**

DOJ's annual Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) reports have for many years called on the Legislature to support adoption of county-level firearm relinquishment programs focused on promoting relinquishment compliance, especially in the protective order context.

With advocacy from gun violence and domestic violence experts, the Legislature established the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program as a one-time pilot program in the 2022 Budget Act. In 2023 and 2024, the Judicial Council awarded \$28.5 million in grants through that program to 13 county Superior Courts, applying with local law enforcement or prosecuting agencies, to support partnerships focused on promoting firearm relinquishment compliance when individuals become subject to court protection orders.¹²⁶ Though this was established as a competitive grant program, there was sufficient grant funding for all 13 counties that applied.

Grantees have used these resources to hire court and law enforcement staff dedicated to improving implementation of court protective orders to prevent gun violence and armed abuse, following many of the best practice steps implemented in jurisdictions such as Kings County, Washington, and San Mateo County, as described above.¹²⁷ An important finding from these programs is that many people subject to these orders voluntarily comply when they receive clear communications from the court and local law enforcement or prosecuting partners about how to relinquish firearms and receive a clear message that system stakeholders will follow-up to verify compliance and that non-compliance will lead to serious consequences.¹²⁸ One jurisdiction receiving Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program funds “began sending letters to those in their community identified as non-compliant [with firearm relinquishment verification requirements] and received an 80% response rate from prohibited persons, some of whom had complied but not properly notified the court and others who then relinquished firearms for the duration of the prohibition based on the information the agency provided on how to comply.”¹²⁹ Dedicated staffing positions increased the number of personnel responsible for identifying the remaining dangerous non-compliance cases, directly communicating with the prohibited person, coordinating safety plans with survivors, and/or initiating follow-up criminal investigation and enforcement.¹³⁰ Some grantees used these funds to develop new technological solutions for immediately communicating information about protective order violations involving firearms to numerous local agencies.¹³¹

Some local governments receiving federal “Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program” (Byrne SCIP) grants through BSCC also dedicated their grant funds for similar firearm relinquishment purposes, with a focus on protective order cases. In 2025, the City of Los Angeles, for instance, received \$1 million in federal Byrne SCIP funding over two years to implement a new multi-agency task force initiative focused on improving service, implementation, and enforcement of Domestic Violence Restraining Orders, with a focus on preventing gun violence and armed abuse.¹³²

Collectively, Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program recipients are reporting impressive results. In just one year, grantees from 11 counties collectively reported facilitating the relinquishment of over 3,000 firearms from 901 people subject to firearm-prohibiting court orders.¹³³ These efforts likely contributed to the 35% increase from 2023 to 2025 in the number of individuals who were removed each year from the California DOJ’s statewide database of illegal firearm possessors due to compliance and enforcement efforts verifying that the person lawfully relinquished or was separated from all known firearms.¹³⁴ In 2024 and again in 2025, a record number of individuals were removed from the Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) database due to compliance or enforcement efforts.¹³⁵ Sustaining this progress should be a vital public safety goal over the next five years.

California’s one-time state investments in the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program will expire for current grantees in 2027 and 2028, jeopardizing this progress. The Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Act enacted in 2023 (AB 28 (Gabriel)) sought to permanently sustain the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program by dedicating \$15 million per year in new Special Fund revenue for that purpose, but there has been insufficient revenue in that Special Fund to appropriate any funding for Firearm Relinquishment Grants.

State lawmakers should renew and augment this funding stream to sustain existing programs and replicate their success in other counties across the state. State lawmakers should prioritize funding for communities with the highest rates of firearm homicide and proposals that demonstrate the strongest likelihood of reducing firearm violence and increasing safety for survivors obtaining court protective orders within the grant period.

d. All counties should consider developing protection order and survivor safety coordinating councils or task forces to identify and address gaps in service, record-reporting, and enforcement of protection orders that include firearm relinquishment provisions.

Implementation of new laws governing service and enforcement of protective orders has been much more robust in some jurisdictions than others, often facilitated by state or local funding in teams dedicated specifically to this purpose.

A helpful implementation practice has been to convene often burdened and siloed court personnel, state and local law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, and the defense bar together, to ensure all stakeholders are informed about new laws and responsibilities, identify implementation barriers, and develop coordinated local action plans for addressing them.¹³⁶

Accordingly, this plan recommends that county leaders convene multiagency coordinating councils or task forces — either formally or informally — with the specific goal of identifying and addressing barriers to protection order implementation and enforcement impacting survivor safety, especially from firearm violence. These task forces should focus on action-oriented problem-solving to identify and address barriers to implementation. All participating agencies should be encouraged to forthrightly identify procedural gaps and implementation challenges, and develop practical plans for addressing them together, and identifying additional funding or staffing resources needed to fulfill safety obligations.

These councils or task forces should consider developing local action plans to ensure all of the following occur more consistently in their jurisdiction:

- ✓ Survivors of violence and abuse have access to safety planning supports that provide accessible information about the range of court protection and restraining orders and other interventions or supports that may be available in their circumstances. Service providers help survivors understand their options for electronic filing and providing testimony through videoconference or other remote means, which may be especially important for protecting survivors' safety when they are in hiding from a violent and abusive partner or stalker.
- ✓ Law enforcement and service providers should proactively solicit information from survivors about whether the person they need protection from possesses or controls firearms; should help survivors understand that an abusive person's firearm access is a leading risk factor for escalating violence and homicide; and should develop safety planning approaches accordingly.
- ✓ Courts and designated law enforcement partners in the jurisdiction must promptly transmit information about protective and restraining orders to California DOJ for inclusion in the California Restraining and Protective Order System (CARPOS), to ensure they are immediately accessible to law enforcement statewide through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) and for firearm background check purposes. Delays or failures to report these records can create a significant safety and enforcement issue.
- ✓ Courts should ensure information and images of protective and restraining orders are

promptly uploaded into the California Courts Protective Order Registry (CCPOR) and accessible to courts statewide. Notably, courts in 10 California counties are still not participating in CCPOR.

- ✓ Petitioners who obtain court protective and restraining orders should be effectively informed about how to request service of the order and hearing notices by a qualified law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction required to serve such orders upon petitioners' request under new state laws.
- ✓ Law enforcement agencies should promptly serve court protective orders upon receiving requests for service from the petitioner, and proactively identify orders that have not been served prior to scheduled court hearings to promptly serve those orders and file proof of service forms with the court.
- ✓ Law enforcement officers serving protective or restraining orders that include firearm prohibitions must take steps to effectuate firearm relinquishment immediately at the time the order is served, or as soon as practicable thereafter.
- ✓ Court and law enforcement personnel must promptly record service information in both court and law enforcement record systems to ensure these orders are enforceable and that courts can hold hearings to issue longer-term protection orders.
- ✓ Courts adjudicating protective order cases must make and record findings about whether the respondent likely owns, possesses, or controls firearms or ammunition, based on information identified by a check of the Automated Firearms System, and a review of other information reported on court forms or in hearings by the petitioner, witnesses, the respondent, or any other source. Some Superior Courts, such as San Francisco, have adopted local court forms that assist petitioners in providing more detailed information about the type of firearms the restrained party possesses or controls and the ways in which the person has unlawfully used those firearms to harm or threaten them.
- ✓ Respondents who become subject to firearm-prohibiting orders should receive locally relevant, plain language information that effectively informs them about how to safely comply with firearm relinquishment requirements, including processes for contacting firearm dealers or local law enforcement agencies to facilitate firearm relinquishment of any firearms that were not relinquished immediately at the time of service to a law enforcement officer serving notice of a protection order outside of court.
- ✓ Courts must consistently review the record to determine and record whether the respondent has timely complied with firearm relinquishment requirements, including by scheduling relinquishment compliance review hearings when necessary.
- ✓ Courts should notify local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies when the court has not received verification forms demonstrating firearm relinquishment compliance within 48 hours of issuing a firearm-prohibiting court order.
- ✓ Local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies should designate a position responsible for accessing or receiving notices from the courts when courts make findings and notifications regarding firearm relinquishment noncompliance in protective order cases. Local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies should provide courts with regularly updated information for that designated point of contact.
- ✓ Local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies should promptly investigate and respond to notifications of relinquishment noncompliance from the court or other parties, including as required for some protection orders under Section 6306(f) of the Family Code and Section 273.75 of the Penal Code.

- ✓ Law enforcement and prosecuting agencies should dedicate staffing resources to investigate these reports, facilitate prompt compliance, and treat cases involving violations of firearm relinquishment requirements as a safety and accountability priority.
- ✓ Law enforcement agencies should conduct prompt investigation and enforcement efforts to remove firearms identified in the Automated Firearms System, as well as any other firearms a prohibited person may own, possess, or control, such as illegally manufactured ghost guns.
- ✓ Law enforcement agencies promptly report information about any firearms relinquished to the law enforcement agency into the Automated Firearms System (AFS) through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS). When agencies fail to promptly report this information, California DOJ’s APPS Enforcement teams or other law enforcement agencies may waste scarce time and investigative resources seeking to recover firearms that were already relinquished but not properly reported as such in law enforcement databases.

This action-oriented, problem-solving effort should be a priority for county stakeholders to improve compliance, build trust in the legal system, and protect survivors who have petitioned for safety interventions to prevent gun violence and other harms.

e. Law enforcement agencies should identify and address barriers to accomplishing service of protection orders, and “prioritize service and enforcement of protection orders above other responsibilities that do not have comparable safety consequences.”¹³⁷

In California and across the U.S., an alarming number of protection orders are never successfully served or recorded as served in court and law enforcement databases, which obstructs enforcement and frequently requires courts to delay hearings or dismiss petitions from survivors seeking court-ordered safety interventions.¹³⁸ Law enforcement agencies with many competing priorities may struggle to prioritize service, especially when respondents are intentionally evading service, have irregular hours, and there are safety concerns about officers recovering firearms from someone believed to be armed and dangerous.

California law now requires law enforcement officers serving protective orders to take steps to facilitate firearm relinquishment at the time of service, so delays in accomplishing service may also frequently delay firearm relinquishment compliance and allow violent and abusive individuals to remain in possession of firearms after a court has issued a firearm-prohibiting court order against them.

Service challenges are a longstanding safety issue nationally, and in California.¹³⁹ In 2005, the California Attorney General published a task force report called “Keeping the Promise” that documented significant gaps in implementation and enforcement of domestic violence-related protective orders.¹⁴⁰ That report warned that “there are a significant number of [domestic violence perpetrators] in many counties who have not been served with the [post-hearing Domestic Violence Restraining Order] issued against them,” and published statewide data showing that about 30% of all post-hearing Domestic Violence Restraining Orders issued in California in 2004 were still recorded as unserved in March 2005 in the statewide protective order database now known as the California Restraining and Protective Order System (CARPOS). (A protection order is recorded as served in CARPOS if a court or law enforcement agency enters information into this database to record that the person subject to the protection order received notice either when present in court or by served with notice outside of court).

Over two decades later, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's analysis of protection order records reported into CARPOS shows that service continues to be a major implementation and safety challenge. CARPOS data showed that statewide:

- 54% of post-hearing Domestic Violence Restraining Orders (DVROs) issued in 2024 were recorded as being served through the restrained party's presence in court.
- 21% of these orders issued in 2024 were successfully served outside of court by May 7, 2025.
- 24% of these orders issued in 2024 were still recorded as unserved in CARPOS on May 7, 2025.

This indicates that if the restrained person was not recorded as receiving notice of a post-hearing DVRO in court, it was about as likely as not that this court order may never be recorded as served in CARPOS at all. In order to hold the court hearing to issue that longer-term order in the first place, the court must have found that the individual received proper advance notice of the court hearing, indicating that it was not impossible to effectively serve court documents on that individual outside of court.

Service challenges are not unique to the Domestic Violence Restraining Order. CARPOS data showed that for other protection order types, an even larger percentage of court orders issued in 2024 were still recorded as unserved in CARPOS on May 7, 2025, including:

- 27% of post-hearing Workplace Violence Restraining Orders.
- 29% of post-hearing Civil Harassment Restraining Orders.
- 32% of post-hearing Gun Violence Restraining Orders.
- 33% of post-hearing Postsecondary School Violence Restraining Orders.
- 34% of post-hearing Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Restraining Orders.

This service data may be particularly surprising for Gun Violence Restraining Orders (GVROs) because law enforcement agencies served as the petitioners for 99% of GVROs issued in 2024. This indicates that law enforcement agencies may struggle to successfully serve or document service of orders those same agencies requested against people found by a court to pose a significant danger of firearm violence.

The data above includes only longer-term protection orders issued after a noticed hearing. For protection orders that expired at the Temporary or Emergency stage before a full court hearing, an even larger percentage were recorded as unserved in CARPOS, including for Gun Violence Restraining Orders obtained by law enforcement petitioners. If the subject of the order is not served with timely notice of the temporary order and the court hearing, the court would not be able to proceed with the hearing to issue a longer-term order; as a result, challenges in accomplishing service are a major obstacle for both law enforcement and survivors to obtain longer-term safety interventions to prevent violence.

It is not clear from this data how many of these orders were truly unserved, or erroneously reflected as such in CARPOS due to courts and law enforcement agencies failing to record service information in CARPOS in accordance with state law. Challenges with actual service and documentation of service likely both play a role. But this is not just a record reporting issue: researchers, grant reports, survivor advocates, and protection order stakeholders have all identified service as a leading implementation challenge. When agencies properly accomplish and document service and report the date of service

in CARPOS, they are also frequently reporting that the order was not served quickly. For example, out of all post-hearing Gun Violence Restraining Orders issued in 2024 that were recorded as successfully served outside of court by May 7, 2025, about half (49%) went unserved for 14 days or longer after the order was issued, and 35% were unserved for 30 days or longer.

Whether a court protection order is truly unserved or erroneously recorded as such in CARPOS, the court order is much less likely to be effectively enforced if law enforcement information systems do not indicate that the respondent has received notice of the order. Once a protection order is reported to CARPOS, that court order will still generally prevent a respondent from passing firearm and ammunition background checks for the duration of the order, even if it has not yet been served or recorded as served. But failures to serve and document service of court orders make it much harder to effectively ensure individuals found to be a danger to self or others are promptly and safely separated from their weapons.

Agencies should coordinate with other stakeholders to identify resource gaps or other implementation barriers contributing to challenges in service, implementation, and enforcement of protection orders, and should identify opportunities to dedicate more resources and staffing to enhance the agency's capacity to promptly serve firearm-prohibiting protection orders, document service, and ensure respondents relinquish firearms at the time of service.

Agencies with more limited capacity should seek to collaborate with other regional law enforcement partners to serve orders and ensure safe relinquishment of firearms at the time of service.¹⁴¹ Agencies can also take steps to ensure that service attempts are more efficient with fewer service attempts by implementing effective service protocols and gathering more information for officers serving these court orders where possible.¹⁴² This sometimes requires staffing capacity to serve orders outside of standard business hours.¹⁴³ Agencies can also take steps to ensure their officers follow standard checklists to ensure that firearm-prohibiting court orders are effectively served with all required documents and within the timelines required by law, and that service is properly documented.

Courts have an important role to play in ensuring court orders are most consistently and promptly served as well, and should take steps to accomplish and record service when a restrained person is present in court.

f. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to authorize all local law enforcement agencies mandated to serve these orders to receive reimbursement for doing so on an equal basis.

For decades, California law has generally required sheriffs' departments to serve most protective orders involving threats to physical safety for free, upon the petitioner's request. State law has established a process for sheriffs' departments to bill the courts to receive some reimbursement for serving those orders, and has directed the Judicial Council of California to develop the "SER-100" form to be used to request service of a protective order by sheriffs.

To help address longstanding service challenges, California has recently adopted laws generally requiring all peace officers — not just sheriffs — to serve all types of protective orders for free upon receiving a petitioner's request for service. This requirement took effect on January 1, 2024, for Domestic Violence Restraining Orders,¹⁴⁴ and took effect for all other firearm-prohibiting protective orders on January 1, 2026.¹⁴⁵

Anecdotally, implementation of these new service requirements has been uneven, in part because the standard Judicial Council SER-100 form used to request service by law enforcement continues to only reference sheriffs and marshals, and because state law has also not been updated to authorize other law enforcement agencies to receive reimbursement for serving protective orders.

California lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act, Assembly Bill 1753 (2026, Stefani), which includes provisions to make any agency required to serve protective orders upon request eligible for reimbursement for doing so on an equal basis, and to direct the Judicial Council to update the SER-100 form for petitioners to request service by any local agency in their jurisdiction required to serve these orders.

- g. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to clarify that across all firearm-prohibiting protective order case types, courts can and should access or receive information maintained in the Automated Firearms System (AFS) and other criminal history and protective order databases, to inform the court's findings about whether the respondent likely possesses firearms and has lawfully relinquished them.**

California law now requires courts to check or receive information in the Automated Firearms System (AFS) prior to a court hearing on the issuance of either a Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) or Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO). (More precisely, the law requires courts to ensure a database search is conducted on the court's behalf by any court clerk or law enforcement officer with access to the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS)). This AFS check is important to firearm relinquishment compliance and survivor safety. It helps inform the court about whether the subject of the order possesses legally recorded or registered firearms identified in that system, and helps the court ensure individuals who do own firearms identified in that system promptly relinquish them. In DVRO cases, state law also requires courts to conduct a check of other criminal history and restraining order databases, if the court has sufficient funding resources to do so.

While state law requires courts to conduct the AFS check prior to a hearing in GVRO and DVRO cases, it is insufficiently clear about courts' permissive ability to do so in all other firearm-prohibiting protective order cases. State law is also insufficiently clear about courts' permissive ability to check other criminal history databases in protective order cases other than DVROs. The Gun Violence Restraining Order statute, for example, mandates a check of the Automated Firearms System, and does not mention any other databases. In a GVRO case filed by a non-law-enforcement petitioner without CLETS access, this could prevent the court from receiving any CLETS information about the dangerous respondent's criminal history, even though the law states that a recent history of violence or other specified criminal conduct is relevant evidence of dangerousness the court must consider in a GVRO case.

This lack of clarity has created some confusion and implementation challenges for implementing firearm relinquishment compliance and accountability efforts in particular. Effective January 1, 2026, across all types of firearm-prohibiting protective order cases, courts are now required to make findings on the record about whether the restrained person likely possesses firearms and, if so, whether that person has violated the protective order by failing to relinquish those weapons and provide proof-of-compliance to the court. This law is designed to make courts proactive partners in preventing individuals subject to all types of protection orders from becoming or remaining illegally armed. But it will be much harder for courts to make an informed finding in these cases if they are not clearly authorized to check AFS to see if the respondent possesses lawfully acquired or registered firearms.

California lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act, which includes provisions to clarify that courts are permissively authorized to check AFS and criminal history databases across all protective order types upon receiving a petition for any protective order, prior to a hearing on the issuance of any protective order, and prior to a hearing regarding a restrained person's violation of any protective order, including its firearm relinquishment requirements.

Relatedly, The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act also includes a provision to require the district attorney or prosecuting city attorney in a domestic violence criminal case to provide the court with information about any firearms associated with the defendant in the Automated Firearms System. Existing California law requires prosecutors to provide the court with information about the defendant's

criminal history in certain circumstances, including when granting pretrial release, considering a plea agreement, or issuing a Criminal Protective Order.¹⁴⁶ This existing law also appears to assume that the court would receive information from the prosecutor about the defendant's firearm access, but possibly due to a drafting oversight, fails to mention AFS or require prosecutors to include information from an AFS check alongside other criminal history information.¹⁴⁷ The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act would correct this issue and ensure courts more regularly receive information about defendants' firearm access in criminal domestic violence cases.

- h. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to require prosecuting agencies to develop standard protocols for responding to notifications of firearm relinquishment noncompliance from the court. With or without this mandate, prosecuting agencies should coordinate with law enforcement partners to prioritize investigation, response, and potential prosecution of cases involving firearm relinquishment noncompliance, unlawful attempts to purchase firearms or ammunition in violation of a protective order, and other protective order violations indicating escalating dangerousness.**

As discussed above, new laws generally require courts to report firearm relinquishment noncompliance findings to the local prosecuting attorney and local law enforcement.¹⁴⁸

Some prosecuting agencies (especially those receiving temporary state or federal grant funds for this purpose through the Firearm Relinquishment Grant or Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program grant) have developed streamlined processes for receiving firearm noncompliance notices from the court and initiating follow-up investigation and communications with the restrained person and/or protected party, either in partnership with local law enforcement or with crime analysts and investigators working for the prosecuting agency. These follow-up efforts can be effective at communicating the importance of firearm relinquishment compliance, ensuring that restrained people promptly come into compliance, or provide missing documentation verifying that they have done so, with the motivating threat of prosecution if they fail to comply.

However, implementation of these new requirements has been uneven. Assembly Bill 451 requires covered law enforcement agencies to adopt standard policies and procedures related to relinquishment compliance, but this law does not apply to prosecuting agencies.

To promote implementation and compliance with these requirements, The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act would require prosecuting agencies to develop protocols for both receiving and responding to notifications of firearm relinquishment noncompliance in the context of court protective orders and criminal convictions.¹⁴⁹

This Act would also require law enforcement and prosecuting agencies to designate positions responsible for receiving these firearm relinquishment noncompliance notices from the court on behalf of their agency, and to regularly ensure that the clerk of the Superior Court has updated contact information for the person(s) responsible for accessing and receiving such notifications from the court on behalf of the agency.¹⁵⁰

With or without this protocols mandate, prosecuting agencies should develop and robustly implement policies designed to promote firearm relinquishment compliance and accountability, in partnership with local law enforcement partners.

As described above, firearm relinquishment mandates provide an early test for protection order respondents about whether courts and other public safety stakeholders will treat protective order violations as a public safety priority or, in practice, tolerate dangerous noncompliance.

Dedicating additional focus and resources to facilitating protective order compliance and enforcement, with a focus on cases involving firearms and elevated homicide risk, can help send a strong signal to both survivors and would-be violators that the jurisdiction treats protective order compliance and firearm violations as a specific priority for safety and accountability.

- i. **Firearm relinquishment stakeholders must ensure people who become prohibited from possessing firearms relinquish *all firearms*, including firearms such as ghost guns that are not recorded or registered in the person’s name in law enforcement databases. This should be emphasized in training and protocols for ensuring firearm relinquishment compliance, especially in protective order cases. State policymakers should also consider expanding DOJ Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) teams’ authority and staffing to support more firearm relinquishment task force partnerships focused on recovering illegally possessed firearms identified in APPS *and* based on other indicators of unlawful possession too.**

California’s Automated Firearms System (AFS) includes records of many firearms that were legally purchased or registered in California. This is a critical repository of information —unavailable in most other states — that helps courts and law enforcement identify some people who possess firearms and are required to relinquish them. However, a public safety challenge is that many public safety stakeholders do not fully appreciate the limitations in this database and may believe they have ensured relinquishment of all firearms based on AFS information alone. A large majority of unlawfully used or possessed firearms recovered by law enforcement agencies in California are not identified in AFS.¹⁵¹

Firearm relinquishment policies, protocols, and trainings should emphasize that a prohibited person’s AFS record generally does not identify:

- *Illegally* acquired firearms, such as illegally manufactured ghost guns or firearms trafficked into California or obtained from a straw purchaser without a dealer transaction and background check;
- Most rifles or shotguns that were *legally* acquired through a California firearms dealer before 2014;
- Firearms legally acquired in other states, if the owner subsequently moved to California and unlawfully failed to submit forms to California DOJ recording ownership of those firearms; or
- Cases where a prohibited person has effective custody or control of firearms that were purchased by someone else.

In many cases, courts, law enforcement, prosecutors, and other victim service partners may receive additional information indicating that a dangerous person has access to firearms that are not identified in AFS, such as if a survivor requesting a Domestic Violence Restraining Order testifies that an abusive partner possesses a 3D printed ghost gun, or in cases like the *United States v. Rahimi* case referenced above, if a survivor testifies that an abusive partner fired a weapon at her.

In these circumstances, courts, law enforcement, and other partners must coordinate to ensure they are proactively soliciting credible information from survivors and witnesses about all firearms that a prohibited person may possess or control; checking AFS records and other information that credibly indicates firearm access; and verifying relinquishment of all firearms subject to the prohibited person’s possession or control.

Since 2006, California DOJ’s Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) enforcement teams have been directed by law to identify individuals who failed to relinquish firearms identified in AFS after

becoming prohibited from possessing them. State law has required California DOJ to publish annual reports about its APPS enforcement activities focused on those individuals only, and other state laws now require local law enforcement agencies to report to California DOJ quarterly about their activities to investigate those individuals only. APPS enforcement teams investigating individuals who unlawfully possess at least one firearm recorded in AFS often also uncover other firearms unknown to AFS, but this occurs in the course of operations into individuals who have at least one firearm identified in AFS.

The APPS enforcement program is a national model but already receives insufficient resources to investigate the more than 12,000 individuals who become identified as unlawfully armed APPS subjects each year based on firearms identified in AFS records alone; any broader mandates or authorization to investigate many more cases of unlawful firearm possession should take these significant resource constraints into account.

However, state lawmakers should consider expanding the APPS program's authority and staffing resources to develop more firearm relinquishment task force partnerships with local agencies around the state focused on recovering unlawfully possessed firearms identified in AFS and from other individuals identified as unlawfully armed through other means. DOJ and local partners may develop leads for investigating unlawful firearm possession in other cases when, for instance, courts issue notifications of firearm relinquishment noncompliance in protective order cases, or when a person with a prohibiting criminal record fails an ammunition background check indicating that attempted to purchase ammunition for a weapon they cannot lawfully use or possess.

- j. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to authorize prosecutors to request, and require courts to consider issuing, firearm-prohibiting Criminal Protective Orders in hate crime cases, including in cases where a defendant has demonstrated a danger to a community or large groups of people instead of specific targeted victims.**

California has several decades-old statutes that encourage courts hearing criminal cases involving hate crimes to issue Criminal Protective Orders to protect vulnerable victims or witnesses.¹⁵² But there are significant gaps in implementation of these laws. For example, the standard Criminal Protective Order forms used by the courts do not currently reference any authority to issue Criminal Protective Orders in hate crime cases. If hate crime-related protective orders are not issued on standard Judicial Council forms, they are also not likely to be consistently reported into any protection order database used by law enforcement and for firearm and ammunition background checks. These existing statutes also do not expressly authorize or require courts to order defendants subject to hate crime-related Criminal Protective Orders to relinquish firearms.

The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act includes multiple provisions to address these gaps and promote more consistency and protection in hate crime cases.

First, this Act would clarify that Criminal Protective Orders issued in hate crime cases prohibit the defendant from possessing or acquiring firearms for the duration of the protective order, and must be reported on standard court forms used for all other firearm-prohibiting Criminal Protective Orders.

Second, this Act would require that in a criminal proceeding stemming from an alleged hate crime, courts must consider issuing a Criminal Protective Order against the defendant, upon request by a prosecutor or victim, or on the court's own motion, in order to protect a victim from the defendant and/or any other person at risk of becoming a victim of a hate crime.

Finally, if the court does not issue a Criminal Protective Order to protect a specific victim, this Act would require the court to consider issuing an order prohibiting the defendant from possessing or acquiring firearms for a temporary period. In criminal domestic violence cases, existing law already authorizes

courts to issue firearm-prohibition orders (CR-162 Orders to Surrender Firearms) that are akin to a Gun Violence Restraining Order because they do not name any specific victim protected by the court order or include any other safety provisions, but specifically suspend a person's firearm access for a temporary period based on a determination that the defendant is a significant danger. Hate crime cases may frequently involve individuals whose conduct threatened the safety of large groups of people or sensitive locations instead of specific targeted victims; in those cases, a protective order to protect specific identifiable victims may not be feasible but the defendant may nonetheless pose a significant danger of firearm violence to the entire community and courts should consider issuing orders to prohibit them from possessing firearms accordingly.

k. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to require prosecuting agencies to make reasonable efforts to notify victims and witnesses when the court issues a Criminal Protective Order naming them as protected parties.

Courts with jurisdiction over a criminal case, after arraignment, are authorized to issue Criminal Protective Orders in various circumstances to protect victims or witnesses who have been threatened or intimidated. Courts may issue Criminal Protective Orders based on a request from the victim/witness themselves, but they may also issue these orders based on a request from the prosecutor or, in some cases, by the court acting on its own motion.

Domestic violence survivor advocates have flagged concerns that in some jurisdictions, victims protected by these Criminal Protective Orders were never notified of that order, and only discovered that fact when they filed for a civil Domestic Violence Restraining Order.

The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act would require prosecuting agencies to seek to ensure victims or witnesses named as protected parties in a Criminal Protective Order are promptly notified about the issuance, terms, and duration of that order, if they were not present in court to receive notice when it was issued.¹⁵³

l. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to provide a standard process for enforcing and registering in the California Restraining and Protective Order System (CARPOS), all tribal or out-of-state court orders that are defined as "protection orders" under the federal Violence Against Women Act or that are equivalent to a Gun Violence Restraining Order.

Existing California law creates a process for registering in CARPOS and enforcing under state law some protection orders issued by tribal or out-of-state courts, but only if they are related to family or intimate partner violence and name a specific person protected in the court order. There is generally no standard court form or process for registering other types of protection orders in the CARPOS database, and for enforcing violations of those orders under state law, such as: a tribal court order issued to protect victims of hate-motivated threats, or an out-of-state court order equivalent to a Gun Violence Restraining Order that does not name a specific protected person but is issued to prevent a dangerous individual from possessing or acquiring firearms.

Some tribal and out-of-state orders are reported directly into national protection order databases maintained by FBI, which would still provide access to information about the order to state and local law enforcement, even when that information is not reflected in California's statewide CARPOS system. As a result, many tribal or out-of-state protective orders should still be accessible for firearm-related background check and law enforcement purposes. However, those national databases provide less information than CARPOS, and have stricter limitations that prevent many orders from being reported at all. For instance, protection orders can generally only be reported to the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Protection Order File if they include the restrained person's date of birth. If a person obtains a protection order against a stalker or other dangerous acquaintance they do not know

well, they may not know that person's date of birth and the protection order may often not be reported into national databases.

Protection orders do not need to be formally registered in CARPOS or any other court or law enforcement database to be subject to the full faith and credit mandate under the federal Violence Against Women Act. In practice, however, law enforcement agencies and officers may be more likely to enforce violations of a protection order if they can verify the existence and terms of that order in California's CARPOS system via CLETS, and if state law itself instructs courts and law enforcement to enforce violations of those orders as violations of California law. This would also allow prosecutors, including DOJ, to more easily prosecute individuals for conduct that knowingly violates the terms of a tribal or out-of-state protection order when they are in California (such as if a person continues to stalk a California resident who moved to the state after obtaining a protection order in Nevada). And it would make it more likely that California DOJ could flag firearm-prohibiting court orders issued by tribal or out-of-state courts if a restrained person attempts to purchase a firearm or ammunition in California in violation of those orders.

California lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act, which includes provisions to close this gap.¹⁵⁴

m. State lawmakers should pass legislation to authorize parties to electronically file court papers and participate in hearings remotely across all civil protection and restraining order types.

In recent years, California has adopted important legislation to authorize parties and witnesses in some protection order cases to file relevant court papers electronically 24/7 without a fee, and to participate in court hearings remotely, such as through a videoconference. These policies should be extended to all protection order types issued to prevent violence, threats, and other dangerous conduct, to promote both safety and access to justice.

Protective order petitioners are disproportionately low-income survivors of violence and abuse. Remote filing and hearings in protection order cases helps to reduce barriers to participation for individuals who may otherwise struggle to obtain or pay for childcare, transportation and parking, time off work, and other costs associated with traveling to the courthouse to physically file court papers and testify at hearings. Without this access, legal aid providers note that “[i]mpoverishment was the direct cause of many court postponements” in protection order cases.¹⁵⁵

Remote access policies also help survivors participate from safe and confidential locations, including when they are in hiding from a dangerous and abusive person. In 2024, a married couple with four children were shot and killed in San Diego as they exited their vehicle two blocks from the courthouse where they were set to appear in a protection order hearing. The man they were seeking protection from apparently knew they would be attending the court hearing to testify against him at that time.¹⁵⁶

- California first enacted electronic filing and remote hearing access provisions for Domestic Violence Restraining Orders and Gun Violence Restraining Orders through Senate Bill 538 (2021, Rubio), which took effect July 1, 2023.
- California then expanded these provisions to apply to Civil Harassment Restraining Orders and Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Restraining Orders through Assembly Bill 561 (2025, Quirk-Silva), effective January 1, 2027.
- The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act and Assembly Bill 2179 (2026, Patel) would extend these provisions to Workplace Violence and Postsecondary School Violence Restraining Orders as well.

The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act would also encourage court self-help centers and other relevant stakeholders to inform survivors requesting information about petitioning for protective orders about their ability to participate remotely.

n. State lawmakers should pass legislation to prohibit courts from maintaining blanket court rules that require protective order petitioners to provide pre-filing notice to an abusive partner or dangerous individual of their intent to request ex parte protections.

In cases involving urgent safety threats, California and most states authorize victims, law enforcement, and others in danger to request short-term ex parte protective orders based on evidence or testimony submitted to the court under oath showing that another person has engaged in violent, abusive, or dangerous conduct. These orders are commonly requested by survivors taking the dangerous step of leaving an abusive home or relationship and requesting immediate court-ordered safety protections for a limited period before a full, noticed court hearing can be held to consider issuing a longer-term protective order.

For most civil cases generally, one party must provide prior notice to the other party before submitting a request for an ex parte court order. This standard rule applies to many civil cases where there are minimal safety concerns. However, these same rules are sometimes also applied to civil protective order cases where there may be very significant safety concerns, including Gun Violence or Domestic Violence Restraining Orders. Some California courts have adopted standard court rules that require all or most petitioners in civil protective order cases to provide a dangerous person with advance, pre-filing notice of their intent to submit a petition for an ex parte protective order.¹⁵⁷ In practice, this would require some petitioners navigating very dangerous circumstances to call a dangerous individual in advance and notify them of their intent to request court-ordered safety interventions up to 24 hours before they can file forms asking the court for protection.¹⁵⁸

In 2008, the Judicial Council of California's Domestic Violence Practice and Procedure Task Force issued a report that warned that these pre-filing advance notice requirements "can trigger a significant risk of harm to the applicant."¹⁵⁹ That report recommended that there should be no blanket court rules requiring petitioners to provide prior notice before submitting requests for protective orders in cases involving safety concerns.

AB 1657 (2026, Rogers) would address this issue for Domestic Violence Restraining Orders and other orders issued under the Family Code.

The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act would address this issue for other civil court protective orders, and restrict courts from requiring petitioners to provide pre-filing notice of intent to request an ex parte protective order in cases in which pre-filing notice would likely endanger the petitioner or another person's safety.¹⁶⁰

5. Strengthen implementation of the Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO), and behavioral threat assessment and risk management interventions, especially to prevent mass shootings, hate-motivated shootings, and suicide.

Since it took effect in 2016, California’s Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) process has provided an important mechanism for obtaining an individualized determination from the courts that someone who would otherwise have the legal ability to possess and acquire firearms and ammunition is on a dangerous pathway to gun violence or suicide, and should be prevented from accessing and purchasing weapons for a temporary period.¹⁶¹ The GVRO is one of California’s nine different protection and restraining orders that include provisions to prevent individuals from possessing or acquiring firearms, and from passing firearm-related background checks, after a court finds they engaged in dangerous behavior.¹⁶² Most of these processes other than the GVRO (such as Domestic Violence Restraining Orders) empower victim-survivors to obtain individualized protections from someone who has harmed, threatened, or abused them.

The GVRO is unique because it is available directly to law enforcement petitioners, and in circumstances where a person exhibits significant dangerous warning sign behaviors but has not necessarily directed violence, threats, or abuse toward any specific victim(s) in particular. The GVRO is issued to address dangerous firearm access only and is not issued to protect any specific person in danger.

This makes the GVRO an especially critical intervention for preventing mass shootings, hate-related shootings, and other circumstances involving individuals who pose a significant but generalized danger to the public or large groups of people. The U.S. Secret Service’s National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) found that a large majority of mass shootings and similar attacks in public or semi-public spaces are perpetrated by individuals who (1) were not legally prohibited from possessing or purchasing firearms,¹⁶³ but (2) exhibited significant warning sign behaviors and communications prior to their attack that were “so concerning, they should have met with an immediate response.”¹⁶⁴

In these circumstances, the GVRO empowers law enforcement, family members, and other community members to file civil court petitions to proactively prevent harm. The GVRO can also play an important role in suicide prevention and other circumstances in which a person may pose a significant danger of causing firearm injury, including due to severe cognitive impairments, alcohol abuse, or patterns of dangerous and irresponsible behaviors such as leaving unsecured firearms accessible to children.

California is making progress to increase awareness, understanding, and utilization of the GVRO, but this remains an important ongoing priority for preventing gun violence.

- a. **Following recommendations in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s [GVRO 10-Year Progress Report](#), law enforcement agencies, city attorneys, and county counsel should prioritize efforts to improve awareness and implementation of the GVRO as a critical public safety tool for proactively intervening to prevent mass shootings and other firearm violence, suicide, and injury incidents.**

Renewed focus, training, and implementation supports are needed to ensure law enforcement and other stakeholders in every community are prepared to use the GVRO and other firearm-prohibiting safety interventions to prevent more mass shootings, suicides, and other tragedies.

Utilization of the GVRO was very limited in the first few years after the GVRO process was implemented; a very small number of longer-term GVROs were issued in a small number of counties.¹⁶⁵ Since that time, some California jurisdictions have developed nationally recognized models for implementing the GVRO, with the support of state, federal, and local investments in stakeholder training and GVRO-focused teams and protocols.

These models also help to ensure very short-term orders obtained in emergency circumstances are consistently followed by longer-term GVROs. After a Hearing or Consent that, in appropriate circumstances, keep the GVRO's protections in place for between one and five years, instead of 21 days.¹⁶⁶ The number of longer-term GVROs issued statewide increased by 67% from 2022 to 2024.¹⁶⁷ Over two years, from 2024 to 2025, California courts issued about 1,500 longer-term GVROs statewide in cases where a court found by clear and convincing evidence that a person posed a significant danger of causing injury to themselves or others with firearms and that a GVRO was necessary under the circumstances.¹⁶⁸ These efforts have likely helped California achieve substantially lower mass shooting victimization rates compared to the rest of the nation on average.¹⁶⁹

However, utilization of the GVRO process remains highly uneven across the state and, despite significant progress, is still driven by a relatively small number of agencies that have developed coordinated GVRO programs in partnership with city attorneys or county counsel.¹⁷⁰ Three counties (San Diego, Santa Clara, and Riverside) with about 10% of California's firearm homicides, and just under 20% of the state's population, accounted for 49% of individuals subject to at least one GVRO issued in 2024, and 57% of all longer-term GVROs issued statewide.¹⁷¹

It is important to exercise caution and nuance when using the number of GVRO cases in a jurisdiction as a metric of safety or success. For one, all GVROs are not equal: a single five-year GVRO could provide more durable protections than four GVROs lasting for one year each, or 80 Temporary or Emergency GVROs lasting for 21 days against the same individual. The fact that a court issued a GVRO does not necessarily mean the court order was effectively served and enforced. And in a number of circumstances, alternative safety interventions may provide stronger protections from gun violence by combining firearm access prohibitions with additional protections for identifiable victims in danger and/or addressing underlying risk factors such as mental health concerns. The GVRO addresses dangerous firearm access only.

Overall, though, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's March 2026 "[GVRO 10-Year Progress Report](#)" concluded that "available data indicates that the GVRO process remains under-utilized in many jurisdictions, especially those with some of the highest firearm death rates in the state. Utilization of the GVRO has been driven in significant part by robust and coordinated GVRO programs in communities with some of the lowest firearm mortality rates in California."¹⁷²

Law enforcement agencies around the state should incorporate best practices for increasing understanding and utilization of the GVRO in appropriate circumstances by:

- Providing comprehensive and practical training on the GVRO as well as other safety interventions for addressing dangerous firearm access. Training should meaningfully prepare officers to do all of the following:
 - Identify circumstances in which a GVRO may be an appropriate and necessary safety intervention.
 - Understand the two pathways for requesting GVROs, both in emergency circumstances and through a standard GV-100 Form court petition in other dangerous but non-emergency circumstances.
 - Understand the differences between the GVRO and other court protection and restraining orders that include similar firearm prohibitions.
 - Understand how the GVRO process intersects with processes for involuntary mental health holds when individuals are a danger to self or others due to a mental health disorder.

- Successfully obtain GVROs by documenting and presenting relevant evidence in GVRO petitions regarding dangerousness, necessity, and (for pre-hearing Temporary or Emergency GVROs) imminence of harm.
- Successfully obtain longer-term GVROs that last for up to five years, instead of 21 days, in cases involving persistent danger and necessity.
- Timely serve GVROs and notice of GVRO court hearings, and ensure that service is properly reported to both court and law enforcement record systems, to ensure GVRO cases are not dismissed and the GVRO is enforceable.
- Ensure that individuals who become subject to GVROs promptly and safely relinquish any firearms and other prohibited items they own, possess, or control.
- Ensure that information about firearms seized from or relinquished by the individual are properly recorded in law enforcement record systems.
- Petition the court to renew an expiring GVRO in cases involving persistent danger and necessity.
- Dedicating staff positions to building expertise in behavioral threat assessment, addressing dangerous firearm access, screening GVRO cases and coordinating GVRO implementation and enforcement in appropriate circumstances.
- Providing officers with practical checklists to help navigate the GVRO's sometimes complicated civil court procedures and requirements.
- More generally, building a culture of safety through prevention that emphasizes the value of preventative interventions like the GVRO as a core priority of the law enforcement agency's public safety mission.

The Office of Gun Violence Prevention's [GVRO Implementation Guide](#)¹⁷³ and [Model GVRO Policy for California Law Enforcement Agencies](#)¹⁷⁴ provide more specific guidance about identifying GVRO cases, and about implementing GVROs as part of a comprehensive behavioral threat assessment and management strategy, based on best practice recommendations from the U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center.¹⁷⁵

The GVRO Implementation Guide also includes a set of best practice checklists in the appendix to help officers track and successfully navigate the GVRO's requirements.

- b. Local law enforcement agencies should designate GVRO coordinators and/or develop streamlined partnerships with city attorneys and county counsel to proactively advise, assist, and represent law enforcement petitioners through the GVRO process, especially for navigating the civil court forms-filing and hearing process required for longer-term GVROs. Local governments should provide dedicated resources to build this local GVRO implementation expertise and capacity.**

In jurisdictions robustly utilizing the GVRO, stakeholders have emphasized the critical role that designated GVRO coordinators and legal counsel have played, especially in managing the court filing and hearing requirements for law enforcement agencies to obtain longer-term GVROs After a Hearing or Consent.

In San Diego and Santa Clara counties, robust utilization of the GVRO process has been driven by coordinated partnerships between local law enforcement agency petitioners and the Offices of the San Diego City Attorney, San Jose City Attorney, and Santa Clara District Attorney. In these jurisdictions,

agency leaders acted to identify GVRO implementation as a safety priority; robustly trained officers and other stakeholders about the GVRO; and created designated units or positions focused on building expertise in identifying GVRO cases and actively partnering with law enforcement officer petitioners throughout the court process. As these dedicated teams established expertise with the GVRO process, and developed effective procedures for obtaining and implementing GVROs, they also receive more GVRO case referrals from their community, prosecutors, and other public safety partners.

City attorneys and county counsel in other jurisdictions should develop streamlined partnerships and ensure that their attorneys and staff are trained and informed to identify and screen GVRO cases, and successfully represent law enforcement agencies through the GVRO process. The [GVRO Implementation Guide](#)¹⁷⁶ includes guidance about how to present relevant evidence of dangerousness and necessity to the court in a GVRO petition, ensure the court can proceed with GVRO hearings, and ensure GVROs are effectively served, documented, and enforced.

GVRO coordinators and legal counsel should also be prepared to advise law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders about additional or alternative safety interventions that may be available to address dangerous firearm access and, depending on the circumstances, obtain additional services or protections for targeted victims as part of a more comprehensive behavioral threat assessment and management approach.¹⁷⁷ The GVRO Implementation Guide includes guidance on these topics as well.

- c. In accordance with Assembly Bill 2621 (2024, Gabriel), law enforcement agencies must ensure their written GVRO policies and procedures are regularly updated to reflect current law, prepare officers to identify GVRO cases, and navigate procedural requirements for obtaining, serving, and documenting all three types of GVROs.**

California law requires most law enforcement agencies — municipal police departments, sheriff’s departments, the Department of the California Highway Patrol, and the University of California and California State University Police Departments — to adopt, implement, and regularly update written agency policies and standards relating to GVROs. Legislation that took effect in 2025 (AB 2621, Gabriel) required law enforcement agencies to implement a number of updates to these GVRO policies to reflect changes to laws governing the GVRO process, address common implementation barriers, and provide more comprehensive guidance about the types of circumstances in which officers should consider requesting GVROs or other safety interventions; the types of evidence courts may consider in GVRO cases; and the process required to obtain a longer-term GVRO After a Hearing or Consent.

Some agencies have not yet updated GVRO Policies in accordance with these requirements and have policies that are both outdated and deficient under this statute.

The Office of Gun Violence Prevention published an optional Model GVRO Policy for California Law Enforcement Agencies in March 2026 to assist law enforcement agencies with implementing these mandated GVRO policy updates.¹⁷⁸

Law enforcement agencies should coordinate with their legal counsel and other safety stakeholders to incorporate mandated updates to these policies and to ensure they are effectively implemented in practice.

- d. State lawmakers should consider requiring that more peace officers receive basic training about the GVRO process, and additional or alternative interventions for addressing dangerous firearm access, as part of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requirements.**

This training should prepare officers to identify GVRO cases, evaluate additional or alternative interventions that may be available to address dangerous firearm access, and understand the practical steps required to obtain, serve, document, and enforce a GVRO.

This training should also effectively prepare officers to serve, document, and enforce other firearm-prohibiting court orders; and to understand the lawful process and authority to otherwise remove firearms from a person in crisis pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 8102 or other authority.

- e. State and local policymakers should consider dedicating additional funding and staffing resources for California DOJ and other partners to expand behavioral threat assessment investigation and response, with a focus on preventing mass shootings and other targeted terroristic attacks.**

As described above and in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s GVRO Implementation Guide and other GVRO resources: a majority of mass shooters exhibit a constellation of concerning warning sign behaviors prior to their attack and “leak” intent to commit harm to one or more people close to them. These dynamics create important opportunities for proactive intervention when community members understand how to report concerning behaviors and law enforcement agencies have dedicated capacity to assess risk and respond effectively, including by obtaining GVROs or other interventions to address dangerous firearm access in appropriate cases.

The U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center has published important guidance reports for state and local law enforcement partners about how to develop behavioral threat assessment and management teams focused on preventing mass shootings and other targeted public or terroristic shooting attacks.¹⁷⁹ These and other publications make clear that many mass or targeted shootings can be prevented by agencies with the capacity to implement behavioral threat assessment and management teams focused on that task, including to respond to community members’ reports about concerning behavior, and proactively monitor for threats of violence and warning sign behaviors, including those described in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s Model GVRO Policy and GVRO Implementation Guide.

State and local policymakers should consider dedicating resources for this specific purpose to help California DOJ and/or local partners expand staffing capacity to identify and respond to threats of mass or targeted attacks through behavioral threat assessment and management teams.

These investments could also help expand trainings and supports to help law enforcement agencies around the state effectively understand and utilize the GVRO and other safety intervention options for reducing risk in circumstances where a prospective mass shooter is on a dangerous pathway to gun violence but has not yet escalated their conduct to violence or specific criminal threats.

- f. State policymakers should pass legislation to update an outdated Section 8102(c) of the Welfare and Institutions Code, which can be a source of dangerous confusion for law enforcement officers seeking to prevent a dangerous individual from possessing firearms after they are released from an involuntary mental health hold.**

Individuals detained by law enforcement and mental health professionals on an involuntary mental health hold because they are a significant danger of harming themselves or others may be discharged from a mental health facility following evaluation without becoming subject to legal restrictions on their ability to purchase or possess firearms. This might occur, for example, if the dangerous individual voluntarily consented to treatment; if mental health professionals determined the individual was dangerous as a result of factors unrelated to a mental health disorder; or if mental health professionals simply determined that the individual would be better served through care and treatment in an outpatient setting without involuntary admission to an inpatient facility. In these cases, an individual released from the involuntary mental health hold may file a “law enforcement release” application requesting the return of any weapons that law enforcement officers seized for safekeeping during the mental health hold.¹⁸⁰

In these circumstances, a largely outdated process in Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 8102(c) authorizes law enforcement agencies to petition courts for authority to retain custody of these specific weapons based on evidence that the individual would be a danger to themselves or others with firearms. The statute outlines a process for the court to hold a hearing and adjudicate whether returning those firearms would endanger that person or others' safety. Many agency policies and guidance materials related to involuntary mental health holds continue to reference this process.

Officers trained about this court process may reasonably — but inaccurately — assume that WIC 8102(c) adjudications prevent the person from passing firearm-related background checks to purchase or receive other firearms and ammunition. They do not. This WIC 8102(c) process was created decades before the GVRO existed; it is much more limited than a GVRO and can be a source of dangerous confusion. When the court grants a WIC 8102(c) petition based on evidence of dangerousness, that court order concerns the return of specific weapons only. Unlike a GVRO, the WIC 8102(c) order does not:

- Create any legally enforceable firearm prohibition;
- Prohibit the individual from possessing or acquiring other firearms and ammunition at any time;
- Prevent the individual from passing firearm-related background checks; or
- Prohibit other people from transferring firearms to the individual.

This statute should be amended to encourage law enforcement agencies to petition for a GVRO in circumstances where they believe a person released from an involuntary mental health hold is a danger to self or others, or to at least establish that a WIC 8102(c) petition granted by the court should more broadly prohibit the subject of the petition from possessing or acquiring firearms and ammunition for up to five years based on the court's determination of dangerousness.

- g. State lawmakers should monitor implementation of new legislation enacted in 2025 (AB 1344, Irwin), which authorized District Attorneys in four counties to serve as GVRO petitioners as a temporary pilot program, to determine whether the program should be expanded, continued, or subject to additional limitations.**

Law enforcement officers serve as petitioners for the vast majority of GVROs issued in California and for most equivalent civil “red flag” or “extreme risk protection” orders issued in other states with laws modeled on California's GVRO.¹⁸¹ In California, officers requesting longer-term GVROs are often assisted in court filings and hearings by city attorneys or county counsel representing the law enforcement agency.

A few other states have also authorized criminal prosecutors to petition civil courts for firearm-prohibiting restraining orders equivalent to a GVRO,¹⁸² but until very recently, California has not. California law authorizes prosecutors to request that courts hearing a criminal case issue firearm-prohibiting Criminal Protective Orders against a defendant who is a danger to victims or witnesses, but prosecutors are generally not authorized to petition civil courts to issue a GVRO.

In 2025, California enacted Assembly Bill 1344 (Irwin), which establishes a six-year pilot program authorizing district attorneys in Alameda, El Dorado, Santa Clara, and Ventura counties to serve as GVRO petitioners from January 1, 2026 to January 1, 2032.

Continued evaluation of this pilot program over the next five years will help inform state policymakers' decision about how and whether to expand this authorization to prosecuting agencies in other counties

in the future, and any limitations or best practice guidelines that should be emphasized for prosecuting agencies serving as civil court GVRO petitioners.

California's communities need more public safety stakeholders with dedicated capacity and expertise to identify GVRO cases, evaluate additional or alternative safety interventions, and pursue GVROs when necessary to proactively prevent gun violence. Prosecutors should be able to play that role effectively and with care. The GVRO is also a forward-looking civil process focused on preventing future harm instead of punishing past conduct, and is utilized to prevent non-criminal harms such as suicide, as well as intentional criminal violence. It is important to preserve this preventative harm-reduction framework.

6. Strengthen firearm eligibility standards to ensure people with significant histories of dangerous criminal convictions in California cannot purchase or possess firearms for a temporary period.

California should expand the list of misdemeanor convictions that disqualify a person from possessing or acquiring firearms for 10 years after conviction to include additional offenses that have a close nexus to violence, threats, gun trafficking, and other offenses that are highly predictive of future risk of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon.

Under federal and/or California law, people convicted of felonies and some misdemeanors generally become subject to lifetime prohibitions on possessing or acquiring firearms and ammunition. Federal law's lifetime prohibition for misdemeanor convictions applies to some domestic violence-related offenses¹⁸³ and, more generally, to offenses defined as misdemeanors under the laws of any state that carry a maximum penalty of more than two years imprisonment.¹⁸⁴

California law also lists a set of violent or otherwise dangerous misdemeanor offenses that generally disqualify a person from possessing or acquiring firearms and ammunition for a more limited 10-year period following conviction. Codified at Section 29805 of the California Penal Code, this list of misdemeanors includes some offenses involving criminal violence, threats of violence, domestic abuse, child or elder abuse, stalking, hate crimes, malicious animal cruelty, and some weapon and firearm-trafficking related offenses. Individuals convicted of these offenses must verify that they have relinquished any firearms and ammunition they own, possess, or control upon conviction, and are generally ineligible to pass firearm-related background checks in California for this 10-year period.

These misdemeanor-related firearm eligibility standards play an especially important role for public safety in California because:

- (1) Research indicates that people who commit violent and weapon-related misdemeanors are at significantly increased risk of subsequent firearm violence and homicide;¹⁸⁵
- (2) Multiple studies have found that state laws that prohibit firearm access by people convicted of violent misdemeanors are associated with state-level reductions in firearm homicide, intimate partner homicide, and nonfatal firearm injury hospitalizations,¹⁸⁶ and individual-level reductions in violent misdemeanants' risk of arrest for subsequent gun and violent crimes.¹⁸⁷
- (3) California law classifies multiple violent or weapon-related offenses as misdemeanors punishable by up to one year in jail that at least some other states more commonly classify either as felonies or as misdemeanors carrying maximum penalties of over two years in jail, both of which trigger lifetime firearm prohibitions under state or federal law. States that classify more dangerous criminal conduct as either a felony or as a misdemeanor punishable by over two years implicitly prohibit firearm access by many more people with criminal records who would be eligible to purchase and possess firearms in California unless the specific relevant misdemeanor offense has been listed as a firearm-prohibiting misdemeanor under California law. For example:
 - Massachusetts imposes jail terms of up to 30-months (two and a half years) for a range of misdemeanor offenses, including assault, battery, DUI offenses, and protection order violations, which would generally trigger lifetime firearm prohibitions under federal law, and lifetime handgun prohibitions under Massachusetts law.¹⁸⁸ Maryland classifies assaults, criminal threats, and unlawful possession of firearms in violation of protective orders as misdemeanors punishable by over two years — triggering lifetime firearm prohibitions under federal law.¹⁸⁹

- A number of jurisdictions classify some of the same conduct as a felony. For example, federal law makes possession of a firearm in violation of some Domestic Violence Restraining Orders punishable as a felony by up to 15 years in prison.¹⁹⁰ States including Connecticut, Iowa, Nevada, New Jersey, and Washington also generally make unlawful possession of a firearm in violation of a protective order a felony, triggering lifetime firearm prohibitions under state and federal law.¹⁹¹ California generally classifies this crime as a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year,¹⁹² meaning the same criminal conduct that generally leads to lifetime firearm disqualifications in some other states and federal courts would commonly result in no firearm disqualification upon conviction in California, unless these offenses are specifically listed as firearm-prohibiting misdemeanors under California law.

As a result, it is important that California policymakers regularly update and broaden the list of violent or dangerous misdemeanor offenses that result in 10-year firearm prohibitions under California law.

Updating this list has been a recurring area of focus for the Legislature, but some longstanding gaps remain that allow some people convicted of dangerous offenses described below to possess and acquire firearms.

New gaps may also be created whenever the Legislature creates new misdemeanors or reclassifies certain crimes that were previously felonies as misdemeanors or wobblers (chargeable as either a felony or misdemeanor) without also routinely considering whether to make these new or re-classified offenses firearm-disqualifying upon a misdemeanor conviction.

- a. State lawmakers should pass The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act to ensure people convicted of protective order violations, hate crimes, unlawful possession of firearms or ammunition, and criminal threats of violence against sensitive locations, are ineligible to purchase or possess firearms for 10 years following the conviction.**

The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act includes provisions that would strengthen California's firearm eligibility standards by adding the following offenses to the list of misdemeanors that result in 10-year firearm prohibitions.

- Violations of court protective orders (convictions under Penal Code §§ 166(c) and (d); 273.65; 422.77; 18205; 29825).
- Hate crimes and violations of hate-related protective orders (convictions under Penal Code §§ 422.7 and 422.77).
- Illegal possession of ammunition by a prohibited person (convictions under Penal Code § 30305).
- Illegal possession or acquisition of firearms in violation of express conditions of probation (often in the domestic violence context) (convictions under Penal Code § 29815).
- Criminal threats of violence, such as shooting threats, against a school, house of worship, medical facility, or other sensitive locations (convictions under Penal Code § 422.3).

The discussion below includes data analysis showing that these convictions are associated with increased risk of violence and homicide.

Protection Order Violation Convictions:

Courts issue protection orders based on evidence that an individual has engaged in violence, abuse, or other threatening and dangerous conduct. If a person knowingly or willfully violates these court-ordered safety conditions in California, including by unlawfully possessing or acquiring firearms in knowing violation of the court's order, they may be convicted of a misdemeanor under multiple partially overlapping criminal statutes, including Penal Code Sections 166, 273.6, 273.65, 477.77, 18205, and 29825.

Under existing California law, people convicted of knowingly violating a Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) become subject to a 5-year firearm prohibition following the expiration of the GVRO.¹⁹³ People convicted of violating other protective orders become subject to 10-year firearm prohibitions if they are convicted under Penal Code Section 273.6, which generally criminalizes violations of civil protection orders. But people convicted of the same conduct under other statutes are generally not subject to any firearm prohibitions upon conviction, including when they are convicted of violating Criminal Protective Orders under Section 166(c). Ironically, violations involving firearms may be less likely to result in longer-term firearm prohibitions than other violations because California law states that protective order violations related to firearms should generally be charged and prosecuted under Penal Code Section 29825, which leads to no firearm prohibitions upon conviction.

For example, if someone becomes subject to a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) or Criminal Protective Order for violence and abuse and then knowingly violates the court order by unlawfully keeping or acquiring firearms, they may be charged and convicted under Section 166(c) or 29825 for that conduct. Despite this criminal conviction, they would be eligible to possess and acquire firearms as soon as the protection order expires.

This is an especially significant public safety issue because convictions for violating a protective order are strongly associated with increased risk of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon.

For the purposes of this report and strategic plan, the California DOJ's Research Services Bureau analyzed the criminal history of all people convicted of a crime in California from 2018-2024 to identify which prior misdemeanor convictions showed up most commonly and disproportionately in the criminal history of people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon. Researchers analyzed the criminal history of individuals convicted in California of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon from 2018-2024, and compared them to individuals convicted during the same time period of all other crimes. For both categories, the researchers identified the number and percentage of people who had been convicted of dozens of specific misdemeanor offenses in California in the 10 years before their 2018-2024 conviction to identify which misdemeanor convictions may be most predictive of future homicide or life-threatening violence. Note that this analysis compares the criminal histories of people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon to people convicted of other crimes, not with the broader population of people who had no criminal convictions from 2018-2024.

This analysis found that misdemeanor protective order violation convictions were strongly associated with later serious violence: 5.1% of people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon in California from 2018-2024 had been convicted of a misdemeanor violation of Section 166(c) within the preceding 10 years for knowingly and willfully violating a protective order. In comparison, 0.4% of people convicted of all other crimes from 2018-2024 had been convicted under Section 166(c) within the previous 10 years, meaning that the homicide or assault with deadly weapon offenders had a prior record of Section 166(c) convictions at about 13 times the rate of the comparison group.

A much smaller number of people were convicted under Penal Code Section 29825 for unlawfully possessing firearms in violation of a protective order, which may indicate patterns of under-

enforcement of firearm-related protective order violations under this statute. Because of the smaller numbers of people involved, more caution should be applied in interpreting data for this statute, but this data showed that people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon were nearly four times as likely to have a previous conviction under Section 29825 within the previous 10 years compared to the comparison group.

This data reinforces other research indicating that criminal violations of court protective orders issued to protect a survivor of violence or abuse should be treated as a significant risk factor for escalating danger and lethal or life-threatening violence,¹⁹⁴ and should be firearm-disqualifying for 10 years after conviction.

Hate Crime Convictions:

In 2017, California enacted The Disarm Hate Act (AB 785, Jones-Sawyer) to prohibit people convicted of certain misdemeanor hate crimes under Penal Code Section 422.6 from possessing or acquiring firearms for 10 years after conviction. But this law did not cover some less common hate crime misdemeanor convictions under Penal Code Sections 422.7 and 422.77. These offenses can include convictions for hate-motivated threats or acts of violence and intimidation, or convictions for violations of protective orders issued to address hate-related threats. California Senate Bill 2 (2023, Portantino) made Penal Code Section 422.7 misdemeanors disqualifying offenses for a Concealed Carry Weapon (CCW) license for 10 years, but defendants convicted of hate crimes under that statute or Section 422.77 would generally not be required to relinquish possession of firearms or ammunition upon conviction and would be eligible to pass background checks to purchase firearms or ammunition.

Caution should be applied in analyzing this data, because a relatively smaller number of people are convicted under hate crime statutes. But DOJ's criminal history analysis found that hate crime convictions are predictive of future serious violence: people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon from 2018-2024 had a prior misdemeanor hate crime conviction within the previous 10 years under Section 422.6 at more than seven times the rate of people convicted of other offenses during the same period.

Unlawful Ammunition Possession Convictions:

People convicted of illegally possessing or acquiring firearms within 10 years of a firearm-prohibiting misdemeanor are generally prohibited from possessing or acquiring firearms for another 10 years based on that second criminal conviction. In other words, illegal possession of a firearm after a firearm-prohibiting conviction is itself a firearm-disqualifying offense. But people convicted of a misdemeanor for illegally possessing ammunition — either after a prohibiting criminal conviction, in violation of a protective order, or in violation of any other legal prohibitions — are not prohibited from possessing or acquiring firearms or ammunition for any period of time after that conviction. If a person becomes subject to a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) based on dangerous and abusive conduct, and is then prosecuted and convicted of two misdemeanors for illegally possessing firearms (under Section 29825) and illegally possessing ammunition for that firearm in knowing violation of the protective order (under Section 30305), they may be eligible to pass firearm and ammunition background checks as soon as the DVRO expires. Neither of these convictions would currently impact their eligibility to possess firearms or ammunition or to pass firearm-related background checks under California law.

DOJ's analysis found that people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon had a prior misdemeanor conviction record within the previous 10 years for unlawfully possessing ammunition under Penal Code Section 30305 at about three times the rate of people convicted of other offenses during the same time period.

Criminal threats against a school, hospital, house of worship, or other sensitive location:

Under existing California law, people convicted of misdemeanor criminal threats under Penal Code Section 422 are generally prohibited from possessing or acquiring firearms within 10 years after conviction. That is very important for public safety because DOJ's criminal history analysis found that, people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon had a prior section 422 conviction within the previous 10 years at about seven times the rate of people convicted of other offenses during the same time period.

Section 422 is an important but relatively narrow statute that generally requires prosecutors to prove beyond reasonable doubt, among other things, that a defendant willfully threatened to unlawfully inflict death or great bodily injury to another person, and that the threats were "so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat" to cause that person "reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family's safety." In some cases, it has been harder for prosecutors to use this statute to address place-based criminal threats such as specific and credible threats posted on social media to commit a shooting at a school or house of worship. As a result, in 2025, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 19 (Rubio) to establish a new parallel criminal threats statute (Penal Code Section 422.3), which makes it a wobbler (an offense chargeable as either a felony or misdemeanor) to make specific credible threats to commit shootings or other serious violence at certain sensitive locations, including a school, college or university, childcare center, workplace, medical facility, or house of worship.

However, SB 19 did not add this new offense to the statute listing all misdemeanors that result in 10-year firearm prohibitions upon conviction. As a result, people convicted of misdemeanors under the new statute would generally be eligible purchase or retain possession of firearms.

This is a clear public safety issue that would be addressed by passing The Survivor Pathways to Safety Act into law.

b. State lawmakers should pass legislation to expand the list of misdemeanor convictions that result in a 10-year firearm prohibition to include additional offenses related to illegal ghost guns and gun trafficking.

People convicted of ghost gun and gun trafficking-related offenses have engaged in fraudulent and dangerous criminal behavior that supplies illegal gun markets and fuels gun violence. As a result, they should face a 10-year prohibition on firearm access to help prevent them from being able to divert firearms to prohibited and underage purchasers. State lawmakers should expand the list of firearm-prohibiting misdemeanors to include convictions under the following sections of the Penal Code:

- Section 23920 for the unlawful sale, transfer, offer to sell, or possession of firearms with knowledge that they have an obliterated serial number (as proposed by Senate Bill 1220 (2026, Hurtado)), and Penal Code 27530 for unlawfully selling or transferring ownership of an unserialized firearm.
- Section 27500(b) for unlawfully selling or transferring a firearm to a person the transferor has cause to believe is a prohibited person.
- Section 27505 or 27510 for unlawfully selling or transferring a firearm to a minor.
- Section 27515 for unlawfully selling or transferring firearms to a straw purchaser with knowledge that the firearm is to be subsequently sold, loaned, or transferred to avoid the provisions of laws generally requiring a firearm dealer transaction and background check.

- Section 27520 for unlawfully importing or acquiring firearms with intent to sell or transfer them without a required dealer transaction and background check.
- Section 27545 for unlawfully selling firearms without a dealer transaction and background check.
- Section 27585 for residents who unlawfully import firearms purchased outside of California into this state, without a required dealer transaction and background check.
- Section 28250 for knowingly furnishing a fictitious name, address, or other incorrect information in connection with a firearm dealer record of sale.
- Section 30306 for unlawfully selling ammunition to a prohibited people, or to straw purchasers with knowledge or cause to believe that the ammunition is to be subsequently sold or transferred to a prohibited person.

People prosecuted for gun trafficking-related conduct under federal law may face severe felony punishments and lifetime firearm prohibitions.¹⁹⁵ Some states with lower rates of firearm homicide than California, including New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts, also impose more severe felony penalties on many of these offenses.¹⁹⁶

Some other states with the nation’s lowest rates of firearm death¹⁹⁷ also impose broader categorical firearm disqualifications on people convicted of firearm-related misdemeanors: in Massachusetts, for example, people convicted of violating “any law regarding the use, possession, ownership or transfer of firearms or ammunition for which a term of imprisonment may be imposed” generally become subject to lifetime prohibitions on purchase and possession of handguns, and are also generally prohibited from purchasing and possessing rifles or shotguns for at least five years following release from confinement or supervision.¹⁹⁸ In Hawaii, people generally become ineligible to possess firearms for 20 years after they have been convicted of a misdemeanor “criminal offense relating to firearms.”¹⁹⁹

Under California law, all of the firearm trafficking-related offenses listed above are classified either as a misdemeanor or as a wobbler that does not result in a firearm prohibition upon a misdemeanor conviction,²⁰⁰ meaning that legislation is required to ensure defendants convicted of these offenses are ineligible to purchase or possess firearms for a temporary period. DOJ’s criminal history analysis found that people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon had prior conviction records for one of more of these trafficking offenses listed above at about twice the rate of the comparison group. Firearm trafficking conduct also increases the likelihood that other people will commit firearm violence.

c. State lawmakers should pass legislation to expand the list of misdemeanor convictions that result in a 10-year firearm prohibition to include additional offenses associated with significantly increased risk of subsequent homicide or assault with a deadly weapon in data analysis conducted by California DOJ for the purposes of this report.

This includes convictions for:

- Assault and battery-related offenses omitted from existing assault and battery-related prohibitions: California’s list of firearm-prohibiting misdemeanor offenses includes the most common assault and battery offenses but omits some rarer but serious assault and battery crimes, including but not limited to: convictions for battery on school property (Penal Code Section 243.2), against an elder or dependent adult (Section 243.25), against a public transportation professional or passenger (Section 243.3 and 243.35), and against a school employee engaged in the performance of their duties (Section 243.6). The list of firearm-prohibiting misdemeanors also omits assault offenses codified at Sections 241.1 through 241.6

of the Penal Code involving, for example, assaults against custodial officers, on school property, against school district employees and peace officers, and public transportation professionals and passengers.

- DOJ's criminal history analysis indicated that assault and battery misdemeanor convictions are strongly associated with subsequent escalating violence. People convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon from 2018-2024 had prior misdemeanor convictions for the assault and battery offenses cited above at 5.4 times the rate for people convicted of all other offenses during the same time period. People convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon were also more than five times as likely to have been convicted under the more common assault and battery statutes that are already firearm-prohibiting under California law (excluding domestic battery convictions), and about 10.5 times as likely to have been convicted of misdemeanor domestic battery against a current or former spouse or intimate partner.²⁰¹
- Infliction upon a child of injury resulting in a traumatic condition or cruel or inhuman corporal punishment (Penal Code section 273D): California's list of misdemeanor offenses that result in 10-year firearm prohibitions upon conviction includes multiple misdemeanor offenses related to child abuse and domestic battery, but omits this statute.
 - DOJ's criminal history analysis found that people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon had a prior conviction within the previous 10 years for misdemeanor child abuse under Section 273D (which is not currently firearm-prohibiting) at five times the rate of people convicted of other offenses, and for misdemeanor child abuse under section 273A (which is currently firearm-prohibiting) at four times the rate.
- False imprisonment (Penal Code sections 236 and 237): The crime of false imprisonment punishes unlawful conduct that can include "substantial and sustained restriction of another's liberty accomplished through force, fear, fraud, deceit, coercion, violence, duress, menace, or threat of unlawful injury to the victim or to another person, under circumstances where the person receiving or apprehending the threat reasonably believes that it is likely that the person making the threat would carry it out."²⁰² This offense is often charged as a felony, resulting in firearm prohibitions, when the criminal conduct is connected to human trafficking, commercial sex acts, or "violence, menace, fraud, or deceit."²⁰³ But a substantial number of false imprisonment offenses are also charged as misdemeanors that do not result in any firearm prohibitions.
 - DOJ's criminal history analysis found that people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon from 2018-2024 had a prior misdemeanor conviction for false imprisonment within the previous 10 years at nearly 13 times the rate of people convicted of all other offenses.
- Brandishing of a replica or imitation firearm (Penal Code section 417.4): Under existing law, misdemeanor convictions related to brandishing firearms in a threatening manner generally result in 10-year firearm prohibitions upon conviction. However, people convicted of similar threatening conduct involving realistic-looking imitation or replica firearms generally do not become subject to firearm prohibitions upon conviction. Except in cases of self-defense, Penal Code section 417.4 makes it a misdemeanor to brandish a replica or imitation firearm in a threatening manner against another person, "in such a way as to cause a reasonable person apprehension or fear of bodily harm," if the replica or imitation firearm is so substantially similar in coloration and overall appearance to a firearm to lead a reasonable person to perceive that the item is a firearm.²⁰⁴

- DOJ’s criminal history analysis found that people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon had a prior misdemeanor conviction under section 417.4 at six times the rate for people convicted of all other offenses.
- Unlawful and malicious obstruction of wireless communication devices with intent to prevent a victim or other person from summoning assistance or notifying law enforcement of a crime (Penal Code section 591.5): Convictions under Penal Code section 591.5 are often associated with domestic violence offenses in which an abusive partner seeks to maliciously prevent a victim from accessing their cell phone to call for help or report a crime. The data below indicates that this conviction is a significant red flag for escalating dangerousness and subsequent violence.
 - DOJ’s criminal history analysis found that people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon from 2018-2024 had a prior misdemeanor conviction under section 591.5 at over 12 times the rate of people convicted of all other crimes during the same time period.
- d. **Given the strong association between alcohol abuse and risk for firearm violence,²⁰⁵ state lawmakers should pass legislation to temporarily prohibit people from acquiring or possessing firearms after they have been repeatedly convicted of DUIs or similar offenses within a limited period.²⁰⁶**

Researchers from the California Firearm Violence Research Center have found that alcohol abuse and Driving Under the Influence (DUI) convictions are associated with increased risk of violence. After controlling for other variables, compared to firearm purchasers with no criminal history, firearm purchasers with a prior DUI conviction were found to be nearly three times more likely to be subsequently arrested for intimate partner violence or firearm-related violent offenses.²⁰⁷ Even among individuals who had also been convicted of other non-DUI criminal offenses, a prior DUI conviction was independently associated with increased likelihood to commit firearm-related violent crime.²⁰⁸ Data estimates from the CDC and FBI suggest that a person arrested for a DUI has driven while intoxicated 80 times on average before their first DUI arrest, and that repeat DUI convictions are therefore strong indicators of more severe alcohol misuse.²⁰⁹

Other academic research studies have also found that alcohol misuse is associated with increased intimate partner violence, interpersonal assault, firearm-related death, and firearm suicide,²¹⁰ and that an “estimated 1 in 3 gun homicide perpetrators drank heavily before murdering their victims . . . and a quarter of gun suicide victims were heavily drinking before they died by suicide.”²¹¹

DOJ’s criminal history analysis found that about 15% of people convicted of homicide or assault with deadly weapon in California from 2018-2024 had previously been convicted of at least one DUI offense within the preceding 10 years,²¹² and that people convicted of homicide or assault with a deadly weapon were more likely to have a prior history of two or three previous DUI convictions compared to people convicted of all other crimes during the same time period.

To address the intersection of alcohol abuse and firearm violence risk, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia have enacted laws that expressly prohibit people from possessing or acquiring firearms for a temporary period if they have been repeatedly convicted of DUI or similar offenses.²¹³

In many more states, people convicted of repeat DUI offenses become subject to state and/or federal firearm prohibitions because the state classifies the repeat DUI conviction as a felony or enhanced misdemeanor.²¹⁴ As discussed above, federal law generally prohibits firearm access by people convicted

of a felony punishable by more than one year imprisonment or a state law misdemeanor offense that carries a maximum penalty of more than two years.²¹⁵

Many states provide more severe penalties for repeat DUI convictions than California, which means that California is something of an outlier in the degree to which our state laws effectively permit people with repeat DUI convictions to lawfully acquire and possess firearms.²¹⁶ For example:

- Neighboring Nevada and Arizona both generally classify a third DUI conviction within a 7-year period as a felony,²¹⁷ which generally results in lifetime firearm prohibitions under Nevada, Arizona, and federal law.²¹⁸
- Florida and Texas are among the many states that generally classify a third DUI conviction within a 10-year period as a felony.²¹⁹ These felony convictions generally result in lifetime firearm prohibitions under Florida and federal law,²²⁰ and a five-year firearm prohibition under Texas law following release from any confinement or supervision following the conviction.²²¹
- New York and Oklahoma generally make a second DUI conviction within a 10-year period a felony,²²² and Indiana makes a second DUI conviction within a 7-year period a felony,²²³ resulting in lifetime firearm prohibitions under state and/or federal law in all three states.²²⁴
- Massachusetts generally classifies a first or second DUI conviction as a misdemeanor punishable by up to 30 months,²²⁵ which may trigger lifetime firearm prohibitions under federal law.²²⁶

In California, a second or third DUI conviction within a 10-year period is currently generally classified as a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail, and a fourth or subsequent DUI conviction within a 10-year period is currently a wobbler punishable as either a felony or a misdemeanor. Only felony convictions under these statutes would result in firearm prohibitions under California or federal law. In 2026, as of the date of publication for this report, Assembly Bill 1546 (Schultz) has unanimously passed out of the California Assembly that would make a third DUI conviction within 10 years a wobbler, and classify some fourth or subsequent DUI convictions within a 10-year period as felonies. By authorizing felony convictions for more repeat DUI convictions, this legislation would implicitly prohibit more repeat DUI offenders from possessing and acquiring firearms. However, even if this legislation is signed into law, people convicted of a misdemeanor for a third or subsequent DUI offense within 10 years would still be eligible to purchase and possess firearms upon conviction.

California state lawmakers should consider pass firearm eligibility legislation to close this gap and, at a minimum, disqualify people from possessing or acquiring firearms for 10 years after they have been convicted of three or more DUIs or related offenses within the preceding 10-year period.

7. Strengthen firearm eligibility standards to ensure people with significant histories of dangerous criminal convictions, adjudications, or involuntary mental health admissions in other states cannot purchase or possess firearms in California for a temporary period.

- a. State lawmakers should pass legislation to ensure people convicted of violent or dangerous misdemeanors in any state, tribal, or federal court are ineligible to purchase or possess firearms in California for 10 years, if a substantially similar conviction in a California court would have resulted in a 10-year firearm prohibition.**

As described above, under California law, people convicted of certain violent or dangerous misdemeanor offenses in California become ineligible to possess or acquire firearms for a 10-year period.

However, these firearm disqualifications apply to people convicted of crimes in California for violating listed California Penal Code offenses. For example, a person becomes disqualified from purchasing or possessing firearms for 10 years if they are convicted of a misdemeanor for criminal threats of violence under California Penal Code section 422. A person convicted of an equivalent crime in another state for the same dangerous conduct may have no conviction record under the California Penal Code. If they moved to California, they could likely pass firearm-related background checks and lawfully purchase and possess firearms in our state.

This is a major gap in California's firearm eligibility and background check systems, allowing some people with violent or otherwise dangerous criminal records to purchase and possess firearms in California's communities.

In the context of out-of-state court protection orders, existing California law prohibits people from possessing or acquiring firearms in California if they are subject to "a valid order issued by an out-of-state jurisdiction that is similar or equivalent to" one of California's protection order processes, if that out-of-state order includes a prohibition on owning or possessing a firearm.²²⁷ Among other things, this statute helps to ensure such individuals are ineligible to purchase and possess firearms in California if information reported into national protective order databases indicates that a prospective purchaser is currently subject to a firearm-prohibiting protective order issued in any U.S. jurisdiction.

At least 16 other states extend state law firearm eligibility standards to at least some out-of-state misdemeanor convictions that do not otherwise trigger federal firearm prohibitions.²²⁸ California should do the same. State lawmakers should pass legislation to ensure people convicted of specified violent or otherwise dangerous misdemeanors in other state, tribal, territorial, or federal courts are ineligible to acquire or possess firearms in California within 10 years after conviction. (Recommendation (c) in this section below outlines a suggested process for doing so).

- b. State lawmakers should pass legislation to ensure people who have been involuntarily admitted to a mental health facility in any U.S. state or territory for dangerousness to self or others are ineligible to purchase or possess firearms in California, if a substantially similar involuntary admission in California would have resulted in a firearm prohibition.**

California law generally makes a person ineligible to possess or acquire firearms for a five-year period if, following an involuntary mental health hold and assessment period, mental health professionals determine that the person meets the strict criteria for involuntary admission to a mental health facility because they are danger to themselves or others as a result of a mental health disorder and they are refusing voluntary care and treatment.²²⁹ California law also generally imposes a lifetime firearm prohibition if a person has been involuntarily admitted to a mental health facility for dangerousness two or more times within a one-year period.²³⁰

However, as with the misdemeanor convictions standards described above, these firearm disqualifications currently apply to a person who was involuntarily admitted to a mental health facility in California, pursuant to specified sections of the California Welfare and Institutions Code. In practice, this means that a person who has been involuntarily admitted to a mental health facility in another state for dangerousness due to a severe mental health disorder would likely be eligible to purchase and possess firearms in California, unless they became subject to federal firearm prohibitions following a court-ordered involuntary commitment.

This is an especially significant gap for suicide prevention. In one leading study conducted in Florida, researchers analyzed the previous mental health admission histories of people with serious mental illness who were legally eligible to possess firearms when they died by firearm suicide. Researchers found that three-quarters of these firearm suicide decedents had previously been placed on a short-term emergency psychiatric hold that did not result in a firearm prohibition.²³¹ In other words, stronger firearm eligibility standards based on involuntary mental health facility admissions might have significantly reduced the number of people with severe mental illness and very high suicide risk who would be eligible to purchase and possess a uniquely lethal method of suicide attempt.

This study also analyzed the previous mental health admission histories of people with serious mental illness who were legally eligible to possess firearms when they were arrested for perpetrating violent gun crimes. Researchers found that one-third had previously been placed on a short-term emergency psychiatric hold that did not result in a firearm prohibition.²³²

State lawmakers should pass legislation to ensure people who have been involuntarily admitted to a mental health facility for dangerousness in any state or territory in the U.S. are subject to the same firearm eligibility standards as people subject to involuntary admissions in California.

Existing California law provides a process for individuals who have been involuntarily admitted to a mental health facility in California to petition courts for individualized exemptions to California law's related firearm prohibitions.²³³ The same process should be extended to individuals who would become subject to California firearm prohibitions based on involuntary mental health facility admissions in other states.

- c. State lawmakers should authorize California DOJ to develop a process to implement these firearm eligibility standards into firearm background check processes in a cost-effective manner by requiring individuals to certify information under penalty of perjury about criminal convictions, mental health facility admissions or adjudications, or protective orders from any state or jurisdiction in the U.S.**

The recommendations above propose that California should the same firearm eligibility standards to people convicted of dangerous criminal conduct, involuntarily admitted to a mental health facility for dangerousness, or subject to active court protective orders that prohibit firearm access in any state or jurisdiction in the U.S.

However, identifying mental health facility admission records or criminal conviction records under potentially thousands of different statutes under the laws of every other state, territory, or federal law, would present a very significant implementation and resource challenge for California DOJ's firearm background check teams already operating under significant staffing and resource constraints.

Given these constraints, this strategic plan proposes an implementation approach that would require a prospective firearm purchaser or applicant to affirm under penalty of perjury, in a standard format to be developed by DOJ, that:

- They have not been convicted of a misdemeanor within the previous 10 years in any state, territorial, tribal, or federal court, for specified offenses, such as crimes involving unlawful violence or threats of violence, including any assault, battery, criminal threats, or terroristic threats offense; sexual battery, sexual assault, or rape; stalking; threats or intimidation against crime victims or witnesses; domestic abuse; child abuse or child endangerment; hate crimes or bias-motivated offenses; malicious animal cruelty; brandishing of a firearm, other deadly weapon, or imitation firearm; violations of court protective or restraining orders; or weapon offenses involving the unlawful possession, carrying, manufacture, sale, offer to sell, purchase, or transfer of firearms, ammunition, or firearm components.
- They have not been involuntarily admitted to a mental health facility in any state or territory of the U.S. for dangerousness to self or others within the previous five years.
- They have not been involuntarily admitted to a mental health facility in any state or territory of the U.S. for dangerousness to self or others two or more times within any one-year period.
- They are not subject to an active court protection or restraining order issued by any state, territorial, tribal, or federal court that prohibits the possession or acquisition of firearms.

This implementation approach could also direct California DOJ, and provide necessary resources, to develop standard procedures to check whether prospective firearm purchasers or applicants have issued the certifications described above as part of firearm background and eligibility check processes.

8. Establish and fund a new California DOJ-led initiative to combat gun trafficking with state, local, and federal task force partners, with a focus on disrupting interstate gun trafficking and ghost gun manufacturing operations that fuel a majority of gun crime and violence in California.

- a. State lawmakers should establish and fund a new anti-trafficking initiative led by the California DOJ's Bureau of Firearms to expand task force partnerships focused on investigating and disrupting ghost gun manufacturing and interstate gun trafficking pipelines.**

As Part 1 emphasized in more detail, additional resources are needed to investigate the illegal gun trafficking and ghost gun manufacturing operations that fuel a growing majority of gun crime in California and supply illegal firearm markets without background checks or other safety precautions. This is especially critical now, as the federal government significantly dismantles federal law enforcement capacity to investigate gun trafficking and illegal ghost gun manufacturing offenses and has proposed other actions that threaten to increase gun trafficking activity.²³⁴

Under the Trump Administration, an estimated 80% of the special agents tasked with investigating gun crime at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) have reportedly been assigned to work immigration enforcement cases, causing what current and former federal law enforcement officials described as a historic drop in gun trafficking investigations and firearm dealer inspections.²³⁵ The President's Budget proposals have also sought hundreds of millions of dollars in further cuts to ATF capacity, including by eliminating crime gun tracing modernization projects and eliminating over two-thirds of ATF's inspector positions responsible for investigating firearm industry misconduct. The U.S. Justice Department's own analysis stated these proposals would "reduce ATF's capacity to regulate the firearms and explosives industries by approximately 40 percent[.]"²³⁶ The New York Times reported plainly that these plans would "sharply limit[] the government's already cramped capacity to identify businesses that sell guns to criminals" as "part of the Trump administration's effort to defang and downsize the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives."²³⁷

The Trump Administration has also proposed a range of new rules and regulations that would make it even easier for irresponsible firearm dealers in other states to maintain ATF licenses after serious violations, and for gun traffickers to illegally funnel firearms purchased without background checks in other states into California.²³⁸ In 2026, for example, the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Postal Service proposed rule-changes that would, contrary to longstanding federal law, authorize individuals to directly mail firearms through the Postal Service to other people across state lines without first mailing the weapons to a licensed firearms dealer to process the delivery and verify the recipient's age, identity, and eligibility.²³⁹ This would generally be a violation of California law, but would likely invite many more people to unlawfully mail firearms acquired in other states with weaker gun safety laws to minors and prohibited buyers in our state.

Together, these actions send a clear signal that the federal government is walking away from its role in investigating and disrupting firearm industry oversight and gun trafficking enforcement.

State and local resources must step into that dangerous vacuum. California's strong gun safety laws create strong incentives for traffickers to profitably and illegally funnel firearms to people who are ineligible to pass firearm background checks in California.

As Part 1 documented, California DOJ has implemented vital firearm industry oversight programs, including by building dedicated teams at DOJ's Bureau of Firearms responsible for inspecting California-based firearm dealers, ammunition vendors, and gun show operations. These teams' funding and hiring authority is generally tied to legislative mandates that require DOJ to focus on inspecting California businesses and gun shows. This funding and focus is important; these efforts have helped to

significantly reduce the percentage of crime guns recovered in California that were sold by a California dealer.²⁴⁰

However, these efforts must also be expanded. In response to California’s effective policy, oversight, background check, and enforcement efforts, prohibited buyers and individuals engaged in criminal conduct have become much more likely to obtain crime guns from out-of-state sources or through illegal skip-the-background-check ghost gun products.²⁴¹ As a result, ATF data shows that about two-thirds of illegally used or possessed crime guns recovered by law enforcement agencies in California either cannot be traced to any firearms dealer sale at all (including ghost guns) or are traced back to dealers located in other states with fewer gun safety regulations and safeguards.²⁴²

New research analyzing interstate and international gun trafficking patterns for guns recovered from crime within one year of sale shows that the largest gun trafficking pipeline in North America funnels guns sold in Arizona to illegal use or possession in California.²⁴³ California was also the destination state for the fourth largest gun trafficking corridor in North America (from Nevada to California), and the seventh largest (from Texas to California).²⁴⁴

California has also been very disproportionately impacted by the skip-the-background-check ghost gun industry: from 2017-2021, California accounted for 12% of all guns recovered from crime nationwide and traced by ATF, in line with our share of the national population, but California accounted for 55% of all crime guns identified as ghost guns nationwide.

These illegal crime gun sources threaten to circumvent the entire framework of California’s background check, firearm relinquishment, and other gun safety laws. For example, in 2022, a violent and abusive man subject to a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) perpetrated a mass shooting at a Sacramento church during a supervised visitation with his daughters. The DVRO would have made him ineligible to pass a firearm or ammunition background check under California law, and required him to relinquish any weapons he already owned, possessed, or controlled. But he used an illegally manufactured ghost gun made from skip-the-background-check products to kill his three daughters, a church executive, and then himself.

To counter these threats, Part 1 identified as one of this plan’s top priorities the need for investment in a statewide initiative to combat these leading trafficking sources. Additional investment and legislative authorization are needed for DOJ to increase staffing capacity and develop task force partnerships with more local partners in our most impacted communities to proactively investigate, prosecute, and disrupt the interstate gun trafficking and ghost gun manufacturing operations fueling a majority of gun crime and violence in California.

These investments in disrupting the supply of illegal weapons would complement effective investments in violence intervention, domestic violence protection, and firearm relinquishment compliance.

- b. California DOJ should develop a Crime Gun Intelligence data platform, modeled on the “Crime Gun Connect” platform developed by the Illinois Attorney General’s Office, to help law enforcement investigators access and analyze ATF crime gun tracing records to identify individual gun traffickers and larger trafficking patterns.**

The legislation that directed the Office of Gun Violence Prevention to develop this strategic plan required this report to “[a]scertain[] gaps in firearm tracing systems and mak[e] recommendations to alleviate them.”²⁴⁵ Toward that end, the California DOJ has identified a number of process and database improvements to increase the number of crime guns recovered by law enforcement agencies in California that can be traced through a confirmed match to firearm dealer sale or registration record reported to California DOJ. As a result of these record-matching improvements, California DOJ has

been able to include information about more crime guns recovered by law enforcement agencies in the Department's annual Assembly Bill 1191 Crime Gun Tracing reports, which provide unique levels of detail and transparency about crime guns recovered by law enforcement in California, including about the California firearm dealers, if any, that conducted the last recorded legal sale or transfer of ownership of firearms before they were recovered by law enforcement.

However, the most significant gap in California's crime gun tracing systems, is that about two-thirds of the crime guns recovered by law enforcement in our state cannot be traced to any California dealer sale. California DOJ's existing tracing systems are an important first step and national model in many respects. But these state-level systems are primarily based on California firearm dealer sale records; they generally cannot trace a firearm recovered by law enforcement in our state to a purchase that occurred, for example, in Arizona. Our existing crime gun tracing systems have insufficient data insight and dedicated staffing to investigate this largest gun trafficking pipeline in North America.

Through its modernized eTrace system, ATF receives, and provides law enforcement access to, more information about crime guns and associated sale records reported by law enforcement agencies and firearm dealers to ATF nationwide. With more dedicated anti-trafficking resources, California DOJ could effectively utilize this system to both identify individual firearm traffickers and also investigate larger patterns of gun trafficking and violent gun crime across state and jurisdictional lines.

A small number of other states have also developed Crime Gun Intelligence data platforms for use by state and local law enforcement partners. These platforms seek to synthesize large volumes of crime gun tracing-related data from eTrace and other law enforcement databases into routinely updated, searchable, and sophisticated data analytics tools.²⁴⁶ In 2022, the Illinois Attorney General's Office developed the "Crime Gun Connect" data platform for this purpose, which turned at least 10 years of ATF records for crime guns recovered in Illinois into a synthesized digital data platform with mapping capabilities and advanced search features that enable law enforcement partners to much more efficiently analyze gun trafficking patterns across state lines based on state and national crime gun tracing and dealer sale records. The platform allows users to also narrow search terms to identify cases with the strongest red flag indicators for straw purchases or criminal dealer involvement in gun trafficking.²⁴⁷

To support an enhanced initiative to combat gun trafficking in California, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention will seek to develop a similar Crime Gun Intelligence platform. This could significantly expand law enforcement investigators' ability to identify the perpetrators of individual crimes, uncover patterns of straw purchase and trafficking activity within and outside our state borders, and identify which out-of-state dealers are fueling interstate gun trafficking.²⁴⁸

9. Robustly implement and strengthen California’s ghost gun laws, and prioritize proactive policy and enforcement efforts to address the fast-growing role that 3D printed ghost guns play in fueling gun violence.

California’s ability to achieve sustained reductions in gun violence over the next five years will likely hinge in significant part on the state’s ability to address the proliferation of ghost guns, which are increasingly produced from 3D printers or CNC milling machines. As noted above, ghost gun trends have overwhelmingly driven our state’s overall crime gun trends since at least 2019, including the large surge in crime guns recovered by law enforcement in 2020 and 2021 and decreases since.

California law generally authorizes individuals to manufacture or assemble up to three legal firearms per year without a firearm manufacturer’s license, provided they do so from serialized frame or receiver products sold pursuant to background checks, and provided they do so for personal use and not for subsequent sale or transfer to other people.²⁴⁹

The ghost gun market is instead focused on facilitating the manufacture of firearms from products sold without age verification, background checks, sale records, or serial numbers—an obviously attractive source of weaponry for people too young or too dangerous to pass firearm background checks in our state. Dangerous and irresponsible actors continue to seek to “innovate” new methods of selling skip-the-background-check access to firearms to these buyers. Countering these efforts will require robust implementation and enforcement of California’s newly enacted ghost gun laws, as well as agile responsiveness to address new threats and “innovations” in this space.

The first wave of the ghost gun crisis — which fueled surging gun violence during 2020 and 2021 in particular — typically involved the sale of ghost gun build kits and frame or receiver products sold in nominally unfinished form in order to circumvent background check and other requirements applicable to the sale of products defined by law as “firearms.” These products have frequently been marketed as “80%” frames or receivers to convey that they are close to fully completed. In response to California’s strong efforts to regulate the sale of unfinished frame or receiver products (also known as “firearm precursor parts”) since 2022, the ghost gun industry has been quickly shifting its focus to products and services designed to facilitate unlicensed individuals’ illegal manufacture of ghost guns using consumer-level 3D printers and CNC milling machines.²⁵⁰

Some ghost gun industry members have sold consumer-level machines designed or marketed as ghost gun manufacturing machines. Some have operated websites designed to sell or facilitate the distribution and use of the digital code used to program these machines to print or mill firearms, machine gun conversion devices, and other dangerous firearm accessories — without any background check. Some industry members have sold firearm parts and kits that are legal for sale for some purposes and with some weapons, but are often used to complete an illegally 3D printed ghost gun and/or convert firearms into illegal assault weapons or machine guns. Some industry members have announced plans to develop Artificial Intelligence models and chatbots to guide users through the process of completing a 3D printed or CNC-milled ghost gun and generate code for printing or machining firearm components on demand. Companies selling these products and services have often failed to inform California purchasers that it is a crime to use these ghost gun-related products and services for their logical intended purpose without a license to manufacture firearms.

These practices facilitate illegal gun manufacturing and trafficking and represent a dangerous threat to public safety. These practices are also unfair to consumers deceived into unlawfully buying and using these products, and to more responsible firearm business competitors that comply with the law, background checks, and other safety requirements.

The Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s report on “[California’s Fight Against the Ghost Gun Crisis](#)” (October 2024) emphasized that addressing the ghost gun threat is essential for firearm relinquishment compliance efforts and survivor safety. For example, that report quoted court filings in which law enforcement officers in San Jose recounted that they arrested a man for felony domestic violence and removed a ghost gun his abuse victim said he had pointed at her to violently threaten her. When officers informed the man that a court had issued a protection order against him barring him from keeping the gun under California law, he replied, “Then I’ll just build another one.”²⁵¹ In Colorado, authorities seized a ghost gun from a young person who reportedly ran a neo-Nazi website, vowed to become “the next mass killer”, and held their grandparents hostage at gunpoint. A few months later, that person reportedly acquired 3D printers to produce more ghost guns and perpetrated a horrific hate crime attack, shooting 24 people and killing five at an LGBTQ night club.²⁵²

In recent years, counterterrorism experts also expressed alarm about the ghost gun industry’s growing appeal to extremists, paramilitary groups, and terrorists.

- The director of the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center warned that the “go-to” for “international terrorists, domestic terrorists, or violent extremists,” was to “try to get a hold of a [ghost gun] because of the belief that [law enforcement] will never be able to figure out where this weapon came from.”²⁵³
- A 2021 report by the U.S. Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team warned that “violent extremists continue to seek ways to acquire firearms through the production of privately made firearms” and that these actors seek out ghost guns to “circumvent security, avoid some state government regulations, and evade detection of and complicate law enforcement and investigative efforts.” That year, the terrorist group, Al-Qaeda, published training materials encouraging would-be terrorists to obtain ghost guns to perpetrate mass shootings in the U.S.²⁵⁴
- A 2024 report published by the Global Network on Extremism and Technology stated, “criminal networks worldwide have turned to 3D printed firearms as both a lucrative source of income and a means of arming themselves.”²⁵⁵
- A 2025 report published by the Global Network on Extremism and Technology documented the fast-growing number of violent extremist attacks globally that were perpetrated by youth with ghost guns, especially 3D printed firearms. The report warned that the “threat posed by 3DPFs [3D printed firearms] is growing by the day,” and that “the barrier to entry and technical threshold to build these weapons are decreasing rapidly, particularly with the proliferation of 3DPF designs that are easier to make, less dependent on commercial components and require little to no assembly. Several new designs do not require much assembly and thus could be potentially attractive to the younger generation.”²⁵⁶

Proactive implementation and enforcement of California’s ghost gun laws must continue to be a top public safety priority over the next five years.

- a. Law enforcement agencies, prosecuting agencies, city attorneys, county counsel, and other stakeholders should prioritize proactive implementation and enforcement of California’s newly enacted ghost gun laws, including Assembly Bill 1263 (2025, Gipson) and Senate Bill 704 (2025, Arreguín), against entities that cause, facilitate, aid, or abet the unlawful manufacture of ghost guns and other illegal firearms and devices.**

In recent years, California has adopted a range of effective new laws that codify standards of responsible business conduct and routes for both civil and criminal enforcement and accountability against individuals and entities that facilitate the unlawful manufacture of ghost guns in our state. Law enforcement and prosecuting agencies, city attorneys, county counsel, and consumer protection and

victims' rights attorneys should familiarize themselves with these new laws and prioritize proactive education, compliance, and enforcement. To promote those goals, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention has published a [Quick Reference Guide to California's Ghost Gun Laws](#), and an [informational bulletin](#) about new ghost gun laws enacted in 2025.²⁵⁷

In 2025, California enacted Senate Bill 704 (Arreguín) to require firearm barrels (when purchased separate from a firearm) to be delivered to a purchaser through a licensed firearms dealer verifying age and identity, effective January 1, 2026, and pursuant to a background check and sale record effective July 1, 2027.²⁵⁸ Unlicensed individuals completing a 3D printed ghost gun build must typically still purchase a firearm barrel instead of printing one, so proactive enforcement of these laws regulating the sale of firearm barrels could help disrupt the illegal manufacture of ghost guns.

In 2025, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention also developed a package of legislative reforms to address emerging ghost gun threats that California DOJ sponsored through Assembly Bill 1263 (Gipson). The provisions of this new ghost gun law took effect January 1, 2026. Among other things, Assembly Bill 1263 creates new civil and criminal statutes to hold individuals accountable for knowingly, willfully, or in the civil context, recklessly, causing another person to engage in the unlawful manufacture of firearms, or otherwise aiding, abetting, promoting, or facilitating the unlawful manufacture of firearms.²⁵⁹ The law also requires entities selling products commonly used to produce ghost guns and/or convert firearms into illegal assault weapons or machine guns to provide specified notices to California consumers and to comply with age verification and identification requirements prior to sale and delivery.²⁶⁰

Building on other affirmative litigation that stopped some dangerous ghost gun industry business practices,²⁶¹ California DOJ has utilized these accountability tools to sue entities that unlawfully distribute digital firearm manufacturing code for 3D printing ghost guns and machine guns and otherwise facilitate the illegal manufacture of firearms.²⁶² The San Diego County Counsel and survivor advocates have also effectively utilized causes of action established by recent state ghost gun laws to stop the unlawful sale of certain ghost gun manufacturing machines in California.²⁶³

More proactive compliance and accountability efforts will continue to be required to prevent the ghost gun market from unlawfully circumventing California's background check and safety requirements.

- b. State lawmakers should pass legislation to amend Penal Code section 27520 to state in more explicit plain language that this statute prohibits straw purchasing and gun trafficking conduct, and applies when a person acquires, assembles, or manufactures a firearm for the purpose of unlawfully selling or transferring that firearm to another person without a dealer transaction and background check.**

Under existing law, California Penal Code section 27520 makes it a crime to “acquire within this state or bring into this state a firearm for the purpose of selling, loaning, or transferring the firearm” with intent to avoid the provisions of cross-referenced statutes generally requiring a firearm dealer transaction and background check. However, this statute is relatively rarely utilized.

Legislative amendments to simplify and update this statute's language for the ghost gun age could help ensure it may be more consistently utilized against individuals engaged in criminal straw purchase and ghost gun manufacturing conduct with intent to traffic firearms. Relatedly, policymakers should consider amending this law to also establish a presumption of intent to traffic ghost guns in certain circumstances, such as if a defendant who is not licensed to manufacture firearms possesses a large quantity of unlawfully manufactured and unserialized ghost guns.

c. State lawmakers should pass legislation to amend Penal Code sections 27530 and 29180(d) to prohibit “offering to sell” an unserialized ghost gun or a privately manufactured firearm.

Current California law generally prohibits the sale, transfer of ownership, manufacture, and possession of unserialized firearms.²⁶⁴ California law also generally prohibits the sale or transfer of ownership of firearms that were manufactured by individuals who are not licensed to manufacture firearms, whether those firearms were assembled from serialized frames or receivers or are unserialized ghost guns.²⁶⁵

However, some local law enforcement agencies have reported challenges with obtaining warrants and pursuing enforcement when they uncover evidence that a gun trafficker has communicated offers to sell unserialized ghost guns or privately manufactured firearms, since the statutes referenced above apply to sale or transfer of ownership but do not expressly prohibit offers to sell these illegal weapons.²⁶⁶

California Penal Code section 23920(a) generally makes it a misdemeanor, among other things, to sell or offer to sell a firearm that has an altered or obliterated serial number with knowledge that the serial number was altered or obliterated, but this law would generally not apply to an illegally manufactured ghost gun that never had any serial number at all.

d. State and local policymakers, research universities, and philanthropic foundations should consider providing institutional support and incentives to develop technological solutions to the 3D printed ghost gun issue. State lawmakers should also consider adopting legislation that, at a minimum, imposes liability on manufacturers after a reasonable implementation period for harms caused by a failure to integrate reasonable available safeguards to prevent 3D printers from being used to unlawfully manufacture ghost guns or machine gun conversion devices.

Technological innovation has driven impressive advances in precision additive manufacturing, also known as 3D printing, with materials ranging from lower-cost polymers to liquid metals.²⁶⁷ The market for desktop 3D printers is overwhelmingly dominated by manufacturers based in China,²⁶⁸ who have rapidly and dramatically lowered average costs and barriers to entry for consumer-level 3D printing machines²⁶⁹ capable of producing fully 3D printed ghost guns, hybrid firearm designs, and parts kits designed to complete and/or convert ghost guns into assault weapons or machine guns.²⁷⁰ The market for these consumer-level 3D printers is projected to continue to grow rapidly over the next five years; market research analysts estimate that the “global desktop 3D printing market was valued at USD 5.88 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 20.93 billion by 2030[.]”²⁷¹

These trends could have many positive impacts, but they would also mean that 3D printer manufacturers are on pace to introduce increasingly sophisticated ghost gun manufacturing machines into potentially millions of households, providing many more people with direct skip-the-background-check access to illegal and untraceable ghost guns.

A combination of research support and industry liability could help address these threats.

In other contexts, commercial manufacturers have incorporated increasingly sophisticated machine-learning platforms that analyze the geometric properties of inputted files, 3D models, or two-dimensional images, to develop similarity scores and matches with other indexed files, models, and images. In recent years, multiple research institutions have announced efforts to adapt these platforms to develop software and firmware solutions that detect when a 3D print job would produce a firearm or machine gun conversion device and stop the printer from doing so.²⁷² A 2025 report by Everytown for Gun Safety noted that at least one private-sector company based in Europe was already “offering this new technology to clients looking to prevent [3D printed firearms] from being created under their watch[.]”²⁷³ The report also noted that “[o]ther 3D printing companies and academic

institutions in the United States have also begun to innovate with detection technology,” and that “[a]lthough these efforts are relatively new, the progress made appears to indicate that technology can potentially prevent the production of [3D printed firearms]. It will require a concerted effort to develop this technology further and help ensure its widespread adoption across the 3D printing industry.”²⁷⁴ Ongoing innovation and refinements will be required to stay ahead of motivated evasion efforts, ensure this detection technology has a low rate of false positives and negatives, and ensure effective integration into new printers.

Other nascent research efforts have shown promise for helping investigators trace ghost guns recovered from a crime scene or unlawful possessor to the 3D printer that produced it.²⁷⁵ Aside from technological innovations, forensic science research is needed to identify best practices for garnering forensic evidence from 3D printed firearms.²⁷⁶

State and local policymakers, research universities, and philanthropic foundations can foster continued innovation and improvements in these and related technological solutions by offering institutional support, and research and development incentives.

The 3D printer industry must also shoulder responsibility for addressing the fast-growing role their products play in fueling gun crime and violence.²⁷⁷

In May 2026, New York became the first state to enact legislation that would require 3D printer models sold in the state to incorporate technologies necessary to block the printer from producing firearms or machine gun conversion devices, pursuant to a multi-year process for evaluating existing technologies and developing performance standards and implementing regulations through an expert working group. Gun violence prevention advocates have sponsored similar legislation in California in 2026, Assembly Bill 2047 (2026, Bauer-Kahan). This legislation was significantly amended in June 2026; as of the date of publication for this report, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention is evaluating that legislation, relevant technologies, and the resources needed to implement these requirements within expedited timelines.

At a minimum, however, state lawmakers should consider adopting legislation that imposes liability on 3D printer manufacturers after a delayed implementation period for harms caused by their failure to integrate reasonable available safeguards to prevent 3D printers from being used to unlawfully manufacture ghost guns or machine gun conversion devices.

10. Strengthen California's firearm background check processes.

- a. **State lawmakers should pass legislation to require firearm purchasers to pass a fingerprint-based background check, instead of a name-based check.**

California's firearm purchaser background checks are currently name-based checks, which use personal identifiers such as name and date of birth to check if a prospective firearm purchaser is a match for other disqualifying records reported into criminal history or other relevant law enforcement databases nationwide. In some cases, name-based checks may require significant time and investigation to rule out false positives from individuals with common names, or false negatives when an individual has used aliases or changed their name, or if their prohibiting criminal record has inaccurate or incomplete information, such as misspellings or missing date of birth.

Fingerprint-based background checks are often required for licensing and employment purposes as the gold standard for comprehensive and accurate checks.²⁷⁸ Fingerprint-based checks can supplement and improve name-based checks by providing more conclusive identification and matches with disqualifying criminal history records more efficiently.

Fingerprint-based background checks are required for applicants for concealed carry licenses in California, and as a condition of firearm purchase permits in multiple other states, but not for firearm purchases in California.

Requiring a fingerprint-based check for firearm purchases could improve California's background check processes, and may also serve as a deterrent to straw purchasers and others involved in criminal conduct.²⁷⁹ A report by the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions noted that firearm purchaser and licensing requirements that include fingerprint-based requirements were associated with decreases in interstate firearm trafficking.²⁸⁰

- b. **State lawmakers should pass legislation that generally requires courts to enter information about court-ordered firearm prohibitions into law enforcement databases maintained by California DOJ when courts order individuals not to possess or acquire firearms as a condition of pretrial release or diversion.**

When courts issue orders granting pretrial release or general diversion to a defendant in a criminal case, courts commonly include a range of individualized safety conditions that can include orders prohibiting the defendant from possessing firearms and other weapons if they present a danger to public safety.

However, these firearm conditions are generally not reported to law enforcement databases accessible to the California Department of Justice and FBI for use in firearm-related background checks. Therefore, the court's pretrial release or diversion order is not sufficient to prevent a defendant from passing background checks if they attempt to purchase firearms in California or other states in violation of these conditions.

This can be a source of dangerous confusion. Law enforcement, prosecutors, victims, and other stakeholders may inaccurately assume that these firearm-prohibiting court orders are reported into law enforcement databases and prevent a defendant from passing background checks. In some cases, based on that false assumption, victims or public safety stakeholders may decide not to request other firearm-prohibiting court orders, including Criminal Protective Orders or Gun Violence Restraining Orders, that courts are mandated to report into law enforcement and firearm background check systems. As a result, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's training materials encourage law enforcement officers or victims to consider whether it may be necessary to request Criminal Protective Orders, Gun Violence Restraining Orders, or other firearm-prohibiting protection orders when a court

has ordered a defendant not to possess firearms as a condition of pretrial release or diversion only. Though seemingly duplicative, another court order would often be required to ensure a dangerous individual would not be able to pass background checks while out of custody and that the firearm-prohibiting order would be reported to DOJ and enforceable by law enforcement statewide.

State law requires courts to report some firearm prohibitions to California DOJ that are included as express conditions of probation or, in rarer circumstances, as part of a court order related to military or mental health-related diversion under specific statutes governing firearm prohibiting orders in these cases.²⁸¹

To promote safety and compliance, legislation should similarly direct courts to report information to California DOJ about firearm prohibitions ordered as a condition of pretrial release or general diversion order for background check and enforcement purposes.

11. Strengthen California DOJ’s capacity to implement firearm industry oversight, consumer protection, and other gun violence prevention responsibilities.

- a. State policymakers should continue to maintain and prioritize funding to support the California DOJ Bureau of Firearms’ vital public safety functions, including firearm dealer inspections and enforcement.**

As described in more detail in Part 1 and above, California has significantly increased its investment in firearm industry oversight over the past decade, allowing the California DOJ Bureau of Firearms to hire small but vital teams dedicated to inspecting firearm dealers, ammunition vendors, and gun show operations in our state. These investments are important for public safety; the recommendations above focus on the need for additional resources to address ghost gun manufacturing and interstate gun trafficking because firearm industry oversight policy and investments have made an important difference in reducing the percentage of crime guns sold by California businesses. Ongoing funding will continue to be needed to ensure the Bureau of Firearms can effectively implement these responsibilities effectively.

The Bureau of Firearms also maintains other important functions for consumer and public safety, such as by ensuring that handguns and firearm safety devices sold in California (like trigger or cable locks) pass product safety and reliability standards; by developing public education materials like the Firearm Safety Certificate Study Guide to inform firearm purchasers about laws and responsibilities governing firearm ownership; by conducting firearm-related background checks and reporting records to national background check databases; and by maintaining the Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) program to recover unlawfully possessed firearms.

California’s investment in these important functions has relied on a combination of General Fund investments and fee-supported Special Fund revenues. Those Special Funds are not sufficient to support these public safety functions alone, so California lawmakers should continue to ensure DOJ receives necessary resources to fulfill them.

- b. State and local policymakers should pass legislation to prevent irresponsible dealers from being authorized to apply for a new firearm dealer license after their authorization to sell firearms has been revoked for unlawful conduct.**

Existing law authorizes the California DOJ to maintain the “centralized list” of licensed firearm dealers who are authorized to operate as firearm dealers in California; removal from this list effectively removes a dealer’s authorization to sell firearms in the state. State law requires California DOJ to remove dealers from the centralized list if their federal firearms license has expired or been revoked, and authorizes DOJ to remove dealers from that list if they violate certain requirements.²⁸²

In 2026, California DOJ also promulgated updated regulations implementing a statutorily authorized process for assessing civil fines on firearm dealers for legal violations uncovered in the course of dealer inspections; these fines escalate depending on the severity of the violation and whether the dealer takes timely and effective action to comply with corrective action plans to remedy the violation. Especially as the federal government continues to weaken ATF’s firearm dealer oversight functions and capacity, this balanced framework will help promote firearm dealer compliance and safety, and incentivize prompt corrective action when inspectors identify correctible errors or deficiencies.

However, public reporting has flagged concerns that some firearm dealer businesses in other states have been able to continue to operate even after ATF had revoked their federal firearm dealer licenses for willfully violating federal law, including by transferring firearms to illegal purchasers.²⁸³ Those dealers reportedly re-applied for a new federal firearms license at the same location under the name of

a different family member who received the dealer's firearms inventory and effectively continued the operations of the same business that had engaged in dangerous misconduct.

A provision included in Assembly Bill 1810 (2026, Berman) would help clarify California DOJ's ability to ensure that irresponsible dealers removed from the centralized list for misconduct remain ineligible for replacement on the centralized list or employment at a firearms dealer for a specified number of years.

Local jurisdictions that issue firearm dealer licenses and inspect firearm dealers should also consider implementing steps to ensure that irresponsible dealers whose licenses have been revoked for misconduct remain ineligible to participate in firearm dealer businesses for a specified period thereafter, including through self-certifications under penalty of perjury at the time of a license application.

- c. State policymakers should consider passing legislation to require firearm dealers to conduct regular inventory checks, certify all dispositions have been reported to DOJ, and promptly notify DOJ of any firearms that cannot be accounted for in their inventory.**

State policymakers should consider legislation to pass provisions that were proposed by Senate Bill 15 (2025, Blakespear), but never enacted, to require firearm dealers to conduct quarterly or semi-annual inventory checks to confirm all firearm acquisitions and dispositions by the dealer. This legislation proposed requiring dealers to maintain written affidavits to certify to California DOJ that all firearms acquired were accounted for and all dispositions have been reported to DOJ, or else promptly report and identify to DOJ any firearms that are not accounted for in the dealer's inventory.

- d. State policymakers should pass legislation to strengthen requirements for gun show promoters, especially to ensure gun show vendors comply with new consumer notice and age and identification verification requirements for the sale of products commonly used in ghost gun manufacturing.**

California has adopted laws to ensure gun shows in the state are subject to inspections by California DOJ or local law enforcement, and to ensure gun show organizers certify that the event will comply with important gun safety requirements. (California DOJ's annual Assembly Bill 2552 Gun Show report provides more information about gun show requirements and inspections.²⁸⁴)

State lawmakers should update these statutes to reflect newly enacted ghost gun laws, and to ensure state and local law enforcement agencies receive information about all vendors participating at the event — not just those selling firearms and ammunition — to include vendors selling products commonly used to manufacture ghost guns or convert firearms into illegal assault weapons.

Existing California law requires gun show producers to provide a list to the California DOJ before the gun show identifying all licensed firearms dealers or ammunition vendors who are prospective vendors and designated firearms transfer agents at the event, so that California DOJ can verify that the identified individuals have valid licenses and are eligible to participate.²⁸⁵ Upon written request from a local law enforcement agency where the event will be held, gun show producers are also required to provide a complete and accurate list of "all persons, entities, and organizations that have leased or rented, or are known to the producer to intend to lease or rent, any table, display space, or area at the gun show or event for the purpose of selling, leasing, or transferring firearms, or processing the sale or transfer of ammunition."²⁸⁶

These are both important mechanisms for identifying potentially unlawful participants who the producer knows will be selling *firearms or ammunition*. However, gun shows have also often been a locus for selling other firearm-related accessories and devices, including 3D printers and CNC milling machines marketed as ghost gun manufacturing machines, and kits and components designed to be used to facilitate ghost gun manufacturing.

These statutes should be updated accordingly. Lawmakers should amend these statutes to require gun show producers to provide California DOJ and local law enforcement with a complete and accurate list in advance, and after the event, of all persons, entities, and organizations that have leased or rented, or are known to the producer to intend to lease or rent, any table, display space, or area at the gun show or event for the purpose of selling, leasing, or transferring firearms or ammunition, *or otherwise selling, leasing, transferring, or marketing firearm parts, magazines, 3D printers or CNC milling machines, or products defined as regulated “firearm accessories” under California’s Firearm Industry Responsibility Act, including products that are “clearly designed and intended for use in manufacturing firearms.”*²⁸⁷

Additionally, state lawmakers should pass legislation to require gun show vendors selling these products at the gun show to certify that they will comply with all provisions of the Firearm Industry Responsibility Act, including the provisions of Assembly Bill 1263 (2025, Gipson) that now require sellers to verify prospective purchasers’ age and identification and provide a clear and conspicuous notice prior to sale of a regulated firearm accessory, firearm barrel, or firearm manufacturing machine about laws governing the unlawful manufacture of firearms.²⁸⁸

- e. State policymakers should pass legislation to authorize California DOJ to share information about deceased gun violence perpetrators’ firearm transaction history with surviving victims of gun violence and victims’ family members, upon proper application, to promote transparency and accountability.**

California law appropriately provides confidentiality restrictions that generally limit public access to information maintained by California DOJ related to firearm sales and acquisitions. State law outlines exceptions that authorize California DOJ to share access to information about an individual’s firearm transaction record or a dealer’s firearm sale record in some circumstances with law enforcement agencies, city attorneys or county counsel, researchers, and victims of domestic violence protected by active domestic violence-related protective orders or in certain criminal cases involving domestic violence.²⁸⁹

However, these existing exemptions are relatively narrow. In some cases, after a shooting, they have required California DOJ and other law enforcement agencies to shield a deceased perpetrator’s firearm transaction records from surviving victims or victims’ family members seeking to understand how a shooter acquired firearms, which firearms they acquired, when they acquired them, and from which California licensed firearms dealer, if any. In murder-suicide cases, mass shootings, or other shootings in which a gunman was killed, existing law arguably requires California DOJ to prioritize a deceased homicide offender’s privacy interest in their firearm purchases over victims’ and family members’ right to access information about a murder weapon, and any failures or legal violations that unlawfully allowed that perpetrator to acquire firearms.

As discussed above, this report recommends that state lawmakers provide funding and legislative authorization necessary for California DOJ to establish an automated protected person information portal to provide survivors with direct and immediate access to otherwise confidential information reported into DOJ databases about their own protection order case, including information indicating that the restrained person has attempted to acquire firearms or ammunition in violation of the court order.

State lawmakers should also consider passing legislation that would authorize California DOJ to share information about a gun violence perpetrator’s firearm purchase and transaction histories with survivors and victims’ family members in additional circumstances. The perpetrator’s privacy interest in their firearm sale history, and concerns about interference in a criminal case, are both diminished when the subject of the record is deceased; therefore, state law should authorize California DOJ to share firearm transaction information with surviving gun violence victims or with victims’ family members, upon proper application, when (1) the subject of the record is deceased and (2) has been identified by

a law enforcement agency as the likely perpetrator of a firearm homicide, attempted homicide with firearms, or other unlawful shooting.

This could help empower survivors with information, inform policy responses, and enable survivors to pursue justice and accountability in appropriate circumstances.

f. State lawmakers should continue to prioritize funding for the California DOJ's Firearm Information Technology Systems Modernization (FITSM) Project to improve and streamline public safety functions.

The information technology systems utilized by California DOJ and other criminal justice agencies for firearm background checks, identifying unlawful firearm possessors, identifying crime gun tracing matches, and similar responsibilities, are severely antiquated. The systems currently in use were developed many years ago — dating as far back as 1980 — and have often been modified piecemeal over the years in response to new legislative mandates. Many different databases use different logic, meaning inputs cannot be easily transferred from one database to another, and modifications cannot be applied across multiple systems. Consequently, problems and inefficiencies persist and cause increased workloads and missed operational opportunities.

California DOJ is implementing an extensive Firearm Information Technology Systems Modernization (FITSM) Project to upgrade these systems, and has received funding support through the Budget for this project. But California DOJ must return to the Legislature each year to request continued budgetary support to move this project forward, re-engage contractors one year at a time, and comply with lengthy process reviews by the Department of Technology from which other state agencies are exempt. Completing FITSM will be an important step to improve efficiencies and strengthen DOJ's ability to synthesize information from many record systems to improve public safety and data analysis. State lawmakers should continue to fund this project and support expedited implementation.

g. State lawmakers should continue to prioritize funding for California DOJ to fulfill its responsibility to investigate officer-involved shootings.

Since 2021, California law has directed the California DOJ to investigate all incidents involving an officer-involved shooting resulting in the death of an unarmed civilian in the state. Historically, these critical incidents in California were primarily handled by local law enforcement agencies and district attorneys. Assembly Bill 1506 (2020, McCarty) now mandates that the DOJ serve as an independent state prosecutor to investigate and review officer-involved shootings of unarmed civilians across California. Pursuant to Assembly Bill 1506, DOJ seeks to build and maintain trust and engagement between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve by disseminating relevant information and materials about investigated incidents, making public determinations regarding criminal prosecution, and where criminal charges are not appropriate, publishing a written report that includes:

- A statement of facts, as revealed by the investigation and analysis of those facts under applicable law;
- An explanation about why criminal charges were not found to be appropriate; and
- Where applicable, recommendations to modify relevant agency policies and practices.

California DOJ continues to take steps to enhance implementation of this law and to expedite Assembly Bill 1506 investigations and reports. State lawmakers should continue to prioritize funding necessary to fulfill these important safety and justice goals.

In recent years, the number of officer-involved shooting incidents in California has fallen overall, contrary to trends in many other states.²⁹⁰ The San Francisco Chronicle’s analysis of data reported by California DOJ found that “California law enforcement officers killed fewer people, shot fewer people and used physical force against fewer people in 2024 than in any year since the state began keeping track nine years ago,” even as many other states were “experiencing a reverse trend.” This analysis also noted that “No California officers died as a result of use-of-force encounters [in 2024] either, which was the first time that’s happened since at least 2016.”²⁹¹

12. Protect and strengthen restrictions on the sale and manufacture of uniquely dangerous weapons.

- a. **Public safety stakeholders should continue to implement and enforce new laws designed to address the proliferation of machine gun conversion devices and firearms converted into automatic machine guns.**

Some firearm models have design features that make them uniquely susceptible to conversion into automatic machine guns through ready installation of a machine gun conversion device. The proliferation of those illegal conversion devices — often imported from sellers abroad or 3D printed from digital files sold or distributed online — is a significant public safety challenge and, as discussed in Part 1, may help explain declining survival rates for firearm assault injuries in California and nationally, as victims shot multiple times are less likely to survive on average.²⁹²

In 2025, California enacted legislation to address this safety issue, including Assembly Bill 1127 (Gabriel), which prohibits the commercial sale of certain semiautomatic pistol models that are uniquely susceptible to machine gun conversion after July 1, 2026, unless manufacturers of those models incorporate reasonable design modifications to prevent ready installation of machine gun conversion devices. In public statements, manufacturers of these models have indicated that they are modifying their designs to prevent machine gun conversion.

Other legislation and litigation efforts described above (in the section on ghost guns) also seek to proactively stop entities from knowingly publishing digital code for 3D printing illegal machine gun conversion devices or otherwise promoting or facilitating the sale and production of those illegal devices online.

Successful implementation of these new laws will help address the proliferation of illegal machine guns in crime, and reverse declining case survival rates for firearm assault victims. Public safety stakeholders should prioritize investigation and enforcement actions against individuals and entities that sell, import, or facilitate the unlawful manufacture of machine guns and machine gun conversion devices.

- b. **State lawmakers should pass legislation to update California law’s definition of restricted assault weapons.**

In 1989, a gunman perpetrated a hate-motivated mass shooting in a Stockton, California schoolyard, wielding an AK-47-style rifle with detachable large-capacity magazines holding 30 and 75 rounds each. Firing over 100 times in three minutes, he murdered five young children and injured 30 other students and a teacher before taking his own life.²⁹³

In response, California adopted its law generally restricting the sale, manufacture, and possession of certain uniquely dangerous semiautomatic firearms defined as “assault weapons” because they have a combination of features that facilitate mass killing.²⁹⁴ These policies have helped California achieve substantially lower rates of mass shooting victimization than the rest of the U.S. on average.²⁹⁵

In a number of public mass casualty shootings, would-be victims escape to safety or incapacitate the shooter when the shooter briefly pauses to reload their weapon. For example:

- In 2019 at a synagogue in Poway, California, a gunman killed one person and injured three others “while emptying a 10-round magazine. When the attacker ran out of bullets, he tried and failed to reload another 10-round magazine, then fled as ‘several members of the congregation moved to confront him’ an FBI affidavit said.”²⁹⁶ A retired agent who ran the FBI’s active shooter program told reporters covering this attack: “That moment to reload, it’s the linchpin of the

event. . . If there is a way during that time or when the rounds in that weapon are expended to intervene . . . that is the difference between a few and dozens injured or killed.”²⁹⁷

- In a 2018 mass shooting at a bar in Thousand Oaks, California, a college student hiding under a pool table jumped to action when he heard the shooter pause to reload; the student threw a barstool through a window allowing dozens of people to escape.²⁹⁸
- In the 2012 Sandy Hook elementary school shooting, a six-year old boy shouted for his classmates to run while the gunman paused to reload. In his classroom, “11 students survived, including some who ran past [the shooter] when he stopped to reload.”²⁹⁹
- In the 2011 mass shooting at a Tucson, Arizona supermarket, a gunman shot Congresswoman Gabby Giffords in the head “and sprayed the rest of the crowd with bullets, hitting a total of 19 people” and killing six.³⁰⁰ After he fired 33 rounds from his first detachable magazine, the “attack was interrupted when the shooter . . . stopped to reload and fumbled the fresh ammunition [magazine]. A bystander seized the chance, clubbing him in the back of the head with a folding chair while another tackled him to the ground.”³⁰¹ This “heroic effort almost certainly saved lives, and it could’ve saved more if the first magazine had been smaller.”³⁰² A nine-year old girl was killed by his 13th bullet.³⁰³

Restrictions on large-capacity ammunition magazines are critical to ensure that a shooter must pause to reload after firing 10 rounds; they are some of the effective policies available to reduce mass shooting victimization rates overall.³⁰⁴ As a result, California and a number of other states generally define semiautomatic handguns and rifles as restricted assault weapons if they have fixed large-capacity magazines that can hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

California and other states also define certain semiautomatic firearms as restricted assault weapons if they combine the capacity to accept detachable magazines with additional assaultive features. These assault weapons narrow the window for escape or intervention by enabling a shooter to rapidly replace a spent magazine with another pre-loaded magazine and continue firing 10 more rounds in a short period of time with a weapon incorporating other assaultive features.

Manufacturers have repeatedly developed new products that seek to circumvent the assault weapon law’s purpose and relevant statutory and regulatory definitions, which requires California and other states to periodically update relevant definitions accordingly.

Over a decade ago, to circumvent assault weapon definitions, some manufacturers developed “bullet button” assault rifles that required the user to use the tip of a bullet or other object or “tool” to depress a button on the firearm to release what was, in practice, a detachable magazine that could be rapidly replaced with a new pre-loaded magazine on a weapon otherwise identical to other prohibited assault rifles. In 2016, in response to a devastating mass shooting in San Bernardino perpetrated with bullet button assault rifles, California passed legislation to update its assault weapon definitions to include certain semiautomatic firearms with assaultive features, if they do not have “fixed magazines” that were “contained in, or permanently attached to, the firearm in such a manner that the device cannot be removed without disassembly of the firearm action” or use of a “tool”.³⁰⁵ This language contemplated that “fixed” magazines were “contained in, or permanently attached to, a firearm” in such a manner that the magazine could not be removed unless “the firearm action has been interrupted and will not function.”³⁰⁶

However, multiple entities have since introduced workaround products designed to enable a shooter to technically disable a semiautomatic rifle’s firing action (through a pin that very slightly separates the upper and lower receivers) while rapidly replacing a spent magazine with another pre-loaded magazine.

As the seller of one such product describes: “The rear takedown pin is designed so that when it is pressed, it slightly separates the lower receiver from the upper, technically disassembling the rifle to the point when it cannot function. So now, you can easily remove the magazine and replace a new one, after which you can simply push the barrel up to lock the rifle again.”³⁰⁷ Sellers describe the product as allowing purchasers to retain all assault weapon features and “the capability of way faster and simpler reloads than a bullet button;”³⁰⁸ promise “ultra-fast magazine changes” for any AR-15 or AR-10;³⁰⁹ and state that the product allows purchasers “to have a fixed magazine that you can reload very quickly” by “easily remov[ing] the magazine and replac[ing] a new one[.]”³¹⁰

These and other workaround products turn semiautomatic rifles with assaultive features into the kinds of uniquely dangerous weapons California’s assault weapons law was intended to restrict.

Some other states have adopted assault weapons restrictions with definitions that could be a model for legislation to address this issue. For example:

- Washington State’s assault weapon restrictions apply to semiautomatic weapons with assaultive features if they can accept a detachable magazine “that can be loaded or unloaded while detached from a firearm and readily inserted into a firearm.”³¹¹
- In 2025, Colorado enacted a law restricting the sale and manufacture of certain semiautomatic rifles or semiautomatic shotguns, if they have a detachable magazine “that is not permanently attached to a firearm and may be removed from the firearm without rendering the firearm incapable of accepting any magazine.”³¹²
- Illinois restricts semiautomatic weapons with assaultive features if they can accept a detachable magazine or if they “may be readily modified to accept a detachable magazine.”³¹³
- New York restricts semiautomatic rifles with assaultive features “that [have] an ability to accept a detachable magazine.”³¹⁴

California policymakers should pass legislation to similarly update California’s definitions to address new products that jeopardize public safety, while providing a process for lawful current owners to remain in possession of registered weapons.

13. Prioritize and invest in efforts to increase clearance rates for firearm homicides and nonfatal shootings, with a focus on interrupting cycles of retaliatory gun violence.

- a. Local policymakers and law enforcement agencies should dedicate more resources and personnel to investigating and solving firearm homicides and nonfatal shootings with a focus on preventing gun violence. Law enforcement agencies should consider establishing dedicated teams focused on responding to and investigating nonfatal shootings based on models developed in cities such as Denver and Columbus.

To interrupt cycles of retaliatory gun violence, law enforcement agencies must prioritize efforts to increase clearance rates for fatal and nonfatal shootings. Local leaders should promote and strongly invest in these efforts. As described in more detail below, recent models implemented in cities such as Denver and Columbus show that creating units dedicated specifically to investigating and prosecuting nonfatal shootings and promoting victim and witness trust and cooperation can increase clearance rates dramatically and quickly.

A large majority of shootings in the United States do not lead to an arrest, and clearance rates are especially low for nonfatal shootings involving Black and Hispanic male victims.³¹⁵ In the typical shooting, a surviving victim returns from the hospital to a community where the person or people who nearly killed them remain at large and will not suffer legal consequences for that act.³¹⁶ As detailed in Part 1, this helps explain why survivors are at extremely elevated risk of being shot again and killed after surviving a gun assault injury.

A substantial body of research suggests that these persistently low clearance rates for society's most serious crimes weaken deterrence, undermine perceptions of law enforcement's efficacy and legitimacy, and contribute to further gun violence.³¹⁷ Researchers for the University of Chicago Crime Lab explain that low clearance rates for shootings "can undermine public confidence in the criminal justice system, as community members witness those who commit acts of violence remain free. This undermining of public confidence in the police is a problem in its own right and may further fuel the gun violence problem by reducing the willingness of the public to cooperate with law enforcement. Worse still, instead of formally seeking justice, some in the community may be encouraged to resort to retaliation, further continuing the cycle of violence."³¹⁸

Efforts to increase clearance rates for shootings can drive more virtuous cycles instead by increasing perceptions of law enforcement efficacy and legitimacy, increasing victim and witness engagement, strengthening deterrence and accountability for violence, removing persistent violent offenders from the community, and reducing incentives for victims to pursue vigilante retribution.³¹⁹

Persistently low clearance rates for shootings are related, in part, to issues of community trust and legal cynicism.³²⁰ It is harder for law enforcement agencies to solicit cooperation and testimony from victims and witnesses who do not trust that the agency can effectively protect them, especially for shootings tied to gang member-involved disputes.³²¹ The U.S. Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance published a comprehensive report in 2013 identifying best practice recommendations for improving investigative practices to increase homicide clearance.³²² The report emphasized that its specific recommendations ultimately "rely on a community who trust and support the police and are therefore willing to talk with investigators and/or voluntarily provide information to the police."³²³ When comparing law enforcement agencies that solved most homicides to those that did not, the report found that, "[w]hile many factors contributed to successful homicide investigations . . . there was one overarching factor: all of the agencies [that were identified as successful models] had laid a strong foundation of trust with the community."³²⁴

The disparity between low clearance rates for homicide and very low clearance rates for nonfatal shootings is notable because nonfatal shootings “leave an important witness alive.”³²⁵ Phillip Cook, a leading researcher on homicide and shooting investigations, notes that “[m]any shooting survivors may dislike and distrust the police and may be influenced by the ‘no snitching’ norm. . . . Even if the police nonetheless pursue the investigation and are able to solve the case without the victim’s input, prosecutors are reluctant to prosecute if the victim is unwilling to testify.”³²⁶ However, law enforcement agencies can take effective steps to build victim and witness trust and participation. Cook writes:

If the police have the capacity to protect victims against retaliation, that may be effective in some cases. Another approach is to provide a tangible indication to victims that the police are invested in helping them. Police departments often have staff devoted to victim services who are not directly involved in enforcement. In some departments, staff are proactive in contacting gunshot victims and offering help. If the victim-service officer can form a positive relationship in this fashion, one result might be an increased chance that the victim cooperates with the investigator. The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department has been a leader in victim advocacy, and a systematic study of their data suggests that a proactive outreach program has indeed improved gunshot victims’ cooperation with the police.³²⁷

Increasing homicide and shooting clearance rates is also a resource, staffing, and prioritization issue. In law enforcement agencies nationwide, a large percentage of agency resources are spent responding to calls for service for non-criminal or low-level quality of life offenses, while a much smaller percentage of agency resources are spent proactively preventing the most serious violent crimes or investigating homicide and nonfatal shootings.³²⁸ Investigative reporting by The Trace into nonfatal shooting investigations noted that detectives believe “nonfatal shootings are at least as difficult to investigate as fatal ones . . . yet across the country, city leaders invest far less in solving them.” The report concluded that “[d]etectives are stretched so thin in some cities that many nonfatal shootings don’t get investigated at all,” and that “[w]hen cities fail to solve nonfatal shootings, homicides often follow.”³²⁹ As the Baltimore Sun observed, “Cases that aren’t cleared by the police are too often cleared by the streets[.]”³³⁰

In recent years, jurisdictions like Denver, Colorado, have developed models for increasing clearance rates for nonfatal shootings by launching teams specifically dedicated to investigating nonfatal shootings with the same rigor and resources applied to homicide investigations. In 2019, Denver’s Police Chief noted that Denver had “historically low clearance rates for nonfatal shooting cases — far lower than those for fatal shootings” and decided to expand the resources allocated to investigate such cases by launching a “Firearm Assault Shoot team” (FAST). He initiated this strategy without an increased budget by dedicating seven investigators from the Major Crimes Division to focus specifically on addressing the challenge of unsolved and undeterred shootings.³³¹

According to a report by the Center for American Progress: “Recognizing that unresolved shootings may lead to retaliation and further violence, the [FAST] unit treated cases as they would have homicides and focused intensively, and for a sustained period, on investigations into nonfatal shootings that otherwise might have gone unsolved. Denver increased its nonfatal shooting clearance rate substantially, from only 1 in 6 in 2019 to 60 percent of cases solved in 2023, best among the 20 most populous U.S. cities.”³³² A report on Denver’s initiative by The Marshall Project concluded that “Over the last three years, FAST has cleared hundreds of shootings, arresting suspects or issuing warrants for their capture at nearly triple the department’s previous rate for these violent crimes. The effort has shown that when detectives have the time, resources and commitment, they can resolve most shootings.”³³³

Other cities launched similar initiatives with strong early results. In Columbus, Ohio, the Police Division Chief launched an 18-month pilot program in 2024 that created a Non-Fatal Shooting Team responsible for responding to and investigating non-fatal shootings in a specific patrol zone in the city. “The

approach applies the same successful team concept used to solve homicides, and the same dedication of investigative resources to these cases.”³³⁴ City leaders reported that the pilot “produced a dramatic increase in solve rates. The Non-Fatal Shooting Team has handled 78 cases, with a solve rate of 75 percent, compared to 46 percent for non-fatal shootings citywide.”³³⁵ The Police Chief tied this team’s progress to reductions in gun violence too: “Solving these cases helps us disrupt the cycle of violence being perpetuated by a small percentage of our population . . . We believe the work of this team has not only impacted non-fatal shootings but also contributed to our reduction in fatal shootings. Stopping a non-fatal shooter today prevents a potential homicide tomorrow.”³³⁶

In 2024, officials in St. Paul, Minnesota, launched a new unit to specifically investigate nonfatal shootings. Within one year, the city reportedly increased nonfatal shooting clearance rates from 38% to 71%.³³⁷ Minneapolis launched a similar FAST unit in 2026; the Mayor explained, “we’re done treating nonfatal shootings as lesser crimes,” and local officials have reported increases in clearance rates for nonfatal shootings.³³⁸

These teams must have staffing resources necessary to do their jobs effectively. Evaluations of New York State’s “Nonfatal Shooting Initiative,” which supported a very small team to increase clearance rates in two mid-sized cities found that “initial implementation led to improvements in [nonfatal shooting] clearance rates by as much as 30 percent; however, those gains declined over time as detective caseloads increased.”³³⁹ Research evaluations in other cities have generally concluded that when agencies dedicate more resources and staffing (including through non-sworn personnel) to enhance shooting investigations, improve management structures, and prioritize community engagement and witness protection to garner more witness trust and testimony, they can increase clearance rates and “help prevent further cascades of gun violence in cities by deterring retaliation and incapacitating violent individuals who could persist in their crimes or end up as victims of retaliatory shootings.”³⁴⁰

Based on these and other best practice strategies,³⁴¹ local policymakers and law enforcement agencies should take steps to increase homicide and nonfatal shooting clearance rates as part of a comprehensive plan for reducing gun violence.

Local policymakers should dedicate more funding to these purposes, and law enforcement agencies should also seek to redirect resources within their departments to increase the number of sworn or nonsworn personnel focused specifically on increasing justice for victims of homicides and nonfatal firearm violence. Denver launched the FAST unit without significantly increased budgets or personnel by hiring within its department and training officers and personnel in investigative work.³⁴²

Effective efforts to increase deterrence and accountability for shootings should be complementary to targeted Community Violence Intervention efforts led by non-law enforcement agencies and nonprofit partners. Both, together, can improve safety, reduce incentives for retaliation, and build community trust and engagement by refocusing public safety resources around the most serious crimes, and offering a just mix of prevention, protection, and accountability. Ultimately, these efforts send a strong signal together that the community is coordinating to more effectively protect human life, end perceived impunity for firearm violence, and provide survivors in danger with meaningful pathways to safety and non-violence.

- b. State policymakers should fund the Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Grant Program to support efforts to increase clearance rates for fatal and nonfatal shootings. This grant program was legislatively authorized through Assembly Bill 28 (2023, Gabriel) but has not been funded.**

California should be a leader in addressing a longstanding national challenge of unsolved and undeterred shootings.

Some other states, including Minnesota and New York, have recently launched and funded modest state grant programs to support local initiatives to increase clearance rates for nonfatal shootings, with a specific focus on reducing community gun violence.³⁴³ In 2022, Pennsylvania invested a larger \$50 million in similar efforts through the state’s “Gun Violence Investigation & Prosecution Grant Program.”³⁴⁴ At the federal level, a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers has also repeatedly introduced the VICTIM Act (Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods Act) that proposes funding a new federal grant program to support local government initiatives that have “the specific objective of improving clearance rates for homicides and firearm-related violent crimes.”³⁴⁵

Based on these models, in 2023, California passed legislation that sought to make permanent state investments in increasing clearance rates for firearm homicides and shootings, but these provisions have not been funded or implemented. As described above, California’s Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Act, Assembly Bill 28 (2023, Gabriel), established a new Special Fund for gun violence prevention purposes supported by a modest firearm industry excise tax. That Act included provisions that established the framework for a new “Justice for Victims of Gun Violence” grant program to be administered by the California DOJ to support efforts to solve more firearm homicides and firearm assaults.³⁴⁶ Subject to appropriation by the Legislature, this Act authorized \$15 million per year from the Special Fund to support these grants in California’s highest need jurisdictions, if there was sufficient revenue in the Special Fund for this purpose. There has been insufficient funding in the Special Fund for DOJ to receive any funding for this grant program, and based on current revenue projections, that will not likely change over the next five years.

AB 28 (Gabriel) codified a strong framework for this Justice for Victims of Gun Violence grant program “to support evidence-based activities to equitably improve investigations and clearance rates in firearm homicide and firearm assault investigations in communities disproportionately impacted by firearm homicides and firearm assaults, and thereby help reduce gun violence in communities across California.”³⁴⁷ This Act directed California DOJ to make these grants on a competitive basis for activities that have the specific objective of increasing clearance rates for firearm homicides and nonfatal shootings, including by: “hiring and training detectives dedicated to investigating these offenses, hiring and training personnel or other partners to coordinate with victims and witnesses or to collect, process, and test relevant evidence, improving data analysis, forensics, and technological capacities, and promoting recurring and trauma-informed engagement with victims, witnesses, and other impacted community members in a manner that builds trust, safety, and collaboration.”³⁴⁸

In recent years, advocates have proposed other legislation to codify expanded rights for homicide victims’ family members to request that law enforcement agencies re-investigate older open homicide cases that have been unsolved for multiple years.³⁴⁹ To address concerns that diverting existing resources from active cases to older cases could lead to more unsolved crimes, instead of fewer,³⁵⁰ advocates in California proposed that any funds allocated toward the Justice for Gun Violence Victims Grant Program under Assembly Bill 28 (Gabriel) could be used to help defray law enforcement agencies’ potentially significant associated costs.

With additional funding and investigative resources, bringing more investigative focus to solve older homicide cases would help improve justice and bring peace to survivors. However, for the specific purpose of reducing gun violence, it is the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s assessment that it would be more impactful to focus on increasing agencies’ capacity to solve more recent shootings, especially nonfatal shootings which are much less likely to be cleared than homicides overall and which are commonly tied to risk of repeat attempts on the survivor’s life and cycles of retaliatory violence.

State lawmakers should dedicate funding for California DOJ to implement the Justice for Victims of Gun Violence grant program focused on justly increasing clearance rates to reduce firearm violence in our most impacted communities.

- c. State and local policymakers, and law enforcement agencies, should continue to integrate and strengthen investments in co-responder and tiered dispatch models³⁵¹ that deploy non-sworn personnel, CVI or behavioral health professionals, and other community partners to some calls for service, independently or with law enforcement co-responders, to provide more effective interventions and free law enforcement resources to focus on clearing shootings and other public safety priorities.**

In recent years, more law enforcement agencies have developed strategies for behavioral health professionals, CVI professionals, and other non-sworn safety personnel and crisis responders to respond without sworn law enforcement officers to some noncriminal or lower-level calls for service, or as co-responders with sworn law enforcement officers to others. These strategies recognize that law enforcement resources are often spread very thin responding to circumstances where officers often do not have extensive training or expertise, or may be less able to solicit trust and engagement from community members in crisis. For example, research evaluations found that when civilian CVI professionals mobilized by Los Angeles' Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Incident Response teams co-responded to shootings with the Los Angeles Police Department, rates of retaliatory violence fell by more than 40% compared to control conditions where law enforcement officers responded to the shooting alone.³⁵²

These models can help decrease risks to both officers and civilians, build community trust, and importantly, also reduce burdens on law enforcement agencies. This can allow law enforcement agencies to refocus more resources on emergency response, homicide and shooting clearance, protective order enforcement, and other priority efforts to address the most serious threats to public safety.

Local law enforcement agencies have sought a patchwork of grant opportunities to fund many of these community crisis response or co-responder models through small and temporary state grant programs, including the C.R.I.S.E.S. Act Grant Program and the Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program federal grant. State and local leaders should renew and strengthen funding streams to support these models, and law enforcement agencies should seek to implement and expand these strategies with existing resources.

- d. State policymakers should consider passing legislation to establish new implementation timelines for microstamping mandates under Senate Bill 452, if microstamping firing pins are not commercially available from licensed microstamping component producers by July 1, 2027. State and local policymakers and philanthropic funders should also consider funding grants to scale production and optimization of microstamping firing pins by entities that pass California DOJ reliability testing standards and obtain a state license to produce microstamping components.**

Research has established that incorporating laser-engraved "microstamping" firing pins into firearms is a viable technology that could help law enforcement agencies identify more leads and evidence to solve more shootings.³⁵³ This technology is not yet incorporated in any firearms available for commercial sale. As described below, California has taken some important recent steps toward bringing this technology to market by establishing a framework for testing and certifying the reliability of microstamping components installed in semiautomatic handguns. But additional legislation and investments will likely be required to scale production of microstamping components, promote adoption by the firearm industry, and ensure law enforcement investigators can readily use microstamping information to help identify leads and increase clearance rates.

When an ammunition cartridge is discharged from a firearm, microscopic marks such as distinctive lines, dents, or scratches, are transferred from the firearm to the cartridge case.³⁵⁴ These marks are sometimes referred to as "incidental marks," which are caused by characteristics unique to a specific

firearm, such as tiny imperfections and irregularities on the firearm's parts — such as the firing pin or barrel — produced randomly during manufacture or from subsequent wear and tear. Standard forensic examination processes involve evaluating discharged cartridge cases from a crime scene under microscopes to evaluate the incidental marks that the firearm transferred to the cartridge case during the cycle of fire. These marks are visually compared on multiple fired cartridge cases to try to determine if the same weapon left the same distinct marks on different fired cartridge cases.

Microstamping technology (sometimes referred to as “intentional firearm microstamping”) seeks to supplement these forensic firearm examination tools by incorporating features in a firearm that leave a more intentional “signature” unique to each firearm. Microstamping involves laser-engraving a unique microscopic code onto a firearm's firing pin so that it stamps intentional marks, as opposed to incidental marks, on cartridge cases when a firearm is fired. The goal of this technology is to cause firearms to intentionally stamp a microscopic signature unique to that firearm, similar to a license plate number, on cartridge casings discharged by that firearm. When the face of a laser-engraved firing pin strikes the primer or rim of the cartridge case, the unique laser-machined code structures engraved on the firing pin are intended to stamp a corresponding impression (a “microstamp”) onto the cartridge case that could serve as a unique identifier when that cartridge case is recovered at a crime scene and evaluated under a microscope. By imparting intentional marks unique to the firearm, microstamps could provide more information to forensic analysts than incidental marks do today, even if some portion of the microstamped code is not fully legible under the microscope and even if a suspect firearm had not yet been recovered for further forensic testing.

In 2023, California enacted Senate Bill 452 (Blakespear), which included a staggered implementation schedule for rolling out new mandates and responsibilities related to microstamping components. This law first required California DOJ to investigate the viability of microstamping components installed in semiautomatic pistols. If the DOJ found that microstamping components had demonstrated technological viability, this law required the DOJ to engage in further activities to develop performance standards and a regulatory process for entities that produce microstamping components (such as by laser-engraving firing pins) to demonstrate that those components meet minimum reliability and performance standards in order to qualify for an Senate Bill 452 license from California DOJ to engage in the business of producing microstamping components.

California DOJ completed these steps in 2025. In June 2025, California DOJ issued a public [report](#) that concluded that “it is technologically viable for microstamping components to produce microstamps on spent cartridge casings discharged by a firearm into which the microstamping component has been installed.”³⁵⁵ The report noted that “microstamping is not a perfect technology to solve all firearm crimes, but is a viable technology that could help solve and prosecute more of them more often.”³⁵⁶ The New Jersey Attorney General's Office published a similar technological viability finding and report.³⁵⁷ California DOJ then published performance standards and processes for testing and licensing microstamping components.³⁵⁸

SB 452's timeline then contemplated that California DOJ would award grant funding or service contracts in 2026 to DOJ-licensed producers of microstamping components who passed testing and certification standards and obtained a license to engage in the business of producing microstamping components.³⁵⁹

However, California DOJ has not received any funding for those grants or contracts. Additionally, no person or entity would currently be eligible for those grants or contracts because none have applied for a DOJ license to produce microstamping components to date.

SB 452 requires California DOJ to determine by July 1, 2027, if “[m]icrostamping components at commercially reasonable prices are available from licensees” who passed California DOJ's microstamping performance standards, or if “Options of microstamping-enabled firearms are readily available for purchase in the State of California.”³⁶⁰

If DOJ is unable to issue that certification by that date, no subsequent microstamping-related mandates would take effect at any time under SB 452, even if microstamping components become readily commercially available from licensees at a later date. As a result, lawmakers should consider passing legislation to amend and push back SB 452's implementation timelines, if microstamping firing pins are not commercially available from licensed microstamping component producers by July 1, 2027.

State policymakers should also consider investing a relatively small amount of funding to allow DOJ to fulfill the grants or service contracts contemplated in SB 452. Alternatively, state and local policymakers and philanthropic funders should consider funding grants to more directly scale production and optimization of microstamping firing pins.

Additional funding resources may also be necessary for California DOJ to implement IT upgrades to relevant databases and reporting systems to ensure that a firearm's unique microstamping code (called the Firearm Identification Number)³⁶¹ is reported in a consistent manner and available to law enforcement agencies around the state seeking to trace spent cartridge cases recovered from crime scenes to the recorded purchaser associated with that firearm.

14. Promote safe firearm storage, especially around children and teens, and promote efforts to temporarily store firearms outside the home during periods of suicidal crisis or other acute risk.

- a. Public health and safety stakeholders should prioritize efforts to improve norms around safe firearm storage, including through plain language public education campaigns from trusted messengers, counseling by pediatricians and other healthcare providers, and free or low-cost distribution of certified firearm safety devices.

Comprehensive public education efforts are required to shape safe firearm storage practices and norms, especially to prevent minors from gaining unsupervised access to firearms to cause intentional or unintentional harm to themselves or others. Research reviews indicate that the most effective strategies to improve safe firearm storage practices combine information from trusted credible messengers, such as healthcare professionals, with distribution of firearm safety devices like cable and trigger locks or secure gun cases.³⁶²

Contrary to clear recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics, national research survey data indicates that only three in ten American adults in households with children reported storing all guns unloaded and locked.³⁶³ Other survey data also indicates that many gun owners do not appreciate the connection between unsafe firearm storage practices and risks to youth safety, including suicide, unintentional shootings, and interpersonal violence.³⁶⁴ This is a longstanding public education challenge and should continue to be a priority for public health-based approaches to gun violence prevention.

California has adopted safe firearm storage legislation requiring firearms to be securely stored when they are not in use to prevent theft and unauthorized access. California law generally makes it a crime for a person to store a firearm in a manner that makes the weapon accessible to unsupervised minors or to individuals who are legally prohibited from accessing firearms.³⁶⁵ California law generally requires firearm dealers to ensure firearm purchasers receive a [firearm safety device](#) at the time of sale, such as a secure gun safe or a locking device, that has been certified as passing safety and reliability tests conducted by DOJ-certified laboratories.³⁶⁶ Effective January 1, 2026, California law also requires individuals to ensure firearms they possess in a residence are securely stored using a DOJ-certified firearm safety device or secure gun safe whenever a lawful authorized user is not carrying the firearm on their person or within close enough proximity to readily prevent unauthorized users from gaining unsupervised access to the firearm.³⁶⁷ (Biometric “smart gun” models have also been certified for sale in California that integrate a biometric lock as a certified firearm safety device into the design of the firearm itself).³⁶⁸

Improving awareness and compliance with these standards is important for preventing youth violence, suicide, and unintentional shootings. It is critical for preventing mass shootings: The National Threat Assessment Center found that over three-quarters of minors who use firearms to commit school shootings accessed firearms from the home of a parent or another close relative.³⁶⁹ In nearly half of school shootings perpetrated by minors, the minor used firearms that were either readily accessible or “not secured in a meaningful way.”³⁷⁰ (In another 16% of these shootings, the minor gained access to firearms from a locked gun safe or container because they knew how to access the keys or combination).³⁷¹

Improving safe firearm storage practices can also aid in suicide prevention. A large majority of suicide attempts do not result in death, unless they involve firearms. Adolescents and young adults are at uniquely high risk for suicide attempts, so efforts to prevent young people from accessing the most uniquely lethal common means of suicide during impulsive periods of suicidal crisis can often make a lifesaving difference. Research data is clear that “[w]hile the risk of youth suicide is lowest in families

with no firearms at home, among gun-owning families, youths living in homes in which all firearms are stored unloaded and locked are at lower risk for suicide than those living in homes in which firearms are stored less securely.”³⁷²

To inform parents about these laws and their importance, and shape firearm storage norms, California enacted two bills in 2022 requiring school districts to send semi-annual notices to parents about California’s safe firearm storage laws.³⁷³ These laws were an important first step, but advocates have identified recommended improvements to ensure these notices use more accessible language, are posted in multiple formats on social media or school websites, and are integrated into standard annual school safety checklist procedures to promote long-term awareness and more consistent implementation by school districts. Many of these recommendations have been included in Assembly Bill 1943 (2026, Gipson). Lawmakers should pass this legislation.

Healthcare professionals should also emphasize the importance of safe firearm storage with their patients, and should seek to disseminate firearm safety devices in the clinical setting, especially to firearm-owning parents with minors or young adults under 21 in the home and/or household members living with people with significant risk factors for violence or suicide. Healthcare professionals at the California Firearm Violence Research Center developed a comprehensive online public education campaign called “The Bullet Points Project,” which includes training and guidance resources for healthcare professionals in multiple formats about how to counsel patients about safe firearm storage and develop clinical tools for preventing firearm injury.³⁷⁴ Healthcare professionals should utilize these and other resources to integrate safe firearm storage counseling and other efforts to reduce risk of violence, suicide, and unintentional firearm injuries into clinical practice.

In recent years, some local law enforcement agencies and public health departments have also implemented programs to mail or distribute certified firearm safety devices for free in many settings. These free distribution campaigns can provide important opportunities for trusted public health and safety agencies to communicate the importance of safe firearm storage and about California’s legal mandates to use certified firearm safety devices.

Law enforcement agencies and public health departments should implement these distribution programs, which research indicates may be more effective and cost-effective alternatives to traditional gun buybacks.³⁷⁵

b. Suicide prevention stakeholders should promote awareness and utilization of new California laws designed to help families voluntarily transfer firearms to firearm dealers or other lawful adults for temporary safekeeping in periods of crisis.

When people are in suicidal or mental crisis, the presence of a firearm in the home can be a significant risk factor for lethal outcomes. People in crisis, and their family members and support networks, should be informed about the multiple options that California law provides to help people quickly transfer firearms out of the home for temporary safekeeping to build more distance between a person in crisis and the weapon. Voluntary safekeeping options are not always a best practice, since they may still allow a very dangerous or acutely suicidal individual to retrieve the firearms on demand or purchase or acquire others; in some cases, legally enforceable restrictions on firearm access are required to ensure a dangerous or suicidal individual cannot possess or acquire firearms for a temporary period and would be ineligible to pass firearm background checks. But families in suicidal or other crisis should be informed about all safety options available to prevent harm, including options for voluntary temporary safekeeping.

Through Senate Bill 368 (Portantino), enacted in 2023, California became the first state to require retail firearm dealers to offer temporary firearm safekeeping services, for a reasonable fee, for a minimum number of firearms per year.³⁷⁶ In other states, suicide and gun violence prevention advocates have

undertaken challenging and important efforts to develop searchable lists and maps of firearm dealers who indicated that they would be willing to accept firearms for temporary safekeeping storage. But California law now affirmatively requires a licensed firearms dealer to do so, if they sell firearms and operate a retail premises open to the general public.

Some suicide prevention advocates have expressed concern that individuals transferring firearms to licensed dealers for this purpose would face stigma or law enforcement scrutiny, but California dealers recorded around 1,000 separate voluntary safekeeping transactions in the first year this law took effect, indicating that this is an appealing safety option for some people. It is also important to emphasize that temporary safekeeping transfers are not specific to suicide or mental health issues. No record associated with these transfers identifies the transfer as mental health-related, and utilizing this law to voluntarily store firearms outside the home in no way implies that the firearm owner is the person at risk. Senate Bill 368 more broadly requires dealers to offer temporary safekeeping storage services to people who wish to “prevent [the firearm] from being accessed or used by the transferor or other persons that may gain access to it in the transferor’s household, causing significant danger of personal injury to themselves or others.” That could include circumstances in which a firearm owner is in suicidal crisis, but could also include many other circumstances, such as if a firearm owner wishes to store firearms outside the home for a temporary period while a struggling family member is visiting their household.

Other California statutes also authorize firearm owners to temporarily transfer firearms directly to another lawful adult for temporary safekeeping for suicide prevention (pursuant to Penal Code section 27882) or other safety purposes (pursuant to Penal Code section 27883), without a licensed dealer transaction or dealer storage, if the person storing the firearm does not access or use the firearm in any manner except when returning it, keeps the firearm securely stored with a certified firearm safety device at all times, and meets certain other requirements.³⁷⁷ Somewhat restrictive limitations apply if the transfer is not related to suicide prevention purposes; lawmakers should consider updating Penal Code section 27883 to remove counterproductive barriers and restrictions in these cases.

Suicide prevention and safety stakeholders should ensure families navigating crisis situations understand all of these important options available under California law to facilitate voluntary firearm transfers outside the home.

c. Law enforcement agencies should develop programs that encourage interested community members to temporarily transfer firearms to the agency for suicide prevention or safekeeping purposes.

To comply with Assembly Bill 451 (2025, Petrie-Norris), law enforcement agencies should ensure they post accessible information on agency websites about how local residents can safely relinquish firearms to the agency, either to comply with firearm relinquishment obligations or on a voluntary basis to prevent the firearm from being accessed by a household member during a period of crisis.

Some law enforcement agencies have gone further by affirmatively establishing programs to accept and store firearms for temporary safekeeping purposes. In 2025, the San Francisco Police Department launched a new “Safe Gun Storage Program” that provides city residents with the option to temporarily transfer firearms for safekeeping at any of the city’s district police stations for up to one year at no cost.³⁷⁸ Assembly Bill 1974 (2026, Stefani) would codify various provisions to encourage other law enforcement agencies to adopt similar safekeeping policies statewide.

These efforts can help ensure that families navigating periods of suicidal or other crisis have a range of accessible options for removing firearms from the home quickly and safely.

d. Law enforcement agencies and other eligible petitioners should consider requesting Gun Violence Restraining Orders against individuals who pose a significant danger of causing firearm injury by unlawfully failing to secure firearms, especially from unsupervised children or teen household members exhibiting significant warning signs of violence.

California law authorizes courts to issue a Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) against a person who is found to pose a significant danger of causing personal injury with firearms, if the order is necessary under the circumstances. While most GVROs are issued to address dangers of intentional interpersonal violence or suicide, the court does not need to find that the person subject to the GVRO is a significant danger of directly inflicting firearm injury by pulling the trigger themselves.³⁷⁹ Courts have issued GVROs and equivalent court orders in other states in cases where individuals' behavior created a significant danger of causing other people to injure themselves or others with firearms, including when adults unlawfully failed to secure firearms to prevent access by unsupervised children or by teen household members exhibiting significant warning signs of mass shooting risk.³⁸⁰

In these examples, the underlying unsafe storage and child endangerment conduct could constitute a crime resulting in a 10-year firearm prohibition upon conviction under California law.³⁸¹ However, especially when prosecutors do not pursue criminal charges for failing to secure firearms from children and dangerous teens, law enforcement agencies and other eligible GVRO petitioners — including the four district attorneys' offices currently authorized to petition for GVROs — should also consider the GVRO as an important civil safety intervention option.

In a growing number of cases nationwide, prosecutors seeking to deter gun violence are pursuing manslaughter and other serious felony charges against parents whose children commit school shootings for allowing dangerous minors to access firearms.³⁸² More proactive and preventative efforts to obtain GVROs against people who unlawfully provide minors with unsupervised access to firearms could help reduce safety risks, provide a temporary civil harm reduction measure, and also shape norms around secure firearm storage to prevent youth violence in particular.

15. Promote safety in schools and through schools by expanding investments in school-based violence prevention, behavioral health services, and multidisciplinary threat assessment and management teams, and by embedding social-emotional learning and cognitive behavioral intervention into the school curriculum.

- a. State and local policymakers and education agencies should seek to promote gun violence prevention through expanded investments in school-based CVI or behavioral health services, and multidisciplinary behavioral threat assessment and management teams, in districts most impacted by gun violence.**

The Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Act enacted in 2023 (AB 28 (Gabriel)) sought to permanently dedicate up to \$50 million per year in Special Fund revenue to the California Department of Education (CDE) for gun violence prevention-related purposes. The Legislature subsequently enacted legislation that sought to direct the CDE to use most of this funding to support a behavioral health training course for educators, but there has been insufficient revenue in that Special Fund to award any funding to CDE for gun violence prevention purposes to date.

Returning to the central theme of this strategic plan report, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention recommends that scarce gun violence prevention funding be directed first toward programs that have the specific goal of reducing gun violence by working with students at highest risk in communities most impacted by gun violence. California has invested billions toward expanding access to behavioral health supports for youth through the Children and Youth Behavioral Health initiative, in an “After School for All” initiative to expand after-school programming supports for students through sixth grade, and in other important youth mentorship and development initiatives.

School-based gun violence prevention investments should fill gaps left in these much larger investments to address the highest unmet needs, such as for programs that embed CVI professionals in the school setting in communities most impacted by community gun violence, or provide more staffing resources for behavioral health professionals to support multidisciplinary behavioral threat assessment and management teams tasked with identifying and providing intensive counseling and supportive services to students exhibiting behavioral warning signs of violence or suicide. Resources should be directed first to districts with the fewest local resources and highest rates of violence.

- b. State and local policymakers and school districts should integrate evidence-based social-emotional learning and cognitive behavioral intervention programs into the school curriculum to build students’ skills at conflict resolution, self-regulation, positive relationships, and social norms against violence.**

This strategic plan has generally prioritized policies and investments focused on intensive interventions with individuals assessed as highest risk of victimization or involvement in gun violence, as opposed to lighter-touch approaches seeking to reach broad segments of the community. However, the school setting provides important and cost-effective opportunities to scale more universal efforts to shape social norms around violence, promote positive social development and relationships, and integrate emotional regulation and conflict resolution education into the educational curriculum.

These programs and strategies often fall under the umbrella term of “social-emotional learning (SEL).” Some school-based SEL programs have shown strong promise in reducing violent and aggressive behavior by integrating insights from the cognitive behavioral interventions that are essential to many CVI strategies. They focus in part on building students’ skills at engaging deliberate and controlled responses to regulate impulsive, reactive behavior and manage conflicts that might otherwise escalate to violence. Researchers have generally found that a number of school-based SEL programs focused on

building those skills are effective at reducing students' violent and aggressive behavior over the short and long-term,³⁸³ and that across grade levels, the students who exhibit the highest risk of violent and aggressive behaviors also receive the greatest benefit from these interventions.³⁸⁴ The section below discusses examples from two programs with relatively strong evidence directly relating to violent crime for elementary school students (the Good Behavior Game) and Becoming a Man (for middle and high school students).³⁸⁵

Elementary school: The Good Behavior Game

Children engaged in aggressive behavior in preschool and early elementary school are at higher risk of engaging in violence and antisocial behavior in young adulthood.³⁸⁶ Early interventions can help address these behaviors and disrupt the developmental pathways that lead to more serious challenges later in life.

The Good Behavior Game (GBG) seeks to decrease aggressive-disruptive behavior through approaches from social field theory.³⁸⁷ Teachers integrate the GBG into regular instruction by splitting the classroom into teams, intentionally distributing potentially aggressive or disruptive students among different teams.³⁸⁸ The teacher clearly outlines behavioral expectations for the class and the rules of the GBG: during regular instruction, whenever a student exhibits a disruptive behavior, that student's team receives a point. Any team that does not have more than four points by the end of the game period wins the GBG, with all members of the team winning either a prize or a rewarding activity.³⁸⁹ The GBG intervention leverages peer bonding and accountability to shape the classroom culture and norms, build self-regulation skills, and encourage positive social cohesion as students are incentivized to help their teammates behave well. The GBG provides an avenue for positive socialization in the classroom and has been found to significantly reduce aggressive and disruptive behaviors in elementary school students.³⁹⁰

Research has also indicated lasting benefits in adolescence and adulthood too.³⁹¹ Researchers found that at ages 19-21, young adults who had received GBG instruction in their first-grade classroom had lower rates of antisocial personality disorder, lower rates of drug abuse or dependence disorders, and higher high school graduation rates, compared to students who were in a control group without GBG instruction.³⁹²

Researchers found that the largest benefits from GBG instruction were for males who were rated as highly aggressive and disruptive by their first-grade teachers.³⁹³ At ages 19-21, males who had been rated as highly aggressive and disruptive by their first-grade teachers had much lower rates of drug dependence or abuse disorders if they were in a GBG first-grade classroom, much higher high school graduation rates,³⁹⁴ and lower rates of criminal conduct and antisocial personality disorder.³⁹⁵

Middle School and High School Programs: Becoming a Man

Developed by a Chicago non-profit organization called Youth Guidance, the Becoming a Man (BAM) program is designed for middle and high school males from 7th to 12th grade. It was first implemented in dozens of schools in Chicago before it was expanded to Boston, Dallas, Kansas City, Los Angeles, and London.³⁹⁶ The BAM program uses one-hour, once-per-week group sessions during the school day over the school year.³⁹⁷ The total number of sessions depends on whether the BAM curriculum is completed in one or two years.

Counselors who are credible messengers sharing similar backgrounds to the student population guide participating students to internalize six core values: Integrity, Accountability for one's actions and behaviors, Self-Determination, Positive Anger Expression, Respect for Womanhood, and Visionary Goal-

Setting to connect positive behaviors with long-term success. The curriculum is grounded in sociological research emphasizing the importance of trusted mentorship and rites-of-passage for adolescent development, as well as cognitive behavioral interventions. BAM uses a variety of methods to teach students to recognize patterns of impulsive “fast-thinking” that may lead to misunderstandings and escalatory behaviors, and to cultivate patterns of more deliberative and accountable behavior. As the program’s materials describe: “Each session is built around a lesson plan designed to develop a specific skill through stories, role-playing and group exercises. BAM students learn and practice impulse control, emotional self-regulation, recognition of social cues and interpreting intentions of others, raising aspirations for the future, and developing a sense of personal responsibility and integrity.”³⁹⁸

For the one-year program, researchers found that BAM was associated with 28% reductions in arrests among students who participated in the BAM curriculum, and a 45% reduction in violent-crime arrests, compared to random control groups who were not assigned to a BAM program. There were even larger effects for the two-year program, with a 35% reduction in total arrests and 50% reduction in violent-crime arrests compared to the control group.³⁹⁹

When scaling and expanding to new sites, these programs have sometimes faced challenges replicating the same degree of reductions. But they nonetheless have added to a large and growing research base showing that school-based SEL programs designed to build students’ skills at self-regulation, conflict resolution, and positive relationships can have a significant positive impact on a range of outcomes associated with gun violence risk.

As a result, California should integrate these types of evidence-based programs into the school curriculum and educational practice, with a goal of fostering peace-building skills and protective factors to reduce violence for every student in California — starting first in communities most impacted by violence and homicide.

Legislation is moving through the Legislature in 2026, Assembly Bill 1851 (Gipson), which would direct the California Department of Education, by July 1, 2027, to enter into a contract with one or more local educational agencies, to serve as lead entities in providing support for the implementation of integrated, universal social-emotional learning, behavioral health, and restorative practices for pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12.

16. Implement targeted place-based strategies that seek to reduce gun violence by transforming highly impacted communities' built and social environment.

Community gun violence is often highly concentrated at the neighborhood and sub-neighborhood level, with many public shootings occurring in concentrated “hot spots” around certain blocks, liquor establishments, or blighted or vacant lots with little natural foot traffic. Targeted efforts to transform the physical and social environment in these locations may help transform the conditions that increase risk of concentrated gun violence.

“Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)” refers to a set of strategies that seek to modify the physical and social environment of highly impacted locations in a manner that deters crime; increases the likelihood that offenders will be detected by witnesses or law enforcement; fosters collective efficacy and informal social control by empowering community members to reclaim and gather in community spaces; and increases the likelihood that bystanders will be able to intervene to deescalate public disputes before they escalate to impulsive violence. A growing body of research has shown that targeted CPTED efforts can contribute to reductions in violent crime in hot spot locations or impacted neighborhoods, such as by improving street lighting; creating and maintaining small pocket parks on previously blighted or abandoned lots that had become magnets for criminal activity and violent conflict; remediating blight; creating or revitalizing community spaces; and through other place-based changes that increase “natural surveillance,” strengthen informal social control, and reduce opportunities for undeterred violent encounters.⁴⁰⁰

Some CPTED studies have reported very substantial reductions in outdoor violent crime. For example, researchers recently conducted two randomized studies that found that improving lighting in public housing developments in New York City was associated with large reductions in outdoor “index crimes” (including murder, non-negligent manslaughter, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, grand larceny and motor vehicle theft).⁴⁰¹ City officials provided the researchers with a list of 80 high-priority housing developments, and 40 of those developments were randomly assigned to receive large temporary light structures, while the remaining were used as a control group and received no lighting improvements.⁴⁰² Results from the experiment based on a six-month study period showed that deployment of temporary light structures reduced outdoor nighttime index crimes by 60% within the housing developments, with little evidence that crime was displaced to other areas.⁴⁰³ A follow-up study extended the time-period to three years and found large enduring reductions in both outdoor nighttime and daytime index crimes.⁴⁰⁴ These effects on outdoor daytime, as well as nighttime index crimes, suggest that lighting improvements may have reduced crime through “demonstration effects” that show the developments are being cared for and empower residents to exert greater informal social control, as well as through “incapacitation effects” by potentially improving enforcement efforts to arrest and deter the individuals driving crime at all hours.⁴⁰⁵

Multiple other studies have also evaluated CPTED initiatives designed to reduce violent crime by cleaning up vacant lots that were hot spots for illegal activity and creating community pocket parks in these locations with small bushes, trees, grass, and low fencing with open entry points. Some of these initiatives also paid local community members to mow and maintain these parks. Researchers have generally found that these and other place-based CPTED initiatives to remediate abandoned or blighted sites led to reductions in violent crime without negative spillover effects into other areas, and that these reductions were especially large in neighborhoods most impacted by concentrated poverty.⁴⁰⁶

Some CPTED replication studies have found much more modest effects, but directionally, there is a growing evidence base that these targeted place-based interventions generally work to reduce gun violence by at least a modest amount, can complement interventions focused on the highest risk people, and should be part of a comprehensive approach to sustainably reducing community violence.

State and local gun violence prevention stakeholders should seek to incorporate targeted CPTED efforts into gun violence prevention strategies. Public health and safety stakeholders, including local offices of violence prevention, should use data to identify hot spot locations and coordinate with other public agencies and nonprofits responsible for lighting, lot remediation, park maintenance, and community planning and development, to implement targeted place-based strategies with the specific goal of reducing community violence and fostering the conditions for sustaining those reductions.

Once state and local policymakers have provided more adequate funding for CVI initiatives focused on intervention with the people at highest risk, they should also consider creating complementary funding streams to support these place-based interventions and other efforts to transform community conditions in hot spot locations and neighborhoods most impacted by community gun violence.

17. Invest in gun violence prevention research.

For decades, federal law placed limitations on the use of federal funds for gun violence prevention research, which caused a profound and harmful chilling effect.⁴⁰⁷ This chilling effect was so severe that it prompted some researchers to research the lack of research on gun violence.⁴⁰⁸ Those researchers analyzed data from 2004-2015 on the amount of funding dedicated to research on leading causes of death in the U.S. and the number of research publications published on those topics; they found that gun violence research had received 1.6% of the funding predicted and generated 4.5% of the number of research publications predicted based on the number of people killed by firearm injuries compared to other leading causes of death. “In relation to mortality rates, gun violence research was the least-researched cause of death and the second-least funded cause of death after falls.”⁴⁰⁹

California has played a leading role in filling this research vacuum. In 2016, California passed the California Firearm Violence Research Act to establish the California Firearm Violence Research Center (The Center), centered at the University of California, Davis, as the nation’s first state-funded center for gun violence research. The Center’s mission is to “conduct basic, translational, and transformative research that provides sound scientific evidence on the nature, causes, consequences and prevention of firearm violence; to disseminate that evidence and promote the adoption of evidence-based firearm violence prevention measures; and to expand and extend such efforts through education and training in firearm violence research and its applications.”⁴¹⁰ This Center is a branch of the U.C. Davis Centers for Violence Prevention, which also houses a longstanding Violence Prevention Research Program.⁴¹¹

In addition to conducting direct research activities, the Center also engages in a variety of activities to support public dissemination of research findings, provide technical assistance and evaluation support to state and local policymakers, train new investigators in the small field of firearm violence research, and support external research partners’ research and evaluation work through a small grants program.⁴¹² The Center has developed important public education programs, including the BulletPointsProject described above, which provides important and accessible information to healthcare professionals about clinical tools for preventing firearm injury.

Research published by the Center has spotlighted emerging threats, trends, and policy opportunities, including on firearm relinquishment, ghost guns, domestic violence and misdemeanor-related firearm eligibility standards, Gun Violence Restraining Order implementation, and the importance of CVI strategies. Research conducted by the Center has informed many of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s publications and policy efforts, including this strategic plan.

California’s state-level investments in research are especially critical now because the Trump Administration has caused significant harm to new efforts to revive gun violence prevention research at the federal level. A January 2026 analysis by the research-focused nonprofit RAND Corporation stated:

Beginning around March 2025, the National Institute of Justice, the National Institutes of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cancelled millions of dollars of research that had already been funded across a wide set of research domains, withdrew planned solicitations that could have sponsored firearm violence prevention research, and cancelled or postponed grant reviews related to firearm violence prevention. As of January 2026, none of these agencies have issued new calls for proposals on this topic, despite congressional appropriations specifically for this purpose. Coinciding with the federal withdrawal of investments, some major philanthropic supporters have also reduced their investments in such research . . .

Without a sustained and stable commitment of resources, the already weak infrastructure for measuring important aspects of firearm use, policy, and violence may further decay.⁴¹³

California's Firearm Violence Research Center has received about \$3 million annually in California's state budget. Governor Newsom has championed these investments, but it will be critical for state policymakers to ensure this funding is protected and renewed over the next five years as a key component of a California's commitment to data-driven evaluation, education, and improvement for public safety.

18. Promote impact-oriented grant-making to reduce gun violence.

- a. **State and local policymakers, grant-making agencies, and other funders should seek to ensure gun violence prevention-related grant programs prioritize impact first and reduce counter-productive administrative burdens and barriers to entry.**

Through the process of developing and growing the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program from a small \$9 million pilot program to a \$227 million program from 2022-2025, grantees and advocates identified a number of procedural barriers to success and, through Assembly Bill 762 (2023, Wicks) successfully advocated for a number of process improvements to address them.

Future grantmaking activities should be informed by these efforts to center program impact by providing a defined theory of change and focus for grant applicants, and minimizing administrative burdens and barriers to entry. Assembly Bill 762 codified the following in the CalVIP Grant program framework for the 2026-2029 grant cycle:

- Providing clearly defined and predictable focus areas for the grant program so that grantees are expected to implement a select number of relatively similar strategies, focused on similar populations, and with similar metrics of success. These focus areas left considerable room for innovation and authorized grantees to adapt elements from multiple evidence-based models to meet local needs, but they also articulated a clear theory of change that required applicants to implement evidence-based CVI interventions focused on engaging individuals identified as highest risk and for the specific purpose of reducing community gun violence within three years.
- Limiting eligibility for grant funding to grantees that serve residents in a list of jurisdictions that have the highest rates and/or numbers of homicides or firearm assaults.
- Requiring grant proposals to specifically state how they will identify, engage, and provide violence intervention services to individuals at high risk of gun violence in the near future.
- Requiring grant proposals to provide clearly defined and measurable objectives for their proposed project and information explaining how the project would likely reduce gun violence specifically.
- Requiring the grant-making agency to prioritize funding based on applicants' demonstrated need and likelihood of success at reducing gun violence within the three-year grant period.
- Generally requiring local government applicants to apply with designated community-based organization partners.
- Eliminating requirements that grantees provide any matching funds to qualify for state grants. Grantees reported that these funding match requirements imposed significant administrative burdens for separately tracking state and local funding, and kept some highly effective but cash-strapped cities or organizations from being able to apply for state funding.⁴¹⁴
- Providing at least 20% of the total grant award to successful grant applicants at the start of the grant period, so grantees can immediately hire and expand services, instead of carrying costs for many months before being able to receive any reimbursement.⁴¹⁵
- Providing larger grants over a period of at least three years, instead of the much smaller one or two-year microgrants commonly seen in other grant programs.

- Providing set-aside funding for the administering agency to provide dedicated technical assistance for grantees on data collection and administrative requirements, including through externally contracted technical assistance providers.
- Evaluating data collection and administrative requirements with a critical eye to seek to ensure that program resources are focused on preventing gun violence as much as possible, while also tracking and reporting relevant data and verifying state funds are used for appropriate purposes.
- Requiring a public report once per grant cycle on the impact of initiatives supported by the grant.
- Establishing a grant steering or advisory committee to make recommendations on grant applications, scoring criteria, and in scoring grant proposals, including input from multiple state and local public agencies, subject matter experts with direct experience implementing gun violence prevention programs, and survivors of gun violence.⁴¹⁶

These codified process improvements have not solved all grant administration challenges by any means, but they provide more clarity and predictability to prospective grantees and the grantmaking agency about the purpose of the grant, reduced administrative barriers to entry, and directed more grant funding toward programs focused on, and accountable for, achieving demonstrable reductions in gun violence. These efforts were so successful at reducing barriers that the number of applicants requesting CalVIP grants nearly tripled after these changes took effect.

Agencies implementing other gun violence prevention-related grants at the state, local, and philanthropic level should identify opportunities to incorporate similar improvements to grantmaking processes, to reduce counterproductive barriers to entry, ensure maximum impact, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and data collection requirements divorced from evaluation needs, and empower more impact-oriented grantmaking.

b. State policymakers should consider allocating some gun violence reduction grant funds outside the competitive grant model to a select number of cities or counties that have had chronically high rates of homicide and firearm assault.

Most public health, safety, and victim service grant programs in California and other states operate on a competitive grant structure. In that structure, a state agency — often under the direction or advisement of a grant steering committee composed of outside experts and volunteers — develops and releases a grant application; develops the scoring criteria that will be used to score each proposal; and then, after a short application window, scores and ranks the grant proposals and awards any available funding to the highest scoring applicants.

At its best, this competitive process allows the most promising and needed projects to rise to the top on merit. Agencies like California’s Board of State and Community Correction (BSCC), have developed and implemented a number of evidence-based processes to inform prospective applicants, train grant reviewers to try to standardize scoring, and provide a fair and transparent process for competing for state funding support.

A competitive grant model can also reflect and reinforce inequities. In practice, more well-off communities may often out-compete communities with the highest rates of gun violence. They may be more likely to have dedicated grant-writers, to already have a relatively robust public safety strategy and stronger capacity to adapt existing programs to meet the requirements of a new grant; and they may be better able to leverage local funding commitments and partnerships on short notice during

limited application windows, including to meet local funding match requirements. As a result, they may make a stronger case in the grant application that they will be able to hit the ground running to implement a brand name strategy and comply with sometimes complicated fiscal, auditing, and reimbursement-based billing requirements.

In comparison, communities with a more limited tax base and public safety infrastructure may be applying for funds to expand staffing capacity and develop new infrastructure and partnerships where little to none existed before. They may also struggle to develop a comprehensive proposal and identify local funding sources within short application windows.

Despite these challenges, the competitive CalVIP Grant Program in particular has been an important source of funding for smaller and high-poverty communities that have often not received other significant public safety investments, as detailed in Part 1's CalVIP case studies. Even CalVIP has allocated some scarce funding to support highly effective models in cities and counties with relatively lower rates of violence.

Some other states have experimented with alternatives to the competitive grant process that automatically make a select number of highest-need communities eligible for designated public safety funding from the state. Experts have stressed that there are potential challenges with this approach; by guaranteeing funding for highest need communities, the state retained little discretion and control to ensure that local governments implemented evidence-based practices, or actually used these funds for gun violence prevention purposes at all.

As a result, this report recommends that policymakers consider limited, pilot approaches to grantmaking outside a competitive grant process. State lawmakers should consider making dedicated gun violence reduction funding available to a select number of highest need cities or counties subject to relatively clear requirements that empower state agencies to ensure these funds are used effectively. Local governments receiving these dedicated funds outside the competitive grant process could be required to submit a gun violence reduction plan to qualify for those funds and could be required to certify that those funds will be used for a limited menu of specific evidence-based interventions and purposes.

- c. State policymakers should consider updating the Board of State and Community Corrections' (BSCC) name and mandates to reflect that BSCC is currently the primary administering agency for most public safety and violence reduction-related grants in California. State policymakers should also consider other efforts to consolidate gun violence prevention-related grantmaking responsibilities.**

Many stakeholders have reported confusion about the fact that most prevention-oriented public safety grantmaking in California is administered through an agency called the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). This confusion is driven in part by the title of this state agency, which does not accurately reflect the leading role it plays in administering prevention-oriented public safety grant programs far beyond the corrections context.⁴¹⁷ In recent years, BSCC's "Corrections Planning and Grant Programs" division reported administering approximately \$400 million annually in grant funding to more than 700 individual grant recipients through 25 different grant programs that "address public health and safety needs, including but not limited to mental health and substance abuse disorder treatment, diversion from the formal justice system, rental assistance and reentry services for people coming out of prison, and community-based violence reduction efforts."⁴¹⁸ Recent examples include the:⁴¹⁹

- Adult Reentry Grant (ARG) and ARG Rehab of Existing Property program
- Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (Byrne SCIP) grant program

- California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant program
- Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) program
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) grant program
- Mobile Probation Service Centers Grant Program
- Officer Wellness and Mental Health Grant Program
- Proposition 47 Grant Program
- Proposition 64 Public Health & Safety Grant Program
- Public Defense Pilot Program
- Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) grant program

BSCC's extensive role in public safety planning and grant-making should be reflected in the agency's name, mandates, and staffing capacity.

Additionally, multiple recent gun violence prevention-related reports, including from the Commission on Behavioral Health, have recommended consolidating more of California's gun violence prevention-related grantmaking and planning activities, which are currently spread among multiple agencies to a degree that is unusual compared to other states.⁴²⁰ Most of California's public safety-related grants are administered by BSCC, while domestic violence and victim-service related grants are generally administered by the Office of Emergency Services; some smaller or temporary grants have been administered through California DOJ, the Judicial Council of California, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Public Health, and other agencies. The very limited number of recent grants focused specifically on gun violence prevention have generally been administered by BSCC, with small grants administered by the Judicial Council and DOJ. Notably, BSCC's grant steering committee process creates some opportunities for inter-agency collaboration; for example, in 2025-2026, the BSCC convened an Executive Steering Committee for the CalVIP Grant Program that included both DOJ's Office of Gun Violence Prevention and the Department of Public Health.

This report does not include a specific recommendation on whether or how to consolidate grantmaking, but policymakers and advocates should consider the following in determining where to place future gun violence prevention-focused grantmaking responsibilities:

Prevention and intervention-oriented gun violence reduction grants should generally be administered by agencies where the leadership structure, staffing, and agency culture:

- Reflect familiarity with evidence-based gun violence prevention and intervention strategies.
- Allow the agency to conduct day-to-day administrative duties effectively, and provide responsive service to grantees. This can require significant administrative and staffing capacity, especially for reimbursement-based grants in which the agency must promptly review, correct, and approve or deny billing requests submitted by grantees who often have varying levels of experience with fiscal management and grant compliance. Grant administration staff should have the time and motivation to set the grant program up for success and problem-solve. This distinguishes a grantmaking agency that proactively engages with prospective applicants to promote awareness and strong applications instead of merely quietly posting a funding

opportunity on a website. This also distinguishes an agency that proactively contacts grantees to correct errors in reimbursement requests instead of merely denying a technically deficient request.

- Empower the agency to maintain a disciplined focus on impact for the people and places at highest risk. Agencies may face strong pressures to spread scarce funding thin across many jurisdictions and programs, or toward politically popular projects serving lower-risk people and places. Strong grantmaking agencies have a clear theory of change that empowers more relentless focus on impact and accountability for results. In various aspects of program design, grantmaking agencies may also have to choose between funding an organization that has little grant administration experience but strong experience reducing violence in an impacted community, or instead a brand name legacy organization that has robust grant administrative experience but little demonstrated record of reducing violence. Gun violence prevention grantmaking should be placed with agencies that have an impact-oriented culture and leadership that prioritizes investment in the former.



Conclusion: A Blueprint for Sustained Progress

As this strategic plan has emphasized from the start of Part 1, California has achieved something historic: in recent years, California became safer from gun violence than at any other time on record. That progress is a remarkable achievement. It is also at risk today. Sustaining these reductions will be an important challenge for the next Governor and public safety stakeholders across the state.

But California can achieve much more in the years to come by strengthening state and local investments in gun violence prevention capacity and implementing priority recommendations from this strategic plan. As noted above, cutting firearm homicide and assault victimization rates by another 30–50% below recent record lows would be a very ambitious but achievable goal, bringing California's gun violence rates in line with the safest large states in the nation and preventing thousands more fatal and nonfatal shootings each year.

Part 1 provided a comprehensive foundation of data and posed a direct question: will California's budgets reflect the lessons of its recent successes?

Part 2 has laid out dozens of detailed recommendations across 18 focus areas that rest on a core foundation: California must pair strong laws, rigorous implementation, and effective enforcement with much stronger investment in strategies to reduce gun violence among the people and places at greatest risk.

California has shown that transformational progress against gun violence is possible. It is up to us now to choose to demand further progress against gun violence, and to act and invest accordingly.

Endnotes

- 1 Based on the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s analysis of data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WONDER, Multiple Cause of Death data portal. In 2024, California’s crude firearm death rate was 7.24 per 100,000. If the rest of the U.S. (the other 49 states and D.C. combined) had a firearm death rate of 7.24 per 100,000 from 2015-2024 instead of 13.63 per 100,000, there would have been 209,995 firearm deaths in the rest of the U.S. instead of 395,542, a difference of 185,547 deaths. As described in more detail in Part 1, data from the California Department of Public Health and other sources indicate that for every person killed by firearms, between two to three others require serious medical intervention for firearm injuries but survive. See California DOJ, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “A Strategic Plan to Sustain California’s Record Progress Against Gun Violence, Part I: Where We Are, How We Got Here, What We Need” (Apr. 2026), p. 20-21, at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-AB1252-Report-2026.pdf>.
- 2 Based on the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s analysis of dealer record of sale (DROS) firearm transaction data reported to the California DOJ Bureau of Firearms for 2021-2025.
- 3 See Cal. Penal Code, section 14245 (codified by Assembly Bill 1252 (Wicks) in 2024). See also, Penal Code, section 14131, subd. (k) (as amended by Assembly Bill 762 (2023, Wicks)).
- 4 Id.
- 5 California Department of Justice, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “A Strategic Plan to Sustain California’s Record Progress Against Gun Violence, Part I: Where We Are, How We Got Here, What We Need” (Apr. 2026), at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-AB1252-Report-2026.pdf>.
- 6 Death certificate data reported through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WONDER Database shows that in 2024, California achieved the state’s lowest age-adjusted firearm homicide rate on record in CDC data collected since 1968 (3.115 per 100,000 residents). This CDC data also shows that Massachusetts achieved age-adjusted firearm homicide rates that were at least 50% below California’s record low 2024 rate in all but one year between 2012 and 2019, in 2021, and in 2024. New York achieved a record low age-adjusted firearm homicide rate in 2019 (1.743 per 100,000 residents) that was 45% below California’s 2024 low. New York’s age-adjusted firearm homicide rate in 2024 was 39% below California’s.
- 7 Data published in the California Department of Justice’s Homicide in California 2025 Report, showed that the number of firearm homicides reported by law enforcement agencies in California fell by 19% from 1,122 in 2024 to 904 in 2025.
- 8 These cuts and funding shortfalls are discussed in detail in Part 1.
- 9 See, e.g., Brisa Colón, “Fresno homicides up by more than double compared to same time last year,” ABC30 Action News (Apr. 1, 2026), at <https://abc30.com/post/fresno-police-increase-reward-search-different-murder-suspects/188186669/>; Rob Parsons, “Can Fresno save one of its most effective gun-violence prevention programs?,” FresnoLand.org (Apr. 7, 2026), at <https://fresnoland.org/2026/04/07/advance-peace-fresno/>; Ricky Rodas, “Trump cut funding for gun violence prevention. California’s Latino communities are facing the fallout,” The Guardian (Apr. 7, 2026), at www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/apr/07/gun-violence-funding-cuts-california-trump; Melissa Montalvo, “Fresno abruptly loses federal grant credited for big drop in city’s gun violence” (Jun. 6, 2025), at www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article304999576.html#storylink=cpy; Jay Barmann, “San Francisco Now Averaging One Homicide Per Week In 2026, With Latest on Sixth Street,” SFist (Mar. 4, 2026), at <https://sfist.com/2026/03/04/san-francisco-now-averaging-one-homicide-per-week-in-2026-with-latest-on-sixth-street/>.
- 10 This report includes multiple recommendations to sustain California’s progress reducing all forms of firearm death and injury, including firearm suicide and unintentional firearm deaths and injuries. There is an especially strong need for additional resources to address firearm homicide and firearm assaults. As discussed in more detail in [Part 1’s](#) Chapter 1 (“Data on Gun Violence Survivors & the Cycle of Gun Violence,” starting on Page 20), Californians suffer about three times as many intentional interpersonal firearm homicide or firearm assault injuries annually compared to the number of intentionally self-inflicted firearm suicide or self-harm incidents involving firearms. Policy and data analysis focused only on fatal outcomes skews the data toward the most commonly lethal incidents (firearm suicide), understates the public safety impact of interpersonal and unintentional shootings, and too often ignores the unique harms and dangers faced by the large majority of gun assault victims who survive — many of whom are at very elevated risk of being shot again and killed without effective intervention.
- 11 See National Institute of Criminal Justice Reform, “GVRs: The Successful Gun Violence Reduction Strategy” (Jan. 2026), p. 1 at https://nicjr.org/files/galleries/The_Successful_GVRs.pdf.
- 12 See id.; California Partnership for Safe Communities, “Beyond Models: Exploring Key City Capacities for Sustainably Reducing Community Violence” (Jul. 2025), at <https://crimejusticelab.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Key-Capacity-Brief-FINAL.pdf>; California Partnership for Safe Communities, “Rebuilding Key Capacities to Reduce Community Violence” (Jan. 2025), at <https://www.oaklandca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/violence-prevention/cpsc-audit-update-2025.pdf>; University of Pennsylvania Crime and Justice Policy Lab, “Exploring Key City Capacities for Sustainably Reducing Community Violence,” at <https://crimejusticelab.org/project/key-capacities/>; Thomas Abt, *Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence -- And A Bold New Plan For Peace In The Streets*, Basic Books (2019); Devone Boggan, “Making Peace the Priority — A New Vision for Public Safety, Part 2, From Crisis Response to Crisis Prevention: What Makes CVI Distinct” (May 1, 2025), at <https://devoneboggan.com/making-peace-the-priority-a-new-vision-for-public-safety-2/>; Community Violence Intervention Action Plan: Mapping Transformation for the Field” (Fall 2024), at www.cviactionplan.com/.

- 13 See John K. Roman, “Abundance, and Public Safety” (Mar. 2025), at <https://johnkroman.substack.com/p/abundance-and-public-safety>; University of California, Berkeley, Possibility Lab Abundance Accelerator, Mikaela Rabinowitz, “An Abundance Agenda Approach to Public Safety” (Jan. 2026), p. 7, at https://nicjr.org/files/galleries/Possibility_Lab_Safety.pdf.
- 14 See John Roman, “How Prevention Reduced Crime and How to Get More of It,” *Vital City* (Feb. 19, 2026), at www.vitalcitynyc.org/how-prevention-reduced-crime-suggestions-analysis/.
- 15 See *id.*; Julie Pattison-Gordon, “ARPA Reduced Violence. Local Governments Look to Sustain the Gains,” *Governing Magazine* (Jun. 4, 2025), at <https://www.governing.com/policy/arpa-reduced-violence-local-governments-look-to-sustain-the-gains>; Center for American Progress, “The American Rescue Plan Has Helped State and Local Governments Invest in Community Safety” (Aug. 15, 2022), at www.americanprogress.org/article/the-american-rescue-plan-has-helped-state-and-local-governments-invest-in-community-safety/; White House Press Release, “ICYMI: President Biden’s American Rescue Plan is Empowering Cities and States to Bolster Public Safety in their Communities” (Jun. 23, 2021), at www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/350539.a
- 16 See National Office of Violence Prevention Network (NOVPN), “2025 NOVPN Report, July 1, 2024 - July 1, 2025,” at https://nicjr.org/files/galleries/NOVPN25_Annual_Report_Digital_Final_9_2025.pdf and National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR), “Our Impact” (last accessed Mar. 17, 2026), at <https://nicjr.org/Our-Impact> (noting number of OVPs in national network grew from 21 in 2021 to over 80 in 2025).
- 17 California Department of Justice, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “A Strategic Plan to Sustain California’s Record Progress Against Gun Violence, Part I: Where We Are, How We Got Here, What We Need” (Apr. 2026), p. 30-32, 34-38, 45, 54-63, at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-AB1252-Report-2026.pdf>.
- 18 See, e.g., Council on Criminal Justice, “What’s Driving the Drop in Homicide? How Low Might It Go?,” (Jan. 22, 2026), at <https://counciloncj.org/whats-driving-the-drop-in-homicide-how-low-might-it-go/>.
- 19 In recent years, California state agencies have administered three gun violence prevention-focused grant programs supporting local gun violence reduction initiatives, but none of them has received any General Fund investments since 2023:
 - The California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program, administered by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), has helped drive historic reductions in gun violence in California from 2022-2025. It has received no General Fund investment since 2023. Since 2025, the CalVIP program has been funded solely through Special Fund revenue from a modest excise tax on firearm industry retailers. This revenue is now sufficient to support about 10% of applicants requesting local investment in gun violence prevention initiatives for the 2026-2029 grant cycle.
 - The Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program, administered by the Judicial Council of California, has contributed to record increases in the number of firearms relinquished by people who become subject to firearm-prohibiting court orders. This program received one-time investment in the 2022 Budget Act.
 - The Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program Grant (Byrne SCIP), administered by BSCC, has supported relatively small but important investments totaling about \$11 million over two-year periods for crisis intervention and firearm relinquishment programs and efforts to promote safe firearm storage. These grants are funded through federal dollars from the federal Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, and BSCC will likely make its last round of Byrne SCIP grant awards in 2027.

California Budget Acts enacted in 2024, 2025, and 2026 include specific line-time appropriations for the California Firearm Violence Research Center at the University of California. The 2026 Budget Act also included a new \$3 million one-time appropriation for the “Broken by Violence” organization providing grief and trauma recovery services to victims of violence.

- 20 See Seth Kerstein, “Firearms and Ammunition Revenue Update (2025 Q3),” *Legislative Analyst’s Office* (Nov. 18, 2025), at <https://lao.ca.gov/LAOEconTax/Article/Detail/842>.
- 21 See California Department of Justice, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “A Strategic Plan to Sustain California’s Record Progress Against Gun Violence, Part I: Where We Are, How We Got Here, What We Need” (Apr. 2026), p. 13-14, at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-AB1252-Report-2026.pdf>.
- 22 See Chandler Hall, “What City Leaders Say Is Helping Drive Down Gun Violence in Their Communities,” *Center for American Progress* (Apr. 7, 2026) (analyzing Gun Violence Archive gun violence incident data for both fatal and nonfatal gun violence injuries), at www.americanprogress.org/article/what-city-leaders-say-is-helping-drive-down-gun-violence-in-their-communities/.
- 23 In 2024, California DOJ’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention and Office of Community Awareness, Response, and Engagement organized five regional convenings to bring together hundreds of CVI experts and practitioners from around the state. In every convening, participants shared an overwhelmingly consistent message that the leading barrier to success, and priority for safety improvement, was to address challenges created by chronic funding scarcity and instability for CVI interventions. See also, e.g., Crystal Miller, “Community Violence Intervention Series: A Framework for Safer Communities,” *Milken Institute* (Jun. 3, 2026), at <https://milkeninstitute.org/content-hub/insights/community-violence-intervention-series-framework-safer-communities>; Shayla Colon, “Violence Has Fallen, but So Has Funding for Prevention,” *New York Times* (updated Apr. 27, 2026), at <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/25/headway/violent-crime-intervention-funding-cuts.html>; Nick Wilson of Center for American Progress, “Community Violence Prevention Programs Remain a Wise Investment,” *Governing Magazine* (Nov. 1,

- 2024), at <https://www.governing.com/urban/community-violence-prevention-programs-remain-a-wise-investment>.
- 24 These federal cuts are described in more detail in Part 1 of this report, especially on pages 11-13, at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-AB1252-Report-2026.pdf>.
- 25 See Eugenio Weigend Vargas and Jason E. Goldstick, “Geographic Patterns of Firearms with Short Time-to-Crime in the U.S. and the Americas, 2015–2023,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* (Feb. 18, 2026), at [www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(26\)00053-X/abstract](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(26)00053-X/abstract).
- 26 See John K. Roman, “Abundance, and Public Safety” (Mar. 2025), at <https://johnkroman.substack.com/p/abundance-and-public-safety>; University of California, Berkeley, Possibility Lab Abundance Accelerator, Mikaela Rabinowitz, “An Abundance Agenda Approach to Public Safety” (Jan. 2026), p. 7, at https://nicjr.org/files/galleries/Possibility_Lab_Safety.pdf.
- 27 Thomas Abt, [Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence -- And A Bold New Plan For Peace In The Streets](#), Basic Books (2019).
- 28 See, e.g., Thomas Abt, “My eight-year plan to dramatically reduce urban gun violence,” *The Guardian* Opinions, (Dec. 10, 2019), at <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/dec/10/us-gun-violence-thomas-abt>; Thomas Abt, [Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence -- And A Bold New Plan For Peace In The Streets](#), Basic Books (2019); Devone Boggan, “Making Peace the Priority — A New Vision for Public Safety, Part 2, From Crisis Response to Crisis Prevention: What Makes CVI Distinct” (May 1, 2025), at <https://devoneboggan.com/making-peace-the-priority-a-new-vision-for-public-safety-2/>.
- 29 See U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, “Firearm Violence: A Public Health Crisis in America: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory” (2024), available at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK605169/ (citing Benjamin-Samuel Schlüter, et al., “Youth Experiencing Parental Death Due to Drug Poisoning and Firearm Violence in the US, 1999-2020,” *JAMA*, Vol. 331, No. 20 (May 4, 2024), at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2818482>).
- 30 See California Commission for Behavioral Health, “Stopping the Hurt: Preventing the Harms of Firearm Violence via Public Behavioral Health; The Impacts of Firearm Violence Project Report” (May 2025), p. 37-38, at https://bhsoac.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/CBH_Impacts_of_Firearm_Violence_Digital.pdf.
- 31 See, e.g., Nirmita Panchal, “The Impact of Gun Violence on Youth Mental Health and Well-Being,” Kaiser Family Foundation (Mar. 12, 2026), at www.kff.org/mental-health/the-impact-of-gun-violence-on-youth-mental-health-and-well-being/; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, “Firearm Violence: A Public Health Crisis in America: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory” (2024), available at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK605169/; Elizabeth Tung, et al., “Social Isolation, Loneliness, And Violence Exposure In Urban Adults,” *Health Affairs*, Vol. 38, No. 10 (Oct. 7, 2019), at <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00563>.
- 32 Patrick Sharkey, et al., “The Effect of Local Violence on Children’s Attention and Impulse Control,” *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 102, No. 12 (Dec. 2012), at <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3519330/>.
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- 34 See Emily Badger and Christopher Ingraham, “How violence shapes children for life,” *The Washington Post* (Apr. 20, 2016), at www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/04/20/how-violence-shapes-children-for-life/ (citing Patrick Sharkey and Gerard Torrats-Espinosa, “The Effect of Violent Crime on Economic Mobility,” *Journal of Urban Economics*, Vol. 102 (July. 2017), at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318643432_The_Effect_of_Violent_Crime_on_Economic_Mobility).
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- 36 See Rita Oceguera, “Chicago Economist Argues for Social Intervention on Gun Violence,” *The Trace* (Apr. 29, 2025), at <https://www.thetrace.org/2025/04/jens-ludwig-gun-violence-book-solutions/>.
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- 39 See California Department of Justice, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “A Strategic Plan to Sustain California’s Record Progress Against Gun Violence, Part I: Where We Are, How We Got Here, What We Need” (Apr. 2026), p. 23-24, at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-AB1252-Report-2026.pdf>.
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- 45 See Devone Boggan, “This Moment Belongs to the Work: Restoring Community Violence Intervention to Its Purpose” (Dec. 19, 2025), at <https://devoneboggan.com/this-moment-belongs-to-the-work-restoring-community-violence-intervention-to-its-purpose/>.
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- 112 See, e.g., Robert Lewis, “Outgunned” investigative reporting series, *CalMatters* (Jul. 21, 2021), at <https://calmatters.org/justice/2021/07/california-gun-law-failing/?series=outgunned>; Jennifer Gollan, “How the US fails to take away guns from domestic abusers: ‘These deaths are preventable,’” *Center for Investigative Reporting and The Guardian* (Oct. 26, 2021), at www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/26/domestic-abuse-gun-violence-reveal; Clare Amari, “How Wisconsin’s ‘honor’ system for removing guns from domestic abusers failed Jesi Ewers,” *Wisconsin Public Radio* (Jul. 10, 2022), at www.wpr.org/justice/how-wisconsins-honor-system-removing-guns-domestic-abusers-failed-jesi-ewers; Julia Weber, “Implementing Gun Laws in California: Successes Provide Models for Other Jurisdictions,” *Giffords* (Aug. 14, 2025), at <https://giffords.org/analysis/implementing-gun-laws-in-california-successes-provide-models-for-other-jurisdictions/>.
- 113 For a concise summary of the new firearm relinquishment-focused laws California has enacted since 2022, see pages 52-54 of the California DOJ’s Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) Report published in March 2026, at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/2025-apps-report.pdf>.
- 114 California Family Code, section 6306, subd. (f); California Code of Civil Procedure, section 527.9, subd. (b); California Penal Code, section 18120, subd. (b)(6).
- 115 California Family Code, section 6306, subd. (f); California Code of Civil Procedure, section 527.9, subd. (b).
- 116 California Family Code, section 6306, subd. (f).
- 117 See U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, “Victim Notification,” <https://ovc.ojp.gov/topics/victim-notification>; California VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday), at <https://vinelink.vineapps.com/state/CA>.
- 118 See, e.g., Maryland Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention and Policy, “VINE Protective Order FAQ,” at <https://gocpp.maryland.gov/victim-services/rights-resources/vpo/vpo-faq/>; Commonwealth of Kentucky Department of Corrections, “VINE VPO,” <https://corrections.ky.gov/Victim-Services/Pages/VINE-VPO.aspx>; National Center for Policing Innovation, “Providing Protective Order Notifications through Virginia VINE,” at <https://ncpi.us/enewsletters/providing-protective-order-notifications-through-virginia-vine/>; Washington, Substitute House Bill 1501, SEC 5. (2017 Regular Session), at <https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2017-18/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/1501-S.PL.pdf>. See also, New York State Sheriffs’ Institute, “Order of Protection Notification System,” at <https://sheriff-assist.org/order-of-protection-notification/>.
- 119 Pursuant to Assembly Bill 451, this requirement applies to municipal police departments, county sheriffs’ departments, the Department of the California Highway Patrol, and the University of California and California State University Police Departments. See Penal Code, section 13667.
- 120 See California DOJ, Division of Law Enforcement, Information Bulletin No. 2026-DLE-06, “New Mandates and Resources Related to Gun Violence Restraining Orders (GVROs) & Other Firearm-Prohibiting Court Orders” (Mar. 17, 2026), at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/2026-dle-06.pdf>.
- 121 See National Resource Center for Domestic Violence and Firearms, “Community Spotlights: Washington State” (Jul. 2024), at https://nrcdvf.org/community_spotlights/state-of-washington/.
- 122 See Alice Ellyson, et al., “Firearm restrictions in domestic violence protection orders: Implementation, vetting, compliance, and enforcement,” *Criminology & Public Policy*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Nov. 2024), at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1745-9133.12639>.
- 123 See Julia Weber, “Implementing Gun Laws in California: Successes Provide Models for Other Jurisdictions,” *Giffords*

(Aug. 14, 2025), at <https://giffords.org/analysis/implementing-gun-laws-in-california-successes-provide-models-for-other-jurisdictions/>.

- 124 See County of San Mateo, County Executive’s Office, “To Reduce Gun Violence, County Launches ‘Cutting-Edge’ Effort to Remove Guns from the Hands of Felons, Stalkers” (Oct. 19, 2022), at www.smcgov.org/ceo/news/reduce-gun-violence-county-launches-cutting-edge-effort-remove-guns-hands-felons-stalkers and “San Mateo County Supervisors Bolster Gun Violence Prevention” (Dec. 4, 2024), at www.smcgov.org/ceo/news/san-mateo-county-supervisors-bolster-gun-violence-prevention. See also, e.g., Susan Cohn, “Before the Court: New state report highlights success of San Mateo County gun violence prevention program,” *The Daily Journal* (Oct. 24, 2024), at www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/before-the-court-new-state-report-highlights-success-of-san-mateo-county-gun-violence-prevention/article_d7e13318-9317-11ef-954e-7fc953bd6fe9.html; National Resource Center for Domestic Violence and Firearms, “Community Spotlights: San Mateo County” (Jun. 2024), at https://nrcdvh.org/community_spotlights/san-mateo-county-ca/.
- 125 San Mateo County Superior Court, “New State Report Highlights Success of San Mateo County Gun Violence Prevention Program Two Years After Launch” (Oct. 24, 2024), at <https://sanmateo.courts.ca.gov/system/files/news/new-state-report-highlights-success-san-mateo-county-gun-violence-prevention-program-two-years-after.pdf>.
- 126 The 2022 Budget Act originally appropriated \$40 million for the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program but subsequent Budget Acts rescinded about \$10 million in unspent funding allocated for this program.
- 127 See Judicial Council of California, “Report on the Firearms Relinquishment Grant Program for 2024–25” (Oct. 24, 2025), at <https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/legislative-reports/lr-2025-report-firearms-relinquishment-grant-program-2024-25.pdf>.
- 128 See Julia Weber, “Implementing Gun Laws in California: Successes Provide Models for Other Jurisdictions,” Giffords (Aug. 14, 2025), at <https://giffords.org/analysis/implementing-gun-laws-in-california-successes-provide-models-for-other-jurisdictions/>.
- 129 See id.
- 130 See id.; Judicial Council of California, “Report on the Firearms Relinquishment Grant Program for 2024–25” (Oct. 24, 2025), at <https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/legislative-reports/lr-2025-report-firearms-relinquishment-grant-program-2024-25.pdf>.
- 131 See Judicial Council of California, “Report on the Firearms Relinquishment Grant Program for 2024–25” (Oct. 24, 2025), at <https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/legislative-reports/lr-2025-report-firearms-relinquishment-grant-program-2024-25.pdf>.
- 132 See Los Angeles DVRO Enforcement Task Force, at <https://ladvrotf.my.canva.site/dvro-tf-site/>; Board of State and Community Corrections, “Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program,” Cohort 2 Grant Project Summaries, at <https://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Attachment-3-Byrne-SCIP-Cohort-2-Project-Summaries-1.pdf>.
- 133 See Judicial Council of California, “Report on the Firearms Relinquishment Grant Program for 2024–25” (Oct. 24, 2025), at <https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/legislative-reports/lr-2025-report-firearms-relinquishment-grant-program-2024-25.pdf>.
- 134 See California DOJ, “Armed and Prohibited Persons System Report 2025” (Mar. 15, 2026), p. 2, 5, 22, <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/2025-apps-report.pdf>.
- 135 Id.
- 136 See Julia Weber, “Implementing Gun Laws in California: Successes Provide Models for Other Jurisdictions,” Giffords (Aug. 14, 2025), at <https://giffords.org/analysis/implementing-gun-laws-in-california-successes-provide-models-for-other-jurisdictions/>.
- 137 National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, “Civil Protection Orders: Strategies for Safe and Effective Service of Process,” p. 4 (Aug. 2022), www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/CPO-Guide-Project-Service-of-Process_FINAL.pdf.
- 138 See id.
- 139 See id.; “Keeping the Promise: Victim Safety and Batterer Accountability,” Report to the California Attorney General from the Task Force on Local Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence (Jun. 2005), at <https://files.giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/CA-Attorney-General-Domestic-Violence-Report-June-2005.pdf>.
- 140 “Keeping the Promise: Victim Safety and Batterer Accountability,” Report to the California Attorney General from the Task Force on Local Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence (Jun. 2005), at <https://files.giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/CA-Attorney-General-Domestic-Violence-Report-June-2005.pdf>.
- 141 See, e.g., National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, “Civil Protection Orders: Strategies for Safe and Effective Service of Process,” p. 2-4 (Aug. 2022), www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/CPO-Guide-Project-Service-of-Process_FINAL.pdf
- 142 See, e.g., id. at 3.
- 143 See, e.g., id. at 3.
- 144 Pursuant to Assembly Bill 818 (2023, Petrie-Norris).
- 145 Pursuant to Senate Bill 899 (2024, Skinner).
- 146 See California Penal Code, section 273.75.
- 147 See id. at subdivision (d).
- 148 California Family Code, section 6306, subd. (f); California Code of Civil Procedure, section 527.9, subd. (b).
- 149 These requirements would be codified by Assembly Bill 1753 (2026, Stefani) at a new section 136.26, subdivision (b),

of the Penal Code.

- 150 These requirements would be codified by Assembly Bill 1753 (2026, Stefani) at a new section 29813.5 of the Penal Code.
- 151 See California DOJ “AB 1191 Crime Gun Report 2025,” (Jul. 2025), at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/ab1191-crime-gun-report-2025.pdf> (reporting that 34.7% of *serialized* crime guns reported to California DOJ in 2024 had no associated sale or transaction record in AFS; unserialized crime guns would also typically have no traceable transaction record in AFS).
- 152 See California Penal Code, sections 422.85, 422.865, and 422.88.
- 153 These requirements would be codified by Assembly Bill 1753 (2026, Stefani) through a new Penal Code, section 136.2, subdivision (a).
- 154 These requirements would be codified by Assembly Bill 1753 (2026, Stefani) through amendments to sections 6380, 6401, and 6402 of the Family Code, and at a new section 6403.5 of the Family Code related to enforcement of tribal or out-of-state “extreme risk protection orders” equivalent to California’s Gun Violence Restraining Order or analogous civil or criminal court orders.
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- 159 See Judicial Council of California, “Final Report of the Domestic Violence Practice and Procedure Task Force: Recommended Guidelines and Practices for Improving the Administration of Justice in Domestic Violence Cases” (Jan. 2008), p. 15, accessible at www.allianceforhope.org/family-justice-center-alliance/resources/final-report-domestic-violence-practice-procedure-task-force.
- 160 These requirements would be codified by Assembly Bill 1753 (2026, Stefani) through amendments to Section 527 of the Code of Civil Procedure, and corresponding Findings and Declarations adopted through SECTION 1 of the bill.
- 161 This background on the Gun Violence Restraining Order is adapted from the DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s report titled, “Gun Violence Restraining Order 10-Year Progress Report: Data and Recommendations for Improved Implementation” (Mar. 2026), at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/grvo-10-yr-progress-report.pdf>.
- 162 See DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “Pathways to Safety: California’s Nine Court Protection Orders to Prevent Gun Violence” (Jun. 2024), at www.oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/OGVP_Restraining%20Order%20Report.pdf, and “Quick Reference Guide to California’s Nine Court Protection orders to Prevent Gun Violence (rev. Nov. 2024), at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/OGVP%20Protection%20Orders%20Reference%20Guide%20Handout.pdf>.
- 163 U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center, “Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016-2020,” p. 38 (Jan. 2023), www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2023-01/uss-ntac-maps-2016-2020.pdf.
- 164 See *id.* at vi, 52.
- 165 See California DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “Gun Violence Restraining Order 10-Year Progress Report: Data and Recommendations for Improved Implementation” (Mar. 2026), p. 17-18, at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/grvo-10-yr-progress-report.pdf>.
- 166 See *id.* at p. 25-29 (discussing challenges ensuring that short-term Emergency or Temporary GVROs are followed by longer-term GVROs in cases involving persistent danger and necessity).
- 167 *Id.* at p. 17-18.
- 168 See California DOJ, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “A Strategic Plan to Sustain California’s Record Progress Against Gun Violence, Part I: Where We Are, How We Got Here, What We Need” (Apr. 2026), p. 91-92, at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-AB1252-Report-2026.pdf>.
- 169 See California DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “Gun Violence Restraining Order 10-Year Progress Report: Data and Recommendations for Improved Implementation” (Mar. 2026), p. 16, at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/grvo-10-yr-progress-report.pdf> (citing Heather Harris, Public Policy Institute of California, Blog Post: “Mass Shootings in California” (Aug. 7, 2025), at www.ppic.org/blog/mass-shootings-in-california, and the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s analysis of mass shooting incident records (for shootings involving 4+ victims killed or injured) from the Gun Violence Archive, accessible at Gunviolencearchive.org).
- 170 See California DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “Gun Violence Restraining Order 10-Year Progress Report: Data and Recommendations for Improved Implementation” (Mar. 2026), p. 20-25, at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/grvo-10-yr-progress-report.pdf>.
- 171 See *id.* at p. 20.
- 172 *Id.* at p. 23.
- 173 See California DOJ, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “Gun Violence Restraining Orders: A Practical Implementation Guide for California Law Enforcement” (Mar. 2026), at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/gvro-implementation-guide.pdf>.

- 174 See California DOJ, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “Model Gun Violence Restraining Order Policy for California Law Enforcement Agencies” (Mar. 2026), at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/model-gvro-policy.pdf>.
- 175 See, e.g., U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center, “Behavioral Threat Assessment Units: A Guide for State and Local Law Enforcement to Prevent Targeted Violence” (Oct. 2024), www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2024-10/Behavioral-Threat-Assessment-Units-A-Guide-for-State-and-Local-Law-Enforcement-to-Prevent-Targeted-Violence.pdf; California DOJ, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “Gun Violence Restraining Orders: A Practical Implementation Guide for California Law Enforcement” (Mar. 2026), at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/gvro-implementation-guide.pdf>.
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- 183 18 U.S.C., §§ 922, subd. (d)(9), (g)(9); 921, subd. (a)(33).
- 184 18 U.S.C., §§ 922, subd. (g)(1); 921, subd. (a)(20).
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- 188 See Massachusetts General Laws, Ch. 265, §§ 13A; Ch. 209A, §3C. See also, e.g., Wellesly, Massachusetts Police Department, “Disqualifications for Firearms Licensing,” at <https://welleslyma.gov/877/Disqualifications-for-Firearms-Licensing>. Under Massachusetts law, people are generally subject to lifetime firearm prohibitions under Massachusetts law if they have ever been convicted of misdemeanors punishable by more than two years or a violation of any law regarding the use, possession, ownership or transfer of firearms or ammunition for which a term

of imprisonment may be imposed, except that these prohibitions do not apply to a person applying for a license (“Firearm Identification Card”) to purchase and possess rifles or shotguns if at least five years have elapsed after the person was released from confinement, probation, or supervision. Ch. 140, § 121F, subd. (j)(i).

- 189 Md. Public Safety Code § 5-205; Md. Criminal Law Code §§ 3-1001, 3-203 .
- 190 See 18 U.S.C. §§ 922, subd. (g)(8); 924, subd. (a)(8).
- 191 See Ct. Gen. Statutes, §§ 53a-217, 53a-223; Iowa Code, § 724.26; Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann., §§ 202.360, 33.031; N.J. Stat., §§ 2C:39-7, 2C:43-6, subd. (a)(3); RCW, § 9.41.040.
- 192 See California Penal Code, § 29825, subd. (b).
- 193 Pursuant to Penal Code § 18205.
- 194 See, e.g., Christopher Benitez, et al., “Do Protection Orders Protect?”, *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Sep. 2010), at <https://jaapl.org/content/38/3/376>; Stalking Prevention Awareness and Resource Center, “Protective Order Violations as Stalking” (Aug. 2023), at www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/SPARC-Stalking-and-PO-Violations.pdf.
- 195 See, e.g., 18 U.S.C. §§ 932-934 (generally imposing felony prison terms of up to 15 years of imprisonment for straw purchasing convictions or convictions for transferring firearms to prohibited persons, and of up to five years for unlawfully possessing, manufacturing or importing firearms or ammunition, knowingly falsifying dealer sale record information used for background check purposes, selling firearms without a required license, etc.).
- 196 See N.J. Stat., §§ 2C:39-9; 2C:39-16.2; New York Penal Law, §§ 265.60, 265.63, 265.66, 265.16, 265.17; Mass. General Laws, Ch. 209A, §3C; Ch. 269, § 10E; Ch. 140, §§ 128, 130.
- 197 Mortality data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WONDER Database Online shows that Massachusetts and Hawaii were the states with the lowest rates of firearm death in 2024.
- 198 See Mass. General Laws, Ch. 140, § 121F; subd. (j).
- 199 HRS §§ 134-7, subd. (b), (i); 134-1 (defining “Criminal offense relating to firearms”).
- 200 See California Penal Code, § 27590.
- 201 Based on misdemeanor convictions reported into the Automated Criminal History System under Penal Code Section 243, subd. (e).
- 202 See California Penal Code, §§ 236; 236.1, subd. (h)(3); 237.
- 203 See California Penal Code, §§ 236.1, subd. (h)(3); 237.
- 204 See California Penal Code, §§ 417.4; 16700, subd. (a).
- 205 For example, research from the California Firearm Violence Research Center found that “Prior alcohol-related convictions were associated with a fourfold to fivefold increase in risk of incident arrest for a violent or firearm-related crime, a relative increase greater than that seen for age, sex or prior violence.” See Garen Wintemute, et al., “Firearms, alcohol and crime: convictions for driving under the influence (DUI) and other alcohol-related crimes and risk for future criminal activity among authorized purchasers of handguns,” *Injury Prevention*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (e-published Jan. 30, 2017), at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28137977/>. Other research from the Center found that “In this population of authorized purchasers of handguns in California, a history of DUI conviction at the time of purchase was found to be associated with a significant increase in the risk of subsequent arrest for a Crime Index–listed violent crime, a firearm-related violent crime, and any violent crime independent of a range of individual and community-level measures.” See Rose Kagawa, et al., “Association of Prior Convictions for Driving Under the Influence With Risk of Subsequent Arrest for Violent Crimes Among Handgun Purchasers,” *JAMA Internal Medicine*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (Sept. 30, 2019), at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2751947>. See also, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Gun Violence Solutions and Consortium for Risk-Based Firearm Policy, “Alcohol Misuse and Gun Violence: An Evidence-Based Approach for State Policy” (May 2023), at <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2023-05/2023-may-cgvs-alcohol-misuse-and-gun-violence.pdf>.
- 206 See Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Gun Violence Solutions and Consortium for Risk-Based Firearm Policy, “Alcohol Misuse and Gun Violence: An Evidence-Based Approach for State Policy” (May 2023), at <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2023-05/2023-may-cgvs-alcohol-misuse-and-gun-violence.pdf>; Garen Wintemute, “Alcohol misuse, firearm violence perpetration, and public policy in the United States,” *Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Vol. 79 (Oct. 2015), at www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0091743515001425?via%3Dihub. See also, e.g., Ellicott Matthay, “Assessing Links Between Alcohol Exposure and Firearm Violence: A Scoping Review Update,” *Alcohol Research Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Jan. 2025), at <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11737877/>.
- 207 See id. (citing Garen Wintemute, et al., “Firearms, alcohol and crime: convictions for driving under the influence (DUI) and other alcohol-related crimes and risk for future criminal activity among authorized purchasers of handguns,” *Injury Prevention*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (e-published Jan. 30, 2017), at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28137977/>, and Rose Kagawa, et al., “Association of Prior Convictions for Driving Under the Influence With Risk of Subsequent Arrest for Violent Crimes Among Handgun Purchasers,” *JAMA Internal Medicine*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (Sept. 30, 2019), at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2751947>).
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- 228 See, e.g., Colo. Rev. Stat., § 24-33.5-424(b.3) (“[T]he bureau shall deny a transfer of a firearm if the prospective transferee has been convicted of any of the following offenses committed on or after June 19, 2021, if the offense is classified as a misdemeanor, **or if the prospective transferee has been convicted in another state or jurisdiction, including a military or federal jurisdiction, of an offense that, if committed in Colorado, would constitute any of the following offenses classified as a misdemeanor offense**, within five years prior to the transfer . . .”) (emphasis added); Haw. Rev. Stat., §§ 134-1 (definitions); 134-7, subd. (b) (“No person . . . who has been convicted **in this State or elsewhere** of having committed a felony, a crime of violence, a criminal offense relating to firearms, or an illegal sale or distribution of any drug shall own, possess, or control any firearm or ammunition.”) (emphasis added); Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 140, §§ 121F, subd. (j)(i), (ii) (A prohibited person shall be a person who: (i) has ever, in a court of the commonwealth **or in any other state or federal jurisdiction**, been convicted or adjudicated as a youthful offender or delinquent child or both, . . . for the commission of: (A) a felony; (B) a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for more than 2 years; (C) a violent crime as defined in section 121; (D) a violation of any law regarding the use, possession, ownership or transfer of firearms or ammunition for which a term of imprisonment may be imposed; (E) a violation of any law of the commonwealth regulating the use, possession or sale of controlled substances, . . . or a violation of any substantially similar law of another state or federal jurisdiction; or (F) a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921(a)(33); provided, however, that, the commission of a crime described in clauses (B), (D) or (E) shall only disqualify an applicant for a firearm identification card under section 129B for 5 years after the applicant was convicted or adjudicated or released from confinement, probation or parole supervision for such conviction or adjudication, whichever occurs later[.]” (emphasis added). See also, Ala. Code §§ 13A-11-72(a), 12-25-32, subd. (15); 11 Del. C. § 1448, subd. (a)(1), (d); 430 ILCS, § 65/8, subd. (a), (k), (l), (t); La. R.S., §§ 14:95.1, subd. (A)(1); 14:2; 15 Maine Rev. Stat., §§ 393, subd. (1)(A-1)(4), (5); 393, subd. (1-B); Md. Public Safety Code Ann., § 5-133, subd. (c); Minn. Stat., § 624.713, subd. (1)(11); N.J. Stat. § 2C:39-7, subd. (c); Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 202.360, subd. (a), (c); N.Y. Penal Law, §§ 400.00, subd. (1); 265.00, subd. (17); 265.01, subd. (4); N.D. Cent. Code, § 62.1-02-01, subd. (1)

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- 379 California law requires courts evaluating whether to issue a GVRO to consider evidence showing that the subject of the petition has been convicted, among other things, of offenses related to unsafe storage of firearms around children and adults who are legally prohibited from possessing firearms. Even if a person has not been convicted of these offenses, evidence that they engaged in this conduct could be relevant to showing the person is a significant danger of causing firearm injury. See Penal Code, §§ 18155(b)(1)(E), 18175 (referencing convictions under Penal Code section 29805, including violations of California laws governing safe storage of firearms around minors and prohibited persons).
- 380 See, e.g., *Anaheim Police Dept. v. Crockett*, 2026 Cal. App. Unpub. LEXIS 292, *1-2, 13-14 (Fourth App. Dist., Div. Three, Jan. 16, 2026) (unpublished appellate opinion stating, “That [the respondent] himself did not directly pose a ‘significant danger’ of committing gun violence does not mean he could not be subject to a GVRO. The [petitioner] Police Department showed by clear and convincing evidence that [the respondent] could not adequately prevent his son from accessing his firearms, and his son did pose a significant threat of gun violence. The GVRO statute would be ineffectual if the ban could not be applied to those, like [the respondent], who enable, however unintentionally, the threat of violence by others.”); Karina Vargas, “Court documents reveal gun restraining order tied to Islamic Center shooting suspect’s family,” ABC10 News San Diego (May 22, 2026), at www.10news.com/news/local-news/san-diego-news/court-documents-reveal-gun-restraining-order-tied-to-islamic-center-shooting-suspects-family; Dorian Hargrove and Andrew Keatts, “Why classmates, school officials and Chula Vista police asked a court — unsuccessfully — to keep one of the suspected mosque shooters away from his dad’s guns,” *Times of San Diego* (May 22, 2026), at <https://timesofsandiego.com/crime/2026/05/22/chula-vista-police-gun-violence-restraining-order-mosque-shooter-court/>; Ryan Mense, “Dozens of guns seized, San Jose man arrested in illegal firearm sales investigation,” KRON4 News (May 8, 2024), www.kron4.com/news/bay-area/dozens-of-guns-seized-san-jose-man-arrested-in-illegal-firearm-sales-investigation/. See also, e.g., Nic Flosi, “Mount Prospect police: Guns confiscated from home after teen’s possible school threat,” FOX 32 Chicago (Nov. 19, 2024), at <https://bit.ly/3EnCdah>.
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414 Some grant programs have incorporated local funding match requirements that require grantees to provide a cash or in-kind contribution to match every dollar of state funds they receive. These local match requirements can help leverage local investments, ensure local partners have “skin in the game,” and ensure grant programs reflect genuine partnerships funded by multiple sources, so they are not entirely reliant on one variable source of competitive state grant funds. These funding match requirements also implicitly tend to reduce the amount of state funding local governments or nonprofits request. On the other hand, in practice, funding match requirements can also be quite counter-productive and inequitable. They may keep many effective local government or nonprofit applicants on the sidelines when they are seeking state funding precisely because they have minimal local resources with which to address public safety challenges or because they do not have the ability to obtain local funding commitments within the short application period provided for many grant programs. Even for grantees that do have sufficient resources for a funding match, implementing these funding match requirements can impose significant practical and administrative burdens to separately track each dollar funded from state or local sources.

415 As noted above, most state grant programs operate on a reimbursement structure in which grantees carry costs (including for staff salaries and client services) for multiple months then bill a state agency for reimbursement for authorized services. The grantmaking agency scrutinizes the billing, requests appropriate changes or additional documentation to substantiate the billing, and then releases reimbursement potentially many months after the grantee initially made the expenditure.

This reimbursement structure helps to ensure that state taxpayers are not paying for unauthorized services outside the scope of the grant proposal. But they also require both the grantmaking agency and the grant recipient to spend some significant portion of public safety grant funding on fiscal administration and auditing, instead of program development or delivery. Community-based programs with highly effective staff and strategies, but smaller cash reserves and billing and documentation tracking capacity may struggle to carry costs for many months before they receive reimbursement.

To account for these challenges, Assembly Bill 762 (2023, Wicks) implemented some modest improvements for the CalVIP program for the 2026-2029 grant cycle, including by guaranteeing that grantees receive at least 20% of an approved grant at the start of the grant period or as soon as possible thereafter “in order to enable grantees to immediately utilize such funds to support violence reduction initiatives.”

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