



C A L I F O R N I A

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Gun Violence Restraining Order 10-Year Progress Report:

Data and Recommendations for Improved Implementation

Office of Gun Violence Prevention

March 2026



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Introduction

In April 2014, a concerned mother and her son’s counselor contacted a crisis hotline to request a welfare check on the mother’s 22-year old son in Isla Vista, California.¹ He had gone silent for several days without responding to his mother’s calls and texts, and they were worried he might harm himself after they saw disturbing videos he posted online. He had a history of emotional and behavioral issues, developmental disabilities, social isolation, disturbing social media posts, and angry outbursts, especially toward women and romantic couples he envied. Behavioral experts later described him as “mired in ‘pathological, insidious envy—a painful state of unworthiness related to shame that leads to the wish to destroy goodness in others.’”² One of his friends from childhood cut off communication because he was so disturbed by his fixations on grievance and violent fantasies.³ A former roommate had moved out of their apartment because “he was getting really uncomfortable” and had a “bad feeling.”⁴ Another former roommate had written a letter to their apartment management requesting to move because he feared the young man was a “ticking time bomb waiting to explode,” and said, “I fear for my safety.”⁵

But the young man had no known criminal history, had never been hospitalized for mental illness or placed on a mental health hold, and had no other record that would legally disqualify him from passing firearm-related background checks. He purchased three firearms and hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

When law enforcement officers visited him to conduct a welfare check, he told them that “his mother was a ‘worry wart’ and that he had made the videos as a way to express himself because he was lonely and did not have any friends.”⁶ After speaking with him and his mother, the officers determined that he did not meet criteria to be detained on an involuntary mental health hold for dangerousness to self or others due to a mental health disorder.⁷

A few weeks later, in May 2014, he emailed a manifesto expressing hatred for women, white supremacist beliefs, and violent fantasies about power, social status, and overseeing concentration

- 1 Facts surrounding the Isla Vista mass murder were reported by sources including: Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Office, “Isla Vista Mass Murder, May 23, 2014, Investigative Summary” (Feb. 18, 2015), at www.documentcloud.org/documents/1671822-isa-vista-investigative-summary/; Mark Follman, “Lessons From a Mass Shooter’s Mother,” *Mother Jones* (July + August 2024 Issue), at www.motherjones.com/criminal-justice/2024/05/threat-assessment-mass-shooting-elliott-rodger-isa-vista-mother/; Stephen White, “Case Study: The Isla Vista Campus Community Mass Murder,” *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* (Mar. 2017), at www.wtsglobal.com/public_html/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Isla-Vista-JTAM-SGWhite-2017.pdf; Dan Good, Clayton Sandell, and Cecilia Vega, “Elliot Rodger’s Previous Attacks on Women, Couples,” ABC News (May 27, 2014), at <https://abcnews.com/US/elliott-rodgers-previous-attacks-women-couples/story?id=23879620>; Rachel Fugardi, “Nine years after deadly ‘incel’ attack, threat of male supremacism is growing,” Southern Poverty Law Center (May 23, 2023), at www.splcenter.org/resources/stories/after-incel-attack-male-supremacism-growing/; Rebecca Solnit, “One year after the Isla Vista massacre, a father’s gun control mission is personal,” *The Guardian* (May 23, 2015), at www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/23/one-year-isa-vista-massacre-victim-father-gun-control; ABC7 Eyewitness News, “Isla Vista massacre: 7 killed, 13 injured,” (May 25., 2014), at www.abc7.com/post/isa-vista-massacre-7-killed-13-injured-76145/.
- 2 See Mark Follman, “Lessons From a Mass Shooter’s Mother,” *Mother Jones* (July + August 2024 Issue), at www.motherjones.com/criminal-justice/2024/05/threat-assessment-mass-shooting-elliott-rodger-isa-vista-mother/ (quoting Stephen White, “Case Study: The Isla Vista Campus Community Mass Murder,” *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* (Mar. 2017), at www.wtsglobal.com/public_html/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Isla-Vista-JTAM-SGWhite-2017.pdf).
- 3 See Stephen White, “Case Study: The Isla Vista Campus Community Mass Murder,” *J. of Threat Assessment and Management* (Mar. 2017), p. 28, at www.wtsglobal.com/public_html/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Isla-Vista-JTAM-SGWhite-2017.pdf.
- 4 ABC News, “Elliot Rodger’s Ex-Roommate Reveals What It Was Like to Live With the Troubled Man” (May 29, 2014), <https://abcnews.com/US/roommate-santa-barbara-killer-elliott-rodger-bad-feeling/story?id=23916334>.
- 5 See Kelsey Brugger, “Rodger Lawsuit Winds Through Court,” *Santa Barbara Independent* (Jun. 4, 2015), at www.independent.com/2015/06/04/rodger-lawsuit-winds-through-court/.
- 6 Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Office, “Isla Vista Mass Murder, May 23, 2014, Investigative Summary” (Feb. 18, 2015), at www.documentcloud.org/documents/1671822-isa-vista-investigative-summary/.
- 7 Id.

campus.⁸ He then committed a spree of murders and drive-by shootings that killed six students and left 14 other people brutally injured in the Isla Vista community surrounding the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB).⁹

Parents concerned for their children's safety rushed to the area. The parents of a 19-year old freshman named Veronika traveled between the hospital, sheriff's office, and morgue looking for their daughter before they opened the "Find my iPhone" app and saw her phone at the center of one of the crime scenes. Veronika had been shot seven times, walking home with two friends who were also shot beside her.¹⁰ Veronika was "a wiz at many things, with playing water polo, doing complicated math and making people laugh near the top of the list."¹¹ Her father knew "she would have put herself in harm's way to help her friends or even the young man who shot her . . . She always wanted to help. She was very courageous."¹²

She died with her friend, Katie, who was "known around the [sorority] house as the 'mama bear.'" One of Katie's prized possessions was a hand-decorated award she received for helping people get home safely around UCSB. Katie was an art history major, weeks away from graduating, with dreams of becoming a museum curator.¹³

Veronika and Katie's friend, Bianca, was shot five times but survived. She credited a 19-year old stranger with saving her life by running to get help and then laying with her to comfort her, as she managed to reach for her phone and call her mother to tell her she loved her.¹⁴

The last victim killed was a 20-year old UCSB student named Christopher, who had spent his last day volunteering in a beach cleanup. "That's the kind of person he was. . . generous with his belongings and his love."¹⁵ He was talking to his father on the phone 45 minutes before he and his friends fled the sound of gunfire into a deli-mart near campus. One student, a certified lifeguard, ran over to help the law enforcement officer and students trying to keep him alive. It was not until she was performing CPR on Christopher that she recognized him as her friend.¹⁶ Christopher's father described thinking of all the families calling to reach their loved ones to see if they were OK. "That was us that night when Chris died. We were calling, and his phone was ringing there beside his dead body."¹⁷

He pleaded at his son's memorial, "Not one more."¹⁸

8 See Ian Lovett and Adam Nagourney, "Video Rant, Then Deadly Rampage in California Town," *New York Times* (May 24, 2014), at www.nytimes.com/2014/05/25/us/california-drive-by-shooting.html.

9 See Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office, "Isla Vista Mass Murder, May 23, 2014, Investigative Summary" (Feb. 18, 2015), at www.documentcloud.org/documents/1671822-islavista-investigative-summary/.

10 See Jane Weiss, Alliance for Gun Responsibility page honoring Veronika Weiss, at <https://gunresponsibility.org/gun-violence/stories/veronika-weiss/>; Amanda Covarrubias, "Isla Vista shooting victim's father talks about his daughter," *Los Angeles Times* (May 25, 2014), www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-islavista-shootings-victim-father-20140525-story.html.

11 UC Santa Barbara Student Life, UCSB Remembers: Remembering the Victims (last accessed Feb. 9, 2026), at <https://studentlife.sa.ucsb.edu/units-initiatives/ucsb-remembers/remembering-victims>.

12 See Amanda Covarrubias, "Isla Vista shooting victim's father talks about his daughter," *Los Angeles Times* (May 25, 2014), at www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-islavista-shootings-victim-father-20140525-story.html.

13 Id.

14 See Ian Lovett and Adam Nagourney, "Video Rant, Then Deadly Rampage in California Town," *New York Times* (May 24, 2014), at www.nytimes.com/2014/05/25/us/california-drive-by-shooting.html; ABC News, "EXCLUSIVE: Santa Barbara Killer Smiled Before Shooting, Survivor Says" (May 30, 2014), at <https://abcnews.go.com/US/santa-barbara-killer-elliott-rodger-smiled-shooting-survivor/story?id=23923970>; Megan Mineiro and Supriya Yelimeli, "Sheriff Releases Report Detailing Events, Investigation of 2014 I.V. Mass Murder," *Daily Nexus* (Feb. 20, 2015), at <https://dailynexus.com/2015-02-20/sheriff-releases-report-detailing-events-of-2014-i-v-mass-murder/>.

15 See Isla Vista Memorial Project memorial page for Christopher Ross Michaels-Martinez (last accessed Feb. 7, 2026), at <https://islavistamemorialproject.omeka.net/items/show/279>.

16 See Ian Lovett, "After California Attack That Killed 6 Students, Classmates Pause and Seek Closure," *New York Times* (May 27, 2014), at www.nytimes.com/2014/05/28/us/after-california-attack-students-pause-and-seek-closure.html.

17 Richard Martinez, "Moments that Survive: In Memory of Christopher," Everytown for Gun Safety (last accessed Feb. 7, 2026), at <https://momentsthatsurvive.org/tribute/richard-martinez>.

18 Matt Kettman, "Isla Vista Memorial Shouts 'Not One More,'" *Santa Barbara Independent* (May 27, 2014), at www.santabarbaraindependent.com.

In August 2014, these students' family members wrote a letter to California's Governor and Legislature:¹⁹

Three months ago, our loved ones, Veronika, Katie, and Christopher were shot to death. Their deaths have shattered our lives . . . Their deaths were not a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time – as college students at UCSB, [they] were right where they were supposed to be. But the law did not work to keep guns out of the hands of the shooter, even after he displayed warning signs of suicidal and homicidal behavior. Because he had not committed a crime and law enforcement did not think he met the criteria for commitment in a hospital, he was legally allowed to own guns—and he used those guns to kill Veronika, Katie, and Christopher, along with killing and injuring others, in a fury that devastated our families and rattled our entire nation.

After tragedies like this one, people often ask: what could have been done to prevent the shooting from happening? Assembly Bill 1014 provides an answer: the Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO).

They watched from the gallery in the California Legislature when lawmakers passed the Gun Violence Restraining Order into law. Out of their advocacy for change, this safety intervention was born.

The GVRO process empowers law enforcement, family members, and other eligible community members to proactively prevent gun violence by presenting evidence to a judge that a person poses a significant danger of harming themselves or others with firearms, including firearms they may already possess or firearms they could access or purchase in the future. If the court receives sufficient evidence of dangerousness and necessity, the court may issue a civil order that suspends the individual's ability to keep, possess, and acquire firearms and related items, and prevents the individual from passing firearm-related background checks, for a temporary period.

This Report's Purpose: Building on California's Progress

California's GVRO law took effect in 2016, 10 years ago. In the decade since, this law became a national model for similar laws adopted in 20 other states and the District of Columbia.²⁰ In other jurisdictions, equivalent court processes are often referred to as Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), or more colloquially, as "red flag orders."

Researchers with the California Firearm Violence Research Center have identified dozens of threatened mass shootings that were prevented in California during just the first three years after this law took effect, when eligible petitioners acted to successfully obtain a GVRO.²¹ Since that time, utilization of this process has grown significantly. In 2024, California courts issued GVROs against 1,727 individuals found to pose a significant danger of firearm violence, suicide, or other injury.

independent.com/2014/05/27/isla-vista-memorial-shouts-not-one-more/.

19 UCSB Families Letter in Support of AB 1014 (August 26, 2014), at https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.everytown.org/images/UCSB_Families_Letter_AB_1014_8.26.14.pdf.

20 See Elizabeth Tomsich, et al., "The origins of California's gun violence restraining order law: a case study using Kingdon's multiple streams framework," *BMC Public Health* 23, 1275 (2023), at <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-16043-6> ("California's restraining order model has been adopted by all subsequent states enacting an ERPO law. In California, ERPOs are called gun violence restraining orders (GVROs)."); National ERPO Resource Center, "What are Extreme Risk Protection Orders," at www.erpo.org (last accessed Aug. 13, 2025). Connecticut and Indiana adopted more limited versions of this law in 1999 and 2005. After California enacted a GVRO law in 2014, Connecticut subsequently amended its law, joining 19 other states, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands in adopting extreme risk protection order laws modeled on California's GVRO.

21 See Lisa Howard, "California's 'Red Flag' Law Utilized for 58 Threatened Mass Shootings," UC Davis Press Release (Jun. 8, 2022), www.ucdavis.edu/news/californias-red-flag-law-utilized-58-threatened-mass-shootings; Veronica Pear, et al., "Gun violence restraining orders in California, 2016–2018: case details and respondent mortality," *Injury Prevention*, 28:465-71 (2022), www.injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/28/5/465.

As our state marks one decade of implementing the GVRO, the California Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Gun Violence Prevention developed this GVRO 10-Year Progress Report. This report seeks to inform stakeholders around our state and nation about California's significant progress *and* leading challenges implementing this process to prevent tragedies like the Isla Vista shooting.

Some communities are developing national models for robustly implementing the GVRO to address significant dangers to public safety. In recent years, there has been an especially large increase in the number of longer-term GVROs issued statewide—these orders last for up to five years, instead of 21 days, so provide much more durable safety protections. These implementation efforts have likely helped California achieve substantially lower mass shooting victimization rates compared to the rest of the nation on average, and have prevented other forms of firearm violence, suicide, and injury. Yet, renewed focus, training, and implementation supports are required too, to ensure law enforcement and other stakeholders in every community are prepared to use the GVRO and other firearm-prohibiting safety interventions more effectively to prevent more violent tragedies.

- Part 1 of this report provides demographic and trend statistics about GVROs issued in our state.
- Part 2 documents significant recent increases in utilization of the GVRO process.
- Part 3 uses data and implementation research to make recommendations regarding three priorities for improving implementation of the GVRO.

A key overarching recommendation is for law enforcement agencies to designate GVRO coordinators and/or develop streamlined partnerships and processes for city attorneys, county counsel, or other legal counsel to proactively advise and represent law enforcement petitioners through the GVRO process. In jurisdictions robustly utilizing the GVRO, stakeholders have emphasized the critical role that these GVRO coordinators and legal counsel have played, especially in managing the court filing and hearing requirements to obtain longer-term GVROs After a Hearing or Consent.

Additionally, two new California laws now require most law enforcement agencies to update their GVRO policies and procedures to reflect numerous changes in the law and address common implementation barriers.²² Law enforcement agencies should use this opportunity to assess their GVRO implementation needs, and update GVRO policies, procedures, and trainings to ensure officers are effective prepared to do all of the following:

- (1) Understand when the GVRO may be a necessary intervention, and how it intersects with other intervention options for preventing gun violence.
- (2) Successfully navigate the procedural and evidentiary requirements to obtain longer-term GVROs in cases involving persistent danger and necessity.
- (3) Ensure GVROs are promptly served and documented as served in both court and law enforcement record systems.

This report is being published alongside two other resources from the Office of Gun Violence Prevention: a comprehensive **GVRO Implementation Guide** and a **Model GVRO Policy for California Law Enforcement Agencies**. Those resources include more detailed background, guidance, and checklists to help stakeholders develop subject matter expertise in the GVRO process; identify and develop GVRO cases informed by behavioral threat assessment and management strategies; evaluate other safety intervention options designed to address dangerous firearm access when targeted victims are in danger; and successfully request, serve, document, and enforce GVROs to protect public safety.

²² AB 2621 (2025, Gabriel) (amending Penal Code, § 18108) and AB 451 (2026, Petrie-Norris) (enacting Penal Code, § 13667).



Background on the GVRO: Filling a Critical Safety Gap

California’s GVRO provides a 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.

California has been a leader in creating an array of court protection and restraining order processes designed to protect victims and the public from individuals engaged in violent, abusive, or other dangerous conduct in different circumstances.²³ 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. As discussed further below, most of these processes *other than the GVRO* are designed to empower victim-survivors to obtain protections from someone who has harmed, threatened, or abused them, and include temporary firearm prohibitions combined with other safety orders.

The GVRO is unique because it is available directly to law enforcement petitioners, and in circumstances, like the Isla Vista shooting, where a person poses a significant danger but has not necessarily directed violence, threats, or abuse against any specific victim(s) in particular.

This makes the GVRO an especially critical intervention for proactively 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,²⁴ 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.”²⁵ In these circumstances, the GVRO empowers petitioners to proactively intervene to prevent harm, even before dangerous behaviors escalate to criminal conduct, specific threats, or violence.

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. The Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s GVRO Implementation Guide and Model GVRO Policy provide more specific guidance regarding when to consider requesting a GVRO or other safety interventions.

There are two pathways for obtaining a GVRO, which can be described as: (1) the Emergency GVRO Pathway, and (2) the Standard Court Petition GVRO Pathway. Both pathways allow petitioners to provide evidence to a court to quickly obtain an interim 21-day Emergency or Temporary GVRO before a full hearing *and* to request that the court schedule a hearing within 21 days to adjudicate the petitioner’s request for a longer-term GVRO After Hearing or Consent that lasts for between one and five years if there is clear and convincing evidence of dangerousness. (The “respondent” is the individual who is the subject of a GVRO petition; the “petitioner” requests that the court issue a GVRO against the respondent based on evidence of dangerous behaviors.) To issue the GVRO, the court must receive sufficient evidence that the respondent is a significant danger of causing injury to themselves or others with firearms and that a GVRO is necessary under the circumstances.

23 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>.

24 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/usss-ntac-maps-2016-2020.pdf.

25 See *id.* at vi, 52.

Pathway #1: Emergency GVRO Pathway
(law enforcement only)

Law enforcement officer requests Emergency GVRO based on immediate & present danger (typically telephonically from scene of incident).
(EPO-002 court form)



If court issues Emergency GVRO, court schedules a hearing to occur within 21 days.
Emergency GVRO remains in effect until court hearing.



Court issues longer-term GVRO After Hearing/Consent
(1-5 year GVRO) after full hearing or if respondent consents to GVRO.

Pathway #2: Standard Court Petition Pathway
(law enforcement & other eligible petitioners)

Any eligible petitioner submits **GV-100 GVRO Petition Form** to the Superior Court, in person or electronically.

GVRO Petition provides option to request that the court issue a Temporary GVRO to last until hearing.



Court schedules a hearing to occur within 21 days.
If requested, court may issue Temporary GVRO based on evidence of significant danger in the near future.



Court issues longer-term GVRO After Hearing/Consent
(1-5 year GVRO) after full hearing or if respondent consents to GVRO.



CARPOS Data Note and Limitations

This report analyzes GVRO records reported by courts and law enforcement agencies into a statewide law enforcement database maintained by the California Department of Justice (DOJ) called the California Restraining and Protective Order System (CARPOS).

The CARPOS system is designed for law enforcement and safety purposes and is a vital repository of information about GVROs and other court protection or restraining orders issued in California. **But CARPOS presents very significant challenges for data analysis.** As described in more detail below, CARPOS is designed to provide concise summaries to law enforcement only about the most recent court order issued in a protection or restraining order court case. For example, in a case involving one or more pre-hearing Temporary or Emergency GVROs leading up to a longer-term 5-year GVRO After a Hearing or Consent, CARPOS would generally only maintain information about the 5-year GVRO. Information reported about that most recent 5-year order in the case would overwrite information previously recorded about any previous orders issued in that case. Most sources publishing statistical information about GVROs have reported the number of GVRO case records created in CARPOS. In practice, this significantly undercounts the number of Temporary and Emergency GVROs issued in California because those orders are commonly overwritten by subsequent Temporary or Emergency GVROs or longer-term GVROs After a Hearing/Consent issued in the same case.

CARPOS also relies on prompt, accurate, and consistent reporting by courts and law enforcement agencies, but inconsistent reporting practices can significantly affect case statistics. For example, if an agency improperly creates separate GVRO case records in CARPOS for each order issued in the same case, they may report a much higher number of Temporary or Emergency GVROs compared to jurisdictions that properly update the same case record in CARPOS to inform law enforcement only about the most recent order issued in that case. GVRO records extracted from CARPOS on May 7, 2025, included 2,726 GVRO case records for orders issued in 2024, but DOJ identified hundreds of these records as orders issued against the same individual in the same court case that were improperly reported as separate GVRO case records.

To account for these inconsistent reporting practices, this report focuses on analyzing the most recent GVRO issued against the 1,727 individuals who were identified as becoming subject to one or more GVROs issued in 2024. CARPOS does not allow for a more complete analysis of any previous GVROs issued against these individuals leading up to their most recent GVRO.

More detailed discussion about CARPOS data:

State law requires DOJ to maintain CARPOS as a repository of information about protection and restraining orders issued by California courts or otherwise registered with DOJ.²⁶ CARPOS does not include copies or images of the court order itself but summarizes important details about the order's contents, including its terms and conditions, firearm access prohibitions, expiration date, whether the individual subject to the order has received notice of the order, and who the order protects and/or restrains. This information is essential for protecting the public and informing law enforcement officers in the field. Information reported into the CARPOS database is also used by DOJ for firearm and ammunition background checks and for identifying individuals in the Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) who are unlawfully armed in violation of a court order. Information about most orders reported into the CARPOS database is also forwarded to the FBI for inclusion in national law enforcement and firearm background check databases.

²⁶ See Family Code, § 6380(e), (i). The Judicial Council of California maintains a separate database called the California Courts Protective Order Registry (CCPOR), which is used by some courts and includes full scanned images of protection and restraining orders. DOJ's CARPOS database does not include images of the court order but summarizes important details about the contents of the order, including its terms and conditions, firearm prohibitions, expiration date, whether the respondent has received notice of the order, and who the order restrains and protects.

California law requires courts and law enforcement personnel to promptly report information about GVROs and other protection and restraining orders to the CARPOS database through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS).²⁷ Most courts do not have direct CLETS access and report this information through local Sheriffs' departments or other designated law enforcement partners. Courts and law enforcement agencies are also required to promptly enter information into CARPOS to record when a person subject to a GVRO or other protection or restraining order has received notice of the court order, either when the person is (physically or virtually) present at a court hearing or when the person is otherwise served with notice of the order outside of court.²⁸ CARPOS relies on courts and law enforcement to promptly and accurately enter relevant information into this database. For example, if a court or law enforcement agency provides a person with notice that they are subject to a GVRO but then fails to update CARPOS to record that this occurred, CARPOS will show that the person has not yet been served with notice of the order.

The CARPOS system is designed for law enforcement informational purposes, not statistical analysis. It is a dynamic database, meaning that information extracted on one date will likely differ from information extracted on the next. As described above, CARPOS is also designed to provide concise summaries only about the most recent court order issued in a protection and restraining order case. This means that CARPOS does not include information about cases where a petitioner unsuccessfully petitioned for a GVRO and does not maintain information about any previous orders issued in the same case leading up to the most recent order.

When a court issues a GVRO, courts and law enforcement personnel responsible for reporting information about that order into CARPOS must also follow standard instructions about whether to (1) create a new case record in CARPOS for a new court case, or instead (2) update an existing CARPOS record to document the most recent order issued in the same court case. This can be a source of confusion and inconsistent reporting that affects statistical analysis.

When a court issues a protection or restraining order in a new court case, CARPOS-reporting personnel are instructed to create a new, unique case record in CARPOS to record information about that order. In some cases, they will have to create multiple separate CARPOS case records for separate GVRO cases against the same individual. For example, if a law enforcement agency obtains an Emergency GVRO and that order expires without leading to any subsequent GVRO After a Hearing, the case record in CARPOS would show that the most recent court order issued in that case was an expired Emergency GVRO. If the same law enforcement agency subsequently re-filed and obtained another GVRO against the same individual, the agency would be initiating a new court case, so CARPOS-reporting personnel should create a new CARPOS record separate from the earlier case record. In these circumstances, CARPOS would appropriately include two GVRO case records for two different GVRO court cases involving the same petitioner and the same respondent.

However, if a court issues an Emergency or Temporary GVRO and then, in the same case, either issues a GVRO After a Hearing or grants a request to reschedule the hearing and extend the duration of that pre-hearing order, the initial Emergency or Temporary GVRO will be replaced by the most recent order in the same court case. In these circumstances, CARPOS-reporting personnel are instructed to update the same case record in CARPOS with this new information, instead of creating a new and separate case record. If properly reported, this updated information would overwrite the CARPOS record that previously recorded information about the earlier Temporary or Emergency GVRO, so that CARPOS informs law enforcement about the most recent court order made in that same court case. Information about the earlier Temporary or Emergency GVRO would no longer be available in CARPOS.

27 See Family Code, § 6380; Penal Code, § 18115. See also, Judicial Council of California, "California Courts Protective Order Registry Deployments" (Rev. Mar. 2025) (identifying six out of California's 58 counties where courts report protection and restraining order information to DOJ directly), <https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-12/ccpor-deployment-map.pdf>.

28 Family Code, § 6380(d); Penal Code, § 18115(e).

Agencies reporting information into CARPOS sometimes do not properly follow this instruction, and create multiple CARPOS records for the same case, instead of modifying the earlier record. When this occurs, CARPOS shows multiple records for the same court case (often involving Temporary or Emergency GVROs followed by other Temporary or Emergency GVROs or longer-term GVROs After a Hearing in the same court case). This creates challenges when using CARPOS for statistical purposes. As a result, caution should be exercised especially when comparing the number of Emergency or Temporary GVROs issued across different jurisdictions or over time.

To account for these statistical challenges, this data brief focuses on analyzing data regarding longer-term GVROs After a Hearing issued in 2024, and data regarding the most recent order issued against individuals who became subject to one or more GVROs that year, instead of counts of GVRO case records created in CARPOS.



Part 1: GVRO Petitioner and Respondent Statistics

In 2024, California courts and law enforcement agencies reported 2,726 GVRO case records into CARPOS involving 1,727 individual respondents—0.004% of the state’s population found by a court to pose a particular danger to human life and safety with firearms.²⁹

Of these 1,727 individuals who became subject to one or more GVROs in 2024:

Respondent’s Sex:

- 87.8% were identified as male
- 8.5% were identified as female.
- 3.7% were identified as “other” or “unknown.”

Respondent’s Race/Ethnicity:³⁰

- 44.8% were identified as White.
- 31.8% were identified as Hispanic.
- 10.0% were identified as Black.
- 8.0% were identified as Asian.
- 0.5% were identified as Pacific Islander.
- 0.0% were identified as Native American or American Indian.
- 4.9% were identified as “other” or “unknown.”

Respondent’s Age:

- 3.0% were under the age of 18.
- 3.2% were aged 18-20.
- 21.1% were aged 22-29.
- 27.3% were aged 30-39.
- 19.9% were aged 40-49.
- 12.7% were aged 50-59.
- 6.9% were aged 60-69.
- 4.1% were aged 70-79.
- 1.6% were aged 80 or over.
- For 0.2% of respondents, age was unknown or not reported in CARPOS.

29 Based on DOJ’s analysis of GVRO case records reported into CARPOS to identify unique respondents subject to GVROs reported to the DOJ CARPOS database in 2024. To generate this estimate, researchers identified unique restrained individuals using name and date of birth. To account for potential misspellings and inconsistencies in the names in the datasets, researchers then applied “fuzzy matching” techniques (specifically using the Jaro-Winkler algorithm and a transitive grouping approach) to identify records that correspond to the same individual even if all characters do not match perfectly, including due to typos or additional information provided in one record about a respondent’s name, etc. This analysis identified an estimate of 1,727 unique individuals subject to GVROs issued in 2024, representing 0.004% of the state’s July 2024 population of 39.17 million residents. See California Dept. of Finance, “July Population Estimates,” at www.dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates/.

30 For these statistical purposes, respondents were identified as having one race or ethnicity in CARPOS. Individuals are identified as Asian above if their ethnicity was reported in CARPOS as Asian Indian, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Vietnamese, or “Other Asian.” Individuals are identified as Pacific Islander above if their ethnicity was reported as Guamanian, Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or Samoan.

Petitioner Category (for most recent GVRO recorded in CARPOS):

- 98.8% were subject to GVROs requested by law enforcement petitioners.
 - Law enforcement officers are authorized to petition for GVROs in their individual capacity but typically do so in the name of their employing law enforcement agency.
- 0.9% were subject to GVROs requested by the respondent’s family or household members petitioning the court directly.
- 0.4% were subject to GVROs requested by all other petitioner categories combined, including employers, coworkers, and school personnel.

Discussion: Why 99% of GVROs Are Obtained by Law Enforcement Petitioners

The “petitioner category” data may be surprising to some. Policymakers have repeatedly amended California’s GVRO laws to make more non-law-enforcement petitioners eligible to file GVRO petitions directly, including a respondent’s family and household members, employers, coworkers, intimate partners, roommates, and school employees. But in 2024, the overwhelming majority (99%) of GVROs issued in California were requested by law enforcement, often based in part on evidence shared by concerned family or community members. This is also true, to varying degrees, in other states that have adopted GVRO-equivalent “extreme risk protection order” processes, where the vast majority of successful petitions are submitted by law enforcement agencies.³¹

One factor contributing to this pattern is that many GVRO cases are initiated through the Emergency GVRO pathway, which is available only to law enforcement petitioners in emergency circumstances. But in 2024, law enforcement also served as the petitioners for 98% of all other GVROs obtained through the standard court petition pathway available to both law enforcement and non-law-enforcement petitioners.³²

This pattern likely *partially* reflects ongoing challenges in educating the public about the GVRO, including basic awareness that the GVRO exists and about how to utilize this court process in practice. In a statewide research survey in 2020, 65% of California adults reported that they had never heard of either a Gun Violence Restraining Order or “red flag” order.³³ In comparison, in research surveys conducted by the California Firearm Violence Research Center, a large majority of law enforcement officers indicated that they had at least some general awareness about the GVRO or equivalent processes.³⁴ Awareness is also just the first step. Studies evaluating implementation of similar laws in other states found that petitions filed by non-law-enforcement petitioners were much less likely to be successful. In the first year of implementation for Colorado’s similar law, a majority of petitions filed by non-law-enforcement family or community members were rejected by the courts, often due to procedural errors or deficiencies instead of insufficient evidence of dangerousness.³⁵

31 See, e.g., Veronica A. Pear, et al., “Law Enforcement Officer Knowledge of, Attitudes Toward, and Willingness to Use Extreme Risk Protection Orders,” *JAMA Netw. Open* (Oct. 2023); Leslie Barnard, et al., “Extreme risk protection order use in six US states: a descriptive study,” *Injury Epidemiology* (Jun. 3, 2025), at www.injepijournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40621-025-00585-x.

32 Based on analysis of GVROs reported to the DOJ CARPOS database as CLETS-OGV or CLETS-TGV orders.

33 Nicole Kravitz-Wirtz, et al., “Public Awareness of and Personal Willingness to Use California’s Extreme Risk Protection Order Law to Prevent Firearm-Related Harm,” *JAMA Health Forum* (Jun. 2021), at <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8796972/>.

34 See Veronica Pear, et al., “Law Enforcement Officer Knowledge of, Attitudes Toward, and Willingness to Use Extreme Risk Protection Orders,” *JAMA Netw. Open* (Oct. 19, 2023), at jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2810874. This study reported the results of a survey of officers in 19 states with laws similar to the GVRO, but 53% of participants were California officers. 81% of survey respondents in the study indicated they were somewhat or very familiar with these laws.

35 See Leslie M. Barnard, “Colorado’s first year of extreme risk protection orders,” *Injury Epidemiology* (Oct. 20, 2021), at <https://injepijournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40621-021-00353-7>. See also, Leslie M. Barnard, et al., “Implementation of Extreme Risk Protection Orders in Colorado from 2020 to 2022: Firearm relinquishment and return and petitioner characteristics,” *Preventive Medicine Reports* (Jun. 20, 2024), at www.pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11260331/.

Importantly, the fact that most GVROs in California are requested by law enforcement also reflects the critical gap-filling role the GVRO plays in California’s legal framework for preventing gun violence. While the GVRO plays an essential and growing role, GVROs account for 1% of the total number of court protection and restraining orders issued in California with provisions temporarily suspending dangerous individuals’ legal access to firearms.³⁶

The GVRO is the only one of these processes that uses the words “gun violence” in its name. In California, however, people who are in danger or worried about another person’s safety from gun violence much more commonly pursue other court protection and restraining orders that provide more comprehensive protections to specific people who have been targeted with violence, threats, or abuse.³⁷ These other orders are more comprehensive than the GVRO because they typically combine firearm access restrictions—meaning they functionally include a GVRO—with a range of other safety interventions restricting dangerous individuals’ conduct and movements, like “stay away” orders making it a crime for a respondent to approach specific people and places they have harmed or threatened. (For example, in 2024, employers in California successfully petitioned courts for about 1,800 Workplace Violence Restraining Orders against individuals who had harmed or threatened their employees. These orders typically prohibit dangerous respondents from possessing or acquiring firearms and ammunition under California law, and also require them to stay away from protected employees and their workplaces. A GVRO does not include these stay away orders, and employers served as direct petitioners for one GVRO issued in 2024.)

In certain emergency circumstances, law enforcement officers are also authorized to telephonically request “EPO-001” Emergency Protective Orders to quickly obtain court-ordered protections for specific people who are in danger. These “EPO-001” Emergency Protective Orders include firearm prohibitions and other important safety interventions but expire within seven calendar days and, unlike the “EPO-002” Emergency GVRO, do not lead to any subsequent hearing or longer-term protections. Officers obtained over 42,000 “EPO-001” Emergency Protective Orders in California in 2024, sometimes concurrently with a GVRO.³⁸

In other circumstances, the GVRO may be the best or only intervention option available to address dangerous firearm access, including when family and community members want interventions to address firearm access only or do not feel safe or capable of petitioning for GVROs or other protection orders directly; are concerned about a person’s danger to the public, groups of people, or themselves instead of to identifiable victims; are concerned about a person’s danger that has not yet escalated to violence, threats, or abuse; or are concerned about a person who may be a significant danger of causing injury with firearms due to conditions like severe dementia, paranoid delusions, or alcohol or substance abuse.

This reflects California’s effective policymaking, which provides law enforcement and community members with multiple pathways to safety depending on the nature of the danger the public, groups of people, and/or more specifically targeted victims are facing.

Public education efforts should continue to raise awareness about the availability of the GVRO as one of multiple important intervention options for preventing gun violence. Public awareness efforts should also ensure that key stakeholders who provide safety information to people in crisis, including law enforcement, victim service providers, and healthcare professionals, are equipped to provide information about all of the safety options available in California, including the GVRO, other protective

36 See DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “Pathways to Safety: California’s Nine Court Protection Orders to Prevent Gun Violence” (Jun. 2024), p. 6, 79, at www.oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/OGVP_Restraining%20Order%20Report.pdf.

37 These include Emergency Protective Orders available to law enforcement, Criminal Protective Orders, and the following civil court orders: Civil Harassment, Domestic Violence, Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse, Juvenile, Postsecondary School Violence, and Workplace Violence Restraining Orders.

38 Based on DOJ analysis of CLETS-EPO records reported into CARPOS in 2024 (data extracted May 7, 2025).

orders, mental health system interventions, and criminal justice responses. In dangerous circumstances, members of the public may have limited awareness and understanding about all of these options and rely on trusted safety stakeholders to help them identify the best pathway to safety for their unique circumstances. Section 3 of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s Model GVRO Policy includes standard guidance about factors to consider in determining whether to request a GVRO or pursue other safety interventions, and Section 4 of the Model GVRO Policy includes information about the types of evidence courts consider in determining whether there are sufficient grounds for issuing a GVRO.

Since law enforcement officers play a leading role in both requesting and implementing GVROs, public education efforts must also focus on preparing officers to navigate the practical procedural requirements for effectively implementing and enforcing GVROs. General awareness is a necessary first step but more practical guidance and training is needed to prepare officers to effectively implement these orders and navigate its sometimes complicated civil court forms-filing, service, record reporting, and court hearing requirements in real world dangerous situations. A new state law requiring law enforcement agencies to update their standard GVRO policies and procedures provides an important opportunity to address implementation barriers and ensure officers are practically prepared to utilize the GVRO process for public safety.



Part 2: Progress for Increased Awareness and Utilization of the GVRO

Data reported to DOJ indicates that California has been making important progress to enhance awareness and utilization of the GVRO process by law enforcement. Many counties recorded very low numbers of GVROs until a marked and sustained increase, reflecting the impact of effective trainings and local leadership. Especially since 2021, more petitioners have been successfully utilizing the GVRO process in more jurisdictions across California, especially to obtain longer-term orders. Between 2021 and 2024, the number of longer-term GVROs After a Hearing or Consent issued each year in California more than doubled.

In recent years, California has invested in important efforts to enhance awareness and implementation of the GVRO, including through grants awarded by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services;³⁹ state Budget Act investments and DOJ grants for the San Diego City Attorney's Office's GVRO training and implementation program,⁴⁰ trainings and public education efforts by the DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention, and since July 1, 2024, through "Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (Byrne SCIP)" grant awards to multiple cities and counties implementing projects focused on improving awareness and implementation of GVROs and other firearm-prohibiting protective orders.⁴¹ Local investments have also played an important role in communities like Santa Clara County.⁴²

Supported by state and local investments, some California jurisdictions are building GVRO programs cited as national models. In 2024 and 2025, a GVRO program led by the San Diego City Attorney's Office and San Diego Police Department processed 296 GVRO cases that, collectively, separated 895 firearms from individuals found by a court to present a significant danger with firearms.⁴³

News outlets and researchers have reported on GVROs issued to prevent mass shootings and domestic terror attacks, school shootings, hate-motivated shootings, attacks targeting large public gatherings, workplaces, bars, houses of worship, student residences, government buildings, and military service members, among many others.⁴⁴ Many other effective GVRO interventions did not make the news.

- 39 See California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Press Release: "Governor Newsom Launches New Initiative to Protect Californians from Gun Violence" (Jun. 3, 2022), at news.ca.gov/governor-newsom-launches-new-initiative-to-protect-californians-from-gun-violence; Press Release: "Youth, community leaders take center stage in launch of gun safety effort" (Jun. 6, 2025), at www.gov.ca.gov/2025/06/06/youth-community-leaders-take-center-stage-in-launch-of-gun-safety-effort/.
- 40 See, e.g., Teri Figueroa, "San Diego region's gun violence prevention efforts getting \$4.2 million boost," *San Diego Union-Tribune* (Aug. 6, 2024), www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2024/08/06/san-diego-regions-gun-violence-prevention-efforts-getting-4-2-million-boost/.
- 41 See Board for State and Community Corrections, "Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program," at www.bscc.ca.gov/byrne-state-crisis-intervention-program/.
- 42 Devin Fehely, "Santa Clara County beefs up enforcement of red flag gun law," CBS News Bay Area (Feb. 8, 2023), www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/santa-clara-county-beefs-up-enforcement-of-red-flag-gun-law.
- 43 San Diego Regional Gun Violence Response Task Force, "Annual Report to the California Department of Justice: Grant # DOJ-GVRTF-2023-24-1-001" (Feb. 7, 2025) and (Feb. 6, 2026).
- 44 See, e.g., Veronica Pear, *et al.*, "Gun violence restraining orders in California, 2016–2018: case details and respondent mortality," *Injury Prevention*, 28:465–71 (2022), www.injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/28/5/465; Garen Wintemute, *et al.*, "Extreme Risk Protection Orders Intended to Prevent Mass Shootings: A Case Series," *Annals of Internal Medicine* (Aug. 20, 2019), www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M19-2162; Grace Toohey, "A San Diego high schooler threatened a shooting. Cops found explosives, ghost guns at teen's home," *Los Angeles Times* (Jan. 30, 2024), www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-01-30/san-diego-teen-threatened-their-high-school-police-found-explosives-guns-at-the-home; Dorian Hargrove and David Gotfredson, "Carlsbad man detained for plotting mass shooting in conjunction with Madison, Wisconsin school shooter," CBS 8 (Dec. 18, 2024), www.cbs8.com/article/news/local/carlsbad-man-detained-for-plotting-mass-shooting-in-wisconsin-school-shooter/509-fc2891a1-b4dd-496a-8608-314c7d4f4fbd; David Gotfredson, "GVRO: [V. K.] threatened 'LGBTQ and other races,'" CBS 8 (Oct. 2, 2024), www.cbs8.com/article/news/local/gvro-victor-krvaric-threatened-lgbtq-other-races/509-2b4c369a-98f4-4105-852c-aa2fc6c42d20; CBS 8 Staff, "A Navy Sailor who threatened to kill fellow sailors on the USS Ronald Reagan loses right to own guns," CBS 8 (Apr. 15, 2025), www.cbs8.com/article/news/local/sailor-who-threatened-kill-fellow-sailors-loses-gun-rights/509-277fa9ab-e8a7-4a6c-ba0e-ade85269d3d7; Selen Ozturk, "CA Launches Campaign to Fight Gun Violence Crisis," *Precinct Reporter News* (Aug. 7, 2025), *CA Launches Campaign to Fight Gun Violence Crisis - Precinct Reporter Group News*; "SJPD officer arrested for series of alleged assaults on girlfriend, shooting hole through roof,"

Their impact is measured in shootings prevented—in tragic headlines never written—because law enforcement and other stakeholders took effective action to identify clear dangers and intervene before violence occurred, recurred, or escalated.

Their impact may also be measured in data. The number of mass shooting incidents in California has fallen substantially below the pre-pandemic average, in contrast to trends for the rest of the nation,⁴⁵ and from 2023-2025, on a per capita basis, the number of people shot or killed in mass shooting incidents in California was 38% below the rate in the rest of the nation on average,⁴⁶ despite the horrific impact of attacks like a November 2025 shooting that devastated the community of Stockton.⁴⁷

In recent years, there has been an especially significant increase in the number of longer-term GVROs After a Hearing/Consent issued statewide, indicating that more law enforcement agencies are effectively navigating the court hearing process required to obtain longer-term GVROs that last for up to five years instead of expiring within days or weeks.

Figure 1 below shows the number of longer-term GVROs After a Hearing/Consent issued each year in California, and Figure 2 shows the number of California counties in which at least one GVRO was issued each year.⁴⁸

ABC 7 News (Aug. 14, 2024), <https://abc7news.com/post/sjpd-officer-arrested-series-violent-assaults-girlfriend-shooting-hole-roof/15186009/>; Tyler Hayden, “Santa Barbara Man Who Shot at Teens Near Stevens Park Faces Prison Time, Civil Lawsuit,” *Santa Barbara Independent* (Apr. 4, 2024), at www.independent.com/2024/04/04/santa-barbara-man-who-shot-at-teens-near-stevens-park-faces-prison-time-civil-lawsuit/; “Using California’s Red Flag Law to Combat Hate Crimes,” San Diego City Attorney Mara Elliott (Feb. 2020), www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/cacomnews-feb20.pdf; Everytown Research & Policy, “Examples of How Extreme Risk Laws Save Lives,” at <https://everytownresearch.org/report/appendix-a-extreme-risk-laws-save-lives-stories/>.

45 See 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/ (finding that in fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024 to July 1, 2025), the number of mass shooting incidents in California was 36% *below* the pre-pandemic average while the number of mass shooting incidents for the rest of the nation combined was 26% *above* the pre-pandemic average).

46 Based on analysis of mass shooting (4+ victims killed or injured) incident records from the Gun Violence Archive, accessible at Gunviolencearchive.org. From 2023-2025, 627 victims were killed or injured in mass shootings in California and 7,713 victims were killed or injured in mass shootings in the rest of the US (the 49 other states and D.C.). Population estimates from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WONDER Database reported that the average population for California over this three year period was 39,275,906 residents, and the population for the rest of the US outside California averaged 299,103,051, indicating that the mass shooting victimization rate in California was 1.60 per 100,000 residents, about 38% below the mass shooting victimization rate for the rest of the US of 2.58 per 100,000 residents over this period.

47 See Sheyanne Romero and Victoria Franco, “Stockton shooting at birthday party leaves 4 dead. Here’s what we know,” *The Stockton Record* (Nov. 30, 2025), at www.recordnet.com/story/news/2025/11/30/what-we-know-about-stockton-mass-shooting-that-kills-4-injures-10/87538828007/.

48 Based on DOJ analysis of GVRO records reported into the CARPOS database. Note that the CARPOS database is a dynamic database. Data for 2016 to 2023 is based on analysis of data published on DOJ’s Open Justice data portal at openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data. Data for 2024 is based on analysis of GVRO records extracted from CARPOS on May 7, 2025, and may slightly differ from counts reported on OpenJustice.

Figure 1. Number of Longer-Term GVROs After Hearing/Consent Issued Each Year in California.

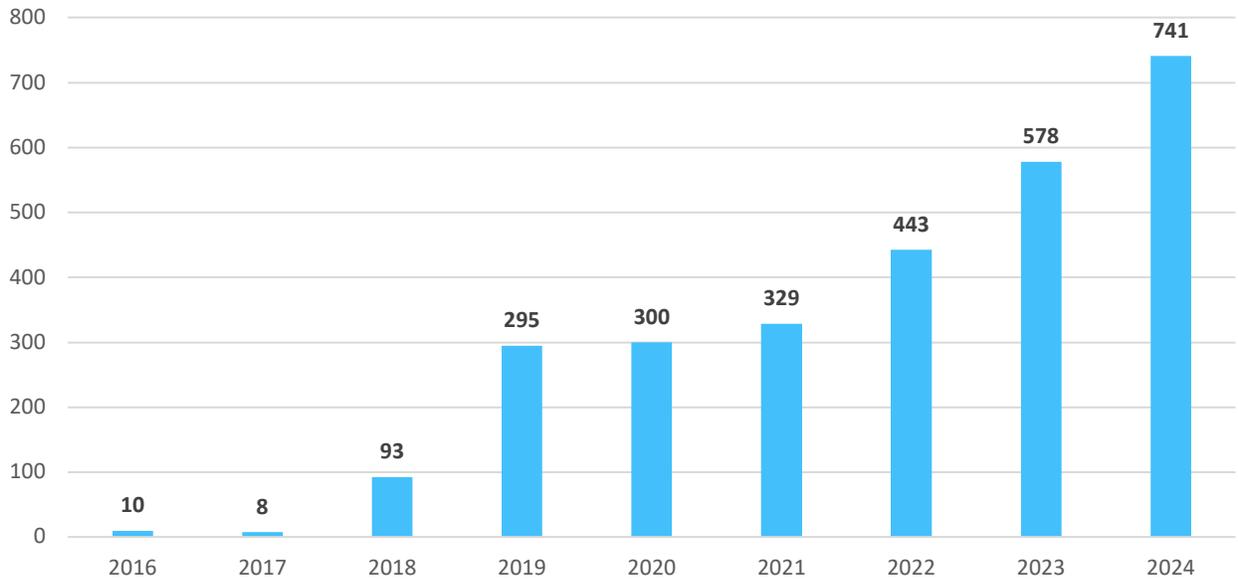
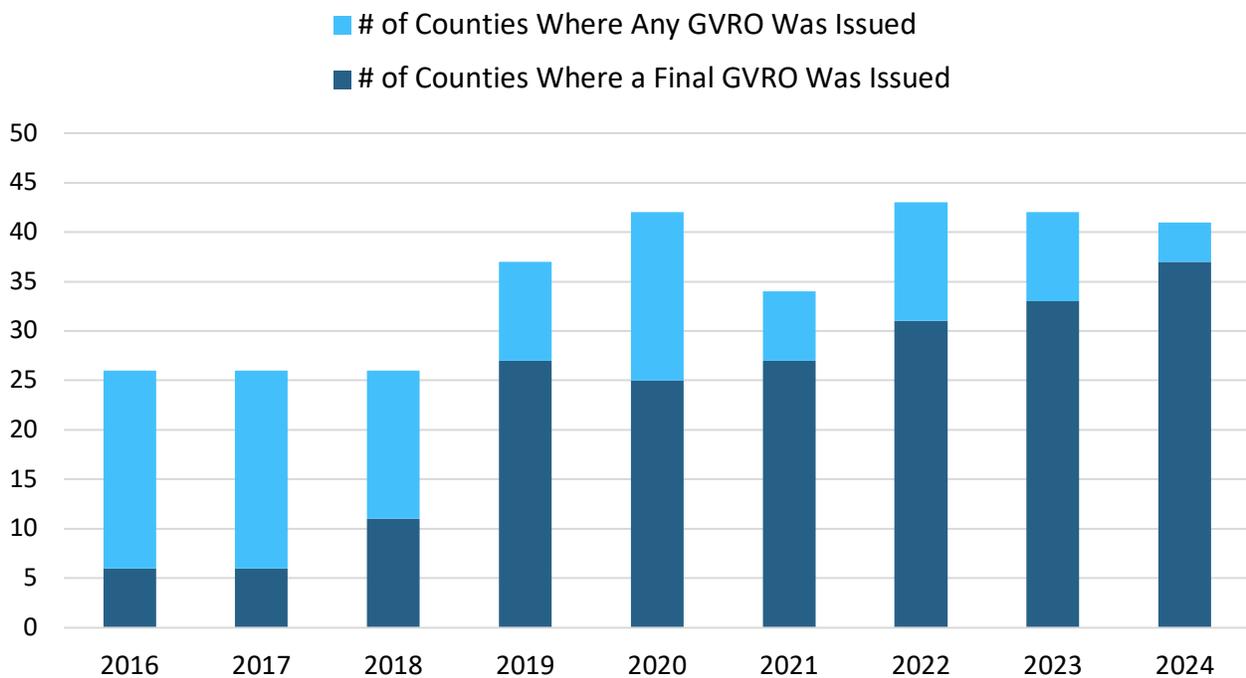


Figure 2. Number of California Counties Where At Least One GVRO Was Issued That Year.



This data shows that:

- Utilization of the GVRO was very limited in the first few years after the GVRO process was implemented in 2016. A small number of longer-term GVROs After a Hearing or Consent were issued in a small number of counties.
- The number of longer-term GVROs issued statewide started to substantially increase in 2018 and 2019 and then remained relatively flat in 2020 and 2021.

- Since 2021, the number of longer-term GVROs issued per year in California has increased by about 30% each year, more than doubling between 2021 and 2024, and increasing by 67% between 2022 and 2024.
- Courts granted more longer-term GVROs in 2024 than they had over the first five years after the GVRO law took effect combined.
- Early utilization of the GVRO was concentrated in a handful of counties. In recent years, petitioners have been successfully pursuing longer-term GVROs in more jurisdictions. 2022 was the first year during which at least one longer-term GVRO After a Hearing/Consent was issued in a majority of California’s 58 counties. In 2024 at least one longer-term GVRO After a Hearing/Consent was issued in 37 counties.

In 2024, California petitioners were able to obtain GVROs against 1,727 individuals, and to obtain longer-term GVROs lasting for between one to five years in 741 cases in which a court found clear and convincing evidence that an individual posed a significant danger of hurting themselves or others with firearms. Officers enforcing these orders recovered hundreds of firearms from GVRO respondents in just one jurisdiction alone (San Diego).⁴⁹ In other cases, GVROs were issued and enforced to proactively prevent dangerous or suicidal individuals who did not yet possess firearms from passing background checks to acquire deadly weapons for the duration of the GVRO.

⁴⁹ See San Diego Regional Gun Violence Response Task Force, “Annual Report to the California Department of Justice: Grant # DOJ-GVRTF-2023-24-1-001” (Feb. 7, 2025) (reporting that 120 GVRO cases processed by the San Diego City Attorney’s Office in 2024 collectively recovered 376 firearms from GVRO respondents).



Part 3: Three Priorities for Improving Implementation of the GVRO

This section identifies three key priorities for building on California’s implementation progress and promoting effective utilization of the GVRO as a core part of California’s public safety strategy. California has made critical progress expanding awareness and use of the GVRO to prevent mass shootings and other gun violence incidents. However, stakeholders have also faced significant barriers to utilizing and implementing the GVRO and similar policies in other states.⁵⁰

This report’s recommendations for improvements focus primarily on law enforcement because law enforcement officers and agencies serve as petitioners for the vast majority of GVROs, and play a central role in serving, documenting, and enforcing GVROs obtained by any petitioner. New state laws also require law enforcement agencies to update their GVRO policies and procedures to promote effective implementation, which provides an important opportunity for law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders to assess their jurisdiction’s implementation progress, gaps, and needs.

To build on California’s progress implementing the GVRO, law enforcement agencies should:

1. Continue to address uneven utilization, awareness, and confusion about the GVRO process. Many more jurisdictions have begun utilizing the GVRO process in recent years. But utilization is highly uneven across the state and driven by a relatively small number of agencies that have developed sustained, coordinated GVRO programs in partnership with their city attorneys or other legal counsel. Other agencies can incorporate best practices developed in these jurisdictions by: providing comprehensive and practical training on the GVRO as well as other safety interventions for dangerous firearm access; dedicating staff positions to behavioral threat assessment and GVRO implementation and enforcement; and by building a culture of prevention that emphasizes the value of preventative civil safety interventions to the law enforcement agency’s public safety mission. Agencies should consider designating GVRO coordinators and/or develop streamlined partnerships with city attorneys, county counsel, or other legal counsel to advise or represent law enforcement agencies through the GVRO process, especially to manage GVRO court hearings and filings required to obtain longer-term GVROs.
2. Ensure officers are trained and prepared to obtain longer-term GVROs in cases involving persistent danger and necessity. Many agencies’ GVRO policies focus primarily or exclusively on training officers to obtain only short-term Emergency GVROs that generally expire within 21 days, and a majority of GVROs issued in California expire at this short-term Temporary or Emergency GVRO stage. While this can be appropriate for many circumstances, law enforcement officers must also be effectively trained and prepared about how to extend these 21-day GVROs into much longer-term GVROs lasting for up to five years in cases involving persistent danger and necessity.

50 See, e.g., Veronica Pear, et al., “Implementation and perceived effectiveness of gun violence restraining orders in California: A qualitative evaluation,” *PLoS ONE* (2021), at www.pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34665820/. See also, e.g., Leslie Barnard, et al., “Extreme risk protection order use in six US states: a descriptive study,” *Injury Epidemiology* (Jun. 3, 2025), at www.injepijournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40621-025-00585-x; Laura Prater, et al., “Civilian Petitioners and Extreme Risk Protection Orders in the State of Washington,” *Psychiatric Services* (May 25, 2022), at <https://psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.202100636>; Leslie Barnard, et al., “Colorado’s first year of extreme risk protection orders,” *Injury Epidemiology* (Oct. 20, 2021), at www.injepijournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40621-021-00353-7; Leslie M. Barnard, et al., “Implementation of Extreme Risk Protection Orders in Colorado from 2020 to 2022: Firearm relinquishment and return and petitioner characteristics,” *Preventive Medicine Reports* (Jun. 20, 2024), at <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11260331/>.

3. Ensure GVROs are promptly served and that service information is properly reported to both court and law enforcement record systems. As detailed below, a large number of GVROs are either never served on the respondent or never recorded as served in court and law enforcement record systems. Failure to serve notices of court hearings and file proof-of-service forms with the court frequently prevents courts from holding hearings to issue longer-term GVROs. Failure to serve and document service of any GVRO in law enforcement record systems can also impede enforcement. There are effective strategies for addressing these service challenges, in part by elevating service as a priority and dedicating more time and resources to ensuring GVROs and other protection orders are promptly served and enforced. Checklists or other practical implementation resources can help ensure that officers properly record service for both court and law enforcement record systems within mandated timelines.

The DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s report on *Gun Violence Restraining Orders: A Practical Implementation Guide for California Law Enforcement* includes explanatory background, GVRO process flow charts, and best practice checklists to help law enforcement agencies address these barriers and effectively utilize the GVRO process for public safety.

The Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s Model GVRO Policy also includes guidance for law enforcement agencies and their legal counsel about circumstances in which officers should consider requesting a GVRO or pursuing other safety interventions to reduce risk of gun violence, about the types of evidence courts consider in GVRO cases, about preparing for GVRO hearings, and serving and enforcing GVROs issued by the court.

The section below presents data and discussion about each of the three priorities identified above.

Priority #1:

Address Uneven Implementation, Awareness, and Confusion about the GVRO Process

The data presented above shows that utilization of the GVRO process has increased significantly in recent years: in 2024, at least one GVRO was issued in 41 of California’s 58 counties, and at least one longer-term GVRO After a Hearing/Consent was issued in 37.

But utilization of the GVRO is also highly uneven across the state. 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 After a Hearing/Consent statewide.⁵¹

On a per capita basis, some other counties with smaller populations utilized the GVRO process at a higher rate than these three counties. The 10 counties with the highest per capita rate of individuals subject to at least one GVRO issued in 2024 were (in declining order): Alpine, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Lake, San Mateo, San Diego, Tulare, San Luis Obispo, Nevada, and Riverside.⁵²

⁵¹ Id.

⁵² Based on DOJ analysis of the number of unique individuals subject to GVROs issued in 2024, by county, compared against county-level population data from 2023 accessed from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WONDER database. Note that per capita rates may be especially variable for counties with smaller populations, such as Alpine County.

Table 1. Number of Unique Individuals Subject to At Least One GVRO Issued in 2024, by County.⁵³

County	Number of Unique Individuals Subject to At Least One GVRO Issued in 2024 (some individuals were subject to multiple GVROs)
Alameda	73
Alpine	2
Amador	0
Butte	3
Calaveras	2
Colusa	0
Contra Costa	12
Del Norte	0
El Dorado	8
Fresno	32
Glenn	1
Humboldt	0
Imperial	0
Inyo	0
Kern	9
Kings	2
Lake	11
Lassen	0
Los Angeles	90
Madera	2
Marin	11
Mariposa	0
Mendocino	2
Merced	2
Modoc	0
Mono	0
Monterey	6
Napa	10
Nevada	8
Orange	100
Placer	12
Plumas	0
Riverside	190
Sacramento	63
San Benito	0

⁵³ Based on analysis of unique individuals who were subject to at least one GVRO entered into the CARPOS database in 2024.

County	Number of Unique Individuals Subject to At Least One GVRO Issued in 2024 (some individuals were subject to multiple GVROs)
San Bernardino	24
San Diego	332
San Francisco	27
San Joaquin	13
San Luis Obispo	23
San Mateo	78
Santa Barbara	31
Santa Clara	320
Santa Cruz	60
Shasta	1
Sierra	0
Siskiyou	1
Solano	15
Sonoma	29
Stanislaus	9
Sutter	0
Trinity	0
Tehama	0
Tulare	48
Tuolumne	1
Ventura	60
Yolo	4
Yuba	0
CA Statewide Total	1,727

It is important to exercise caution and nuance when using the number of GVRO cases or respondents in a jurisdiction as a metric of safety or success. For one, all GVROs are not equal: a single 5-year GVRO After a Hearing would provide more durable protections than four GVROs After a Hearing 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 also does not necessarily mean the court order was effectively served and enforced. The number of GVROs issued by the courts, in isolation, can only tell so much.

As discussed above, other safety interventions can also provide broader protections to targeted victim-survivors in many circumstances, so it could be counterproductive for public safety if a jurisdiction aggressively prioritizes efforts to obtain GVROs in place of other comprehensive interventions, or in cases where a GVRO is effectively redundant because a dangerous respondent was already legally prohibited from accessing firearms for the duration of the GVRO (such as due to a prior felony conviction). In some circumstances, voluntary alternatives to an adversarial court process, such as through mental health services or violence intervention specialists, could also be more effective at reducing risk of violence and suicide in practice.

With these caveats in mind, 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.⁵⁴

By the end of 2024, courts in five smaller counties in California had still never reported issuing a single GVRO of any type or duration.⁵⁵ In addition to those five counties, courts in eight other California counties had still never reported issuing a single longer-term GVRO After a Hearing, meaning that from 2016-2024, all GVRO orders issued in these 13 counties had generally expired within 21 days unless the court granted a short-term continuance to extend the duration of the 21-day order.⁵⁶ Ten of these 13 counties had firearm death rates above the statewide average, and eight had firearm death rates over 50% above the statewide average.⁵⁷ Of the 20 counties with the highest per capita firearm homicide rates in California, only six (Alpine, Alameda, Lake, Glenn, Tulare, and Sacramento) were among the 20 counties with the highest per capita rate of individuals subject to GVROs in 2024.⁵⁸

Increasing awareness about the GVRO in jurisdictions with higher rates of firearm violence and mortality been an important focus area for multiple agencies in California, such as through the “Reduce the Risk” public education campaign launched by the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services in 2025 (see ReduceTheRisk.ca.gov). These awareness efforts are important, ongoing, and challenging; they must raise awareness about the GVRO as one critical intervention option, while addressing significant confusion about how the GVRO intersects with other intervention options that can provide more comprehensive protections, restrictions, or services in some circumstances, including law enforcement-initiated mental health holds and Emergency Protective Orders, other firearm-prohibiting protective orders, and other criminal justice or mental health system responses.

In some communities and law enforcement agencies, training and awareness efforts must also address myths about the GVRO process or skepticism and confusion about a primarily law enforcement-led civil intervention designed to preventatively reduce risk without incarceration. Law enforcement agency leaders can play an important role in supporting officers’ understanding and use of the GVRO by emphasizing that preventative civil interventions are essential to the agency’s public safety mission. The GVRO and other civil safety interventions reflect behavioral threat assessment and management in practice and should be utilized by law enforcement and community partners as part of building a culture of safety through prevention, in addition to reactive response and accountability after harm has already occurred.

Efforts to support GVRO awareness and implementation must also prepare law enforcement officers and other petitioners to navigate a sometimes-daunting civil court and forms-filing process, especially for obtaining a longer-term GVRO After a Hearing. The GVRO provides law enforcement officers with unique powers to directly file GVRO petitions and present evidence in GVRO court hearings on behalf of the law enforcement agency. But many officers do not have extensive training or experience with how to identify GVRO cases, navigate civil court processes, track the different forms-filing and proof-of-service requirements that apply in different types of GVRO cases, and manage presentation of evidence and testimony in civil court hearings themselves.

In counties like San Diego and Santa Clara, robust utilization of the GVRO process has been driven by coordinated partnerships between local law enforcement agency petitioners and the Offices of the

54 Based on DOJ’s analysis of GVRO records in CARPOS and per capita firearm death rates reported by the California Dept. of Public Health’s California Firearm Injury Dashboard by victim county of residence (2016-2022), accessed at skylab4.cdph.ca.gov/firearm-injuries/.

55 Those counties were Colusa, Del Norte, Modoc, Plumas, and Yuba.

56 Those counties were Alpine, Amador, Colusa, Del Norte, Inyo, Mariposa, Modoc, Plumas, San Benito, Sutter, Trinity, Yolo, and Yuba.

57 Based on DOJ’s analysis of GVRO records in CARPOS and per capita firearm death rates reported by the California Dept. of Public Health’s California Firearm Injury Dashboard by victim county of residence (2016-2022), accessed at skylab4.cdph.ca.gov/firearm-injuries/.

58 Id.

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 very actively partnering with officers 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. Significant state and local funding investments have helped build and sustain these leading programs too.⁵⁹

In these and other jurisdictions, law enforcement officers have emphasized the critical role that GVRO coordinators and city attorneys, county counsel, or other legal counsel have played in GVRO implementation. These GVRO coordinators or legal counsel represent law enforcement agency petitioners, appear in court on behalf of the agency in GVRO hearings, and handle much of the practical forms-filing, coordination, and scheduling work for the law enforcement agency they represent. Sometimes working with dedicated GVRO investigators or analysts, these attorneys or coordinators can also help officers screen GVRO cases, navigate the legal and procedural requirements for obtaining, serving, and implementing GVROs, build and present evidence at court hearings, and track GVRO cases to ensure timely service, firearm relinquishment compliance, and record reporting. Where possible, law enforcement agencies and their legal counsel should support utilization of the GVRO by developing these streamlined partnerships and protocols.

Agencies that do not have these resources available may still benefit from their example by elevating the GVRO as a public safety priority and designating GVRO coordinators responsible for advising and assisting officers through the GVRO process. Like all other civil court protection and restraining orders in California, the GVRO is a standard, forms-based process designed to be accessible to petitioners requesting court-ordered safety interventions without the assistance of an attorney.

Law enforcement agencies should also develop clear GVRO policies, procedures, and trainings to help officers understand identify GVRO cases, evaluate the strengths and limitations of the GVRO alongside other potential safety interventions, and equip officers with practical-focused tools for success. For example, the San Diego Police Department has designated a phone number for officers to call with questions regarding GVROs at all hours, and has produced practical implementation-focused resources like training pamphlets on how to properly complete GVRO forms.

Researchers have found that officers who received training and information about the GVRO process are much more likely to request GVROs, in part because these trainings can help address misconceptions and clarify the importance of this process in a range of dangerous circumstances.⁶⁰ In a survey study by the California Firearm Violence Research Center published in 2023, researchers presented officers with a range of potentially dangerous scenarios and asked whether they would agree with requesting a GVRO (or equivalent order) in that scenario. The most common reasons that officers gave for *not* pursuing a GVRO were that the potentially dangerous individual described in the scenario had not yet committed a crime or made specific threats to commit a shooting.⁶¹ These responses

59 See, e.g., Teri Figueroa, “San Diego region’s gun violence prevention efforts getting \$4.2 million boost,” *San Diego Union-Tribune* (Aug. 6, 2024), www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2024/08/06/san-diego-regions-gun-violence-prevention-efforts-getting-4-2-million-boost/; Devin Fehely, “Santa Clara County beefs up enforcement of red flag gun law,” *CBS News Bay Area* (Feb. 8, 2023), www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/santa-clara-county-beefs-up-enforcement-of-red-flag-gun-law/.

60 See Veronica A. Pear, et al., “Law Enforcement Officer Knowledge of, Attitudes Toward, and Willingness to Use Extreme Risk Protection Orders,” *JAMA Netw. Open* (Oct. 2023), at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2810874>; Leslie Barnard, et al., “Extreme risk protection order use in six US states: a descriptive study,” *Injury Epidemiology* (Jun. 3, 2025), at www.injepijournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40621-025-00585-x.

61 See Veronica A. Pear, et al., “Law Enforcement Officer Knowledge of, Attitudes Toward, and Willingness to Use Extreme Risk Protection Orders,” *JAMA Netw. Open* (Oct. 2023), at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2810874>.

reflected possible misconceptions about the GVRO process, since the GVRO authorizes courts to issue GVROs as a proactive, preventative civil measure to address dangerous behavior before an individual, like the Isla Vista shooter, has necessarily escalated their conduct to criminal threats or violence, or threatened to commit a shooting in particular. Across a range of potential GVRO scenarios, researchers found that “officers with training or experience [pursuing GVROs] were more likely to agree with using [a GVRO] than those without training and experience—usually by about 20 percentage points. This suggests both the necessity and value of [this] training, as it seems to convey to officers the potential utility of [this process] in preventing firearm violence of all kinds.”⁶²

More officers can effectively utilize this process to prevent firearm violence when their agencies provide effective training about how and when to use this process; develop GVRO policies, checklists, and implementation resources designed to help officers navigate practical requirements; designate GVRO-coordinators and/or legal counsel to assist or represent officers in the GVRO process; and emphasize the importance of the GVRO and other civil safety interventions to the agency’s public safety mission.

Priority #2:

Ensure Officers are Trained and Prepared to Obtain Longer-Term GVROs in Cases Involving Persistent Danger & Necessity

The GVRO process allows petitioners to present evidence necessary to obtain short-term court-ordered safety interventions immediately for an Emergency GVRO or within one business day for a Temporary GVRO. These are very short-term GVROs that typically expire within 21 days. From there, the GVRO process is designed to request and schedule a full court hearing within 21 days to adjudicate the petitioner’s request for a longer-term GVRO After a Hearing or Consent in circumstances where the respondent remains a significant danger and has not become subject to other firearm access restrictions within the preceding 21 days. That longer-term GVRO can remain in effect for up to five years—the duration of more than 85 Emergency or Temporary GVROs.

However, many law enforcement agencies’ GVRO policies and procedures currently focus primarily—in some cases, exclusively—on training officers about the process for obtaining 21-day Emergency GVROs only in circumstances involving immediate and present danger. Many agencies’ policies make little to no mention of the process for submitting a GV-100 petition to obtain GVROs through the standard court petition pathway in dangerous but non-emergency circumstances, and many also make little to no mention about the processes required to obtain longer-term GVROs After a Hearing or Consent. Some agencies’ GVRO policies currently do not mention any court hearing at all. That is a consequential oversight and may help explain why a majority of GVRO cases expire at the Emergency or Temporary GVRO stage—potentially allowing a respondent to regain firearm access within just days or weeks after a court found the respondent to be an immediate and present danger, or a significant danger, of hurting themselves or others with firearms.

Of the 1,727 individuals who became subject to at least one GVRO issued in 2024, 986 (57%) were subject to short-term Emergency and/or Temporary GVROs only.⁶³

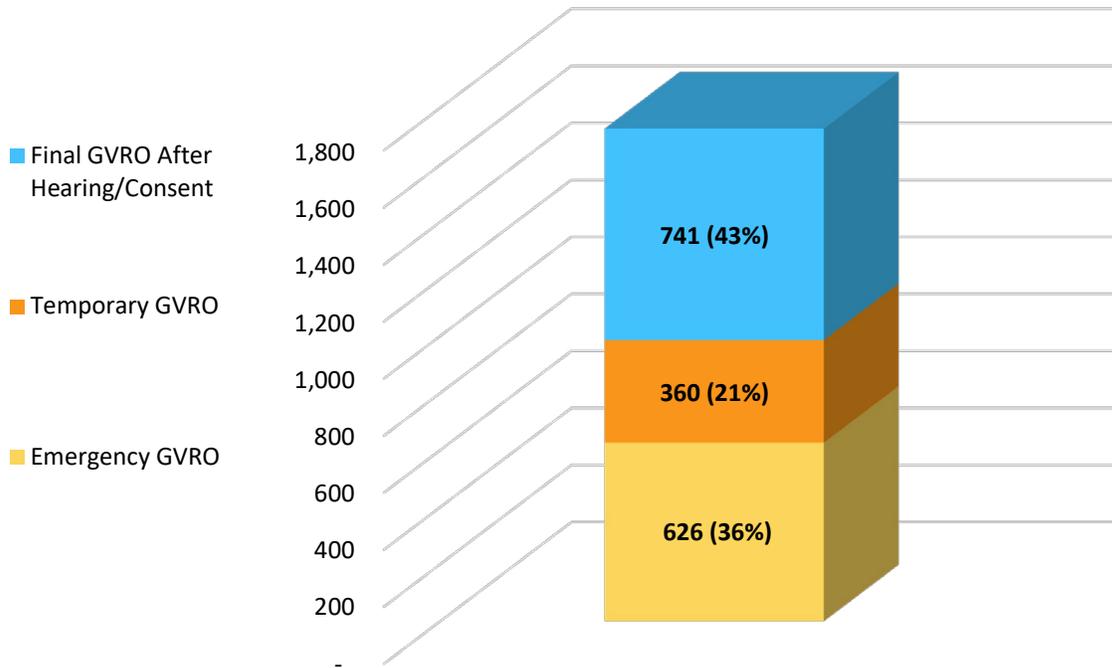
62 See id.

63 Based on DOJ’s analysis of records reported to CARPOS before May 7, 2025, with a 2024 issuance date. 958 individuals (55.5%) were subject to short-term Emergency and/or Temporary GVROs that expired by May 7, 2025. An additional 28 (1.7%) were subject to short-term Emergency and/or Temporary GVROs that were still in effect as of May 7, 2025, indicating that the court likely granted multiple or longer-term continuances extending the duration of a Temporary or Emergency GVRO that had not become a GVRO After Hearing/Consent by that date. Anecdotally, courts may sometimes grant longer-term continuances in GVRO cases pending the outcome of a concurrent criminal case against the same individual.

The last GVRO order issued against these 1,727 individuals in 2024 was:

- A GVRO After Hearing or Consent for 741 individuals.
- An Emergency GVRO for 626.
- A Temporary GVRO for 360.

Figure 3. Type of GVRO Last Issued Against Individuals Subject to At Least One GVRO Issued in 2024.⁶⁴



Note that these counts only reflect the last GVRO order issued against the 1,727 individual respondents who became subject to a GVRO issued in 2024; they do not capture the much larger number of short-term Temporary and Emergency GVROs issued in the course of many of these cases. It was not uncommon for petitioners to have to initiate multiple GVRO cases against the same individual before ultimately obtaining a longer-term GVRO After a Hearing/Consent. For example, if a law enforcement agency obtained an Emergency GVRO but then failed to submit proof-of-service forms to the court in a timely manner, or to attend the scheduled hearing, the court may cancel the hearing and dismiss the court case. In that case, the agency could seek to request another GVRO, and might submit a GVRO petition to obtain a Temporary GVRO followed by a longer-term GVRO After Hearing against the same individual. That one individual would have been subject to an Emergency GVRO, a Temporary GVRO, and then a longer-term GVRO After Hearing, but in Figure 3 above, that individual would only be recorded among the 741 people who ultimately became subject to a longer-term GVRO in 2024, out of 1,727 who become subject to GVROs of any type that year.

Of the 741 individuals who ultimately became subject to a longer-term GVRO After a Hearing/Consent:

- 48% became subject to a longer-term GVRO lasting for the maximum 5-year duration.
- 7% became subject to a longer-term GVRO lasting between 4 and 5 years.

⁶⁴ Based on DOJ analysis of GVRO records reported into CARPOS with an issuance date in 2024, and extracted on May 7, 2025. This analysis reflects the most recent GVRO issued against the 1,727 unique individuals who became subject to GVROs in 2024 as of May 7, 2025.

- 18% became subject to a longer-term GVRO lasting between 3 and 4 years.
- 9% became subject to a longer-term GVRO lasting between 2 and 3 years.
- 17% became subject to a longer-term GVRO lasting less than 2 years.

958 individuals were subject to GVROs issued in 2024 that expired at the Emergency or Temporary GVRO stage before May 7, 2025, without leading to any longer-term GVRO After a Hearing/Consent.

- In a majority of these cases (54%), the last GVRO issued in the case was an Emergency or Temporary GVRO that expired within 21 days. The remainder were Temporary or Emergency GVROs that expired more than 21 days after issuance, indicating that the court found “good cause” to grant one or more continuances requested by either party before the order ultimately expired without leading to a longer-term GVRO After Hearing.
- In 69% of these cases, the most recent order was an Emergency or Temporary GVRO that expired within 30 days.
- In 78% of these cases, the most recent order was an Emergency or Temporary GVRO that expired within 60 days.
- In 87% of these cases, the most recent order was an Emergency or Temporary GVRO that expired within 90 days.

Another 28 individuals were subject to Emergency or Temporary GVROs issued in 2024 that were still in effect as of May 7, 2025, but had not led to a longer-term GVRO by that date, indicating that the court likely granted multiple or longer-term continuances extending the duration of that Temporary or Emergency order. Anecdotally, courts may sometimes grant somewhat longer-term continuances in GVRO cases pending the outcome of a concurrent criminal case that might result in longer-term firearm prohibitions that would make the GVRO unnecessary.

In summary, this data shows that of the 1,727 individuals who became subject to GVROs in 2024, 43% ultimately became subject to longer-term GVROs After a Hearing or Consent, and 21% ultimately became subject to longer-term GVROs issued for the maximum five-year duration. A majority of 2024 GVRO respondents were subject to Emergency or Temporary GVROs only; short-term continuances were relatively common in these cases, but for 30% of individuals who became subject to any GVRO in 2024, the last GVRO issued in their case was an Emergency or Temporary GVRO that expired within 21 days, without a subsequent order or continuance or any longer-term GVRO After a Hearing/Consent. For nearly half (48.5%) of individuals who became subject to any GVRO in 2024, the last order issued in their case was an Emergency or Temporary GVRO that expired within 90 days without leading to any longer-term GVRO After a Hearing/Consent.

In many cases, it is expected and appropriate for petitioners to obtain a Temporary or Emergency GVRO only. A short-term Temporary or Emergency GVRO could help address an acute but passing crisis, such as if a respondent poses an acute danger to themselves or others after a devastating loss or trauma. Petitioners might also request a short-term GVRO as a stopgap safety measure to give individuals close to the respondent, and other public safety or mental health professionals, time and safety to pursue other interventions that could address an individual’s dangerousness to self or others. For example, law enforcement officers might request a 21-day Emergency or Temporary GVRO against an individual subject to an involuntary mental health hold and then determine that the person became legally prohibited from accessing firearms if the person is formally admitted to the mental health facility for dangerousness to self or others. Law enforcement officers responding to the scene of a violent incident might request an Emergency GVRO (and sometimes a concurrent EPO-001 Emergency Protective Order) to provide the victims with time to evaluate their options and obtain other firearm-prohibiting

protection orders, or time for a prosecutor to request a Criminal Protective Order in certain criminal cases. In other cases, officers may obtain an Emergency or Temporary GVRO and then determine that the respondent was already subject to legal firearm prohibitions. In these cases, circumstances may change, or the petitioner may gain new information indicating that a longer-term GVRO is unnecessary under the circumstances.

However, implementation barriers, service challenges, and confusion about the GVRO hearing process likely contribute to the attrition between the number of GVROs issued as Emergency or Temporary orders and the number of longer-term post-hearing GVROs.⁶⁵

As discussed in more detail under “Priority #3” below, issues with serving GVROs and GVRO court hearing notices likely play a significant role. Nearly half of all GVROs that expired at the Temporary GVRO stage are recorded in CARPOS as never having been served on the respondent. If officers were unable to serve the respondent with court documents notifying them about the Temporary GVRO and the subsequent GVRO hearing, or did not timely file proof-of-service forms with the court verifying that the respondent received advanced notice of the hearing, the court would have to delay or cancel the hearing and potentially dismiss the case.

For a court to consider granting a longer-term GVRO After a Hearing, the petitioner or their legal representatives must also attend the GVRO court hearing (physically or virtually) to present testimony and other evidence in court. This can present some unique challenges to law enforcement officers because the GVRO is the only civil restraining order process in California in which officers directly present petitions, evidence, and testimony at court hearings. At a practical level, officers may be unfamiliar with how to navigate civil court procedures without the assistance of an attorney or GVRO coordinator—including how to file a GVRO petition, how to file and present relevant evidence, how to request to testify virtually, and how to file proof-of-service forms demonstrating that the subject of the petition received sufficient notice of the hearing. A 2021 GVRO implementation study from the California Firearm Violence Research Center concluded that, “Without an attorney, [law enforcement officers] have found hearings difficult to navigate” and that “[a]dding GVRO cases to officers’ existing responsibilities may contribute to lapses in hearing attendance (and the subsequent dismissal of the order), as hearings may involve lengthy wait times and multiple court visits.”⁶⁶

Some officers trained to obtain Emergency GVROs may not understand the need to submit proof-of-service forms to the court or to attend any subsequent court hearing at all. As noted, above, many law enforcement agencies’ GVRO policies and procedures currently focus on training officers about obtaining Emergency GVROs only and do not focus on the court hearing or related procedures. Stakeholders have reported significant concern that law enforcement officers who successfully obtain Emergency or Temporary GVROs have not been adequately trained to submit proof-of-service forms to the court, and to attend and testify in court hearings to extend the short-term protections of an Emergency or Temporary GVRO into a longer-term GVRO.⁶⁷

Some of the language used on standard GVRO court forms has likely contributed to confusion too, such as by directing petitioners to provide evidence that the respondent poses a significant danger to themselves or others “by having” firearms. Some officers may inaccurately believe that they cannot

65 Many of these practical implementation barriers are discussed in an important qualitative interview study from researchers affiliated with the California Firearm Violence Research Center. See Veronica Pear, et al., “Implementation and perceived effectiveness of gun violence restraining orders in California: A qualitative evaluation,” *PLoS ONE* (2021), at www.pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34665820/.

66 Id.

67 See, e.g., Veronica Pear, et al., “Implementation and perceived effectiveness of gun violence restraining orders in California: A qualitative evaluation,” *PLoS ONE* (2021), at www.pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34665820/. The DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention has participated in technical assistance and training programs focused on the GVRO and consulted with subject matter experts implementing and evaluating GVRO programs; stakeholders frequently reported confusion or lack of awareness about many practical aspects of the GVRO process, especially related to post-hearing orders.

or need not obtain a longer-term GVRO in cases where a respondent has already been (temporarily) separated from their firearms pursuant to an Emergency or Temporary order. In 2024 and 2025, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention submitted formal comments recommending that the Judicial Council of California update multiple GVRO forms to clarify that—as state law states explicitly—GVROs may be issued to prevent a dangerous individual who does not currently possess firearms from having the legal ability to access, purchase, or acquire them. The Judicial Council has incorporated some updates to the GVRO forms in line with these comments, but as of the date of publication for this report, other GVRO form updates are still pending.

When law enforcement agencies pursue longer-term GVROs by submitting proof-of-service and appearing at subsequent court hearings, they are very often successful. Logically, individuals found by a court to be a significant danger to themselves or others often continue to pose a significant danger 21 days later. One study examining three years of GVRO case records in California reported that when petitioners sought a GVRO After a Hearing, courts issued that order 84% of the time.⁶⁸

The study also found that for every case in which a GVRO After a Hearing was pursued but denied by the court, at least three times as many cases ended at the Emergency or Temporary GVRO stage because petitioners in practice did not pursue a longer-term GVRO.⁶⁹ This data likely *significantly* undercounts the true number of cases where law enforcement petitioners did not pursue a longer-term GVRO because it did not include records for most Emergency GVROs issued over this period. Tellingly, the study authors noted that for the vast majority of Emergency GVROs reported into CARPOS, courts had not received copies of the EPO-002 Emergency GVRO and proof-of-service form, indicating that in many cases, officers had likely obtained Emergency GVROs, documented those orders in CARPOS, and then never submitted copies of the EPO-002 to provide proof-of-service to the court. Without the EPO-002 showing that the respondent received notice of the Emergency GVRO and the subsequent court hearing, the court would often not be able to proceed with a hearing and the Emergency GVRO would typically expire in 21 days.⁷⁰

State law requires law enforcement agencies to adopt, develop, and implement GVRO Policies that prepare officers to understand and navigate all aspects of the GVRO process, including standards and procedures for determining whether a respondent subject to an Emergency or Temporary GVRO continues to present “an ongoing increased risk for violence” such that a longer-term GVRO is necessary. In such cases, the law emphasizes “the responsibility of officers to attend [GVRO] hearings and diligently participate in the evidence presentation process” to obtain those longer-term orders.⁷¹ Ensuring that petitioners are prepared to obtain longer-term GVROs in cases involving persistent danger and necessity is a key priority for enhancing implementation of the GVRO.

68 See, e.g., Veronica Pear, *et al.*, “Gun violence restraining orders in California, 2016–2018: case details and respondent mortality,” *Injury Prevention* (Oct. 2022), at <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9510437/>.

69 See *id.*

70 See *id.*

71 Penal Code, § 18108(c)(1), (2), (3), (7).

Priority #3:

Ensure GVROs are Promptly Served & Recorded as Served in Court and Law Enforcement Record Systems

Statewide, a large number of GVROs issued by the courts are either never served on the respondent or never recorded as served in court and law enforcement record systems, which can impede compliance and enforcement and prevent courts from holding hearings to issue longer-term GVROs After a Hearing.

Challenges related to service of all court protective and restraining orders are long-standing, national safety issues, and are not unique either to California or to the GVRO process.⁷² In 2022, the National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges wrote that in “in jurisdictions throughout the country, many protection orders remain unserved, leading to long delays in holding hearings on final orders, inability to enforce the terms of orders, and, in some cases, dismissal of the orders for failure to effect service.”⁷³

But prompt and consistent service, and documentation of service, is vital for enforcement. A person subject to a GVRO (or other court protection or restraining order) generally cannot be arrested or convicted for violating the court’s order unless they have been served with notice of the court order and its requirements. This can occur when a respondent is present in court (physically or through a videoconference or other remote appearance) and the judge notifies them about the GVRO at that time. But if the respondent does not receive notice through physical or virtual presence in court—either because the order is a pre-hearing Emergency or Temporary GVRO or because the respondent did not attend the GVRO court hearing—they must generally receive notice by being personally “served” with a copy of the GVRO and other court documents outside of court, either by a law enforcement officer, a professional process server, or an adult who is not a party in the case.⁷⁴ Because law enforcement officers serve as the petitioners for 99% of GVROs, and GVROs may frequently involve individuals who are a significant danger of acting violently with firearms, it is typically a best practice for service outside of court to be conducted by law enforcement officers to ensure that dangerous respondents safely and immediately relinquish all firearms to those officers as soon as they are served with notice of the order.

Once GVROs are served, proof-of-service forms must be promptly filed with the court, and service information must also be entered in law enforcement record systems. State law requires courts and law enforcement to update the California Restraining and Protective Order System (CARPOS) via the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) to record within one business day when a respondent has received notice of the GVRO, either in court or through service outside of

72 For example: a 2005 California Department of Justice report warned that nearly 30% of Domestic Violence Restraining Orders issued after a hearing were recorded as unserved in California’s statewide restraining order database now known as CARPOS; a 2024 report by the State of Texas’s Office of Court Administration flagged unserved protective orders as a leading barrier to protective order enforcement in that state; and a 2022 report by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges warned that “in jurisdictions throughout the country many protection orders remain unserved[.]” See Department of Justice, “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), Table 6; State of Texas Office of Court Administration, “Protective Order Efficacy Study,” p. 17 (2024) (“[F]requently, we find the defendant has never been served with the Order which causes obvious problems at times of enforcement.”); National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, “Civil Protection Orders: Strategies for Safe and Effective Service of Process,” p. 9 (Aug. 2022), www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/CPO-Guide-Project-Service-of-Process_FINAL.pdf. See also, e.g., Judith McFarlane, *et al.*, “Protection Orders and Intimate Partner Violence: An 18-Month Study of 150 Black, Hispanic, and White Women,” *American Journal of Public Health* (Apr. 2004), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC1448307/> (evaluation with 150 domestic violence survivors in Houston, Texas, reported that 18 of the 69 women who were not granted a protection order “were not granted a protection order because the abuser could not be found and served papers to appear in court.”).

73 National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, “Civil Protection Orders: Strategies for Safe and Effective Service of Process,” p. 9 (Aug. 2022), www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/CPO-Guide-Project-Service-of-Process_FINAL.pdf.

74 Penal Code, §§ 18140, 18160(b), 18197; Code of Civ. Proc. § 414.10.

court.⁷⁵ If the respondent receives notice in court, the court is responsible for recording service in CARPOS (typically through designated local law enforcement agency partners that have direct CLETS access). If the respondent receives notice from a process server or other adult, that person is required to provide proof-of-service forms to the court, and the court must then ensure that service information is recorded in CARPOS (again, through local law enforcement agency partners in most jurisdictions). If law enforcement officers serve a GVRO outside of court, they are responsible for ensuring that their agency promptly submits proof-of-service forms to the court and updates the relevant case record in CARPOS to reflect that the respondent has received notice of the GVRO.

A court also generally cannot proceed with a court hearing to issue a longer-term GVRO unless the court receives documentation showing that the respondent received advance notice of the hearing. Respondents are often served with forms notifying them about the GVRO court hearing at the same time that they are served with notice of a pre-hearing Emergency or Temporary GVRO, but in some circumstances these forms will be served at different times and in different ways.⁷⁶

Successfully serving court orders outside of court is sometimes time-consuming and resource-intensive, particularly when law enforcement agencies have limited staffing capacity, when respondents are intentionally evading service, and when there are safety concerns around serving individuals who may be armed and dangerous to others. This often requires more than simply placing court forms in a respondent's hands; to protect the public from dangerous respondents, state law generally directs officers serving GVROs to take steps to immediately separate the respondent from any firearms or related items the respondent has in their possession or control.⁷⁷ A warm and de-escalatory knock-and-talk approach is often safe and effective, but service sometimes requires larger teams of officers to ensure officer safety and recover dangerous individuals' firearms at the time of service, including through executing search warrants.⁷⁸

Understanding how to document service for both court and law enforcement record systems can also be challenging because, depending on the circumstances, different timelines, forms, and notice requirements apply.⁷⁹

75 Penal Code, § 18115(e).

76 For more detailed discussion, see the "Quick Reference Guide: Documenting Service of GVROs and GVRO Hearing Notices" on pages 57-58 in the DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention report, "Gun Violence Restraining Orders: A Practical Implementation Guide for California Law Enforcement" (2025).

77 Penal Code, § 18120.

78 See, e.g., National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, "Civil Protection Orders: Strategies for Safe and Effective Service of Process," p. 4-5 (Aug. 2022), www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/CPO-Guide-Project-Service-of-Process_FINAL.pdf; National ERPO Resource Center, "Important Considerations for Law Enforcement in States with Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) Laws," p. 6 (Jan. 2025), [Law-Enforcement-FAQ-1.14.2025_updated.pdf](https://www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Law-Enforcement-FAQ-1.14.2025_updated.pdf); King County Chiefs Association and Snohomish County Chiefs Association, "Model Policies and Procedures Covering: Protection Orders, Extreme Risk Protection Orders, and Orders to Surrender Weapons" (Jun. 8, 2018), at www.waspc.org/assets/ProfessionalServices/modelpolicies/protection%20orders%20orders%20to%20surrender%20weapons%20and%20extreme%20risk%20protection%20orders%20information.pdf; Prosecutors Against Gun Violence, "Firearm Removal/Retrieval in Cases of Domestic Violence," p. 41-42 (Feb. 2016), <https://prosecutorsagv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/pagv-consortium-firearm-removal-retrieval-dv-report.pdf>; National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, "Suggested Components of Law Enforcement Protocols Addressing Firearms in DV Cases," p. 4 (Mar. 2020), at <https://ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/LE-Protocol-Combined-FINAL.pdf>; Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions and Everytown for Gun Safety, "Promising Approaches for Implementing Extreme Risk Laws: A Guide for Practitioners and Policymakers," p. 31-32 (May 2023), <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2023-05/2023-may-cgvs-promising-approaches-for-implementing-extreme-risk-laws.pdf>.

79 The GV-200 is generally used to document proof-of-service for Temporary GVROs and GVROs After a Hearing and to document that the respondent received notice of the court hearing in GVRO cases that did not begin as Emergency GVROs. For Emergency GVROs, the EPO-002 generally provides notice of both the Emergency GVRO *and* the subsequent court hearing, but only if the judicial officer issuing the Emergency GVRO also specified a date, time, and location for the hearing recorded on the EPO-002. If the judicial officer issuing the Emergency GVRO did not simultaneously schedule the GVRO hearing, the court will subsequently schedule the hearing and mail a GV-009 hearing notice *if* the law enforcement officer requesting the GVRO files a copy of the EPO-002 with the court within three court days after the Emergency GVRO was issued. See the Quick Reference Guide to Documenting Service of GVROs and GVRO Hearing Notices, in the DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention's report, "Gun Violence Restraining Orders: A Practical Implementation Guide for California Law Enforcement" (2025).

A February 2025 grant report from the state’s leading GVRO program, led by the San Diego City Attorney’s Office and Police Department, reported that inability to timely serve respondents and document service of GVROs and/or court hearing notices to the court’s satisfaction was the most common reason a requested GVRO petition did not result in a longer-term GVRO After Hearing.⁸⁰ The grant report estimated that the number of longer-term GVROs After a Hearing issued in San Diego would have been about 20% higher but for case dismissals and hearing delays related to service.⁸¹ (As discussed below, this program has also reported making very significant progress on service issues by expanding the number of officers dedicated to GVRO enforcement). In other jurisdictions with fewer resources and positions specifically dedicated to GVRO enforcement, service issues are likely an even larger barrier.

DOJ’s analysis of GVRO records reported to CARPOS confirms that service is a very significant implementation barrier statewide. (A GVRO is recorded as served in CARPOS if a court or law enforcement agency updates CARPOS to record that the respondent received notice of the GVRO *either* through presence in court or through service outside of court.)

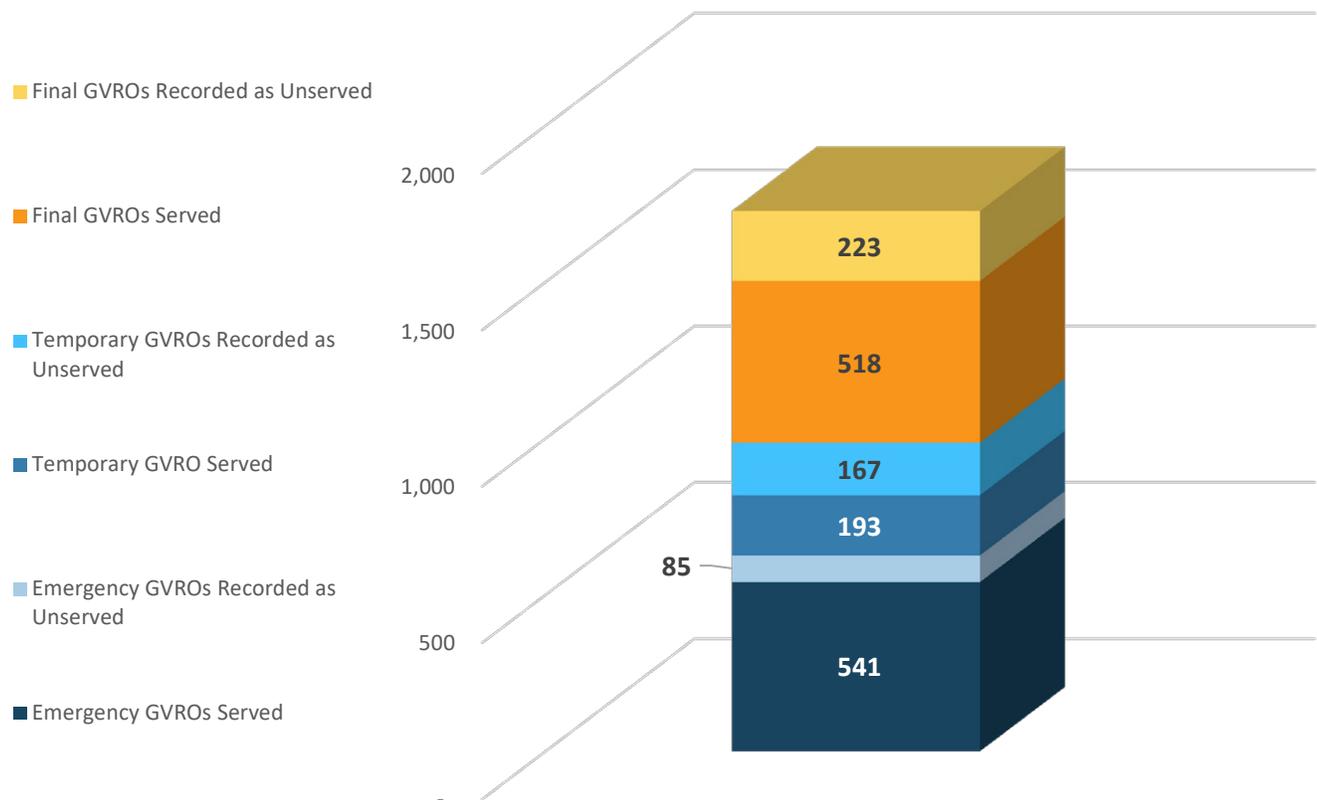
- Of the 741 individuals who became subject to a longer-term GVRO After a Hearing/Consent issued in 2024, 223 (30%) were still recorded in CARPOS as never being served with notice of that order as of May 7, 2025.
 - For individuals whose cases ended at the Emergency GVRO stage, 14% were subject to Emergency GVROs that expired without ever being recorded as served in CARPOS as of May 7, 2025.
 - For individuals whose cases ended at the Temporary GVRO stage, 47% were subject to Temporary GVROs that expired without ever being recorded as served in CARPOS as of May 7, 2025.

Delays in service are also apparent in this data: 227 longer-term GVROs After a Hearing issued in 2024 were recorded as being successfully served on the respondent outside of court, but almost half of those orders (111) were unserved for at least 14 days after the court had issued the longer-term GVRO, and 79 were unserved for at least 30 days.

80 San Diego Regional Gun Violence Response Task Force, “Annual Report to the California Department of Justice: Grant # DOJ-GVRTF-2023-24-1-001” (Feb. 7, 2025), p. 11-12.

81 *Id.*

Figure 4. Served vs. Unserved Status Recorded in CARPOS on May 7, 2025, for Last GVRO Issued Against GVRO Respondents in 2024.



This data shows that a significant number of GVROs are not served promptly, and that a large number are either never successfully served at all or never properly recorded as served in CARPOS, including *nearly half* of all GVRO cases that expire at the Temporary GVRO stage. This data only reflects the most recent order issued in the case; in many other cases, petitioners’ inability to timely serve a Temporary GVRO and notice of the GVRO hearing likely delayed courts from holding hearings necessary to issue a longer-term GVRO.

While a larger percentage of Emergency GVROs are recorded as served *in CARPOS*, this data does not reflect whether proof-of-service forms for these emergency orders were ever submitted to the courts. Anecdotally, law enforcement officers may obtain Emergency GVROs remotely at the scene of a dangerous incident, and properly record service of that Emergency GVRO in CARPOS, but then fail to file a copy of that Emergency GVRO and proof-of-service form with the court within three days, which would generally prevent the court from proceeding with a hearing to issue a longer-term GVRO. In a number of cases reported to CARPOS, petitioners had to open new GVRO cases after courts issued an initial Emergency GVRO that was served but expired.

Service is a significant barrier to implementation and enforcement of longer-term GVROs too. Of the 741 GVROs After a Hearing/Consent issued in 2024 in California, 39% (291) were recorded in CARPOS as being served by the respondent’s physical or virtual presence in court; 31% (227) were recorded as being served outside of court; and another 30% (223) were still recorded as unserved as of May 7, 2025. The vast majority of these unserved longer-term GVROs had been recorded as unserved for at least six months after the court issued the order. This indicates that if a respondent was not recorded as receiving notice of a GVRO After Hearing in court, it was about as likely as not that the GVRO would never be recorded as served at all. In order to hold the court hearing to issue that longer-term GVRO in the first place, the court must have found that the respondent 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.

It is not clear how many of these GVROs were truly unserved, or erroneously reflected as such in CARPOS due to courts and law enforcement agencies failing to record this service information 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, GVRO grant reports, and stakeholders implementing GVRO programs have all identified service as a leading implementation challenge for GVROs and other firearm-prohibiting court protection and restraining orders. And when agencies properly accomplish and document service and report the date of service in CARPOS, they are frequently reporting that the order was not served for weeks. As noted above, based on the date of service information documented in CARPOS, about half (49%) of the longer-term GVROs After a Hearing that were issued in 2024 and successfully served outside of court went unserved for 14 days or longer and, and 35% were unserved for 30 days or longer.

Whether a GVRO 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 GVRO 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 against GVRO respondents make it much harder to effectively ensure individuals found to pose a very high risk of gun violence are promptly and safely separated from their weapons.

The data in Table 2 below shows that serving GVROs and/or documenting service in CARPOS is a challenge in counties across the state. Table 2 analyzes the last GVRO order issued against each of the 1,727 individuals who became subject to GVROs in California in 2024, and presents county-level data regarding the number of these last-issued GVROs that were Emergency, Temporary, or longer-term GVROs After a Hearing, and the number of those orders that were issued in 2024 and still recorded as unserved in CARPOS on May 7, 2025. (A GVRO will be recorded as served if a court or law enforcement agency updated CARPOS to record that the respondent received notice of the GVRO either through presence in court or service outside of court.)

Table 2. County-Level Service Data Recorded in CARPOS on May 7, 2025, for Last GVRO Issued Against GVRO Respondents in 2024.⁸²

County	Emergency GVROs Issued in 2024	Temporary GVROs Issued in 2024	GVROs After Hearing/Consent Issued in 2024	Emergency GVROs issued in 2024 <u>recorded as unserved on May 7, 2025</u>	Temporary GVROs issued in 2024 <u>recorded as unserved on May 7, 2025</u>	GVROs After Hearing/Consent issued in 2024 <u>recorded as unserved on May 7, 2025</u>
ALAMEDA	30	15	28	4	11	5
ALPINE	0	1	1	n/a	1	0
AMADOR	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
BUTTE	2	0	1	0	n/a	0

⁸² Based on DOJ analysis of GVRO records reported into the CARPOS database with an issuance date in 2024. This analysis examines the most recent GVRO issued against each individual who became subject to a GVRO issued in 2024, as of May 7, 2025, and reports by county, the number of those 2024 orders that were Emergency, Temporary, or longer-term GVROs After Hearing/Consent, and the number of those orders still recorded as unserved in CARPOS on May 7, 2025.

County	Emergency GVROs Issued in 2024	Temporary GVROs Issued in 2024	GVROs After Hearing/Consent Issued in 2024	Emergency GVROs issued in 2024 <u>recorded as unserved</u> on May 7, 2025	Temporary GVROs issued in 2024 <u>recorded as unserved</u> on May 7, 2025	GVROs After Hearing/Consent issued in 2024 <u>recorded as unserved</u> on May 7, 2025
CALAVERAS	0	0	1	n/a	n/a	1
COLUSA	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
CONTRA COSTA	6	5	1	1	2	0
DEL NORTE	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
EL DORADO	4	2	2	0	1	0
FRESNO	23	4	5	2	4	2
GLENN	0	0	1	n/a	n/a	0
HUMBOLDT	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
IMPERIAL	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
INYO	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
KERN	0	3	6	n/a	0	1
KINGS	0	1	1	n/a	0	0
LAKE	11	0	0	1	n/a	n/a
LASSEN	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
LOS ANGELES	44	20	26	11	8	4
MADERA	0	0	2	n/a	n/a	0
MARIN	9	0	2	0	n/a	1
MARIPOSA	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
MENDOCINO	0	0	2	n/a	n/a	1
MERCED	1	0	1	0	n/a	0
MODOC	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
MONO	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
MONTEREY	2	2	2	0	0	1
NAPA	0	3	7	n/a	0	1
NEVADA	2	1	5	0	0	0
ORANGE	59	18	23	12	5	6
PLACER	5	3	4	0	1	2
PLUMAS	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
RIVERSIDE	17	33	140	4	10	59
SACRAMENTO	32	3	28	4	2	10
SAN BENITO	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
SAN BERNARDINO	14	3	7	3	0	1
SAN DIEGO	117	63	152	13	31	40
SAN FRANCISCO	7	3	17	0	1	4
SAN JOAQUIN	4	9	5	1	1	1
SAN LUIS OBISPO	3	3	17	0	1	1
SAN MATEO	49	2	27	8	1	4
SANTA BARBARA	13	3	15	1	1	2

County	Emergency GVROs Issued in 2024	Temporary GVROs Issued in 2024	GVROs After Hearing/Consent Issued in 2024	Emergency GVROs issued in 2024 recorded as unserved on May 7, 2025	Temporary GVROs issued in 2024 recorded as unserved on May 7, 2025	GVROs After Hearing/Consent issued in 2024 recorded as unserved on May 7, 2025
SANTA CLARA	84	105	131	11	66	60
SANTA CRUZ	28	11	21	3	2	3
SHASTA	1	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
SIERRA	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
SISKIYOU	1	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
SOLANO	9	4	2	0	2	1
SONOMA	15	8	6	2	4	1
STANISLAUS	5	3	1	0	0	0
SUTTER	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
TEHAMA	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
TRINITY	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
TULARE	18	18	12	3	5	2
TUOLUMNE	0	0	1	n/a	n/a	0
VENTURA	7	14	39	0	4	10
YOLO	4	0	0	1	n/a	n/a
YUBA	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
California Total	626	360	741	85	167	223

There are effective strategies for improving service, including those outlined by the National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges’ report on “Strategies for Safe and Effective Service of Process” for protection and restraining orders.⁸³ First, communities should seek to identify where their service gaps and challenges are flowing from, which may require problem-solving collaborations between courts and law enforcement agencies to understand and address the problem of unserved orders, served orders improperly documented as unserved in CARPOS, and orders delayed or dismissed by the court for failure to file proof-of-service forms. Unserved court protection orders and hearing notices are a clear safety problem and also a serious administrative burden for both courts and law enforcement. Both have a role to play in ensuring that court orders issued to prevent violence are effectively served, documented, and enforceable.

One key strategy highlighted in the “Strategies for Safe and Effective Service of Process” report is a straightforward one, though sometimes difficult to accomplish in practice: dedicating more resources and staffing to enhance law enforcement agencies’ capacity to promptly serve firearm-prohibiting protection orders, document service, and ensure respondents relinquish firearms at the time of service.⁸⁴ In GVRO grant reports submitted to DOJ, the San Diego City Attorney’s Office noted that expanding the number of officers assigned to the San Diego Police Department’s Gun Violence Reduction Unit (from two officers with collateral assignments to a dedicated team of one sergeant, two officers, and two detectives) significantly reduced the number of GVROs dismissed or continued

⁸³ See National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, “Civil Protection Orders: Strategies for Safe and Effective Service of Process” (Aug. 2022), www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/CPO-Guide-Project-Service-of-Process_FINAL.pdf.

⁸⁴ Id. at p. 2-4.

for lack of service.⁸⁵ Previously, with a smaller team with collateral assignments, the agency reported that between three to six GVROs were continued or dismissed each month due to service issues; after expanding a team tasked with prioritizing these efforts, the number of GVROs continued or dismissed due to service issues fell to zero or one per month.⁸⁶ From 2024 to 2025, the number of GVRO cases dismissed due to service issues in San Diego fell by 72%.⁸⁷

Some other agencies have also recently established units at least partially dedicated to service and firearm relinquishment efforts, including by taking advantage of state funding opportunities through two competitive grant programs: the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program (administered by the Judicial Council of California) and the Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (administered by the Board of State and Community Corrections). The Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program will likely make a limited amount of additional funding available for these purposes through a request for grant proposals anticipated for release in early 2027. The Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program received one-time Budget Act funding in 2022 and has awarded about \$30 million over three grant cycles in 2023-2024 to support court-law-enforcement partnerships in 13 counties focused on “ensur[ing] the consistent and safe removal of firearms from individuals who have become prohibited from owning or possessing firearms and ammunition pursuant to court order.”⁸⁸ New Budget Act allocations will be required to renew this grant program’s funding, as funding will begin to expire for many grantees in April 2027.

Agencies with more limited capacity can also seek to collaborate with other regional law enforcement partners to serve orders and ensure safe relinquishment of firearms at the time of service.⁸⁹ DOJ agents with the Bureau of Firearms’ Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) also have extensive experience safely recovering firearms from prohibited individuals and can assist with firearm relinquishment efforts at the time of service. Agencies can also help address service challenges by developing processes to help officers “[p]rioritize service of civil protection orders above other responsibilities that do not have comparable safety consequences.”⁹⁰

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 serving officers where possible.⁹¹ If a respondent is away from home for set hours, e.g., during their workday or school hours, they may never be successfully served if officers repeatedly attempt to serve them at their home during these same hours. Ensuring serving officers have available information about the respondent and their schedule, and/or attempt service at different times of day can improve efficiency and likelihood of safe and successful service with fewer attempts. This sometimes requires staffing capacity to serve orders outside of standard business hours.⁹²

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 for both the court and law enforcement. (The Office of Gun Violence Prevention’s resource titled, *Gun Violence Restraining Orders: A Practical Implementation Guide for California Law Enforcement*, includes sample checklists for officers requesting

85 San Diego Regional Gun Violence Response Task Force, “Annual Report to the California Department of Justice: Grant # DOJ-GVRTF-2023-24-1-001” (Feb. 7, 2025), p. 11-12.

86 See id.

87 San Diego Regional Gun Violence Response Task Force, “Annual Report to the California Department of Justice: Grant # DOJ-GVRTF-2023-24-1-001” (Feb. 6, 2026), p. 10.

88 See Judicial Council of California, “Report on the Firearms Relinquishment Grant Program for 2023-24” (Sep. 30, 2024), at [lr-2024-allocation-of-funding-fy-2023-24-court-based-firearm-relinquishment-program.pdf](#).

89 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](#)

90 Id. at p. 4.

91 See, e.g., id. at 3.

92 See, e.g., id. at 3.

and serving GVROs, and the Model GVRO Policy includes sections on service, recording service, and facilitating relinquishment of firearms at the time of service).

Under state law, law enforcement agencies' GVRO policies and procedures must inform officers about standards and procedures for both obtaining *and serving* GVROs.⁹³ This is a priority for improving implementation and enforcement of the GVRO, as well as other court protection and restraining orders to prevent gun violence.⁹⁴

93 Penal Code section 18108(c)(1), (2), (3).

94 In a future publication, the DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention will present further data and information about service-related challenges and strategies for improving service across all types of court protection and restraining orders issued in California, and for enhancing implementation of all of these vital processes for preventing gun violence.

Conclusion

California has been a national leader in developing court protection and restraining order processes like the GVRO as a critical parallel and complement to the criminal justice and mental health systems. These court intervention processes create pathways to safety designed to proactively intervene and prevent violence before it occurs, recurs, or escalates. As California sets records for reducing gun violence,⁹⁵ these preventative processes should be an essential component of every community's public safety strategy.

The Office of Gun Violence Prevention encourages communities around the state to assess their implementation needs, take a proactive role in supporting education about the GVRO and other interventions to address dangerous firearm access, and take steps to address the three priorities identified in this report to continue to improve implementation of the GVRO over the next decade to come.

The Office of Gun Violence Prevention has developed the accompanying GVRO Implementation Guide and Model GVRO Policy to help law enforcement agencies and their legal counsel update GVRO trainings, policies, and procedures, and ensure that officers in every jurisdiction can successfully navigate this process when necessary to address significant dangers to human life and safety.

95 Based on data accessed through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics Mortality Data, WONDER Database, at <https://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd.html>. In 2019, California had its lowest overall firearm-related death rate on record in CDC data going back over half a century. Like the rest of the nation, California experienced significant spikes in firearm homicides in 2020 and 2021, which started rising in March 2020 alongside the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. After significant pandemic-era increases, California's firearm homicide rate fell in 2022, 2023, and 2024. As of February 8, 2026, provisional CDC mortality data indicates that California's firearm death rate in 2024 was on track to set a new record low, although this data was not yet final by the date of publication for this report.