



Dear Governor Shapiro, Chairman Martin, Senator Hughes, Chairman Harris, and Representative Grove,

Whether you represent our great state's rural, suburban, or urban areas, it is no secret that the Commonwealth is grappling with a public health crisis. In the last two years, firearm homicides have climbed in communities from Reading to Erie to Allentown, reaching nearly 1,000 a year.

We urge Governor Shapiro and the General Assembly to continue to invest in strategic approaches to prevent violence by investing at least \$100 million in the 2023-2024 Commonwealth Budget in the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (VIP).

As you may be aware, VIPs provide a public health approach to reducing shootings and gun homicides by forging relationships with people at the center of gun violence in our communities. These programs support people at the highest risk of being victims or perpetrators. These programs include, but are not limited to:

- Credible messengers who mediate disputes that could potentially lead to retaliatory shootings;*
- Hospital-based violence interruption programs, which engage survivors of gun violence while they're hospitalized to connect them with case managers and social service providers;*
- Group violence interventions, which are collaboratives between community leaders, social service providers, and law enforcement who identify those that present the highest risk of violence, and intervene to provide the necessary support;*
- Victim services that help prevent retaliation by supporting those who've experienced violence;*
- Targeted workforce development efforts that combine trauma-informed care with engaging high-risk individuals in the economy;*

The \$100 million is based on allocating \$125,000 per homicide a year. We recommend that PCCD give at least 70% of those resources (\$90,000/homicide) to intervention programs that engage individuals at risk for being involved in violence, as victims or perpetrators, within the next three years. This level of funding in other states has reduced incidents of aggravated assault, homicide, and other violent acts by 30 percent. A cost-benefit analysis based on Thomas Abt's work, now the Founding Director of the University of Maryland's Center for Study and Prevention of Violence Reduction, found a \$22 return on investment for every \$1 spent this way.

The need for sustained investment in violence reduction programs is clear. However, in order for these efforts to be sustainable and for Pennsylvania to realize favorable outcomes and see a maximum return on taxpayer investment, it is critical for the General Assembly to continue its investment while the administration improves the effectiveness of such efforts.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request. Please know that we eagerly look forward to working alongside you and the General Assembly in the future as we take on the herculean but surmountable task of significantly reducing gun violence within our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

*100 Black Men of Philadelphia Inc
Abiding Missions
Anti-Drug & Alcohol Crusaders
Anti-Violence Partnership of Philadelphia
Black Brain Campaign
Caring People Alliance
Center that Cares
FAVOR International Incorporated
Focus On Renewal
Foundation of HOPE
George W. Hill Correctional Facility
Greater Valley Coalition Against Violence
Learn Something Educational LLC
Mentor Leaders Produce Mentor Leaders
Mercy Neighborhood Ministries, Inc.
Mighty Writers
Minding my soul LLC
Mission Incorporated
Mt. Vernon Manor CDC
Norris Square Community Alliance
Operation Better Block
Philadelphia Foundation
Power of Paint Art Academy & Management
Safe-Hub Philadelphia
Somerset Academy
South Pittsburgh Coalition for Peace
Students Run Philly Style
The Center For Family Excellence
Turning Points for Children
Voices Against Violence
William Penn Foundation
YouthPlaces, Incorporated*