



# COMMUNITY JUSTICE ACTION FUND

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End of Year Report

# 2021

Community Justice works to reduce gun violence in Black and Brown communities by empowering those closest to the pain.



## INTRODUCTION LETTER

Community Justice maintains one of the largest networks of activists working to end gun violence in America, with over 30,000 identified supporters and we are proud to lead the charge in fighting for Black and Brown communities that are tragically and disproportionately impacted by gun violence.

In 2021, we helped amplify that gun violence is a public health crisis to national media, policymakers across the country and even to the Oval Office, as President Joe Biden acknowledged this in his remarks on April 8th, 2021. Through coalition building, direct advocacy and grassroots organizing, we were able to partner with over 340 national and local organizations to build our collective strength to end gun violence.

Our collective push for funding for community focused violence intervention strategies successfully secured BILLIONS in federal, state and local funds across the nation. And lastly, our efforts to tell our stories and change the narrative around gun violence in our communities reached millions of Americans, as our team was able to gain media coverage in some of the nation's largest outlets, including MSNBC, NBC News, TIME, NPR, the Washington Post.

Our team remains steadfast in our commitment to empower new and existing leaders to reach their goals and full potential to advocate for gun violence prevention.

As we lean with grace into the sixth year of our work, we are committed to ending gun violence in all forms with sustained advocacy and community investments that will make a lasting impact.

Gregory Jackson Jr.,  
**Executive Director**



IN 2021,

**44,808**

DEATHS BY GUN

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**20,178**

KILLED

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**24,090**

SUICIDES

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IT IS **TIME** TO TAKE ACTION  
TO **END** GUN VIOLENCE.



COMMUNITY JUSTICE  
ACTION FUND



# SECTION 1

## **BUILDING POLITICAL POWER THROUGH EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES AND THOSE MOST IMPACTED BY GUN VIOLENCE**

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In 2021, Community Justice worked to build political power to reduce gun violence by organizing community leaders, activists, survivors and concerned residents to advocate for positive change in their communities to end gun violence.

# ADVOCACY COALITIONS

## INVEST IN US COALITION

In the fall of 2020, Community Justice launched the **INVEST IN US NATIONAL COALITION** to build collective power of national organizations invested in reducing violence to ramp up advocacy efforts for federal funding of community violence intervention and prevention programs. This coalition quickly grew to include over 30 national gun violence prevention and social justice organizations to become the first hybrid coalition effort between social justice and gun violence prevention groups to share a common goal and strategy.



This coalition engaged the White House and Congressional leaders the day after the Inauguration to push for federal investment in community violence intervention (CVI) efforts by demanding select existing federal grants be expanded to include CVI strategies, that federal CVI funding be included in Biden's 2022 budget, that American Rescue Plans should be encouraged to fund CVI programs, that Biden go beyond his

**\$900 MILLION** campaign promise to invest **\$5 BILLION** as part of his Build Back Better Plan and that Congress reintroduce the Break the Cycle of Violence Act. Our first major victory arrived on April 8th, when our founder, Amber Goodwin and current Executive Director, Gregory Jackson were invited to the White House Rose Garden to witness Biden's historic executive actions to address gun violence that not only met multiple demands of our coalition but directly acknowledged Greg for his courage as a survivor turned activist in this space.



These actions were followed shortly by federal guidance from the White House, Department of Treasury and Department of Education to states and local officials to use funds received from the American Rescue Plan Act to invest in CVI programs at the local level. At the Congressional level, we witnessed our proposed **\$5 BILLION** be included in both the Break the Cycle of Violence Act introduced by Representative Horsford and Senator Booker, as well as in the Build Back Better Act introduced to compliment the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill passed in summer of 2021.



## 2019

**BREAK THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE ACT INTRODUCED**

**CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON URBAN VIOLENCE**

## SUMMER 2020

**POLICE VIOLENCE IS GUN VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN**

**PEACE IS ESSENTIAL CAMPAIGN**



## SUMMER 2021

**WHITE HOUSE CVI SITE VISIT**

**NATIONAL FUND PEACE TOUR**

**AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN GUIDANCE**

**BREAK THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE RE-INTRODUCED**

## WINTER/SPRING 2021

**HISTORIC WHITE HOUSE CVI MEETING**

**FUND PEACE CAMPAIGN**

**WHITE HOUSE EXEC ACTIONS**

## WINTER 2020

**WHITE HOUSE TRANSITION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**INVEST IN US COALITION CREATED**

## FALL 2021

**\$5 BILLION INCLUDED IN BUILD BACK BETTER ACT (DHHS & DOJ)**

**BREAK THE CYCLE GETS OUT OF COMMITTEE**

**BILLIONS OF LOCAL FUNDING INVESTMENT**



# KEY COALITION VICTORIES

- President Biden takes executive action to change 26 existing grants across 5 agencies to include funding for community violence intervention and prevention strategies.
- Reintroduction of the Breaking the Cycle of Violence Act in the U.S. House and Senate including \$5 Billion for CVI Strategies and \$1.5 Billion for Youth Workforce Programs
- Release of American Rescue Plan Act Guidance to Prioritize Community Violence Intervention Programs and Strategies for Fund Usage
- Inclusion of \$5 Billion in CVI Funding in Biden's Build Back Better Act
- Inclusion of \$200+ Million in CVI Funding as part of the Biden's Proposed 2022 Annual Budget
- Update To Medicaid Coverage Policy To Include Gun Violence Services and Victims
- Gained 99 Congressional Sponsors of the Break the Cycle of Violence Act, including 78 Sponsors in the U.S. House and 21 Sponsors in the U.S. Senate

## BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

On October 28, 2021, President Biden announced his framework for the Build Back Better Act, which includes \$5 billion to fund community-based violence intervention (CVI) programs. This is the largest federal investment in CVI programs, and it will directly aid the most vulnerable communities to gun violence. Community Justice did everything in their power to urge Members of Congress to keep this funding in the Build Back Better Act. We met with over 30 Representatives and Senators in Congress, as we explained how this essential funding will heal individuals in black and brown communities that have been broken by the continuous cycle of gun violence. We've also hosted a series of press events with Members of Congress to discuss how the Build Back Better Act will help communities directly address gun violence. Members that joined us include Senator Chris Murphy, Congressman Mike Levin, and Congressman Mark Desaulnier. After months of negotiations, the House of Representatives convened on November 19 to pass the Build Back Better Act!

The Build Back Better Act now lies in the upper chamber, where Senators continue to negotiate on several provisions in the bill. We will persist in working with Members of Congress to ensure this essential legislation passes in the Senate and gets signed by President Biden.







## FUND PEACE CAMPAIGN

As our federal advocacy efforts picked up momentum, we recognized the need to engage and empower local community violence prevention organizations to join advocacy efforts across the country to gain further investments to address the crisis of gun violence. In partnership with Cities United, Live Free USA, Life Camp Inc. READI Chicago, The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention, ReVolve Impact, Not Another Child and Black academic leaders launched the Fund Peace Campaign in February of 2021. This campaign recruited over 300 local organizations across the country to collectively advocate in their local communities to demand political leaders “fund peace” and invest in proven community based violence intervention strategies to reduce violence. Through a nationwide tour, weekly engagement webinars, policy briefings and press events, this campaign was able to greatly advance the local funding commitments from Governors, Mayors and local leaders to invest in these life saving strategies.

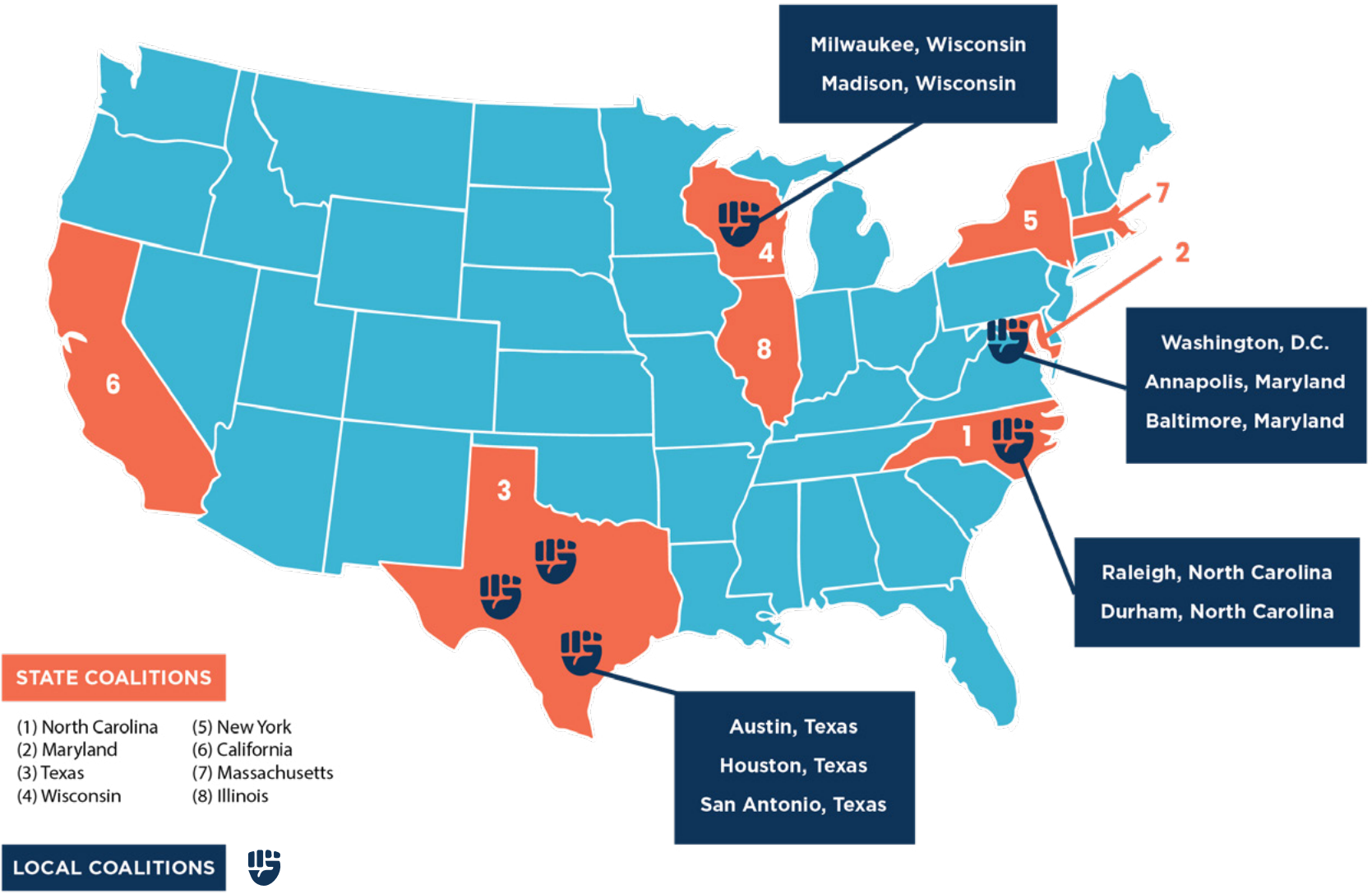
## “INVEST IN US” STATE AND LOCAL COALITIONS

We kicked off this effort by organizing coalitions at the state and local levels to build collective energy and tactics to advocate for funding to invest in community based violence intervention and prevention strategies. These coalitions ranged in size from four to over a hundred members per coalition and were organized for local county level bouts to national advocacy with Congress.





# COALITION LOCATIONS



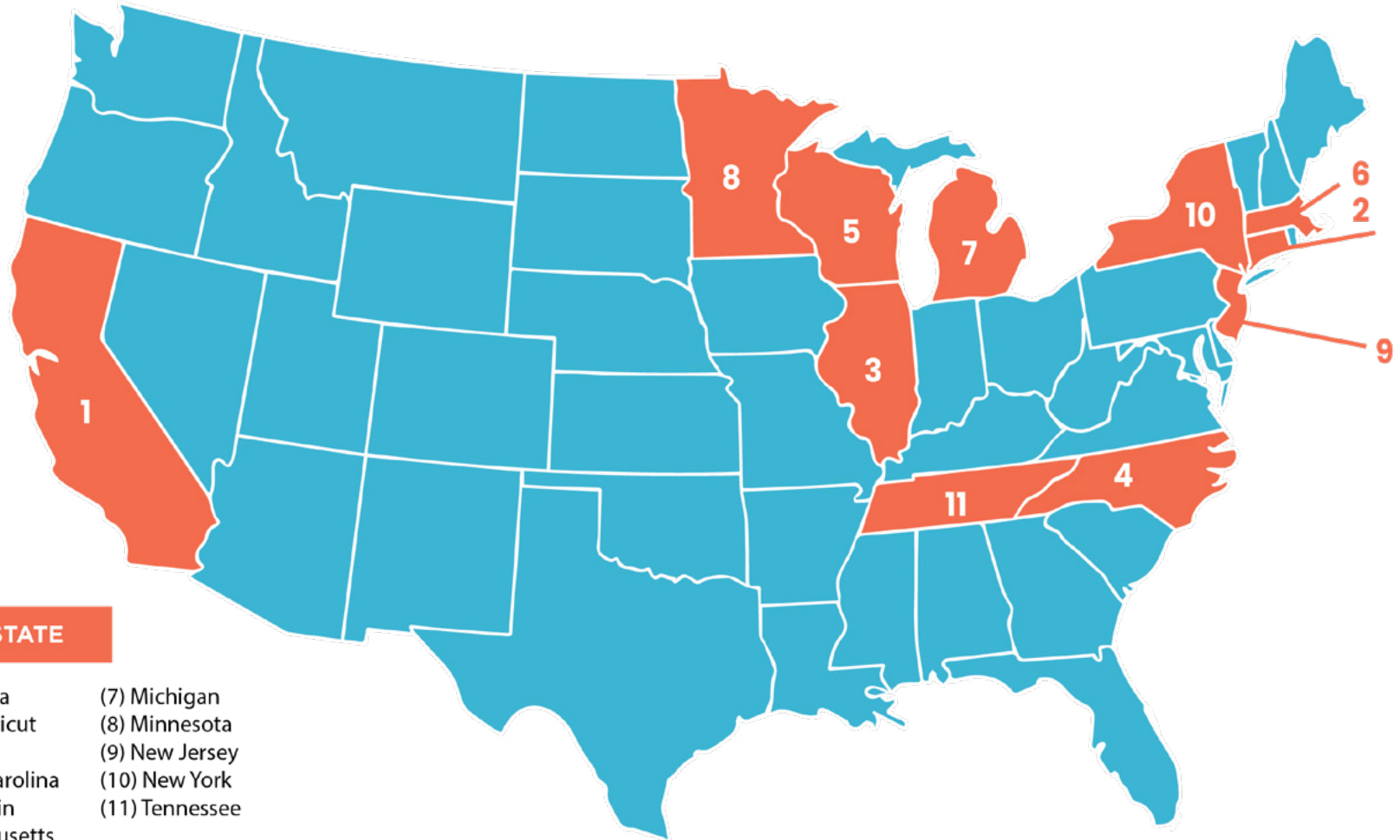
## COALITION HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Maryland Coalition, co-led by Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence, led consistent advocacy efforts towards the Mayor of Baltimore and the Governor. After releasing multiple letters, press events and 11 phone banks, the Mayor of Baltimore announced **\$50 MILLION TO INVEST** in community based violence intervention and prevention.
- The North Carolina Coalition presented before the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission, North Carolina Taskforce for Safer Schools and the Governor's Juvenile Justice Committee about the urgency to take a public health approach to violence and the important role of Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention strategies.
- The North Carolina Coalition successfully organized a site visit for the North Carolina Attorney General with the Bull City United Violence Intervention program to learn directly about CVI strategies in North Carolina.
- The Texas Coalition introduced a letter to request American Rescue Plan fund Community Violence Intervention strategies, accompanied by a statewide press event. Coalition leaders and Community Justice Advocacy staff also testified before the Texas Legislature about the needs for these funds to help address violence. In San Antonio, CJAF joined Big Mama's Safe House and Moms Demand Action to testify at two of the District 2 city council budget input meetings for ARP funding.
- The Wisconsin Coalition released a letter to the Governor and advocated to request **\$25 MILLION** in American Rescue Plan fund CVI strategies at the state level, as well as at the local level in both Milwaukee and Madison. Through consistent advocacy to the Wisconsin governor's office, the Governor announced **\$45 MILLION** committed to fund CVI strategies throughout the state, **\$2.5 MILLION** commitment in Madison and **\$3 MILLION** commitment in Milwaukee.
- The Massachusetts Coalition released a letter to the Governor and advocated for a request for **\$37 MILLION** in American Rescue Plan be used to fund CVI strategies at the state level and through consistent advocacy, the Governor announced a **\$50 MILLION** commitment to fund CVI strategies across the state.
- The New York Coalition released a letter to the Governor and advocated for **\$1.5 BILLION** to be invested statewide to fund CVI strategies across the state to reduce violence. This effort resulted in a **\$138.7 MILLION** commitment by the Governor.

### COORDINATION OF STATE AND LOCAL ADVOCACY FOR COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION FUNDING

In addition to the state based coalitions, Community Justice supported various advocacy efforts in states across the country in partnership with Giffords, Brady, Everytown, Live Free USA and state level organizations. Through weekly coordination calls, one off meetings and briefings, we helped usher in the largest surge of funding for Community Violence Intervention programs in history. Below is a quick snapshot of all the jurisdictions that committed part of the American Rescue Plan Act funds for Community Violence Intervention and Prevention strategies.

# STATE FUNDING COMMITTED



**ENTIRE STATE**

- (1) California
- (2) Connecticut
- (3) Illinois
- (4) North Carolina
- (5) Wisconsin
- (6) Massachusetts
- (7) Michigan
- (8) Minnesota
- (9) New Jersey
- (10) New York
- (11) Tennessee





## POLICYMAKERS FOR PEACE

In 2021, Community Justice rallied around our Policymakers for Peace to help them advance policy in the midst of both the COVID19 and Gun Violence epidemics. In Wisconsin, our Policymaker for Peace, Representative Shelia Stubbs was elected chair of the Wisconsin Congressional Black Caucus and continues to work with our team to advance bold policy around CVI funding and an emphasis to address violence against Black women in Wisconsin. In Missouri, our Policymaker for Peace, Tishaura Jones was elected Mayor of St. Louis has escalated numerous efforts to address violence throughout the city, including an **\$11.5 MILLION** commitment to fund CVI strategies in St. Louis. In Congress, our Policymaker for Peace, Representative Nikema Williams became a champion at the federal level and supported both the Break the Cycle of Violence Act and the Build Back Better Act. Looking ahead to 2022, we aim to recruit an additional 42 Policymakers to join our network, with a goal of 20 from the U.S. Congress.



## SPEAKER'S BUREAU



This year we witnessed and supported our previous Speaker's Bureau leaders as they thrived in their activism and leadership to address gun violence in our communities. One of our spring 2020 graduates, Oresa Napper-Williams was able to take her story directly to the White House and was one of the few leaders in the country to speak directly to President Biden about the urgency to take a public health approach to address violence and invest in community based solutions. Additionally, another graduate Karin Tyler, was named Deputy Director of the Milwaukee Office of Violence Prevention.

# JUSTICE CAMP

In partnership with Cities United, Community Justice launched a four day Justice Camp to train leaders on the crisis of gun violence, it’s intersection with other crises in our communities and advocacy skills to achieve change in their communities. This training of over 75 activists across the country jump started advocacy efforts in many communities across the country. This year’s theme was on Advocating for Peace, Investment & Community to End Gun Violence. Each day was filled with learning, engaging conversation and activities. The topics of this 4-day virtual event were as follows: Advocacy & Power Mapping, Establishing Clear Goals To Build Political Power, Community Based Models and Understanding Intersectional Issues to Reduce Violence. Over 75 guests attended the event with featured guest Amber Goodwin, the founder of CJAF, Oresa Williams, the Executive Director for “Not Another Child” and Kei Williams, the Organizing Director from Marsha P. Johnson and more.

# COMMUNITY JUSTICE VOLUNTEERS

In 2021, our Organizing Associate led the charge to engage supporters from 2020 who were passionate about advancing policy to reduce gun violence in Black and Brown communities. This group of over 200 volunteers took on various advocacy efforts to strengthen direct pressure on policymakers and decision makers to support community focused strategies to end gun violence. We held monthly volunteer calls to educate volunteers on issues, solutions, current events and ways they can take action to bring about change.

# VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS





# SECTION 2

## CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ON GUN VIOLENCE IN BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES

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In 2021, Community Justice launched multiple educational campaigns that engaged both traditional and social media outlets about the urgency to end gun violence, its unique impacts on our communities and the importance of funding community based solutions to end gun violence.

# GUN VIOLENCE IN BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES ARE BY DESIGN

In light of the major spikes in gun violence during the pandemic, our efforts around the By Design campaign launched in 2020 shifted to focus on specific communities and incidents of violence. Through our Beyond the Headlines and Volunteer webinars, we took a deeper dive into the root causes, details and solutions required to address violence after the media coverage ends. These events feature local leaders, activists and those impacted by the respective act of gun violence and elevate policy solutions.

## GUN VIOLENCE IN FLORIDA:



Gun Violence in the Hispanic and Latinx Community, featuring Andrea Pino-Silva, activist and Gender Policy Advisor for CJAF, Mike de la Rocha, co-founder of Revolve Impact, and Jonathan Garzon, Community Leader for United Parents and Students dove into how experiences and knowledge on how gun violence affects the Latinx community.

Through targeted media engagement, we were able to elevate the root causes and intricacies of the gun violence crisis through articles and stories.



Laws accused of encouraging vigilante violence still in most states despite scrutiny after Arbery killing



Why ending violence in Baltimore's Black communities takes more than just gun-control laws



Sentencing Reform Advocates Urge State To Prioritize Incarceration Alternatives

# HOW COVID19 WORSENERD THE GUN VIOLENCE CRISIS

As violence surged across the country, Community Justice helped illustrate how the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the root causes and risk factors that lead to violence in our communities. This connection proved critical to push back against narratives that reinforced the need for more policing, instead of more investments to intervene violence, support those most at risk and address root cause issues like housing, economic opportunity, educational inequity and more.

## HIGHLIGHTS:



Just like COVID-19, gun violence is a public health crisis



Biden lays out strategy to tackle rising homicides



How to apply COVID-19 lessons to outbreak of gun violence



Joe Biden confronts the dueling pandemics of COVID and gun violence



# THE IMPORTANCE OF FUNDING COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

In 2021, our primary educational and advocacy focus was on the need to invest in community focused violence intervention and prevention strategies. Our team was able to elevate this urgency through appearances on national outlets like NPR, MSNBC, NBC News and Mother Jones, as well as localized media hits to elevate state and local investments in these strategies. Led by our Legislative Affairs Manager, we were able to host multiple discussions live on Social Media about the urgency of these funds with members of Congress.



## JULY 7, MSNBC:

All In With Chris Hayes



## NOVEMBER 10, INSIDER:

Why ending violence in Baltimore's Black communities takes more than just gun-control laws

## FEBRUARY 12, MOTHER JONES

Biden's White House Is Ready to Tackle Gun Violence. Black-Led Groups Hope They Won't Be Excluded.

## APRIL 1, NPR:

\$5 Billion For Violence Prevention Is Tucked Into Biden Infrastructure Plan

## APRIL 8, WHITE HOUSE:

Remarks by President Biden on Gun Violence Prevention

## APRIL 14, NBC NEWS:

Biden wants to give anti-violence groups \$5 billion. Here's how it could be spent

## JUNE 26, THE GRIO:

Black policy advocates played role in Biden's gun crime prevention plan

## JULY 19, PEACOCK:

Armed in America: DC Gun Violence Shakes Community | The Mehdi Hasan Show

## AUGUST 10, BALTIMORE SUN:

Federal recovery money should fund Safe Streets and other anti-violence programs, advocates say

## NOVEMBER 4, 13 NEWS NOW NORFOLK:

US lawmakers pushing historic \$5B plan for community violence prevention programs



## WHAT'S NEXT WEBINAR:

# SUPPORTING VICTIMS REDUCES GUN VIOLENCE

Ending gun violence starts with supporting those most directly impacted by this crisis. By highlighting the story of our Executive Director, we were able to elevate the toll that our broken criminal legal system and health system has played to fuel violence by neglecting or worse, criminalizing, gun violence victims of color. In Time Magazine, we were able to elevate this issue to an international audience, while further emphasizing the need to strengthen the health response to gun violence in our communities.



He Was Shot by a Stranger but Treated Like a Criminal When He Reached the ER



'Surviving the Survival' of Living Through a Shooting

# ADDRESSING THE BIAS IN MEDIA COVERAGE OF GUN VIOLENCE

Media plays a major role in influencing and driving policy changes. In 2021, we began efforts to call out the bias and inconsistencies in how violence is covered in communities of color versus white communities in America. By highlighting these inconsistencies, we began to call out how the media criminalizes and dehumanizes Black and Brown folks impacted by violence, which in turn overly emphasizes crime control approaches.



The Way We Think About Mass Shootings Ignores Many Black Victims



Media inconsistent in telling the stories of gun violence victims | GUEST COMMENTARY

**Community Justice could not have accomplished so much this year, without the diligent support of our volunteers, activists, legislative champions and partners across the country.**

**THANK YOU**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:  
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