

The City of Richmond Gun and Gang Violence Community Assessments: A Summary of the Process and Results

Elizabeth Prom-Wormley¹, Samuel Brown²,
Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Framework Executive Steering Committee,
City of Richmond Community Ambassadors²

Author Affiliations

¹Division of Epidemiology, Department of Family Medicine and Population Health,
Virginia Commonwealth University

²Department of Human Services, City of Richmond



Executive Summary

The goal of this report is to summarize the results of a process that the City of Richmond conducted to understand community resident perceptions related to gun and gang violence. This report will outline (1) the process by which data were collected, (2) results on community-identified causes/needs, solutions, and strengths related to gun and gang violence; and (3) identify currently available programs and resources addressing gun and gang violence available through the City of Richmond and related partners. This report was commissioned by the office of the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Human Services, City of Richmond. Results will be used to build on prior knowledge and recommendations developed by the City of Richmond's Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention steering committee. This report also serves as a preliminary summary of the current work from members of the Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention steering committee. It describes the current collaborative landscape to further align and coordinate future work across organizations.

The work identified four major conclusions and additional insight. First, safety and gun violence remain important issues throughout Richmond. Approximately 68% of participants reported that gun violence was a pressing issue facing their community. This concern was consistent across all age groups. Additionally, 40% of participants either did not feel safe or were unsure of their safety. This unease is due in large to gun violence as well as living in areas that are unpredictable and subject to a high degree of theft or negative interpersonal interactions. Second, there were age, gender, and location differences across opinions related to safety as well as future solutions. Consequently, strategies to address gun violence will require careful planning to consider these factors. Third, consistent and positive interpersonal and organizational communication were identified as important strategies to improve communities. Fourth, the current support landscape of organizational work indicates that Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention steering committee partners are currently engaged in multiple strategies to support gun violence prevention that have been identified as priority areas by residents. However, there are other areas that offer unique opportunities to address gun violence in Richmond (e.g., positive social media messaging as well as consistent and frequent messaging). As the Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention framework partnership grows, most organizations indicated a need for additional staffing to maintain consistent and frequent organizational communication, develop formal agreements, and identify strategies by which to measure success.



Background and Rationale

Richmond experienced an historical increase in gun violence in 2020 and 2021. In response, the city established the Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Framework as a collaboration across several organizations to coordinate effort and rapidly reduce the number of deaths due to gun violence. In order to support this effort, the Richmond Youth Gang and Gun Violence Assessments was developed as a process to describe the landscape of gang and gun violence in the City of Richmond. This process began in November 2021 and was sponsored by the City of Richmond through a grant from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. The process was coordinated by city staff (Mr. Samuel Brown) and was developed in consultation with staff from other city departments (Dr. Rhonda Gilmer, Dr. Osita Ioregbu, Mr. James Davis) and groups consisting of community members and representatives across organizations with known goals of supporting Richmond residents by reducing exposure to violence (the Richmond Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, the City of Richmond Community Ambassadors Team, and the Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Framework [GVPI] steering committee). An academic partner (Dr. Elizabeth Prom-Wormley) with prior experience in community-based participatory research in Richmond¹ advised city staff prior to survey recruitment on their planned data collection process, balancing community resident concerns (e.g., survey length and participant representativeness) alongside methodological issues (e.g., establishing appropriate sample sizes and strategies for recruitment). The academic partner also analyzed focus group and survey data, synthesized results, and documented the process. The process occurred in three phases between December 2021-September 2022 as summarized in Figure 1.

Methodology

Development of the Community-Facing Focus Groups and Survey.

Planning Group. A planning group was convened in December 2021.

The goal of this group was to use community feedback to identify areas of concern and gaps in understanding related to the Richmond gun violence landscape (Figure 1, gray box). The initial planning group consisted of members from the City of Richmond government (Dr. Rhonda Gilmer, Dr. Osita Ioregbu), an academic partner from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU, Clark-Hill Institute for Positive Youth Development, Dr. Terri Sullivan), and community members with expertise in community-engaged research methods (Ms. Torrey Edmonds). In preparation for preliminary community feedback, this group developed a set of pilot questions and survey items as well as offered suggestions for the data collection process.

Ten Community Ambassadors ages 25-68 attended a discussion facilitated by city staff from the planning group. Results from this planning group discussion informed development of the community-wide data collection plan as well as the proposed survey and focus group items. Discussions from the planning group as well as those from the Richmond Gun Violence Prevention Task Force identified a need to focus on understanding the gun violence landscape in youth (ages 10-17) and young adult (ages 18-24) residents. Several community-related concerns were identified, including a lack of access to community programs and resources, lack of employment opportunities, food access, gun violence, mental/emotional health, and lack of trauma healing supports. Further, multiple themes were identified as solutions to address gun violence, including job creation, programming and services for youth, programming and services for young adults, preventing access to guns, and access to mentoring. Work from this stage also indicated the importance for discussion of the current gun violence landscape to also consider community strengths. There was also a need to understand factors influencing gun and gang violence.

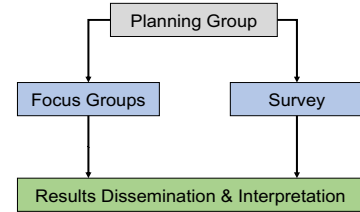


Figure 1. Summary of the Richmond Youth Gang and Gun Violence Assessments Process.

The process occurred in three phases.

Phase 1- Preparation for community-data collection (gray boxes).

Phase 2- Data collection through community-wide focus groups and surveys in communities at high risk for gun or gang violence (blue boxes).

Phase 3- Results dissemination and interpretation discussions in Community Ambassadors and GVPI steering committee members (green boxes).



Community-wide survey and focus group items and data collection plan were finalized jointly from January-March 2022. The survey was designed to generate quantitative data that quickly summarizes community perceptions. Focus groups were designed to generate qualitative data to establish the contexts for which participants responded to survey items.

The items included in the community-facing survey and focus groups as well as their respective procedures were pilot tested in a group of 60 adults and youth ages 12-70 to establish user accessibility and determine the average time required. Pilot testing occurred in “hot spot” communities considered to be at high risk for gun and gang violence. Risk was determined by mapping shooting-related calls received by the Richmond Police Department throughout the city in 2021² as well as feedback from Community Ambassadors with knowledge of the gun-related activities in the neighborhoods they supported. The pilot versions of the survey and focus group prompts were edited in response to feedback.

Administration of the Community-Wide Focus Groups and Survey.

Focus Groups. Focus groups were conducted in five Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority communities (Fairfield Court, Gilpin Court, Hillside Court, Mosby Court, and Whitcomb Court) as well as a publicly subsidized community (Belt Atlantic apartments) between March 24-28, 2022 (Table 1). These neighborhoods were chosen because they are in gun violence hot spots. Community residents were randomly invited to participate in focus groups on the day of events through door-to-door invitation. Almost all participants reported having been affected by gun violence. Approximately 10 community residents participated in focus groups on average. Participants were between the ages of 13-67 and represented either adults or groups of parents and their children. Focus groups lasted for approximately 2-3 hours. All participants received dinner. Additionally, participants aged 13 and older received a \$50 gift card.

Box 1. Focus Group Discussion Questions

- Tell me a little about your neighborhood: what are some of its characteristics; how do you feel about your community?
- In what ways do you think your community can be made stronger?
- We know that many issues such as gun and gang violence continue to harm our communities. Tell me about how gun violence has impacted you and your community.
- Have you had friends, family members, or neighbors physically impacted by gun violence? How does this make you feel?
- What do you think are some of the causes of gun violence in the community?
- Why do you think young people join gangs?
- What opportunities should be provided to help better support youth in your community that may keep them from getting involved in gang activity?
- Let’s think about possible solutions to gun violence. If you could design a plan to address, or attempt to solve, some of the issues and concerns facing your community over the next 3-6 months, what would that look like?
- How about over the next year?
- Do you feel like you, your community, have been exposed to things that would make you more knowledgeable and aware of your cultural history?
- Do you think that increasing the cultural awareness of residents in your community would have any impact on gun violence? How do you think increasing our knowledge, understanding of and connection to black, cultural history would empower community members?
- What else would you like to share?

Focus groups discussed the impacts of gun violence in the community. Participants also shared ideas to reduce violence in their community using prompts summarized in Box 1. Focus groups were facilitated either by Community Ambassadors or a team member from the VCU Injury and Violence Prevention Program (IVPP). VCU IVPP partners were present at focus group meetings to record discussions and offer connection to mental health support and trauma-informed care in the event of emotional distress resulting from conversations.

Table 1. Summary of Focus Group Participation

Community	Date	Number of Participants	Age Range	Proportion of Participants Under 18 Years Old
Gilpin	3/24/2022	9	13-67	50%
Mosby	3/24/2022	10	14-62	50%
Whitcomb	3/24/2022	10	9-70	50%
Hillside	3/24/2022	12	13-67	50%
Fairfield	3/24/2022	10	13-50	70%
Belt Atlantic	3/28/2022	13	20-30	0%



Surveys. Any English-speaking individual aged 10 or older residing in the Richmond region was eligible for participation. Surveys took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Participants did not receive incentives for survey completion. There were 598 completed surveys and of these, responses were analyzed from 573 unique participants providing complete data for at least 75% of all survey items. All participants completed the survey in its entirety. A summary of the survey recruitment dates, locations, methods, and population age groups targeted for participation is summarized in Table 2.

Participant Recruitment Process. A convenience sampling approach was used to conduct participant recruitment of an online survey within hot spot locations. Recruitment and receipt of the survey link was conducted through: (1) an in-person invitation to participate from a Community Ambassador, or (2) an announcement during a community activity focused on youth followed by a link shared by a general e-mail from the activity organizer to all participants. Individuals who received an in-person invitation to participate were orally administered the survey by a Community Ambassador and responses were recorded using a mobile device with internet access. Some youth participants were invited to complete a paper version of the survey from an announcement during a community activity focused on youth. These surveys were later entered into the online platform by city staff. The online survey was conducted using the SurveyMonkey platform (<https://surveymonkey.com>).

Table 2. Summary of Survey Collection Details

Date	Method	Population	Location of Data Collection
6/6/2022	In-Person	Adult	Intersection of 3rd Street & Broad Street, Church Hill 25 th Street corridor, Market Place 14 on the corner of Mosby Street and Fairmount Avenue, Community Supermarket on Mechanicsville Turnpike, Chimborazo area
6/7/2022	In-Person	Adult	Northside (around Virginia Union University, Brookland Park Blvd, North Ave), Idlewood, Southside Plaza
7/11/2022	In-Person	Adult	Jefferson Davis Hwy
4/26/22-8/1/22	Internet	Youth	Boys & Girls Club Teen Center/Armstrong High
4/26/22-8/1/22	Internet	Youth	Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School
4/26/22-8/1/22	Internet	Youth	George Wythe High School
5/16/22-8/1/22	Internet	Youth	Department of Juvenile Justice
7/8/22-8/1/22	Internet	Youth	RVA Cooks Program
7/28/22-8/1/22	Internet	Youth	Mayor's Youth Academy

The Data Collection Team. The data collection team consisted of city staff and members of the Community Ambassador program. The Community Ambassador program consists of adult residents ages 18 and over who live and work in hot spot communities and coordinate efforts with the City of Richmond’s Human Services team to connect residents with resources. Teams of two Community Ambassadors consisting of one man and one woman canvassed hot spot locations and approached residents who were already outdoors.

Statistical Analysis. Summary statistics for quantitative survey responses were estimated as distributions of responses using frequency counts and proportions. Qualitative survey and focus group responses were cleaned to remove typos and disaggregate multiple ideas into separate responses. Responses were separately evaluated by two academic researchers to further reduce data text into common statements prior to text mining. Text mining was conducted to assess statements for frequency of responses across each individual survey/focus group item. Responses were then visualized into word clouds to represent frequency of responses. Data were analyzed by the academic partner using R version 4.0.5 (“Shake and Throw”)³. Text mining was conducted using the *tm* and *wordcloud* packages in R.

Data Dissemination and Interpretation.

Two sets of results dissemination and interpretation events were conducted for Community Ambassadors and GVPI steering committee members to review preliminary summary statistics generated from survey items and to reflect and interpret responses from focus group items. Community Ambassadors provided their personal responses to focus group items during a two-hour event on July 7, 2022. They reviewed preliminary summary statistics on July 11, 2022, during a two-hour event. Steering committee members met for two one-hour



dissemination and interpretation events to review preliminary summary statistics on August 30, 2022, and focus group responses on September 13, 2022. These events were led by the academic partner with guidance from city staff. The goals of these discussions were as follows: (1) evaluate the degree to which the results accurately represented the experiences of participants and Richmond-area residents more broadly, (2) identify additional areas of results reporting necessary to ensure useful conversation for the development of a community-based plan of action, (3) identify any additional context related to the interpretation of results, and (4) establish the degree to which results connect with the City of Richmond's Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Framework.

Events consisted of a combination of small and large group conversations focused on the interpretation of preliminary results. No formal training in data analysis was provided before the event to reduce the time burden of participants. However, the academic partner who conducted analyses systematically asked for and responded to requests for clarification on results interpretation and potential limitations.

Current Partner Assessment. A GVPI partner survey was conducted between September 20-27, 2022. This survey assessed the current landscape of programs offered by the organizations who currently partner within the GVPI steering committee and who offer services to or work with residents. Survey items summarized the programs being offered, identified collaborative efforts between partners, and identified partner needs to sustain and expand their effort. Recent studies of large-scale partnerships report greater long-term group sustainability and effectiveness when these aspects are considered as part of a collaborative process⁴.



Results – The Landscape of Violence in Richmond, Virginia

Survey Demographics. Of the 598 completed surveys received, responses were analyzed from 573 participants providing complete and unique responses for at least 75% of all items. Approximately 99% of participants shared basic demographic details at the end of the survey. The majority (53.17%) of participants identified as men. There was a generally uniform distribution across age groups. Approximately 92% of participants lived within the City of Richmond. Of these, most participants resided in neighborhoods in the Northside, Southside, or East End. Most participants (74.52%) lived outside of public housing communities (Table 3).

Table 3. Demographic Distribution of Survey Participants

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Man	302	53.17
Woman	256	45.07
Non-Binary/Gender Non-Conforming	10	1.76
Total	568	100
Age Group		
Under 18	122	21.40
18-24	69	12.11
25-34	103	18.07
35-44	88	15.44
45-54	82	14.39
55-64	75	13.16
65 and over	31	5.44
Total	570	100
Location*		
Northside	114	20.04
East End	197	34.62
Southside	115	20.21
West End	60	10.54
Outside Richmond	40	7.03
Richmond Unspecified	43	7.56
Total	569	100
Public Housing		
No	427	74.52
Yes	146	25.48
Total	573	573

***Respondent-Identified Locations**

Northside- Gilpin, Highland Park, Jackson Ward, Hermitage, Chamberlayne Ave, Brook Rd, College Park Apartments, David Garden, Carver, Washington Park, Foundry Apartments, Virginia Union, Battery Park, 5th Avenue; **East End-** Whitcomb, Fairfield, Mosby, Church Hill, Fulton, Oliver Hill, Nine Mile, Mechanicsville Turnpike, Shockoe Bottom, 7th District, 31st St. Oakwood, 23rd St., Jefferson Ave., Woodsville; **Southside-** Hillside, Jefferson Davis Hwy., Midlothian Turnpike, Gray St., Swansboro, Broad Rock, Afton, Midlothian Village, Belt Atlantic, Snead Rd., South Wood, Westover Hills, Manchester, Ruffin Rd., Blackwell; **West End-** Downtown, Southampton, Scotts Addition, Carytown, Fan District, North 2nd St., District 4. Stadium, Chippenham, Byrd Park, Idlewood, Randolph, Museum District, Northumberland Ave.; **Outside Richmond-** locations/counties outside of the city of Richmond; **Richmond Unspecified-** Responses indicating residence in the City of Richmond without additional geographic details



Perception of Community-Wide Issues, Full Sample. Most participants (68.05%) endorsed an opinion that gun violence was a pressing issue facing their community. Additionally, 46.46% of participants reported that gang activity was a pressing issue facing their community (Table 4).

Approximately half of participants endorsed items indicating the importance of social support and health issues facing their community. Almost 14% of participants reported that there were “other” issues facing their community. These other issues included: gentrification, affordable housing, assistance with home maintenance, fear of neighbors/ poor communication, activities for youth, financial investment in the community, and supports for families.

Table 4. Summary of Opinions – Full Sample

Survey Item	N	%
What are some of the most pressing issues facing your community? (N = 579)		
Gun Violence	394	68.05
Lack of Access to Programs/Resources	300	51.81
Gang Activity	285	49.22
Lack of Employment	269	46.46
Lack of Trauma Healing Supports	260	44.91
Mental/Emotional Health	221	38.17
Food Access	215	37.13
Other	79	13.64

Perceptions of Safety, Full Sample. Approximately 42% responded that they did not feel safe or were unsure if they felt safe (Table 5). Approximately 71% of participants indicated gang activity was at least somewhat of a problem in their community. Further, 39% of participants indicated that gang activity was either a significant or huge problem in their community (Table 4).

Table 5. Summary of Safety Results- Full Sample

Safety Item	N	%
Do you feel safe in your community		
No	137	24.77
Yes	321	58.05
I Don't Know	95	17.18
Total	553	100
How much of a problem is gang activity in your community?		
Not a Problem	165	28.95
Somewhat a Problem	181	31.75
A Significant Problem	62	10.88
A Huge Problem	162	28.42
Total	570	100





A. Survey Responses on Why Participants Did Not Feel Safe



B. Survey Responses on Causes of Gun Violence



C. Focus Groups Responses on Causes of Gang Participation.



D. Focus Groups Responses on Causes of Gun Violence

Figure 2. Summary of Written Survey and Focus Group Responses. Visual representation of phrases that were reported with at least three respondent endorsements are shown. Larger font sizes represent phrases that were identified more frequently. Phrases with the same colors occurred at the same frequency.



Qualitative Survey Results: Reasons for Not Feeling Safe. Survey participants shared reasons why they did not feel safe (Figure 2 Panel A). The most common factors with feeling unsafe was violence and guns, representing a theme related to physical safety and survival. Additionally, participants reported a theme related to the general environment feeling unsafe (e.g., “unsafe”, “unpredictable”, “theft”, and “drug”).

Qualitative Survey Results: Causes of Gun Violence. Participants shared thoughts on the causes of gun violence (Figure 2, Panel B). Responses represented the following five themes:

- Behaviors associated with crime in the community (e.g., “drug activity”, “easy access to guns” and “gang activity”)
- Individual-level factors (e.g., “lack of parental support”, “disagreement between others”, “poverty”, and “unemployment”)
- Broader community-level factors representing challenges in developing positive social networks (e.g., “social media”, “lack of communication”, and “lack of activities for youth”)
- Challenging interpersonal interactions (e.g., “lack of emotional intelligence”, “reputation”, “family issues”, “outsiders coming into the community”, “poor conflict resolution”, “women”)
- Government-related actions (e.g., “lack of police protection”, “government”, “lack of accountability”, and “gun laws”)

Focus Group Results: Causes of Gang Participation. Focus group participants reflected on what they understood to be causes of gang participation (Figure 2, Panel C). Six themes were identified:

- Belonging to a peer group (e.g., “peer pressure”, “manipulation”, “belonging”)
- Factors in the home (e.g., “lacking parental support”, “home problems”)
- Lacking adult support that could be found outside the home (e.g., “lacking role models”, “seeking love”, “seeking respect”, “seeking mother figure”, “lacking positive males”, “seeking father figure”)
- Safety outside the home (e.g., “safety”, “sports wars”, “seeking protection”)
- Environmental factors outside the home (e.g., “internet”, “music”, “videos”, “peers negative association”, “older influences”, “lacking community support”)
- Inability to anticipate consequences (e.g., “poor understanding of consequences”, “bad choices”, “lacking awareness of gang participation”, “seeking attention”)

Focus Group Results: Causes of Gun Violence. Focus group participants reflected on what they understood to be the causes of gun violence (Figure 2, Panel D). Three themes were identified from responses:

- Unresolved conflict (e.g., “unresolved conflict”, “people outside community bringing unresolved conflict”, “jealousy”, “peer pressure”)
- Lack of resources related to prevention and education (e.g., “lacking support structures”, “lacking talk outlet”, “lacking recreation”, “lacking activities”, “kids need education”, “misplaced attention”, “false info”)
- Behaviors associated with crime outside the home (“taking things that don’t belong”, “stealing”, “disrespect”, “impress others”, “carrying guns is cool”, “drug trafficking”)
- Communication behaviors (e.g., “retaliation”, “overreacting”, “poor communication”, “disrespect”)
- Environmental factors outside the home (e.g., “rapper”, “micro policing”, “internet”, “influences”)

Results Interpretation. Results dissemination group discussions indicated surprise by the difference in endorsement of concern related to gun violence (68%) versus gang violence (49%). However, additional discussion in these groups offered some considerations towards the interpretation of this difference. First, the term “gang” is likely to be defined and interpreted differently across community members. For example, from a law enforcement perspective, a “gang member” must be certified through investigation. Similarly, from a community resident perspective, a group of friends who happen to engage in violence may not constitute a “gang” though that type of activity may also be related by external observers as “gang activity”. Second,



perspectives across law enforcement, government leadership, and community residents agreed that the violence occurring in Richmond is not primarily due to gang activity but rather disagreements between individuals that pull other people within their network with them. For example, a disagreement may begin between individuals who live in different neighborhoods but grow when the individual involved in the conflict bring friends with them for support or additional protection. Similarly, individuals that are engaged in romantic relationships may face strong disagreement and engage other family members or friends as they process the relationship challenge. Other times, negative interpersonal interaction occurs via social media that can be viewed by the two individuals experiencing disagreement as well as the wider community of followers. Nevertheless, the means by which violence is perpetrated (e.g., “gun violence”) is clearer and has less room for differences in interpretation. Consequently, as strategies and broad messaging of efforts are developed, it will be necessary to establish a consistent plan across GVPI framework partners to discuss “gang violence” with the community. Further, GVPI partners may benefit from additional discussion for a common strategy to discuss “gun violence” in public and whether that should include discussion of the specific reasons underlying gun violence (e.g., gang versus intimate partner violence).

**Take Home Message 1:
Gun Violence is the Result of Many Factors**

Results from the full survey results indicate that over 40% of Richmond residents either did not feel safe or were unsure of their safety. This unease is due in large to gun violence as well as living in areas that are unpredictable and subject to a high degree of theft or negative interpersonal interactions.

Survey and focus group respondents identified several themes that they thought led to gun violence. There were three common themes.

Behaviors associated with crime (e.g., theft, drug use). Discussion during results dissemination indicated that either the engagement in criminal activity may cause the perpetrator to use a gun or the victim to have a gun to defend themselves.

Engagement in challenging interpersonal interactions and unresolved conflict. This theme represented a wide variety of interpersonal conflicts including neighborhood level disagreements, school-related sports rivalries, and intimate interpersonal relationships (e.g., domestic abuse involving current partners or former romantic partners who choose to live together to ensure housing stability).

Broader environmental factors outside the home which may evolve quickly. These factors may serve as barriers for positive interpersonal social development such as social media and other internet-based forms of communication.

Survey participants identified government-related actions as a factor related to gun violence. Focus group participants identified the lack of access to quality resources for prevention and education for knowledge and activities that could serve as alternatives to gun violence.



Results – The Landscape of Violence in Richmond, Virginia from the Perspective of Gender, Age, and Location

Community-Related Opinions by Gender. No statistically significant differences related to opinions by gender were detected.

Community-Related Opinions by Age. In general, a smaller proportion of participants under age 18 endorsed identified items to address gun violence (45-53%) compared to participants 18 and older (55-78%, Table 6). *There were no significant differences in the frequency of endorsing gang activity and gun violence as pressing community issues across age groups. Additionally, there were no significant differences across age groups for addressing gun violence through job creation and career opportunities.*

Table 6. Distribution of Opinion Items by Age Groups

Survey Item	Under 18		18-34		35-54		55 & over		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
What are some of the most pressing issues facing your community?										
Lack of Access to Programs/Resources*	37	30.33	98	56.98	104	61.18	57	53.77	296	51.93
Lack of Employment*	24	19.67	98	56.98	98	57.65	48	45.28	268	47.02
Food Access*	17	13.93	83	48.26	73	42.94	43	40.57	216	37.89
Gang Activity	49	40.16	96	55.81	87	51.18	52	49.06	284	49.82
Gun Violence	81	66.39	130	75.58	114	67.06	67	63.21	392	68.77
Mental/Emotional Health*	22	18.03	79	45.93	74	43.53	42	39.62	217	38.07
Lack of Trauma Healing Supports*	17	13.93	21	12.21	17	10.00	24	22.64	79	13.86

* Significant difference in trends across age groups at $p < 0.05$

Community-Related Opinions by Location. Participants in locations other than the West End had higher frequencies of endorsing most items related to issues facing the community (Table 7). *There were no significant differences in the frequency of endorsement for some issues across locations, including Food Access, Gang Activity, and Mental/Emotional Health across locations.*

Table 7. Distribution of Opinion Items by Location

Survey Item	Northside		East End		Southside		West End		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
What are some of the most pressing issues facing your community?										
Lack of Access to Programs/Resources*	68	59.65	98	49.75	71	61.74	19	31.67	256	52.67
Lack of Employment*	66	57.89	88	44.67	51	44.35	20	33.33	225	46.3
Food Access	52	45.61	64	32.49	43	37.39	24	40	183	37.65
Gang Activity	59	51.75	106	53.81	61	53.04	22	36.67	248	51.03
Gun Violence*	79	69.3	146	74.11	82	71.3	32	53.33	339	69.75
Mental/Emotional Health	48	42.11	68	34.52	42	36.52	22	36.67	180	37.04
Lack of Trauma Healing Supports*	59	51.75	85	43.15	60	52.17	18	30	222	45.68

* Significant difference in trends across locations at $p < 0.05$



Perceptions of Safety by Gender. Approximately 18.3% of men, 30.8% of women, and 66.7% of non-binary/gender non-conforming participants reported *not* feeling safe in their community. Consequently, women and non-binary/gender non-conforming participants were more concerned about their safety. In contrast men and non-binary/gender non-conforming participants were more concerned about gang activity in their community. Approximately 72.4% of men, 68.8% of women and 90% of non-binary/gender non-conforming reported that gang activity is a problem in their community (Table 8).

Table 8. Distribution of Safety Items by Gender

Survey Item	Men		Women		Non-Binary		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Do you feel safe in your community?*								
No	54	18.3	76	30.8	6	66.7	136	24.68
Yes	196	66.4	124	50.2	1	11.1	321	58.26
I Don't Know	45	15.3	47	19	2	22.2	94	17.06
How much of a problem is gang activity in your community?*								
Not a Problem	83	27.6	80	31.3	1	10	164	28.92
Somewhat a Problem	113	37.5	66	25.8	0	0	179	31.57
A Significant Problem	31	10.30	30	11.7	1	10	62	10.93
A Huge Problem	74	24.6	80	31.3	8	80	162	28.57

* Significant difference by gender at p<0.05

Perceptions of Safety by Age. Adults between ages 18-34 had the highest frequency of *not* feeling safe in their community (32.52%). Participants ages 55 and over had the highest frequency of feeling safe in their community (73%). Participants under age 18 (68.85%) and those between 18-34 (80.7%) most often indicated that gang activity was a problem in their community (Table 9).

Table 9. Distribution of Safety Items by Age Groups

Safety Item	Under 18		18-34		35-54		55 and over		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Do you feel safe in your community?*										
No	22	18.18	53	32.52	46	27.38	16	16.00	137	24.82
Yes	67	55.37	80	49.08	101	60.12	73	73.00	321	58.15
I Don't Know	32	26.45	30	18.4	21	12.5	11	11.00	94	17.03
How much of a problem is gang activity in your community?*										
Not a Problem	38	31.15	33	19.3	49	28.82	45	42.45	165	29.00
Somewhat a Problem	54	44.26	44	25.73	50	29.41	32	30.19	180	31.63
A Significant Problem	9	7.38	25	14.62	20	11.76	8	7.55	62	10.90
A Huge Problem	21	17.21	69	40.35	51	30.00	21	19.81	162	28.47

* Significant difference between age groups at p<0.05



Perceptions of Safety by Location. Participants in locations other than the West End had a higher frequency of not feeling safe (18-35% versus 7%). Participants in the East End and Northside most often reported that gang activity was a huge problem in their community (Northside- 32%, East End- 33%, Table 10).

Table 10. Distribution of Safety Items by Location

Safety Item	Northside		East End		Southside		West End		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Do you feel safe in your community?*										
No	36	32.14	65	34.57	20	18.02	4	7.02	125	26.71
Yes	63	56.25	90	47.87	67	60.36	36	63.16	256	54.7
I Don't Know	13	11.61	33	17.55	24	21.62	17	29.82	87	18.59
How much of a problem is gang activity in your community?*										
Not a Problem	31	27.19	46	23.47	29	25.22	22	36.67	128	26.39
Somewhat a Problem	33	28.95	57	29.08	47	40.87	14	23.33	151	31.13
A Significant Problem	13	11.4	28	14.29	10	8.7	8	13.33	59	12.16
A Huge Problem	37	32.46	65	33.16	29	25.22	16	26.67	147	30.31

* Significant difference between locations at p<0.05

Results Interpretation. Participants in results dissemination activities considered the distribution of results by age, gender, and location to be representative of their experiences in the hot spot areas where the data were collected. It is important to note that although hot spots generally include public housing communities, these communities do not exclusively experience gun violence. Therefore, most survey participants (75%) did not reside in public housing communities and results represent feedback from a broader geographical range that is at high risk for gun violence. Of particular interest is the possibility to consider broad messaging across all age groups to support safety in residents younger than 18 as well as those between 18-34.

Take Home Message 2:
There are Differences by Age Groups and Location on the Importance of Gun Violence and Perceptions of Safety

There are Gender Differences in Perceptions of Safety

There were no significant differences in the frequency of endorsement of gun and gang violence as important issues facing Richmond by age. Further, a large majority (63-76%) of participants in each age group considered gun violence a priority. Consequently, gun violence and gang activity represent unique issues that are similarly important across all ages.

Generally, participants under 18 had lower frequencies of endorsement for all non-violence related issues compared to those 18 and older.

Younger participants (under 18 and 18-34) generally did not feel safe in their communities compared to those 35 and older.

There were no significant differences in the frequency of endorsement across locations related to the importance of Food Access, Gang Activity, and Mental/Emotional Health as issues facing the community.

Generally, West End participants reported lower frequencies of endorsement for all issue topics compared to the other geographical areas.

Participants who identified as women or non-binary/gender non-conforming had a higher frequency of not feeling safe in their community while men and non-binary/gender non-conforming participants had a higher frequency of concern related to gang activity.



Results – Perspectives on Developing Community-Informed Solutions to Violence in Richmond

Community-Related Opinions, Full Sample. Approximately 65% (55-67%) of respondents endorsed all offered solutions to address gun violence. Additional suggestions included: support for family units (parents and children), education, stopping drugs and guns, mental health support, and increasing police presence. No gender differences were detected.

Table 11. Summary of Opinions – Full Sample

Survey Item	N	%
How can the issue of gun violence be best addressed in your community? (N = 579)		
Increase Youth Programs/Services	389	67.18
Increase Young Adult Programs/Services	379	65.46
Prevent Gun Access	372	64.25
Access to Mentoring	356	61.49
Create Job/Career Opportunities	322	55.61
Other	65	11.23
Nothing	12	2.07

The frequency of participants under age 18 endorsing social support issues was generally lower than participants 18 and older. Participants 35 and older had a higher frequency of endorsing items related to increasing youth programs and services (70-79%) compared to participants younger than 18 (52.46%). *There were no significant differences in the frequency of endorsement for creating jobs/career opportunities across age groups.*

Table 12. Distribution of Opinion Items by Age Groups

Survey Item	Under 18		18-34		35-54		55 & over		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How can the issue of gun violence be best addressed in your community?										
Create Jobs/Career Opportunities	65	53.28	94	54.65	100	58.82	63	59.43	322	56.49
Increase Youth Programs/Services*	64	52.46	109	63.37	134	78.82	79	74.53	386	67.72
Increase Young Adult Programs/Services*	64	52.46	114	66.28	126	74.12	75	70.75	379	66.49
Prevent Gun Access*	62	50.82	116	67.44	113	66.47	78	73.58	369	64.74
Access to Mentoring*	56	45.90	106	61.63	120	70.59	71	66.98	353	61.93

* Significant difference in trends across age groups at $p < 0.05$

Participants in locations other than the West End generally had lower frequencies of endorsing most items related to addressing gun violence (Table 7). East End residents had a lower frequency (56.35%) for preventing gun access as a solution to address gun violence compared to other locations (65-75%). Northside residents had the highest frequency of item endorsement across all proposed gun violence solutions.

Table 13. Distribution of Opinion Items by Location

Survey Item	Northside		East End		Southside		West End		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How can the issue of gun violence be best addressed in your community?										
Create Jobs/Career Opportunities*	77	67.54	115	58.38	62	53.91	22	36.67	276	56.79
Increase Youth Programs/Services*	87	76.32	130	65.99	83	72.17	30	50.00	330	67.90
Increase Young Adult Programs/Services*	81	71.05	134	68.02	84	73.04	30	50.00	329	67.70
Prevent Gun Access*	85	74.56	111	56.35	83	72.17	39	65.00	318	65.43
Access to Mentoring*	80	70.18	122	61.93	71	61.74	33	55.00	306	62.96

* Significant difference in trends across locations at $p < 0.05$

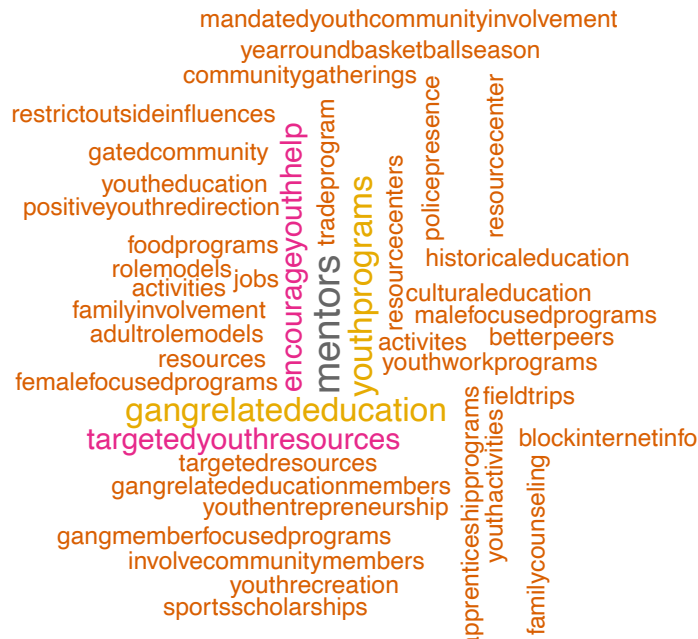




A. Survey Responses on How to Make the Community Stronger



B. Focus Group Responses on How to Make the Community Stronger



C. Focus Group Responses on How to Prevent Gang Violence

Figure 3. Summary of Written Survey and Focus Group Responses Related to Community Improvement. Visual representation of phrases that were reported with at least three respondent endorsements are shown. Larger font sizes represent phrases that were identified more frequently. Phrases with the same colors occurred at the same frequency.



Qualitative Survey Results: How to Make the Community Stronger. Survey responses identified four themes (Figure 3A).

- Community-facing activities (e.g., “community activities”, “youth activities”, “mentoring programs”, “community service programs”, “community unity”, “organizing charitable events”)
- Gun prevention measures (e.g., “gun prevention measures”)
- Employment (e.g., “job opportunities”)
- Actions to improve interaction among community members (e.g., “community meetings”, “better communication”, “safety patrol”)

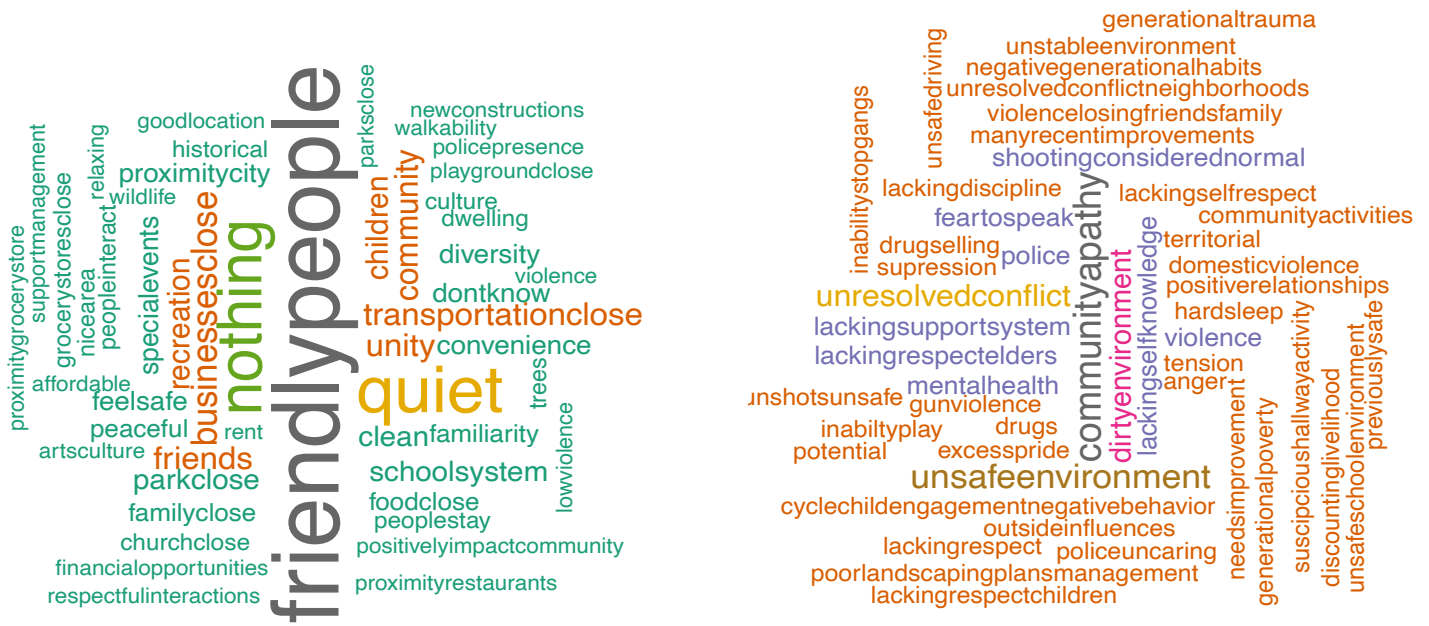
Focus Group Results: How to Make the Community Stronger. Focus group responses identified two major themes related to making the community stronger (Figure 3B).

- Actions that could be addressed by external stakeholders such as government and non-profit agencies (e.g., “community projects promoting togetherness”, “police patrol”, “trade programs”, “programs advertising resources”, “resource center”)
- Actions that could be addressed by individual residents (e.g., “working together”, “positive role models”, “stick together”, “helping”, “identifying life possibilities”)

Focus Group Results: How to Prevent Gang Violence. Focus group responses identified five themes (Figure 3C).

- Family support (e.g., “food programs”, “adult role model”, “resources”, “family involvement”, “family counseling”, “resources”)
- Prevention and Intervention (e.g., “Targeted youth resources”, “mentors”, “year-round basketball”, “gang-related education”, “apprenticeship programs”, “jobs”, “youth entrepreneurship”)
- Safety (e.g., “restrict outside influence”, “education for gang members”, “resource center”, “gated community”)
- Education (e.g., “historical education”, “cultural education”, “female focused program”, “male focused program”,)
- Community activity (e.g., “youth work programs”, “sports scholarship”, “community gathering”, “mandated community involvement”)





A. Survey Responses on Positive Aspects of the Community

B. Focus Group Responses Describing the Community

Figure 4. Summary of Written Survey and Focus Group Responses Related to Descriptions of the Community. Visual representation of phrases that were reported with at least three respondent endorsements are shown. Larger font sizes represent phrases that were identified more frequently. Phrases with the same colors occurred at the same frequency.

Qualitative Survey Results: Describing Positive Aspects of the Community. Four themes were identified despite a substantial proportion of participants reporting no positive community descriptions (“nothing”, Figure 4A).

- Positive interactions with neighbors (e.g., “friendly people”, “unity”, “friends”, “community”, “respectful interactions”, “can have a positive impact on the community”)
- Neighborhood as sanctuary (e.g., “quiet”, “people stay”, “familiarity”, “peaceful”, “trees”, “low violence”)
- Proximity to amenities (e.g., “proximity to the city”, “transportation close by”, “proximity to the grocery store”, “proximity to restaurants”, “family close”, “church close”, “food close”, “playground close”, “convenience”, “transportation close”)
- Arts and cultural opportunities (e.g., “diversity”, “special events”, “arts culture”, “historical”, “culture”)

Focus Group Results: Describing the Community. Focus group discussion identified six themes that described communities (Figure 4B).

- Low community investment from neighbors (e.g., “community apathy”, “dirty environment”, “poor landscaping plan management”)
- Limited perceived ability to address external factors (e.g., “inability to stop gangs”, “police uncaring”, “unsafe driving”, “suppression”, “fear to speak”)
- Interpersonal conflict (e.g., “violence losing friends and family”, “domestic violence”, “unresolved conflicts neighborhoods”,
- Limited support for positive interpersonal interaction (e.g., “lacking support system”, “lacking knowledge”, “lacking respect for elders”, “lacking self-respect”, “lacking respect from children”, “mental health”)
- Intergenerational challenges (e.g., generational poverty, generational trauma, negative generational habits)
- Limited safety (“unstable environment”, “unsafe environment”, “inability to play”, “shooting considered normal”, “gunshots unsafe”, “unsafe school environment”, “previously safe”, “suspicious hallway activity”)



Results Interpretation. Survey and focus group participants who were asked to describe their neighborhoods were challenged to immediately identify positive responses to describe their communities. Discussions with Community Ambassadors brought this challenge into perspective when describing their personal interactions as residents who experience daily stress that comes with an unpredictable and unsafe environment with few positive neighbor interactions and an increasing normalization of gun violence. *In all, the most important factors to describe neighborhoods related to interpersonal interaction and feeling safe.*

Survey and focus group participants were asked to consider ideas to strengthen their communities. Additionally, focus group participants were asked to consider strategies by which to prevent gang violence. Common themes related to community-facing programs and activities that might often be coordinated by government and non-profit organizations. GVPI partners and Community Ambassadors agreed that having activity options would be useful. Further, there was a desire to build community pride and awareness within the activities through inclusion of historical and cultural perspectives that resonate with residents in the communities that are being served. Among Community Ambassadors, there was concern that programs and activities are often developed using academic “best practices” that may not necessarily honor their unique life experiences and perspectives. This could be perceived as using solutions with poor alignment between the strategy and the community it is meant to support. For example, Community Ambassadors noted that the historical background underlying why unresolved interpersonal conflicts between neighborhoods has not been fully understood.

Improved communication is a common issue that was identified in focus group and survey responses. The idea of improved communication reflects multiple perspectives. First, there is a need to develop social norms and skills that support healthy interpersonal conflict. While discussion among Community Ambassadors first started with discussion of youth, it quickly transitioned to also addressing this concern with adults since they serve as examples and role models of interpersonal communication. This includes neighbor conflict, parent-child conflict, and intimate partner conflict. Second, there is a need to develop a consistent and frequent positive social media messaging strategy related to violence to balance the constant negative messaging and misinformation through social media. Third, there is a need to address the perceived non-communication from government and non-profit organizations around strategies and resources through consistent and frequent messaging.

Take Home Message 3:
Communities Appreciate Positive and Consistent Interpersonal as well as Organizational Communication

Positive communication was identified as important factor for communities. This reflects (1) social norms and skills that support healthy interpersonal conflict, (2) consistent and frequent positive social media messaging strategy to combat online confrontation and misinformation, and (3) frequent and consistent messaging from government and non-profit organizations

Gun prevention measures beyond legislation was considered important in communities. This includes (1) sharing back with residents a current understanding of how high-powered guns are getting into the hands of youth, (2) considering harm reduction education strategies to help young people anticipate the harm associated with gun and gang violence

As new strategies are considered to improve the community, metrics of success need to also be planned early. These should likely include a broader range of behaviors beyond current common metrics (e.g., number of people served). For example, metrics should take knowledge of behavior change into account.

Survey participants identified “gun prevention measures” as an important area to reduce violence. Discussion among Community Ambassadors offered several perspectives. First, they were concerned with understanding how young people were getting access to more powerful guns. They noted that the power of the guns that they were seeing now was far greater than what they were accustomed to seeing when they were younger. They were very serious about wanting to know how these high-powered guns were getting in the hands of the youth. Consequently, the idea that there should be more regulation seemed premature or unnecessary at this time because they did not fully understand the process. Second, Community Ambassadors indicated that broad gun prevention measures related to the responsible use of guns and including a clear awareness of the power of



guns on the lives of the families and communities surrounding the victim and perpetrator could be useful. They considered gun possession to be almost normalized in their communities and as such, their thoughts were focused on addressing community-wide harm reduction strategies related to gun possession. Further, they had little confidence that government solutions to limit gun access would actually work and as such, they wanted to identify solutions for which they had more control in implementing. This theme of harm reduction through careful education to include exposing people to the reality of living with a specific decision was also mentioned in focus group discussion.

As GVPI partner discussion considered strategies to “improve the community”, they addressed concern about the need to appropriately measure such an outcome. Currently, evaluations related to improving the community generally focuses on the number of people served or number of events of gun violence. They were interested in identifying additional ways to measure success in improving the community in the future. They wanted to use common measures across GVPI partner program that more meaningfully capture changes in life stages (e.g., a social work “surviving to thriving” approach focusing on supporting exact needs that would meet an individual within their circumstances and provide individualized support). They also expressed interest in the use of measures that related to the Stages of Planned Behaviors since behavior changes are dynamic process that vary over time. They were also interested in using metrics that would better understand how they as organizations were improving community. In this way, they felt that they could use the information to better communicate success with the broader community.



Results – A Preliminary View into the Work of GVPI Partners

Of 18 e-mail invitations, there were 7 GVPI steering committee member respondents (39% response rate). This is a typical response rate for surveys among organization representatives in Richmond.

Partner Support Activities. All partners engaged in work to support the GVPI framework. However, collaboration with the GVPI framework had not yet been formalized in a written agreement for 42.9% partners. Partner activities covered a wide range of needs identified by residents in the survey and focus group results. Almost all partners (6 groups, 85.7%) were connecting residents with resources. Additionally, most (5 groups, 71.4%) indicated that they engaged in activities to support safety for youth and interpersonal conflict management/resolution for youth. Over half of the groups (4 groups, 57.1%) indicated that they engaged in work that supports employment skills, mental health for youth, mentoring for youth, and offering activities that may serve as an alternative to gang/gun violence. In general, 2-3 groups offered support to adults (e.g., housing, ensuring safety for adults, interpersonal/conflict management for adults, mental health for adults, mentoring for adults). One group provides social media based positive messaging for youth (Table 14).

Partner Needs. Over half of organizations (57.1%) needed more staff, more collaboration with other organizations, and improved data infrastructure to keep track of their clients. Many needed increased financial support (3 groups, 42.9%).

Table 14. Summary of GVPI Steering Committee Partner Activity

Variable	N	%
Current Connection with GVPI Framework		
Non-Formal Agreement in Place and Work Has Begun	3	42.9
Formal Agreement in Place and Work Has Begun	4	57.1
Program Type		
Accountability for negative behaviors	3	42.9
Advocacy for policies related to gun access	3	42.9
Community civic engagement (e.g., street clean up, volunteering, voting)	3	42.9
Community-level financial investments	2	28.6
Connecting residents with resources	6	85.7
Employment skills (e.g., trade/apprenticeship programs, resume development, interview preparation, entrepreneurship)	4	57.1
Ensuring safety for ADULTS	3	42.9
Ensuring safety for YOUTH	5	71.4
Housing (e.g., ensuring affordable housing, supporting home maintenance, addressing gentrification)	2	28.6
Interpersonal conflict management/resolution skills for ADULTS	3	42.9
Interpersonal conflict management/resolution skills for YOUTH	5	71.4
Mental health for ADULTS	3	42.9
Mental health for YOUTH	4	57.1
Mentoring for ADULTS	3	42.9
Mentoring for YOUTH	4	57.1
Offering activities that may serve as an alternative to gang/gun violence	4	57.1
Physical wellness (physical health/exercise)	3	42.9
Parent-specific supports	2	28.6
Supports for family units	3	42.9
Social media based positive messaging for ADULTS	0	0.0
Social media based positive messaging for YOUTH	1	14.3
Supports Needed		
Increased financial support	3	42.9
More staff	4	57.1
More advertising to bring residents to your program	2	28.6
More collaboration and coordination with other organizations	4	57.1
Longer hours to support more residents	1	14.3
Different hours to support more residents (e.g., outside of typical business hours)	2	28.6
More information on resident needs	1	14.3
More information on City government goals/needs	0	0.0
Improved data infrastructure to keep track of clients	4	57.1



Partner Interactions. Partner organizations were asked to identify the organizations that they collaborate with to address the Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Framework. Generally, most partner organizations collaborate with many other organizations (6 collaboration per group on average). Most partner organizations collaborate with approximately two other partner organizations on average (Figure 4).

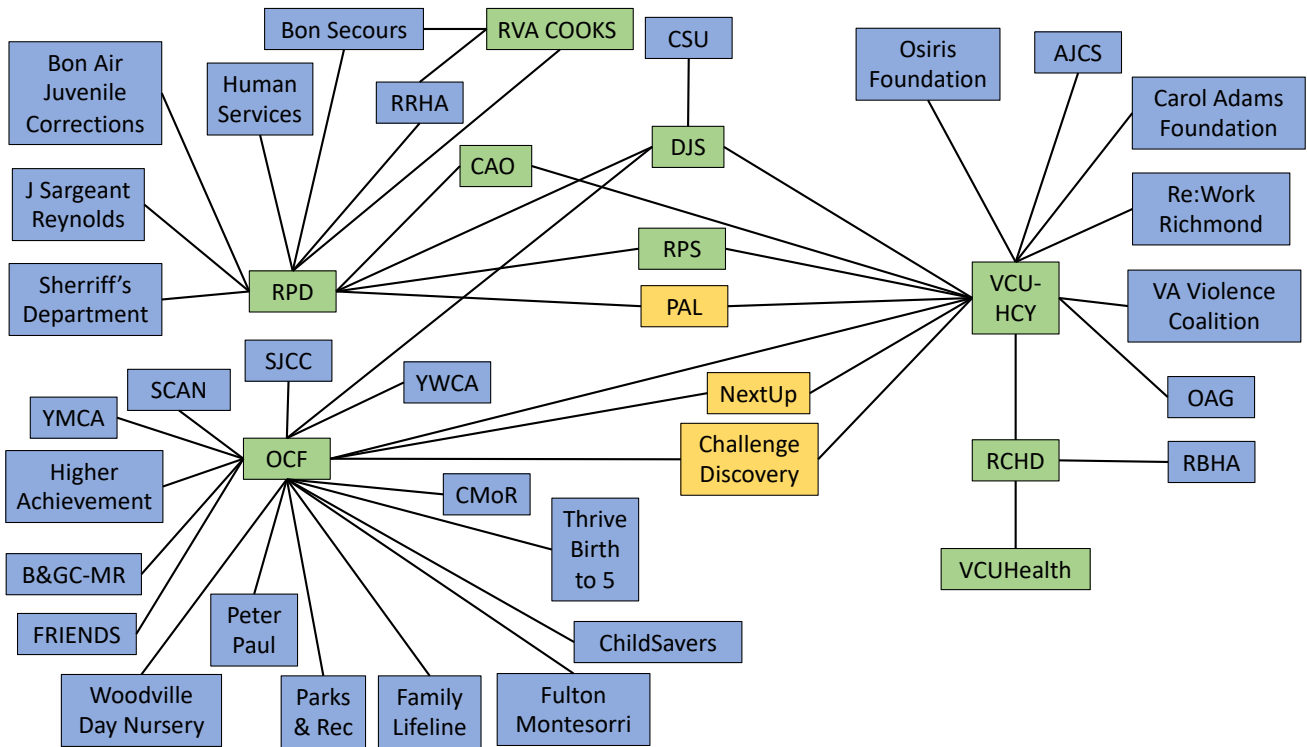


Figure 4. Current Representation of GVPI Partners and their Organizational Collaborations. Green boxes represent GVPI partners. Yellow boxes represent organizations that are not part of the GVPI steering committee and have connections to more than one GVPI steering committee partner. Blue boxes represent organizations that are not GVPI partners but have connection with a GVPI steering committee partner.

Abbreviations

- AJCS-** Anna Julia Cooper School
- B&GC-MR-** Boys and Girls Club of Metro Richmond
- CAO-** Office of the Chief Administrative Officer for Human Services, City of Richmond
- CMoR-** Children's Museum of Richmond
- CSU-** Crisis Stabilization Unit
- DJS-** Department of Justice Services
- FRIENDS-** FRIENDS Association for Children
- OAG-** Office of the Attorney General
- OCF-** Richmond Office of Children and Family Services
- PAL-** Richmond Police Athletic League
- Parks & Rec-** Richmond Parks and Recreation
- RBHA-** Richmond Behavioral Health Authority
- RBHA-** Richmond Behavioral Health Authority
- RCHD-** Richmond City Health District
- RPD-** Richmond Police Department
- RPS-** Richmond Public Schools
- RRHA-** Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority
- SCAN-** Greater Richmond SCAN
- SJCC-** St. James's Children's Center
- VCU-HCY-** Virginia Commonwealth University- Healthy Communities for Youth
- VCUHealth-** VCUHealth Injury Violence and Prevention Program
- YMCA-** YMCA of Greater Richmond
- YWCA-** YWCA of Richmond



Results Interpretation. GVPI steering committee members are engaged in a high degree of work to support the gun violence framework. Organizations are engaged in multiple strategies to support gun violence. There is a strong degree of effort in connecting individuals with resources. However, collaboration across GVPI partners is still evolving. This is not surprising for this stage of multi-organization development. The group has been working together for less than a year and cross-partner collaborations are still under development as demonstrated by some informal agreements to work together though work has begun in all instances. It should be noted that many partners identified several needs to increase support for Richmond residents. *Most indicated that more collaboration with other organizations was necessary.* Consequently, it is likely that the number of organizations supporting the GVPI framework will grow. Additionally, most organizations noted needing more staff and more funding. Coordination of collaboratives across multiple organizations requires a high degree of staffing to support meaningful discussion, consistent dialogue, identifying common goals, and establishing/monitoring strategic planning goals. This is like the support necessary for data infrastructures. Funders should be aware and support these needs as this is extremely important work that will not be addressed with commonly used “bodies in seats” metrics. Instead, organizations and funders would need to consider additional metrics such as community satisfaction before and after implementation of a new data infrastructure, community awareness of a program, or resident willingness to work with organizations after implementation of a collaborative strategy. Further, funders and leaders will need to consider how to measure and demonstrate the value of collaborative success as well as financially supporting multiple organizations for such effort-intensive work.

***Take Home Message 4:
GVPI Partners Engaged in High Workload and Will Need
Additional Support to Sustain the Effort***

Organizations are engaged in multiple strategies to support gun violence that have been identified as priority areas by residents

There is a strong degree of effort in connecting individuals with resources among GVPI partners.

Less effort has been invested in positive social media communication

GVPI partners have some collaboration among themselves, and this is expected to grow over time

As the GVPI framework partnership grows, most organizations will require additional staffing support in order to maintain consistent communication, develop formal agreements, and identify strategies by which to measure success



Conclusions

This report summarizes a broad set of perspectives related to gun and gang violence in Richmond, Virginia throughout 2022 and has established four major conclusions. First, safety and gun violence remain important issues in Richmond. Approximately 68% of participants reported that gun violence was a pressing issue facing their community. This concern was consistent across all age groups. Additionally, 40% of participants either did not feel safe or were unsure of their safety. Second, this unease is due in large to gun violence as well as living in areas that are unpredictable and subject to a high degree of theft or negative interpersonal interactions. Younger participants (under 18 and 18-34) generally did not feel safe in their communities compared to those 35 and older. Consequently, safety is an important issue in Richmond, but it is a greater concern in residents ages 34 and younger. Targeted strategies related to safety to support younger resident should be considered. Third, participants who identified as women or non-binary/gender non-conforming had a higher frequency of not feeling safe in their community. Men and non-binary/gender non-conforming participants had a higher frequency of concern related to gang activity. Therefore, addressing violence will also require different strategies by gender. Fourth, consistent and positive interpersonal and organizational communication were identified as important strategies to improve communities. This reflects (1) social norms and skills that support healthy interpersonal conflict, (2) consistent and frequent positive social media messaging strategy to combat online confrontation and misinformation, and (3) frequent and consistent messaging from government and non-profit organizations. Fifth, organizational leaders are engaged in multiple strategies that have been identified as priority areas by residents to reduce gun violence. Some areas (connection to resources) are commonly addressed across stakeholders. However, there are other areas that offer unique opportunities to address gun violence in Richmond (e.g., positive social media messaging and consistent messaging). As the GVPI framework partnership grows, most organizations will require additional staffing support in order to maintain consistent communication, develop formal agreements, and identify strategies by which to measure success.

These results should be evaluated in light of the following limitations. First, data were collected in areas at high risk for gun violence. While they are representative of communities that face gun violence, they are not representative of the entire city. Similarly, data collection occurred in English. Results may not be representative of Spanish-speaking residents, many of which also live in hot spot locations. Future studies in these communities are encouraged. Third, although results related to gender differences included non-binary/gender non-conforming participants, the number of participants in this survey was low (N=10) and as such strong conclusions should not yet be developed for this group or residents based on these results. Additional research related to violence is needed to confirm these trends in non-binary/gender non-conforming communities. Fourth, survey results identify perceived areas of priority as well as possible solutions. However, these data do not anticipate the likelihood that participants would use future services that have been addressed. It is important that future programs consider conducting additional pilot research to evaluate the degree of interest and the conditions that would increase resident participation in programs. One benefit of the approach used for this process is that it has identified a community of residents who are trained in basic research methods (e.g., Community Ambassadors) who have a wealth of information and whose work could be compensated as consultants in advance of program outreach to address this point.



REFERENCES

1. Prom-Wormley EC, Ilyas F, Wilson D, et al. A Participatory Group Process within a Health Collaborative to Collect and Disseminate Needs Assessment Data. *Prog Community Health Partnersh.* 2020;14(3):285-297.
2. City of Richmond. Gun Violence Prevention: The Framework to Address Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention in Richmond, Virginia. Richmond, VA 2022.
3. *R: A Language and Environment for Statistical Computing* [computer program]. Vienna, Austria: R Foundation for Statistical Computing; 2021.
4. Jacob RR, Korn AR, Huang GC, et al. Collaboration networks of the implementation science centers for cancer control: a social network analysis. *Implement Sci Commun.* 2022;3(1):41.

