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What Does Research and Practice Tell Us about Effective Youth Gun and Group Violence Reduction Interventions?
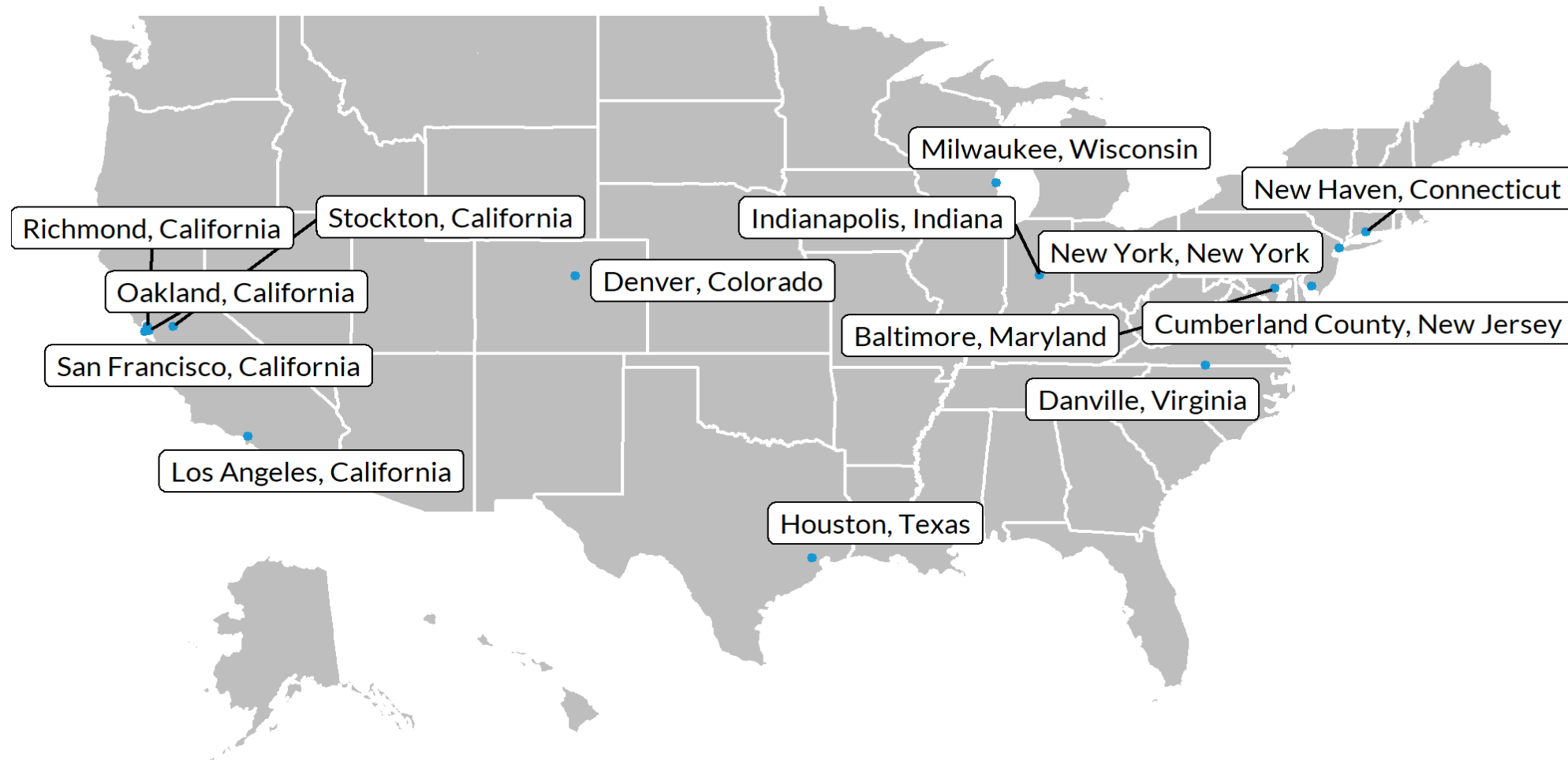
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Project Overview

- **Objective**: Develop research-based practice guide to reduce youth gun and gang/group violence.

- **Scope**: Strategies intended to reduce gun-related violence committed by young people between ages of 10 and 25 who may also be associated with gangs/groups.

- **Sources**

  - Engagement with Subject Matter Experts

  - Literature Synthesis

  - Scan of Antiviolence Practice

Youth and young adults (10 – 25)

Gang/group violence

Gun violence

Jurisdictions Included in the Scan of Practice

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

New Haven, Connecticut

Richmond, California

Stockton, California

Indianapolis, Indiana

New York, New York

Oakland, California

Denver, Colorado

Cumberland County, New Jersey

Baltimore, Maryland

San Francisco, California

Danville, Virginia

Los Angeles, California

Houston, Texas

Prominent Models in the Field Share Many Commonalities

Activity	Model		
	Focused Deterrence	Public Health	CGM
Case management/services	✔	✔	✔
Conflict mediation	✔	✔	✔
Credible messengers		✔	
Employment assistance	✔	✔	✔
Enhanced enforcement	✔		✔
Enhanced surveillance	✔		✔
Faith-based activities	✔	✔	
Hospital-based intervention		✔	
Outreach workers	✔	✔	✔
Public perception campaign	✔	✔	✔
Reducing gun supply	✔	✔	

Scan of Practice Findings

- Communities experienced similar **drivers of gun violence** and **strengths**.

- **Problem analysis** suggest program modifications and **community support and input** critical to designing and sustaining interventions.

- Programs viewed gun violence as a **contagion** and took **trauma-informed and public health approaches**.

- **Building trust** with young people foundational and critical to success.

- **Partnerships** were key and grounded in common goals and values, mutually beneficial relationships, and time and effort.

- Interventions had to navigate **mistrust between police and communities** with concentrated violence.

- **Sustainability** requires funding, partnerships, staff support, and documenting effectiveness.

Community Violence Interventions

- Efforts to address community gun violence through means other than incarceration

- Focusing on relational work with people most likely to commit gun violence

- Intervening to interrupt and mediate conflicts

- Interventions work toward outcomes beyond reducing youth group and gun violence

- Connecting people to social and economic services and resources

- Addressing intergenerational cycles of poverty, violence, and trauma that give rise to gun violence

Common Components of CVIs

- Problem analysis to identify highest risk people and places

- Intensive engagement with people at highest risk of shooting and being shot

  - Street outreach

  - Case management

  - Service connection

- Violence interruption

- Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs)

- Community mobilization and events

Community Violence Interventions Involve Distinct (but Often Overlapping) Roles

- **Case managers** carry caseloads of youth enrolled in a program

  - Facilitates and monitors their progress on life plans or uses other mechanisms to identify their goals and milestones.

- **Outreach workers** work to connect with youth affiliated with gangs or groups to build trust and relationships and connect them to formal programs and services.

- **Violence interrupters** intervene to prevent retaliation and other modes of violence spreading through communities by responding to shooting scenes and mediating active conflicts, among other means.

- **Credible messengers** are trusted by youth affiliated with groups or gangs and promotes risk reduction by encouraging conflict mediation.

  - Young people view them as living examples of change because of shared experiences.
  - Credible messengers may do any or all of the types of work done by the other three positions in this list.

Example: Gang Reduction Initiative of Denver (GRID)
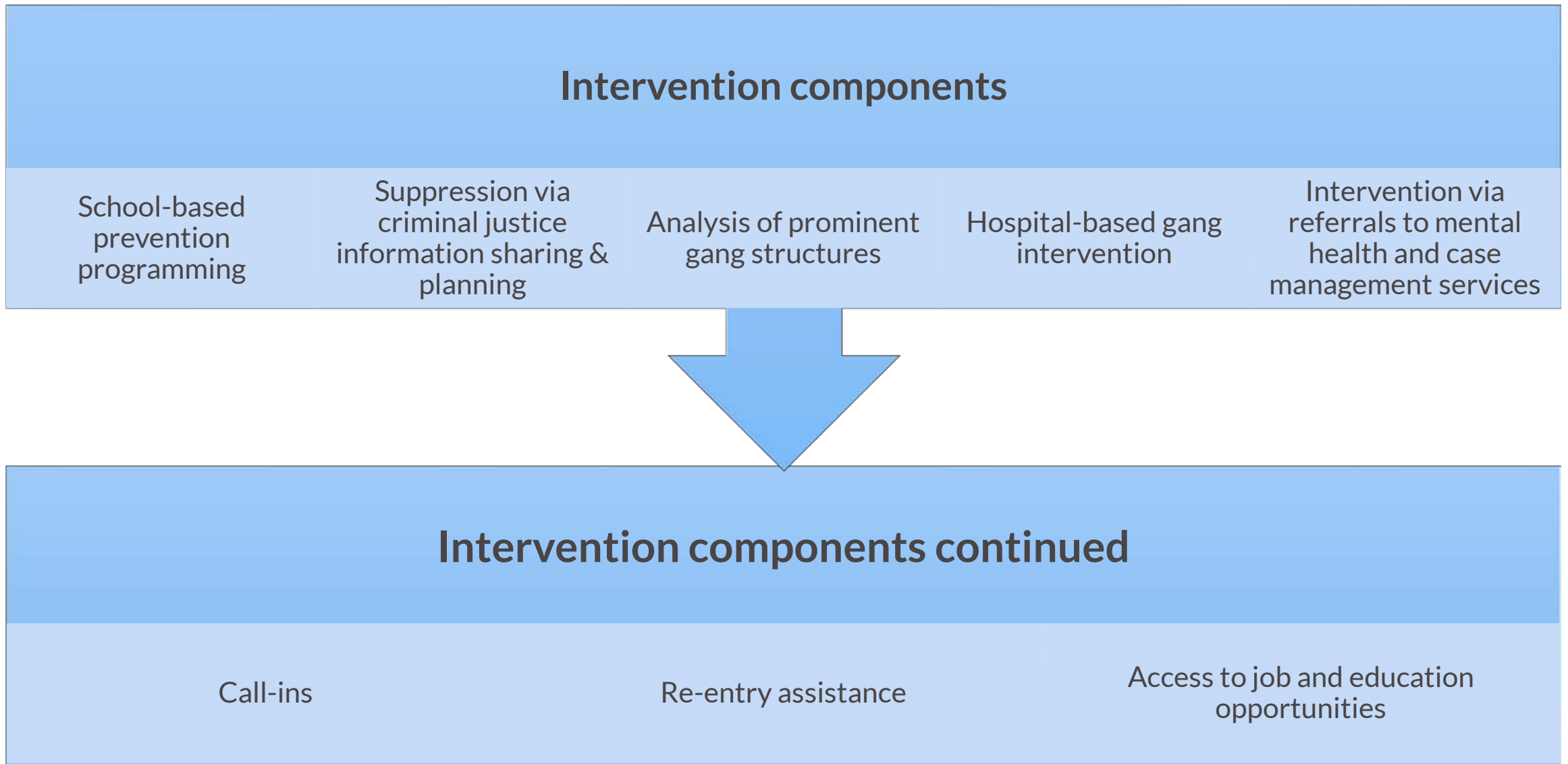
Denver, CO Demographics (2019)

- Population: 727,211
- Percentage under 18 years of age: 19.8%
- Median Household Income: $68,592

Source: American Community Survey population estimates as of July 1, 2019 (available at https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219).

About the intervention

- Citywide, focused on violent neighborhood hotspots
- Comprehensive Gang Model, Focused Deterrence, & Public Health
- Typically, 9-12 months of program engagement
- Funded by the City of Denver via the Department of Safety (general funds)
- Target population includes individuals ages 12-24 that drive violence

GRID Continued

Intervention components

| School-based prevention programming | Suppression via criminal justice information sharing & planning | Analysis of prominent gang structures | Hospital-based gang intervention | Intervention via referrals to mental health and case management services |

Intervention components continued

| Call-ins | Re-entry assistance | Access to job and education opportunities |

Example: Crisis Management System (CMS) New York City
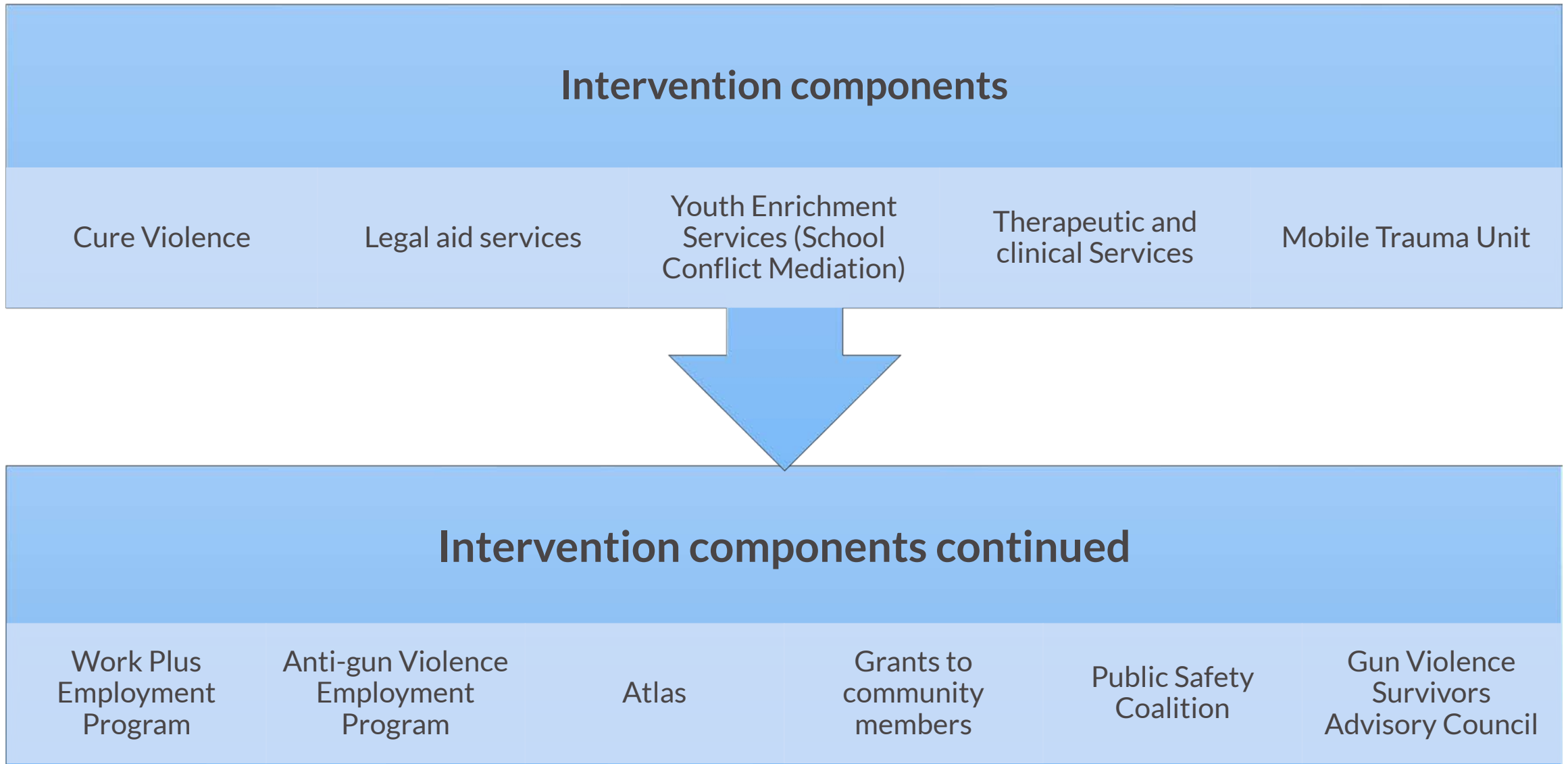
New York City, NY Demographics (2019)

- Population: 8,336,817
- Percentage under 18 years of age: 20.8%
- Median Household Income: $63,998

Source: American Community Survey population estimates as of July 1, 2019 (available at https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219).

About the intervention

- 30 neighborhoods with high volume of gun violence across five boroughs
- Public Health
- Funded by the NYC Mayor's Office and the NYC City Council
- Target population includes youth ages 16-24 with elevated risk factors for perpetrating gun violence or being a victim of gun violence

CMS Continued

Intervention components

| Cure Violence | Legal aid services | Youth Enrichment Services (School Conflict Mediation) | Therapeutic and clinical Services | Mobile Trauma Unit |

Intervention components continued

| Work Plus Employment Program | Anti-gun Violence Employment Program | Atlas | Grants to community members | Public Safety Coalition | Gun Violence Survivors Advisory Council |

Practice Guidance on Building Antiviolence Infrastructure

Formalize the Government Role in Coordinating Antiviolence Work

- Create a strategic plan for antiviolence work that defines the different roles played by various partners.

- Establish a government entity to coordinate non-police components of the local violence reduction strategy.

- Distribute funding and support to community organizations in a manner as objective and insulated from political interference as possible.

- Establish an executive-level forum for routine discussion of performance of antiviolence efforts and to share challenges and needs for effective work.
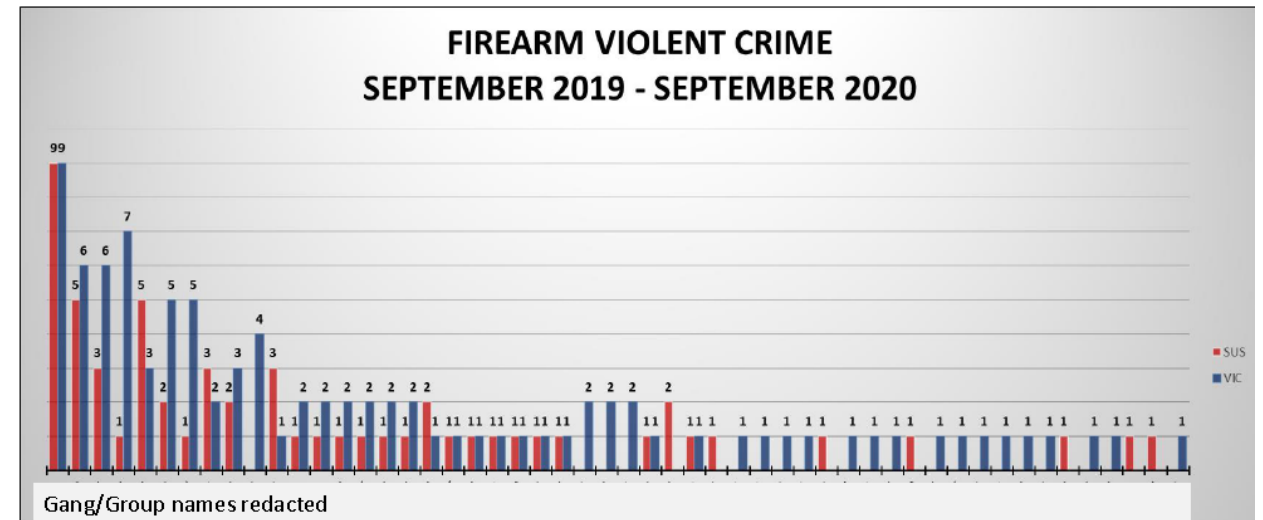
"It . . . gives an opportunity for young people to see government in a different way. Changing the face of the government to say this is actually you and it should be serving you. Here are some of the folks in your neighborhood who are doing mentoring and violence prevention, and they are a part of the government."
—Research Stakeholder

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Assess the Problem To Focus Attention and Resources

- Conduct a local problem analysis before developing violence reduction strategies.

- Routinely and collaboratively analyze the violence problem so the strategy can be refined when needed.

- Tie deployment of programmatic and intervention resources to the people and places indicated by the problem analysis.

- Be ready to recalibrate strategies based on findings from initial and ongoing problem analysis.

LAST 12 MONTHS SHOOTING SCORE CARD

FIREARM VIOLENT CRIME
SEPTEMBER 2019 - SEPTEMBER 2020

Gang/Group names redacted

Fund and Enhance the Capacity of a Robust Community-Based Antiviolence Strategy

- Dedicate stable funding to community-based antiviolence work.

- Expand the scale of interventions to meet the scale of the problem.

- Invest in building capacity of community organizations to do antiviolence work.

- Pay antiviolence interventionists commensurately with other professionals engaged in antiviolence work, and provide them with benefits.

- Support the violence reduction workforce around mental health and wellness, including addressing primary and vicarious trauma.

- Provide training and professional development pathways for staff to develop skills crucial to the implementation of the selected intervention and grow as professionals.

"We need more intervention workers, and we need them to make a livable wage. My workers can go to Wal-Mart and make a dollar more, but they do this because they have a passion. It needs to become a legitimate profession."
—Intervention Stakeholder

Engage the Community To Make and Keep the Peace

- Gather community perspectives on violence reduction and translate their asks into action from government.

- Include advocacy for community needs in the overall youth gun violence strategy.

- Hold community activities such as pop-up events or peace walks in neighborhoods regularly and after a shooting incident to address trauma and provide support.

"Community asks for a codesign and co-leadership model, but government makes that hard."
—Local Government Stakeholder

Calibrate the Relationship Between Law Enforcement and Non-Police Antiviolence Work

- Set a clear understanding of roles between law enforcement and non-police antiviolence activities that preserve the perceived and actual independence of the non-police intervention and its staff.

- Communicate and coordinate between law enforcement and community antiviolence work at the executive level.

- Communicate the purpose and value of non-police antiviolence interventions to all members of law enforcement agencies.

"There were certain firewalls that they agreed to—no one who conducts direct service will ever be in a meeting with law enforcement."

--Community Violence Intervention Stakeholder

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Collect and Share Data To Refine Practice and Assess Effectiveness

- Articulate the logic and outcomes for each component of the antiviolence strategy.

- Invest in data and analysis capacity.

- Feed data back to program staff and have a mechanism for discussing and using for continuous quality improvement.

- Include members of the community or those directly impacted by gun violence in data-related activities such as collection and evaluation.

- Set progress metrics for youth participants that include positive youth development outcomes, and capture success in terms of incremental change or milestones.

- Conduct evaluation of interventions to determine if they are delivering intended impact.

"When you have data, it's hard to say that [our program] is not accomplishing its goals. When you have no data, it's easy to say that."
    —*Local Government Stakeholder*

Project Resources

- [A Research-Based Practice Guide To Reduce Youth Gun and Gang/Group Violence](#)

- [Implementing Youth Violence Reduction Strategies: Findings From a Scan of Youth Gun, Group, and Gang Violence Interventions](#)

- [Implementing Youth Violence Reduction Strategies: Findings From a Synthesis of the Literature on Gun, Group, and Gang Violence](#)

Thank You!

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