

Promoting Peaceful Families and Communities: Maintaining Progress in Reducing Gun Violence in Alameda County

Report Brief

This brief highlights key information in *Promoting Peaceful Families and Communities: Maintaining Progress in Reducing Gun Violence in Alameda County*. The report's title comes from Alameda County's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and is a long-term priority focused on supporting community members' safety and resilience.

Public Health Impacts of Gun Violence

Gun violence is a public health issue that impacts the health and well-being of everyone in Alameda County. It harms those injured or killed and has rippling impacts on their loved ones and throughout our community. The Alameda County Public Health Department's Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) is committed to working with the community to reduce violence and promote peace.

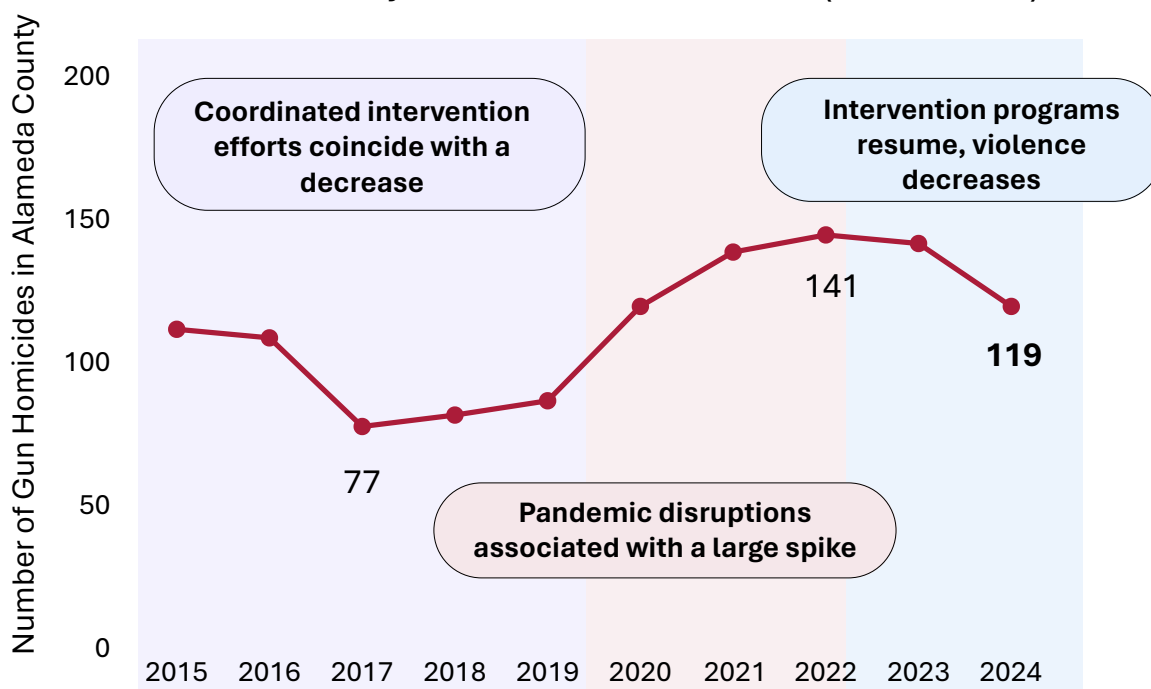
Gun homicides in Alameda County

Preliminary data from death certificates indicate that **119 gun homicides** occurred in Alameda County in 2024 – a **16% decrease** from the 141 recorded in 2023. This marks the lowest number of gun homicides since 2020 when the same total was recorded.

[Click here to read the full report](#)



Alameda County Gun Homicide Trends (2015-2024)



Note: All citations for this brief are available in the full report

Promoting Peaceful Families & Communities: Maintaining Progress in Reducing Gun Violence in Alameda County

Drivers of Violence

High levels of gun violence in Alameda County are driven by a combination of deep structural inequities coupled with easy access to firearms. A legacy of racist public policies such as redlining created under-resourced communities with limited opportunities, and the conditions for conflicts, tensions, and violence to arise. Easy gun access magnified these tensions, increasing the likelihood that conflicts escalate into lethal violence.

Structural inequities that increase the risk of violence:



Economic hardship: Living in high-poverty neighborhoods increases exposure to chronic stressors – such as food insecurity, housing instability, and limited job opportunities – making it easier to become involved in gun violence.



Housing and built environment: Violence is more likely to occur in areas with high levels of blighted properties and vacant lots.



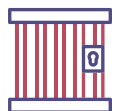
Access to care: Untreated trauma and behavioral health needs can act as a trigger when someone faces a stressful situation or a conflict.



Education: Schools in high-poverty neighborhoods often have less resources to adequately prepare students for the future. Inequities in access to high-quality education shape inequities in violence.



Justice and Policing: When communities do not feel safe to rely on law enforcement for safety or justice, residents may resort to handling disputes on their own, often leading to retaliatory or ongoing violence.

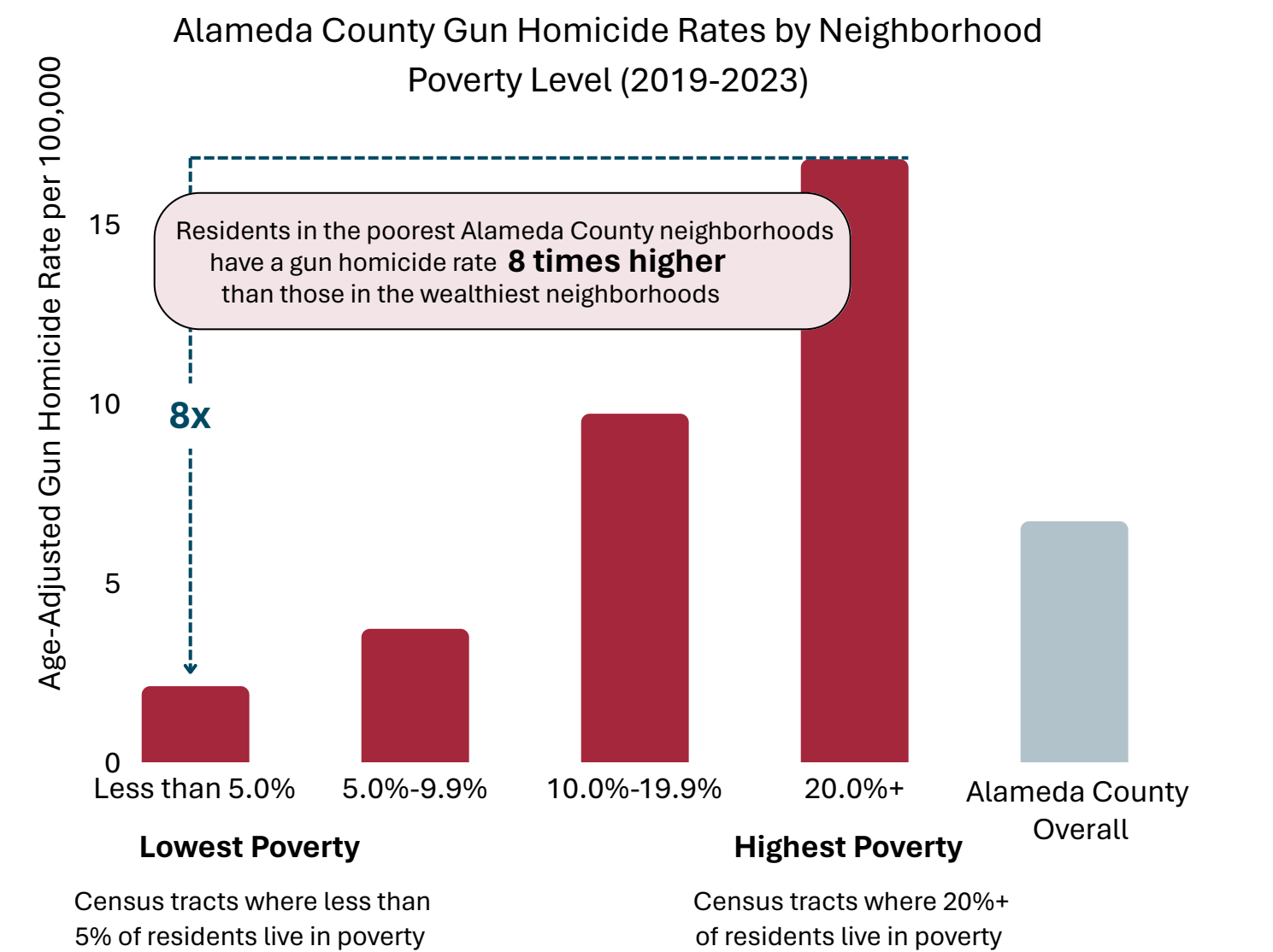


Incarceration: The unintended consequences of harsh penalties for nonviolent offenses contributed to mass incarceration, family separation, and disconnected communities.

“Gun violence in Alameda County is overwhelmingly concentrated in communities that have endured decades of marginalization due to inequitable public policies and limited access to resources. Maintaining progress in reducing gun violence demands a sustained commitment to addressing its root causes, and requires a collaborative approach that supports strategies which center the voices and leadership of community members.”

**Kristen Clopton, Manager, Office of Violence Prevention
Alameda County Public Health Department**

Living in Under-Resourced Communities Increases Risk for Violence



Gun Access

Gun access exacerbates challenges and inequities faced in our community. Guns may escalate what could have been a verbal argument or less severe fight into a homicide or serious injury.

Owning a gun in your home is associated with:

- 3x** higher risk for suicide
- 2x** higher risk for homicide among household members

Among county residents, guns were involved in:

- 83%** of all homicides
- 93%** of children and young adults homicides

Groups Disproportionately Impacted

There are large, longstanding differences in the level of gun violence by race and ethnicity, sex, and age.

Racial Disparities

- Black residents are **44 times more likely to die by gun homicide** compared to their Asian counterparts, the group with the lowest rate of firearm homicide.
- No other disease or injury in Alameda County displays such stark disparities by race and ethnicity.

“Gun violence is a **health equity** and **social justice** issue.”

Children and Youth

- Guns are the **leading cause of death for children and transition aged youth** (ages 0-24).
- Children who live in neighborhoods with high levels of gun violence often experience repeated trauma of hearing gunshots, witnessing shootings, or losing loved ones.
- Adverse childhood experiences caused by gun violence are linked to declines in academic achievement and poor psychological, emotional, and physical health across the lifespan.



Photo credit: Hasain Rasheed

Domestic Violence

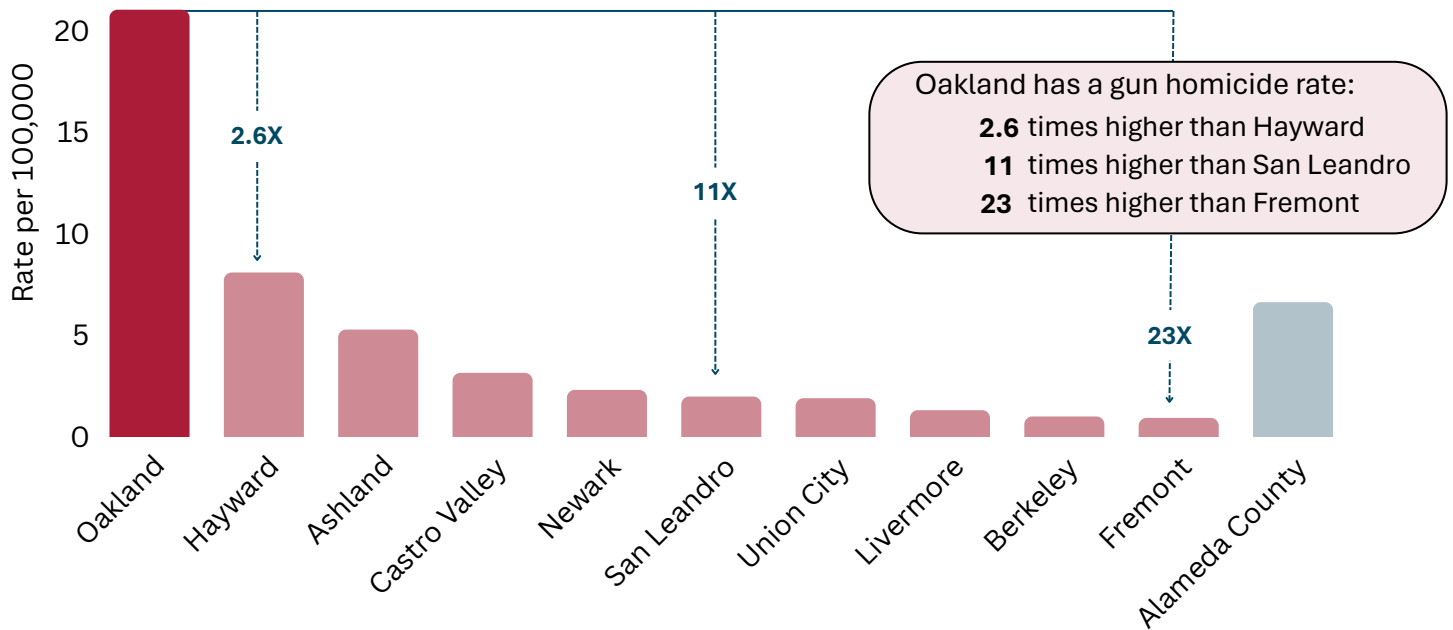
“Domestic violence and firearm access are a lethal combination.”

- When an abuser has access to a firearm, **women are five times more likely to be killed** by their abusive partner.
- From 2017 to 2022, the Alameda County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team identified 39 domestic violence-related homicides in Alameda County, and 46% of domestic violence homicides were by firearm.

Gun Violence is Geographically Concentrated

- Most gun homicides that occur in Alameda County are concentrated in under-resourced Oakland neighborhoods, but all areas of the county are impacted.
- Oakland accounts for only 25% of the total population in Alameda County but made up 80% of all gun homicides from 2014 to 2023.

Alameda County Gun Homicide Rate by Injury Location (2014-2023)

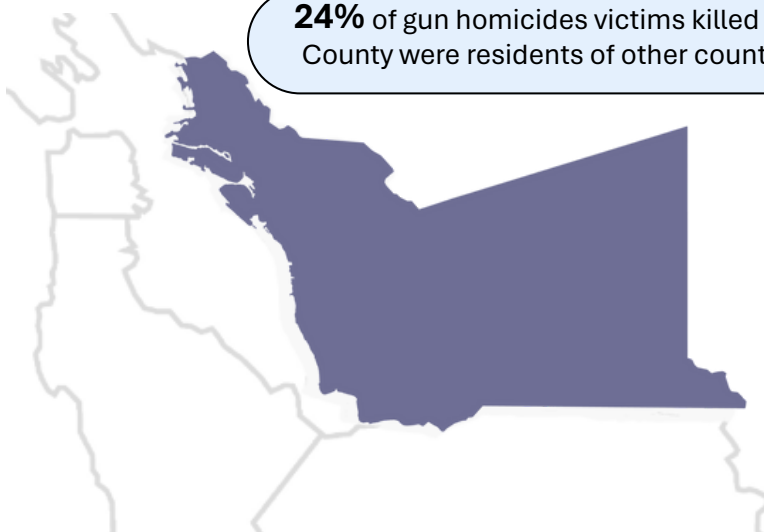


From 2014 to 2023:

15% of Alameda County residents who died by gun homicide were killed outside of the county.

24% of gun homicides victims killed in Alameda County were residents of other counties.

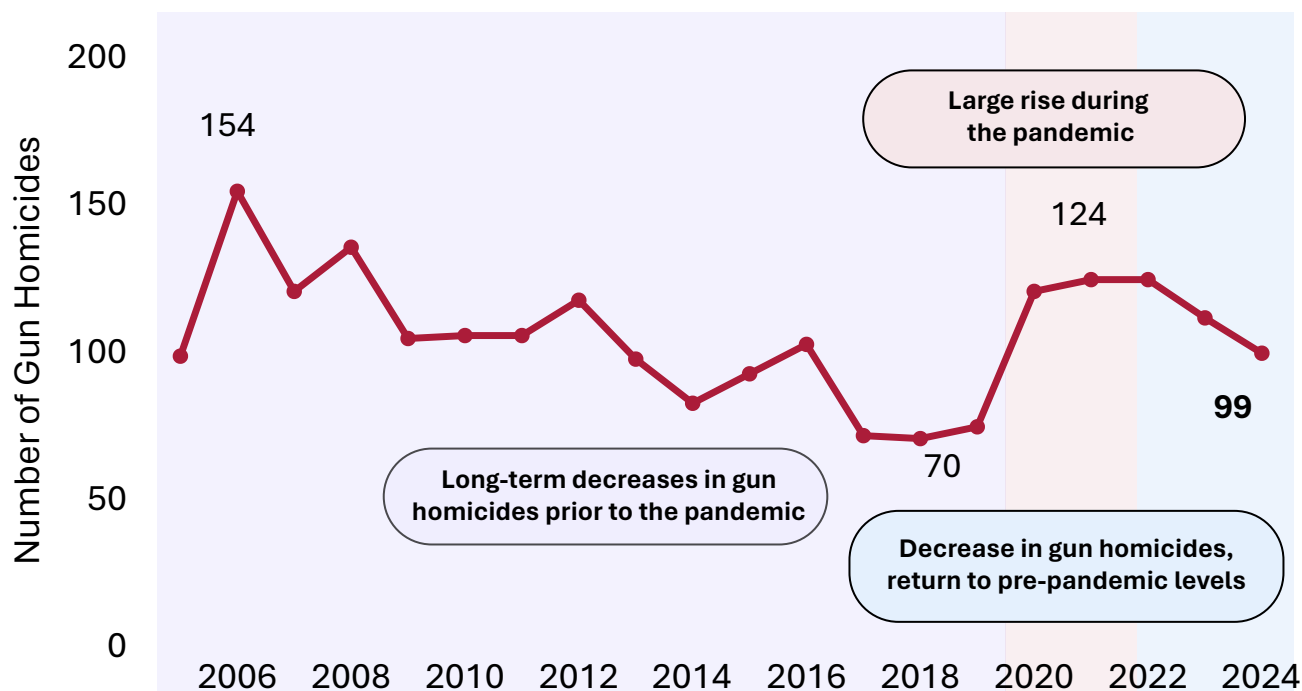
Gun violence is a regional issue which requires collaboration between Bay Area Counties.



Long-term Trends and Prevention Efforts

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Alameda County experienced a decades-long decline in gun homicide rates, **with rates from 2017 to 2019 even falling below the national average**. This success corresponded with a range of violence prevention and intervention strategies involving public safety and community-based organizations. However, **the pandemic disrupted many of these efforts**, and the firearm homicide rate rose steeply—increasing by 68% from 2019 to 2021. There were increases in homicides nationwide.

Gun Homicides Among Alameda County Residents (2005-2024)



A Focus on Alameda County Residents

This graph shows gun homicides among Alameda County residents regardless of where the shooting occurred. It includes residents killed outside the county and excludes nonresidents killed within the county. This approach helps guide prevention and intervention strategies for those who live in Alameda County.

Responding to a Rise in Gun Violence

In response to the recent rise, numerous agencies and community-based organizations in Alameda County reinforced violence prevention and intervention efforts. These renewed efforts have coincided with decreases in gun homicides in 2023, and again 2024. While these trends are encouraging, the gun homicide rate remains above pre-pandemic levels, highlighting the need for sustained investment in violence prevention.

Strategies to Reduce Violence

Reducing violence in Alameda County requires a coordinated approach that incorporates prevention, intervention, and long-term community transformation. Each of these strategies plays a role in addressing the root causes of violence and firearm access, engaging individuals and communities affected by gun violence, and working towards systemic changes to ensure safe and healthy communities.

Coordinated Approach to Reduce Gun Violence



Community Violence Intervention

Community Violence Intervention (CVI) strategies can support those impacted by structural inequities and violence. These strategies:

- Work within communities impacted to disrupt conflicts before they escalate and help individuals heal.
- Provide trauma-informed care and healing-centered engagement.

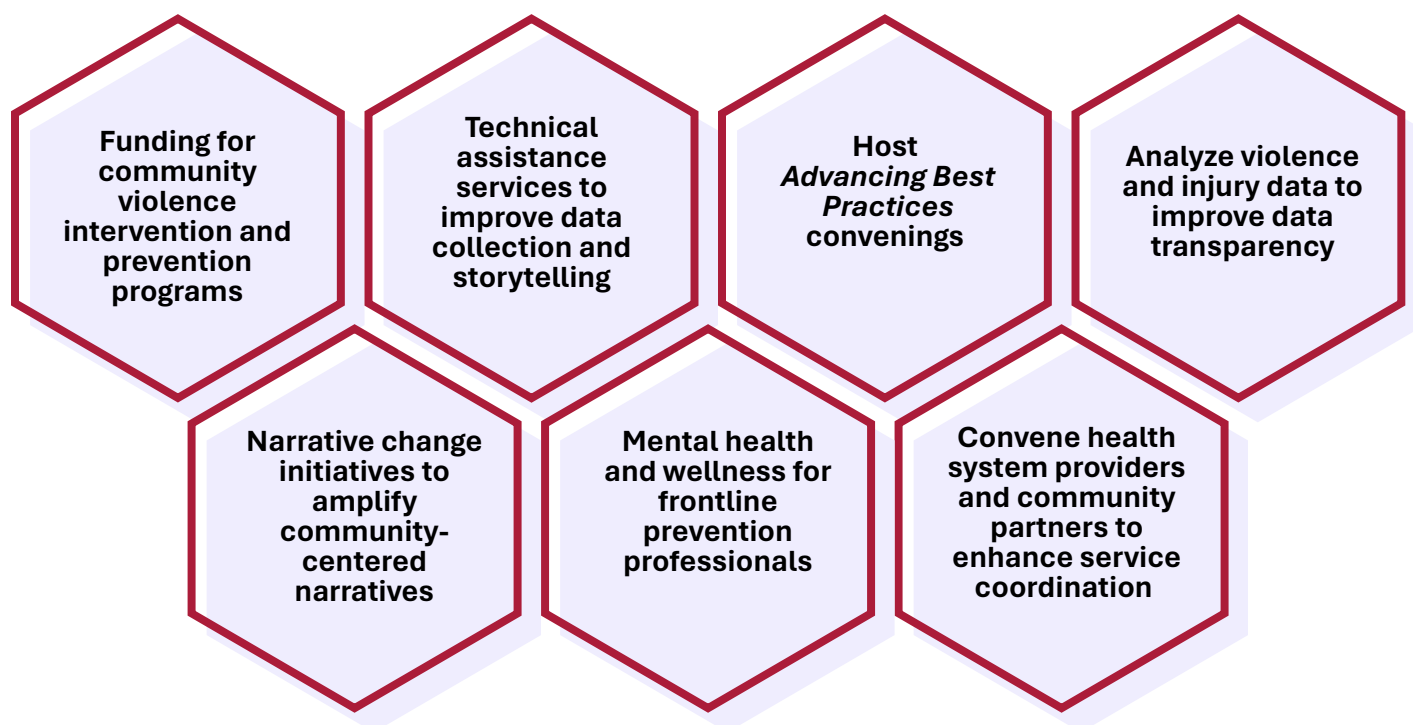


Photo credit: Youth Alive, YA Outreach Team

The Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)

Launched in 2023, the OVP is dedicated to addressing the impacts of violence, which harm both individual and community health. The OVP is housed within the Alameda County Public Health Department and serves to promote peaceful families and communities. OVP is one of only a dozen county-level Offices of Violence Prevention in the United States.

OVP Programming Activities



The Office of Violence Prevention is Committed to:



Advocating for funding and support to community-based violence intervention and prevention programs



Strengthening collaboration and service coordination through issue-related round tables and convenings



Improving data sharing to inform violence prevention efforts



Promoting gun policy and public awareness to reduce gun violence

Call to Action

Addressing inequities contributing to violence in Alameda County requires ongoing efforts to ensure that strategies evolve and respond to the needs of impacted communities.

To continue strengthening existing work in Alameda County, future efforts should prioritize:



Intervention

Fund and implement community violence intervention strategies to interrupt cycles of violence and support those at highest risk.

Prevention

Support prevention efforts that promote healing, create opportunity, and shift norms around firearm use.



Transformation

Work with communities to eliminate structural inequities and promote peaceful and healthy families and communities.

“ We all play a role in reducing gun violence within our communities. ”

As you reflect on the findings from this report, please consider how you can support impactful changes to address the presence of guns in our communities and advocate for longstanding community-driven efforts to reduce gun violence.

To learn more about the Office of Violence Prevention, please click [here](#).