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Lt. Gov. Austin Davis Visits York as Part of Statewide Safer Communities Tour

Davis Highlights York's Group Violence Intervention Initiative and Innovative Scholarship Program for Those Impacted by Gun Violence

York, PA – Lt. Gov. Austin Davis continued his statewide “Safer Communities” tour today with a visit to York to highlight their Group Violence Intervention (GVI) initiative, which deploys “credible messengers” who work directly with gunshot victims and incarcerated individuals and provide support to address the problems that lead to violence. The GVI initiative is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), which Lt. Gov. Davis chairs.

“Gun violence is the issue that brought me to public service, when I was 16 years old, and somebody was shot on the block that I lived on with my family,” said Lt. Gov. Davis. “It drove me to a local city council meeting to get involved in my community and to do something about gun violence.

“I’m traveling all across our Commonwealth this week, on a statewide Safer Communities tour, to highlight the success stories, the programs and people who are making a difference here to end gun violence.”

York launched its GVI initiative in 2016 to help reduce gun violence. GVI is an evidence-based model that brings together community members, social service providers and law enforcement to address gun violence and reduce homicides. The GVI approach, originally known as “Operation Ceasefire,” was first implemented in Boston in the 1990s and has been adopted by numerous cities across the United States, including several in Pennsylvania. York City has also been identified as a national model for GVI implementation by John Jay College, which provides technical assistance to communities on GVI efforts. Law enforcement groups from across Pennsylvania and the country come to York to meet with GVI to learn about the initiative.

York County received a \$2 million Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) grant through PCCD to support this initiative, as well as other collaborative prevention and intervention activities with project partners. To date, grant funding has helped reach nearly 2,000 people. The initiative’s “credible messengers” have conducted more than 256 mediations or interventions.

Funding has also supported innovative strategies like creating a new, first-of-its-kind “More Graduations, Less Funerals” Opportunity Scholarship program, within the York

City Police Department in partnership with Harrisburg Area Community College, to provide scholarships to those affected by gun violence.

With the Safer Communities tour, Lt. Gov. Davis is highlighting PCCD-funded efforts that are working to address gun violence and make our communities safer. The tour kicked off Tuesday in Pittsburgh, and it will also travel to Philadelphia, Allentown, Wilkes-Barre and Erie.

VIP funding from PCCD supports grants and technical assistance to address community violence throughout the Commonwealth, with a focus on preventing and intervening with gun and group-related violence. The state budget passed by the House and Senate would provide \$40 million total for VIP grants. This infusion of resources would help PCCD support effective community-based initiatives.



Lt. Gov. Austin Davis speaks at Safer Communities tour stop in York, more photos/video available at [PACast.com](https://pacast.com)

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