



Pennsylvania
**Commission on Crime
and Delinquency**

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Contact: Ali Gantz, algantz@pa.gov

**Lt. Governor Austin Davis Kicks Off Listening Tour to Inform the Work
of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention**

The Office of Gun Violence Prevention was re-established by Governor Shapiro and builds on the Shapiro-Davis 2024-25 bipartisan budget which makes significant investments to make Pennsylvania communities safer

[PHOTOS]

Harrisburg, PA – Today, Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis and the **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)** joined the **Departments of Health, Human Services, Community and Economic Development, State Police, Military and Veterans Affairs, Office of the Victim Advocate** and advocacy organizations **CeaseFirePA, Everytown for Gun Safety, GIFFORDS, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions**, and others to kick off the first in a series of listening sessions that will inform the work of PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

"I believe every Pennsylvanian deserves to be safe and feel safe in their communities – and my Administration took real action to re-establish Pennsylvania's Office of Gun Violence Prevention and put real resources behind this effort," said **Governor Shapiro**. "Under Lieutenant Governor Davis' leadership at PCCD, we are listening to Pennsylvanians about their experiences with gun violence and bringing together public safety and public health experts, gun violence survivors and advocates, and leaders from state and local agencies to address and prevent violence across the Commonwealth. We're going to continue to work together to ensure that every Pennsylvanian has the real freedom that comes when you can walk down the street in your community without worrying about gun violence."

The purpose of the listening tour is to identify needs and perspectives from across Pennsylvania related to gun violence, violent crime, and behavioral health to inform the Office's work. Topics of discussion included youth gun involvement and violence; domestic violence and intimate partner violence; community gun violence; and gun suicides.

"As I travel across the Commonwealth, I am reminded daily of the devastating impact that gun violence is having across our communities. That's why I'm proud of the

bipartisan state budget, which includes more resources for community-based programs and a new statewide program to fund afterschool programs that can provide kids with learning and enrichment opportunities in a safe, supportive environment,” said **Lt. Gov. Davis, PCCD Chair**. “We’re taking a comprehensive approach to make Pennsylvania communities safer and PCCD’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention is one more piece of that puzzle.”

Takeaways from these discussions will drive the work of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention as well as inform Pennsylvania's federal FY 2024 Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) Funding Plan. Community stakeholders are encouraged to complete PCCD’s [Stakeholder Feedback Survey](#) to share their thoughts related to ideas about policies, programs, and how funding should be used to help reduce gun violence in Pennsylvania.

"Gun violence is the number one cause of death for our children. It's a top reason why people feel anxiety in public places and even avoid going out altogether. It's the cause of the majority of suicides across Pennsylvania. We lost 1,800 Pennsylvanians to this epidemic in 2023, and it's going to take a whole-of-government approach to save lives," said **Adam Garber, Executive Director of CeaseFirePA**. "We applaud the Shapiro-Davis administration for their leadership in re-establishing Pennsylvania's Office of Gun Violence Prevention and look forward to partnering with the Office in advancing evidence-based policies and programs to move us toward the vision we all share: a life free from gun violence."

Pennsylvania has made significant investments in public safety across the state in recent years. In 2023, homicides decreased by 16% across Pennsylvania compared to 12% nationally, with 29 out of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties seeing declines in homicides. Additionally, Philadelphia's homicides decreased 23% in 2023 compared to the prior year and are down 40% so far in 2024.

“Today's kick-off of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention is a significant step in safeguarding Pennsylvania’s communities by uniting experts, survivors, and advocates under one mission to end gun violence,” said **Sean Holihan, GIFFORDS' State Legislative Director**. "Thanks to Governor Shapiro and Lieutenant Governor Davis' commitment and leadership, we are not just talking about change—we are building a safer future with actionable solutions.”

While progress has been made, too many Pennsylvanians are still impacted by gun violence – firearm-related injuries remain the leading cause of death for children and Pennsylvania’s firearm fatality rate is significantly higher than surrounding states.

"Reestablishing Pennsylvania’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention is a crucial step in addressing the state’s ongoing gun violence crisis,” **Jen Pauliukonis, Director of Policy and Programming, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions**. “By focusing on evidence-based strategies and fostering collaboration across communities, Pennsylvania is sending a strong message that public health and the well-being of its

residents is a priority. This Office will play an essential role in advancing policies that prevent gun violence and promote public health."

"Today's convening is yet another example of the Shapiro-Davis Administration's commitment to addressing gun violence in Pennsylvania. Not even a month after re-establishing the Office of Gun Violence Prevention, they're already bringing together some of the most important voices in the fight against gun violence," said **Monisha Henley, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at Everytown for Gun Safety**.

"It requires all of us to address gun violence as the public health crisis that it is, and we're grateful the Office of Gun Violence Prevention will continue to serve as a place for community organizations, law enforcement, elected officials and survivors to build on this life-saving progress."

To address this issue, Governor Shapiro signed [Executive Order 2024-02](#) on September 9, re-establishing the Pennsylvania Office of Gun Violence Prevention within PCCD. Under the Governor's Executive Order, the Office will:

- Convene an advisory group of national, state, and community violence prevention experts, survivors of gun violence, health and behavioral care practitioners, members of law enforcement, and other state agencies;
- Develop a gun violence prevention plan for the Commonwealth; including a multi-faceted approach to address youth gun involvement and gun violence and addressing the intersections of gun violence with domestic violence;
- Partner with the Pennsylvania Departments of Health (DOH) and Human Services (DHS), Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and other Commonwealth entities to create and maintain a comprehensive online Gun Violence Data Dashboard and resource hub to track gun violence deaths, nonfatal gun-related injuries, and overall trends in crime and violence and serve as a "one-stop-shop" for data and research on gun violence in Pennsylvania;
- Apply for non-state funding to support research, analysis, and implementation of effective gun violence prevention strategies;
- Work with PCCD's Office of Victims' Services to improve services and support for gun violence victims, building on the agency's [Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Initiative](#); and
- Collaborate with DOH's Division of Violence Prevention, DHS, and other key stakeholders to increase awareness of firearm safety practices like safer storage.

The Office builds on the Shapiro-Davis 2024-25 bipartisan budget which makes significant investments to make Pennsylvania communities safer through various additional programs at PCCD, including:

- **\$5 million increase— totaling \$45 million—** for community-based programs to reduce violence through the [Violence Intervention and Prevention \(VIP\) program](#) which supports a wide range of models focused on reducing community violence and relies on community groups that are most in tune with specific local needs;

- **\$11.5 million** to create a the first-ever statewide [Building Opportunity through Out of School Time \(BOOST\) program](#), which will aim to reduce community violence by providing more afterschool learning opportunities for young people;
- **\$5 million increase** for the Nonprofit Security Grant Fund, to provide resources for places of worship, community centers, and other entities to enhance security measures; and
- **\$5 million** for PCCD's Victim's Compensation Assistance Program, to financially support victims in the aftermath of a crime.

PCCD is currently accepting applications under two VIP grant solicitations and the BOOST solicitation. To learn more about these funding opportunities and Pennsylvania's initiatives to make communities safer and reduce gun violence, visit the [PCCD website](#).

Photos from the event can be found on [PAcast.com](#).

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