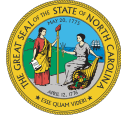


North Carolina Violence Prevention Activities 2023-2024



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC SAFETY

North Carolina views violence, including firearm violence, as both a public safety and a public health issue. Through initiatives and programs briefly described in the 2022 white paper, [Keeping Families and Communities Safe](#), North Carolina was already using state and community-level assets, initiatives and programs to reduce violence and firearm misuse leading to injury and death. Through collaboration between the Governor’s Office, the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), we have built upon these existing efforts to reduce violence and make communities safer and healthier. This document lays out our shared accomplishments and the actions taken in the past year to address violence in North Carolina — and what is anticipated for the remainder of 2024.

Administrative



Accomplished

- March 2023:** Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) established by Governor Roy Cooper via [Executive Order 279](#) to be located in Department of Public Safety.
- July 2023:** Hired an OVP executive director.
- Sept 2023:** DPS and DHHS executed memorandum of agreement — NCDHHS to provide position and funding for OVP deputy director.
- Dec 2023:** [OVP Community Violence Advisory Board](#) named.
- Dec 2023:** First advisory board meeting.
- Feb 2024:** Submitted funding proposal to the Governor’s Crime Commission (GCC) for Community-based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI).
- March 2024:** OVP deputy director hired.
- May 2024:** OVP received 3-year sub-award from GCC, via CVIPI federal funding, to hire two positions to increase the Office’s capacity to provide training and technical assistance to communities.
- June 2024:** Deputy director transitions to acting executive director.
- June 2024:** Developed a document for philanthropy to identify areas of collaboration and potential funding. Met with philanthropic funders to discuss opportunities.

Planned

- July 2024:** Governor's Crime Commission to help fund Firearm Epidemiology/Coordinator position. This position will be trained by and work with both DPS and DHHS on data assets including specific data studies such as linking justice-involved populations with mortality data.
- Fall 2024:** Hire two grant-funded OVP program coordinators to oversee training and technical assistance.
- Fall 2024:** Publish OVP strategic plan.
- Fall 2024:** Continue to convene the Community Violence Advisory Board quarterly.

Safe Storage

Accomplished

- May 2023:** Launched [NC S.A.F.E.](#) — mass media educational campaign, work with community organizations, resource for Local Firearm Safety Teams, Counseling on Access to Lethal Means training, map of safe storage locations, gun lock distribution.
- June 2023:** Governor Roy Cooper proclaimed June 4-10 as NC S.A.F.E. Week of Action to raise awareness about the importance of safe gun storage.
- August 2023:** Six subrecipients funded by the Comprehensive Suicide Prevention grant reported distributing 3,445 gun locks in 10 project counties.
- Nov 2023:** Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program funds awarded to DPS/Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for second phase of NC S.A.F.E. A second round of orders for gun locks and safes was placed with plans to distribute to local health departments, pediatricians and other community groups.
- Jan 2024:** Began distribution of more than 10,000 gun locks to local health departments.
- Jan 2024:** Outreach to pediatricians via NC Pediatric Society and the Coastal Pediatric Symposium; training on safe firearm storage counseling and distribution of 500 locks to 44 practices in 23 counties.
- Feb 2024:** Distribution of 2,700 gun locks to eight local ncIMPACT Suicide Prevention Teams covering 17 counties.
- March 2024:** DPS rolled out a mandatory NC S.A.F.E. training module to its employees through its learning management system. This training module was rolled out to all state employees in late spring.
- May 2024:** Began next phase of safe storage media campaign, which includes suicide prevention and vehicle safe storage messaging.
- May 2024:** Presented on safe storage practices and distributed educational materials and gun locks at the SAFE Kids conference.

- **June 2024:** Received 620 personal gun vaults to be distributed to local communities to raffle off during safe storage events.
 - **June 2024:** Gov. Cooper proclaimed June 2-8 as the second annual NC S.A.F.E. Week of Action. Community partners hosted more than 10 events across the state, delivering the educational message regarding the importance of safely securing firearms. Educational/promotional materials and branded gun locks with instructions were delivered at these and other events. A big uptick has been seen since the Week of Action in social media participation and sharing of safe firearm storage information.
- Planned**
- **2024:** Continued distribution of gun locks through subrecipients funded by the Comprehensive Suicide Prevention grant and other community groups.
 - Begin process/outcome evaluation of NC S.A.F.E. campaign.
 - Planning begins for NC S.A.F.E.-related mini-campaign targeting delivery of secure storage messaging to parents of school-aged children via local school systems.

Community Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs

- Accomplished**
 - **2023:** NC Medicaid 1115 waiver [Healthy Opportunity Pilots Fee Schedule](#) able to use Medicaid dollars to help fund Hospital and Community Violence Interruption Programs in three regions of the state.
 - Working with one pilot region that has both a hospital and a community violence interruption program.
 - **Oct 2023:** Governor’s Crime Commission (GCC) awards Victims of Crime Act dollars to hospital-based violence intervention Programs.
 - **Oct 2023:** GCC applied for and was awarded competitive funding via Office of Justice Programs’ [Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative](#) which will be sub-awarded to local communities.
 - **Nov 2023:** Submitted new Medicaid 1115 waiver proposal to expand Medicaid funding of violence prevention services statewide and to include gun locks and gun safes.
- Planned**
- **2024:** Continuing technical assistance and training for local prevention and intervention programs.
 - **Fall 2024:** OVP to host statewide community violence prevention convening.
 - **Fall 2024:** If 1115 waiver request approved by Centers for Medicaid and Medicare, expansion of Medicaid funding for violence prevention services statewide and safe storage.

Project Safe Neighborhood

- Accomplished**
 - Summer 2023:** Office of Violence Prevention, Governor’s Crime Commission, U.S. Attorneys’ Office partnered to administer and begin sub-awarding federal grants for violence prevention through Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) for the first time in several years.
- Planned**
 - 2024:** OVP, GCC, U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina to receive sub-awarded grant funding for Project Safe Neighborhoods.
 - 2024:** OVP, GCC, U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle and Western Districts of North Carolina to receive sub-award grant funding for Project Safe Neighborhoods.

Suicide

- Accomplished and Ongoing Work**
 - 2023:** Continuation of safe storage efforts, Counseling on Access to Lethal Means training and train-the-trainer events, community helper training, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training with train-the-trainer events, Faith Leaders for Life, Building Bridges Coalition, Suicide Prevention Advisory Council, creation of local firearm safety and community suicide prevention teams.
 - Oct 2023:** Hired youth suicide prevention coordinator for Comprehensive Suicide Program (CSP) team. Hired a state suicide prevention coordinator, in conjunction with the University of North Carolina Suicide Prevention Institute, to coordinate work in the [NC Suicide Prevention State Action Plan](#).
 - Nov 2023:** Collaboration with UNC Suicide Prevention Institute Forum 1 - connecting researchers and [ncIMPACT local suicide prevention teams](#) (15 teams covering 24 counties).
 - Dec 2023:** Suicide data webinar presented by the DHHS Injury and Violence Prevention Branch, highlighting firearms work, to ncIMPACT local suicide prevention teams.
 - Jan 2024:** Hired suicide prevention epidemiologist for Comprehensive Suicide Team, which presented webinar on suicide prevention programming to ncIMPACT local suicide prevention teams.
 - Feb 2024:** UNC Suicide Prevention Institute Forum 2 - ncIMPACT local suicide prevention teams.

- **March 2024:** Youth Suicide Symposium in Greenville, NC, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training For Trainers. Training for the nclMPACT teams on safe messaging surrounding suicide. Presentation of Faith Leaders for Life Program at national health equity conference.
- **April 2024:** UNC Suicide Prevention Institute and nclMPACT Forum 3 – with local suicide prevention teams. Comprehensive Suicide Team presented on safe storage messaging and handling of media during suicide and crisis.
- **April 2024:** Comprehensive Suicide Team collaborates with DHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, Substance Use Services to create a suicide prevention Governor’s proclamation, supports creation of media campaign.
- **June 2024:** Launched new DHHS Suicide Prevention Landing Page ncdhhs.gov/stopncsuicide.
- **June 2024:** Statewide Summit on Suicide Prevention with UNC Suicide Prevention Institute and nclMPACT’s local suicide prevention teams: Our State, Our Wellbeing program.
- **Planned**
- **2024:** Continuation of local firearm safety teams and coalitions, Faith Leaders for Life program, CALM training and train the trainer, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training and gatekeeper trainings.
- **July 2024:** Comprehensive Suicide Team working with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Policy Academy to develop new suicide prevention state action plan for black youth.
- **Oct 2024:** Virtual NC Injury-Free Academy on suicide prevention.

Reentry

● **Accomplished and Ongoing Work**

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT CORRECTION

- Educational programming in correctional facilities – includes high school equivalency diplomas, associate’s degrees, bachelor’s degrees, vocational training and apprenticeships. Multiple partnerships with four-year colleges and universities, community colleges and small businesses.
- State IDs for incarcerated people – DAC partnered with the Division of Motor Vehicles to provide state IDs prior to release to eligible individuals.
- HOPE University – provides free educational programming for all incarcerated people and for up to a year after release. Popular courses include culinary arts, carpentry, finances, plumbing, legal studies and more. Over 665,000 courses completed and more than 2.1 million hours spent learning as of 2/29/24.

- Local reentry councils are an organized network of individuals and agencies that provide programming and support for justice-involved people. This includes housing, employment, transportation, medication assisted treatment and more.
- In May 2024, DAC announced that they would expand Local Reentry Councils (LRCs) to cover 27 additional counties. There are currently 17 councils and 26 emerging councils serving 30 counties. Emerging councils are funded through community partnerships and organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT CORRECTION/DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Medicaid eligibility — Effective December 1, 2023, 2,105 incarcerated people were approved for Medicaid under Medicaid expansion. DAC identifying individuals with upcoming release dates who will be eligible for Medicaid.
- Serious mental illness specialist care coordination — Liaisons of behavioral health managed care organizations, under oversight of NCDHHS, work with the Department of Adult Correction to develop re-entry plans and care coordination for individuals with serious mental illness and specific convictions for violent crime (murder, sex offenders, gender-based violence) up to 90 days before release.
- Almost 50 re-entry programs statewide, with 43 tailored to substance use disorder, 6 focusing on serious mental illness and 12 local health departments focusing on overdose prevention and housing statewide.
- UNC FIT Wellness Clinic — Delivers whole person health care, peer support care coordination, along with connections to community supports such as housing, transportation and phones, to people released from prison with serious mental illness and a history of treatment non-compliance, reported aggression or recent solitary confinement.
- Justice Reentry & Reintegration Initiative — Intellectual and Developmental Disability/Traumatic Brain Injury Pilot — Available in 14 of DAC’s 56 correctional facilities, serves eight counties; provides individual re-entry plan development and ongoing post-re-entry supports including skill-building, assistance with basic needs such as housing, transportation and employment. Educates the DAC staff, re-entry providers and justice system partners.

Nov 2023:

Submitted new Medicaid 1115 waiver proposal to extend Medicaid coverage of services in the 90-day period prior to release for all incarcerated Medicaid eligible adults and youth. Proposed services include case management, medication for opioid use disorder, and a minimum 30-day supply of prescription medication. More details available in the [October 2023 fact sheet](#).

Jan 2024:

Governor Cooper signed [Executive Order 303](#), setting a transformative, whole-of-government approach to improve reentry for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated North Carolinians. This work aims to dramatically improve reentry success by 2030.

Planned

Fall 2024:

If 1115 Waiver Request approved, expansion of Medicaid coverage of services 90-day before release.

Medicaid Expansion

Accomplished

- Dec 2023:** Medicaid Expansion went into effect, expanding coverage to low-income adults. On December 1, over 273,000 people who were covered by Family Planning Medicaid were automatically enrolled in full Medicaid. Since then, an average of 1,000 people a day are being enrolled. This will help to meet the needs of adults, parents, and families supporting health and economic stability.

Awareness and Sharing of Best Practices

Accomplished

- Nov 2022:** White Paper — [Public Health Approach](#).
- Feb 2023:** NC Public Health Leaders Conference.
- July 2023:** [North Carolina Medical Journal Issue](#) — [DPS-DHHS commentary and Governor sidebar](#).
- Sept 2023:** NC Public Health Association Firearm Safety Conference — 20th anniversary of the Violent Death Reporting System.

National/Federal Engagement

Accomplished or Ongoing Engagements

- 2023:** DHHS participating in Association of State and Territorial Health Officers multi-state Catalyst Center for Firearm Injury Prevention — [Roadmap for Using a Public Health Approach to Prevent Firearm Injury](#).
- 2023:** Participating in the development of a state-targeted violence and terrorism prevention strategy with NC DPS and the Department of Homeland Security Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships.
- Sept 2023:** Participated in the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention, Annual Conference — [Building a Sustainable Future](#).
- Dec 2023:** Representation on American Medical Association Firearm Injury Prevention Task Force (ongoing).
- Jan 2024:** Visit with North Carolina Congressional members, the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention and D.C. violence interruption programs.
- Jan 2024:** Representation on the Healthcare Coalition for Firearm Injury Prevention.
- March 2024:** Center for Disease Control and Prevention Office of Injury Center – Science officer and National Violent Death Reporting System Site Visit (and NC-VDRS advisory board meeting).

- March 2024:** Participated in Safe States Alliance Hill Day. Two teams (total seven people) from North Carolina met with six Congressional Office and both Senate Office members to raise awareness and provide education around injury and violence prevention work at state level funded by CDC Injury Center.
- April 2024:** Participated in Department of Justice Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative Grantee Conference.
- April 2024:** UNC Injury Prevention Research Center hosted Society for Advancement of Violence and Injury Research Annual Conference, featuring a keynote presentation from NC State Health Director.
- April 2024:** NCDHHS Division of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch hosted Southeastern & Southwestern Injury Prevention Network Annual Convening, featuring a panel discussion on preventing firearm violence and creating safer communities in North Carolina, moderated by state Office of Violence Prevention's deputy director.
- May 2024:** Participated in national OVP convening with the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, organized by the National OVP Network.
- June 2024:** Participated in Gun Violence Awareness Day Roundtable with Congresswoman Deborah Ross.
- Planned**
- Sept 2024:** CDC Reverse Site Visit; NC Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Team to Atlanta.

Research

- Accomplished**
- 2023:** Convened a multi-partner research workgroup including NCDPS, NCDHHS, RTI International, Duke University, UNC Injury Prevention Research Center, NC Central University, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist to develop a Firearms Research Agenda.
- Planned**
- 2024:** Exploring funding opportunities to conduct needs assessment process evaluation to determine how best to support community violence intervention programs in North Carolina.

UNC-Injury Prevention Research Center and the North Carolina Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool NCDETECT to submit abstract for the National Firearm Research Conference in Seattle in December.

Federal

BIPARTISAN SAFER COMMUNITIES ACT

- \$7.6M to NC Governor’s Crime Commission via the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program. Uses:
 - \$2.5M for NC SAFE, DPS-led safe storage campaign. This funding is for the second part of the campaign initially launched in 2023 with state dollars. The program includes educational materials, safe storage equipment and public service advertising.
 - More funding for community- and hospital-based violence intervention programs in 2024.
- \$4M to Governor’s Crime Commission via Office of Justice Programs’ Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative. Uses:
 - \$250,000 grant award to OVP to increase capacity and to provide training and technical assistance to communities around the state and expand the OVP team.
 - Funding to communities forthcoming.
- \$1.4M in FFY23 via NCDHHS Mental Health Block Grant. SAMHSA approved uses:
 - Update of the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery Plan.
 - Training for behavioral health response team members and staff within emergency shelters.
 - Community collaboratives training, technical assistance and resources to respond to traumatic events/disasters - Division of Child and Family Well-Being.
 - Culturally and linguistically competent messaging, education and an awareness campaign.
 - First episode psychosis: Trauma training for staff and education/awareness materials to broaden outreach.
- \$29.3M to the NC Department of Public Instruction via the Student Support Block Grant. Uses:
 - Retain current school-based mental health professionals.
 - Increase the number of highly qualified and skilled school counselors, school social workers and school mental health clinicians.
 - Train and re-specialize school-based mental health providers and provider candidates through tuition assistance, intensive training, stipends and school-based internships that lead to employment and licensure.
 - Partner with a minority-serving institution University of North Carolina-Pembroke, NC State University and UNC-Charlotte to recruit, train and re-specialize school based mental health providers, provide travel stipends for internships in identified law enforcement agencies and stipends for internship supervisors.

- \$29,367,638 to the NC Department of Public Instruction via the Stronger Connections Grant Program. Uses:
 - To create safer and healthier learning environments for students and providing support for ongoing needs of families, educators and communities.
 - Public school units are identified as high-need by the US Department of Education are eligible for funding.

OTHER FEDERAL

- \$775,000 to the NC Department of Public Safety, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) via Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Office Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Second Chance Act funds. Uses:
 - Fund the Reentry to Resilience Program serving youth returning from youth development centers to the counties of Mecklenburg, Nash, Wilson and Edgecombe.
 - Fund an intake coordinator for the program.
 - Fund a process study and outcome evaluation of the program by RTI International.
- \$746,000 to NC Department of Public Safety, JJDP via the OJJDP Second Chance Act funds. Uses:
 - Provide vocational training, employment assistance and intensive wraparound case management services to juveniles approaching transition age (17 and half years and older) reentering the community from youth development centers.
 - Juvenile re-entry programs will serve the counties of Craven, Carteret, Pamlico and Pitt in North Carolina.
- \$990,763 to NC Department of Public Safety, JJDP via the OJJDP Juvenile Reinvestment Funds. Uses:
 - Pilot restorative justice programming in juvenile facilities including a formative study by RTI.
 - Implementation and validation studies of Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument.
 - Validation of the North Carolina Detention Assessment Tool.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT FUNDING

- \$750,000 from NC Governor’s Crime Commission to expand hospital-based violence prevention and intervention programs.
 - Awarded to two hospital programs 10/23.

PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD FUNDING VIA GCC AND US ATTORNEYS’ OFFICES

- Wake County Sheriff – \$25,000 – Funds will increase substance use prevention programming at five schools and support gang violence intervention and prevention activities (including prevention of violent crime, firearm offenses, gun violence and drug and human trafficking) for high-risk communities.
- City of Fayetteville Police Department – \$35,000 – This grant will assist the Fayetteville Cumberland Reentry Council to continue to provide therapy services for their clients and Police Activity League program with camp enhancements. The PAL program helps mitigate gang violence.

- New Bern Police Department — \$35,000 — Part of the funds will focus on educating juveniles about gun violence and providing additional re-entry resources.
- NC Community Outreach & Wellness Center, Inc — \$20,000 — Eastern North Carolina Street Keepers is a community violence interruption program with five employed local street keepers that operate within the community. This is a pilot program that takes a public health approach and will use credible messengers to interrupt violence and defuse immediate tensions.

MENTAL HEALTH BLOCK GRANT FUNDING

- Recurring 5% required set-aside for crisis funding. Uses:
 - Suicide prevention including the new Peer Warmline.
 - Enhanced mobile crisis teams for children and families.
- \$720,000 per year for re-entry programs for people with serious mental illness and violent offenses. Uses:
 - Dedicated care coordinator and liaison in each behavioral health managed care organization to provide in-reach and re-entry planning for individuals with serious mental illness and targeted convictions (violent offenses and sex offenses).
 - Ensure medication stability and clinically appropriate interventions and wrap around services after release to prevent re-offending.
 - Small population of high-need/high-risk individuals and planning is done jointly with Dept of Adult Correction.
 - Funding does not include treatment costs, which are separate and accounted for within the array of Medicaid/state-funded services.

COVID SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

- 5% set-aside for crisis-related projects, including suicide prevention.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

- \$5,252,972 (2022-2024) and \$13,492,492 (2023-2026) for 988. Uses:
 - Expansion of the call center to respond to 24/7 calls/chats/texts and meet 90% in-state answer rates.
 - Integration with 911/public-safety answering points and mobile crisis response for individuals needing that level of care. PSAPs are types of call centers where the public's telephone calls for first responders such as police, fire department, or emergency medical services and ambulances are received and handled.
 - Ensure effectiveness in working with Tribal and Latinx communities who reach out to the 988 call center through assessment of current training and practices. Conduct training for crisis counselors and technical assistance while educating the community and building trust.
 - Instate communications/marketing of 988.

CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

- \$4.35M (2020-2025) Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Grant and \$792,640 (2022-2024) COVID-19 Health Equity Grant to DHHS Division of Public Health for Suicide Prevention. Uses:
 - Creation of state action plan and state-wide suicide prevention advisory board.
 - Safe storage efforts – Counseling on Access to Lethal Means training and train-the-trainer events, creation of firearm safety teams.
 - Funding for local community suicide prevention teams with deliverables of gatekeeper training, CALM training, and creation of firearm safety teams.
 - Training and technical support, including gatekeeper training: Faith Leaders for Life, Start with Veterans, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training and train-the-trainer events, Injury Free Academy focused on suicide prevention and youth suicide prevention, specific to LGBTQ+: How to Be an Ally.

Federal/State - Medicaid

- Medicaid 1115 waiver [Healthy Opportunity Pilots Fee Schedule](#) – to help fund violence intervention services. Medicaid expansion as of December.

Local/County/City

- Multiple local municipalities have provided funding for community violence intervention programs (e.g., New Hanover County/Wilmington – Port City United, Mecklenburg County/Charlotte – Office of Violence Prevention, Durham County/Bull City United).

Philanthropy

- Hospital foundations funding start-up of hospital violence interruption programs (e.g., Novant Health).
- Potential future philanthropy funds award for research proposal.



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