

# Enhancing Law Enforcement's Role in Community Violence Interventions

Police leaders have many responsibilities, chief among them improving public safety while strengthening police-community relations. In pursuit of these goals, law enforcement agencies (LEA) are increasingly supporting community violence interventions (CVI). **The Police Executive Research Forum's recent report outlines key considerations and suggestions to enhance law enforcement's role in these interventions.**

## WHY IT MATTERS

Despite a large drop in gun homicides in 2024, they remain high—nearly 20 percent higher than in 2015.<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that CVIs reduce violent crime, particularly homicides and shootings.

- CVIs are community-led strategies that focus on the individuals at greatest risk of being victims or perpetrators of gun violence. Relationships are established with these individuals, services are provided, and the conditions that drive violence are addressed.
- Solutions are tailored to the unique needs of each community and require a careful balance between the roles of law enforcement role and the community in public safety. Unfortunately, little is known about law enforcement's role in CVIs, and there is limited guidance for police leaders interested in supporting a CVI.

## WHAT WE DID

To provide police leaders with the guidance they need, we published a new report titled *Enhancing Law Enforcement's Role in Community Violence Interventions*. In it, we provide an overview of what CVIs are, describe the two-phase study our guidance was drawn from, and present the results from that work.

- For the first phase, we surveyed LEAs on their knowledge of, support for, and involvement in CVIs. **The results give agency leaders an idea of what their involvement could look like.**
- Next, we held an expert workshop; the discussion resulted in a list of key considerations and suggestions to help police leaders effectively support these interventions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Gun Violence Archive, "10 Year Review," last modified January 8, 2025, <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>.

## WHAT WE FOUND

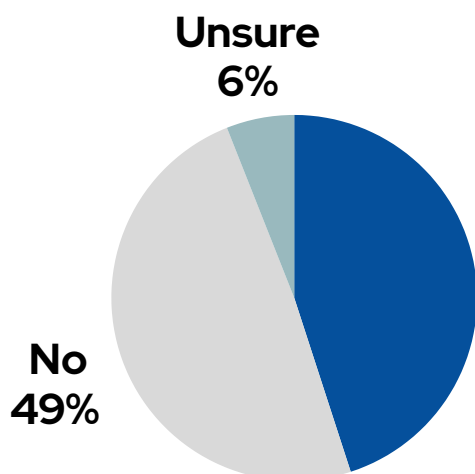
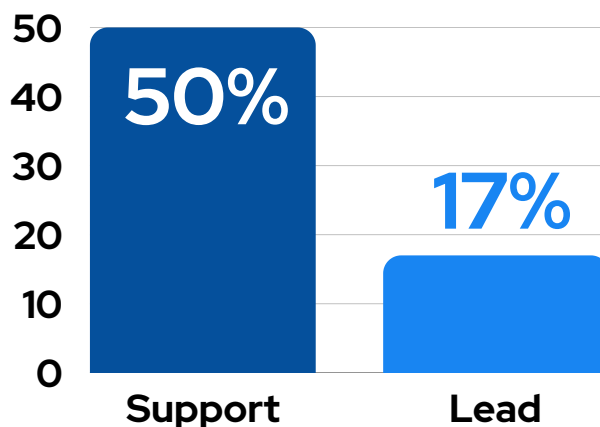
In 2023, more than 200 LEAs completed our survey. Participants shared information on how their agencies became involved with a CVI, their role in developing and implementing the intervention, how they staffed and funded their participation, and who (or what) they targeted, among many other topics.

**Law enforcement is ready to actively support CVI strategies.** The figures here and on the next page show the findings that reflect this, with more detailed findings available on [page 8](#) and in the [appendix](#) of our report.

# 85%

of respondents believe  
the community shares responsibility  
for addressing violence.

Nearly three times as many  
agencies **prefer supporting**  
a community-led CVI over  
leading one themselves.

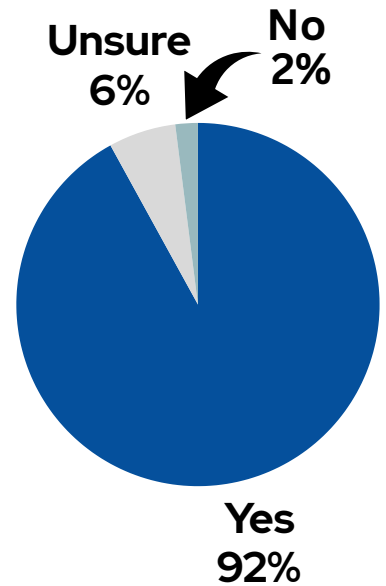


**Nearly half** of LEAs have  
participated in a CVI.

On average, their participation  
began in 2017, with more than  
half becoming involved in  
2020 or later.

Nearly all the LEAs that have participated in a CVI **would do so again.**

Just 13% of agencies without CVI experience said they would not participate in one.



## WHAT EXPERTS SAID

In March 2024, 13 experts discussed issues police leaders should think about if considering a CVI strategy and **identified promising practices for developing, implementing, and sustaining viable CVIs** in partnership with the community. The practices cover (1) organizational culture, (2) implementation, (3) buy-in, and (4) partnerships. A summary of our guidance for police executives follows—including a more detailed discussion of information sharing, the most challenging aspect of CVIs involving law enforcement. A summary of our guidance for police executives is provided here and on page 12 of our report. First, though, we discuss the most contentious, challenging, and sensitive aspect of CVIs involving law enforcement—information sharing.

## INFORMATION SHARING

Information sharing is usually the most contentious, challenging, and sensitive aspect of CVI strategies that involve law enforcement. Should the information flow be one-way, with law enforcement providing partners with information about individuals involved in violence? Or should it be two-way, with community partners also supplying law enforcement with information? Officers may worry that sharing information could compromise an investigation or, worse, lead to a civilian being hurt, while community partners may worry that sharing information could threaten their safety and ruin their credibility in the community.

The sensitive nature of this information highlights the importance of **building trust**. **Agencies and their partners can begin building trust by establishing clear guidelines on what information will be shared and by whom at the outset of the CVI.** Doing so establishes a solid foundation for a trusting partnership, which allows trust to be built over time and significantly enhances the strategy's likelihood of success. Ultimately, law enforcement agencies and their community-based partners must determine what works for their community.



# Organizational Culture

## ASK YOURSELF

Does my agency foster a **culture of community engagement** that encourages officers to engage in acts that **build trust and strengthen relationships** with the community?

### *How can your agency do this better?*



**Hire** and **promote** those committed to community. [p. 14]



**Reward** the behaviors that build community connections, through promotions and praise. [p. 14]

### *How have other agencies done this?*

One agency we spoke with promotes CVI officers to corporal and gives them a 5.5 percent pay increase, while another agency formally commends officers for engaging the community in non-enforcement ways. [p. 14]



# Implementation

## ASK YOURSELF

Does my agency **have the capacity to meaningfully contribute** to a CVI strategy?

### *How can your agency do this better?*



**Partner with experienced organizations** from the start to get the agency on the right track. [p. 14-15]



**Conduct a capacity assessment** before agreeing to the work to avoid taking on more work than the agency has resources to complete. [p. 15]



**Educate** all partners on what CVI involves and make sure the appropriate officers who have strong relationships with the community lead the agency's involvement. [p. 16]

### *How have other agencies done this?*

Organizations like the National Network for Safe Communities and the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform offer training and technical assistance to agencies, helping them to assess agency capacity and prepare officers to implement a CVI.





# Buy-In

## ASK YOURSELF

Does your agency have **support from officers and the community** for the CVI strategy?

### *How can your agency do this better?*

- ✓ **Explain why** the agency supports the CVI and **how** it will benefit them. [p. 17-18]
- ✓ Address officers' **questions** and **concerns** about CVIs. [p. 18-19]
- ✓ **Deliver on promises made** to the community to avoid further damaging relations. [p. 19-20]

### *How have other agencies done this?*

Agencies report greater success when they set reasonable expectations for the community through regular communication. Doing so can temper expectations, affording agencies time to roll out their CVI on a small scale initially. Agencies were more successful when they established their CVI in a single neighborhood before expanding to other areas.



# Partnerships

## ASK YOURSELF

Does the agency have the **necessary partnerships** with key community stakeholders in place?

### *How can your agency do this better?*

- ✓ **Develop and maintain** the necessary partnerships with community organizations. [p. 20-21]
- ✓ **Build trust and accountability** in the community. [p. 21-22]
- ✓ **Establish parameters** that identify what information will be shared and with whom. [p. 22-23]
- ✓ Support the **service arm**. [p. 23]

### *How have other agencies done this?*

Some police leaders have publicly acknowledged past harm caused by their agency and participated in public safety roundtables with community leaders.



*A more detailed discussion of these considerations and suggestions can be found on pages 10-23 of [our report](#).*