

Health Resources in Action

Request for Proposals:

Massachusetts Community Violence Intervention
Capacity Building Initiative



**HEALTH
RESOURCES
IN ACTION**

At-A-Glance	
Available Funding	250,000 each
Funding Period	September 2024 – September 30, 2026
Goal of the Funding	<p>1. To support organizations building or strengthening their ability to offer the full spectrum of services of violence prevention and intervention.</p> <p>2. To build organizational capacity, deepen and expand reach, and support infrastructure that strengthens organizational operations and broader field sustainability.</p>
Eligible Applicants	Massachusetts-based nonprofit organizations or groups with a 501(c)3 or a fiscal sponsor, that work in communities where there is a disproportionate impact of gun violence (eligible communities are Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Fall River, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Somerville, Springfield, Worcester). Some organizations may not need to have 501(c)3 status to be eligible.
Eligible Activities	<p>Organizations must either:</p> <p>Currently conduct direct intervention that engages proven-risk individuals most likely to be directly involved in gun violence</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Plan to use these funds to deepen their engagement of proven-risk priority populations to reduce gun violence through direct intervention</p>
Application Deadline	5pm EST on 7/11/2024
Contacts	Natalie Johnson njohnson@hria.org
Webpage & Application Form	https://hria.org/tmf/massachusetts-community-violence-intervention-capacity-building-initiative-grant-program/

Community violence

Community violence, defined by the United States Department of Justice as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person, group, or community in a specific location that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation”ⁱ is a health crisis concentrated in communities most impacted by racism and structural violence, which includes systemic denial of access to economic, educational, and employment opportunities. The lack of opportunity resulting from this disinvestment and structural violence constrains choices and perpetuates the cycle of community violence. Over the past few years, the COVID-19 (CV19) pandemic, which disproportionately impacted already-marginalized communities, compounded these challenges and exacerbated rates of violence.

Gun violence disproportionately impacts communities of color across the U.S. Although Black boys and men account for six percent of the total U.S. population they comprise more than half of gun homicide victims.ⁱⁱ Between 2019 and 2021, the gun homicide rate for Black boys and men ages 10–33 rose 43%.ⁱⁱⁱ This disparity is just as stark in Massachusetts, where firearms cause 77% of youth homicides; and 39% of all firearm homicide victims are between 15–24 years old. Young people of color are disproportionately at risk for being victims of gun violence, with Black males 32x more likely to be hospitalized due to firearm assault than their white peers.

Community Violence Intervention (CVI) strategies require a comprehensive approach to stem violent behavior while addressing upstream causes. A public health framework allows communities to focus on resiliency, such as economic/social capital and meaningful engagement opportunities that target root causes and employ collaborative cross-sector partnerships. Many evidence-based CVI strategies have roots in Boston, such as Operation Ceasefire (OpC), started in 1996.^{iv} A study published in the *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* claims OpC saw a 63% reduction in youth homicide. Replicating this approach has led to similar successes, with OpC earning national recognition as an effective evidence-based intervention.

Health Resources in Action

Health Resources in Action (HRiA) is a national public health organization with 65+ years of prevention, health promotion, policy, research experience and extensive technical and practical expertise in CVI strategies. Recognizing that addressing the root causes of community violence and other race-based inequities requires collaboration across systems, HriA regularly convene diverse sectors to facilitate the alignment of a common agenda that leads to more equitable policies, systems and environmental (PSE) changes.

Supporting Community Based CVI Organizations Although Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are key in providing culturally informed community violence intervention that resonates with the communities they serve, public and private dollars have historically been largely directed to law enforcement or primary prevention instead of CBO-led intervention. As a result, CBOs cannot build the necessary capacity to sustainably develop, implement, and evaluate CVI strategies.

Infrastructure Challenges Faced by CBOs

CBOs need infrastructure and capacity to lead multisector partnerships, manage and sustain financial resources, and implement and evaluate best practices. The lack of available local data can often hinder the ability of CBOs to effectively quantify the need for and assess the impact of CVI strategies. Key informant interviews with CBO leadership in the Boston area illuminated barriers, including a lack of infrastructure for assessing data, a poor pipeline for staffing/leadership, and relative isolation from other CBOs doing this work.^v CBOs with fewer staff/resources are poorly equipped to apply for more funding, especially when competing with better-resourced CBOs in larger cities. Building the reach and capacity of CBOs is vital to stemming the spread of community violence in MA's cities.

Data access, collection, and analysis are key challenges faced by CBOs. Many lack the financial resources to build their internal capacity to collect and utilize data. When funds are received, many CBOs use this funding to implement programs directly serving the community rather than evaluate outcomes or establish data collection and analysis systems. Many CBOs cannot access the data needed to inform CVI strategies. Often law enforcement agencies, hospitals, and criminal justice systems will not share community-level data. Further, how these entities share data is compartmentalized and provides an incomplete picture of the community's needs. In 2021, HRiA completed a data review process of 10 years of police and hospital data in 10 Massachusetts cities, which illuminated gaps and surfaced many barriers in accessing complete and accurate data around gun violence.^{vi}

Communities often have rapidly evolving needs that CBOs must be nimble in addressing. Addressing community safety issues is not linear and can change abruptly at any given time. Many communities lack the capacity to address upstream root causes of violence, and instead react with "band-aid" approaches that have only a short-term impact. Implementing capacity-building strategies that consider community context and help organizations secure future funding is essential to sustain CVI efforts.

Massachusetts Community Violence Intervention Capacity Building Initiative

This grant is intended to support Community Based Organizations (CBO) engaged in Community Violence Intervention and Prevention (CVI) work. **Small, grassroots**

organizations and organizations led by and serving BIPOC communities are strongly encouraged to apply. Organizations must either currently conduct direct intervention that engages proven risk individuals OR plan to use these funds to deepen their engagement of proven-risk populations and engage in direct intervention.

Eligible organizations should be located in MA in cities with an elevated or increasing rate of violence (see below for list) identify at least one new/existing Community Violence Intervention (CVI) strategy or operational capacity-building activity for implementation as the focus of the proposed project, identify how resources will support the strategy and build capacity, and demonstrate the commitment to work collaboratively with HRiA and other TTA partners and subject matter experts. Proposed CVI strategies should also promote racial equity and the removal of barriers to access/opportunity for communities that have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by inequality.

Program Overview – What will the funding support?

The MCVI-CBI grants program has two primary goals:

1. To support organizations building or strengthening their ability to offer the full spectrum of services of violence prevention and intervention.
2. To build organizational capacity, deepen and expand reach, and support infrastructure that strengthens organizational operations and broader field sustainability.

This grant supports organizations building or strengthening their ability to offer the full spectrum of services of violence prevention and intervention. Organizations that have established programs in one area of the violence prevention/intervention/postvention spectrum and wish to strengthen their ability to work across that spectrum are eligible to apply.

Examples of what this grant may fund include:

- Novel program components and innovative approaches to the work (e.g., building out a strong postvention program instead of referring out, implementing a novel evidence-informed CVI strategy, strengthening an organization's capacity to use data to guide frontline work, funding social determinants of health)
- Operational capacity-building activities that strengthen an organization's sustainability and improves implementation of CVI strategies (e.g., systems that improve ability to apply for or sustain future funding, adequate staffing, quality improvement and evaluation activities)
- New full-time staff focused on either of the above goals

Priority will be given to organizations who work directly with proven risk individuals.

*We have included examples below for illustrative purposes to demonstrate the type of programs that may be eligible for funding. **Eligible projects are not limited to those below, these are simply examples to showcase the type of work that might be done under this grant.***

- An organization currently engaged in work behind the wall/re-entry work that plans to build out their street outreach and intervention team.
- An organization doing street outreach that plans to invest in data infrastructure and mapping tools to improve their real-time use of data.
- An organization planning to implement a novel approach to CVI work.

Who is eligible to apply?

Massachusetts-based nonprofit organizations or groups with a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor, that work in communities where there is a disproportionate impact of gun violence. Eligible communities for this grant are Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Fall River, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Somerville, Springfield, Worcester.

Organizations must either:

- Currently conduct direct intervention that engages proven-risk individuals most likely to be directly involved in gun violence

OR

- Plan to use these funds to deepen their engagement of proven-risk priority populations to reduce gun violence through direct intervention

What proposals are not eligible?

- Capital expenditures
- Proposals by organizations that do not currently work in the violence prevention space
- Proposals focused on populations other than proven-risk individuals
- Proposals that solely outline existing activities, with no programmatic or operational capacity-building element
- Proposals that focus on criminal justice-based or carceral approaches to gun violence
- Hospital-based intervention programs
- Proposals containing other activities that are not permitted using Department of Justice Funding.

What is the funding period?

September 2024 - September 30th, 2026

How will this proposal be reviewed?

Your application will be reviewed by a committee comprised of HRiA staff, community partners, and subject matter experts. The following criteria will be considered during the review process:

- **Alignment with funding priorities**
 - Organizations that directly reach the priority population(s) (people at proven risk for involvement in community violence) through the areas of work specified in this RFP.
- **Community engagement**
 - Organizations with a history of and ability to authentically engage community members, including the priority population(s) mentioned above.
- **Project Clarity and Feasibility**
 - Organizations with clearly outlined proposals and a demonstrated commitment to capacity building. This includes readiness to engage community members, take part in capacity building training and support based on needs, and to apply learnings to create and implement a workplan.

What are we expected to do if we receive this grant?

If your organization is awarded funding, HRiA will work with you and your staff/volunteers/board to complete the following:

- **Programmatic Reporting:**

Reporting will align with CFR-200 (federal regulation on reporting). HRiA will work with grantees to support compliance with these guidelines. Grantees will remain in communication with HRiA throughout the funding period to provide feedback, success stories, lessons learned, and status updates.
- **Expenditure Reporting**

Grantees will submit quarterly financial expenditure reports in compliance with DOJ requirements.
- **Capacity Building**

Capacity building is a core objective of this grant opportunity. HRiA and partners will offer a large set of trainings, systems, opportunities, and other capacity building activities that grantees will be required to participate in. Grantees will support staff (including transportation) in full participation in **required** training intensives, learning exchanges, annual conferences, and leadership development opportunities for CVI professionals.

DOCUMENTS

- Background on Community Gun Violence and Effective Violence Intervention and Prevention Programs: <https://efsgv.org/learn/type-of-gun-violence/community-gun-violence/>
- City Profiles