

Knoxville Office of Community Safety and Empowerment Community Violence Intervention Implementation Support

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) strives to reduce incarceration and violence, improve the outcomes of system-involved youth and adults, and increase the capacity and expertise of the organizations that serve these individuals. NICJR works with an array of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropic foundations to provide technical assistance (TA), research, organizational development, and advocacy in the fields of violence reduction, juvenile and criminal justice, and youth development.

Scope of Work

Since June 2023, NICJR has provided comprehensive training and TA to support Knoxville's implementation of a Gun Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRs). To date, NICJR's work has included conducting a Cost of Gun Violence study and Landscape Analysis; providing ongoing support to the Mayor, Office of Community Safety and Empowerment (OCSE) Director and staff, Knoxville Police Department, and community partners; and delivering a series of Life Coaching trainings. NICJR is also conducting a detailed Gun Violence Problem Analysis for Knoxville. Additionally, NICJR facilitated an Oakland site visit where representatives from Knoxville were able to gain firsthand insight into Oakland's GVRs, and we have supported the City in establishing and refining Shooting Reviews and Coordination Meetings as well as strengthening its data tools and processes.

Through the Landscape Analysis, NICJR found that the handful of organizations created in response to the city's gun violence challenges tend to focus on prevention and community transformation, rather than violence intervention. In response, we have worked closely with the City and key community-based organizations (CBOs) to develop and implement an Intensive Life Coaching program. We also provided grant funding to the CBO leading this work.

Building upon these efforts, NICJR will provide the following services to support the City of Knoxville in establishing an effective community violence intervention (CVI) program.

Provide Program Director. NICJR will provide a full-time, in-person Program Director equipped to lead the CVI program and supervise a team of local credible messengers while the City identifies a permanent CVI provider. The Program Director will also support Coordination Meetings, including receiving direct referrals from the Office of Community Safety and Empowerment and providing regular updates regarding all previous referrals.

Hire Frontline Staff. NICJR will hire and manage five credible messengers who will serve as Life Coaches and Outreach Workers. Through street outreach and intensive life coaching, these staff will engage very high-risk individuals identified via Shooting Reviews and referred via Coordination Meetings.

Intensive Life Coaching serves young adults who are at very high risk of being involved in gun violence. Life Coaches who share similar experiences as participants (also known as credible messengers) establish trusting relationships with them; provide regular, meaningful contact

and support; and utilize tools to influence better, safer, and healthier decisions. As participants make better decisions, they achieve improved outcomes, including educational and employment accomplishments and a reduction in violence and system involvement.

NICJR's three-part life coaching theory of change consists of: 1) Relationship; 2) Mentality Shift; and 3) Services, Supports, and Opportunities. Since many young people at high risk for violence are resistant to services, Life Coaches focus first and foremost on gaining participants' trust. Life Coaches who are credible messengers gain trust through meaningful and frequent contact. They use motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to shift negative thinking, improve decision making, and increase motivation. Life Coaches develop Life Plans with participants that identify needs and strengths and guide connections to services, supports, and opportunities. They then directly connect participants to programs and services they personally know and trust.

To promote engagement, participants receive financial incentives for achieving milestones such as maintaining contact with their Life Coach. Financial incentives are critical tools to engage hard-to-reach participants and have proven effective in violence reduction programs. Coaches also provide consistent feedback and hold participants accountable to help them meet goals and sustain positive change.

Life Coaches serve up to 10 participants at a time for 12–18 months, making daily contact with participants and meeting in person at least two to three times per week. Life Coaches also prioritize safety and provide conflict mediation and relocation as needed to keep participants safe and help them become successful.

The Knoxville Life Coaches will also help support the implementation and management of Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise, a trauma informed, culturally relevant cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) program.

Provide CVI Administrative Support. NICJR will carry out administrative functions for the CVI program, including collecting programmatic data, sharing monthly progress reports with OCSE, and providing other administrative services as needed.

Monthly reports will include:

- program activities;
- the number and general demographic information of individuals participating in outreach, life coaching, and/or CBT;
- number and types of referrals from services;
- number of mediations and/or de-escalations;
- program goals achieved by participants or staff;
- anecdotal information regarding community contacts and participant engagement;
- detailed financial reports; and
- progress toward two overarching CVI program goals:

- all high-risk individuals identified and referred through the KPD Shooting Review and Coordination meetings are engaged by a Life Coach and on a caseload in the CVI program for nine months or more, and
- 10% annual reduction in both homicides and nonfatal shootings.

The Program Director (or assigned staff) will participate in weekly Coordination Meetings with OCSE, violence reduction leadership and management team meetings, stakeholder meetings, and other community-based violence reduction meetings/discussions as appropriate. When necessary, the Program Director (or assigned staff) will be available to discuss programming with the Administration, City staff, City Council, stakeholders, or other appropriate parties.

Provide CVI Technical Assistance. In addition to the Program Director’s full-time, one-the-ground support, NICJR will provide ongoing technical assistance (both in person and virtual) as the City establishes its CVI program. NICJR will also support the City in identifying and onboarding a permanent CVI provider.

Budget and Timeline

NICJR proposes a 12-month scope of work beginning June 1, 2025, with nine months of direct service via the Program Director and frontline staff and 12 months of CVI technical assistance.

<u>Personnel</u>	
Program Manager	\$75,000.00
Life Coaches (x5)	\$225,000.00
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$300,000.00</i>
Fringe (20%)	\$60,000.00
Total Personnel	\$360,000.00
Participant Incentives	\$35,000.00
NICJR TA	\$75,000.00
Travel and other expenses	\$25,000.00
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$495,000.00</i>
Indirect 5%	\$24,750.00
TOTAL	\$519,750.00

Project Team Qualifications

David Muhammad is the Executive Director of NICJR and provides oversight to all NICJR projects. David serves as lead consultant and technical assistance provider to gun violence reduction strategies in jurisdictions throughout the country. As one of the lead consultants for the City of Oakland’s GVRs, David helped the city achieve five consecutive years of decline in gun violence. David also helped manage the primary community-based organization providing

services to Ceasefire clients, including creating its Life Coach position, writing the position description, and hiring and training staff. David also developed the data-driven performance management of the organization, including a data dashboard that captures the work and deliverables of Life Coaches. A former correctional administrator, David served as Chief Probation Officer of the Alameda County Probation Department. In this role, he was responsible for overseeing 20,000 youth and adults under the supervision of the Department, two juvenile facilities, 600 staff members, and a \$90 million budget. He significantly expanded community-based services available to system-involved youth. From 2010 to 2011, David also served as Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Probation in New York City, the second largest Probation Department in the US. As with all NICJR projects, David will provide high-level oversight for this work.

Keiland Henderson serves as the Gun Violence Reduction Assistant Director at NICJR, where he coordinates and manages the communication, technical assistance, and training for jurisdictions NICJR is supporting to develop and implement GVRs. He also conducts ongoing research and writes reports on gun violence reduction. Prior to joining NICJR, Keiland worked as the community engagement coordinator for the City of Stockton's Office of Violence Prevention, where he played a crucial role in implementing a citywide violence reduction strategy. He also served as a violence interrupter and outreach supervisor, overseeing a team of life coaches and case managers. Prior to OVP, he worked for over ten years in nonprofit management, business development, and community outreach with Faith-Based Solutions and as the executive director for the Reno-Tahoe Young Professionals Network. Keiland currently serves on Delta College's Pathway to Law Advisory Board and San Joaquin County's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission. He is also an inaugural graduate of NICJR's Young Professionals of Color Fellowship.

Emmanuel Hernández is a Violence Reduction Project Manager for NICJR. In this role, he provides support and technical assistance to jurisdictions NICJR is supporting to develop and implement GVRs. Emmanuel is passionate about partnering with cities to promote the collaboration of diverse stakeholders and the coordination of violence reduction efforts. Prior to joining NICJR, Emmanuel worked at the University of Chicago's Crime Lab as a Qualitative Research Manager for a study of cognitive behavioral training programs in Chicago. Prior to the Crime Lab, he worked as a Project Coordinator for Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) Mexico City, where he managed the development and implementation of a Group Violence Intervention Strategy in Mexico City's Police Department in collaboration with Yale University, the California Partnership for Safe Communities, Mexico City's law enforcement and social services agencies, and local nonprofits. Emmanuel also collaborated on the adaptation, implementation, and evaluation of Procedural Justice training for Mexico City's Police Department. Emmanuel holds a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Chicago. Currently, he teaches a class on Citizen Security in the Public Space and Urban Mobility Program at the National Autonomous University of Mexico.