Expanding the Community Justice Action Fund’s City Violence Prevention Index

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Community Justice Action Fund
- Community Justice Action Fund (CJAF) is a project of Tides Advocacy and a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization
- CJAF is a leading gun violence prevention organization that promotes evidence and community-based solutions, with a specific emphasis on empowering and supporting communities of color

Gun Violence: A Public Health Crisis
- In 2022, 44,340 people died and 38,592 people were injured by guns1
- This crisis is particularly devastating for communities of color who are disproportionately impacted by community violence
- Gun violence costs the country approximately $557 billion every year2
- All the while, research into gun violence remains severely underfunded3

Violence Prevention Index
- The 2023 City Violence Prevention Index (VPI) will assess 100 municipalities based on their violence intervention and prevention policies, programs, and services
- These municipalities had the highest number of firearm deaths and injuries in 2022 based on data from the Gun Violence Archive (GVA)

Learning Objectives
1. Prepare the list of cities to be included in the 2023 VPI by applying principles of database management in SAS Studio.
2. Explain the role of city government in creating a comprehensive, community-based violence prevention infrastructure through policies, programs, and funding.
3. Evaluate city budgets, policies, programs, and services using the CJAF Internal Research Manual.

Activities
- Analyze GVA 2022 dataset using SAS Studio
- Critically review the Internal Research Manual and add citations for supporting evidence
- Evaluate the CVI Ecosystems minimum funding formula
- Research city budgets and websites
- Attend webinars, meetings with city officials, and Gun Violence Prevention Roundtable calls

Deliverables
- List top 100 cities by (1) total killed and injured, (2) events of firearm violence, (3) cumulative incidence (Figure 1)
- List of City Managers, Mayors, and Office of Violence Prevention contacts for 2023 included cities
- Analysis of CVI Ecosystems funding formula
- Draft scores and evidence for cities (Figure 2)

Figure 1. Final list of 100 cities ranked by total people killed or injured in 2023.

Figure 2. Scorecard used when assessing cities.

Lessons Learned
- Lack of data. To understand and mitigate firearm violence, we need real-time and accurate measures of gun injuries. The CJAF VPI fills a gap in data by evaluating city efforts. The CJAF VPI can be a useful tool for future research, such as monitoring changes in city scores over time and determining correlations between VPI score and violence reduction.
- Community-based solutions exist. When no rigorous scientific evidence of program or law effects is available (often due to barriers to conducting research on firearm violence and/or limitations in study design), policymakers should implement common-sense policies that have weaker evidence (such as correlations) and are community-based.
- Unique city government structure. Cities differ in their jurisdiction (e.g. not all cities have oversight of school policies) and capacity (e.g. staffing, ability to public advocate against state-wide policy).

Public Health Implications
- While states and the federal government play essential roles in addressing the gun violence epidemic, cities can and must spearhead and invest in community violence intervention.
- The VPI provides local officials and community leaders with a comprehensive evidence-informed and community-led roadmap for effectively reducing gun violence with an equity lens.

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References