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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

- Prepare the list of cities to be included in the 2023 VPI by applying principles of database management in SAS Studio.
- Explain the role of city government in creating a comprehensive, community-based violence prevention infrastructure through policies, programs, and funding.
- 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 Research 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

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