

Firearm Violence Prevention Strategies

Firearm violence is a public health crisis, killing more than 45,000 Americans each year and becoming the leading cause of death for children in the United States in 2020. Firearm injuries and death contribute to health inequities as communities of color, especially black men and boys, face highly disproportionate risks for firearm-related harm. This public health crisis and social justice issue is preventable and health funders have an important role to play in advancing firearm violence prevention (FVP) efforts. GIH conducted a survey in September 2024 about funder engagement in firearm violence prevention. This fact sheet summarizes the survey results with a total sample of 81 health funders.

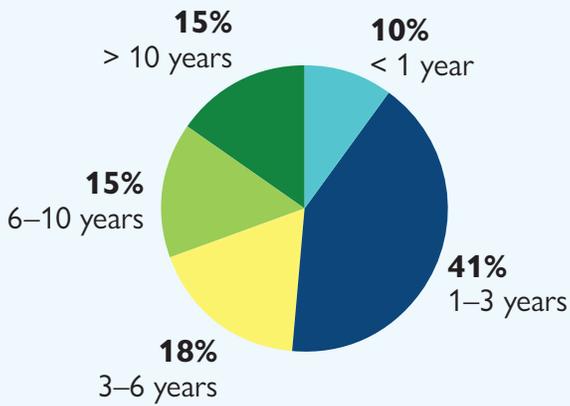
Key Takeaways

- 1 Investments in firearm violence prevention are growing.** Both the number of health funders supporting firearm violence prevention and the dollar amounts dedicated to these efforts are increasing significantly. Approximately 59 percent of survey respondents (N=48) are funding firearm violence prevention. In [2020](#), just 23 percent of GIH survey respondents (N=21) were funding these efforts. The majority of funders supporting this work (64 percent) report an increase in funding for firearm violence prevention since 2020, while only 5 percent report a decrease in funding. Reasons for increased funding varied and include recent entry into this funding area, an increased focus on health equity, and increased need in communities served.
- 2 Most health funders supporting firearm violence prevention are new to this funding area.** Over half of survey respondents (51 percent) began funding firearm violence prevention within the last 3 years. Only 15 percent of respondents have been funding this work for more than 10 years.
- 3 Health funders support a wide variety of firearm violence prevention activities.** The most commonly funded activities include help for people at high risk for being victims or perpetrators of violence (70 percent of respondents), capacity building, training, and technical assistance (58 percent), coalition building (55 percent), public education and narrative change (45 percent), and policy advocacy (43 percent). Less commonly supported activities included youth development (38 percent), criminal justice reform (35 percent), research (33 percent), and addressing high-risk places (25 percent).
- 4 Despite facing challenges, health funders are making an impact in their efforts to prevent firearm violence.** Respondents report multiple challenges to their efforts to prevent firearm violence, including limited funding from public agencies and other private funders, the highly contentious nature of the policy debate surrounding access to and ownership of firearms, opposition from pro-gun rights groups, and the complexity of addressing the root causes of firearm violence such as poverty and structural racism. Despite these challenges, health funders report significant successes, including increased capacity among firearm violence prevention advocates and community violence intervention organizations, stronger partnerships among community organizations and local governments, and increased public awareness of the power of prevention.

Firearm Violence Prevention (FVP) By-The-Numbers

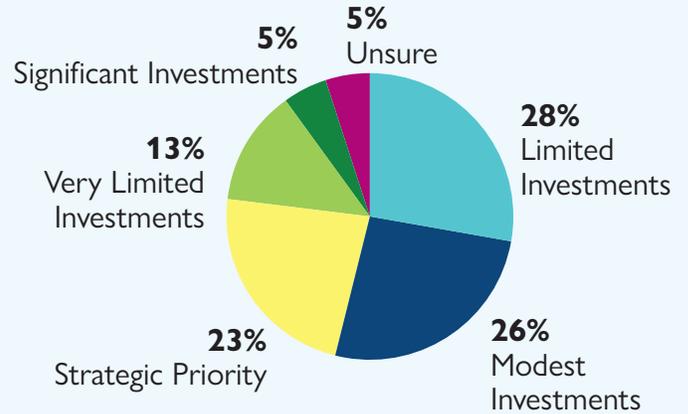
Length of Time Funding FVP

Funders Investing in FVP



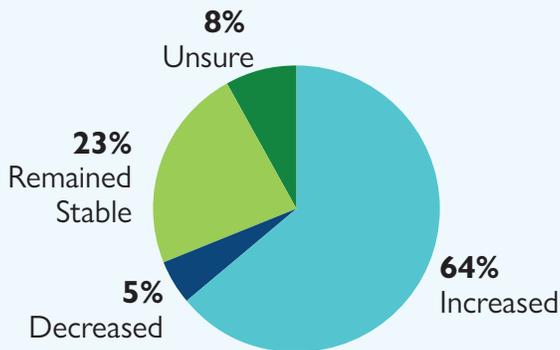
Levels of Investment

Funders Investing in FVP



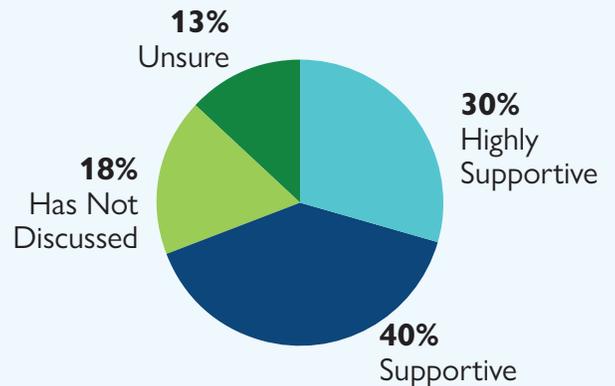
Change in Funding Since 2020

Funders Investing in FVP



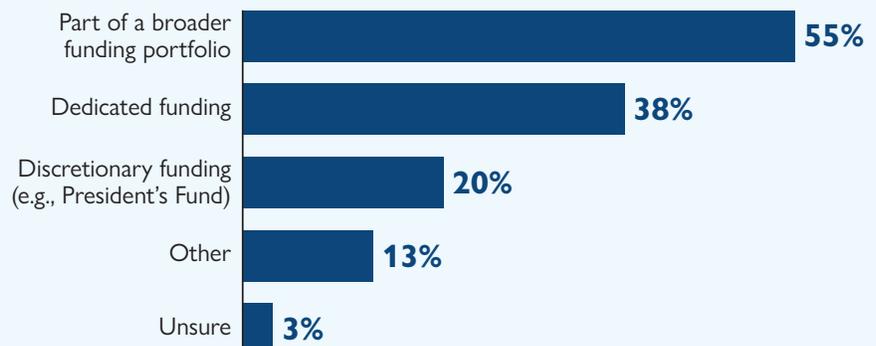
Board Support

Funders Investing in FVP



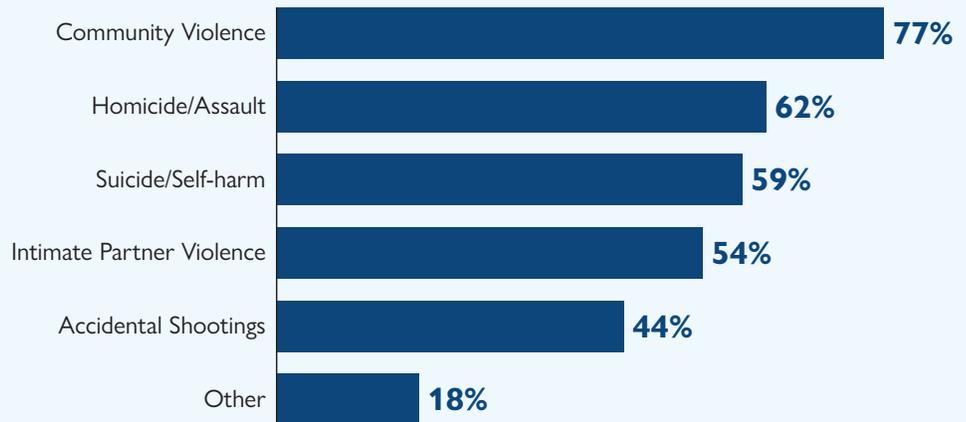
Source of Funding

Funders Investing in FVP



Firearm Harms Addressed

Funders Investing in FVP



Challenges

- **Funding Constraints:** Funders cite limited funds for FVP, the cost of FVP interventions, the lack of other FVP funders in their area, and the need to balance between local and national FVP needs.
- **Polarization of Issue and the Policy Environment:** Funders cite the divisive nature of the narratives around firearm violence prevention and partisan attitudes related to policy change.
- **Complexity of Addressing Root Causes:** Because FVP is not a singular issue, funders struggle with whether to support high impact interventions, CBO growth and development, prevention efforts, anti-poverty efforts, or policy advocacy.
- **Other challenges** cited include gaps in research and data on effective interventions, the widespread availability of firearms, and funder expertise and capacity related to FVP.

Successes

- **Stronger Partnerships:** Many funders cited partnerships as a success, either by increasing the number of partners, new partnerships in expanded geographic areas, multi-sectoral partnerships, increasing the capacity of partner organizations, and increasing public awareness and community engagement. Coalitions for FVP efforts, data sharing, and improved relationships and trust with CBOs were also mentioned.
- **Funding:** Funders mentioned the following as a success: increase in public funds for community violence interventions and research, moving from the pilot stage to public funding, and co-funding communication efforts with other funders.
- **Policy and Advocacy:** Policy successes mentioned include state-level victories around Extreme Risk Protection Orders and the Supreme Court's upholding of the restriction of firearm access for domestic violence perpetrators. Also mentioned was successful advocacy by grantees to embed FVP efforts in public health funding and improvement in injury surveillance.
- **Improved Outcomes:** While many efforts undertaken by funders are new, some funders are seeing reduction in homicides, conflicts, re-injury, and recidivism, increased access to care and social services, and increased employment.



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