



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Stephanie Hayden-Howard, LMSW, Assistant City Manager 

From: Adrienne Sturup, Austin Public Health Director 

Date: June 8, 2026

Subject: **Office of Violence Prevention Collaboration with Travis County – Staff Update (Resolution No. 20250605-083)**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update regarding [Resolution No. 20250605-083](#), which directs the Office of Violence Prevention to enter into a memorandum of understanding with Travis County and to collaborate with Austin Public Health, Austin Police, community-based organizations, public health experts, and justice stakeholders to build a formal, comprehensive public health and safety plan guided by a nationally recognized community violence intervention organization.

Austin Public Health, in partnership with Travis County and community stakeholders, has completed the first phase of the consultant-supported planning process related to the development of a comprehensive public health and safety plan. As part of this work, Tillmon Consulting has finalized the Community Violence Intervention Strategy for Austin and Travis County. The attached report is provided for City Council's information and review.

Austin Public Health is currently reviewing the proposed strategy and associated recommendations with City leadership and stakeholders to determine operational considerations, implementation priorities, staffing needs, and governance implications.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Adrienne Sturup, Director of Austin Public Health at Adrienne.Sturup@austintexas.gov or (512) 972-5010.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Erika Brady, City Clerk
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Attachment: Community Violence Intervention Strategy for Austin and Travis County



TILLMON
TRAINING & CONSULTING

COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION STRATEGY

Austin & Travis County





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Part I: A Shared Vision for Community Safety

Executive summary

This Community-Wide Violence Intervention Strategy for Austin & Travis County represents a decisive shift from fragmented efforts toward a coordinated, system-level approach to safety—one that is grounded in public health, informed by community voice, and designed for long-term sustainability. It is not simply a plan. It is a blueprint for alignment, accountability, and institutionalization.

At its core, this report makes a clear and evidence-based assertion: violence is not random, nor is it solely a matter of individual behavior. It is the predictable outcome of structural conditions—historical inequities, concentrated poverty, unmet behavioral health needs, and systemic fragmentation. As such, sustainable reductions in violence cannot be achieved through enforcement alone. They require a comprehensive ecosystem approach that integrates prevention, intervention, healing, and opportunity.

Part I: A Shared Vision for Community Safety establishes the philosophical and strategic foundation of this work. Through extensive engagement—surveys, focus groups, and interviews—community members, practitioners, and institutional stakeholders articulated a shared understanding of safety as more than the absence of violence. Safety is defined as the presence of trust, stability, healing, and opportunity. This section centers equity, dignity, and community ownership as core values, and introduces five strategic pillars: prevention, intervention, healing and recovery, systems coordination and data, and sustainability. It also emphasizes that governance and funding are not administrative considerations—they are the conditions that determine whether this work endures.

Part II: Strategic Action Planning translates vision into structure. It defines Community Violence Intervention (CVI) as an ecosystem, not a program; and makes clear that effectiveness is driven by alignment, not isolated activity. Within this ecosystem, credible messengers serve as the entry point, possessing a License to Operate (LTO) grounded in trust and lived experience. Community-based organizations function as the operational core, delivering life-saving services, while social services provide the stabilization necessary to address root causes. Survivors anchor the work in lived reality, and hospitals serve as critical interruption points. Government, in turn, must act as the convener, coordinator, infrastructure builder, and accountability driver. The central recommendation is the elevation of the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) as the backbone entity responsible for aligning systems, clarifying roles, and ensuring measurable outcomes.

Part III: Community Partnership Plan advances the principle that community is not a stakeholder—it is a co-owner of the solution. This section outlines a framework for capacity building, cultural responsiveness, and equitable investment in community-based organizations. It calls for funding strategies that move beyond short-term, transactional contracts toward sustained, multi-year investments that stabilize organizations and strengthen workforce development. It reinforces that those closest to the harm are closest to the solutions, and that effective implementation requires power-sharing, not consultation. Cultural responsiveness is positioned not as an enhancement, but as a requirement for effectiveness.

Part IV: Governance and Sustainability make the ultimate argument of this report: sustainability is achieved through structure. Lasting violence reduction depends on clearly defined governance, stable and protected funding streams, and rigorous accountability systems. This section provides a roadmap for institutionalization, including the formalization of OVP authority, cross-sector governance structures, shared performance metrics, and real-time data systems. It outlines a phased implementation approach, which consist of foundation, expansion, and sustainability; designed to move the strategy from adoption to permanence. Success is defined not only by reductions in violence, but by increased community trust, improved service access, and system-wide alignment.

Across all four parts, a single throughline emerges: the challenge in Austin is not the absence of effort, but the absence of alignment. The components of an effective system already exist. The task ahead is to organize them into a coherent, accountable, and sustainable structure.

This strategy positions Austin & Travis County to lead nationally, not by adopting isolated programs, but by building a fully realized violence prevention ecosystem. One where credible messengers are protected, community organizations are resourced, systems are aligned, and government fulfills its role as a true backbone entity.

Ultimately, this document affirms a fundamental principle:

Violence prevention is not sustained by intention; it is sustained by design.

Introduction & Purpose

Austin stands at a pivotal moment in its approach to community safety. While many residents experience Austin as a safe and thriving city, data and lived experience reveal stark disparities in how safety is distributed across neighborhoods. Certain communities—particularly Black, Brown, and historically under-resourced areas—experience higher rates of violence, deeper trauma, and fewer opportunities for recovery and prevention.

The purpose of this Community-Wide Strategic Vision is to align Austin’s violence prevention efforts around a shared understanding of safety, root causes, and solutions. This vision was developed through intentional engagement with residents, youth, survivors, community-based organizations, faith leaders, public health professionals, and justice system partners. The process elevated community voice alongside institutional expertise and emphasized co-creation rather than consultation.

This document establishes a long-term framework for reducing violence, strengthening trust, and fostering safe, thriving communities. It is designed to guide decision-making across systems, inform funding priorities, and ensure accountability to the communities most impacted by violence.

Community Profile: Austin & Travis County



Demographic and Geographic Context

Austin and Travis County continue to experience rapid growth, yet violence is not experienced evenly across the city. Survey respondents and interview participants consistently identified East Austin, Rundberg/North Lamar, Riverside, and other historically under-resourced neighborhoods as experiencing higher levels of violence.

“Most people in Austin feel safe—but not everybody. And that matters.”

— Focus group participant

African American residents, despite representing a relatively small share of the population, were identified as being disproportionately impacted by violence. This reflects long-standing patterns of segregation, disinvestment, and inequitable access to resources.



Historical and Structural Drivers

Participants across engagement methods emphasized that violence is rooted in structural conditions, not individual failure. Key drivers identified include:

- Historical racism and segregation
- Concentrated poverty and economic instability
- Housing insecurity and affordability pressures
- Limited access to behavioral health services
- Fragmented systems and data silos

“Violence doesn’t come out of nowhere. It comes from unmet needs piling up.”

— Interview participant



Lived Experience and Community Voice

Residents described violence as generational and traumatic, impacting families and communities long after incidents occur. Survivors emphasized the need for long-term support, not short-term responses.

“The violence doesn’t stop when the shooting stops. Families carry it forever.”

— *Survivor*

These insights underscore the importance of healing-centered, survivor-informed approaches to safety.

Mission Statement

The City of Austin and Travis County are committed to preventing violence and promoting community safety through a public health approach that centers community leadership, advances equity, supports healing, and addresses the root causes of harm.

We work in partnership with residents, community-based organizations, and public institutions to prevent violence before it occurs, intervene when risk is high, and support long-term healing and opportunity so that every neighborhood can thrive.

Vision Statement

Austin commits to a future where every neighborhood is safe, every life is valued, and violence is prevented through community leadership, public health strategies, and sustained investment in healing, opportunity, and equity.

This vision recognizes that safety is not solely the absence of violence, but the presence of conditions that allow individuals, families, and communities to thrive.

Core Values

The following core values emerged consistently throughout the visioning process and serve as the ethical foundation for Austin’s violence prevention strategy.

Equity Austin will prioritize resources, policies, and investments for communities most impacted by violence. Equity will be operationalized through data-informed decision making, intentional targeting of resources, and sustained commitment over time.	Healing-Centered Engagement Violence prevention efforts will recognize trauma as both a cause and consequence of violence. Healing, recovery, and survivor support are essential to community safety.
Accountability Institutions and partners share responsibility for outcomes. Clear expectations, measurable goals, and transparent evaluation will guide implementation and continuous improvement.	Community Ownership Residents and community leaders are co-creators of solutions, not passive recipients of services. Those closest to the harm are closest to the solutions.
Transparency Decision-making processes, funding allocations, and progress updates will be accessible and understandable to the public, fostering trust and shared ownership.	Dignity and Trust All people deserve respect, humanity, and the opportunity to contribute to safer communities, regardless of neighborhood, background, or system involvement.

Strategic Pillars

Pillar 1: Prevention

Austin will invest upstream to address root causes of violence before harm occurs.

Top Survey-Ranked Prevention Priorities	
Priority Area	Relative Priority
Youth Development & Mentorship	High
Mental Health & Trauma Services	High
Economic Opportunity	Medium-High
Housing Stability	Medium

Pillar 2: Intervention

Targeted intervention strategies will address immediate risk and interrupt cycles of violence through trusted, community-based approaches.

“Intervention works when it’s done by people the community already trusts.”

— CVI practitioner

Key strategies include community violence intervention, hospital-based intervention, crisis response alternatives, and reentry support.

Pillar 3: Healing and Recovery

Healing is essential to both recovery and prevention.

Survey Insight: Healing and recovery ranked among the highest strategic priorities.

“You can’t punish trauma out of people. You have to help them heal.”
— *Survivor advocate*

Key strategies include Trauma Recovery Centers, survivor-centered services, and community healing spaces.

Pillar 4: Systems Coordination and Data

Effective violence prevention requires aligned systems and reliable data.

Survey Insight: Systems coordination and data-informed decision-making ranked as top priorities.

System Need	Community Feedback
Cross-sector coordination	Very High
Shared data systems	High
Clear accountability	High

Pillar 5: Sustainability and Community Capacity

Long-term safety depends on stable investment and strong community infrastructure.

“You can’t build safety on one-year grants.” — *Community organization leader*

Key strategies include multi-year funding, workforce development, and community capacity building.

Governance, Accountability, and Sustainability

Achieving lasting reductions in violence requires governance structures that elevate prevention as a core public safety function. Community input highlighted the need for a strong, empowered Office of Violence Prevention with the authority, resources, and positionality to coordinate efforts across systems

Key governance principles include:

- Clear leadership and accountability structures
- Regular reporting on progress and outcomes
- Community oversight and feedback mechanisms
- Alignment between executive leadership, City Council, and community partners

Stable funding is critical. Participants emphasized that violence prevention efforts must be funded at scale and protected from political and economic volatility. Sustainable investment enables long-term planning, workforce stability, and continuous improvement.

Measuring Success

Success will be measured through both quantitative and qualitative indicators, including:

- Reductions in violent crime and injury
- Improved access to services and supports
- Increased community trust and engagement
- Strengthened system coordination
- Improved outcomes for survivors and families

Evaluation will emphasize learning and adaptation rather than punishment, ensuring strategies evolve in response to community needs and evidence.

Governance, Accountability, and Implementation Framework

Governance Structure

Sustained violence reduction requires clear leadership, authority, and accountability. Community input consistently emphasized the need for a strong, empowered Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) positioned to coordinate across systems, elevate community voice, and maintain alignment with executive leadership.

Key governance elements include:

- An empowered OVP with cross-departmental authority
- Formalized cross-sector leadership tables (public health, community-based organizations, education, hospitals, faith leaders, and justice partners)
- Regular public reporting to City Council and the community
- Defined roles and responsibilities across agencies and partners

“We need someone whose job is to keep everybody rowing in the same direction.” — *Interview participant*

Accountability Mechanisms

Accountability must be shared, transparent, and community-facing. Participants stressed that accountability should support learning and improvement rather than punishment.

Proposed mechanisms include:

- Annual public safety and violence prevention progress reports
- Clear performance benchmarks aligned with each strategic pillar
- Community feedback loops and listening sessions
- Continuous quality improvement processes

Measuring Progress and Success

Success will be evaluated using a balanced set of quantitative and qualitative indicators, recognizing that reductions in violence and improvements in community trust occur over time.

Quantitative Indicators	Qualitative Indicators
● Year-over-year reductions in violent crime and injury ● Reductions in repeat victimization and retaliation ● Increased access to prevention and healing services ● Improved service coordination and response times	● Resident perceptions of safety and trust ● Survivor satisfaction with services ● Community assessments of system responsiveness ● Practitioner feedback on coordination and effectiveness

“Success is when people feel safer, not just when numbers go down.” — *Focus group participant*

Phased Implementation Roadmap

Phase I: Foundation (0–12 Months)

- Formal adoption of the Strategic Vision
- Strengthen OVP authority and staffing
- Establish cross-sector governance tables
- Launch shared data and reporting standards

Phase II: Expansion (1–3 Years)

- Scale community violence intervention and prevention programs
- Expand Trauma Recovery Center capacity

- Align funding streams with strategic pillars
- Implement workforce development supports

Phase III: Sustainability (3–5 Years)

- Institutionalize funding protections
- Refine strategies based on data and community feedback
- Deepen prevention investments upstream
- Demonstrate sustained reductions and improved community trust

Conclusion and Call to Action

This Community-Wide Strategic Vision reflects Austin’s collective commitment to build safety through prevention, healing, and equity. The voices of residents, survivors, practitioners, and institutional partners are clear: lasting safety requires coordinated systems, sustained investment, and community leadership.

Implementation of this vision demands courage, accountability, and partnership. By aligning policy, funding, and practice around this shared framework, Austin can lead the nation in building a community-centered approach to violence prevention—one where every neighborhood is safe and every life is valued.

Part II: Strategic Action Planning

Austin and Travis County are at a critical inflection point in their approach to community safety. The findings from the Strategic Action Planning including qualitative interviews, focus groups, and broad stakeholder engagement make one conclusion unmistakably clear:

Community Violence Intervention (CVI) is not a discrete program. It is an ecosystem. And for that ecosystem to function effectively, it must be supported by intentional leadership, structured alignment, and durable infrastructure.

Across all engagement methods, stakeholders consistently identified five interrelated priorities:

1. The necessity of clear leadership and defined accountability
2. The central role of community-based organizations and credible messengers
3. The importance of coordination across systems, rather than isolated or fragmented efforts
4. The need for sustainable, long-term funding commitments
5. The imperative for a strong and empowered Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)

Taken together, these findings underscore that effectiveness in violence prevention is not driven by individual interventions alone, but by the degree to which systems are aligned, roles are clarified, and responsibility is shared.

This report positions the Austin Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) as the central coordinating entity within this ecosystem. In this role, OVP is responsible for aligning strategy across sectors, convening key stakeholders, establishing and maintaining accountability, and advancing a comprehensive public health approach to violence reduction.

I. INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Action Planning Report builds upon the Community-Wide Strategic Vision and translates stakeholder insight into a structured framework for implementation.

The analysis presented in this report is informed by a mixed-methods approach, including:

- Qualitative interviews with key stakeholders across multiple sectors
- Focus groups with community-based organizations and frontline practitioners
- Survey data capturing system-wide perspectives and priorities

Together, these data sources provide both depth and breadth, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape, existing gaps, and opportunities for alignment.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Define the community safety ecosystem within Austin and Travis County
- Clarify roles and responsibilities across government, community, and institutional stakeholders
- Establish the function, authority, and strategic positioning of the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)
- Provide a foundation for a coordinated, multi-year strategic action plan

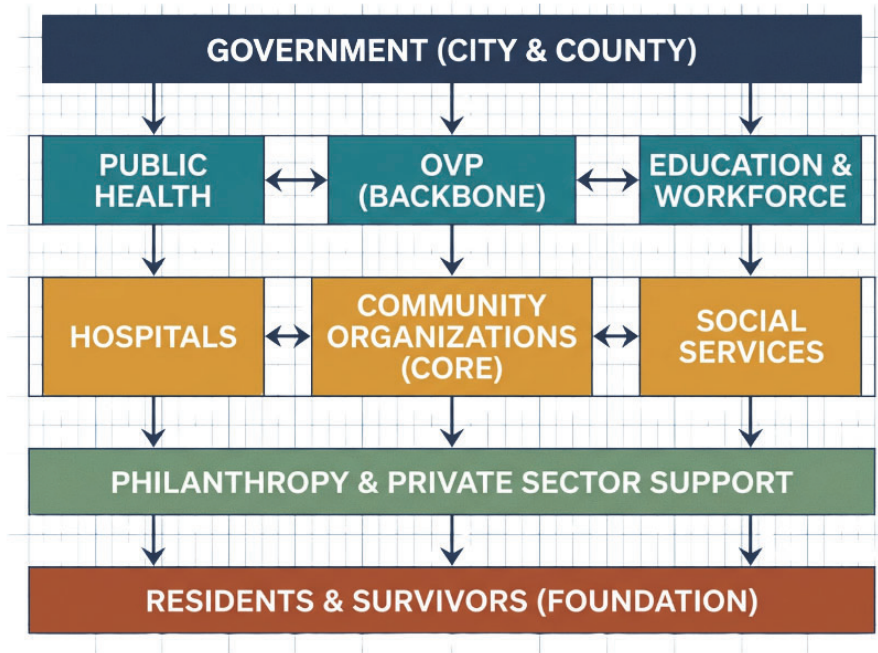
This document is intended not only as a planning tool, but as a framework for sustained implementation, one that connects vision to structure, and strategy to measurable outcomes.

II. DEFINING THE COMMUNITY SAFETY ECOSYSTEM

Alignment, Roles, and the Responsibility to Save Lives

Community safety in Austin & Travis County is not produced by any single agency, program, or intervention. It is the result of a coordinated ecosystem, a network of actors, institutions, and strategies working together with shared purpose and defined roles. This ecosystem must function with clarity, alignment, and discipline. Without those elements, even strong individual efforts will produce limited results. With them, the system can prevent violence, interrupt harm, and sustain long-term community stability.

Austin Community Safety Ecosystem



The Austin community safety ecosystem is not deficient in components. On the contrary, the foundational elements required for an effective violence prevention strategy are already present and active:

- Community-based organizations delivering frontline intervention and support
- Public health systems addressing trauma, behavioral health, and prevention
- Hospitals intervening at critical moments of injury and crisis
- Education and workforce systems shaping long-term opportunity and mobility
- Philanthropic institutions advancing innovation and early-stage investment
- Government entities providing policy direction and resource allocation

The challenge, therefore, is not one of presence, but of alignment.

Across the system, actors are often operating in parallel rather than in coordination. Roles and responsibilities may be well understood within individual organizations or sectors, but they are not consistently defined or shared across the ecosystem as a whole. As a result, accountability remains diffuse rather than centralized, limiting the system's ability to produce sustained and measurable impact.

At the Center: Credible Messengers

At the core of this ecosystem are credible messengers; individuals who possess a form of legitimacy that cannot be conferred through training or institutional affiliation. This legitimacy is best understood as a License to Operate (LTO). It is earned through lived experience; built through trust, consistency, and presence; and sustained through accountability to the community. This license enables credible messengers to engage individuals at the highest risk of violence; de-escalate conflicts before they escalate into lethal incidents; and influence behavior in ways that formal institutions cannot replicate. This is not symbolic. It is operational. Credible messengers function as the primary entry point into the ecosystem. Without their presence and effectiveness, engagement with high-risk individuals is significantly diminished, intervention opportunities are delayed or missed entirely, and trust between systems and communities is compromised. Accordingly, protecting the role and integrity of credible messengers is not merely a philosophical position, it is a strategic imperative.

Community-Based Organizations: The Operational Core

If credible messengers represent the entry point into the ecosystem, community-based organizations (CBOs) represent its operational core. These organizations are responsible for delivering the daily, sustained work that underpins violence prevention, including: street outreach and violence interruption, intensive case management and long-term stabilization, workforce development and pathways to economic mobility, along with trauma-informed and healing-centered services.

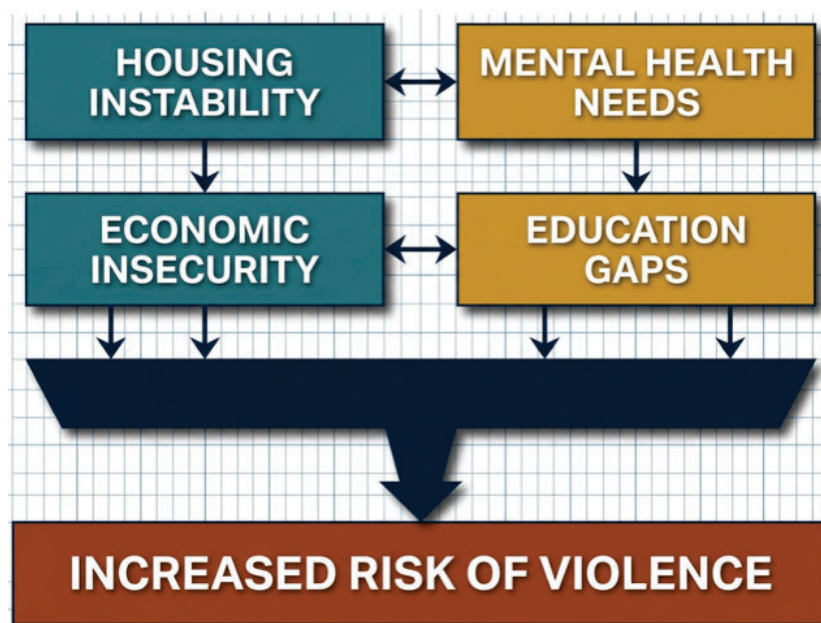
Their work exists at the intersection of immediate crisis response, relationship building and trust development and long-term behavior change and stabilization. CBOs are not peripheral actors within the public safety landscape. They are central to its function. Their capacity, stability, and alignment directly influence the effectiveness of the broader ecosystem.

Social Services: The Stabilization Layer

The findings from stakeholder engagement and data analysis reinforce a critical and consistent insight, Violence is often the manifestation of unmet needs. Housing instability, untreated trauma, limited access to employment, and substance use challenges are not discrete or secondary concerns. They are structural conditions that significantly increase the likelihood of violence involvement. As such, social

services must be understood not as ancillary supports, but as a core component of violence prevention. Stability in housing, health, and economic opportunity is directly correlated with reductions in violence. Without it, intervention efforts remain incomplete and outcomes remain fragile. An effective ecosystem must therefore ensure that social services are integrated into violence prevention strategies, accessible in real time, and coordinated with intervention efforts. Only through this level of integration can the system move beyond interruption toward sustained prevention and long-term community stability.

ROOT CAUSE OF VIOLENCE



To address violence effectively, the ecosystem must treat social services as core prevention infrastructure, not supportive add-ons. This requires: integration of services into CVI strategy, rapid access to resources (not delayed referrals), and coordination between providers.

Survivors: The Moral and Strategic Compass

Survivors of violence hold a unique and irreplaceable position in the ecosystem.

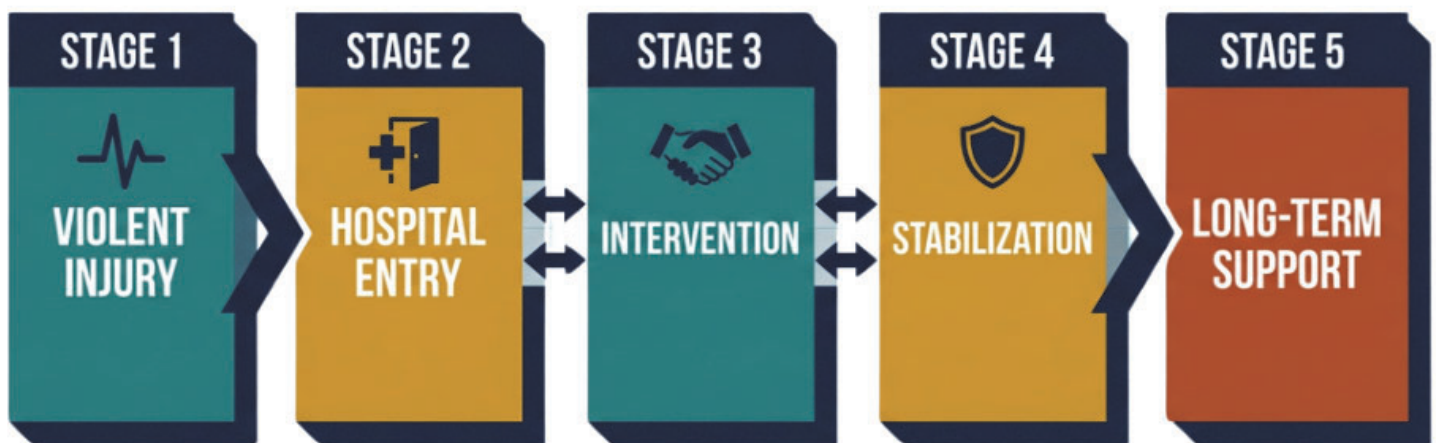
They bring lived experience, legitimacy, emotional intelligence and deep understanding of trauma. In addition, their leadership ensures that the work remains grounded in healing not just intervention and systems remain accountable to those most impacted. Without survivor leadership, strategies risk

becoming detached from lived reality.

Hospitals: The Critical Interruption Point

Hospitals represent one of the most critical intervention opportunities: The moment immediately following violent injury. Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) engage individuals at a turning point, prevent retaliation and re-injury, and connect patients to long-term support.

HOSPITAL VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS



Government: The System Builder

The role of government within the community safety ecosystem is not to supplant community-based efforts, but to ensure that those efforts operate in alignment, at scale, and with sustained impact. Government must function across four essential dimensions:

- Convener — bringing together diverse systems and stakeholders to establish shared direction
- Coordinator — aligning strategies, resources, and activities across agencies and sectors

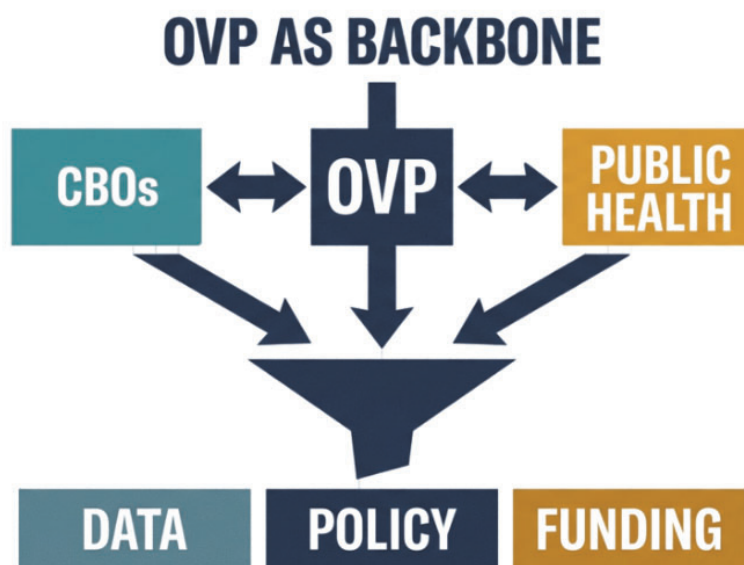
- Infrastructure Builder — designing and sustaining the systems, processes, and frameworks that enable long-term effectiveness
- Accountability Driver — establishing performance expectations, monitoring outcomes, and ensuring responsibility for results

Absent this level of intentional coordination and structural support, the ecosystem will predictably default to fragmentation characterized by parallel efforts, inconsistent implementation, and diminished collective impact.

The Office of Violence Prevention (OVP): The Backbone

Within this framework, the Austin Office of Violence Prevention must serve as the central coordinating infrastructure and the backbone of the ecosystem.

Its role is not merely administrative, nor limited to program oversight. Rather, OVP must function as the entity responsible for integrating strategy across systems, sustaining alignment among stakeholders, translating data into coordinated action and ensuring accountability for outcomes. In this capacity, OVP provides the structural continuity necessary for the ecosystem to function as an integrated system rather than a collection of independent efforts.



The Function of the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)

The Office of Violence Prevention is charged with a set of functions that extend beyond coordination into system-level leadership. Its responsibilities include:

- Aligning strategy across agencies and sectors to ensure coherence in approach and execution
- Convening stakeholders on a consistent basis to maintain shared direction and collective ownership
- Translating data into actionable insights that inform policy, programming, and resource allocation
- Driving accountability through the establishment of performance expectations and monitoring systems
- Advocating for sustained investment to ensure continuity and scale of effective interventions

This is not an administrative role. It is a form of system leadership, one that requires authority, discipline, and the capacity to integrate multiple domains into a unified approach to violence prevention.

Philanthropy: The Innovation Engine

Philanthropy occupies a distinct and indispensable position within the ecosystem. Its value lies not only in financial contribution, but in its structural flexibility. Philanthropic institutions are uniquely positioned to fund innovation in advance of public sector investment, absorb risk associated with emerging or untested strategies, and support pilot programs that can be refined and scaled over time. Across the national landscape, many of the most effective Community Violence Intervention strategies were initially developed, tested, and iterated through philanthropic support before achieving public investment and scale.

For Austin, philanthropy should be engaged not as a peripheral contributor, but as a partner in innovation, enabling the testing of new approaches and a bridge to sustainability, supporting the transition from pilot to institutionalized funding.

Law Enforcement: Distinct but Aligned

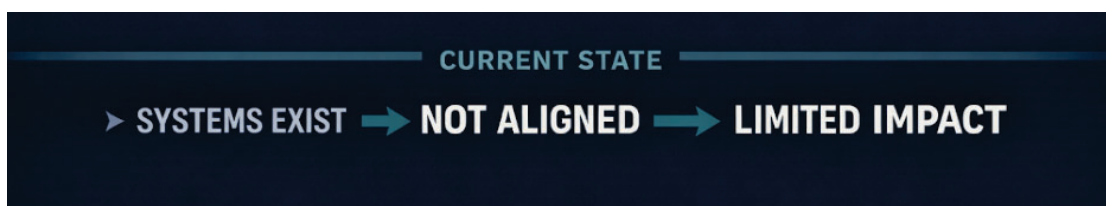
Law enforcement remains an integral component of the broader public safety ecosystem; however, its role is fundamentally distinct from that of Community Violence Intervention. Law enforcement is responsible for enforcement. On the other hand, CVI is responsible for prevention, intervention, and behavior change. These roles must remain clearly differentiated while operating in alignment toward a

shared objective: safer communities. A critical principle underpins this relationship. CVI practitioners do not share community-based information with law enforcement. This boundary is essential to maintain trust with high-risk individuals and communities, preserve the effectiveness of intervention strategies, and protect the relationships that make engagement possible. When roles are clearly defined and mutually respected, the system functions with integrity and effectiveness. When these boundaries are blurred, trust is eroded, and the capacity to intervene is significantly diminished.

The Core System Failure

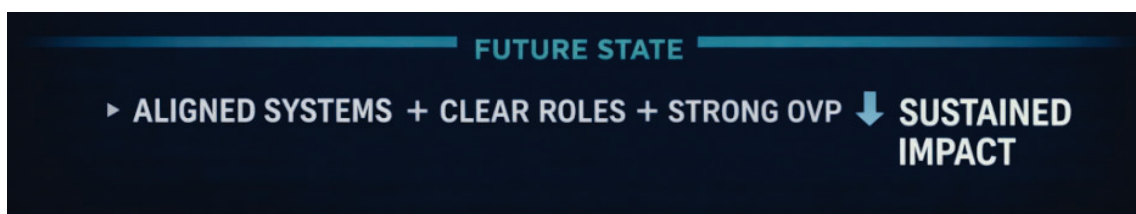
Despite the presence of strong individual components, the current ecosystem is constrained by several systemic challenges: fragmentation across agencies and organizations, limited coordination and alignment of efforts, undefined or inconsistently understood roles, and weak or diffuse accountability structures. These conditions do not reflect a lack of commitment or capability. Rather, they indicate the absence of a fully integrated system. Addressing these gaps requires a deliberate shift from collection of efforts to coordinated infrastructure with clear leadership, defined roles, and enforceable accountability at its core.

CURRENT STATE



The Required Shift and path forward is clear:

FUTURE STATE



Defining Success

The effectiveness of the community safety ecosystem can be assessed through the degree to which it operates as a coordinated and accountable system. Success is not defined by isolated programmatic outputs, but by systemic performance across multiple dimensions.

The ecosystem is functioning effectively when:

- Systems operate in intentional coordination rather than parallel efforts
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, understood, and executed across sectors
- Resources are strategically aligned to shared priorities and outcomes
- Data is integrated, analyzed, and actively used to inform decision-making
- Community trust is established, sustained, and reinforced through consistent engagement and results

These conditions reflect not only operational efficiency, but the presence of a system capable of producing durable and equitable outcomes.

Closing Insight

The community safety ecosystem achieves effectiveness only under conditions of alignment and shared responsibility. It requires each component of the system to understand and operate within its defined role; each sector to commit to coordinated action rather than independent implementation; and leadership to establish, enforce, and sustain accountability.

This work extends beyond the reduction of violence as an outcome. It is fundamentally concerned with preserving life in real time, restoring dignity in communities that have experienced sustained harm, and establishing conditions in which safety is not episodic, but expected. In Austin & Travis County, achieving these outcomes requires the development of a system not a collection of programs anchored by a fully empowered Office of Violence Prevention.

III. KEY FINDINGS FROM ENGAGEMENT

1. Safety Extends Beyond the Absence of Violence

Stakeholders consistently articulated a definition of safety that moves beyond traditional crime metrics. Safety was described as the presence of access to opportunity, economic stability, mental and behavioral health support, and meaningful community connection.

Focus group findings further emphasized that violence is often the consequence of unmet needs, including housing instability, food insecurity, limited employment opportunities, and insufficient access to support systems.

2. The Ecosystem is Fragmented

Across interviews and focus groups, a consistent pattern emerged; limited coordination across agencies and sectors, inconsistent communication structures, duplication of effort, and competition for limited resources. As one participant noted, *“We are doing meaningful work—but not always in alignment.”* This fragmentation reduces the overall effectiveness of otherwise strong individual efforts.

3. Lack of Clear Leadership and Accountability

Stakeholders repeatedly identified the absence of a clearly defined coordinating authority.

- No single entity is consistently recognized as responsible for system-wide performance
- Roles across agencies remain unclear or overlapping
- Accountability mechanisms are underdeveloped

This lack of clarity was captured succinctly in stakeholder feedback:

“There is no clear entity driving the work.”

4. Data Exists, But is Not Operationalized

The ecosystem possesses significant data across multiple systems; however:

- Data remains siloed
- Integration across agencies is limited
- Analysis is not consistently tied to decision-making

As a result, real-time adjustments and strategic alignment are constrained. As noted by stakeholders:

“The issue is not the absence of data, but the absence of coordinated analysis and application.”

5. Funding Instability Undermines Impact

Stakeholders consistently emphasized the limitations of short-term funding structures.

- Over-reliance on annual or grant-based funding cycles
- Limited multi-year investment commitments
- Workforce instability resulting from funding uncertainty

This dynamic undermines both program continuity and long-term outcomes. As expressed across engagement:

“Sustained impact cannot be achieved through short-term investment.”

IV. THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION (OVP)

OVP as the Backbone of the Ecosystem

The Office of Violence Prevention must function as the central coordinating infrastructure of the ecosystem. It is not sufficient for OVP to operate as a programmatic entity. Its role must be structural, strategic, and integrative.

Core Functions of OVP:

Subject Matter Experts

- Establish and uphold evidence-informed and field-based best practices
- Translate national models into contextually appropriate local strategies
- Serve as the central knowledge hub for violence prevention

Convener of the Ecosystem

- Bring together city, county, community-based organizations, and institutional partners
- Facilitate alignment across sectors
- Establish shared ownership of strategy and outcomes

Stakeholder feedback emphasized the importance of consistent convening to ensure clarity of roles and alignment of effort.

Strategy & Policy Driver ● Develop and maintain a comprehensive, citywide violence prevention strategy ● Align policies with a public health framework ● Ensure integration across systems	Data & Accountability Hub ● Define performance metrics and indicators ● Track system-wide progress ● Produce transparent, public-facing reports
Advocacy & Policy Support ● Elevate violence prevention as a sustained policy priority ● Support funding advocacy and legislative alignment ● Inform City Council decision-making	Capacity Builder ● Strengthen community-based organizations through training and technical assistance ● Support workforce development ● Build long-term organizational sustainability

What OVP Should Not Be

- A siloed program operating independently of broader systems
- A passive funder without strategic oversight
- A purely administrative entity lacking authority

V. GOVERNANCE & POSITIONING OF OVP

Current Structure

The Office of Violence Prevention is currently housed within the Public Health Department under the City Manager. This placement is conceptually aligned with a public health approach; however, stakeholder feedback indicates that structural limitations must be addressed.

Identified Challenges

- Limited visibility within the broader governmental structure

- Insufficient formal authority to coordinate across agencies
- Constraints in cross-sector alignment and implementation

Recommended Governance Structures

To strengthen effectiveness, the following adjustments are recommended:

- Maintain OVP within Public Health, while elevating its authority
- Position the person leading the OVP at the level of Division Chief or Assistant Director
- Establish a direct reporting relationship to the Assistant City Manager
- Formalize cross-agency authority through executive directive
- Define a clear accountability structure

Governance Enhancements

- Establish a cross-sector steering committee, including:
 - City and County leadership
 - Senior leaders from community-based organizations
 - Representation from City Council
- Implement quarterly reporting to City Council, including:
 - Progress toward strategic goals
 - Key learnings and challenges
 - Quantitative and qualitative data

Core Principle

Authority must be explicitly defined and institutionalized. It cannot rely on informal relationships or discretionary.

VI. LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS FOR OVP

The effectiveness of OVP is directly dependent on leadership capacity.

Required competencies include:

- Expertise in Community Violence Intervention and public health frameworks
- Demonstrated ability to convene across sectors
- Capacity to navigate complex political and administrative environments
- Strong data and performance management skills
- Established credibility within communities

As reflected in stakeholder feedback:

“Authority is not conferred, it is established through expertise and execution.”

VII. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (3-5 YEARS)

Based on stakeholder engagement and system analysis, the following priorities have emerged:

1. Strengthen the CVI ecosystem through investment in credible messengers and frontline intervention
2. Improve system coordination through formal governance structures and cross-agency alignment
3. Expand access to services, including mental health, housing, and workforce development
4. Build a data-driven system with integrated platforms and real-time analysis
5. Ensure sustainable funding through multi-year investments and dedicated funding streams

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Phase I (0–12 Months): Foundation

- Establish governance structures
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Formalize OVP authority

- Launch data framework

Phase II (1–3 Years): Expansion

- Scale programs and partnerships
- Strengthen workforce capacity
- Align and stabilize funding

Phase III (3–5 Years): Sustainability

- Institutionalize funding structures
- Demonstrate measurable outcomes
- Refine and adapt strategy

IX. MEASURING SUCCESS

Quantitative Indicators

- Reduction in homicides and non-fatal shootings
- Increased access to services

Qualitative Indicators

- Community trust
- Perceptions of safety
- Level of system coordination

X. CONCLUSION

Austin possesses the foundational elements necessary to build a highly effective violence prevention ecosystem. However, success will depend on clear leadership, defined roles, sustained investment and coordinated systems. At the center of this effort must be a fully empowered Office of Violence Prevention functioning not as a program, but as the infrastructure that aligns the entire ecosystem. Because safety is not produced by isolated efforts. It is produced when systems move in alignment, with clarity, discipline, and shared responsibility.

XI. THEORY OF CHANGE

Core Premise

Violence is not random. It is the cumulative result of exposure, structural conditions, and unmet needs over time.

Theory of Change Statement

If Austin & Travis County: invest in credible messengers and community-based organizations; address root causes through prevention strategies; provide targeted intervention for individuals at highest risk; ensure healing and long-term support for survivors; build a coordinated system led by OVP And implement a data-driven accountability framework

Then individuals will experience stabilization and behavior change; Communities will experience increased trust and cohesion; and systems will operate in alignment leading to sustained reductions in violence, increased safety and stability long-term community well-being.

Key Assumptions

- Individuals closest to the harm are closest to the solution
- Trust is foundational to behavior change
- Violence spreads through networks—but so can intervention
- Systems, not individuals, determine sustainability
- Short-term funding cannot produce long-term outcomes

Role of the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) within the Theory of Change

Within the proposed Theory of Change, the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) functions as the central coordinating infrastructure that enables the system to operate with coherence, consistency, and

accountability. Its role is not ancillary, but foundational.

Specifically, OVP is responsible for:

- Ensuring alignment across systems, sectors, and stakeholders
- Maintaining fidelity to evidence-informed and field-tested strategies
- Establishing and enforcing accountability for outcomes
- Sustaining coordination over time through structured governance and ongoing convening

In the absence of an entity operating at this level of authority and integration, the ecosystem is likely to remain fragmented characterized by parallel efforts, inconsistent implementation, and diminished collective impact.

XII. LOGIC MODEL

Austin & Travis County Violence Prevention Strategy

The following logic model operationalizes the Theory of Change by defining the relationships between inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, and by establishing a clear pathway from investment to long-term impact.

INPUTS (What We Invest)

Leadership and Infrastructure • Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) as the central coordinating entity • Alignment of City and County leadership • Establishment of a cross-sector governance structure	Community Assets • Community-based organizations (CBOs) • Credible messengers • Survivors and community leaders
Systems and Institutions • Public Health systems	Resources • City and County budget allocations

● Hospitals and trauma centers ● Schools and education systems ● Workforce development and housing systems	● Philanthropic investments ● Federal and state funding streams
Data and Evaluation ● Integrated data systems ● Defined performance metrics ● External and internal evaluation partners	

ACTIVITIES (What We Do)

1. Prevention (Upstream Interventions) ● Youth development and mentorship initiatives ● Workforce development and employment access ● Housing stabilization efforts ● Mental and behavioral health service provision	4. System Coordination (OVP-Led) ● Convening cross-sector partners on a consistent basis ● Aligning funding, strategy, and implementation efforts ● Defining and reinforcing roles and responsibilities ● Facilitating communication and coordination across agencies
2. Intervention (Targeted Strategies) ● Street outreach and violence interruption ● Hospital-based violence intervention programs ● Reentry support for justice-involved individuals ● Intensive case management for individuals at highest risk	5. Data and Accountability ● Establishing shared performance metrics across systems ● Tracking outcomes and system performance ● Producing public-facing dashboards and reports ● Implementing continuous improvement processes

3. Healing and Recovery ● Trauma recovery and behavioral health services ● Survivor support programs ● Community-based healing and restoration initiatives	6. Policy and Advocacy ● Informing City Council decision-making ● Advocating for sustained and aligned funding ● Ensuring policy alignment with a public health approach to violence prevention
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OUTPUTS (What We Produce)

- Number of individuals engaged through outreach and case management
- Number and scope of programs funded and supported
- Frequency and participation in cross-sector convenings
- Development and dissemination of data dashboards and public reports
- Number of practitioners trained in CVI methodologies
- Number of community engagement sessions conducted

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES (0–12 Months) ● Increased coordination across agencies and sectors ● Enhanced engagement of individuals at highest risk ● Improved access to services and supports ● Establishment of clear governance and accountability structures ● Increased community awareness and initial trust-building
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (1–3 Years) ● Reduction in retaliatory and cyclical violence ● Increased stability among high-risk individuals ● Strengthened alignment across systems and institutions ● Expanded workforce capacity within CVI and related services ● Development of more consistent and reliable funding streams
LONG-TERM OUTCOMES (3–5 Years) ● Sustained reductions in shootings and homicides

- Increased trust in public systems and community-based interventions
- Improved quality of life in historically impacted neighborhoods
- Institutionalization of violence prevention as a core component of public safety infrastructure

IMPACT (Ultimate Goal)

The long-term impact of this strategy is the realization of a city in which:

- Every neighborhood experiences a baseline of safety
- Violence is prevented proactively, rather than addressed reactively
- Communities have equitable access to the resources necessary to thrive
- Systems operate in alignment with clearly defined accountability
- Safety is defined not solely by enforcement, but by the presence of opportunity, healing, and dignity

Part III: Community Partnership Plan

From Strategy to Partnership Infrastructure

Part I established a shared vision for community safety. Part II translated that vision into a strategic framework, clarifying roles, responsibilities, and system architecture. Part III advances this work by addressing a central and operational question:

Who will carry out this work, and how will they be built, supported, and sustained over time?

Violence prevention is not executed within government institutions alone. It is enacted within communities through relationships, trust, and consistent engagement with individuals and families most impacted by violence. Accordingly, this phase operationalizes the ecosystem by translating strategy into structured and intentional partnerships, expanded organizational capacity, sustained and aligned investment, and defined systems of accountability. This is the point at which strategy becomes executable infrastructure.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Partnerships as Public Safety Infrastructure

A central premise of this framework is that partnerships are not ancillary to the strategy, they are the strategy. Community-based organizations (CBOs) should not be positioned as vendors or service contractors. Rather, they must be recognized and treated as core public safety infrastructure.

The effectiveness of Austin's violence prevention strategy will be determined not only by the scope of investment, but by the integrity of its partnership model. Specifically:

- Which organizations are resourced
- How those organizations are supported and developed
- How performance expectations are defined and measured
- Whether partners are structurally positioned to succeed over time

This represents a shift from transactional engagement to system-level investment.

III. IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Defining Proven Effectiveness

The objective of this phase is not to fund the most visible organizations, but to identify and invest in those that demonstrate the highest levels of effectiveness within the communities most impacted by violence. Effectiveness must be defined through a combination of credibility, outcomes, and alignment with core CVI principles.

Criteria for Selection

Organizations selected for partnership should demonstrate the following:

1. Credibility and Trust

- Established and sustained relationships within high-impact communities
- Staff with lived experience reflective of the populations served

- Demonstrated capacity to engage individuals at elevated risk of violence

2. Demonstrated Impact (Beyond Activity)

- Evidence of reducing or interrupting conflict and violence
- Documented success in reentry, stabilization, or behavior change
- Consistent engagement with individuals at highest risk

3. Cultural Responsiveness

- Organizational composition that reflects the communities served
- Language accessibility and cultural competency in service delivery
- Ability to tailor interventions to community-specific contexts

4. Operational Capacity (or Demonstrated Growth Potential)

- Capacity to manage and administer funding responsibly
- Foundational systems for tracking participation and engagement
- Willingness and readiness to grow with structured support

5. Alignment with CVI Principles

- Commitment to trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches
- Orientation toward a public health, non-carceral framework
- Focus on prevention, intervention, and sustained behavior change

Core Service Domains

To ensure a comprehensive and balanced ecosystem, organizations should be identified across four primary service domains:

1. Violence Prevention and Intervention ● Street outreach and violence interruption ● Conflict mediation ● Intensive case management for high-risk individuals	2. Reentry and Stabilization ● Transitional and post-release support ● Employment and workforce pathways ● Mentorship and long-term engagement
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3. Mental Health and Healing ● Trauma recovery services ● Behavioral health interventions ● Survivor-centered support services	4. Youth Development and Prevention ● Mentorship and youth engagement ● Educational support and pathways ● Early intervention strategies
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Partnership Development Process

The development of partnerships should follow a structured and iterative process:

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PIPELINE



This pipeline ensures that organizations are not only selected, but systematically developed, evaluated, and expanded based on performance and need.

IV. CAPACITY BUILDING FRAMEWORK

Aligning Organizational Capacity with Strategic Demand

Stakeholder engagement and system analysis indicate that many grassroots organizations possess high levels of effectiveness, but operate with limited resources and infrastructure. The objective is not to replace these organizations, but to strengthen and scale them. Capacity building is therefore a central function of the ecosystem not a supplemental activity.

Core Capacity Building Areas:

1. Organizational Infrastructure - Financial management and compliance systems - Human resources and staffing structures - Operational policies and governance frameworks	4. Leadership Development - Executive leadership coaching - Management and supervisory training - Succession planning to ensure continuity
2. Program Design and Implementation - Development of standardized case management models - Establishment of service delivery protocols - Integration of trauma-informed practices	5. Workforce Development - Training and support for credible messengers - Development of safety and engagement protocols - Creation of professional development pathways
3. Data and Performance Tracking - Implementation of accessible and usable data systems - Development of outcome tracking methodologies - Strengthening of reporting and evaluation capacity	

CAPACITY BUILDING MODEL

Capacity development should follow a structured progression:



Delivery Approach

Capacity building should be delivered through a multi-modal framework, including:

- OVP-led training and technical assistance programs
- External subject matter experts and technical assistance providers
- Peer learning cohorts to facilitate knowledge exchange
- Embedded support, including on-site coaching and implementation assistance

V. SHARED OWNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

Moving from Engagement to Power. [Engagement](#), while necessary, is insufficient to produce equitable and effective outcomes. [Communities must have meaningful influence over decision-making processes](#). This requires a shift from participation to shared ownership.

Principles of Shared Ownership

- Decision-making authority is distributed, rather than centralized
- Community perspectives directly inform funding priorities and strategic direction
- Community-based organizations are engaged as co-strategists, not solely implementers

Structural Recommendations

1. Community Advisory Council

- Comprised of community-based organization leaders, survivors, and residents
- Holds a formal role in advising on strategy, funding, and evaluation

2. Co-Design Processes

- Community stakeholders actively engaged in program design and refinement
- Continuous feedback loops embedded within implementation

3. Participatory Budgeting Mechanisms

- Allocation of a defined portion of funding for community-directed investment\
- Structured processes for community input and prioritization

4. Transparent Decision-Making

- Clearly defined and publicly communicated criteria for funding decisions
- Regular public reporting on allocations, outcomes, and performance

SHARED OWNERSHIP MODEL



VI. CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS FRAMEWORK

Designing for Those Most Impacted

Violence is not experienced uniformly across communities. It is concentrated within populations that have been historically marginalized, structurally disinvested, and disproportionately exposed to risk. As such, any effective violence prevention strategy must be intentionally designed to reflect the lived realities of those most impacted.

In Austin & Travis County, this requires a deliberate and sustained focus on:

- Black communities
- Latino communities
- Immigrant populations

- Neighborhoods that have experienced long-term disinvestment

Cultural responsiveness, in this context, is not an ancillary consideration—it is a foundational requirement for effectiveness. Strategies that are not grounded in the cultural, social, and historical context of the communities they aim to serve will struggle to build trust, achieve engagement, and produce sustained outcomes.

Core Elements of Cultural Responsiveness

1. Representation

Effective engagement begins with representation. Organizations must reflect the communities they serve—not only at the frontline level, but within leadership and decision-making structures.

This includes:

- Staffing models that prioritize lived experience and community connection
- Leadership that reflects the cultural and demographic composition of impacted communities

Representation enhances credibility, strengthens trust, and improves the relevance and effectiveness of interventions.

2. Language and Access

Access to services must be both linguistically and culturally appropriate. This requires more than translation, it requires communication that is contextually grounded and responsive to community norms.

Key components include:

- Provision of multilingual services
- Development of communication strategies that are culturally aligned and accessible

Without intentional attention to language and access, critical services remain out of reach for those who need them most.

3. Community-Specific Strategies

A standardized approach to violence prevention is insufficient in the face of diverse community needs. Strategies must be tailored to reflect the unique conditions, assets, and challenges within specific communities.

This requires:

- Development of interventions that are responsive to local context
- Flexibility in program design to accommodate variation across neighborhoods

Localized approaches ensure that interventions are not only delivered, but received and sustained.

4. Trust-Building

Trust is the foundation upon which all effective intervention is built. It cannot be assumed, and it cannot be expedited. It is developed through consistent presence, reliability, and demonstrated commitment over time.

Trust-building requires:

- Long-term investment in relationships within communities
- Consistent and visible engagement, particularly in high-impact areas

Without trust, access is limited, engagement is shallow, and outcomes are constrained.

Concluding Insight

Cultural responsiveness is not a discrete component of the strategy—it is an organizing principle that shapes how the entire ecosystem functions. When strategies are designed with intentionality, grounded in lived experience, and sustained through authentic engagement, they are more likely to produce equitable, effective, and lasting outcomes.

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS



VII. FUNDING & CONTRACTING STRATEGY

Transitioning from Short-Term Grants to Strategic Investment

Sustained reductions in violence cannot be achieved through short-term, episodic funding. The current reliance on annual grant cycles introduces instability into the very organizations responsible for delivering life-saving interventions. Workforce continuity is disrupted, organizational growth is constrained, and long-term planning becomes impractical.

Accordingly, this strategy advances a fundamental shift from short-term grants to long-term, strategic investment. This shift is essential to building a system that is not only effective in the short term, but durable over time.

Recommended Funding Model

1. Multi-Year Contracting (3–5 Years)

Multi-year funding agreements are critical to establishing organizational stability and enabling long-term impact. These contracts provide:

- Predictability in funding, allowing for sustained service delivery
- Improved workforce retention, particularly among credible messengers and frontline staff
- The ability for organizations to engage in long-term planning and program development

Stability in funding directly correlates with stability in outcomes.

2. Tiered Funding Structure

A tiered funding approach allows the system to support organizations at varying stages of development while maintaining performance expectations and pathways for growth.

Tier 1: Emerging Organizations

- Smaller-scale funding allocations
- Intensive capacity building and technical assistance
- Focus on developing foundational infrastructure

Tier 2: Established Organizations

- Moderate levels of funding
- Defined performance expectations and reporting requirements
- Expansion of service delivery capacity

Tier 3: Anchor Organizations

- Significant investment aligned with demonstrated impact
- Leadership roles within the broader ecosystem
- Responsibility for mentoring and supporting smaller organizations

This tiered model ensures both inclusivity and accountability, while creating a pipeline for organizational growth and system-wide strengthening.

3. Flexible Funding Mechanisms

- Rigid funding structures often limit an organization's ability to respond to dynamic and evolving
Address emergent issues in real time
- Allow organizations to allocate resources where they are most needed

Flexibility enhances responsiveness, which is critical in high-risk and rapidly changing environments.

4. Performance-Based Contracting

While stability and flexibility are essential, they must be paired with clear expectations for performance and outcomes.

Performance-based contracting should include:

- Clearly defined deliverables aligned with strategic priorities
- Measurable outcome indicators
- Regular performance reviews and feedback loops

This approach ensures that investment is directly tied to impact, while also creating opportunities for continuous improvement community needs. Flexible funding is therefore essential to:

- Support innovation and adaptation

FUNDING MODEL CONTINUUM



This continuum reflects a system designed to both develop and sustain organizational capacity over time, while aligning resources with demonstrated effectiveness.

VIII. PARTNERSHIP MODELS

Structuring Collaboration for System-Level Impact

Effective violence prevention requires not only strong individual organizations, but also well-defined models of collaboration. The following partnership structures are recommended to support coordination, scalability, and alignment across the ecosystem.

Model 1: Collaborative Network Model

In this model, multiple organizations operate within a coordinated framework, guided by shared goals, aligned strategies, and integrated data systems.

Key features include:

- Collective ownership of outcomes
- Shared performance metrics
- Regular communication and coordination

This model is particularly effective in complex environments where multiple organizations bring complementary strengths and capacities.

Model 2: Lead Agency Model

Under this structure, a single organization serves as the primary coordinating entity, with responsibility for managing subcontracts and overseeing implementation among smaller partner organizations.

Key features include:

- Centralized coordination and management
- Streamlined communication and accountability
- Support for smaller organizations through subcontracting relationships

This model can be effective in ensuring consistency and reducing administrative burden across multiple partners.

Model 3: Hub-and-Spoke Model

In this model, the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) functions as the central hub, with community-based organizations operating as service delivery partners (spokes).

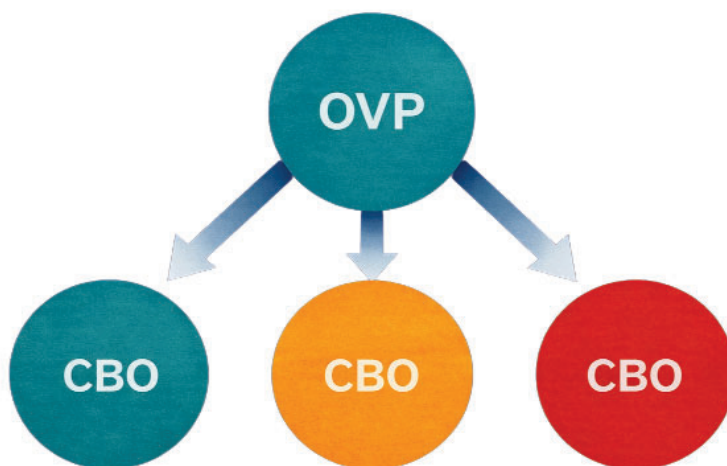
Key features include:

- OVP-led coordination and oversight
- Direct alignment between strategy and implementation
- Clear delineation of roles across partners

This model reinforces the role of OVP as the backbone of the ecosystem, ensuring that all efforts remain aligned with the broader strategy.

The effectiveness of these models is not determined by structure alone, but by the degree to which they are implemented with clarity, consistency, and accountability. When funding is aligned with strategy, and partnerships are structured with intention, the ecosystem is positioned to move beyond fragmented efforts toward sustained, system-level impact.

HUB MODEL



IX. ACCOUNTABILITY & PERFORMANCE

Defining and Measuring Success

The effectiveness of the Community Violence Intervention ecosystem must be assessed through a structured and multidimensional performance framework. Success is not determined solely by activity levels, but by the extent to which coordinated efforts produce measurable and sustained outcomes.

A comprehensive performance system should include the following categories:

Output Metrics

These indicators capture the scope and scale of service delivery:

- Number of individuals engaged through outreach and case management
- Volume and type of services delivered across intervention domains

Outcome Metrics

These measures assess the extent to which interventions are producing meaningful change:

- Reduction in individuals' involvement in violence, whether as victim or perpetrator
- Increased stability, including housing, employment, and behavioral health outcomes

System-Level Metrics

These indicators evaluate the performance of the ecosystem as a coordinated system:

- Degree of alignment and coordination across agencies and partners
- Timeliness and responsiveness of service delivery and intervention efforts

Continuous Improvement Framework

Accountability must be paired with a commitment to ongoing learning and adaptation. Accordingly, the system should incorporate:

- Quarterly performance reviews to assess progress and identify challenges
- Structured feedback loops involving community partners and stakeholders
- Real-time adjustments to strategy and implementation based on emerging data

This approach ensures that performance management is not static, but responsive and iterative.

X. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Phased Approach to System Development

The implementation of this strategy requires a deliberate, phased approach that balances urgency with sustainability.

Year 1: Foundation

The initial phase focuses on establishing the structural conditions necessary for effective implementation:

- Identification and funding of community-based partners
- Launch of capacity building and technical assistance initiatives
- Establishment of governance structures and formalization of OVP authority

Years 2–3: Expansion

The second phase emphasizes scaling and strengthening the system:

- Expansion of programmatic reach and service delivery
- Continued development of workforce capacity
- Refinement and strengthening of partnership models

Years 4–5: Sustainability

The final phase focuses on institutionalization and long-term impact:

- Establishment of sustained and recurring funding streams
- Demonstration of measurable outcomes and system performance
- Expansion of reach to ensure broader community impact

XI. RISKS & MITIGATION

The implementation of a system of this scale requires proactive identification and management of potential risks.

Risk: Overinvestment Without Adequate Support	Mitigation: Implementation of structured capacity building and technical assistance to ensure organizations can effectively utilize resources
Risk: System Fragmentation	Mitigation: Centralized coordination through the Office of Violence Prevention to maintain alignment across partners and agencies
Risk: Workforce Burnout and Instability	Mitigation: Investment in workforce development, training, and support systems to ensure sustainability of frontline staff

XII. CONCLUSION

Phase III reinforces a fundamental principle:

The effectiveness of this strategy is determined by the strength and integrity of its partnerships.

Success is not defined solely by which organizations receive funding, but by:

- The extent to which they are supported and developed
- The degree to which they are aligned with a shared strategy
- The sustainability of their operations over time

Final Statement

Community-based organizations are not merely implementing this strategy. They are the strategy! When these organizations are adequately resourced, structurally supported, and aligned through a strong and empowered Office of Violence Prevention: lives are preserved in real time, communities experience

increased stability and resilience, systems evolve from fragmented efforts into coordinated infrastructure. In this way, partnership becomes not simply a mechanism for delivery, but the foundation upon which lasting transformation is built

Part IV: Governance & Sustainability Report

From Strategy to Institutionalization

Austin & Travis County have established a comprehensive foundation for community violence intervention. Phase I articulated a shared vision. Phase II translated that vision into a structured strategy. Phase III defined the partnership infrastructure necessary for implementation. Part IV advances this work by addressing a critical transition: How does this strategy move from a coordinated set of initiatives to a fully institutionalized system? The objective of this part is to ensure that violence prevention is not contingent upon momentary alignment or individual leadership, but is embedded within the permanent structure of public safety. To that end, this phase examines three core questions:

- Is the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) structurally positioned to lead with authority and effectiveness?
- Does the system have a sustainable and recurring funding model capable of supporting long-term impact?
- Are there clearly defined accountability mechanisms to ensure performance, transparency, and public trust?

Core Premise

The long-term effectiveness of violence prevention is determined by the degree to which it is institutionalized. Violence prevention efforts are most vulnerable when they depend on individual leadership rather than structural authority, short-term or discretionary funding streams, and informal coordination mechanisms. Conversely, violence prevention achieves sustained impact when it is structurally embedded, consistently funded, and rigorously held accountable as a permanent component of public safety infrastructure

II. CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT

Governance, Authority, and System Gaps

The Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) is currently situated within the Public Health Department under the City Manager. This placement reflects an appropriate alignment with a public health framework for violence prevention. However, both stakeholder engagement and system analysis indicate that the current structure, while conceptually sound, is operationally constrained.

Key Findings

1. Authority is Informal Rather Than Codified

OVP is expected to function as a coordinating entity across multiple systems and agencies. However, it currently lacks formally defined authority to compel alignment or enforce participation.

As a result, coordination is largely dependent on interpersonal relationships rather than institutional structure. This creates variability in engagement and limits the consistency of implementation across agencies.

2. Roles Across Agencies Lack Clarity

There is a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities across departments involved in violence prevention efforts. This has resulted in overlapping functions between agencies, ambiguity in ownership of key initiatives and gaps in service delivery. Consequently, the system experiences both duplication of effort and unmet needs, reducing overall efficiency and effectiveness.

3. Communication Pathways Are Inconsistent

Structured communication mechanisms between OVP, City leadership, and partner agencies are not consistently established.

This includes limited formalized engagement with City Council and irregular and inconsistent cross-agency communication. As a result, strategic priorities are not uniformly translated into coordinated action across the system.

4. Accountability is Diffuse

The current system lacks a unified framework for performance measurement and accountability. Key limitations include, absence of a centralized performance management system, limited public reporting on outcomes and progress and inconsistent evaluation across programs and partners. As a result, the ability to measure system-wide impact, assess effectiveness, and build public trust is significantly constrained

Concluding Assessment

The existing structure provides a foundation for a public health–oriented approach to violence prevention. However, without formalized authority, clearly defined roles, structured communication pathways, and a unified accountability framework, the system is limited in its capacity to operate as an integrated and high-performing ecosystem. Addressing these gaps is essential to advancing from coordinated effort to institutionalized systems.

CURRENT GOVERNANCE



III. GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Building a Functional System of Authority

The success of OVP depends on one principle: Authority must be designed not assumed.

RECOMMENDATION 1: FORMALIZE OVP AUTHORITY

Establish OVP as:

- Lead coordinating entity for violence prevention
- Authorized convener of all relevant agencies
- Responsible for system-wide performance

Required Mechanisms:

- Executive directive from City Manager
- Formal governance charter
- Defined authority over coordination and reporting

RECOMMENDATION 2: CREATE A CROSS-SECTOR GOVERNANCE TABLE

Structure: OVP-Led Executive Steering Committee

Participants:

- Public Health
- Public Safety
- Housing
- Workforce
- Education
- Community representatives

Responsibilities:

- Align strategy across departments
- Resolve barriers
- Monitor performance

GOVERNANCE MODEL



RECOMMENDATION 3: DEFINE CLEAR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A foundational requirement for system-level effectiveness is the establishment of clearly defined roles and responsibilities across all participating agencies. Ambiguity in scope and ownership undermines coordination, reduces efficiency, and weakens accountability.

Each agency engaged in violence prevention efforts must operate with:

- A clearly defined scope of responsibility aligned to the broader strategy
- Measurable responsibilities tied to specific outcomes and performance indicators
- Explicit alignment with established strategic priorities

This level of clarity ensures that all actors within the ecosystem are not only aware of their function, but are positioned to execute it in coordination with others.

RECOMMENDATION 4: STRENGTHEN CITY COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT

Sustained political leadership and oversight are essential to the institutionalization of violence prevention. Strengthening the relationship between the Office of Violence Prevention and City Council is critical to ensuring transparency, alignment, and long-term commitment.

This should include:

- Quarterly reporting to City Council on progress, performance metrics, and implementation challenges
- An annual strategic review to assess alignment with long-term goals and adjust priorities as necessary
- Public accountability sessions to provide transparency and reinforce community trust

These mechanisms establish a consistent feedback loop between implementation, governance, and public accountability.

IV. SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Transitioning from Grants to Permanent Investment

The long-term success of this strategy is contingent upon the establishment of a sustainable and predictable funding model.

Core Insight

Long-term public safety cannot be achieved through short-term funding structures. Reliance on time-limited grants introduces instability into the system, disrupts workforce continuity, and constrains the ability of organizations to plan and operate effectively over time.

Recommended Funding Model

1. Dedicated City Budget Allocation

A foundational element of sustainability is the establishment of a dedicated funding stream within the City budget.

This should include an annual baseline allocation to support the operations and coordination functions of the Office of Violence Prevention, and multi-year budget commitments to ensure continuity of programming and partnerships;

2. Interlocal Agreements

Regional alignment is essential to addressing violence that crosses jurisdictional boundaries. Interlocal agreements should be developed to ensure financial and strategic participation from Travis County, and to promote coordinated investment and shared accountability across jurisdictions

3. Alignment with State and Federal Funding Streams

The strategy should actively align with and leverage existing state and federal funding opportunities, including the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) grants, Public health funding streams and targeted violence prevention initiatives. This alignment allows for the expansion of resources while maintaining consistency with broader policy frameworks.

4. Blended Funding Model

A comprehensive funding strategy should integrate multiple sources into a cohesive and sustainable model.

This includes:

- City and County budget allocations
- State and federal funding streams
- Philanthropic investment

A blended funding model enhances financial resilience, reduces dependency on any single source, and supports both innovation and long-term system stability.

BLENDING FUNDING MODEL



RECOMMENDATION 5: ESTABLISH A PROTECTED FUNDING STREAM

A central requirement for long-term system stability is the creation of a protected and dedicated funding stream for violence prevention. Without such protections, funding remains vulnerable to shifting priorities, fiscal constraints, and political cycles—undermining continuity and impact.

To ensure durability, Austin should institutionalize funding through one or more of the following mechanisms:

- A dedicated public safety allocation specifically designated for violence prevention
- The establishment of a special revenue fund to support ongoing operations and programming
- Long-term appropriation commitments that extend beyond annual budget cycles

These mechanisms are essential to safeguarding investment and ensuring that violence prevention is treated as a permanent component of public safety infrastructure rather than a discretionary initiative.

RECOMMENDATION 6: IMPLEMENT MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTING

Multi-year contracting is critical to aligning funding structures with the realities of violence prevention work, which requires sustained engagement over time.

The adoption of 3–5 year funding cycles will:

- Provide stability for community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Support workforce retention, particularly among credible messengers and frontline staff
- Enable long-term planning, program development, and performance improvement

Short-term funding cycles are inherently misaligned with the longitudinal nature of behavior change and community stabilization. Multi-year contracting corrects this misalignment and strengthens the overall system.

V. ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

Ensuring Transparency, Performance, and Trust

A high-functioning ecosystem requires a clearly defined and rigorously implemented accountability framework. Transparency and performance are not ancillary to this work they are central to its legitimacy and effectiveness.

Core Principle

What is measured is managed, and what is managed can be improved This principle underscores the necessity of establishing systems that not only track activity, but assess outcomes and inform decision-making.

RECOMMENDATION 7: ESTABLISH A PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A comprehensive performance management system should be developed to monitor progress, evaluate effectiveness, and guide continuous improvement.

Core components include:

- The establishment of shared metrics across agencies and partners to ensure alignment
- Real-time data tracking to support timely decision-making and adaptive responses
- A centralized data dashboard to integrate information and provide system-wide visibility

This system should function as the operational backbone for accountability, enabling both internal management and external transparency.

RECOMMENDATION 8: DEVELOP A PUBLIC REPORTING SYSTEM

Public accountability is essential to building and sustaining trust. The system must be transparent, accessible, and consistent in its reporting.

Key requirements include:

- Quarterly updates detailing progress, challenges, and performance indicators
- A comprehensive annual report assessing system-wide outcomes and strategic alignment
- A publicly accessible dashboard that provides real-time or near real-time data on key metrics

Together, these mechanisms ensure that stakeholders—including community members, policymakers, and partners—are informed, engaged, and able to assess the effectiveness of the strategy over time.

ACCOUNTABILITY FLOW



RECOMMENDATION 9: ESTABLISH COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURES

A comprehensive accountability framework must extend beyond institutional performance and incorporate mechanisms that center community voice and lived experience. Community accountability is essential to ensuring that the system remains responsive, equitable, and grounded in the realities of those most impacted by violence.

To achieve this, the following structures should be formalized:

- A Community Advisory Council, comprised of residents, survivors, and leaders from community-based organizations, with a defined role in informing strategy, monitoring implementation, and advising on resource allocation
- Public feedback mechanisms that allow for continuous input from community members, including structured forums, surveys, and engagement processes
- Participatory evaluation models that involve community stakeholders in assessing program effectiveness and system performance

These structures shift accountability from a solely internal function to a shared responsibility, reinforcing transparency and strengthening trust between institutions and the communities they serve.

RECOMMENDATION 10: IMPLEMENT A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MODEL

Effective systems are not static; they evolve through deliberate reflection, analysis, and adaptation. A continuous improvement model is therefore essential to maintaining relevance, effectiveness, and impact over time. This model should include a quarterly performance reviews to assess progress against established metrics and identify areas for adjustment, programmatic refinements informed by data, stakeholder input, and emerging trends, and a learning-based evaluation approach that prioritizes ongoing learning, iteration, and system refinement over one-time assessment.

By embedding continuous improvement into the operational structure, the system is positioned to respond dynamically to changing conditions while maintaining alignment with long-term objectives.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Phased Approach to Institutionalization

The transition from strategy to sustained system requires a structured, multi-year implementation approach. This phased model ensures that foundational elements are established early, while allowing for expansion and eventual institutionalization.

Year 1: Foundation

The initial phase focuses on establishing the structural and operational conditions necessary for effective system performance:

- Formalization of OVP authority through executive and administrative action
- Establishment of governance structures, including cross-sector coordination mechanisms
- Development and launch of an integrated data and performance management system
- Securing of initial funding to support core operations and early implementation

Years 2–3: Expansion

The second phase emphasizes scaling and strengthening system capacity:

- Enhancement of coordination across agencies and community partners
- Expansion of programs and services to reach a broader population
- Diversification and expansion of funding sources to support growth and sustainability

Years 4–5: Institutionalization

The final phase focuses on embedding the system within the long-term structure of public safety:

- Full integration of governance models into standard operating procedures

- Establishment of recurring and protected funding streams
- Demonstration of measurable impact through sustained reductions in violence and improved community outcomes

This phased approach ensures that implementation is both deliberate and adaptive—building the necessary foundation, expanding with intention, and ultimately institutionalizing a system capable of delivering sustained and measurable impact.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



Risk Assessment and Mitigation

The long-term effectiveness of this strategy is contingent upon the system’s ability to anticipate, mitigate, and structurally address key risks that could undermine implementation and sustainability. These risks are not incidental; they are predictable challenges that emerge in the absence of formalized systems.

Risk: Insufficient Institutional Authority

Mitigation: Establishment of a formal governance structure

A lack of clearly defined authority constrains the ability of the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) to coordinate across agencies and enforce alignment. This risk must be addressed through the formalization of governance structures that codify OVP’s role, responsibilities, and decision-making authority.

Risk: Funding Instability

Mitigation: Development of dedicated and protected funding streams

Reliance on short-term or discretionary funding introduces systemic instability. Establishing dedicated, recurring funding streams ensures continuity of operations, workforce stability, and long-term planning capacity.

Risk: System Fragmentation

Mitigation: Centralized coordination through OVP

In the absence of a central coordinating entity, systems tend to operate in parallel rather than in alignment. OVP must function as the integrative force that ensures coherence across sectors, agencies, and partners.

Risk: Weak Accountability Structures

Mitigation: Implementation of integrated data systems and public reporting mechanisms

Without a unified accountability framework, performance cannot be effectively measured or managed. The development of integrated data systems, coupled with transparent reporting, is essential to ensuring both internal accountability and public trust.

VII. DEFINING SUCCESS

The success of this strategy must be evaluated through the performance of the system as a whole, rather than through isolated programmatic outcomes.

The system can be considered effective when:

- The Office of Violence Prevention operates with clearly defined and codified authority
- Agencies and partners function in coordinated alignment with shared strategic objectives
- Funding is stable, sustained, and structurally protected
- Data is systematically integrated and actively informs decision-making processes
- Community trust is established, maintained, and strengthened over time

These indicators collectively reflect the presence of a functioning, accountable, and sustainable ecosystem.

IX. FINAL CONCLUSION

Part IV underscores a central and defining insight. Sustainability is not achieved through funding alone; it is achieved through structure. Austin & Travis County have established the essential components of an effective violence prevention strategy:

- A clearly articulated vision
- A defined strategic framework
- A network of community-based partnerships

The remaining task is to institutionalize these components within a system designed for durability. The work now is to build a system that endures.

Final Statement

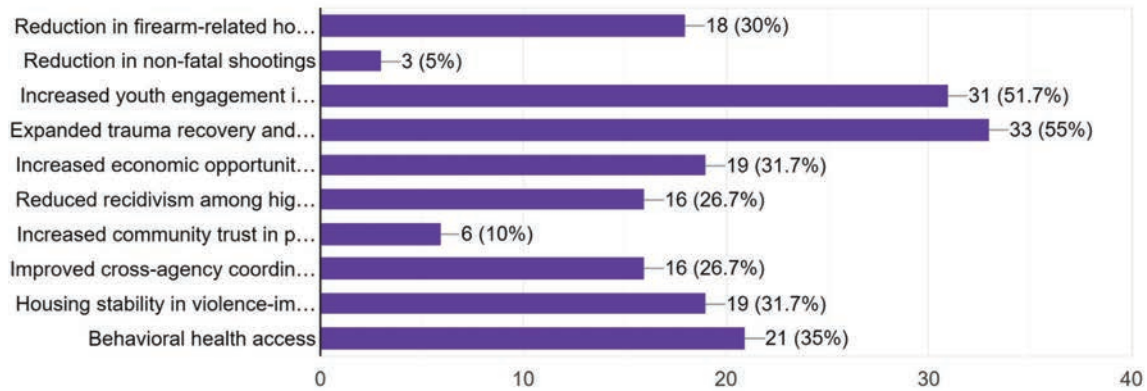
Violence prevention is not sustained by intention alone; it is sustained through deliberate and disciplined design. It becomes permanent when governance is clearly defined, when funding is stable and protected, and when accountability is both rigorous and continuous. These are not peripheral or administrative considerations—they are the structural conditions that determine whether this work is sustained or diminished over time. When these conditions are met, systems no longer function in isolation; they operate in alignment. Communities experience stability not as a temporary outcome, but as a consistent and reliable condition. Most importantly, lives are not only protected in moments of crisis—they are preserved through sustained, system-level intervention. This is not merely a strategy. It is the foundation for a permanent public safety infrastructure—one rooted in prevention, grounded in healing, and driven by opportunity. At the center of this system must be a fully empowered Office of Violence Prevention—an entity capable of integrating efforts, advancing strategy, and ensuring that implementation remains both responsive to community needs and accountable to measurable outcomes. Because the true measure of this work is not what is articulated in strategy, but what is sustained in practice. And what is sustained is what ultimately saves lives.

APPENDIX

Strategic Action Planning Survey Graphs

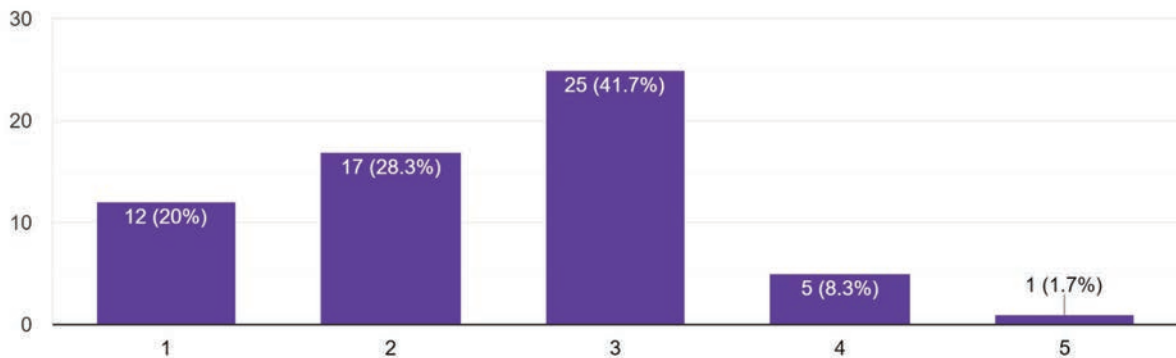
1. Over the next 3–5 years, which THREE outcomes should Austin prioritize most? (Select 3)

60 responses



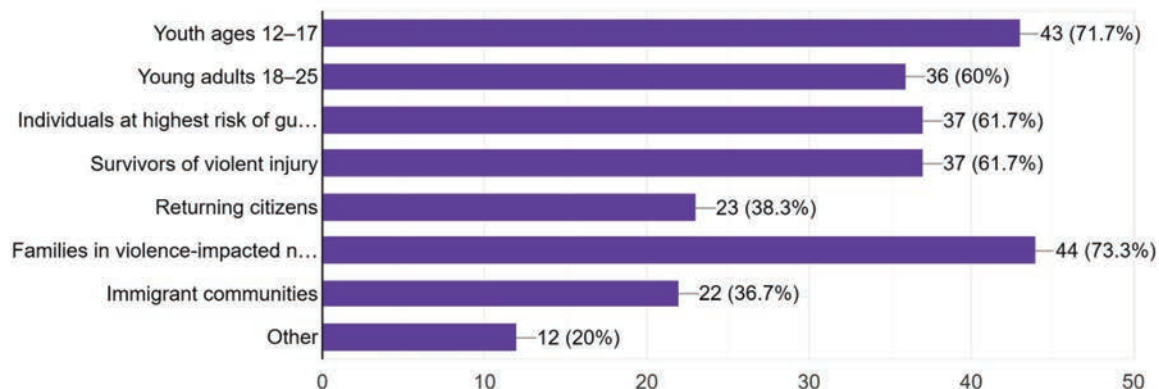
2. On a scale of 1–5, how clearly defined are Austin's current violence prevention goals?

60 responses



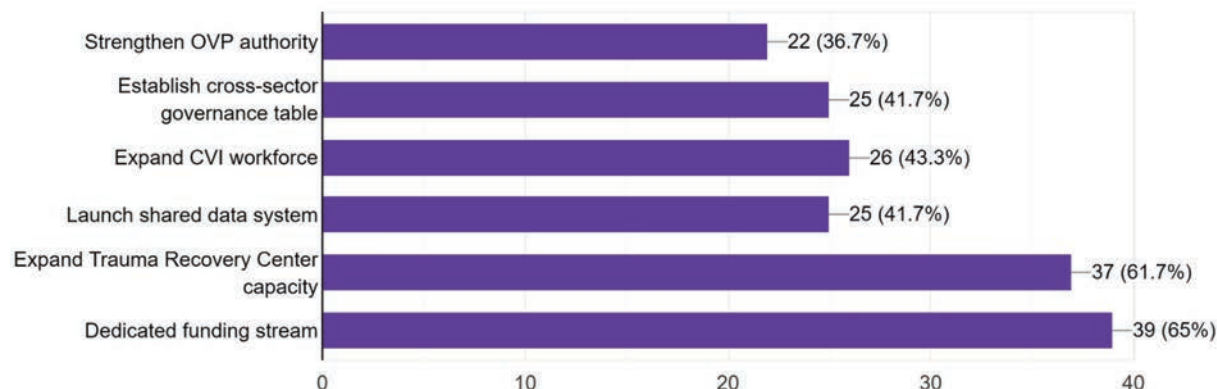
3. Which populations should be explicitly prioritized in the Strategic Action Plan? (Check all that apply)

60 responses



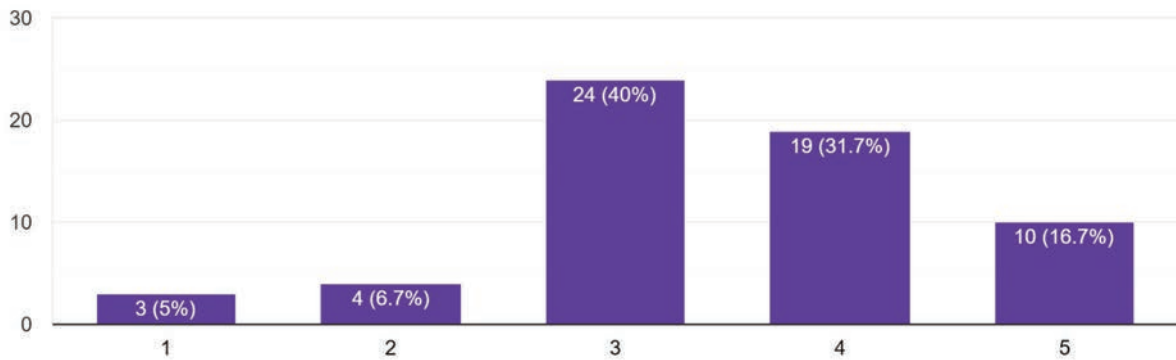
5. Which activities should begin in Year 1? (Foundation Phase) (Check all that apply)

60 responses



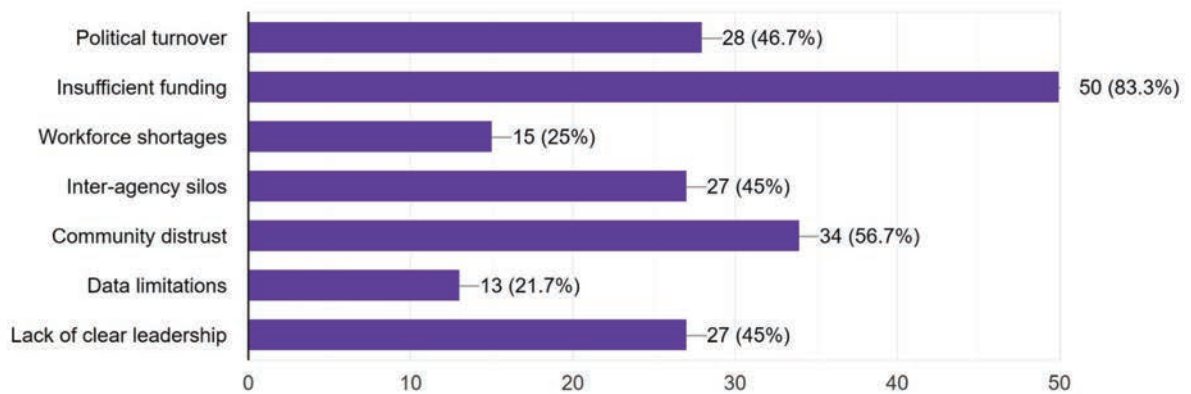
6. How realistic is a 3–5 year timeline for measurable reductions in violence?

60 responses



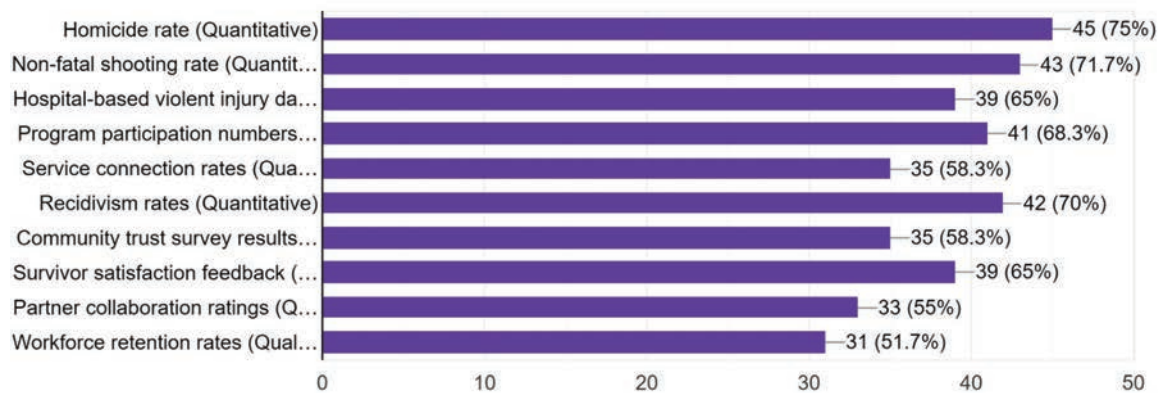
7. What are the greatest implementation risks? (Check up to 3)

60 responses



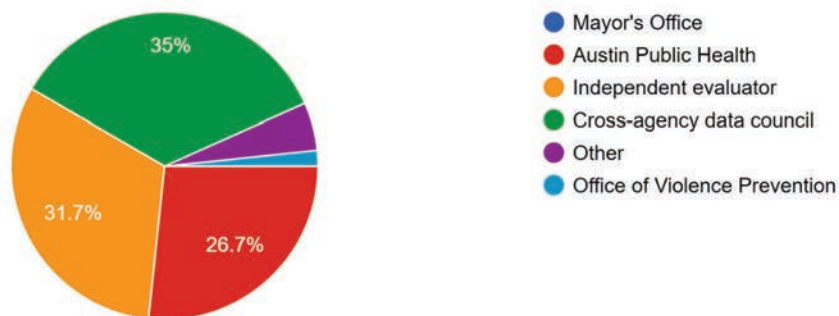
8. Which indicators should be REQUIRED for annual public reporting? (Check all that apply)

60 responses



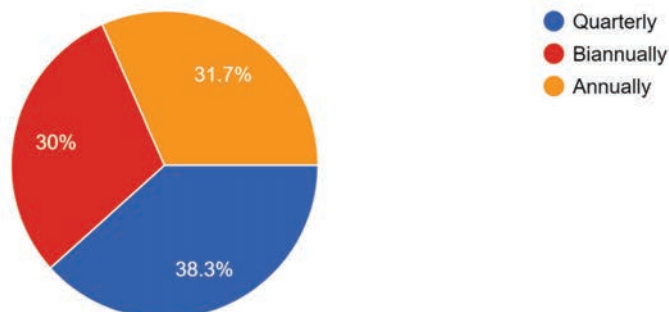
9. Who should be responsible for managing cross-sector data?

60 responses



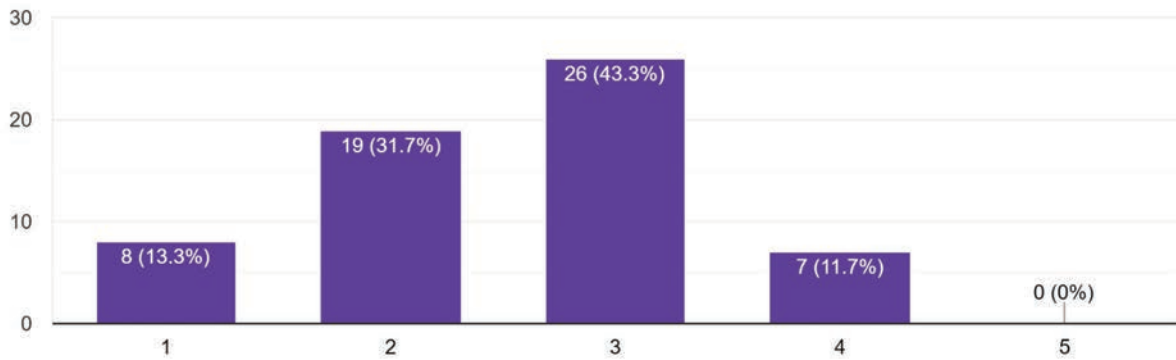
11. How frequently should public reporting occur?

60 responses



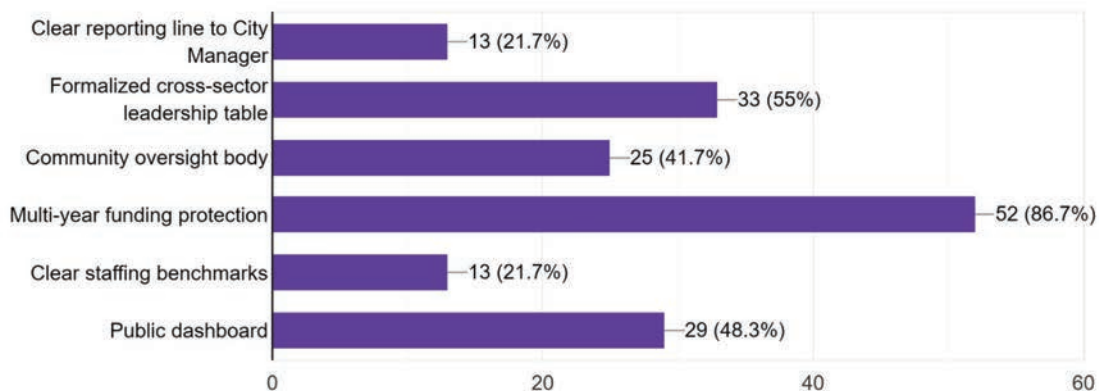
12. The Office of Violence Prevention currently has sufficient authority to coordinate city-wide efforts.

60 responses



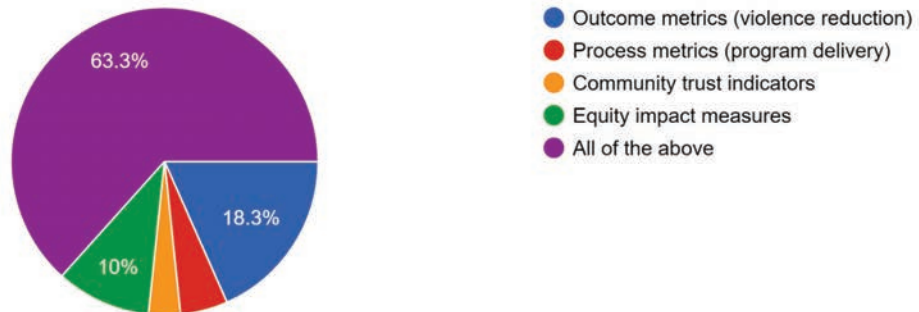
13. What governance changes are most urgent? (Check up to 3)

60 responses



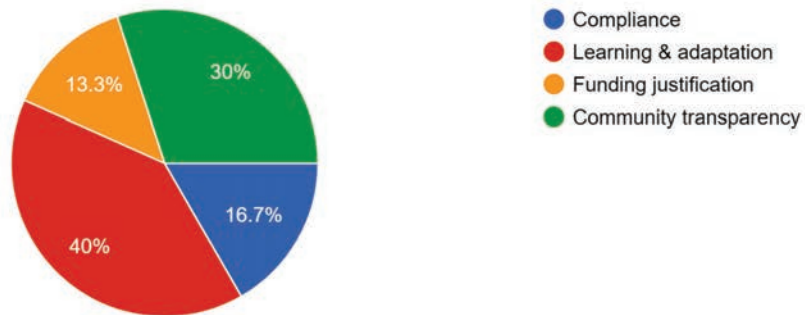
14. Accountability should prioritize:

60 responses



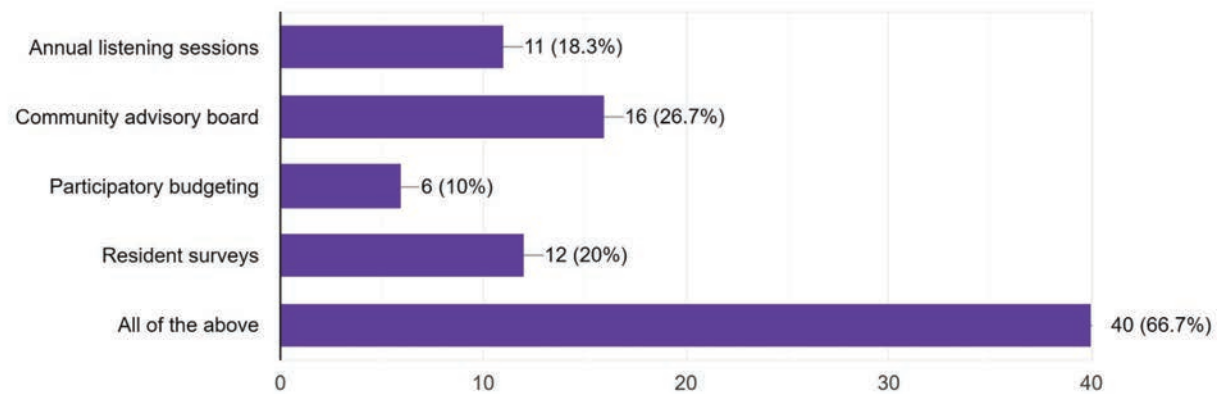
15. Evaluation should primarily focus on:

60 responses



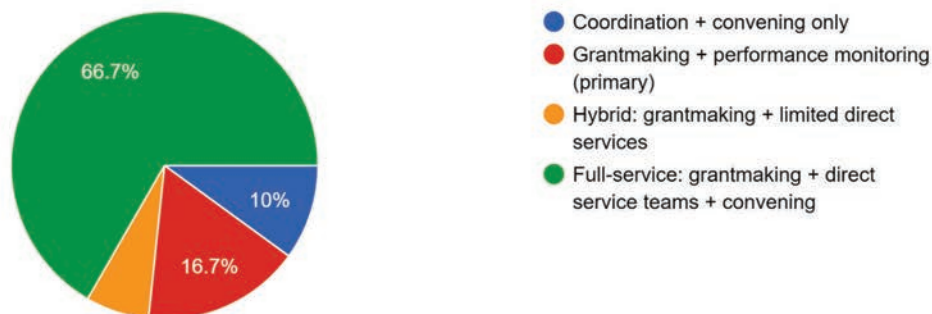
16. How should community voice be institutionalized?

60 responses



17. Which operating model should Austin's OVP be accountable for? (Select one)

60 responses



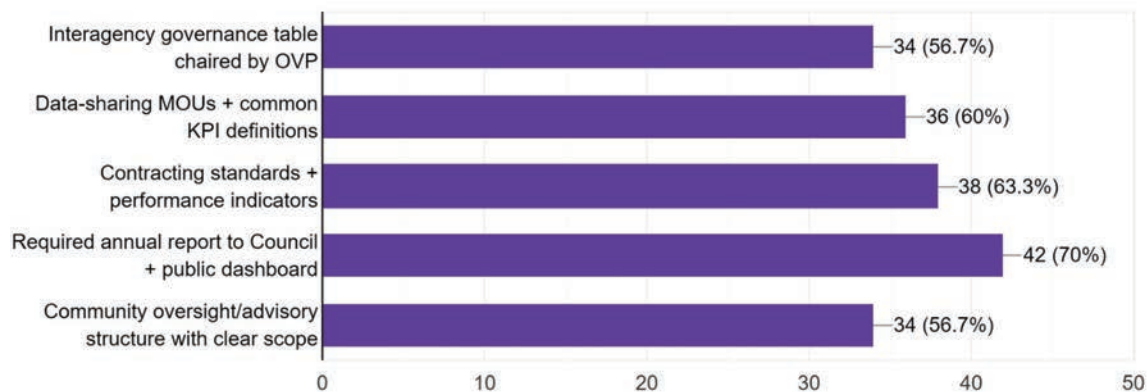
18. Where should OVP sit to succeed? (Select one)

60 responses



19. What authority must be formalized in writing? (Select all)

60 responses



20. Minimum staffing required in FY1 to be credible?
58 responses

