The California Wellness Foundation: Commitment to Gun Violence Prevention

OUR NORTH STAR

We all want to live in safe and healthy communities free from gun violence.

- Gun violence not only threatens individuals' lives – it **harms entire communities**.
- Everyone's **safety and wellness are diminished** when any part of our community experiences violence.
- Wellness is promoted when neighborhoods are **economically and environmentally vital, socially connected, civically engaged and safe.**

THE NEED

Gun violence poses a daily threat to the health and safety of our communities.

- Mass shootings dominate headlines, while daily gun violence often goes **unnoticed by the media and the public.**
- Gun violence **traumatizes entire communities** and **disproportionately harms communities of color.**
- Young people exposed to gun violence struggle with **lasting trauma and health problems**.
- Research estimates that gun violence costs the American economy **at least $229 billion annually**, including $8.6 billion in direct expenses such as medical care.
- California's gun safety policies are among the most advanced in the nation, but the work is not done. **Federal policies must be in place** to curb gun violence, as guns and ammunition legally purchased outside our state can be easily transported across state lines and do harm in our communities.

RESEARCH SHOWS...

Black children and teens are
14x more likely
than White children and teens, of the same age, to die by gun homicide

Nearly 19,000
California Latinos have died from gunfire in the last 20 years

OUR RESPONSE

We have evidence-based insights into what reduces gun violence.

- Cal Wellness approaches gun violence as a **public health epidemic**, rather than a criminal justice problem. Through public education to **shift behavior and policy and community-based solutions**, we can prevent violence before it happens.

- Cal Wellness and other funders must partner with communities most affected by gun violence, including communities of color, to **research, identify, and invest in solutions**.

- **Community-driven prevention strategies** have successfully reduced gun violence in cities across the state and nation. We need to collaborate on solutions that focus on prevention as well as the after-effects of violence.

- We must **expand the spotlight beyond mass shootings** to include everyday gun violence in communities, including suicides and domestic violence incidents.

OUR COMMITMENT TO GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION IS REFLECTED IN THE GRANTEES THAT WE SUPPORT

- Advance Peace
- Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence
- Californians for Safety and Justice
- Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment
- CFLeads
- Community Justice Reform Coalition
- Faith in Action Network

- Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence
- Guardian Foundation
- Hope and Heal Fund
- The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention
- University of California Firearm Violence Research Center

WHY CAL WELLNESS

We have always viewed gun violence as a preventable public health epidemic that harms entire communities.

- Cal Wellness is the **largest foundation funder of gun violence prevention and community violence reduction** in California, and among the largest in the country, with investments **totalling more than $150 million**.

- Since 1992, we have invested in research and innovative organizations addressing gun violence prevention. Our **$30 million Violence Prevention Initiative** was the first grantmaking program approved by our board, shortly after the foundation was established. This work is embedded within our DNA.

- We recognize that **gun violence is intimately connected to other realities** facing the communities most affected—poverty, limited opportunity, social or economic disinvestment, and lack of access to mental health care and other social supports.

- We host a biennial "Healing in Justice" convening, the **largest gathering of violence prevention advocates** in California.

- We are committed to continuing our work to mobilize other funders and educate policy makers to **support public health approaches to gun violence prevention.**