



MOMENTUM FOR PEACE

STRENGTHENING
COMMUNITY



**newport
news** | BUILT ON
BREAKTHROUGHS

2025 COMPREHENSIVE
Community Safety Plan

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The City of Newport News is building ***momentum for peace*** — a sustained, citywide movement toward a stronger, safer, and more connected community. Through comprehensive and coordinated efforts to reduce gun violence and enhance public safety, Newport News has demonstrated that meaningful progress is possible when leadership, strategy, and community partnership align. Under the leadership of Mayor Phillip Jones, in collaboration with the Office of Community Safety (OCS), and a broad network of community partners, the city has achieved measurable reductions in violence while increasing trust, engagement, and opportunity across neighborhoods.



In his 2024 State of the City address, Mayor Jones set a bold and ambitious goal — to reduce gun violence by 15 percent within 18 months. To support this vision, the city launched Youth T.H.R.I.V.E., a citywide initiative designed to build momentum for peace by connecting youth, parents, and caregivers to accessible programming, resources, and opportunities throughout Newport News. Alongside these efforts, community violence prevention and intervention programs focused on engaging individuals at highest risk played a critical role in disrupting cycles of violence. **As a result, the city not only met its goal but exceeded it — achieving a 35 percent reduction in shootings by the end of 2024 and another 19 percent reduction in 2025. This reflects a total decrease of 47 percent in homicides and**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

non-fatal shootings over the two years, and demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating law enforcement with prevention-focused, community-driven strategies.

This momentum is powered by key initiatives, including Youth T.H.R.I.V.E., the establishment of the OCS, the hiring of the city's first Community Violence Prevention Manager, Synethia J. White, and the creation of the Youth Public Safety Council (YPSC). Together, these efforts center youth empowerment, trauma-informed engagement, and community resilience as foundational elements of lasting peace.

The OCS leads the development, implementation, and monitoring of policies and initiatives aimed at reducing violence within specific populations and neighborhoods. Its work includes preventing youth and young adult violence, promoting healing and resilience, and mobilizing stakeholders around a comprehensive, citywide safety strategy. Through collaboration, advocacy, and data-informed action, OCS strengthens positive outcomes for individuals and neighborhoods most impacted by violence.

Guided by a Public Health Approach and the city's Seven Pillars of Violence Prevention, this work reflects a holistic vision of safety — one that recognizes peace as both the absence of violence and the presence of opportunity, trust, and well-being.

The 2025 Comprehensive Community Safety Plan captures this growing momentum for peace. It outlines the shared goals, coordinated actions, and collective achievements of Newport News' violence prevention ecosystem, highlights key partnerships, and charts a clear path forward for sustaining violence reduction while continuing to build a safe, thriving city for all residents.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

I am proud to share the progress our city has made in advancing public safety and preventing violence through comprehensive, community-driven strategies. This progress is fueled by targeted initiatives and strong partnerships that center youth development, healing, and community well-being as essential elements of lasting safety.



During my 2024 State of the City Address, I pledged to reduce gun violence by 15 percent within 18 months. I am pleased to report that as of December 2025, the city has far exceeded that goal, achieving a 47 percent reduction in gun violence since the start of 2024. These results demonstrate what coordinated action, collaboration, and commitment can accomplish.

An important milestone in uniting these efforts is the hiring of our first-ever Community Violence Prevention Manager, Synethia J. White. Ms. White's leadership ensures that our programs, partnerships, and policies work together seamlessly to strengthen safety, opportunity, and trust across Newport News.

City leadership continues to support parallel and complementary strategies that address both enforcement and prevention, recognizing that sustainable safety is rooted in community trust, opportunity, and engagement. Together, we are building a safer, stronger, and more united Newport News—where every resident can thrive and every neighborhood is a place of peace and promise.

PHILLIP JONES

Mayor

City of Newport News

As City Manager, I have witnessed the collective progress Newport News has made in advancing public safety and reducing gun violence. Under the leadership of Mayor Phillip Jones and the City Council and through the collaboration of the Newport News Police Department, the Office of Community Safety, and our dedicated community partners, we have built a model of coordinated, data-driven, and compassionate violence prevention.



Our city's achievements, which include exceeding our goal of a 15 percent reduction in gun violence with a 47 percent decrease in shootings, are a testament to what is possible when government and community work hand in hand. Initiatives like the Youth T.H.R.I.V.E. Program, the Office of Community Safety, and the Youth Public Safety Council have shown the power of investing in our young people, fostering trust, and promoting healing and opportunity.

The Seven Pillars of Violence Prevention guide our ongoing efforts to address the root causes of violence, strengthen families, and build a caring, resilient community. As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to sustaining progress, deepening partnerships, and ensuring that every resident of Newport News feels safe, valued, and supported.

ALAN K. ARCHER

City Manager

City of Newport News

Dear Residents, Partners, and Leaders of
Newport News,

It is my honor to serve as the Community Violence
Prevention Manager for our city — a role created
in response to the urgent need for safer
neighborhoods and a more resilient community.
Together, we have made remarkable progress
in reducing violence, supporting our youth, and



building trust across Newport News. Our
collective commitment has resulted in significant
decreases in shootings and homicides, and our
clearance rates now exceed national averages.
These achievements are a testament to the
power of collaboration and the unwavering
support of our city management, mayor, and
city council.

Our mission is clear: to foster a community
where every resident feels safe, valued, and
empowered. We are advancing this mission
through strategic partnerships with citizens,
individuals impacted by violence, and
community-based organizations. By listening to
those with lived experience and elevating
youth voices, we are shaping solutions that
reflect the realities and hopes of our
neighborhoods.

The path forward is rooted in partnership and
innovation. We are building a robust violence
prevention ecosystem — one that connects
people to life-changing resources, strengthens
community organizations, and creates safe
spaces for all. Our Youth Public Safety Council
and community conversations have shown that
lasting change comes from engaging those

most affected by violence and investing in their leadership. We are also planning to build coordination among young leader groups, such as the Young Adult Police Commissioners and the Mayor's Youth Commission, to ensure a unified approach to community safety.

I am deeply grateful for the leadership and vision of our city management, mayor, and city council. Their steadfast support has empowered us to pursue bold strategies and invest in the well-being of every resident. I also extend my thanks to our community partners, grassroots organizations, and the many individuals who have contributed their time, expertise, and lived experience to this work.

As we move forward, I invite each of you to join us in building peace and strengthening our community. Together, we can create a Newport News where safety, opportunity, and hope are realities for all.

With gratitude and resolve,

SYNETHIA J. WHITE
Community Violence Prevention Manager
City of Newport News





CITIES UNITED
1718 W. MUHAMMAD ALI BLVD.
LOUISVILLE, KY 40205

502.709.6462
INFO@CITIESUNITED.ORG
CITIESUNITED.ORG

December 1, 2025

Anthony D. Smith
Executive Director

On behalf of Cities United (CU), I write in full support of **"Momentum for Peace: Strengthening Community"** the City of Newport News' bold comprehensive public safety plan. Through the leadership of Mayor Phillip Jones and others, and the establishment of the Office of Community Safety, Newport News is responding to a public health crisis, as well as laying the foundation for long-term, comprehensive public safety infrastructure.

At Cities United, we believe that transformation happens when jurisdictions center those most impacted, align public will with political will, and invest in sustainable solutions. Newport News is doing just that. Their strategy is a direct reflection of the values we promote through our **Redefining Public Safety framework** — building Impact, elevating Influence, maximizing leverage, and driving learning across sectors and generations.

The Youth Public Safety Council in particular exemplifies the CU commitment to authentic, trauma-informed engagement of young leaders. Born out of community scans and stakeholder mapping, this initiative ensures that young leaders are not just consulted, but positioned as co-creators in the comprehensive public safety ecosystem. Their role as peer educators, community advisors, and future technical assis-

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tance leaders aligns directly with CU's investment in developing **credible messengers**, and solutions built by young leaders that are both healing and strategic.

Newport News' significant reduction in shootings and a clearance rate that surpasses the national average are powerful examples of what can happen when jurisdictions implement a comprehensive public safety strategy. Beyond policy on paper, it's measurable progress rooted in trust, coordination, and community ownership. The city's investment in the Youth T.H.R.I.V.E. Program, capacity-building for community partners, and the seven-pillar violence prevention framework speaks to a long-term vision that moves beyond crisis response into sustainable systems-building.

Furthermore, this plan mirrors the work we do across our national network:

- **Centering young leaders and families in the solution.**
- **Embedding public safety into neighborhood and city systems.**
- **Leveraging cross-sector partnerships for maximum reach.**
- **Building infrastructure that outlasts leadership changes and pilot funding.**

We are proud to serve as a partner, coach and capacity builder for the City of Newport News, where leadership is not afraid to redefine public safety from the ground up. We stand ready to support the city as they continue their efforts to deepen community engagement, align systems, and amplify the voices of young leaders and others driving real change.

With gratitude and solidarity,

Anthony D. Smith
Executive Director

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GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The Public Health Approach

The City of Newport News' violence prevention strategy is grounded in a public health approach framework that **treats violence not only as a criminal justice issue but as a preventable condition** that affects the health, well-being, and stability of the entire community.

A SCIENCE-BASED, MULTI-DISCIPLINARY MODEL

Public health draws from a wide range of disciplines — **medicine, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, criminology, education, and economics** — to understand the complex factors that contribute to violence. This multi-disciplinary foundation **enables the city to respond using data, evidence, and collaboration** rather than isolated enforcement efforts.

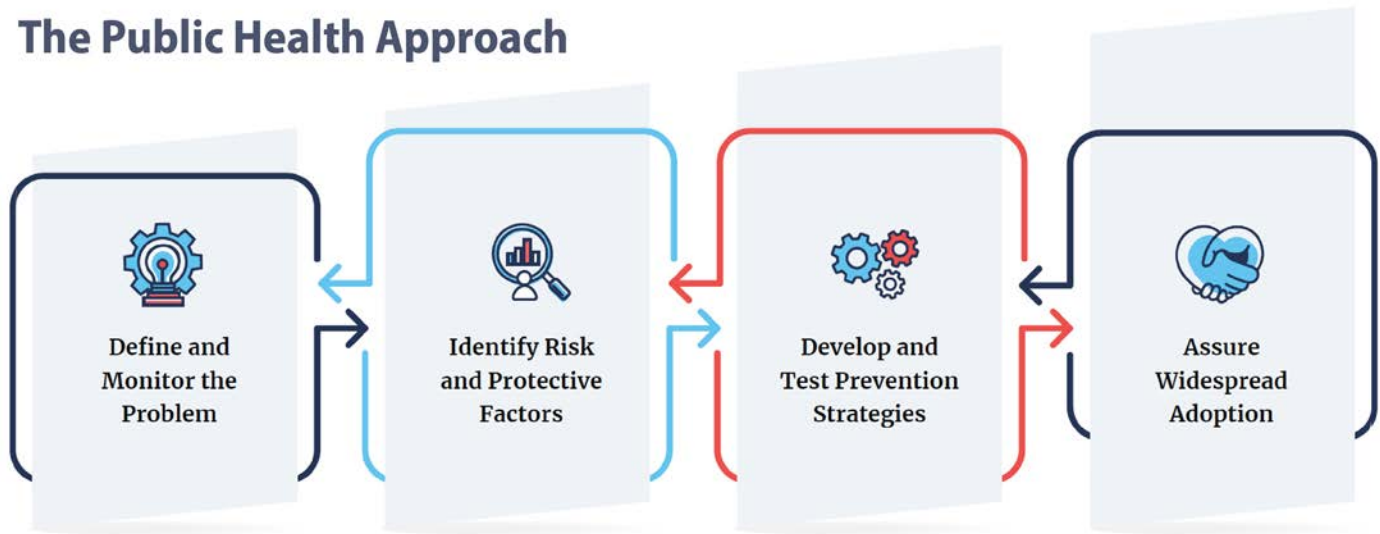
By addressing root causes and social determinants such as poverty, trauma, housing insecurity, and lack of opportunity, Newport News seeks to reduce violence at its source rather than merely respond to its symptoms.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), preventing violence through a public health lens involves four key steps:

- 1. Defining and monitoring the problem**
Collecting and analyzing data to understand the scope, impact, and patterns of violence.
- 2. Identifying risk and protective factors**
Recognizing the conditions and behaviors that increase or reduce the likelihood of violence.
- 3. Developing and testing prevention strategies**
Designing interventions and policies that promote safety and resilience.
- 4. Assuring widespread adoption**
Implementing proven programs broadly and sustainably through collaboration and continuous evaluation. (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024, April 9. About the Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention.*)

The Public Health Approach



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

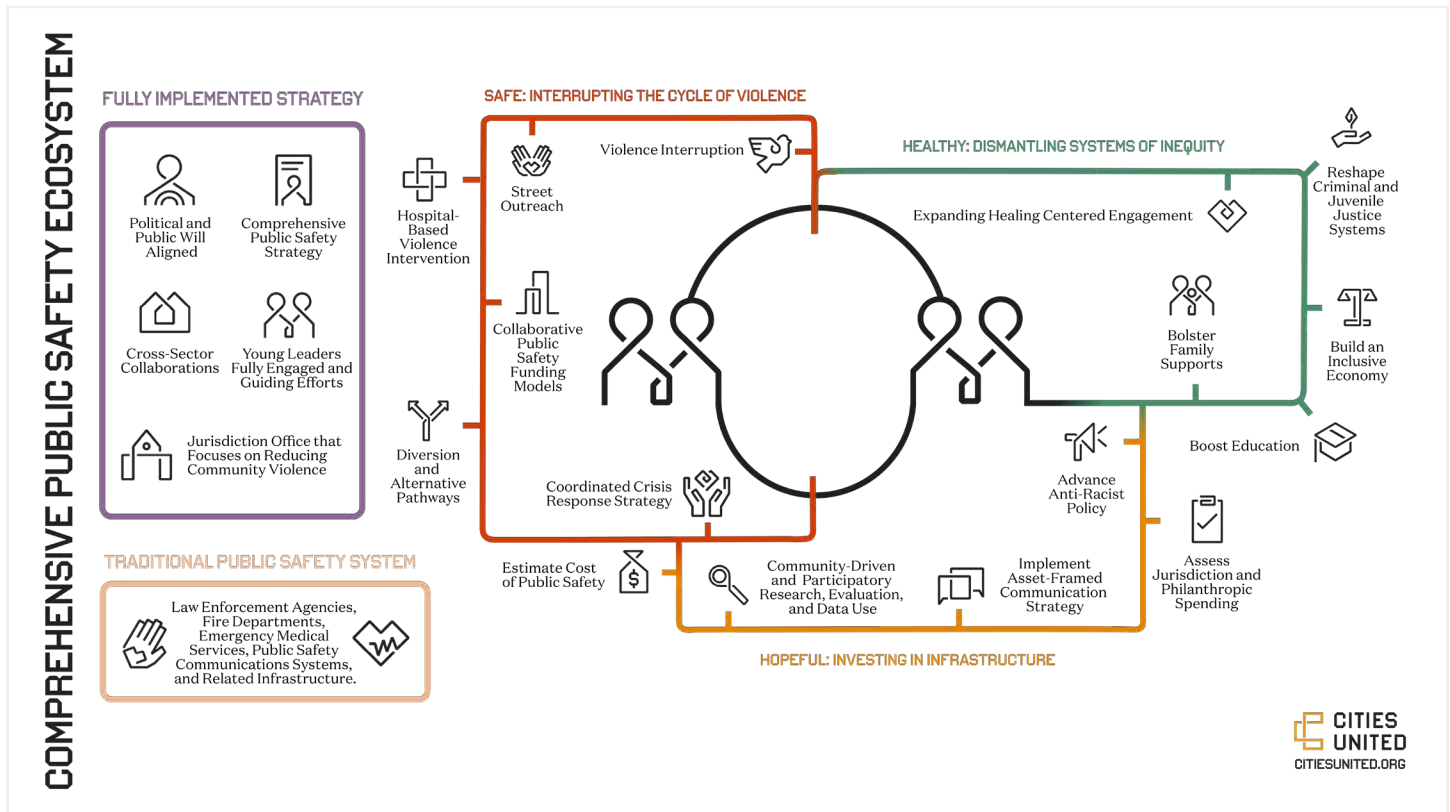
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024, April 9. About the Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention.)

A WHOLE-OF-COMMUNITY APPROACH

The Newport News model expands upon the CDC framework by integrating multiple sectors — including health, education, justice, social services, and the private sector — into a unified system of prevention. This collective impact model ensures that solutions are **community-informed, trauma-aware, and equity-driven**.

Through the OCS, the city coordinates these efforts to align policy, data, and practice. Law enforcement partners with schools, nonprofits, and neighborhood organizations to share insights, exchange data, and co-design prevention strategies that promote opportunity, stability, and trust.

CONNECTING FRAMEWORK TO PRACTICE



The city's **Seven Pillars of Violence Prevention** operationalize the public health model at the local level. Each pillar — ranging from Conflict Resolution to Economic Prosperity — represents a key determinant of safety and well-being. Together, they form an ecosystem that promotes healing, accountability, and growth across generations.

By combining **scientific rigor, cross-sector collaboration, and authentic community engagement**, Newport News is transforming the way cities think about public safety. This guiding framework ensures that every initiative under the ***Momentum for Peace*** banner is informed by research, rooted in equity, and designed for long-term impact.

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR PEACE

The Seven Pillars of Violence Prevention



The Pillars of Violence Prevention were developed to support a holistic, public health-based approach to addressing violence in Newport News. These pillars serve as the foundation for prevention and intervention efforts, which are prioritized across seven key areas — **effective conflict resolution, healthy family functioning, economic prosperity, gun control & safety, a caring community, mental wellness & healing, and effective deterrence & adjudication.**

Community violence is recognized as a **complex public health crisis** — one that impacts the emotional, social, and physical well-being of residents. Acts of violence, including gun violence, create ripple effects of fear, grief, and instability that diminish quality of life and hinder community growth.

While violence can affect residents across all socioeconomic groups, most incidents in Newport News occur in neighborhoods facing overlapping challenges related to **economic hardship, limited educational opportunities, public health disparities, inadequate transportation and housing options, and strained community safety resources.** These interconnected barriers often perpetuate **cycles of intergenerational poverty and vulnerability.**

In response, the City of Newport News has committed to a **multi-systemic, collaborative, and comprehensive strategy** to reduce violence. Guided by these seven pillars, the city's efforts unite community partners, internal services prevention programs, and law enforcement efforts to build pathways toward healing, safety, and long-term community resilience.

PILLAR #1: EFFECTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Effective conflict resolution builds safer, stronger communities by empowering individuals and neighborhoods to address disagreements constructively and peacefully.

Measures:

- Percentage of conflicts resolved

PILLAR #2: HEALTHY FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Healthy family functioning strengthens relationships, builds resilience, and fosters safe, supportive home environments that promote community well-being.

Measures:

- Number of programs available that support communication and parenting.



PILLAR #3: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Economic prosperity promotes safety by expanding access to opportunity, education, housing, and healthcare. Addressing concentrated poverty through equitable investment builds stronger, safer, and more resilient communities.

Measures:

- Number of wealth-building programs (employment, trades, savings, credit, homeownership)
- Number of participants in wealth-building programs
- On-time high school graduation rate

PILLAR #4: GUN CONTROL & SAFETY

Gun control and safety initiatives reduce firearm-related harm through prevention, education, and collaboration, creating safer neighborhoods and a stronger sense of community peace.

Measures:

- Gun death rate per 100,000 residents
- Number of gun locks distributed





PILLAR #5: A CARING COMMUNITY

A caring community is collaborative, inclusive, and empathetic — breaking cycles of violence by fostering safety, belonging, and shared responsibility.

Measures:

- Number of cross-sector efforts that prioritize the Public Health Approach to violence prevention.

PILLAR #6: MENTAL WELLNESS & HEALING

Supporting mental wellness and healing reduces the risk of violence by fostering understanding, resilience, and access to care — creating safer, healthier communities for all.

Measures:

- Number of public education campaigns promoting the normalization and availability of mental health services
- Number of initiatives that promote healthy relationships and conflict resolution strategies



PILLAR #7: EFFECTIVE DETERRENCE & ADJUDICATION

Effective deterrence and adjudication promote safety and justice by preventing violent behavior, encouraging cooperation, and ensuring fair and equitable outcomes for all.

Measures:

- Number of high-risk individuals identified and engaged through deterrence and prevention efforts
- Percentage of individuals referred to supportive services or resources through hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) and violence interruption programs
- Number of restorative justice or diversion opportunities implemented within the adjudication process

Implementation & Supporting Strategies:

- Promoting awareness of community norms around nonviolence and accountability
- Developing clear, equitable sanctions for violent behavior
- Expanding accessible opportunities for individuals seeking to disengage from violence
- Strengthening partnerships between law enforcement, courts, and community-based organizations
- Primary and secondary prevention programs like Let Our Voices Empower and Ketchmore Kids which are funded by the City of Newport News.

ADVANCING MOMENTUM THROUGH THE SEVEN PILLARS

The Seven Pillars of Violence Prevention form the foundation of Newport News' commitment to building a safer, more resilient city. Together, they represent a holistic approach that integrates prevention, intervention, enforcement, and healing — acknowledging that true public safety requires more than policing alone.

Each pillar reinforces the others: **conflict resolution** strengthens relationships, **healthy families** nurture stability, **economic prosperity** expands opportunity, **gun safety** saves lives, **a caring community** fosters empathy, **mental wellness** supports healing, and **effective deterrence and adjudication** uphold justice. Collectively, they reflect a coordinated, public health-based strategy that addresses both the causes and the consequences of violence.

As Newport News continues its ***Momentum for Peace***, these pillars will guide ongoing efforts to align city leadership, law enforcement, and community partners around shared goals — creating sustainable systems of safety, equity, and hope. By investing in people, strengthening neighborhoods, and empowering collaboration, the city moves closer to its vision of a community where every resident can live, work, and thrive free from violence.





COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVES

The **Newport News Community Safety Initiative** serves as a cornerstone of the city's violence prevention strategy, advancing collaboration, trust, and data-informed action. **This initiative includes a comprehensive assessment of gun violence to better understand local trends and risk factors, a community-based grant program that empowers local organizations to lead prevention efforts, and a range of outreach programs designed to strengthen relationships between residents and law enforcement.**

Together, these efforts build the foundation for sustained community safety by aligning prevention, intervention, and enforcement strategies around shared goals assuring that every neighborhood has a voice and a stake in creating a safer, more connected Newport News.

Key Components:

- Comprehensive Gun Violence Assessment
- Community-Based Grant Program for Prevention Partners
- Outreach and Engagement Programs to Build Trust with Law Enforcement



A SHARED VISION FOR SAFETY

Newport News' violence prevention work is grounded in collaboration, research, and community voice. The city's efforts began with the Community Safety Initiative, a two-phase approach that has evolved into a comprehensive ecosystem of prevention, intervention, and partnership.

PHASE ONE: RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT

In 2022, the city partnered with the Center for Crime, Equity, and Justice Research and Policy at Christopher Newport University (CNU) to conduct a Comprehensive Gun Violence and Community Safety Assessment. This foundational study identified the root causes of violence and provided data-driven insights that continue to guide policy, programming, and resource allocation.





PHASE TWO: COMMUNITY-BASED GRANTMAKING

Building on those findings, the city launched a Community-Based Violence Prevention Grant Program to empower local organizations addressing the social determinants of violence. Recognizing that lasting safety begins within neighborhoods. The city partners with grassroots organizations, credible messengers, and youth-led groups to extend the reach and impact of prevention and intervention programs.

Since FY 2023, the city's competitive Community-Based Violence Prevention Grant Program has distributed over \$3.1 million to local organizations. In FY 2024 alone, \$1.37 million was awarded to 15 grantees, each addressing root causes of violence through education, employment, housing, trauma-informed care, and conflict mediation. These partnerships strengthen community capacity and ensure that those most impacted by violence help lead the path toward change.

The city's partnership ecosystem demonstrates that safety is a shared responsibility — one that extends beyond law enforcement to include residents, researchers, educators, and youth. By investing in collaboration and shared accountability, Newport News continues to transform its ***Momentum for Peace*** vision into lasting systems of safety, healing, and opportunity.

THE ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

In the City of Newport News, law enforcement actively engages with residents to foster trust and collaboration to create a safer and more inclusive environment for everyone.

The Community & Youth Outreach Division of the Newport News Police Department (NNPD) is a cornerstone of relationship-building between law enforcement and residents. Through more than 35 community programs annually, the division fosters dialogue, trust, and shared responsibility for neighborhood safety, including the Citizen's Police Academy and Hispanic Citizen's Police Academy, which educate residents about law enforcement operations and strengthen transparency. Additionally, the Young Adult Police Commissioners Program gives youth a platform to share their perspectives and contribute to public safety policy discussions, while School Resource Officers maintain a safe and supportive environment in middle and high schools, serving not only as protectors but as mentors who encourage positive relationships between students and officers.

By investing in collaboration and shared accountability, Newport News continues to transform its **Momentum for Peace** vision into lasting systems of safety, healing, and opportunity.





OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SAFETY

Established in 2024, the OCS was created to **lead, coordinate, and evaluate the city's comprehensive violence prevention strategy**. The Office serves as the central hub for aligning policies, programs, and partnerships that promote public safety through prevention, intervention, and community healing.

The OCS develops and implements policies aimed at reducing violence within specific populations and neighborhoods, with an emphasis on youth and young adults. The Office also **works collaboratively with stakeholders across government, education, public health, and community organizations** to design initiatives that promote resilience, opportunity, and restorative outcomes.

Under the leadership of Community Violence Prevention Manager Synethia J. White, the Office's work builds on the Seven Pillars of Violence Prevention — by collaborating with diverse stakeholders, including impacted individuals, community members, and service providers, to create strategic, community-driven solutions. using reflecting a holistic, public-health approach to safety and wellness.

As a result of the foundational work and the commitment made by leadership, Newport News will enhance and sustain existing efforts. In doing so, there are some findings from the community assessment completed by CNU, community conversations, community violence prevention and intervention stakeholders that were prioritized.

These opportunities are listed below:

- An information and awareness effort to create shared understanding of violence prevention and intervention.
- Growing and coordinating Newport News' community violence intervention ecosystem.
- Enhance the quality of intervention with individuals and families at first sign of risk.
- Develop an evaluation and shared accountability framework.
- Adopt proven violence prevention and reduction strategies and implement them with fidelity.

- Capacity Building: Providing training and resources to strengthen the city's prevention and intervention ecosystem.

Measures:

- Number of partnerships and collaborations coordinated by OCS.
- Number of initiatives implemented or supported through OCS leadership.

Core Functions:

- Policy and Program Development: Creating and monitoring initiatives that address violence prevention and promote community healing.
- Partnership Coordination: Serving as a liaison between city departments, law enforcement, and community-based organizations.
- Data and Evaluation: Collecting and analyzing data to assess program effectiveness and guide strategic investments.
- Community Engagement: Fostering collaboration with residents to ensure programs reflect lived experiences and local priorities.





GOALS & ACTION FRAMEWORK

Advancing Our Collective Efforts

ADVANCING THE ECOSYSTEM

Cities that achieve lasting reductions in violence align systems, invest in capacity-building, and affirm their **community violence intervention (CVI) ecosystems**. Newport News is following this national model — connecting public health, education, community safety offices, and grassroots partners into a unified network.

To strengthen this system, the city convened community conversations which served as virtual and in person work sessions where **over 30 organizations participated to lend their voices and lived experiences to the development of this plan**. These discussions refined **the city's five core goals** — aligned with the Seven Pillars of Violence Prevention — and generated **actionable next steps**.



STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS

Each goal addresses a key component of community safety and identifies measurable actions to drive impact.

- **GOAL 1: Connecting Citizens**

Ensure individuals most impacted by violence are connected to life-changing resources that support success.

Aligned Pillars: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

Action Items:

1. Conduct an Impact of Violence Survey and gather first-person accounts.
2. Improve coordination among service providers to close resource gaps.
3. Provide trauma-informed and transitional training for frontline staff.

- **GOAL 2: Community Building & Empowerment**

Strengthen the CVI ecosystem through training, coordination, and advocacy.

Aligned Pillars: All

Action Items:

1. Deliver training to grassroots and community-based organizations.
2. Establish a coordinated network for shared accountability.
3. Conduct funding scans to identify and fill resource gaps.
4. Use the **Unite Us** platform to support integrated service coordination.

***Unite Us** is an end-to-end software that helps identify needs earlier, target the right interventions, and coordinate and track real results, helping its users invest smarter, serve better, and measure what matters — all in one place.*



- **GOAL 3: Internal Service Coordination**

Strengthen interagency collaboration and streamline partnerships to maximize efficiency and collective impact.

Aligned Pillars: All

Action Items:

1. Create a Collective Review Board for accountability and alignment.
2. Map existing partnerships to avoid redundancy and leverage expertise.
3. Ensure all partners are trained and connected through the **Unite Us** Platform.



- **GOAL 4: Safe Neighborhoods**

Ensure Newport News communities are places where people live, work, and play without fear of violence.

Aligned Pillars: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7

Action Items:

1. Use police and community data to identify high-need areas and conduct environmental scans.
2. Conduct door-to-door engagement to identify safe spaces and build local trust.
3. Promote safety through asset-based community messaging.
4. Host community-led events that celebrate resilience and unity.



- **GOAL 5: Safe Spaces**

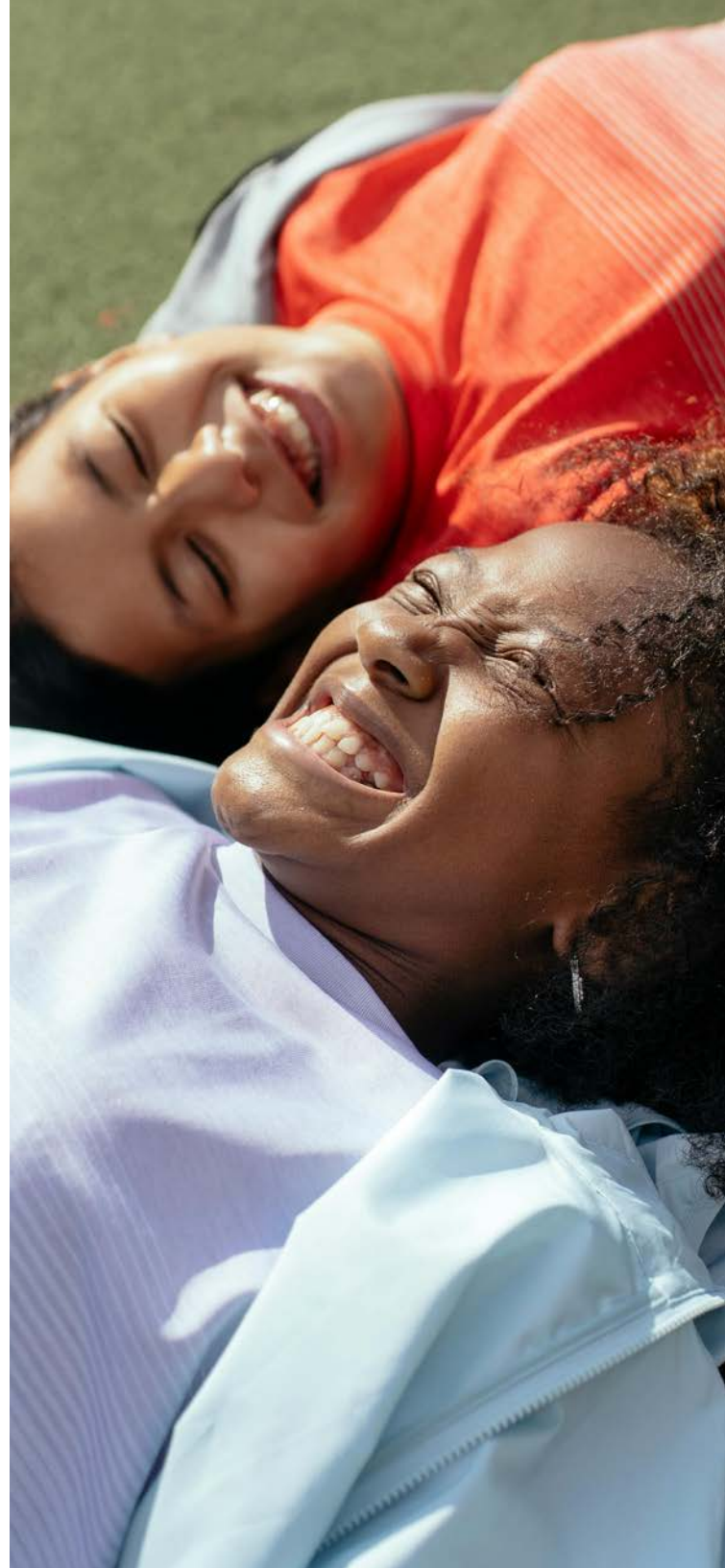
Develop accessible environments offering meaningful, intergenerational activities that foster connection and belonging.

Aligned Pillar: 5

Strategic Priorities: People, Places

Action Items:

1. Identify and activate community spaces for youth and residents.
2. Develop programs that integrate art, healing, mentorship, and recreation.





"Before joining the Youth Public Safety Council, I didn't think my voice mattered. Now I help lead conversations about safety in my neighborhood and mentor younger kids. It's empowering to know that the city is listening and that we're building something better together."

— YPSC Peace Ambassador
J. Smith (16)



YOUTH PUBLIC SAFETY COUNCIL: YOUTH VOICE AT THE CENTER

Established in 2024 through a national grant from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the YPSC represents a **groundbreaking collaboration among the City of Newport News, the Hampton & Peninsula Health Districts, and community-based organizations** including *Abu Unity Incorporated*, *Let Our Voices Empower (LOVE)*, and *Umi*.

Born from a citywide environmental scan and stakeholder mapping process, the YPSC was designed by Kaaleah Jones and Jwan Moore as a **grassroots-informed, youth-centered response** to understanding community violence and shaping sustainable, community-rooted strategies. Kaaleah Jones (*Abu Unity Foundation*) and Jwan Moore (*Taking Back Our Youth*) both participated in the Community Conversation series and took significant leadership roles in the creation of the YPSC. These young leaders were able to utilize the findings of the Community Conversation series to design listening sessions that would allow young people between the ages of 12 and 24 to share how violence is impacting their communities.

The YPSC's mission is to **elevate authentic youth input** through a trauma-informed, youth-led model — creating safe spaces where young people with lived experience can share how violence affects their lives and propose actionable solutions for systemic change. The council's immediate goal is to generate data that informs city policy and programming, while its long-term vision builds the capacity of youth members to serve as peer educators, public safety advisors, and credible messengers locally and nationally.

INSIGHTS FROM YOUTH VOICES

In focus groups and listening sessions, young residents shared candid perspectives:

- Violence has normalized daily life — many expressed constant vigilance, avoidance of certain areas, and growing desensitization.
- Social media amplifies conflicts, while diminished community connectedness has weakened “the village.”
- Youth defined true safety as freedom from constant alertness and the presence of trusted mentors and elders.
- They called for more inclusive events, stronger family support, and greater access to jobs, recreation, and positive role models.

BUILDING A STRONGER ECOSYSTEM

These goals and actions represent the next phase of Newport News' ***Momentum for Peace*** — a commitment to collaboration, innovation, and shared responsibility. By aligning data, partnerships, and lived experience, the city continues to build a resilient ecosystem where safety and opportunity grow together.

The OCS will continue to do the following:

1. Strengthening the Violence Prevention Ecosystem

The city will continue to grow its CVI network by deepening partnerships and building the capacity of community organizations, schools, faith-based leaders, healthcare providers, and law enforcement. This interconnected system ensures that prevention and intervention efforts are collaborative, responsive, and rooted in shared accountability.

2. Advancing Data and Evaluation

Through the OCS and partnerships with local research institutions, Newport News will enhance its capacity to collect, analyze, and share data that measures outcomes and identifies emerging needs. Data transparency will help evaluate program effectiveness and guide resource allocation to areas of highest impact.





3. Expanding Youth Leadership and Opportunity

Youth engagement remains central to the city's prevention strategy. Building on the success of Youth T.H.R.I.V.E. and the YPSC, Newport News will expand leadership development, support young leader connection opportunities, mentorship, and workforce readiness initiatives to help young residents serve as agents of change in their neighborhoods.

4. Deepening Interdepartmental Coordination

City departments will continue aligning around the Seven Pillars of Violence Prevention, integrating violence reduction strategies into housing, recreation, health, and economic programs. This cross-sector approach ensures that safety is woven into every aspect of city planning and service delivery.

5. Promoting Healing and Public Awareness

The city will invest in public education campaigns that normalize mental wellness, celebrate community care, and elevate stories of resilience. By shifting the narrative from fear to healing, Newport News will strengthen the social fabric that prevents violence before it occurs.

6. Sustaining Investment and Innovation

Newport News will pursue sustained funding and federal partnerships to expand prevention programs, technology, and community capacity-building. Innovation — whether through policy, programming, or partnership — will remain the cornerstone of the city's approach.



PATH FORWARD

Building on the measurable progress achieved over the past two years, the City of Newport News is entering a new phase of coordinated, data-driven, and community-informed action. The next stage of the city's violence prevention strategy emphasizes **sustainability, alignment, and long-term impact** — ensuring that every success contributes to a safer, healthier, and more resilient community.

The work of the members of the Community Conversation series and YPSC has outlined the following tasks that support goal attainment for the next two years.

GOALS	TASKS
Connecting Citizens	Build on the strengths of the YPSC and continue outreach and informational efforts to specifically engage service providers and those who are most impacted by violence. Build a collaborative effort among existing youth organizations facilitated and supported by the City of Newport News (Mayor's Youth Commission, Young Adult Police Commissioners, YPSC).
Community Building & Empowerment	Develop a capacity building series that strengthens the community violence prevention and intervention ecosystem.
Internal Service Coordination	Assess the current ecosystem to identify opportunities, redundancies to increase efficiency.
Safe Neighborhoods	Partner with the neighborhood services to build relationships and partner in asset-based community development initiatives in areas identified by data as high need.
Safe Spaces	Work with internal and external stakeholders to identify actions items that support the safe spaces goal.

SUCCESSSES

The City of Newport News has made remarkable strides in reducing violence and strengthening community trust through evidence-based strategies, strong partnerships, and a commitment to prevention. The following highlights reflect the city's collective progress and the measurable impact of its coordinated approach:



31% Reduction in Shootings

The city surpassed its 18-month goal of reducing gun violence by 15%, achieving a 31% decline by July 2024.



Formation of the Youth Public Safety Council

This youth-led advisory body is shaping local and national conversations around community violence prevention and policy innovation.



More Than 50% Decrease in Homicides

Focused deterrence, rapid response, and community partnerships have contributed to a significant drop in lives lost to violence.



Launch of the Office of Community Safety (2024)

The establishment of this office institutionalized the city's commitment to prevention, collaboration, and community healing.



National & State Recognition

National: "Recognizing the city's commitment to building a safer, healthier, and more hopeful community, Newport News was selected as a stop on Cities United Leading the Way Tour, taking place in February 2026."

State: "Synethia J. White presented to other Virginia localities at the 2025 Department of Criminal Justice Services Safer Communities Summer Convening."



\$3.1 Million Invested in Community-Based Solutions

Through its Community Violence Prevention Grant Program, the city has funded over 25 grassroots and youth-led organizations since FY 2023 to address root causes of violence.



Youth Empowerment in Action

Established in 2024 through a NACCHO grant, the YPSC is a collaborative, youth-centered initiative that brings together Newport News, regional health districts, and community-based organizations to address community violence.

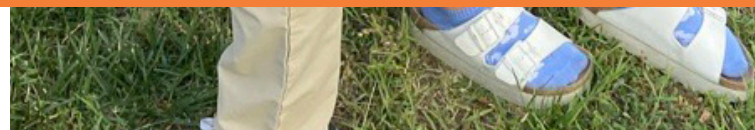


Strengthened Partnerships & Collaboration

Through the combined efforts of the Office of Community Safety, community-based organizations, and research partners, Newport News continues to build an integrated ecosystem that promotes data sharing, trauma-informed care, and community-led safety initiatives.



These achievements demonstrate that progress is possible when **prevention, partnership, and purpose** align. Together, Newport News is building lasting momentum for peace — **one neighborhood, one family, and one life at a time.**



COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

Through continued collaboration, innovation, and accountability, Newport News is charting a clear and courageous course toward lasting peace. The city's commitment to **equity, engagement, and empowerment** ensures that every resident — regardless of age, background, or neighborhood — has the opportunity to thrive in a safe, connected, and compassionate community.

Momentum for Peace is not just a strategy; it is a promise — to the city, to its people, and to future generations.

CONCLUSION

The collective efforts of city leadership, community organizations, law enforcement and the Office of Community Safety reflect Newport News' unwavering commitment to reducing violence and building a safer, stronger community. Through data-informed strategies, cross-sector collaboration, and the empowerment of youth and residents, the city is advancing meaningful change that reaches every neighborhood.

The success of these initiatives demonstrates that progress is possible when prevention, partnership, and purpose align. By maintaining its ***Momentum for Peace***, Newport News continues to lead with innovation, compassion, and accountability — charting a clear path toward lasting peace and opportunity for all who call the city home.





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was made possible through collaborative efforts led by the Office of Community Safety. Together, these partners continue to demonstrate Newport News' commitment to a safer, more resilient, and equitable community.

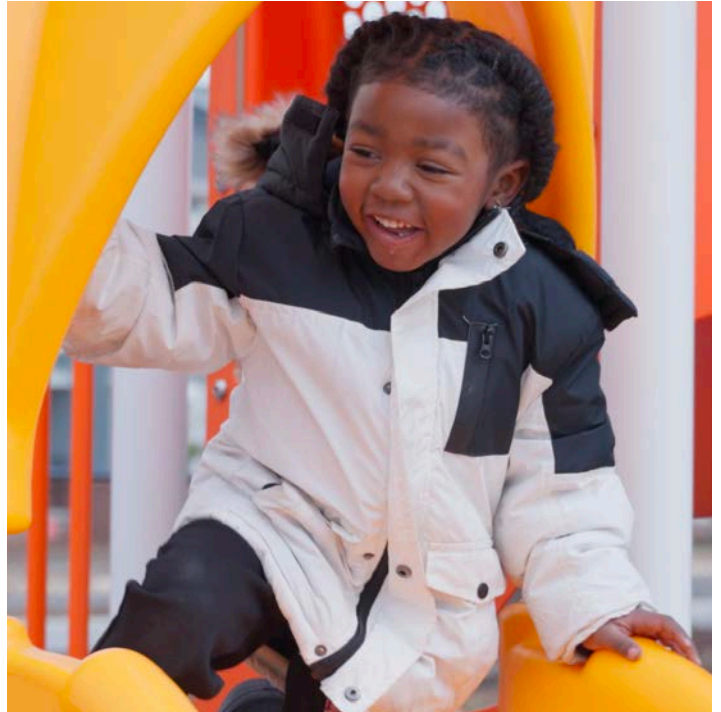
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