

ENDING GUN VIOLENCE IN CHATTANOOGA

Roadmap

July 2022

CITY OF CHATTANOOGA
MAYOR TIM KELLY



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The beginning of Summer 2022 marked a streak of mass shootings across the country, including two in the City of Chattanooga. These tragedies serve as a stark reminder that gun violence is an epidemic, causing a ripple effect of trauma that doesn't stop with the immediate victims. It cascades and multiplies until one shooting has ruined the lives of dozens of families, leaving our communities fearful and frustrated and our most vulnerable children hurting, hopeless, and at risk for further violent behavior.

Gun violence is a public health crisis that is threatening the health and well-being of our city. It will take all of us, working together in common cause, to turn the tide and create safe, prosperous communities for everyone who calls Chattanooga home. The Roadmap to Ending Gun Violence in Chattanooga lays out a path forward to make this vision a reality.

Ending *the Epidemic of Violence*

We must do more to address the systemic culture of gun violence.

While a small group of individuals have driven the majority of the recent shootings in Chattanooga, to truly end this epidemic, we must address every contributing cause that leads to an environment ripe for gun violence. That's why the Roadmap to End Gun Violence in Chattanooga includes actions to both stop the current cycle of violence and address the deep-rooted issues that caused the culture of violence to emerge in the first place. We must act now - and we have already started - to hold people accountable and bring those responsible for shootings to justice. But we must also work over the long-term to improve access to mental health services, quality education pathways, and economic opportunity, so that young people in Chattanooga never feel the need or the desire to pick up a gun to begin with.

This model of **intervention and prevention** — intervening to stop the current cycle of gun violence and investing in long-term initiatives to prevent it from returning - serves as the foundation of this Roadmap.

This is a starting point.

The Roadmap to end Gun Violence in Chattanooga is meant to be a framework, not a final plan. It's meant to be a starting point for us to review, refine, and expand upon, together. We recognize - and are grateful - that there is already important work underway in the community that aligns with this plan. This roadmap allows us to start mapping this work with the work of the City, putting our collective resources into a structured and collaborative framework. Through regular community engagement sessions and an eventual joint city-community digital engagement platform, we will come together to understand what's working, what isn't, and how we can improve together to achieve our shared goals.

Unfortunately, no one action we take will end our gun violence crisis overnight. But our hope is that with a broad and comprehensive roadmap, we can begin the hard work of coordinating the action of our entire community to stop this epidemic.

Guiding Principles

Over the past 6 months, the Kelly Administration has been participating in the Bloomberg Harvard Innovation Track on Youth Gun Violence. Through this innovative initiative, City officials have engaged young Chattanoogaans who have been directly impacted by gun violence to understand how to best design and scale initiatives that have a lasting impact and improve quality of life for all residents. The results of this intensive research demonstrate that to be effective, a gun violence reduction plan must follow certain principles. The Roadmap to End Gun Violence in Chattanooga was framed around these guiding principles:

01 BE TRAUMA-INFORMED AND AWARE

02 REACH FAMILIES, NOT JUST YOUTH

03 BE CITY AND COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

04 COORDINATE, AMPLIFY, ALIGN WITH, AND MAGNIFY THE ONGOING WORK OF OTHERS

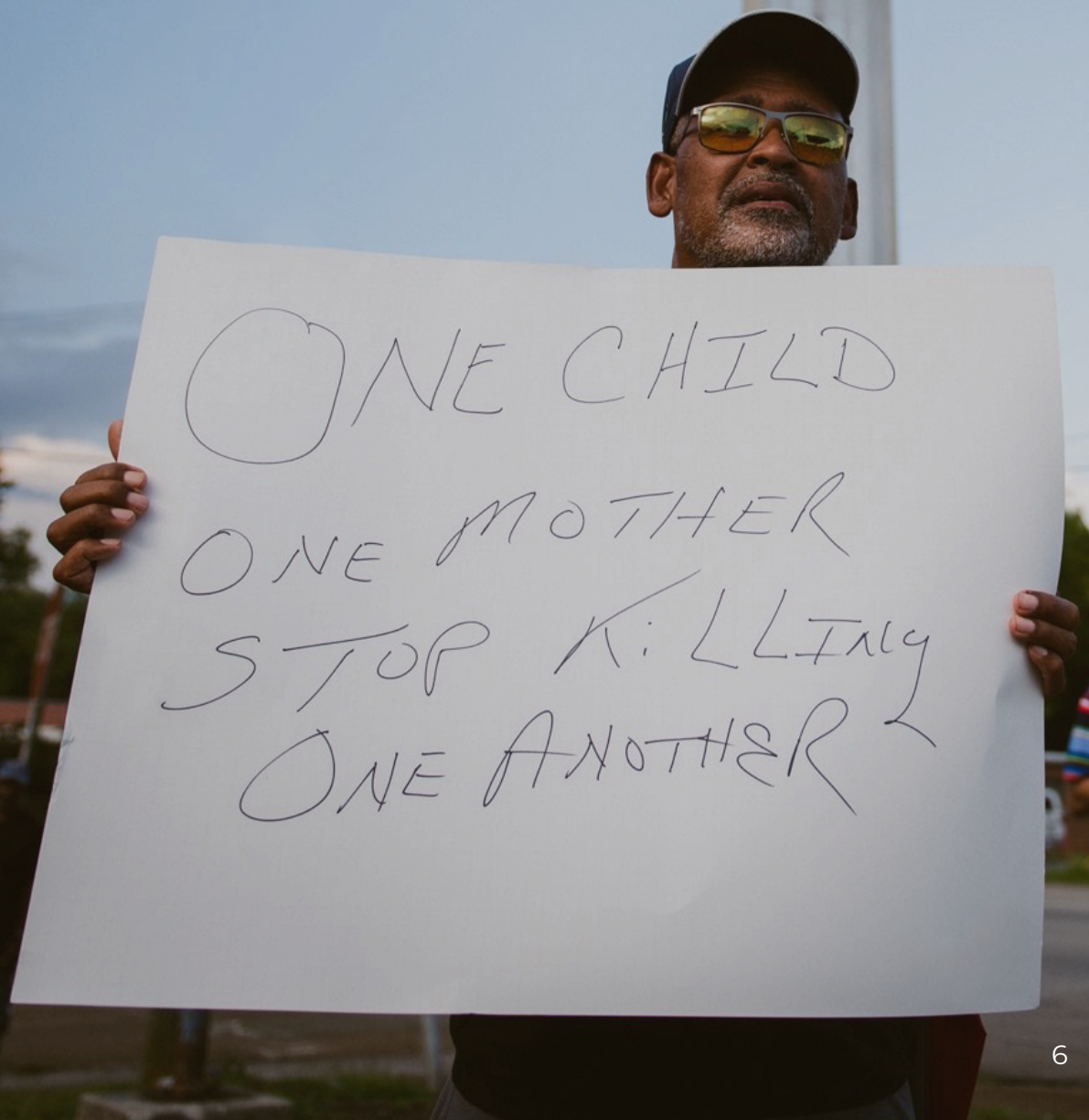
05 CENTER YOUNG PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THOSE EXPERIENCING GUN VIOLENCE

06 BE SUSTAINABLE

07 BE SCALABLE

INTERVENTION

*Immediate Steps to Stop the Gun Violence
on Our Streets*



ONE CHILD
ONE MOTHER
STOP KILLING
ONE ANOTHER

The Kelly administration is committed to doing everything in its power to stop the current cycle of gun violence in our community through immediate interventions designed to reduce violent crime in the short-term. With the Chattanooga Police Department and the Office of Community Health and Safety at the helm, we will continue enhanced efforts to prevent gun violence with focus and precision; deepen coordination with state and federal partners; expand our mental-health informed violence intervention efforts; and reach those at highest risk for immediate involvement in gun violence through evidence-based, intensive outreach programs. Many components of this work have already begun.

INTERVENTION

CPD Focused Deterrence Initiative

On June 10, 2022, CPD launched the Focused Deterrence Initiative to help de-escalate potentially violent situations on our city streets before any shots are fired. As part of the Initiative, which will continue on weekends throughout the summer, additional officers patrol areas of town that statistically have been experiencing a spike of crime since the beginning of the summer. Additional officers have also been placed in CPD's real-time intelligence center to facilitate rapid responses to large crowds gathering in city streets. As of July 26, these efforts have resulted in the seizure of 39 illegal guns and 30 arrests. Recognizing that statistically, gun violence in Chattanooga tends to increase in the summers once school lets out, CPD will proactively implement focused deterrence efforts every summer moving forward, beginning the weekend before Memorial Day.

Deepened Coordination with State and Federal Partners

Already, CPD and the Kelly administration have expanded our partnership with the State of Tennessee, the U.S. District Attorney's Office, the ATF and the FBI to help respond to violent crimes and swiftly bring those responsible to justice. These partnerships were essential to our ability to quickly and effectively arrest and convict multiple suspects connected with the June 5, 2022, McCallie Street shooting. Through regular information sharing, touch points, and regional trainings, CPD will continue to deepen coordination with these state and federal partners, sharing best practices and increasing our local capacity to prevent and respond to violent crimes.

New Technology Resources to Prevent Crimes and Identify Suspects

Police cameras play an integral role in helping officers identify and quickly de-escalate potentially violent situations before violent crimes occur. Cameras also help police gather evidence needed to secure convictions. CPD and the Kelly administration worked together to restock the City's supply of police cameras, adding 25 additional cameras at locations across the city and putting 5 cameras in reserve to ensure any camera that malfunctions can be quickly replaced by another, while repairs are being made. CPD is also exploring additional, responsible ways to use new technologies, including social media monitoring tools, to help identify potentially dangerous situations and individuals.

Enforcement of Juvenile Curfew

Existing law states that juveniles aged 16 years and under must be off the streets by 11 pm on weekends, but curfew has traditionally been hard to enforce. The Kelly administration is working with CPD to establish a new "cooling-off space" where kids who violated curfew can wait until a parent or guardian can safely pick them up. To help ensure the space is not only safe but also productive for youth and their parents, we are exploring partnerships with community-based organizations to be onsite at the facility, providing supportive programming to kids who are waiting and periodic check-ins with parents to offer services and support in the months following.

Expanded Crisis Response Unit

In February 2022, CPD and the Office of Community Health and Safety piloted the Crisis Response Unit, which pairs a certified mental health specialist with a specially trained CPD officer to respond to potentially violent situations. With their combined expertise, the co-responder team is able to both de-escalate dangerous situations and link people with mental illnesses to appropriate services. With the passage of the fiscal year 2023 budget, CPD and the Office of Community Health and Safety are prioritizing staffing of the Unit to full capacity, which includes 10 co-responder pairs responding to calls 24/7 throughout the week.

Intensive Violence Intervention Initiatives with Groups and Individuals

Intensive violence intervention initiatives interrupt existing cycles of gun violence by directly reaching the individuals at the highest and most immediate risk, and providing them with intensive support, services, and opportunities. Multiple intensive intervention initiatives are either planned or already underway in Chattanooga.

The City will partner with a technical advisor and a local nonprofit organization to implement an intensive gun violence intervention strategy through an evidence-based method that has helped interrupt cycles of violence in multiple other mid-sized cities. Over the coming months, CPD and the Office of Community of Health and Safety will use data from past shootings to identify individuals and groups at highest risk of

gun violence and begin trauma-informed, intensive communication and outreach. Office of Community Health & Safety and CPD representatives will offer these individuals wrap-around support and opportunities, and as a last resort, focused enforcement.

“OUR CHILDREN ARE HURTING, FAMILIES ARE GRIEVING, PEOPLE ARE FEARFUL AND FRUSTRATED. WE MUST UNITE AND TAKE ACTION. THE ROADMAP TO END GUN VIOLENCE IN CHATTANOOGA PROVIDES A PATH FORWARD FOR OUR CITY TO DO JUST THAT.”

– MAYOR TIM KELLY



PREVENTION

Long-term Investments to Prevent Gun Violence from Returning

Preventing gun violence in the long-term will require a transformation of our city into One Chattanooga: A city where every child forms strong prosocial bonds, gets an excellent education, and finds a sense of self-worth apart from guns; where all Chattanoogaans are secure in their homes and neighborhoods; where racism is defeated through love and understanding; and where economic success and prosperity is a reachable goal for all. While it will take decades to reach this scale of community transformation, this hard work has already begun as part of the One Chattanooga strategic plan, and more is now planned in partnership with the community to urgently respond to our crisis of gun violence. As part of this partnership, the Kelly administration is committed to finding innovative solutions to ensure this work is sustainable—beyond initial investments—so that together we ignite generational change in our communities.

PREVENTION

Mentorship and Empowerment Initiatives for Young People

Mentoring—the pairing of a young person with a trained, supportive non-parental adult—can lead young people away from violence and toward positive, sustainable behavior and opportunity. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), youth mentorship is one of the most effective strategies for reducing violence because it increases factors that protect against it, such as staying in school and demonstrating prosocial behaviors. Mentors can provide our young people with the confidence, access to resources, and ongoing support they need to develop healthy values, skills, relationships, ultimately leading them to success.

The Kelly administration is making an unprecedented investment in youth mentorship and empowerment initiatives, beginning immediately. On July 26, 2022, the Chattanooga City Council approved the use of \$3.7 million in American Rescue Plan funds for new community-based youth engagement programs, which will create hundreds of new mentors in our community with the capacity to reach our most vulnerable youth. In August 2022, the City will also award up to \$750,000 in additional funding for community-based youth mentorship and empowerment initiatives through a competitive RFP process. Finally, the City has already launched a new teen empowerment program held every Friday night at four local community centers, and CPD is exploring new opportunities for police-led youth engagement programs. The City is also partnering on a local initiative to provide safe, structured programming for youth every Sunday night in Miller Park through the Summer.

In recognition of the importance of coordinating these community-wide efforts, the City will help establish regular meetings for all organizations implementing mentorship initiatives to discuss best practices, greatest needs, and ways to collaborate.

Capacity-building Resources for Effective Youth Programming

As part of its participation in the Bloomberg Harvard Innovation Track on Youth Gun Violence, the Kelly Administration has been engaging young residents who have been directly impacted by gun violence to understand how to best design and scale effective gun violence reduction initiatives. Through one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions, the team has gleaned deep insight into what is driving - and what protects against - gun violence among our community's youth. Using the results of that research, the City will develop and release a guide that includes best practices, recommendations, and template materials for any organization implementing youth mentorship, support, or empowerment initiatives aimed at reducing gun violence in Chattanooga.

Wraparound Services to Support Parents and Families of At-risk Youth

Youth who are involved in gun violence often are missing support from relationships that offer respect, structure, guidance, and accountability. While mentorship programs are one way to help restore this support, recreating these support systems within the family is just as important. Family-wide emotional and social support initiatives can help address the generational poverty and trauma that contribute to gun violence.

Using American Rescue Plan funding, the City is investing in three community-based initiatives that provide wraparound services for at-risk youth and their families. These programs include a range of family-wide counseling, skills-based training, resources for parents and guardians, and health and social services to help stabilize the household environment. The City will also continue supporting the recently launched [Community Forward](#) initiative, a first-of-its-kind partnership with Hamilton County Schools that uses a holistic approach to connect at-risk youth and their families to academic, health, and social services.

Increased Access to Mental Health Services

Mental health crises are often associated with gun violence, and the Kelly administration is committed to ensuring all residents have access to the help needed to de-escalate and prevent these moments of crisis. Beginning immediately, three experienced mental health providers will be visiting the City's community centers to provide onsite assessments and referrals to those in need. In addition, the City is investing more than \$1.225 million in new, community-based mental health initiatives through American Rescue Plan funding and a competitive RFP process for community-based organizations launched earlier this Summer. This historic investment will provide multiple new access points for residents to obtain mental health services, meeting them where they already are in their day-to-day lives. It will also help diversify Chattanooga's mental health workforce, so that some of our most vulnerable communities have access to counselors of similar races, ethnicities, and backgrounds.

To prevent mental health crises from occurring in the first place, the City will continue to invest in ongoing community-wide initiatives to provide vulnerable youth with creative, healthy outlets for expression — from increasing their access to the healing power of green spaces to expanding art and music programming in local community centers.

Public Education on Gun Safety and Storage

Guns are now the number one leading cause of death among children in the United States, and studies have shown that having a gun in the home increases the risk of a family member being involved in gun violence.¹ With an unprecedented surge in gun sales since the pandemic started, it's more important than ever to educate gun owners, parents, and educators about gun safety to help ensure responsible use. Over the coming months, the Office of Community Health and Safety will

launch a 2-part public education campaign to both promote safe gun storage among gun owners and give parents and elementary school educators the tools they need to have critical conversations about gun violence with our city's youth.

Career Pathway and Skill Development Programs for Youth and Adults

One of the best antidotes to gun violence is a solid career opportunity. The One Chattanooga plan envisions a city where there is ready access to training and skill development for all young people, helping them get ahead in a rapidly changing and diversified economy - and reducing the chance they'll ever feel the desire to pick up a gun. The Kelly administration has already made great strides toward this goal, through partnerships on new innovative skill-building programs, like [EMPACT](#) and the [Construction Career Center](#). Now, with the City's unprecedented \$6 million American Rescue Plan investment in new workforce development initiatives aimed at some of our most economically disadvantaged communities, achievement toward this vision will reach new heights.

Ongoing Efforts to Increase Affordable Housing

Going hand-in-hand with lack of opportunity, the lack of affordable housing is also associated with rising gun violence in communities.² Recreating structured, safe, and supportive relationships within families is often impossible without a stable home. Over the next 3 years, the Kelly administration's unprecedented \$33 million investment in affordable housing will help create and preserve thousands of affordable homes, as part of the City's \$100 million affordable housing initiative. At the same time, the City's partnerships on local eviction prevention and diversion initiatives are helping prevent hundreds of traumatizing and costly evictions, keeping families in their homes and connecting them to wraparound services and support.

1. Linda L. Dahlberg, Robin M. Ikeda, Marcie-jo Kresnow. Guns in the Home and Risk of a Violent Death in the Home: Findings from a National Study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Volume 160, Issue 10, 15 November 2004, Pages 929–936, <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwh309>

2. 3 US Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2000). In the crossfire: The impact of gun violence on public housing communities.

CONCLUSION

The Roadmap to End Gun Violence in Chattanooga involves the Chattanooga Police Department, the Office of Community Health and Safety, multiple city departments, state and federal partners, and most importantly, our community - the people and organizations who work alongside us to serve our residents every single day. It provides a critical framework for us to combine our efforts, working toward a common cause. The Kelly administration is already hard at work implementing the actions in this plan, and we will continue working relentlessly with our partners to create safer communities for our city. This work is not going to be finished overnight, and it will require dedicated attention and patience for all of us. But together, we can build a city that is not only safe, but also provides every resident the opportunity to reach their full potential for generations to come.