



Save Lives Now!

A Blueprint
for a
Collaborative
Anti-Violence
Program
for the
St. Louis
Region

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EAST-WEST GATEWAY
Council of Governments

www.ewgateway.org/save-lives-now

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A Blueprint for a Collaborative Anti-Violence Program for the St. Louis Region

The St. Louis region faces a critical challenge from homicides and shootings. Our homicide rate remains one of the highest in the nation, costing lives, causing trauma, and hindering economic growth. Homicides and shootings tear families apart and leave trauma in communities. Violent crime in poor neighborhoods traps residents in poverty. The high homicide rate cost the region between \$3.6 and \$6.9 billion in 2022.

The rising consensus is clear: If our region does not collectively address homicide and street violence, the future of our entire region is at risk.

Save Lives Now! (SLN) is a regional initiative designed to address this crisis head-on with a focus on regional partnership and proven fast-action strategies. This collaborative program aims to **reduce homicides and shootings by 20% over three years.**

We will achieve this through a balanced approach of intervention, enforcement and outreach using three key strategies - **focused deterrence, cognitive behavioral therapy, and street outreach.**

Focused Deterrence is a nationally recognized model of police work that has a proven track record of decreasing homicides. Examples of successful reductions in violence include Chicago (37%), Philadelphia (35%), Indianapolis (34%), Boston (31%), and Kansas City (21%). Focused deterrence leverages data to focus law enforcement and community resources on a set of individuals who are at the highest risk for perpetuating violence or becoming victims of a crime.

Focused deterrence leverages two simple messages:

Message 1: We know who you are, what you are doing, and, if violence continues, we will stop you. Consequences are communicated, including arrest, prosecution and incarceration, as well as clear facts about the lifelong impact of continued violence and incarceration on the individual and the devastating collateral damage to loved ones.

Message 2: If you commit to stopping, we will connect you with supports, services, and treatment to help you exit the cycle of crime.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an effective evidence-based intervention used to engage individuals at risk for violence to help them change their decision-making processes. The goal is to provide those at risk for violence with strategies to make decisions that do not result in violence. This strategy interrupts cycles of violence primarily by changing how individuals react to stressful situations.

When violent offenders have access to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, violent crime drops. In Chicago, researchers found one program reduced shooting and homicide arrests

among high-risk individuals by 65%. A review of 58 different CBT programs, found that the programs reduced criminal recidivism by 25%.

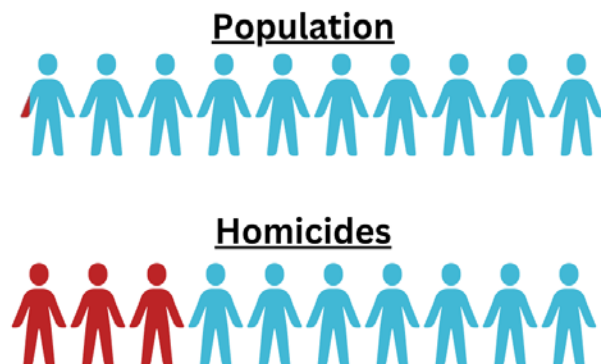
It is not easy for violent offenders to “just stop,” even if they know right from wrong and severe punishment is ahead. They typically need help to change, which is where CBT plays a key role.

Street Outreach is a growing field of expertise in which trained professionals are deployed into high-risk neighborhoods to engage and support individuals and groups at high risk for violence. They are considered “trusted messengers” within the communities, and use this earned trust to mediate and resolve conflicts so they do not result in violence. They further act as a pipeline to services for at-risk individuals to more easily access CBT and other services. Other duties include being active and present in assigned neighborhoods; supporting victims and their families; mentoring victims who may be likely to commit future violence; and reclaiming public spaces for healthy and safe community activities.

Engaging With Purpose

Data shows us that homicides are committed by a small subset of the population. In general, this population has had previous, significant engagement with law enforcement. We can use data to identify high risk individuals and stop them from engaging in violence. Roughly 30 percent of homicides in our region are perpetrated by only .16% of the region’s population. Only 4% of the city’s geography accounts for over half of the crime in the city. Nationally, 1% of the population is responsible for 63% of all violent crime convictions. Focusing our work on this small group of violent individuals is both manageable and effective.

Despite representing only **0.16%** of the population, **High Risk Individuals** commit **30% or more** of the homicides in our region.



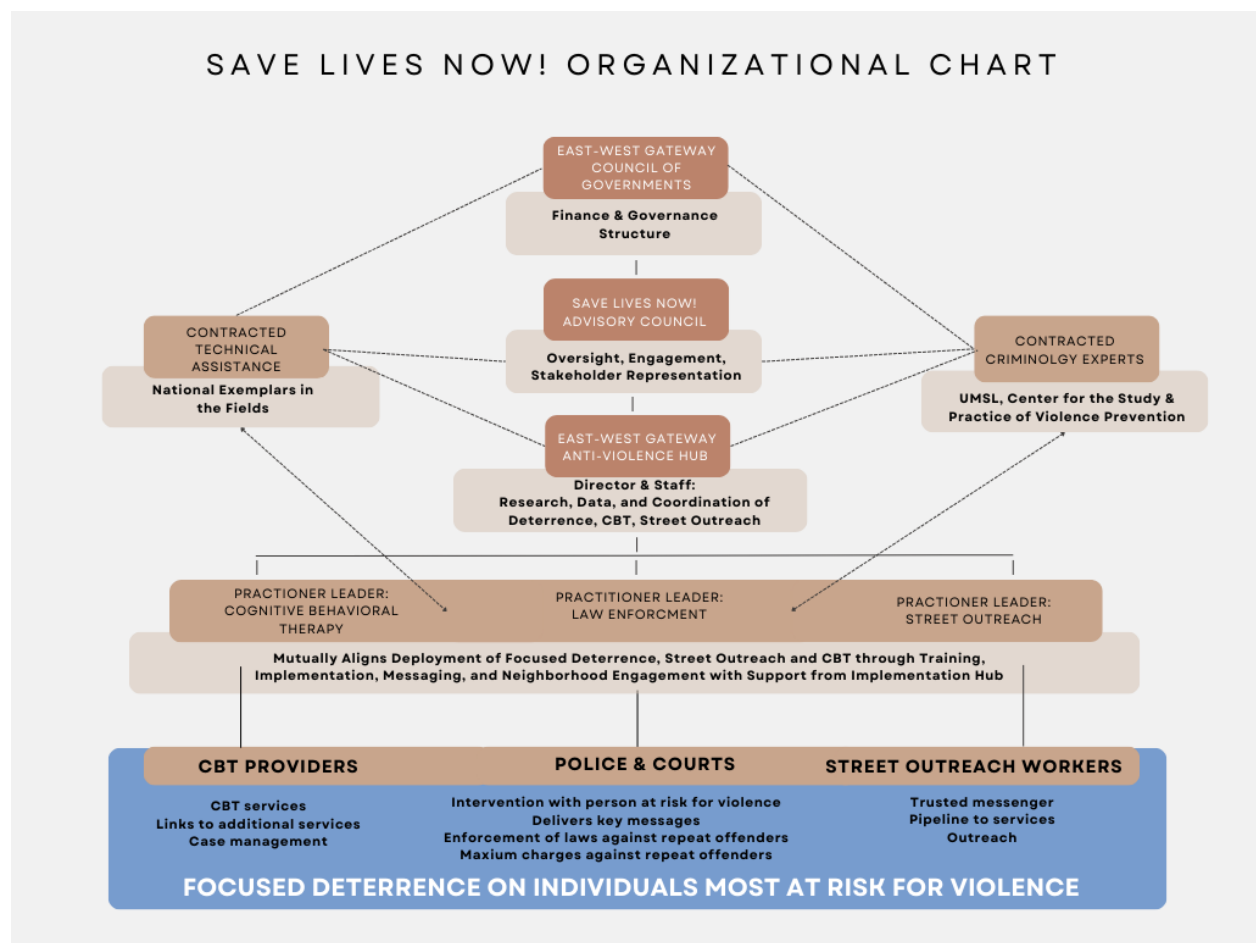
Who Does the Work?

SLN brings together a regional team of stakeholders. With practitioners on the implementation team, the work will take a coordinated, balanced approach with law enforcement and service providers. Their work will be coordinated through a staffed anti-violence hub housed in East-West Gateway Council of Governments. The Hub will provide coordination support, technical assistance, data analysis, and support best practices. SLN will work to engage those at highest risk for violence, working to keep them alive, safe, and free while holding those who shoot and

kill accountable. The region’s new anti-violence strategy will be regionally focused, informed by evidence and data, and humanity-centered.

Transforming an anti-violence vision into meaningful action requires clear and consistent leadership, management, oversight and communication.

City of St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones and St. Louis County Executive Dr. Sam Page have agreed to chair and fast-track the creation of an inclusive Save Lives Now Advisory Council that will convene this spring and meet quarterly to provide updates, communicate with stakeholders and the community, hear public feedback and comment, and engage with residents and others most impacted by violent crime. The Advisory Council will have technical assistance and advisory information from the Anti-Violence Hub.



Assessing Our Work

Using a team of criminologists we will look at year-over-year homicides and nonfatal shootings compared to years prior. We will also look at the outcomes for the individuals we engage, including the number of people we engage, the number connected to services, who have gained

employment, and who have ended up incarcerated. Broadly, we will also examine calls for service to determine if residents are experiencing less incidents of violence overall.

Building on Progress

In December 2023, the East-West Gateway Council of Governments and the Center for the Study and Practice of Violence Reduction (VRC) convened a diverse group of experts from law enforcement, elected leaders, business, social services, and more for a crime summit.

Now a group of members, including the Mayor of St. Louis, the St. Louis County Executive, local business leaders, local and federal law enforcement, and prominent practitioners in crime reduction, want to build a foundation that builds on progress from these meetings.

Our implementation team is actively:

- **Scoping out service providers:** Identifying qualified organizations to deliver the program effectively.
- **Gathering community feedback:** Ensuring the program reflects the needs and concerns of our residents.
- **Securing funding:** Building a sustainable financial plan for long-term success.

SLN represents a collaborative effort critical to building a safer future for our region. By working together, we can interrupt cycles of violence, support at-risk individuals, and create a more vibrant and prosperous St. Louis metropolitan area.



Let's move forward, united. Let's make Save Lives Now a reality.