

## **Gun Violence Funding Proposal**

### **Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025**

#### **Background:**

At the May 6<sup>th</sup> joint meeting of the Children's Trust of Alachua County (CTAC) Board of Directors and the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners, \$250,000 was allocated toward gun violence prevention efforts. Specifically, County staff were directed to work with the City of Gainesville to develop a proposal for the use of the funds in FY24. Soon after, staff were also informed that \$250,000 for FY25 would be allocated for the same purpose.

The Gun Violence Prevention Alliance, comprised of Alachua County, the City of Gainesville and Santa Fe College, and a number of other stakeholders have discussed the usage of the funds. Since the May 6<sup>th</sup> motion, staff have undergone an intentional planning period.

That process has included:

- Setting regular meetings to discuss CTAC funding priorities related to gun violence prevention and intervention efforts in both the City and County
- City staff discussions of programmatic and community needs through IMPACT GNV
- Researching violence interruption models, to include but not limited to Cure Violence
  - County staff have meet with representatives from Cure Violence Global on multiple occasions to discuss their model and any additional services they may offer and bring that information back to the team
- Conducting a SWOT analysis through the Gun Violence Prevention Alliance to develop priorities and areas of opportunity that can inform funding opportunities, including CTAC.
- Centering community engagement through the Gun Violence Prevention Alliance and allowing stakeholders and community members the opportunity to provide input on the use of CTAC funding and needs related to building the capacity of local groups
- Bringing in Jaye Athy from the County CAPP Office as a small grants specialist to help advise us with this effort

The planning period resulted in a proposal for both the FY24 and FY25 funding.

#### **FY24 Proposal**

Using the information and insights gathered in the planning period, staff concluded that the only feasible option for expending the funds would be material purchases. The amount of time remaining in the fiscal year and the necessary processes for implementation of contracts or service agreements would prove extremely challenging to navigate.

**For the above-mentioned reason, staff respectfully requests the roll of FY2024 funding to FY2025.**

## **FY25 Proposal**

The goal of this planning period was for City and County staff to develop priorities based on local needs around gun violence. Staff was able to intentionally engage stakeholders, research best practices, and gather community feedback to ensure that this funding represented the needs of the community and help build long-term sustainable efforts for FY25.

On the July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Gun Violence Prevention Alliance, community stakeholders were asked for input as to how the available funding could be used. The group was in favor of hosting a call for grant-funded projects.

Stakeholders recommended that funded projects focus on:

- County-wide & country-wide partnerships
- Education
- Family engagement
- Free after school/summer programming
- Jobs & opportunities for teens
- Learn through play—eSports, social media, sports
- Learning alternatives
- Mental health
- Proactive vs. reactive initiatives
- Recovery
- Start with young children
- Trauma-informed care
- Incentives for youth that address the problems that occur during down/idle time
- Initiatives with vetted partners
- Gun Violence Youth Forum

The call for projects would be informed using the lessons learned through One Nation One Project GNV, a local arts and wellness initiative working to reduce youth gun violence by addressing associated risk factors.

Stakeholders also discussed the forms of technical assistance that would be helpful for organizations seeking the available funding.

- More grant-writing workshops
- Grant-makers/Funders need to offer ample training and TA/office hours to support those preparing proposals
- Language Barriers
- Simple, straightforward funding applications
- Professional grant writer(s)
- Resources to write grants
- Researcher to find grants
- Connecting the organization to the impacted area

The Children’s Trust ongoing partnership with the Community Foundation of North Central Florida’s Center for Nonprofit Excellence will be leveraged to provide technical assistance and support in these ways.

In addition to the call for projects, stakeholders were interested in the Alliance facilitating a strategic planning process within the next 6 months. This would be done via a contract with a third-party entity. Input for a strategic planning request for proposals will be gathered at an upcoming Alliance meeting.

Community-based violence interruption is a best practice in prevention efforts. There are a number of individuals and organizations doing so throughout Alachua County, and even more who may be interested in serving in that role, given training and support. Following additional research into evidence-based models, this will be provided via a contract with a third-party entity.

Through the work of the city’s arts and wellness initiative, One Nation One Project GNV, a youth steering committee was formed and facilitated. The group, comprised of young people 16-24, provided insight and guidance on gun violence solutions for our community. With feedback from the Alliance stakeholders and the youth steering committee itself, there is a desire for this group to continue. Youth are compensated for their time at meetings and events as subject matter experts. One Nation One Project GNV funding concludes shortly, so additional funding is needed to compensated members and a facilitator to assist with maintaining momentum of the group.

**FY25 Budget:**

Item	Cost	Number	Total
<b>Grant-Funded Projects</b>	\$15,000	12	\$180,000
<b>Strategic Planning Consultant</b>	\$30,000	N/A	\$35,000
<b>Violence Interrupter Support and Training</b>	\$20,000	N/A	\$20,000
<b>Youth Steering Committee Stipends and Facilitation</b>	\$15,000	N/A	\$15,000
<b>Total</b>			\$250,000

**Pending FY24 Funding Decision**

Should the board accept staff request to roll the available \$250,000 of FY24 funding to FY25, staff would revisit the planning process as discussed above to ensure the same intentionality reflected in the FY25 funding is captured in the second allocation.

Based on previous conversations, potential directions for the additional \$250,000 include:

- Increasing the amount budgeted in the current proposal for the following components
  - Grant-funded projects
  - Strategic planning consultant
  - Violence Interrupter Support and Training
- Continuation and expansion of the Willie Mae Stokes Center violence interruption and community outreach work under IMPACT GNV. The center has employed community-based violence interrupters to mediate conflict and de-escalation tensions in the community. It has also enlisted faith leaders to facilitate on-the-ground relationship building with communities most impacted by gun violence. This work has primarily occurred within City of Gainesville

limits. The agreement currently exists between the Willie Mae Stokes Center and the City of Gainesville, totaling \$45,000 through October 31, 2024.

- Purchasing laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots for programs to request based on need and audience served. Programs must be working with youth 0-18 at-risk of gun violence and/or delivering programming in areas with high instances of gun violence.
  - Computer and internet accessibility is a must of modern-day life. Not only do many school-based programs require a computer, but many youth service programs also need devices to ensure access for their students to a variety of resources. This includes completing homework assignments, tutoring, signing up for sports programs, and more. According to the 2024 Alachua County Community Health Assessment, roughly 20% of respondents do not have internet service. The top reasons cited include poor reception/service where they live (8.8%), affordability (5.81%) and lack of access to a personal computer (5.54%).
  - Following the arrival of the devices, the Alliance will host a request for supplies process where community groups and local organizations can request a certain number of devices to support their program operations. Schools and school-based programs are not eligible for this assistance. Devices will be provided upon selection and approval by the Alliance review panel pending program verification. The Alliance will reserve the right to modify requests in collaboration with the requesting organization based on the availability of computers and justification of need.
- Purchasing annual bus passes for families to use to attend mental health appointments, trauma services, and other positive youth and family programming.
  - Similar to the process noted with the technology supplies, the Alliance would facilitate a request for passes, to ensure those who have been directly impacted by gun violence or are at high risk of being impacted are able to reach programs and services.