



CJAF



**COMMUNITY JUSTICE
ACTION FUND**

POLICY DIGEST
OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2021



INTRODUCTION

It has been a critical month for CJAF. We have been focused both on finishing the year out strong and planning for the future. We are working hard securing resources for community violence intervention programs around the country, building out our policy platform around ending gender-based violence, and fine tuning our strategic plan for 2022.

WE'VE ALSO GROWN OUR TEAM!

Pamela Mejia has joined Community Justice as our new Legislative Affairs Manager. Prior to joining Community Justice, Pamela worked in Congress, where she served various Representatives such as Congressman Jose Serrano, Former Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, who now is a United States Senator, and Assistant Speaker Katherine Clark. Pamela is excited to use her policy experience as a tool to bring awareness to the inequities in black and brown communities and prevent gun violence in neighborhoods that are most affected.



ARPA FUNDING

AS OF OCTOBER 2021

States, counties, and cities across America continue to make historic investments in holistic violence prevention strategies. Community Justice worked closely with the White House to ensure that some American Rescue Plan Act funds are dedicated to address violence in our communities. Since then, the Treasury, Dept of Education, and the White House have advised that states and cities use these funds to invest in community-led violence prevention and intervention programs. In partnership with the Fund Peace Campaign, Community Justice has been partnering with local leaders and orgs to advocate and secure funding commitments across the country. Below are some highlights from this advocacy across the country:

ARP Funding Commitments From States and Cities

-  **STATE HIGHLIGHTS**
-  **CITY HIGHLIGHTS**

California

\$200 MILLION

Los Angeles, CA
\$20 Million

Oakland, CA
\$18 Million

St. Louis, MO

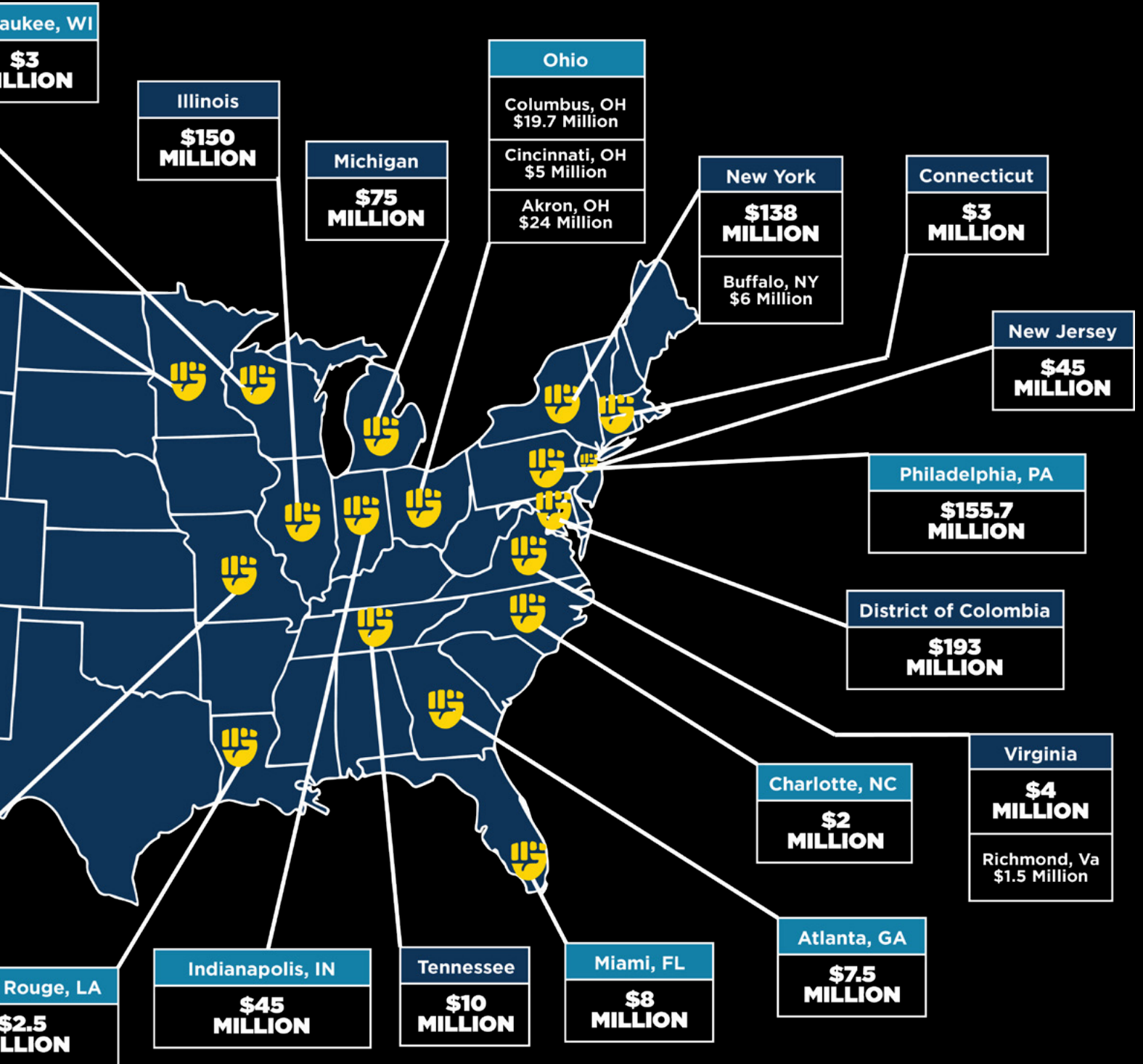
\$11.5 MILLION

Minnesota

\$15 MILLION

Minnesota, MN
\$15 Million





BALTIMORE ANNOUNCES \$50 MILLION FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The City of Baltimore announced a ground-breaking \$50 million investment in a holistic approach to violence prevention. The plan aims to “cure Baltimore” with community violence intervention programs, victim services, youth justice programs, and community healing. Of the \$50 million, \$22 million is dedicated towards gun violence prevention specifically. Community Justice staff attended the Mayor’s announcement to celebrate this powerful declaration. In the words of Mayor Brandon Scott, community violence intervention is “not just about stopping that one incident, it’s about getting these folks the help they need.”

Shantay Jackson, Director at Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, discusses impact of the investment



WISCONSIN ANNOUNCES \$45 MILLION FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION



Governor Tony Evers **announced** this month that his office is investing \$45 million in addressing violence in Wisconsin, including \$25 million for violence prevention efforts and \$20 million in victim

support services. Of the \$25 million investment in violence prevention efforts, \$8.4 million will be dedicated to the City of Milwaukee's Office of Violence Prevention to prevent and reduce violence through partnerships that strengthen youth, families, and neighborhoods. Funding is also reserved for community-based programs and research initiatives.

Since the enactment of the American Rescue Plan, Community Justice Action Fund has **led a coalition** of gun violence prevention organizations to support Wisconsin organizations like Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort Educational Fund and Focused Interruption to advocate for investments into violence prevention programs. We applaud Governor Evers's action, modeling leadership in the midwest by making impactful investments in violence prevention in Wisconsin.

Left to right: Community Justice State Policy and Communications Director Sawyeh Maghsoodloo; Community Justice Legislative Affairs Manager Pam Mejias, Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott, Brother Hamza of Safe Streets, Community Justice Executive Director Greg Jackson

CHECK OUT OUR LATEST BLOG POST

[Gun violence is surging, the solution starts with empowering communities](#)

By Sawyeh Maghsoodloo, Medium



“For too many years, authorities have poured money into debunked “tough on crime” policies that leave neighborhoods with a heavy police presence and no other resources. While law enforcement is a critical tool in violence prevention, it cannot solve this crisis alone.”

“Community violence intervention programs work closely with people in neighborhoods suffering from high concentrations of gun violence to break cycles of violence, address its root causes, and provide resources and opportunities to communities that have otherwise been largely disinvested in. These programs are often staffed by respected community members who have lived experiences with violence and social service providers such as therapists, job counselors, or faith leaders. The bottom line is that community violence intervention programs understand that the threat of incarceration alone does not prevent violence, empowered and well-resourced communities do.”

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

The month of October was National Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, an issue that intersects too often with gun violence. We know from research that the presence of a gun during an intimate partner dispute makes it five times more likely that the woman will be killed. It doesn't take a trigger being pulled for a gun to cause pain, just the threat of a gun by an intimate partner

is enough to cause post traumatic stress symptoms in women. Millions of women know this -- an estimated 4.5 million living women report having been threatened with a gun by an intimate partner. Community Justice is committed to ending domestic violence and advocating for holistic and inclusive support systems for survivors.



FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACT



An important federal bill to improve services and interventions for survivors of domestic and family violence passed in the House and is off to the Senate! The Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act (H.R. 2119) was introduced by gun violence prevention champion and survivor Lucy McBath. The bill will reauthorize and expand funding for programs that serve family and domestic violence survivors.

“A HEARTBREAKING MARK OF THIS PANDEMIC HAS BEEN THE INCREASE IN DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE THAT CONTINUES TO AFFECT AMERICANS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN TO KEEP CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SAFE THROUGH THIS PANDEMIC AND IN THE FUTURE. WITH THIS BILL, WE ARE WORKING HAND IN HAND WITH STATE, LOCAL, AND TRIBAL LEADERSHIP TO ASSIST ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FUNDING PROCESS AS THEY CONTINUE THEIR VITAL WORK.”
- U.S. REP. LUCY MCBATH

To learn more about the intersections of domestic violence and gun violence, check out our recent [Instagram Live](#) with Shelli Egger, a legal advocate for domestic violence victims in Texas.

TEXAS SPECIAL SESSION



The third Texas legislative Special Session kicked off on September 20th and American Rescue Plan Act funding allocations were on the agenda. Irina Alejandro, organizing associate at Community Justice, joined Texas Gun Sense to testify to the Texas State Legislature with [Texas Gun Sense](#) requesting \$20 million for community-based violence intervention programs from the American Rescue Plan funding.

Texas leaders can help prevent violence like the terrible school shooting in [Arlington, Texas](#) by funding community violence intervention and prevention programs that focus on interpersonal violence.

We also hosted a Beyond The Headlines webinar featuring Gyl Switzer, Executive Director at Texas Gun Sense and Naz Soysal, Dallas Chapter Lead at March For Our Lives Texas. You can view it [here!](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
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