

Department Source: City Manager

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: January 20, 2026

Re: Update on Recommended Actions from Mayor's Task Force on Community Violence

Impacted Ward: Citywide

Executive Summary

At the October 2025 City Council meeting, a request was made for staff to provide an update on the recommendations that came from the 2014 Mayor's Task Force on Community Violence. The requested information included what has been implemented, as well as any barriers to recommendations. This report builds on the staff update provided by former Columbia/Boone County Department of Health & Human Services Director in December 2021.

Discussion

The Mayor's Task Force on Community Violence presented their recommendations to City Council in November 2014. They organized their recommendations broadly under four pillars: *Prevention*, *Intervention*, *Enforcement*, and *Re-Entry*, as well as an *Other* category. They offered a variety of recommendations and identified organizations who might take the lead on implementation. For the purposes of this update, staff focused on recommendations where the City was identified as the sole or primary organization for implementation.

Largely, the only recommendations with significant barriers fall under the *Re-Entry* pillar. This is due to the City not having authority for a mandated re-entry supervision program, nor mandating that a "target population" complete a cognitive behavioral therapy program. Similarly, there is reference to two designated City employees participating in a group that no longer exists.

Prevention:

The recommendations under this pillar focused on bolstering job training programs, entrepreneurial programs for at-risk populations, funding for violence prevention, support for community events, and Neighborhood Watch groups.

- The Small Business Grant, formerly known as the Minority Business Enterprise Grant, completed its fourth funding cycle in 2025. Funded by the City of Columbia and administered by Regional Economic Development Inc. (REDI), the grant supports locally owned businesses as they grow, innovate, and strengthen operations. The program is competitive and prioritizes businesses owned by residents of Columbia's economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, with an emphasis on long-term community impact. To date, \$205,000 has been awarded to 39 entrepreneurs to help elevate their businesses. Entering the new year, REDI is actively supporting 256

entrepreneur clients, many of whom reside in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods

- The City created the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) with the FY 25 budget, and D'Markus Thomas-Brown was hired to lead the office in March 2025. Upon creation, a budget of \$500,000 was set aside for immediate activities associated with establishing the office.
- The National Institute of Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) will be conducting a gun violence problem analysis and gun violence landscape analysis to disclose accurate root cause issues contributing to community violence and to show prevention and intervention initiatives that need to be sustained or expanded to further impact violence prevention and intervention.
- The City awarded \$750,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to assist nonprofits with capacity building.
- Neighborhood Watch remains a great partner with the Columbia Police Department (CPD). Beginning in FY 24, funding for this group increased to \$10,000 in CPD's budget from \$2,500 in FY 21.
- The City hosted its first Community Summit in 2025 with over 300 residents in attendance. Although the topics didn't focus exclusively on social need, crime, and discrimination, dot polling questions were used to get resident feedback on items related to safety, community enhancements, and hot topics. Staff from across City departments volunteered their time to connect with residents.

Intervention:

The recommendations under this pillar emphasized the expansion of programs and spaces for youth, violence interruption, and School Resource Officers (SROs) being present in all middle and high schools.

- The City awarded ARPA funding to several nonprofits that work with the youth, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Columbia Supreme, and Destiny of H.O.P.E.
- The OVP created Neighborhood Opportunity and Accountability Proconsul (NOCAP) groups that are contracting with Powerhouse for community navigation liaisons with Transit. Long-term, the OVP will be developing "street teams" following analysis from the NICJR.
- There are four School Resource Officers (SROs) assigned to Columbia Public Schools high schools.
- The Family Access Center of Excellence (FACE) in Boone County, Missouri, opened on August 15, 2016. FACE provides free, coordinated mental health support for youth with social/emotional needs, working with schools and families and is funded through the Boone County Children's Services Board. Chief Schlude is a member of the FACE Board.

Enforcement:

The recommendations under this pillar emphasized building systems of accountability, along with ensuring strong recruitment and retention for CPD.

- The CPD is in the process of pursuing accreditation through Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).
- The City started an in-house Police Academy in October 2024. The Academy is built on the premise that the purpose of the police is to "protect the vulnerable from harm". The Academy incorporates the Police Executive Research Forum's evidence based ICAT (Integrating Communications and Tactics) decision making model. There have been three cohorts to-date, with plans for a fourth beginning in March 2026.
- The CPD Police Academy is staffed by four retired CPD employees, including a former Lieutenant, and 3 former Sergeants. Combined they have over 80 years of policing experience in a wide variety of disciplines.
- CPD Officers are required to complete training on Racial Profiling, Implicit Bias, and De-escalation on an annual basis.
- Starting pay for Missouri POST-certified Police Officers is \$28.85 per hour. Non-POST-certified applicants are hired as Police Officers in Training at a starting rate of \$20.95 per hour. Upon successful completion of the Police Academy, Officers in Training are promoted to Police Officer and their pay is increased to \$28.85 per hour.
- Police Officer applicants with prior full-time law enforcement or qualifying military law-and-order experience may be eligible for lateral entry pay upon meeting all pre-employment requirements, completing required testing and screening, and holding or obtaining Missouri POST Class A certification prior to hire. Eligible officers are placed within the compensation plan based on relevant full-time, paid service, with credit granted for up to ten years. Part-time, seasonal, and reserve service is excluded. Final pay placement is determined by the Police Chief or designee in accordance with the established pay scale.
- While specific housing programs have not been developed, the Housing and Neighborhood provides up to \$20,000 in down payment and closing costs assistance for first-time homebuyers who meet 80% of the HUD Area Median Income guidelines. In addition, the Missouri Housing Development Commission through participating lenders administer homebuyer programs that provide down payment assistance and a below market mortgage interest rate. Income guideline maximums range between \$105,800 to \$148,120.

Re-Entry:

As mentioned above, a few City-specific recommendations from this pillar are not actionable, there are opportunities to collaborate with other community partners to work with populations at risk of reoffending.

- The OVP has responded to a grant opportunity with the Bureau of Justice (BJA) to potentially supply funding for CPD engagement with top offender identification while partnering with the Reentry Opportunity Center, Probation and Parole, and organizations of like mission to identify and those most at risk of reoffending.

Other:

The recommendations under this pillar related to utilizing state and federal dollars, in addition to City funds, to target the reduction of violence, implementing "Ban the Box," and providing assistance to local groups that work with youth.

- While not directly funding violence prevention activities with HUD funding, several initiatives that indirectly support violence and crime prevention were funded. These include activities such as providing housing stability through rental assistance, housing construction and rehabilitation services as well as demolition of vacant and dilapidated properties to strengthen and support neighborhoods. In addition, other activities such as providing funding for homeless centers and vocational training for at-risk youth have been funded.
- The City Council passed a "Fair Chance Hiring Law" in December 2014. The legislation prohibits employers from having questions about an applicant's criminal history on a job application, and from inquiring about an applicant's criminal history, such as a background check, until after a conditional job offer.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: N/A

Long-Term Impact: N/A

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact[Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Safe Community, Secondary Impact: Inclusive and Equitable Community,

Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

[Comprehensive Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Primary, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

Legislative History

Date	Action
12/06/2021	SI20-21 Update on Recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Community Violence

Suggested Council Action

This report is for information only.