

NATIONAL

COLLABORATIVE ON

GUN VIOLENCE

RESEARCH

# THE URGENT NEED FOR RESEARCH ON GUN VIOLENCE

Robust, nonpartisan research is critically needed to inform evidence-based solutions to reducing gun violence.

## GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

The toll of gun violence on American communities is significant and unrelenting. On average, more than 100 people die from gunshots every day in the United States, and more than twice that number receive non-fatal gun injuries.<sup>1</sup> Americans are 25 times more likely than people in 22 other high-income countries to be shot and killed.<sup>2</sup> And since 1999, more than 187,000 students have been exposed to a shooting on campus during school hours.<sup>3</sup> Yet funding for gun violence research is far lower than for other causes of death that kill similar numbers of people.<sup>4</sup>

**Despite the scale of the problem, we lack basic information needed to improve gun policies that will make our schools, our communities, and our nation safer.**

The federal government's investment in research on gun violence has been severely limited for two decades. New federal funding is welcome and needed, but there is still enormous ground to be made up to build the evidence base needed to support fair and effective gun policies.

## Firearm Homicide Rate per 100,000 Population in High-Income Countries, 2010



Grinshteyn, E. & Hemenway, D. "Violent Death Rates: The US Compared with Other High-income OECD Countries, 2010," American Journal of Medicine, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26551975>.

# THE NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ON GUN VIOLENCE RESEARCH

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**The collaborative's mission is to fund and disseminate nonpartisan, scientific research that offers the public and policymakers a factual basis for developing fair and effective gun policies.**

Our sole aim is to provide the evidence that decision makers need to develop solutions that can save lives and reduce injuries while preserving gun owners' rights.

The collaborative was established with a \$20 million gift from Arnold Ventures as a way to reinvigorate gun violence research in the United States. Since launching in 2018, other major donors have joined Arnold Ventures in supporting the collaborative's work, including Wells Fargo Bank, Missouri Foundation for Health, and Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation.

## THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

The collaborative uses a scientific peer-review process to identify rigorous projects that address research questions of high importance. Because gun violence research can be controversial, grant recipients must adhere to strict standards of research transparency, including preregistering their analytic plans and publicly sharing their data so others can check their work.

The collaborative awarded nearly \$10 million in its first round of grants for projects addressing suicide, school violence, officer-involved shootings, firearm safety, and other issues. Funded work included two randomized controlled trials: one evaluating a program for training police officers to better assess high-stakes situations and another assessing the effectiveness of a national program for reducing violence, including gun violence, in schools. Other projects are analyzing the effects of child-access prevention laws, examining the "secondhand" risks and benefits of living with someone who owns a gun, and other important questions.

In 2020, the collaborative will fund up to \$9.5 million in grants on research in the areas of urban gun violence, domestic gun violence, mass shootings, gun suicides, officer-involved shootings, and other topics.

## GOVERNANCE

Funding decisions for the collaborative are made by an independent research advisory committee made up of leaders from business, academia, government, and the healthcare sector. The committee is led by Frank M. Clark, president of the Chicago Board of Education, and member of the Chicago Bar Association. In developing the collaborative's research agenda and portfolio of funded projects, the committee draws on input from stakeholders representing many different interests in gun policy debates, such as gun owners, victim advocates, law enforcement agencies, and public health officials.

The collaborative is administered by RAND Corporation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research institution that has been a leader in the field of gun policy research. RAND manages requests for proposals and the scientific peer-review process, and provides grants management support. Collaborative director Andrew Morral is a senior behavioral scientist at RAND and leads its *Gun Policy in America* initiative. Launched in 2018, *Gun Policy in America* is a multi-year project funded by Arnold Ventures designed to provide policymakers and the public with a neutral source of information on what is known about the effects of current and proposed firearms policies.<sup>5</sup>



*Until the federal government commits to a large and sustained portfolio of research on gun violence prevention, the need for the collaborative's funded research will remain urgent.*

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Demand for action on gun violence is strong. Public opinion polls show that the majority of Americans, including gun owners, want action. Although there is broad agreement that gun violence must be reduced, there is often disagreement on how best to do that.

In 2019 Congress approved gun violence prevention research funding for the first time in more than 20 years. However, the historic absence of federal support for this research has created an opportunity for a national philanthropic consortium to take the lead—not to further a political agenda but to support rigorous research on gun violence prevention. Until the federal government commits to a large and sustained portfolio of research on gun violence prevention, the need for the collaborative's funded research will remain urgent.

New and better information on the prevention of gun violence will reap important benefits. Our investment in rigorous research will contribute to more effective public policies that will save lives.

We hope you will join us in this cause.

**To learn more about supporting the collaborative, contact Andrew Morral at [morral@rand.org](mailto:morral@rand.org).**

### Sources

- 1 RAND Corp, *The Science of Gun Policy* (2018), available: [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2088.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2088.html)
- 2 Grinshteyn, E. & Hemenway, D. "Violent Death Rates: The US Compared with Other High-income OECD Countries, 2010." *American Journal of Medicine*, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26551975>.
- 3 Cox, J. & Rich, S. "Scarred by school shootings." March 25, 2018, *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/local/us-school-shootings-history/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.1ce483qb59c](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/local/us-school-shootings-history/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.1ce483qb59c)
- 4 Stark, David E., and Nigam H. Shah, "Funding and Publication of Research on Gun Violence and Other Leading Causes of Death," *JAMA*, Vol. 317, No. 1, January 3, 2017, pp. 84–86.
- 5 [www.rand.org/research/gun-policy.html](http://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy.html)
- 6 <https://www.npr.org/2019/09/10/759193047/poll-most-americans-want-to-see-congress-pass-gun-restrictions>

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