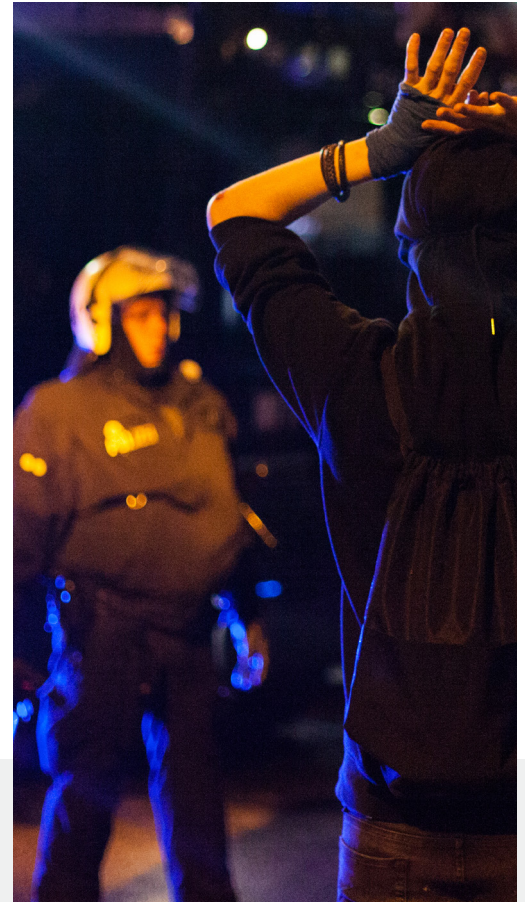


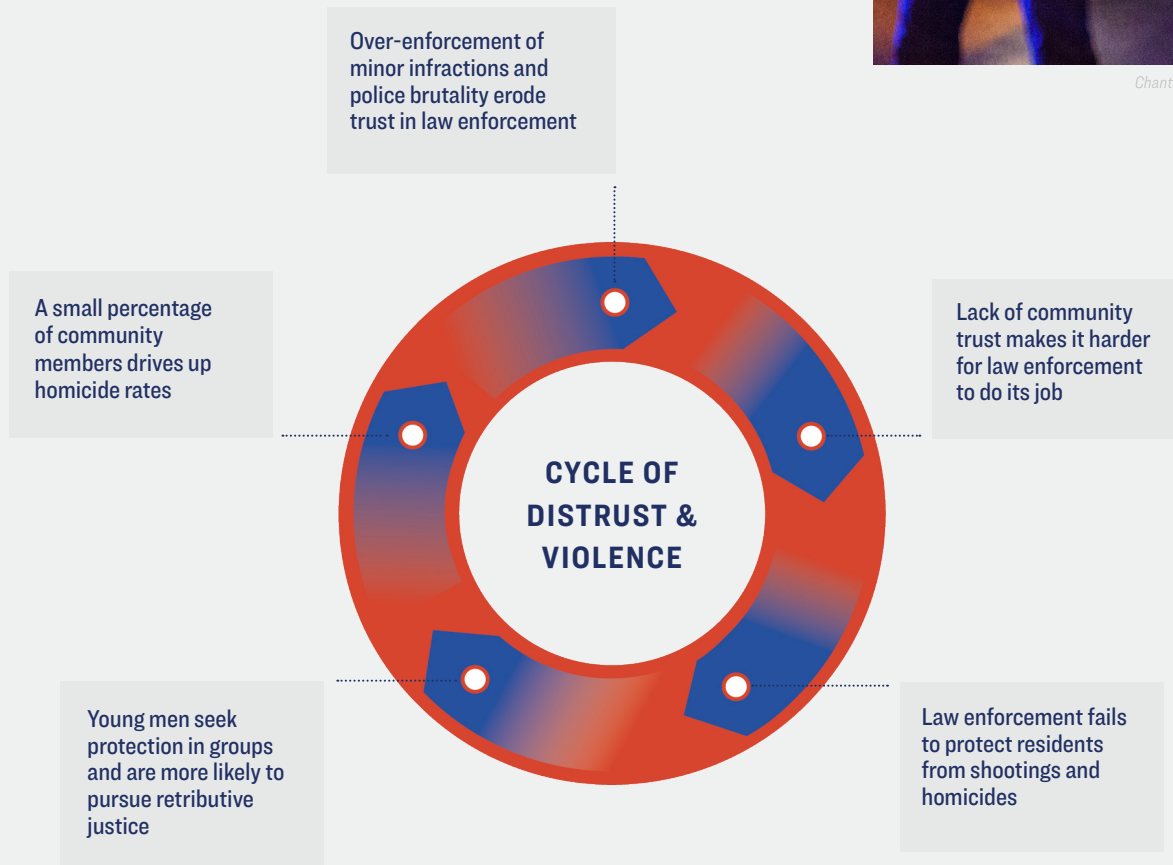
POLICING AND COMMUNITY TRUST

The Corrosive Cycle of Distrust and Violence

The lack of trust between communities and law enforcement is a major driver of gun violence in America's cities. When communities experience disparate treatment at the hands of the criminal justice system—which often takes the form of over-enforcement of minor infractions and under-protection from shootings and murder—they are less likely to report shootings, cooperate with the police, and serve as witnesses. To reduce gun violence and save lives, we must focus on reforms proven to build earned trust and more justly and effectively protect impacted communities from violence.



Chantal Pinzi/EyeEm via Getty Images



Five Facts about Murder in America



Most homicides occur in geographically concentrated areas within our cities.

In 2015, half of the nation's gun homicides occurred in just 127 cities and towns. More than a quarter of gun homicides that year occurred in city neighborhoods containing just 1.5% of the US population. Together, these neighborhoods would cover an area smaller in size than Green Bay, Wisconsin.



Most homicides are perpetrated by a very small percentage of the population.

Data from nearly two dozen cities reveals that around half of homicides and nonfatal shootings involve people—as victims and/or perpetrators—known by law enforcement to be affiliated with “street groups” involved in violence. These groups constitute, on average, less than 0.6% of a city's population, with an even smaller percentage actually perpetrating violent crime.



African Americans make up more than half of all homicide victims in America.

Black men comprise less than 7% of the US population, but 51% of gun homicide victims. Violence is the leading cause of death among young black men and boys aged 15–24. In 2016, homicide was responsible for more deaths in this age group than every other cause of death combined.



More than half of homicides of black Americans don't lead to an arrest.

A recent in-depth investigation by the *Washington Post* found that across 52 of the nation's largest cities over the past decade, 53% of all murders of African Americans never led to an arrest, let alone a conviction. Nearly three-quarters of all unsolved murders in these cities involved a victim who was black. Gun homicides and nonfatal shootings are even less likely to lead to an arrest.



In communities across the country, many violent crimes are never reported.

Researchers have found that high-profile cases of police brutality or misconduct lead to substantial declines in citizen crime reporting and spikes in community violence. Neighborhoods where law enforcement is seen as illegitimate have higher rates of violence. Nationwide, 29% of Americans who were seriously injured in violent crimes involving weapons did not report that crime to the police.

Pathways to Progress

To save lives from gun violence and make all American communities safer, we must disrupt self-reinforcing cycles of distrust and community violence. Police departments and community leaders across the country have demonstrated that community-oriented, relational policing is key to earning public trust, gaining the information and active cooperation necessary to effectively protect the public, and preventing vigilante shootings.

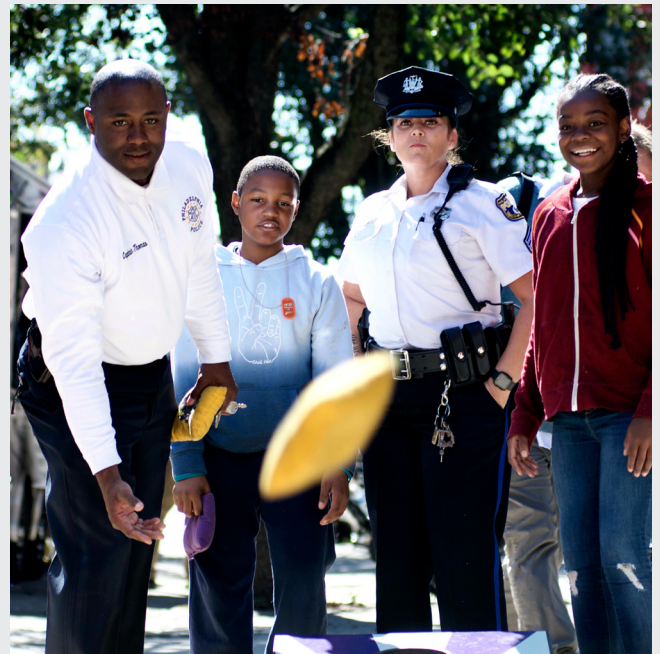
Camden, New Jersey, has experienced remarkable progress in a relatively short amount of time. In 2012, Camden had the fifth highest homicide rate in the nation. Under the direction of Police Chief J. Scott Thomson, Camden's police department undertook a concerted effort to infuse community policing and trust-building efforts throughout all of its officers' work. While these efforts are still very much underway, the city has already seen pronounced results: **In 2012, Camden experienced 67 homicides. In 2018, there were 22.**

Cities seeking to implement reforms similar to those undertaken by Camden should follow the recommendations laid out in the final report of the President's 2015 Task Force on 21st Century Policing, and intentionally refocus law enforcement resources around proven violence prevention efforts like the group violence intervention strategy. Progress is within reach—but we must make a societal-level commitment to taking the steps necessary to achieve it.



Annual Homicides, City of Camden

Source: New Jersey Department of Health



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