RESEARCH REPORT
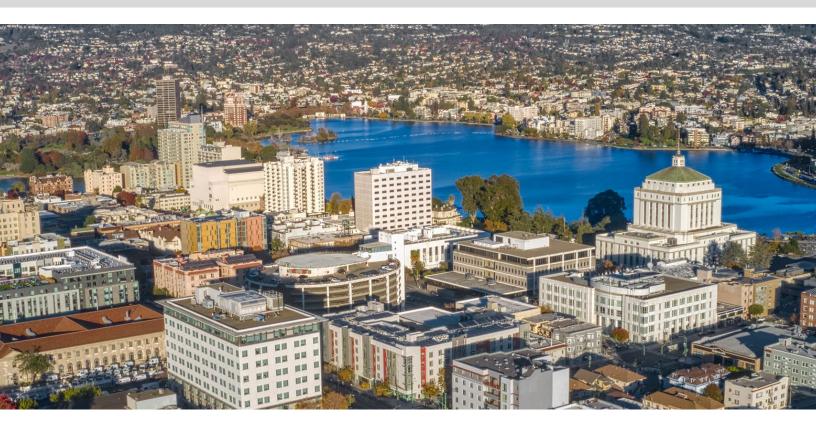
An Interim Process and Outcome Evaluation of Oakland's Measure Z–Funded Services

The Department of Violence Prevention's Group Violence Response Strategy, July 2022 to June 2024

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December 2024

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Executive Summary

This interim evaluation report presents descriptive, process, and outcome findings regarding the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention's (DVP's) group violence response strategy. This strategy responds to violent incidents and mediates conflicts to prevent violence from spreading. The strategy also engages people at elevated risk of involvement in violence in a variety of services to reduce that risk and support their growth and success. The priority population for group violence response is young people, adults, and families at the center of gun violence, with a focus on young men of color between the ages of 14 and 35 and their families.

From July 2022 through June 2024, group violence services delivered hundreds of responses to shooting scenes and engaged thousands of people in Oakland. We summarize the findings of our descriptive, implementation, and outcome analysis of group violence services and related practice and data-capture recommendations below.

Findings

Descriptive Analysis

The evaluation team analyzed data from the DVP's Apricot data-management system to describe the level and nature of group violence response and service activity undertaken by the DVP's funded community partners from July 2022 through June 2024. This included information about characteristics of participants, incidents responded to, services provided, and outcomes recorded. Violence interrupters responded to the overwhelming majority (82 percent) of shooting incidents for which they received notifications to respond. At these scenes they assessed the risk of retaliatory violence and where that risk existed, and they took measures to mitigate and interrupt potential conflicts that could lead to further violence. At the individual level, group violence services were recorded for 2,006 people in the DVP's Apricot data system from July 2022 through June 2024. Youth employment services were the most common (428 people), and even the least common service type, emergency relocation, was provided to 119 people over two years.

Life coaching is one of the core group violence services, with 388 adults and 237 young people having received life-coaching services from July 2022 through June 2024. Participants' varied needs and aspirations are evident in the goals they set during life coaching. For young people, the most

common goals were related to education (33 percent), family (25 percent), and the legal system (14 percent). In contrast, for adults the most common goals were related to employment (38 percent), housing and shelter (16 percent), and the legal system (13 percent). Young people completed more than half of their goals (55 percent), while adults completed 43 percent of theirs.

The group violence services also included employment services. There were 279 young people who received employment services who had at least one recorded work experience, with a total of 537 positions. These were mainly internships (43 percent) and subsidized work experiences (51 percent; see figure 8 on page 22). In comparison, the 145 adult participants who received employment services and had at least one form of employment recorded (205 total positions) were more likely to have permanent nonsubsidized job placements (56 percent), followed by subsidized work experiences (33 percent). Average starting wages among employment participants were $19.28 for adults and $15.83 for young people. These adult wages were in line with the living wage as defined by the City of Oakland as $17.37 an hour with health benefits, or $19.95 an hour without health benefits (City of Oakland 2024). Unlike adult participants, who were working 32 hours a week on average, young people in employment services were working just 10, likely because so many of the youth participants had internships and because they had to balance employment with school.

Process Evaluation

The evaluation team interviewed seven staff members from the DVP and community-based organizations to understand their experiences implementing the Measure Z–funded violence interruption services, emergency relocation, and hospital-based response activities that were part of the group violence response strategy. Those staff members detailed how a core part of the group violence services work is building relationships with community members who have been affected by violence and using partnerships and relationships to connect people to services and supports to promote healing and prevent further violence. They described communicating to use the different knowledge and capacities of Oakland partners to do this complex and challenging work. This included leveraging available resources within their organizations to connect participants to other services and basic supports (like transportation and food assistance), whether those services are funded by Measure Z or not.

The DVP plays a central role coordinating these activities by managing relationships, delivering training, and sometimes mitigating tensions between Oakland Police Department (OPD) personnel and violence interrupters at shootings scenes. A key mechanism for coordinating violence interruption

activities is the weekly shooting-review meetings, where the DVP and violence interruption staff at community-based organizations review incidents that occurred over the past week and delegate who will follow up to ensure victims, families, and communities are being offered the appropriate services. The OPD also conducts a weekly shooting review, and information from those reviews are fed into the DVP's shooting review, but the information does not flow in the opposite direction.

Violence interrupters shared that participants need support finding stable housing and employment opportunities, and in some cases even emergency relocation to protect participants' safety. Interviewees said it is common that group violence service participants have challenges meeting basic needs, such as food, diapers for their children, and arranging funerals for lost loved ones. People receiving relocation services may need to move not just themselves but their entire families, unless they are able and willing to have their children placed with a relative. Interviewees working on relocation described the fear people can feel at the idea of starting their lives over from scratch, from work to housing to school for their children, and not having the support they need. It can also be difficult to get people out of their current living situations.

Interviewees faced many implementation challenges. A common one that all the interviewees doing this work discussed is the vicarious trauma they experience as a result of their work. Because violence interrupters are often from or closely connected to the neighborhoods they work in, a violence interrupter may respond to a scene and see that a friend or loved one has been the victim of violence. At other times an incident will deeply affect the wider community, leading to the possibility of violence escalating among involved groups. Several interviewees also noted the challenge of preparing the violence interruption workforce to succeed in a professional environment. They described the need to support interrupters professionally so they could complement their deep understanding of neighborhoods, insight, and ability to connect based on lived experience with different kinds of job skills required of violence interrupters. A throughline in interviewees' responses about professional development for violence interrupters was the need to meld two different professional cultures, one among people who come to the work through lived experience and the other among those who come to it through educational credentialing. Lastly, multiple interviewees noted that their work occurs in a broader context in which the communities they work in are underinvested in and the root causes of violence, such as persistent poverty, are not addressed.

For all these challenges, interviewees believed they were realizing many successes. First and foremost, they consistently expressed confidence that their work was averting further violence and saving lives. They also felt an important success was being in the position to show up with care and concern for the trauma that people had experienced and the risk of further harm they might be facing.

They also named people's recognition of the value this work was providing as an important success. This included community members recognizing them and coming to expect that they would be responding to violence. It also included formal recognition of the value of the work from the city government in forms such as funding and the establishment of the DVP.

Outcome Analysis

To understand the effects of participation in group violence services on individual outcomes, we conducted two analyses. First, we conducted a dose-response analysis for a sample of 1,011 group violence service participants who consented to share their identifying information, examining the period from July 2022 through June 2024. The dose-response analysis measured the association between the level of engagement in services, defined as the number of individual service sessions, and the likelihood of being arrested after beginning services. Examining the relationship between the "dosage" of services and outcomes is important because increased engagement may lead to more time and activities with which to meet participants' needs. Further, by looking at all participants across all group violence programs, we could more holistically assess the effects of the group violence response strategy overall. We could also capture the combined engagement created by participating in multiple programs, which wouldn't be possible looking at each program separately. We did not find a statistically significant relationship between the number of service sessions participants receive and their likelihood of being arrested after beginning services.

Second, we repeated the analysis for only participants of adult life coaching and housing-focused adult life coaching (n=210). We found that participating in more service sessions was associated with a lower likelihood of arrest. This result approached statistical significance at the $p < 0.1$ level. This indicates that adult life-coaching participants who are engaged at higher levels may have more successful outcomes, and extending the analysis for the final report with a larger sample and follow-up time may provide a more definitive result.

Recommendations

Practice Recommendations

Continue to increase investment and support for the violence prevention and intervention workforce with lived experience. The lived experience that many violence prevention and intervention professionals bring to their work allows them to be credible messengers to people at highest risk of

involvement in violence. At the same time, they may be new to the workforce and professional settings and need to acquire new skills and experience to succeed in those settings. Interviewees who raised this point recognized and appreciated the trainings and other settings the DVP provided for this, but they felt that more time and attention to this issue was needed. Workers with lived experience could also be more involved in designing programs and interventions, not just implementing them.

The DVP can create forums for different service providers to coordinate and communicate. A notable strength of the DVP service continuum is the comprehensive network of referral relationships between service providers evident in the data and the level of partnership indicated by providers we interviewed. While service providers appreciate the coordination and communication where it is happening, the extent of this coordination differs by service and provider. Many interviewees reported spending substantial time establishing and maintaining relationships needed to meet service participants' needs, and more formalized coordination might make this aspect of their work easier. Regular coordination can help providers address emerging trends in patterns of violence and participants' needs, and they can use information about the types of services people receive to better tailor community healing and restorative events and initiatives.

Recruit and retain multilingual staff. In a community as linguistically diverse as Oakland, multilingual staff are needed in all engagement roles, with a particular focus on meeting the high levels of monolingual Spanish speakers in Oakland.

Focus on enhancing housing and mental health service options. The gaps in options to meet service participants' needs related to housing and mental health services came up repeatedly in interviews with providers. While these are difficult and long-standing issues, they are important to raise here because they were consistently described as barriers to effective assistance for service participants.

Deliver more cross-training for staff at different organizations. Many providers appreciated the opportunities they had to attend trainings with peers from other organizations and in other specialties, and they felt the increased mutual understanding from those engagements improved operational collaboration in the field.

Assist providers with building their capacity. Community-based service providers who received DVP funding would like more assistance with building capacity from the DVP and from the City of Oakland generally. This could include finding ways to increase staffing and staff capacity to mitigate challenges resulting from staff turnover and vacancies; making the yearly grant process easier for

grantees, who are often managing reporting requirements from multiple grants from multiple sources; and identifying additional funding sources for providers who are addressing complex needs and finding that available resources, though needed and appreciated, are insufficient for program participants' needs.

Data Recommendations

The City of Oakland and the DVP may want to revisit the process through which participants consent to their data being shared for evaluation purposes, to determine whether that process can continue to deliver necessary privacy protections while better supporting analysis of the outcomes of DVP-funded services. The current process and the resulting levels of consent (53 percent of participants in this interim evaluation of the group violence response) significantly limit analysis of service engagement and outcomes beyond a small and potentially unrepresentative subset of participants. Findings on the effects of DVP-funded programs on this subset of participants who consented to data sharing are valuable, but estimating the effects of those programs on safety and violence in Oakland as a whole requires going beyond understanding what is happening with this subset. Of note, 19 percent of participant consent forms are marked as "not complete yet" or "never presented" in the Apricot data system. Although the DVP has revised the consent form, offered trainings, and provided guidance about the consent process, providers and participants may be wary about the implications of providing consent. The DVP should explore how providers can overcome barriers to gaining participants' consent while maintaining that sharing data is voluntary.

Improve the integration of forms across the Apricot data system. Apricot is a comprehensive system with many different forms for different services funded by Measure Z. Some forms are based on incident responses or service provision but are not linkable back to participants, making analysis of service engagement more difficult.

Work to more consistently and accurately capture dates of birth and names in the Apricot database, and consider whether any additional identifiers might be added. For example, the school ID or probation ID numbers could be requested when applicable. Issues with this information made matching across data systems infeasible for many participants who had consented for evaluators to do so.

Encourage providers to complete and update the forms in the Apricot data system more regularly and comprehensively, which will allow for a better understanding of participants' needs and levels of engagement with programming. For example, the participant and enrollment forms capture important

information about participants' education, housing, families, referral sources, and exposure to violence, but many fields are not completed. Related to updating the forms, exit dates and reasons for exiting programs are missing for many participants, making it difficult to measure completion rates or how long people participate in the programs.

Consider how Apricot could become a useful resource for providers. Many providers maintain their own separate databases and may not use Apricot for day-to-day case management or tracking participants over time. Considering the breadth of the DVP network and the level of referrals across organizations, Apricot could become a more useful resource for providers to improve their work as data tracking becomes more accurate and comprehensive over time.

Evaluation Next Steps

The final evaluation report will be released in mid-2025. For this report, we will engage group violence service participants through interviews and/or focus groups to better understand their experiences with services. We will also extend and expand the outcome analysis that measures the effects of service dosage on key individual outcomes. This will involve adding shooting victimization as an outcome, allowing a longer observation period for outcomes to manifest, and encouraging providers to present the consent form to participants whose consent status is "not complete yet."

Introduction

For decades, the city of Oakland has grappled with gun and gender-based violence, and for decades it has responded by making extensive investments in building capacity and mobilizing expertise to respond to and prevent violent victimization. This interim evaluation report presents findings and insights regarding the work supported and the outcomes realized by one form of that investment: the activities comprising the group violence response strategy area. The group violence response strategy is overseen by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) and carried out by community-based organizations, whose work is funded through the Public Safety and Services Violence Prevention Act, popularly known as Measure Z (box 1). This evaluation work examining Oakland's group violence response is part of a larger process and impact evaluation of Measure Z–funded initiatives undertaken by the Urban Institute in partnership with Urban Strategies Council over a three-year period from July 2022 to June 2025.

We begin this report by situating this evaluation in the complex context of Oakland's violence prevention and intervention work and its history, including previous evaluations of Measure Z. We then provide an overview of the focus of this evaluation, what is included in this report, and what will come in the final evaluation report in 2025. The subsequent sections present our descriptive and qualitative findings on the implementation of the group violence response. We then analyze the impact of group violence services on participant outcomes, and we conclude with summary recommendations derived from our evaluation to date.

BOX 1

Measure Z and the Department of Violence Prevention

In 2014, Oakland voters passed Measure Z, the Public Safety and Services Violence Prevention Act. Measure Z built on lessons from the earlier Measure Y, the Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004. Measure Z provides approximately $27 million in funding annually, with $2 million designated for improving fire-response services, about $15 million for violence-reduction efforts within the Oakland Police Department, and roughly $10 million for violence-prevention and -intervention programs overseen, and in some cases directly provided, by the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP). Measure Z-funded DVP activities are grouped into four strategy areas: group violence response, gender-based violence response, community healing and restoration, and school violence intervention and prevention (VIP) teams that embed the other three strategy areas in select Oakland schools.

Established in 2017, the DVP has a mandate to reduce gun violence, intimate partner violence, and commercial sexual exploitation. Before the DVP was established, the community-led components

of the City of Oakland's violence-reduction work were housed in Oakland Unite. Oakland Unite was a division of the City's human services department, and the DVP absorbed its functions and staff were automatically transferred from Oakland Unite to the DVP. The roles and responsibilities of Oakland Unite were fully assumed by the DVP in 2020, and the DVP also took on new functions.

Source: *Department of Violence Prevention Strategic Spending Plan, 22-24* (City of Oakland, Department of Violence Prevention, 2021).

Recent Violence Trends in Oakland

The period covered by this phase of the Measure Z evaluation (July 2022 to June 2024), was a difficult one in the city of Oakland's history of violence prevention efforts. Though Oakland has experienced rates of violent crime victimization well above the averages of both the United States and California for many years, before the COVID-19 pandemic violent crime had significantly and consistently declined (figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Annual Violent Crime Rate per 100,000 People in Oakland, California, 2012–2023

Compared with state and national rates

Sources: FBI Crime Data Explorer, accessed September 24, 2024, https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/home; Oakland Police Department citywide annual crime reports, publicly available at https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/police-data. **Notes:** Violent crimes include murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Rates for Oakland in 2021 and 2023 were calculated using the Oakland Police Department crime reports. Rates for 2023 for California and the United States were calculated using 2022 population estimates.

This trend reversed with the onset of the pandemic, and shootings in Oakland increased sharply in 2020 (figure 2). Shootings peaked in 2021 but remained at levels much higher in 2022 and 2023 than from 2015 to 2019.

FIGURE 2

Annual Homicides and Shootings in Oakland, California, 2014–2023

■ Homicides ■ Shootings

Source: Oakland Police Department citywide annual crime reports, available at https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/police-data.
Notes: Following the Uniform Crime Report hierarchy rule, this figure shows the number of crime incidents in which homicide or a shooting was the most serious offense. The number of shooting and homicide victims may be greater than the number of crime incidents, as a shooting with multiple victims is counted as one incident.

The most recent available data on shootings and homicides indicate that the number of shootings and homicides in the first half of 2024 was lower than in the first halves of 2022 and 2023, although still above pre-2020 levels. The final evaluation report on the DVP's Measure Z–funded work will address whether this more hopeful trend bears out through the remainder of 2024.

Measure Z–Funded DVP Strategies and Oakland's Violence-Reduction Ecosystem

The DVP's violence intervention and prevention work is part of a large ecosystem of violence-reduction programs and initiatives in Oakland (National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform 2024). These include Oakland Ceasefire (in which the DVP is a key partner), a focused-deterrence model involving the data-driven identification of individuals and groups at the highest risk of being involved

in gun violence; directly and respectfully communicating with those individuals and groups, offering intensive services and support for people to transition away from violence; and focused enforcement for those who continue to engage in violence. They also include the Alameda County Office of Violence Prevention, recently launched to provide interventions similar to Oakland's elsewhere in Alameda County and in Oakland, and the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, which focuses on more general prevention and youth-development activities.[1] Though these efforts are distinct from the Measure Z–supported work of the DVP and its funded community partner organizations and outside the scope of this evaluation, they are important for understanding the work being done to reduce violence in Oakland and intersect with the Measure Z work in formal ways (e.g., service-referral relationships) and informal ways (e.g., relationships between professionals and organizations operating in the same neighborhoods).

Previous Evaluations and Other Relevant Research Findings

The phase of the Measure Z evaluation covered in this report follows and builds on previous evaluation work led by Mathematica, which we summarize here. Mathematica's Measure Z evaluation work covered the implementation and impacts of Oakland Unite's strategy areas from 2016 to 2020.

YOUTH AND ADULT LIFE COACHING

Life-coaching services support people at risk of violence or with previous involvement in violence in Oakland with identifying and reaching goals that reduce their risk of violence. Youth life coaching had significant positive impacts on high school retention and graduation rates over a 30-month period (Gonzalez et al. 2021). Participants (*n*=192) were 13 percent more likely to remain in school and 11 percent more likely to graduate than their nonparticipating peers. However, there were mixed impacts on other outcomes, as young people in life coaching were 13 percent more likely to become victims of reported violent incidents. Though there was a short-term reduction in arrests for violent offenses (most youth life-coaching participants had contact with the justice system in the year leading up to services), no long-term reductions in law enforcement contact were observed. These results came in the context of challenges with fully delivering the services to participants; Mathematica found that only a quarter of young people completed services as recommended by the Oakland Unite life-coaching model.

Adult life coaching resulted in a 3 percent reduction in the likelihood of being arrested for a violent offense after 12 months, with limited long-term impact, except for those referred by Ceasefire, a primary referral partner. Participants linked to Ceasefire were 21 percent less likely to be convicted

after 30 months than similar adults who were also identified as high risk by Ceasefire but did not participate in life coaching. It is important to note that the Ceasefire subgroup was small (*n*=31 of the total sample of 257), so the finding regarding their better outcomes may not generalize to all adult life-coaching participants. Most adult life-coaching participants (75 percent) had been arrested before beginning services, although less than half (43 percent) had been arrested in the two years before beginning services. Mathematica found that less than 40 percent of adults completed services as recommended by the Oakland Unite life-coaching model (Gonzalez et al. 2021).

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

From 2017 to 2018, employment services primarily served African American and Hispanic young people at risk of violence, focusing on those with low attendance at school or experiencing violence (Gonzalez, Lacoe, et al. 2019). Although the strategy targeted young people ages 13 to 18, 39 percent of participants were older than 18 at the time of enrollment. Only 54 percent of school-aged employment services participants were enrolled in an Oakland or Alameda County public school in the 12 months before receiving services. Among these students, 50 percent were chronically absent from school and 22 percent were suspended or expelled during the 12 months before receiving services. Almost a quarter of participants in youth employment services reported being a victim of violence to the OPD before receiving services, and 59 percent reported that they had a peer or family member who had been shot or seriously injured.

School-aged employment services participants (*n*=179) were 13 percent more likely to be enrolled in school in the 12 months after starting services, and had similar school attendance and discipline as the comparison group. Youth employment services participants had similar rates of contact with law enforcement, arrests, convictions, and victimization as the comparison group in the 12 months after beginning services. Mathematica's process evaluation highlighted challenges with collaboration between youth employment services and the life-coaching providers because of competition for young people's time and differing approaches to serving them (Gonzalez, Lacoe, et al. 2019).

Adult employment services served high-risk clients, 39 percent of whom had an arrest before enrolling, two-thirds of whom reported direct exposure to violence, and over 30 percent of whom reported being victims of violence (Gonzalez, Lacoe et al. 2017). Mathematica's impact evaluation showed that participating in adult employment services (*n*=522 participants) decreased people's likelihood of being arrested for any offenses in the six months after enrollment by 6 percentage points. Participation also decreased the likelihood of a violent offense by 1 percentage point, but there was no difference in the likelihood of arrest for a gun offense between the adult employment services

group and the comparison group. Mathematica's process evaluation of these services found that income payments were crucial for client engagement. However, participant engagement remained a challenge when job opportunities did not align with clients' interests.

SHOOTING AND HOMICIDE RESPONSE

From 2019 to 2020, Mathematica evaluated the four substrategies of the shooting and homicide response strategy (D'Agostino et al. 2020). **Violence interrupters** have a deep history with their community, allowing them to resolve conflict and prevent retaliation. Victims of shooting incidents who were referred to violence interrupters largely avoided violent re-injury and retaliation over the next two years. The victimization rate for violence-interruption participants was 13 percent in the 24 months after engagement (there was no comparison group identified for this analysis). Victims did not engage in retaliatory violence as measured by increased gun-related arrests.

Caught in the Crossfire (CIC) **hospital-based intervention specialists** supported survivors with trauma-informed services. Although many CIC participants engaged with services over a sustained period, roughly half ended their involvement with CIC within two weeks, indicating that they participated in the initial intensive outreach services but may have not wanted to continue with additional services. Services included intensive outreach to all participants, case management (for 54 percent of participants), and mental health therapy (for 16 percent of participants). Over the two years after participants started CIC services, participants largely avoided reinjury, with a rate of violent victimization of 15 percent (based on reports made to the OPD), compared with 59 percent in the 24-month period before services. The share of CIC participants experiencing a gun arrest in the 24 months before services was the same as the share experiencing a gun arrest in the 24 months after services. The Mathematica team found no evidence of increased gun-related crime arrests, suggesting there was no pattern of retaliation.

Relocation support staff assessed short- and long-term safety needs and helped victims plan and pay for emergency relocation. In most cases, participants received short-term support, and in rare cases when the $500 emergency funds were insufficient, staff developed longer-term plans. Over the two years after receiving relocation support, participants largely avoided reinjury: the observed victimization rates in Oakland in the 24 months after relocation services was 10 percent. However, the arrest rate for gun offenses in Oakland among participants was slightly higher postrelocation. Both results must be viewed as provisional because of the small number of relocation participants who consented to their data being matched on these outcomes (*n*=21) and the fact that they presumably spent a substantial amount of time outside Oakland after relocation.

Homicide support services helped grieving families after a homicide, including with applying for victims-of-crime funds and funeral/memorial planning. Forty percent of participants received services for a week or less, while 60 percent intermittently engaged in services for six months. Nearly all participants received intensive outreach, but less than 20 percent received mental health services.

EVALUATIONS OF OTHER OAKLAND VIOLENCE-REDUCTION EFFORTS

Oakland Ceasefire has operated during the same period as Oakland Unite and the DVP's Measure Z–funded work, aiming at the same outcomes and focusing on overlapping people and places. The DVP is a main partner in the Ceasefire strategy and some Measure Z funding supports Ceasefire. Ceasefire has also served as a referral source for Oakland Unite and DVP life-coaching participants. An Oakland Ceasefire impact evaluation found several significant effects (Braga et al. 2019). First, a place-based analysis showed that the Ceasefire strategy was associated with an estimated 31.5 percent reduction in gun homicides in Oakland compared with trends in comparison cities. In Oakland, the intervention reduced gun violence in neighborhoods with groups/gangs subjected to the Ceasefire treatment, and this reduction was not associated with increased violence in surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, a gang-/group-based analysis revealed a steeper decrease in shootings involving group members compared with those not associated with a group. There was also a significant reduction in shootings by treated groups/gangs and vicariously treated groups/gangs compared with untreated groups/gangs. The individual-level analysis found that individuals who were identified as high risk through Ceasefire experienced a nonsignificant decrease in victimization but also experienced more arrests than the nonparticipant comparison group. This increase in arrests likely owes to the continuing focus on high-risk individuals by law enforcement agencies and the difficulty of creating a comparison group for Ceasefire participants because of their high-risk status.

Qualitative analysis of 21 interviews with local stakeholders provided insights into the program's successes and areas for improvement. Respondents recommended that Ceasefire partners continue to focus on increasing trust and respect among participants, community members, and law enforcement officials. Respondents expressed concerns about the program's ability to sustain reductions in violence given long-standing socioeconomic factors, like widespread poverty and unemployment. Despite these concerns, respondents supported the program's organized approach to reducing gun violence and the allocation of resources to those at the highest risk of violence. Additionally, stakeholders commended Ceasefire partners for their dedication to the program and their success in sustaining reductions in citywide gun violence.

In 2023, an audit of the performance of the Oakland Ceasefire strategy flagged a number of issues with its implementation in recent years and made several DVP-focused recommendations relevant for this evaluation (California Partnership for Safe Communities 2023). The audit found that the City had "gradually walked away" from the Ceasefire strategy, shifting focus from the high-risk individuals who were intended to be the focus. The result, according to the auditors, was that Ceasefire was no longer impacting citywide violence in Oakland, particularly from 2020 onward. DVP-specific findings included that the DVP "is poorly structured to address the service and support needs of high-risk individuals that express interest in services," with key staff responsible for doing so in separate chains of command and not formally communicating (California Partnership for Safe Communities 2023, 9). The audit further noted that few referrals from Ceasefire to life coaching resulted in people coming onto caseloads, and that of those who did, many did not remain on caseloads for very long. Recommendations for the DVP included reorganizing the DVP under one management structure and identifying a clearer theory of change around gun violence. The audit also recommended that 70 percent of the DVP's life-coach caseloads consist of Ceasefire referrals, with the remainder meeting multiple risk criteria identified in the most recent gun violence problem analysis. Since February 2024, the City has refocused on the Ceasefire strategy, and the DVP's internal direct-services team is now almost exclusively dedicated to this effort.

Urban's Evaluation: Overview and Methodology

In 2022, the Urban Institute, in partnership with Urban Strategies Council, was selected by the City of Oakland to conduct a process and impact evaluation of Measure Z–funded initiatives for a three-year evaluation period from July 2022 to June 2025. The Measure Z services cover two primary components: (1) violence prevention and intervention strategies operated by the DVP, and (2) geographic, special-victims, and community-policing services implemented by the Oakland Police Department.

This evaluation focuses only on strategies and activities implemented by the community-based organizations with Measure Z funding. The evaluation does not cover services provided directly by DVP staff or the Ceasefire strategy. **The evaluation has three components.**

First, the descriptive analysis presents data on the level and nature of activity undertaken by the DVP and its funded community partners. This includes addressing what we know about the characteristics of participants, incidents responded to, services provided, and outcomes recorded. This component draws from the DVP's Apricot data-management system. In addition to the analyses described in this report, the evaluation supported the development of public data dashboards. The

dashboards can be accessed for further detailed information about the strategies and activities funded by Measure Z at https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/dvp-measure-z-funded-grantee-network-data-dashboard. The following research questions are addressed in this component:

- How many people were served in each program? How many incidents were responded to? How many community activities occurred?

    » What were the characteristics of these clients/incidents/activities?

- What was the dosage of the various Measure Z–funded DVP activities, at the client, family, and community levels?

Second, our process evaluation addresses questions about the implementation of the Measure Z–funded activities, going beyond the descriptive information about what activities were undertaken to understand how well they are working and identify implementation challenges and successes. The following research questions are addressed in this component:

- How were the Measure Z–funded DVP activities implemented?

- What are the facilitators of and barriers to success for each DVP substrategy and activity?

- How do the different Measure Z–funded components interact and relate to an overall approach to violence reduction?

Third, our impact evaluation assessed whether the Measure Z–funded activities are realizing intended outcome at the individual and community levels. The following research questions are addressed in this component:

- Do Measure Z–funded activities affect violence at the community level?

- Do people engaged by Measure Z–funded services fare better in terms of safety, well-being, and justice-system involvement than similarly situated people who are not engaged?

- Do Measure Z–funded activities affect community perceptions of safety and well-being?

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The Urban Institute and Urban Strategies Council conducted seven semistructured individual interviews with staff from the DVP and community-based organizations to understand their experiences implementing the Measure Z–funded violence interruption, emergency relocation, and hospital-based response activities that were part of the group violence response strategy area.[2] These activities were the focus of the process evaluation because they had received less process evaluation

attention in previous phases of the Measure Z evaluation and involved either new activities or substantially modified ones. The interviews occurred virtually from September 2023 through February 2024.

Leadership and staff at the community-based organizations funded by Measure Z were informed of the interview opportunity via email using contact information provided by the DVP. The outreach stated the specific activity or program of interest for the interview (e.g., hotlines, shelter services) so that the organization could identify the staff directly involved in the activity or program. Each potential interview began with an informed-consent process in which staff could decide whether to proceed with the interview. The interview questions asked about their roles and responsibilities, how the activity or program was being implemented, referral sources, collaboration across agencies, participants' needs and outcomes, and implementation challenges and successes.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

The Urban Institute executed a data-sharing agreement with the City of Oakland to receive data from multiple sources from the Department of Violence Prevention and the Oakland Police Department. Table 1 lists the types of data received and analyzed in this report. The DVP provided data from its records-management system, called Apricot, which was launched in January 2023. Apricot contains data on individual participants and the services they received as well as on group services and incident responses. Although Apricot was launched in 2023, the DVP was able to carry over data from 2022 that were collected through its previous system, Cityspan. As part of the grant requirements, the DVP-funded service providers report data in Apricot, allowing for more uniform data and consistent analysis across all providers.

Several OPD data sources support the evaluation of the DVP, including data on 911 calls for service, crime, and arrests. We received data on all adult and juvenile arrests from January 2012 to June 2024, including the arrest location and associated charges. The data on calls for service include all 911 calls referred to the OPD from January 2018 to September 2023. The data include information on the call date, time, location, type, priority, and disposition. We received data on all crimes reported to and recorded by the OPD from January 2012 to June 2024, including the date, time, location, and crime type. We also received data on all adult and juvenile homicide victims in Oakland. A request to receive data on nonfatal shooting victims is still pending at the time of this report.

TABLE 1

Sources of Data Used in This Interim Evaluation of Measure Z–Funded Services

	Data coverage
Data source and type	
Oakland Department of Violence Prevention	
Service provision and participation	July 2022–June 2024
Oakland Police Department	
Arrest incidents	January 2012–June 2024
Homicides	January 2018–June 2024

LIMITATIONS

Some important limitations should be considered when assessing the findings of this stage of the Measure Z evaluation. The first is the fact that Apricot, the DVP's new data-entry and -management system, went live in January 2023. Adopting a new system like Apricot involves a learning curve and data-entry inconsistencies and quality-control issues frequently arise and need to be fixed. Urban worked closely with the DVP to mitigate the impact of this change on the evaluation, including obtaining Apricot data extracts as early as possible to become familiar with the data structure and begin asking questions well in advance of the delivery dates for evaluation analyses. Nonetheless, providers' data-collection practices may have differed as they began using Apricot, which may be reflected in our data.

Another limitation is that people participating in individual-level Measure Z activities can refuse to consent to their individually identifying information being shared with the evaluation team. This information is not necessary for the descriptive analyses presented in this report but is needed to match across datasets and assess many outcomes (e.g., arrests). The consent rates varied by service, but in each service a large share of participants did not consent. This means that all outcome analyses involving data linking are restricted to the subset of participants who agreed to share their identifying information. More information about the consent rates is available in the findings section and the appendix.

Group Violence Response Descriptive Analysis

Services funded in the group violence response strategy are intended for people who are at the center of group violence within or between street groups in Oakland. Individual-level services are intended to help people access resources and opportunities that lead them away from violence perpetration, victimization, and incarceration. This strategy also includes activities intended to mediate conflicts before they result in violence and disrupt retaliatory violence. The interventions funded under this strategy are described below.

Adult employment services include pre-employment training, paid work experience, and job placement services for adults at high risk of violence in Oakland. Funded organizations also provide general employment case management services to help people secure and retain employment.

Adult life coaching helps adults at the center of violence in Oakland identify and complete goals that reduce their risk of violence (e.g., obtaining employment or housing, accessing mental health services, avoiding negative peer influences). Life coaches refer clients to needed services and support clients with behavior change, system navigation and socioemotional skill development. Life coaches have frequent contact with their clients and use financial incentives to encourage positive behavior change.

Emergency relocation enables people who are in immediate, lethal danger as a result of group violence to be relocated outside of Oakland while the conflict is mediated or a long-term plan for safety is developed. Funding pays for transportation, hotel stays, and initial rent payments.

Hospital responders visit shooting victims in the hospital to support them at a critical juncture, inform them of helpful services available to them when they are discharged, refer them to services, and provide short-term case management. Hospital responders also help victims complete victim compensation applications.

Violence interrupters respond to shooting and homicide scenes to assess risk of retaliatory violence and interrupt potential conflicts between individuals or groups. They also conduct mediations to prevent conflicts and support victims and families with referrals to services like life coaching and emergency relocation.

Youth diversion services redirect young people away from involvement in the juvenile justice system by offering them the option to participate in a diversion program that promotes accountability and healing in lieu of charges being filed. Diversion program staff help young people access services and develop and complete a plan to repair harm. The Oakland Unified School District also funds a staff position that refers young people leaving the juvenile hall to life-coaching services.

Youth employment services include pre-employment training, career exploration opportunities, and paid work experience for young people at high risk of violence in Oakland. Funded organizations also provide academic case management to facilitate school attendance and graduation.

Youth life coaching helps young people at risk of violence or at the center of violence in Oakland identify and complete goals that reduce their risk of violence (e.g., obtaining employment, attending school regularly, avoiding negative peer influences). Life coaches refer young people to services and support clients with system navigation, socioemotional skill development, and strengthening family ties. Life coaches have frequent contact with their clients and use financial incentives to encourage positive behavior change.

Activities funded by Measure Z under each strategy area and the budget allocation for each are shown in table 2.

TABLE 2

The Oakland Department of Violence Prevention's Group Violence Response Activities Funded by Measure Z, 2022–2024

Activity	Providers	Budget amount 2022–24
Adult employment	Center for Employment Opportunities, Oakland Private Industry Council, Youth Employment Partnership	$1,285,000
Adult life coaching	Abode Services (housing-focused case management), Community & Youth Outreach, Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, Roots Community Health Center, The Mentoring Center	$3,617,500
Emergency relocation	Youth ALIVE!	$596,250
Hospital response	Youth ALIVE!	$843,750
Violence interruption	Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency, Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, Community & Youth Outreach, Trybe, Youth ALIVE!	$4,850,000
Youth diversion	Community Works West, The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, Oakland Unified School District, Fresh Lifelines for Youth*, Carl B. Metoyer Center for Family Counseling*, Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice*	$1,091,250

Activity	Providers	Budget amount 2022–24
Youth employment	Lao Family Community Development, Oakland Kids First, Youth Employment Partnership	$2,475,000
Youth life coaching	East Bay Asian Youth Center, Safe Passages, The Mentoring Center	$2,340,000

Source: Information on funding by activity from July 1, 2022, through September 30, 2024, provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.
Note: * indicates organization providing additional services via subcontract.

This section describes the activities and services delivered under the group violence response strategy area from the DVP's Apricot data system.

Findings on Activities and Service Delivery

Shooting Scene Response

Between July 2022 and June 2024, across the services that make up the group violence response strategy there were hundreds of responses to shooting scenes and thousands of people in Oakland were engaged. Violence interrupters responded to the overwhelming majority of incidents (82 percent) for which they received notifications to respond (table 3). At these scenes they assessed the risk of retaliatory violence and took measures to mitigate and interrupt potential conflicts that could lead to further violence.

TABLE 3

Scene Responses by Violence Interrupters in Oakland, July 2022 to June 2024

	Number of responses	Response rate
Incident type		
Homicide	177	90%
Shooting	499	79%
Total	676	82%

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.
Notes: Response rate is the share of incidents generating a notification that resulted in a response from violence interrupters. Eight responses were recorded for "Other violence" in Apricot.
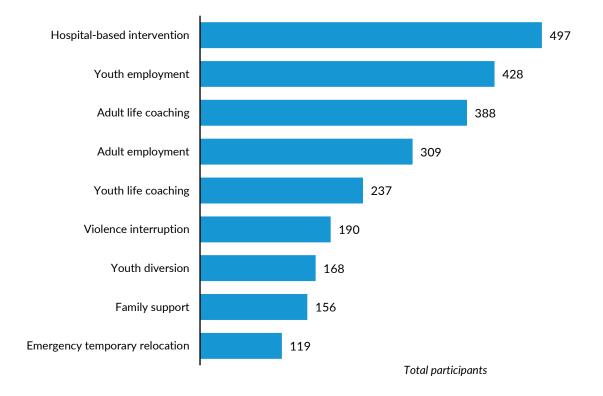
Interviewees who were doing violence interruption, hospital response, or emergency relocation strongly emphasized the centrality of averting retaliation in their work. Crisis response to shooting scenes is collectively provided on a 24/7 basis, with responsibility for responding to shooting scenes

allocated to different organizations and individual violence interrupters for different parts of the city at different times each day. At least one community-based organization funded to respond to shootings and homicides is on shift at any given time. Some of these organizations respond to incidents citywide, and some respond to specific areas in which they are based. When a shooting incident occurs, the OPD sends a notification to the DVP system partner liaison, who then forwards the notification to the violence interrupter network and "activates" the relevant interrupters to respond. Interviewees said that in some cases interrupters are aware of a shooting and have begun their response before receiving the notification. Upon notification, violence interrupters arrive on the scene within 30 to 60 minutes. The violence interruption agency on the schedule responds, but if other agencies with intimate knowledge of the affiliated group or person want to support, they can do so.

Individual Services

At the individual level, 2,006 people had group violence services recorded in Apricot from July 2022 through June 2024. Hospital response reached more than 750 people, the most of any group violence response activity, and 497 of them went on to receive services.[3] Even the least commonly used service type, emergency relocation, worked with 119 people over two years (figure 3). Most group violence service recipients engaged in one service (82 percent), with another 15 percent served by two and 2.6 percent (53 people) served by three or more.

FIGURE 3
Participants Served by Group Violence Response Activity, July 2022 to June 2024

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.
Notes: Family support is part of the community healing and restoration strategy area but is included here because of its relationship with group violence. There were 2,006 unique individuals who received group violence response services; individuals could receive more than one service. Hospital-based intervention data captured in Apricot included services not supported by Measure Z funding; the number of participants served through Measure Z funding was 240.

Table 4 provides the demographic profile of the participants in group violence service activities.[4] These services predominantly serve Black (50.4 percent) and Latino (23.7 percent) Oaklanders. They also predominantly serve young people, with two-thirds of participants for whom age data were recorded younger than 24. A third of those served were female.

TABLE 4
Demographic Profile of Group Violence Response Activity Participants, July 2022 to June 2024

	Share of participants (*n*=2,006)
Race/ethnicity	
African American	51%
Asian	4%
Hispanic or Latino	25%
Multiracial	3%
White	2%
Not Reported	13%
Other	2%
Age	
17 or under	25%
18–24	18%
25–34	14%
35–44	5%
45–54	1%
55+	1%
Unknown	35%
Gender/sex	
Female	33%
Male	63%
Nonbinary or transgender	0.2%
Other	3%
NA	1%

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.

These services are intended for Oaklanders with high exposure to group violence and risk of perpetrating or falling victim to such violence, and it appears that people receiving these services fit this description. Life coaching, youth diversion, and employment providers within the DVP network use an eligibility screener to ensure they are serving the target population. Table 5 shows the risk-factor exposure reported by people at intake via the services-eligibility tool for life coaching, youth diversion, and employment and education services. A person is automatically eligible for the services if they answer yes to either of the first two questions. If they do not answer yes to either of those questions, they are eligible for life-coaching services if they answer yes to at least three of the remaining six items and for employment and education services or youth diversion services if they answer yes to at least two of them. Participants are also automatically eligible for life coaching if they were referred by Ceasefire, the Juvenile Justice Center, a violence interrupter, or a life coach. The responses demonstrate that these services are being provided to individuals who have high levels of primary and secondary exposure to violence, are socially connected to people who carry weapons, and are convicted for violent offenses at high rates.

TABLE 5
Share of Clients Responding "Yes" to Service-Eligibility Questions, July 2022–June 2024

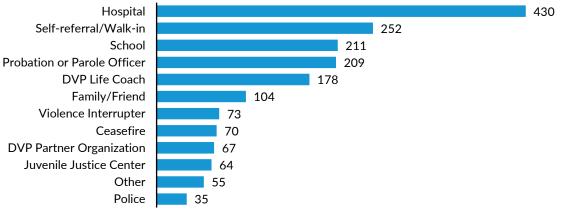| Survey question	Share of clients responding "yes" (*n*=1,062)
Are there any neighborhoods of Oakland that are unsafe for you (because of network affiliation)?	67%
In the past year, have you been shot or stabbed?	9%
In the past year, has someone pulled a gun on you?	39%
In the past year, have you been in a serious physical fight?	48%
In the past year, has a close friend of family member of yours been shot?	61%
Do many of your friends carry a gun, knife, or other weapon?	55%
When you were growing up (during the first 18 years of your life), did you witness or experience physical violence in the home often or very often?	55%
Have you previously been convicted of a violent offense?	29%

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.
Notes: The eligibility screener is administered to life-coaching, youth diversion, and employment and education service participants. Questions can be completed by the client or a staff member from the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention or a DVP-funded provider.

Of the life-coaching participants, 75 percent were eligible based on the screening criteria and 3 percent were ineligible, while for the remaining 22 percent no screening questions were completed. Of the people who participated in youth and adult employment and educational support and youth diversion, 68 percent were eligible, 3 percent were ineligible, and for 29 percent screening information was missing.

In Apricot, frontline staff capture data on how participants were referred to group violence services (figure 4). Most were referred from hospitals, reflecting the high volume of hospital-response contact and the practice of hospitals seeking to refer all gunshot victims to services. It is notable that a large number of participants are self-referred and that schools and community supervision (probation and parole) are significant institutional sources of referrals. The referral patterns also demonstrate the interconnected nature of Measure Z–funded activities, with many referrals coming from life coaches and violence interrupters. The relatively few referrals from Ceasefire (70 over two years) is notable, given the concern raised in a recent audit of Ceasefire about the attenuated relationship between that intervention and DVP services. However, it should be noted that services provided to Ceasefire clients transitioned to being provided almost exclusively by the DVP's in-house direct-service staff in February/March 2024 after the audit.
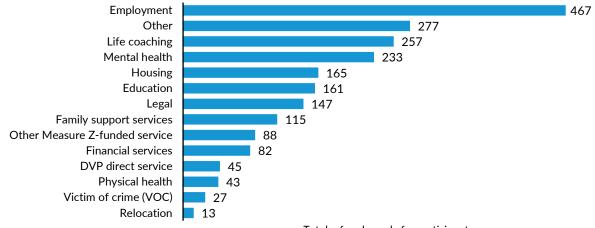
FIGURE 4

Referral Sources of Group Violence Response Activity Participants, July 2022 to June 2024

Total participants referred by source

Hospital	430
Self-referral/Walk-in	252
School	211
Probation or Parole Officer	209
DVP Life Coach	178
Family/Friend	104
Violence Interrupter	73
Ceasefire	70
DVP Partner Organization	67
Juvenile Justice Center	64
Other	55
Police	35

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.
Notes: DVP = Department of Violence Prevention. Data do not include 1,169 people whose referral sources were missing or referral sources with fewer than 20 people (i.e., other community-based organizations, public defender's office, outreach, district attorney's office, and social workers).

After engaging in Measure Z–funded services, participants can be referred to many resources inside and outside the DVP network (figure 5). External referrals were most frequently for employment, mental health, life coaching, housing, and education services.
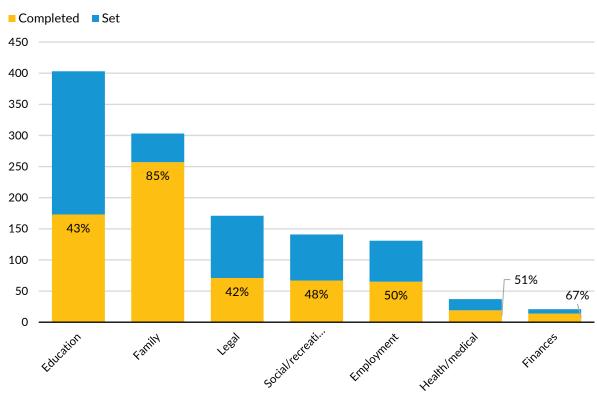
FIGURE 5

Service Referrals Made by Group Violence Response Providers, July 2022 to June 2024

Total referrals made for participants

Employment	467
Other	277
Life coaching	257
Mental health	233
Housing	165
Education	161
Legal	147
Family support services	115
Other Measure Z-funded service	88
Financial services	82
DVP direct service	45
Physical health	43
Victim of crime (VOC)	27
Relocation	13

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.
Notes: Figure does not show 77 external referrals with service type recorded as "NA." "Other Measure Z–funded service" includes violent incident crisis response, school violence intervention program, diversion, healing, housing, safe spaces, and neighborhood and community team services.

The varied needs and aspirations of group violence service participants are evident in the goals they set in life coaching (figures 6 and 7). For young people in life coaching, the most common goals involved education (33 percent), family (25 percent), and the legal system (14 percent), whereas for adults, the most common goals involved employment (38 percent), housing and shelter (16 percent), and the legal system (13 percent). Youth life-coaching participants completed over half of their goals (55 percent), whereas adults completed 43 percent. As of June 2024, 43 participants had successfully completed adult life coaching and 31 had successfully completed youth life coaching.

FIGURE 6

Youth Life-Coaching Participants' Goals and Completion Rates, July 2022–June 2024

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.
Notes: Nine safety goals were set for youth participants, and seven of them were completed. One housing/shelter goal was set and completed for a youth participant.
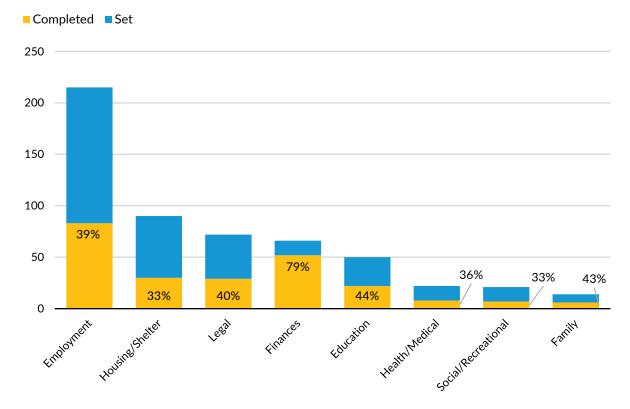
FIGURE 7

Adult Life-Coaching Participants' Goals and Completion Rates, July 2022–June 2024

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.

Youth life-coaching participants received a total of $35,840 in incentives related to their life-coaching goals, an average of $53 in incentives per completed goal. Adult life-coaching participants received a total of $44,730 in incentives, an average of $185 per completed goal.
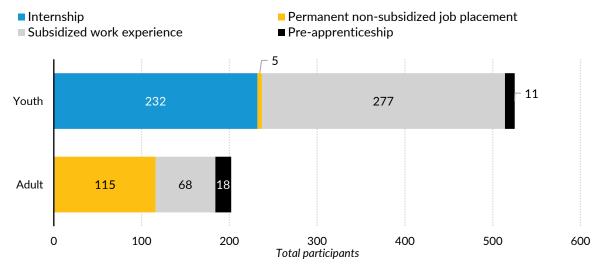
Employment services were also part of the group violence service offerings. Employment was a primary concern for many group violence service participants, particularly adult participants, as suggested by the volume of employment referrals, the prominence of employment goals among life-coaching participants, and views expressed by interviewed providers. There were 279 young people receiving employment services who had at least one recorded work experience, with a total of 537 positions. These were mainly internships (43 percent) and subsidized work experiences (51 percent). In comparison, the 145 adult employment services participants who had at least one form of employment recorded (205 total positions) were more likely to have permanent nonsubsidized job placements (56 percent), followed by subsidized work experiences (33 percent) (figure 8). Average starting wages were $19.28 for adult participants and $15.83 for young participants. These adult wages were in line with living wages as defined by the City of Oakland as $17.37 an hour with health

benefits, or $19.95 an hour without health benefits (City of Oakland 2024). Unlike adult participants, who worked 32 hours a week on average, young people in employment services worked just 10, which likely owed to the prevalence of internships for young participants and the balancing of employment with school.

Employment Outcomes for Group Violence Employment Services Participants, July 2022–June 2024

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.
Notes: Three adults and 13 young people receiving employment services were missing employment status. Five young people had a permanent nonsubsidized job and 1 adult had an internship.

Process Evaluation Findings

The section presents insights about implementation gained from semistructured interviews with providers engaged in violence interruption, hospital response, and emergency relocation, services whose implementation has been least evaluated to date. We spoke with seven staff members at organizations providing group violence services, who were about evenly split between frontline staff and supervisors/program directors, to better understand operations and policies related to Measure Z group violence services. We asked about the implementation of programs and services and successes, challenges, and lessons they had perceived regarding implementation and operations. Drawing on the results of our thematic analysis we summarize key findings pertaining to program structure and service history, conflict mediation, program and service partnerships, participants' needs and challenges, and implementation challenges.

The interrelated efforts in this service area involve responses to shooting scenes (violence interruption) and at the bedsides of shooting victims in hospitals (hospital response). Follow-up services and conflict mediation are intended to reduce the likelihood of further violence, with conflict-mediation activities addressing both acute risk of retaliation and emergent conflicts that might escalate to an inciting act of violence. In situations in which the risk of violence cannot be adequately mitigated, emergency relocation is available to remove at-risk individuals from Oakland for their protection.

Group Violence Response Program Structure

Interviewees said that when responding to shooting scenes the violence interrupters work to understand the situation, engage with families, and identify possible risks of further violence, including potential for retaliatory violence. They also gather information to determine who to follow up with and the high-priority needs of involved parties. This work can be sensitive. Respondents described community members' hesitancy to share information and concerns about whether it might be shared with police. As one interviewee put it, "We don't investigate, but it's difficult not to sound like investigators when we're trying to figure out what's going on."

The goal really is to connect to both victim and perpetrator so we can get to the root causes of why this violence occurred. —Oakland violence interrupter

An important role of violence interrupters involves mediating conflict between groups or individuals after an incident has occurred to prevent retaliation and strengthen positive social ties. One violence interrupter described the goals of conflict mediation as follows: "Ultimately, the goal is to prevent retaliatory violence....Really, it's mostly about preventing those retaliatory shootings by developing ties with the community and linking folks with our organization and similar service providers." Another violence interrupter described the strategy used to determine whether conflict mediation will be necessary upon arriving at a shooting scene:

> We have a short window to capture the incident and connect with people who have some relation to what happened, either the victim or a witness. After that, we connect with the victim's family members. Also, many times, we're able to get information about the individual or group who perpetrated the violence. We want to immediately find out if there's a high likelihood of retaliation so we can gauge if groups are going to continue with that violence. The goal really is to connect to both victim and perpetrator so we can get to the root causes of why this violence occurred.

In the immediate aftermath of the incident, violence interrupters follow up to connect people impacted by the incident with longer-term services. A violence interrupter described their organization's strategy for this aspect of the work as one of "relentless outreach," during which they repeatedly follow up with a victim or person impacted by violence, even if they do not respond. Outreach is important to offer support and resources that the person may need to feel safe, heal from trauma, or be in a more stable situation. This outreach is also offered to those perpetrating violence to prevent retaliatory violence and offer services. One violence interrupter detailed their organization's response timeline: notifications of shootings are responded to within an hour, and follow-up regarding the potential for further violence stemming from the incident occurs at 12 hours and again at 72 hours after the incident. If that risk is present and cannot be effectively addressed quickly (defined by one respondent as within 72 hours), this is when emergency relocation services, for which resources are limited, might be deployed.

Those responding in hospitals primarily visit victims of violence at their hospital bedsides as soon as possible after they are admitted for violent trauma (almost always gunshot wounds) and make victims aware of the resources available to them. They assist with applications for victims-of-crime support and compensation and attempt to get them involved in case management. They also look to

prevent retaliation stemming from the shooting. Interviewees involved in hospital-based intervention said that victims of violence are often more receptive to the offer of help in the hospital setting than they would be in the community, although it can take several visits for them to open up.

Interviewees also shared that emergency relocation services are available when people involved in violent incidents are living in an unsafe situation and need resources to move quickly to another location. The goal is to prevent violence and provide a level of support so people can recover and heal. As indicated above, when the violence interrupters try to mediate to avert the possibility of imminent violence but are not able to, the partners may consider relocation.

As described in the interviews, relocation assistance involves helping a person strategize on what a move out of Oakland might look like and where they would be able to go, and then facilitating the plan. People relocating are provided some funds to support their move and the cost of the new living situation. A provider involved in relocation indicated that these funds are temporary and are rarely provided for more than two or three months. If a hotel is the only identifiable housing option, the budget does not allow for supporting that for more than a month. The DVP data indicate that 56 emergency relocations out of Oakland were provided, with $131,052 disbursed. As people who are relocated are no longer in Oakland, they do not maintain any formal connection to the relocation provider after the move, although the relocated person sometimes initiates informal communication.

Relocation is a temporary fix, but it's designed to make a long-term fix.
—Oakland relocation staff member

Program and Service Partnerships

A core part of the work in this area is building relationships with community members who have been affected by violence and using the web of existing partnerships and relationships to connect people to services and supports to promote healing and prevent further violence. Interviewees described communicating to use the different knowledge and capacities of Oakland partners to do this complex and challenging work. Those providing family support services,[5] emergency relocation, and hospital-based interventions are connected to community-based violence interrupters across the city, despite working for different organizations. Staff working on violence interruption and hospital response

described most frequently referring participants they engaged to life coaching (from DVP-funded providers) and mental health services. Many of the organizations providing violence interruption and hospital response are able to connect participants to other services and basic supports (transportation and food assistance) provided by their organizations, whether they receive Measure Z funding or not.

The DVP plays a central role in the coordination needed to make this work. That role includes managing relationships, delivering training, and sometimes mitigating tensions between OPD personnel and violence interrupters at shootings scenes. The DVP provides trainings, for example an initial three-day "violence interruption/gender-based violence interruption 101" training. As described in interviews, this training covers what violence interruption is and engages participants in exploring how they can deploy their credibility arising from lived experience in the work. Participants also role-play in real scenarios that arise in the work. The training also covers reporting requirements, which an interviewee said was critical "because data drives the work." The DVP also brings in staff from system partners, including the OPD, hospitals, and funeral homes, to biannual meetings, which are important for maintaining a shared understanding of roles in the face of turnover.

A key mechanism for coordinating violence interruption activities is weekly shooting-review meetings, where attendees review incidents that occurred over the past week (with identifying information redacted) and delegate who will follow up to ensure people, families, and communities are getting offered the appropriate services. The OPD also conducts a weekly shooting review. The OPD meets with DVP staff first, and later DVP staff meet with violence interruption staff at community-based organizations separately. The OPD review feeds information to the DVP shooting review, but the information flow does not go in the opposite direction.

This understanding around the one-way flow of information, which protects the credibility of the professionals doing the group violence response work, is characteristic of the delicate calibration of how law enforcement relates to this work. As one respondent described this with respect to the purpose of the trainings that include law enforcement, they are seeking a professional understanding with law enforcement, not a professional relationship, as the latter is too intimate for building relationships where they are most needed in communities where violence interrupters operate. Interviewees shared that to set and maintain that professional understanding requires constantly ensuring key players in law enforcement and the violence prevention ecosystem have a common understanding and language around roles, particularly around the critical principle of the one-way flow of information. This is necessary because building and maintaining trusting relationships with community members closest to the problem of gun violence, which is essential to the success of the

group violence interventions, is not possible if community members believe information about them is being shared with the police.

Participants' Needs and Challenges

Violence interrupters shared that participants need support finding stable housing and employment opportunities and in some cases even emergency relocation to protect their safety. People who experience a violent injury may need employment assistance because they cannot return to their job because of physical limitations. The struggle to find affordable, stable housing is particularly challenging, and organizations feel there are not enough housing resources in Oakland and surrounding areas to meet the needs of participants. This is a source of frustration for violence interrupters because they believe many conflicts could be resolved if people were able to access additional resources and live in a stable environment.

Interviewees said participants commonly have challenges with basic needs, such as food, diapers for their children, and paying for funerals after losing a loved one. One violence interrupter stated that the resources provided to the community through partner programs are insufficient: "It's such a limited scope, so it feels like almost nothing is being done. They get $5,000 for a funeral when it costs $20,000." Further, violence interrupters reported that many participants misunderstand the victims-of-crime application process and eligibility criteria. They also shared that participants face long wait times to receive victims-of-crime funds, so they are unable to use the money to address their immediate needs.

Regarding relocation services, people needing to move for their safety face a daunting set of hurdles. They may need to move not just themselves but their entire families, unless they are willing and able to have their children placed with a relative. Respondents working on relocation described the fear people can feel at the idea of starting their lives over from scratch, from work to housing to school for their children, and not having the support they need. It can also be difficult to get people out of their current living situation, and interviewees said that providing relocation support can involve "battling" with the housing authority around allowing people to break a current lease. In the face of all these challenges, interviewees shared that the funding per person or family being relocated, roughly $2,000, is insufficient.

Successes

First and foremost, interviewees consistently expressed confidence that their work was averting violence and saving lives. They knew this was hard to substantiate and felt it needed to be better communicated. "We need to do a better job speaking to the amount of lives we save and shootings we prevent," as one respondent put it. They also felt that being in the position to show up with care and concern for the trauma people had experienced and the risk of further harm they might be facing was a success. Having the opportunity to meet people's needs at a time when they badly needed help was very important to them. As one interviewee said in the context of family support services, "In this work, families don't have time to be grateful or thankful. They're dealing with their world crashing around them, just trying to get through the day. There aren't a lot of families who have voiced how thankful they are, but the times they do, it makes all the difference. That's why this work is worth it." Another shared a similar sentiment around the hospital-based response: "I feel like our clients, people in our community, really appreciate after a traumatic experience we're showing up at their bedside. I'm here if you need something. People feel like they're not alone, and they open up to receiving support."

Respondents also named the recognition of the value this work provides as an important success. This meant recognition from the community and the expectation that they would be responding to violence, but it also meant formal recognition from the government, whether in the form of funding or standing up the DVP to elevate the work in the city government. As one interviewee summarized this measure of success, "When we show up—this is the biggest compliment—we are accepted, expected, and respected....We're in the community, people know us and the government has put us in our own department."

Implementation Challenges

A challenge that all the professionals doing this work discussed is the vicarious trauma they experience as a result of their work. Because violence interrupters are often from or closely connected to the neighborhoods in which they work, they will sometimes respond to a scene and see that a friend or loved one has been the victim of violence. At other times an incident will deeply affect the wider community, which leads to the possibility of violence escalating among involved groups.

Several interviewees noted the challenge of preparing violence interrupters to succeed in a professional environment. They described the need to support them professionally so that they can complement their deep understanding of neighborhoods, insight, and ability to connect based on lived

experience with the different job skills required of violence interrupters. As one respondent said, "They're beasts in the streets but babies in the workforce because they haven't been involved in it." Dealing with communications expectations (like responding to emails), professional boundaries, and stress and burnout were mentioned as specific areas in which violence interrupters needed training and support. Some interviewees also stressed the importance of establishing mutual understanding and empathy between violence prevention professionals who came to the work through lived experience and those who came to it through educational credentialing (recognizing that some people came through both). A throughline in interviewees' discussions of professional development for violence interrupters was the need to meld two different professional cultures, which at least one person thought could be a strength if handled properly, in a way that allowed for mutual learning and support. If not handled properly, they described a dynamic in which people from an "academic" or government background did not listen to people with lived experience who were doing the frontline work. Differential pay between DVP staff and staff based in the funded community-based organizations could also lead to tension.

One interviewee also named the challenges of growth, noting it was a blessing and a curse. The expansion of the community-led violence prevention and intervention work and the establishment of the DVP meant more capacity and recognition supporting the work, but also more administrators and chiefs to answer to, some of whom were distanced from the communities where the work was happening (though this respondent expressed strong faith in the current leadership at the time of the interview). Perhaps relatedly, interviewees expressed some concerns about whether the quantity of activities was being emphasized to the detriment of the quality of the work.

During our interviews, violence interrupters stated that while they have considerable knowledge of the neighborhoods in which they work, it is still difficult at times to identify and track which groups may be involved in violence in those neighborhoods because the high cost of living and subsequent displacement leads people to move in and out of neighborhoods. In the words of one violence interrupter, "You can become gentrified out of your expertise just like that." Violence interrupters can also be challenged to adapt to changing dynamics of violence. Several noted that the pandemic had affected violence, which they believed had become more random and less relational. Violence with these characteristics is less amenable to interruption, which requires a certain amount of predictability.

Lastly, multiple respondents noted that their work took place in a broader context in which the communities they worked in were underinvested in and the root causes of violence, such as persistent poverty, were not being addressed. A common theme in interviews was frustration that the longer-term work to create conditions for persistent peace was not being done or was only being done

intermittently. Interviewees wanted to see progress on changing those conditions so that their work responding to immediate crises and harm felt less like an unending struggle. More specifically, some named the challenge of avoiding retaliation when clearance rates for violent crime are low; as one put it, "The low clearance rate is part and parcel to the high retaliation rate: if I know who shot my son and nobody is doing nothing about it, then I'm gonna do something about it."

Opportunities for Improvement

We asked interviewees how their programs could better position them for success. Their responses were as follows:

- People with lived experience are often brought in to execute interventions and program packages after the design team has designed them. More workers with lived experience should be part of the program design work.

- More bilingual staff are needed to support the many monolingual Spanish speakers in Oakland.

- Ensuring consistent funding would help make the work more proactive and strategic.

- Some services need more resources. There are too few staff members and financial resources to meet the needs. As an example of what providing more resources could look like, if two staff members were to work on each emergency relocation instead of one, one could focus on relationship building and the other on meeting participants' immediate needs.

- For the hospital response, a better system for receiving referrals (ideally in real time) could help avoid missing people who need support but are discharged before responders become aware of them. Responders can miss people admitted late at night or on weekends when intervention specialists are not working.

- Provide more cross-training for staff at different organizations. Sometimes there is tension between organizations doing violence interruption, including questions about other's qualifications to do the work. Cross training can be a platform to surface these perspectives, discuss different approaches to the work, and hash these differences out.

Outcome Analysis Findings

In this section, we describe how the level of engagement in Measure Z–funded group violence response activities relates to participants' outcomes. The ultimate goal of the group violence services is to prevent and reduce violence in Oakland, and intervening with individual participants to support them and reduce their risk of involvement in violence (whether as victims or perpetrators) is intended to contribute to communitywide violence reduction.

For this analysis, we examine the data for the subset of participants who consented to sharing their identifying information for evaluation purposes. This information is necessary to link across datasets and connect outcomes with participants. We use this information to follow their outcomes related to arrest and homicide victimization. We plan to examine shooting-victimization outcomes as well, but access to shooting-victimization data from the OPD with individual identifiers that would allow for linking with DVP service data is still pending.

Across all group violence services, 53 percent of participants consented to data sharing. Consent rates differed by activity, with life-coaching and employment and education support participants consenting at the highest rates.

We also excluded people for whom service or enrollment dates were not recorded, meaning we could not determine when they started in the programs. Lastly, we excluded people for whom name information was incomplete. As a result of these factors, the outcome analysis is limited to 50 percent of group violence service participants (*n*=1,011) from July 2022 to June 2024. Therefore, these findings may not be representative of all participants, but they do allow for an initial examination of how group violence services may be affecting participants' outcomes. Table A.2 in the appendix provides more information about the differences between all group violence service participants by whether they consented or not. We find that people who consented were less likely to be a student or employed and to identify as Latinx or a woman/girl. They were more likely to be on probation or parole; identify as Asian American, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian; and receive more individual service sessions.

Table 6 shows the characteristics of the participants included in our outcome analysis. Eleven percent of group violence service participants were also participating in another strategy area and are included in this analysis. Over half of participants identified as Black or African American and 26 percent identified as Hispanic or Latinx. Most were younger than 24. The vast majority lived in

Oakland. Apricot indicated that 16 percent were currently on probation or parole and 12 percent had been arrested from January 2018 to June 2022.

Characteristics of Participants in the Group Violence Response Strategy Included in Urban's Outcome Analysis
Mean/share for each variable (n=1,011)

	Mean/share
Race/ethnicity	
Black	59%
Latinx	26%
All other races	13%
Age	
17 or younger	31%
18–24	32%
25–34	26%
35–44	9%
45+	2%
Sex	
Female	29%
Male	70%
Other characteristics	
Lives in Oakland	84%
Student or employed	43%
On probation/parole	16%
Prior arrest January 2018–June 2022	12%
Service engagement	
Total activities/programs assigned	1.4
Total service sessions	37

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.
Notes: Some characteristics are combined or not shown owing to small numbers to protect data privacy. Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, White, and other races/ethnicities are combined into one "all other races" category. Percentages are calculated while including missing values in the denominator, meaning that percentages for any value could be higher if information on that characteristic were available.

In terms of engagement with services, the mean number of recorded individual service sessions per participant was 37, and 18 was the median. We tracked arrests for any offense type and homicide victimization for each participant after they started services or were enrolled in a program. Fifty-six people (5.5 percent) were arrested between starting services and June 2024. Tragically, during that same period, 6 people were victims of homicide. To estimate the association between service participation and arrest outcomes, we conducted a dose-response analysis. We are unable to conduct an analysis for homicide as a separate outcome because of the rarity of this outcome.

In a dose-response analysis, we measure the association between the level of engagement, defined as the number of individual service sessions, and the given outcome. Examining the
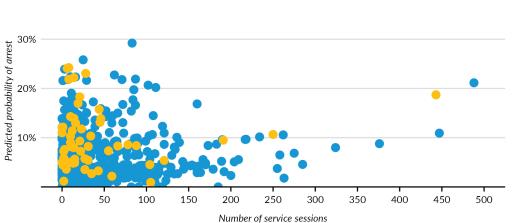
relationship between the "dosage" of services and outcome is important because increased engagement may lead to more time and activities to meet the needs of participants. Further, by looking at all the participants across all programs/activities within a strategy, we can more holistically assess the effect of the strategy overall. We also can capture the combined engagement created by participating in multiple programs, which wouldn't be possible when looking at each program separately. For example, if someone participated in both adult life coaching and employment services, we can examine the total individual services received across both programs.

In the DVP's current approach there are more than 20 distinct activities and 29 unique providers across the four strategy areas. Most (97 percent) of the nearly 8,000 people served from 2022 to 2024 participated in activities in one strategy area. However, 235 people participated in activities in two strategy areas and 26 participated in three. In terms of unique activities assigned, most (88 percent) participated in one activity, while some participated in two activities (10 percent), and a few participated in three or more. Within each activity, people could receive individual instances of service provision or interactions, such as case management meetings, housing support provision, legal assistance meetings, and life-coaching sessions. For people with recorded services, the median number of service sessions was 5, with a range of 1 to 537. This demonstrates that participants have different levels of engagement, with some participants having very frequent interactions with the providers.

Using logistic regression, we control for many variables that could also relate to outcomes, including race, gender, age, residence in Oakland, student and employment status, probation/parole status, and prior arrests. We fit a logistic regression model to the participant data for each strategy, with total individual service sessions received as our explanatory variable of interest. For the arrest outcome, we only track arrests from the day each participant started services or was enrolled in a program through June 30, 2024. That is, we seek to understand whether there is an association between how many services participants received and whether they were arrested after beginning services.

For the group violence response strategy, we find that service participation did not have a detectable association with arrests (the only variable included in the model with a positive, statistically significant [$p < 0.01$] association with arrests was being 25 to 34 years old). Figure 9 shows a plot of how many services each group violence service participant received versus their predicted probability of arrest from the logistic regression model. A yellow dot indicates a participant who was arrested. From the graph, we see that there is not a clear association between the number of services received and arrest outcomes.

FIGURE 9

Relationship of Group Violence Service Dosage to Arrest Outcomes (*n*=1,011)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.

To check whether including some participants who had only been in services for a short time was affecting our results, we also conducted the analysis only for people who had at least six months of follow-up time and found the same result.[6] There are several limitations to this analysis. First, because of data availability, the outcome analysis is restricted to only 50 percent of group violence service participants, who are not representative of all group violence service participants. Second, people's names and dates of birth may have errors that prevent linking to the OPD outcome data because we cannot determine that they are for the same person. Additionally, participants may have received additional services that were not recorded.

Given these limitations, the dose-response results for arrests of group violence service participants should be interpreted with caution. While arrests, particularly for serious or violent charges, are a meaningful indicator for the group violence response strategy, few arrests were observed for the participants included in this analysis. For the final report in this evaluation period, the evaluation team will extend this analysis time frame by at least six months and employ additional linking techniques to address inconsistencies in participants' names and dates of birth. Further, the larger sample size with the additional quarters of services may strengthen the analysis. We also hope that data tracking will improve as providers become more familiar and comfortable with the Apricot data system.

Adult Life Coaching

Through life coaching, adults at risk of involvement in violence in Oakland identify and complete goals intended to reduce their risk of violence (e.g., obtaining employment or housing, accessing mental health services, avoiding negative peer influences). Life coaches have frequent contact with their clients and use financial incentives to encourage positive behavior change. Because participants have frequent engagement with their assigned life coaches, it is worthwhile to examine whether more engagement is associated with better outcomes. For this analysis, we focus on life coaching provided by local community-based organizations, not by the DVP. We find that more service engagement, as measured by recorded individual service sessions, was negatively associated with arrests, a result approaching statistical significance at the $p < 0.1$ level.

From July 2022 to June 2024, 397 people were assigned to adult life coaching or housing-focused adult life coaching, of whom 262 consented to data sharing. After limiting the participants to those whose names and service start dates or enrollment dates were available and who had at least six months of follow-up time, our sample consisted of 210 participants. Table 7 shows the characteristics of these participants. On average, they received 46 individual service sessions, of which 36 were life-coaching sessions. The other sessions involved case management, housing support, employment support, and other services. Life-coaching participants who consented differed from those who did not in some observable ways: they were more likely to have an assigned case manager, were getting more life-coaching services, and received more total services (see table A.3 in the appendix). There were more women and fewer men among consenters than nonconsenters in the adult life-coaching program.

TABLE 7
Characteristics of Adult Life-Coaching Participants (*n*=210)

Mean/share for each variable

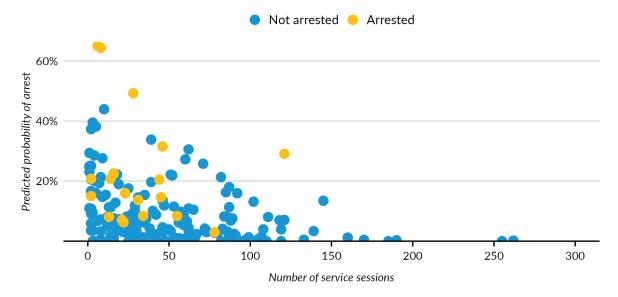|	Mean/share
Race/ethnicity	
Black	70%
Latinx	25%
All other races	5%
Sex	
Female	20%
Male	80%
Other characteristics	
Lives in Oakland	81%
Student or employed	34%
On probation/parole	21%
Prior arrest January 2018– June 2022	23%
Service engagement	
Total service sessions	46
Total life-coaching sessions	37

Note: Percentages are calculated while including missing values in the denominator, meaning that percentages for any value could be higher if information on that characteristic were available.

We find that more service engagement, as measured by recorded individual service sessions, was negatively associated with arrests (approaching statistical significance, $p < 0.1$). For example, if the average participant received 50 sessions rather than 40, their likelihood of rearrest decreased from 8 percent to 7 percent. The model also shows that not being on probation or parole was negatively associated with arrests ($p < 0.05$), while having a prior arrest before starting services was positively associated with arrests (approaching statistical significance, $p < 0.1$). Holding all else constant, being on probation or parole or having a prior arrest was associated with more than double the likelihood of arrest than not being on probation or parole and not having a prior arrest. Figure 10 shows a plot of how many services each adult life-coaching participant received versus their predicted probability of being arrested from the logistic regression model. A yellow dot indicates a participant who was arrested. The yellow dots are largely concentrated on the left side of the figure, among participants who received 50 or fewer services. This indicates a potential negative association, meaning that as a participant received more services, their probability of arrest decreased slightly.

FIGURE 10
Relationship of Adult Life-Coaching Service Dosage to Arrest Outcomes (*n*=210)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.

The logistic regression model controls for many factors that could relate to arrest outcomes, including age, race/ethnicity, gender, residence in Oakland, being a student or employed, being on probation or parole, and having been arrested between January 2018 and June 2022. Similarly, we conducted the analysis for only adults who participated in regular life coaching and excluded those who participated in housing-focused life coaching and found the same effect. That is, adult life-coaching participants who engaged in the services more were less likely to experience an arrest.

We also used propensity-score matching to compare the arrest outcomes of adult life-coaching participants to a comparison group of similarly situated adult participants in the group violence response and community healing and restoration strategies who were not assigned to life coaching and did not receive any life-coaching service sessions. We balanced the groups by participants' race/ethnicity, their gender, whether they lived in Oakland, whether they were a student or employed, and whether they had been arrested from January 2018 to June 2022. We did not find any statistically significant differences in rates of arrest after beginning services. This analysis is limited by the short follow-up time for many participants and the smaller sample size after accounting for participant consent, data availability, and having at least six months of follow-up time. Importantly, the analysis of service engagement showed that higher levels of engagement were associated with a lower likelihood of arrest.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Measure Z funding supports an impressively large and varied array of activities intended to collectively reduce serious violence in Oakland and to help people and communities heal from the violence that does occur. This work is done by a network of community organizations and dozens of committed and skilled professionals. The work directly touched thousands of Oakland residents during the period covered in this report, providing them with critical support of all kinds to help them be safer and contribute to a safer Oakland. This governmental community-based network represents a violence prevention and response infrastructure rare in American cities.

In this section, we present recommendations for both practice and improving data collection and access to support evaluation work. These are synthesized from all the evaluation findings to date and focus on cross-cutting themes. We then summarize the next steps for this stage of the evaluation, which will be reflected in the final evaluation report delivered in mid-2025.

Recommendations

Practice Recommendations

Continue to increase investment and support for the violence prevention and intervention workforce with lived experience. The lived experience that many violence prevention and intervention professionals bring to their work allows them to be credible messengers to people at highest risk of involvement in violence. At the same time, they may be new to the workforce and professional settings and need to acquire new skills and experience to succeed in those settings. Interviewees who raised this point recognized and appreciated the trainings and other settings the DVP provided for this, but they felt that more time and attention to this issue was needed. Workers with lived experience could also be more involved in designing programs and interventions, not just implementing them.

The DVP can create forums for different service providers to coordinate and communicate. A notable strength of the DVP service continuum is the comprehensive network of referral relationships between service providers evident in the data and the level of partnership indicated by providers we interviewed. While service providers appreciate the coordination and communication where it is happening, the extent of this coordination differs by service and provider. Many interviewees reported spending substantial time establishing and maintaining relationships needed to meet service

participants' needs, and more formalized coordination might make this aspect of their work easier. Regular coordination can help providers address emerging trends in patterns of violence and participants' needs, and they can use information about the types of services people receive to better tailor community healing and restorative events and initiatives.

Recruit and retain multilingual staff. In a community as linguistically diverse as Oakland, multilingual staff are needed in all engagement roles, with a particular focus on meeting the high levels of monolingual Spanish speakers in Oakland.

Focus on enhancing housing and mental health service options. The gaps in options to meet service participants' needs related to housing and mental health services came up repeatedly in interviews with providers. While these are difficult and long-standing issues, they are important to raise here because they were consistently described as barriers to effective assistance for service participants.

Deliver more cross-training for staff at different organizations. Many providers appreciated the opportunities they had to attend trainings with peers from other organizations and in other specialties, and they felt the increased mutual understanding from those engagements improved operational collaboration in the field.

Assist providers with building their capacity. Community-based service providers who received DVP funding would like more assistance with building capacity from the DVP and from the City of Oakland generally. This could include finding ways to increase staffing and staff capacity to mitigate challenges resulting from staff turnover and vacancies; making the yearly grant process easier for grantees, who are often managing reporting requirements from multiple grants from multiple sources; and identifying additional funding sources for providers who are addressing complex needs and finding that available resources, though needed and appreciated, are insufficient for program participants' needs.

Data Recommendations

The City of Oakland and the DVP may want to revisit the process through which participants consent to their data being shared for evaluation purposes, to determine whether that process can continue to deliver necessary privacy protections while better supporting analysis of the outcomes of DVP-funded services. The current process and the resulting levels of consent (53 percent of participants in this interim evaluation of the group violence response) significantly limit analysis of service engagement

and outcomes beyond a small and potentially unrepresentative subset of participants. Findings on the effects of DVP-funded programs on this subset of participants who consented to data sharing are valuable, but estimating the effects of those programs on safety and violence in Oakland as a whole requires going beyond understanding what is happening with this subset. Of note, 19 percent of participant consent forms are marked as "not complete yet" or "never presented" in the Apricot data system. Although the DVP has revised the consent form, offered trainings, and provided guidance about the consent process, providers and participants may be wary about the implications of providing consent. The DVP should explore how providers can overcome barriers to gaining participants' consent while maintaining that sharing data is voluntary.

Improve the integration of forms across the Apricot data system. Apricot is a comprehensive system with many different forms for different services funded by Measure Z. Some forms are based on incident responses or service provision but are not linkable back to participants, making analysis of service engagement more difficult.

Work to more consistently and accurately capture dates of birth and names in the Apricot database, and consider whether any additional identifiers might be added. For example, the school ID or probation ID numbers could be requested when applicable, Issues with this information made matching across data systems infeasible for many participants who had consented for evaluators to do so.

Encourage providers to complete and update the forms in the Apricot data system more regularly and comprehensively, which will allow for a better understanding of participants' needs and levels of engagement with programming. For example, the participant and enrollment forms capture important information about participants' education, housing, families, referral sources, and exposure to violence, but many fields are not completed. Related to updating the forms, exit dates and reasons for exiting programs are missing for many participants, making it difficult to measure completion rates or how long people participate in the programs.

Consider how Apricot could become a useful resource for providers. Many providers maintain their own separate databases and may not use Apricot for day-to-day case management or tracking participants over time. Considering the breadth of the DVP network and the level of referrals across organizations, Apricot could become a more useful resource for providers to improve their work as data tracking becomes more accurate and comprehensive over time.

Evaluation Next Steps

The final evaluation report will be released in mid-2025. For this report, we will engage group violence service participants through interviews and/or focus groups to better understand their experiences with services. We will also extend and expand the outcome analysis that measures the effects of service dosage on key individual outcomes. This will involve adding shooting victimization as an outcome, allowing a longer observation period for outcomes to manifest, and encouraging providers to present the consent form to participants whose consent status is "not complete yet."

Appendix

Consent Rates

The rate at which participants consented to data sharing for the purposes of evaluation differed by strategy and activity. Table A.1 shows the consent rate for the group violence response strategy and activities from July 2022 to June 2024. Across the whole strategy, 53 percent of participants consented to data sharing.

TABLE A.1

Consent Status for Group Violence Response Service Recipients

	Yes	No	Not complete yet	Never presented	Missing	Total	Consent rate
Strategy							
Gun and group violence	1,071	406	361	12	156	2,006	53%
Group violence response activity							
Adult employment and education support	258	27	13	4	0	302	85%
Adult life coaching	231	39	81	5	1	357	65%
Adult life coaching (housing focused)	22	1	5	0	0	28	79%
Emergency temporary relocation	35	30	30	2	22	119	29%
Hospital-based intervention	124	173	99	2	99	497	25%
Violence interrupters	88	62	35	1	2	188	47%
Youth career exploration and education support	255	110	62	1	0	428	60%
Youth diversion	93	6	55	0	1	155	60%

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.

Differences by Consent Status

Given that a large share of participants did not consent to data sharing, it is important to examine whether there are substantial differences between participants who did and did not consent. We assessed whether the differences are meaningful by calculating the p-value using a t-test and the Cohen's D effect size. Table A.2 shows the average characteristics of all group violence service participants by consent status. We see that people who consented were less likely to be a student or employed and to identify as Latinx or a woman/girl. They were more likely to be on probation or

parole; to identify as Asian American, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian; and to receive more individual service sessions.

Characteristics of Group Violence Response Participants by Consent Status

	Did not consent (n=935)	Consented (n=1,071)	p-value	Effect size
Has children	32%	28%	0.382	0.078
Student*	57%	48%	0.009	0.179
Employed*	38%	25%	0.002	0.296
On probation or parole*	24%	35%	0.003	-0.245
Primary language English	84%	81%	0.237	0.065
Assigned a case manager	86%	89%	0.067	-0.086
Lives in Oakland	65%	66%	0.671	-0.019
Race				
Black	59%	59%	0.913	-0.005
Asian American, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian*	3%	6%	0.000	-0.176
Latinx*	32%	26%	0.010	0.129
White	2%	2%	0.693	-0.019
Other	4%	5%	0.117	-0.074
Gender				
Woman/girl*	38%	30%	0.000	0.159
Man/boy*	57%	70%	0.000	-0.271
Services				
Total services*	13.0	35.2	0.000	-0.539
Life-coaching services*	5.0	21.5	0.000	-0.422
Case management services*	5.9	11.1	0.000	-0.335

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.
Notes: * indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the groups as measured by a *t*-test *p*-value less than 0.05 or a Cohen's D effect size greater than the absolute value 0.2.

For adult life coaching, the participants who consented were more likely to be employed, assigned a case manager, identify as a woman, and receive more individual service sessions (table A.3). Including participants who did not consent to data sharing could change the findings of the impact analysis. For example, differences in employment or being on probation or parole could affect the likelihood of arrest. Additionally, people who consented went on to receive many more individual service sessions, indicating that they may have been more engaged with the programs. Including participants who received fewer sessions would be helpful for the dose-response outcome analysis, as they may have different outcomes than people who received more services.

Characteristics of Adult Life-Coaching Participants by Consent Status

	Did not consent (*n*=129)	Consented (*n*=248)	*p*-value	Effect size
Has children	44%	41%	0.568	0.080
Student	19%	13%	0.235	0.164
Employed*	26%	36%	0.137	-0.202
On probation or parole	40%	36%	0.578	0.081
Primary language English	89%	88%	0.947	0.008
Assigned a case manager*	67%	84%	0.001	-0.392
Lives in Oakland	83%	83%	0.975	0.004
Race				
Black	73%	72%	0.708	0.041
Asian American, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian	2%	1%	0.530	0.077
Latinx	22%	23%	0.829	-0.024
White	0%	1%	0.158	-0.111
Other	2%	3%	0.642	-0.049
Gender				
Woman*	14%	22%	0.035	-0.218
Man*	86%	78%	0.035	0.218
Services				
Total services*	30.3	40.6	0.009	-0.263
Life-coaching services*	22.7	32.1	0.011	-0.250

Source: Urban Institute analysis of Apricot data provided by the Oakland Department of Violence Prevention.

Note: * indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the groups as measured by a *t*-test *p*-value less than 0.05 or a Cohen's D effect size greater than the absolute value 0.2.

Notes

1   For a fuller description of the violence-reduction ecosystem in Oakland, see National Institute of Criminal Justice Reform (2024).

2   The evaluation team also interviewed staff who had worked on the gender-based-violence strategy (n=10), the Town Nights component of the community healing and restoration strategy (n=5), and the school violence intervention and prevention teams (n=7). While the group violence response strategy was not the focus of those interviews, intersections between the different strategy areas were mentioned and are included in the qualitative results presented here where relevant.

3   Hospital-based intervention services reflected in Apricot included those not supported specifically by Measure Z. Two hundred and forty participants were served by staffing funded through Measure Z.

4   Further details about services are accessible via the DVP's Grantee Network Dashboard at https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/dvp-measure-z-funded-grantee-network-data-dashboard.

5   Family support services, which support family members of homicide victims, are discussed in our report on Oakland's community healing and restoration strategy.

6   To further test that our results were not due to how we designed the analysis model, we replicated the model for group violence service participants and life-coaching participants with different transformations and specifications of the total services variable (e.g., centering and scaling, limiting the maximum to two or three standard deviations above the mean), and reached the same finding that the number of services participated in did not have a detectable effect across all models.

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