

Executive Order 2021-29

EXECUTIVE ORDER IMPLEMENTING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO REDUCING FIREARM VIOLENCE IN ILLINOIS

November 01, 2021

WHEREAS, firearm violence is a public health crisis that demands the collective attention of policymakers, social services and mental health providers, community-based organizations, and residents throughout Illinois; and,

WHEREAS, firearm violence devastates communities across the State, both through the immediate loss of life and the long-term, harmful effects of trauma experienced by victims, witnesses, and community residents; and,

WHEREAS, firearm violence results in a significant number of preventable injuries and deaths that affect the social and economic well-being of the residents of this State; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois recognizes that firearm violence has a disproportionate impact on Black, Latinx, and other communities of color as a result of systemic racism; and,

WHEREAS, exposure to violence disrupts youth development, harms mental and physical health, and increases the likelihood of risky behaviors, including future violence; and,

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association (APHA) has called for a trauma-informed approach to address the root causes of violence in the United States; and,

WHEREAS, the trauma-informed approach considers violence as more than just the action of “bad individuals” and instead as a negative health outcome resulting from exposure to numerous risk factors, including systemic and institutionalized trauma; and,

WHEREAS, the APHA has called on local, state, and federal government agencies to adopt, invest in, expand, and support evidence-based and promising public health approaches to violence prevention; and,

WHEREAS, employing a public health approach can effectively reduce firearm-related crime and violence by systematically studying firearm violence data and its determinants to focus efforts and guide programs, services, and policy changes; and,

WHEREAS, community health workers, nurses, and patient navigators and promoters are often aware of potentially violent circumstances in homes and communities long before they manifest in an act of firearm violence; and,

WHEREAS, their [involvement in evidence-based community violence intervention programs has been shown to reduce homicides by as much as 60 percent](#); and,

WHEREAS, the voices of those most impacted by firearm violence need to inform policies and practices designed to reduce violence; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois is committed to deploying equitable, immediate, and long-term trauma-informed interventions in communities most impacted by firearm violence; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois is committed to deploying all necessary resources to reduce firearm violence and to keep illegal weapons out of Illinois; and,

WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), in partnership with Illinois Department of Human Services (Department), is charged with implementing the *Underlying Causes of Crime and Violence Study Act* (410 ILCS 165/) to identify high violence communities and to prioritize State funding to address the underlying causes of crime and violence; and,

WHEREAS, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) has spent the past two years leading a multi-sector collaborative effort to coordinate violence prevention services and develop a 4-year Statewide Violence Prevention Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Reimagine Public Safety Act (430 ILCS 69/35) (Act) has created the Office of Firearm Violence Prevention (Office) within the Department to address the issue of firearm violence as it affects public health and safety within this State;

THEREFORE, by the powers vested in me by Article V of the Constitution of the State of Illinois as the Governor of the State of Illinois and pursuant to the Act, I hereby order the following:

I. Implementing the Reimagine Public Safety Act and the Office of Firearm Violence Prevention

Section 1. The Department shall be empowered to leverage State resources for the implementation of the Reimagine Public Safety Act.

Section 2. The Department, through the Office of Firearm Violence Prevention, shall engage other State agencies, municipalities, and other units of local government, including, but not limited to, law enforcement, community colleges, park districts, libraries, local public health departments, and local workforce development boards, to curb firearm violence and reduce trauma to Illinois residents living in the most affected communities. The Office shall also collaborate with Illinois hospitals and community-based health providers, ICJIA, IDPH, and the Illinois Departments Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Corrections (IDOC) to implement a public health approach to reduce firearm violence that aligns with the *Underlying Causes of Crime and Violence Study Act* and builds on the *Statewide Violence Prevention Plan* to incorporate public health, public safety, victim services, and trauma recovery centers and services.

Section 3. Within the Department, an Assistant Secretary for Violence Prevention shall lead the Office and shall report all action taken by the Office to the Secretary of the Department and the

Office and shall report all action taken by the Office to the Secretary of the Department and the Office of the Governor.

Section 4. The work of the Assistant Secretary, the Department, and the Office shall be guided by individuals most impacted by firearm violence, through recommendations gathered and provided, under the Act, by Local Advisory Councils (outside of Chicago) and Lead Qualified Violence Prevention Conveners (in the City of Chicago). The Office should aim to support any effort that prevents firearm violence, including detection and interruption of transmission of violence on the part of professionally trained workers.

Section 5. Immediate priorities, interventions, and investments for the Assistant Secretary, the Department, and the Office shall be informed by science, and shared with a Firearm Violence Research Group (FVRG). The FVRG shall be organized by the Office and include subject matter experts from Illinois university departments or units specializing in data on firearm violence.

Section 6. The Department shall engage an academic institution to assist with research, data collection, analysis, and storage, and general administrative duties. The institution may provide research and evaluation on how to improve, expand, adapt, and shift tactics in order to invest in and leverage the most effective efforts, and to prioritize approaches that show an effect on multiple adverse outcomes (for example, prevention of or decreases in violence and substance use).

Section 7. The Department shall identify technical assistance and training providers to work with community organizations to develop and implement quality services to address factors that contribute to local firearm violence.

Section 8. The Department, working, as applicable, with the Illinois Departments of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) and Children and Family Services (DCFS), IDOC, and the Department's Division of Mental Health, will leverage, complement, and enhance existing mental health resources to assist with trauma recovery of individuals exposed to firearm violence. These resources may include, but are not limited to, social service resources employed to address suicide prevention, gang affiliation, food insecurity, income disparity, financial and housing insecurity, and chronic criminal justice involvement. The Office should facilitate and establish links to mediation, child protective, or crisis management services, as appropriate.

Section 9. The Office shall support efforts to establish a database for monitoring violence as it occurs in Illinois communities. This will inform violence prevention organizations with real-time data about firearm injuries and deaths. It may also be used to support government emergency preparedness efforts and will complement existing State and federal violence data repositories, including the Center for Disease Control's *National Violent Death Reporting System*. Information from this work should be used to generate data and predictive analytics to prevent and reduce firearm violence across communities, with a special focus on identifying ways to reduce inequities related to violence.

Section 10. In addition to the Act, the Department is authorized to create and deploy education and training resources to areas of the State it determines are disproportionately affected by

and training resources to areas of the state it determines are disproportionately affected by firearm violence. Such resources may include, but are not limited to, identifying at-risk youth and providing youth development services, including career training and job placement services.

I. Savings Clause

Nothing in this Executive Order shall be construed to contravene any federal or State law or regulation. Nothing in this Executive Order shall affect or alter existing statutory powers of any State agency or be construed as a reassignment or reorganization of any State agency.

II. Prior Executive Orders

This Executive Order supersedes any contrary provision of any other prior Executive Order.

III. Severability Clause

If any part of this Executive Order is found to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect. The provisions of this Executive Order are severable.

IV. Effective Date

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately upon its filing with the Secretary of State.

JB Pritzker, Governor

Issued by the Governor November 1, 2021

Filed by the Secretary of State November 1, 2021