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End Community Violence Now Joins Governor Meyer to Announce State Office of Gun Violence Prevention and Community Safety

*ECVN is eager to work alongside state leaders to address Delaware's gun
violence crisis*

DOVER – Today, **End Community Violence Now (ECVN)**, the state of Delaware's community-based Office of Violence Prevention joined Governor Matt Meyer to announce the state Office of Gun Violence Prevention and Community Safety. Formally established in 2024, ECVN is the culmination of over a decade of intentionally coordinated public-private partnerships involving government, philanthropy, health systems, and community leaders designed to synchronize, strengthen, and sustain Community Violence Intervention (CVI) efforts across the state. ECVN's key partners include the State of Delaware, the [Jessie Ball duPont Fund](#), the [Welfare Foundation](#), the [Longwood Foundation](#), and [ChristianaCare](#).

"Congratulations to Governor Matt Meyer on establishing Delaware's internal office of Gun Violence Prevention and Community Safety," said Lauren Footman, ECVN's inaugural executive director. "As the centralized, community-driven coordinating body for Delaware's CVI efforts, ECVN will look to work with this new Office and tap into our expansive network of local, state and national advocacy and philanthropic partners to replicate the downward trend in violence we are witnessing in New Castle County across other areas of the state. Only by working together and building upon the infrastructure already in place, we know that Delaware can continue to serve as a national example for how public-private partnerships drive community safety and wellbeing."

Between 2013 and 2022, the number of Delawareans who died by firearm increased by 16 percent. In 2022, 124 individuals lost their lives to gun violence – 48 by homicide and 74 by suicide. To address this crisis, ECVN has launched a statewide public education series to raise awareness and build broad-based support for community violence intervention; expanded fundraising efforts, with current requests totaling over \$7 million across various funding sources to strengthen the ecosystem; and is planning a CVI Summit in partnership with Delaware State University's Center for Neighborhood Revitalization and Research to convene national stakeholders and share best practices across the violence intervention field.

"Addressing gun violence requires an all-hands-on-deck approach that's grounded in evidence," said Mike McLively, ECVN board member and policy director of the GIFFORDS Center for Violence Intervention. "The State of Delaware's leadership and partnership with ECVN is an innovative model for improving collaboration between the public and private sectors to end this epidemic."

Following the signing of today's executive order, Delaware's philanthropic community is eager to continue standing alongside federal, state and local leaders in this work. In addition to coordinating efforts among violence intervention groups, ECVN already has a thriving ecosystem in place allowing it to partner with this new office to offer technical assistance and grant-making support to community organizations on the ground, ensuring that they have a seat at the table. This is true given the [March 25 notification](#) that \$38 million of Congressionally approved commitments to the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services were frozen in addition to [federal funding](#) cuts to Delaware gun violence prevention organizations.

"For nearly a century, the Welfare Foundation has supported nonprofits and community-based organizations working to improve the health, education, and civic well-being of Delawareans," said Christopher T. Grundner, ECVN board member and President & CEO of the Welfare Foundation. "We have proudly invested in ECVN from the beginning, recognizing their leadership as the coordinating entity for Delaware's gun violence intervention ecosystem. We applaud Governor Matt Meyer's executive order establishing the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and Community Safety and will embrace the opportunity for ECVN to work together with this new office to bring an end to the gun violence that continues to affect so many communities across our state."

In April, the U.S. Department of Justice cut hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grants that were designated to address gun violence and provide support to victims of violent crimes. All of these cuts in federal funding, coupled with the dismantling of the federal office of gun violence prevention and the removal of gun violence as a public health issue on the federal level will likely lead to the proliferation of violence across various communities.

"Governor Meyer's executive order is yet another opportunity to expand Delaware's ever growing group of community leaders, violence survivors, and local organizations that are committed to keeping our neighborhoods and families safe," said ECVN Board Chair Amy Handy. "As a Sussex County native, I know firsthand that our communities have been disproportionately impacted by gun violence. ECVN and our partners look forward to working

with this new office's director to further develop CVI efforts in Southern Delaware, particularly in Laurel."

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End Community Violence Now (ECVN) is the state of Delaware's community-based Office of Violence Prevention. This public-private partnership seeks to break the cycle of violence through coordinated and sustained investments in evidence-based programs. This includes community engagement and education campaigns, policy advocacy, stakeholder strategy, as well as offering technical assistance and grant-making support to local organizations on the ground doing the difficult, but necessary work. ECVN envisions a future where all Delawareans are safe from the rising threat of gun violence.