OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Annual Report

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

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Nebraska Crime Commission

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NEBRASKA
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COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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Executive Summary

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) awarded funds to 8 recipients in the amount of $616,160.00. The Office of Violence Prevention faces unprecedented demand for funding, with FY 2026 application requests reaching over $2.2 million dollars across 17 proposals. FY 2027 requests for funding exceeded $3 million dollars.

During FY 2026, the Office of Violence Prevention focused on a new phase of structured program development, emphasizing data-driven accountability and evaluations of grant-funded programs. The Office of Violence Advisory Council prioritized the following core strategic framework:

- **Statutory Goal Alignment:** Verifying that public OVP funding directly targets the defined, measurable goals required by statute.
- **Outcome Accountability:** Measuring and documenting all program outcomes, capturing both achievements and challenges.
- **Evidence-Based Evolution:** Analyzing FY 2026 performance metrics to inform future policy development and funding allocations.

To achieve this initiative, the University of Nebraska – Omaha (UNO), School of Criminology and Criminal Justice established an evaluation framework for all OVP-funded programs. By standardizing data collection and developing clear program logic models, the evaluators laid the groundwork for full program evaluations to begin in FY 2027.

Introduction

Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute §81-1450,the Office of Violence Prevention is responsible for reporting annually to the Nebraska Legislature on the allocation and impact of state violence prevention funds. This 2026 report serves to fulfill the statutory requirement.

History

In 2009, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB63, codified in N.R.S. §81-1447 through 1451, creating the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP). The Legislature found that to effectively address community violence issues, communities must develop a multi-faceted approach that includes violence prevention activities, intervention, enforcement and rehabilitation.

Office of Violence Prevention Grant Program

The Office of Violence Prevention Grant Program distributes competitive aid funds in accordance with Nebraska state law (N.R.S. § 81-1450 and 73 Neb. Admin. Code, ch. 1). To maximize the state's investment, the program prioritizes funding for initiatives that demonstrate the greatest overall benefit to Nebraska, focusing on three core areas: the reduction of street and gang violence; the reduction of homicides and injuries caused by firearms; and the creation of youth employment opportunities in high-crime areas.

Funds Awarded

For project period July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026 (FY 2026), a total of $616,160[1] of Office of Violence Prevention funding was awarded to 8 grantees, all within Lancaster and Douglas Counties.

Types of Violence Prevention Programs Funded

Every funded program or service must align with at least one of the three statutory priority funding categories:

I. **Reduction in Street or Gang Violence**: Include, but not limited to, high-engagement initiatives that focus on dismantling the systemic roots of localized street crime and gang activity by offering individuals alternatives to violence-prone lifestyles.

II. **Reduction of Homicides and Injuries caused by Firearms**: Include, but not limited to, targeted interventions focused on connecting victims of firearm injuries with wrap-around support services, employing credible messengers to mediate community conflicts before they escalate into firearm violence, and partnering with local law enforcement to directly engage individuals at the highest risk of committing or becoming victims of firearm violence.

III. **Youth Employment in High-Crime Areas**: Include, by not limited to, intensive workforce programs that engage youth regularly over fixed periods. They blend job placement with mentorship and skill-building to foster positive behavioral transformations.

Chart 1 below illustrates the breakdown of funded programs by category for FY 2026. Chart 2 further breaks down the programs by program type.

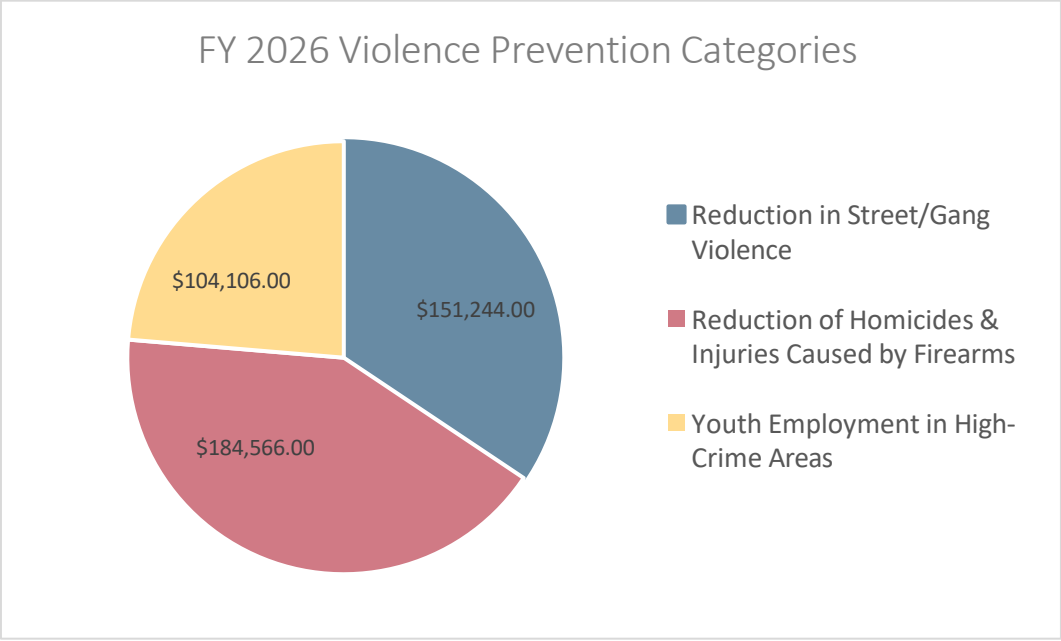

Chart 1

[1] On July 7, 2025, one applicant awarded funding withdrew their application and did not accept their grant award. This resulted in $120,662 being carried over for FY2027 distribution and $10,000 reallocated for program evaluations.

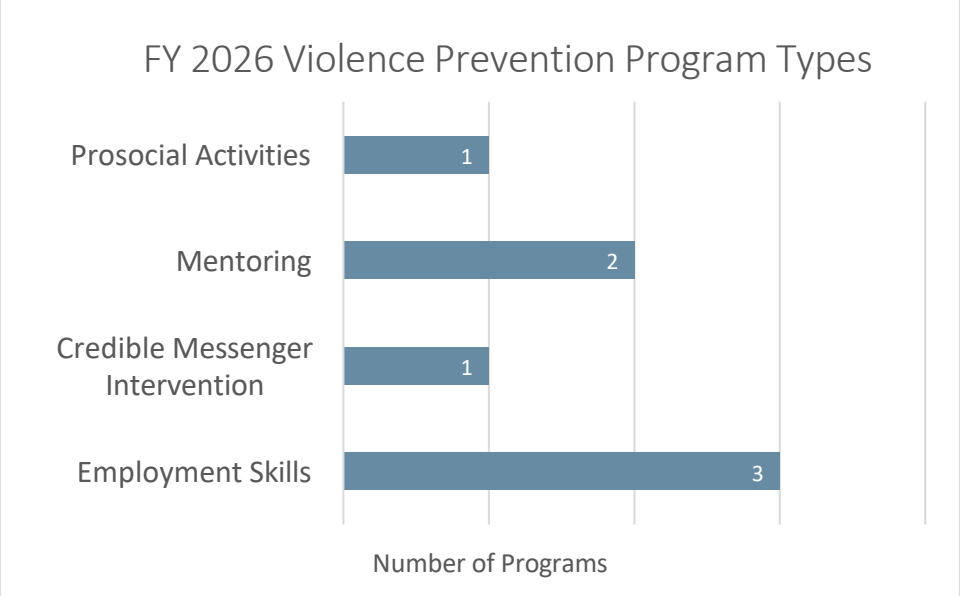

Chart 2

FY 2026 Office of Violence Prevention Awards

Organization	Program	Location	Amount
Latino Center of the Midlands	Healing Círculos: Xochikalli	Omaha	$53,904
Douglas County (Withdrew)	Special Operations; Street/Gang Violence	Omaha	$130,662
Black Men United	Kumani Excel	Omaha	$37,870
YouTurn	Make a 180 Against Violence	Omaha	$113,624
International Council for Refugees and Immigrants	Bridge to Prosperity Youth Workforce Development	Omaha	$54,236
New Life Family Alliance	Safe Youth Program	Omaha	$12,000
City of Lincoln	Operation Tipping Point	Lincoln	$188,864
Board of Regents dba UNO	OVP Evaluators	Omaha	$35,000

Latino Center of the Midlands

Healing Círculos is a direct-intervention, school-based prevention program that builds protective factors against young people becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Developed by the National Compadres Network, the curriculum is evidence-based and designed to meet the needs of young Latinos and Latinas growing up in a bicultural environment. Specifically, this Office of Violence Prevention grant would support a Healing Círculos facilitator devoted to serving girls and young women in South Omaha – a population that has seen a rise in gang membership, according to the Douglas County Juvenile Services Plan. The program will focus on recruitment through four currently partnering schools – Bellevue East, Bellevue West, Omaha South, and Omaha Bryan – as well as Omaha Buena Vista High School and Ralston High School. The program will also continue to provide innovative enrichment opportunities, such as the recent series of art workshops. These activities build prosocial relationships among students, mentors, and program staff in ways that students find engaging and rewarding.

Douglas County

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office envisions appointing a deputy solely dedicated to violent, high-risk repeat offenders, including gang surveillance for those under supervision or pre-trial release. The specialized deputy will act as the DCSO gang liaison and single point of contact regarding gang and street violence intelligence. With jurisdiction over the cities and towns outside of Omaha and statutory responsibility for the Douglas County Courthouse, DCSO is uniquely positioned as a county entity to provide an additional layer of intelligence valuable to other law enforcement and associated entities. The position will be under DCSO's Special Investigations Division and part of its newly designated Special Operations Group, or "SOG." The SOG utilizes intelligence-based, data-driven methods to address crime trends, prevent and suppress criminal activity, and apprehend violators.

Black Men United

The Kumani Excel program creates youth employment opportunities in high-crime areas through an innovative dual-track training initiative. The program serves 40 participants across four cohorts, divided between ages 16-18 (summer) and 19-21 (fall), with each cohort receiving 20 hours of training over four weeks. The entrepreneurship track provides comprehensive business training, including concept development, market research, and financial literacy, culminating in a $500 seed fund opportunity and six months of coaching. The workforce development track focuses on essential workplace skills, career planning, and professional development, concluding with a reverse job fair connecting participants to employers. Both tracks incorporate cutting-edge artificial intelligence training, ensuring participants gain relevant technology skills for future opportunities. The program provides ongoing support through mentorship, resource connection, and career coaching.

YouTurn

YouTurn offers individualized advocacy, mentoring, conflict mediation, and intensive case management for adolescents aged 12 to 18. Their services include referrals to community-based programs, identifying and addressing adverse childhood traumas and experiences through personalized Risk Reduction Plans, promoting behavior change, and enhancing the resilience of each program participant. YouTurn team adopted the "Making A 180 Against Violence" program in 2017 as part of their implementation plan. This initiative requires participants to recognize that their actions and decisions may contradict their long-term goals. Through their intensive one-on-one case management process, participants work closely with their assigned outreach case manager to develop a tailored Risk Reduction and Violence Prevention plan that supports their journey toward positive behavior change.

International Council for Refugees and Immigrants (ICRI)

The Youth Workforce Development Initiative is a comprehensive program aimed at providing employment and mentorship for at-risk youth aged 14 to 21 in Douglas County. Its primary goal is to reduce street and gang violence while creating sustainable job opportunities by addressing the barriers that hinder youth from entering the workforce. Participants will benefit from targeted outreach, receiving job readiness training, resume development assistance, and financial literacy education. The program will also facilitate enrollment in industry-recognized certifications, such as CNA, OSHA, and SERV Safe, equipping youth with the credentials necessary for competitive job placements. Furthermore, participants will have access to paid internships, apprenticeships, and direct employment opportunities in high-demand sectors like healthcare, construction, and skilled trades. For youth not enrolled in traditional high schools, the initiative will offer pathways to obtain a GED and connect them with workforce training programs, including Job Corps and metropolitan community colleges. Career navigators will provide individualized mentorship and support to help participants transition successfully into stable employment. By promoting economic stability and reducing engagement with the justice system, this initiative strengthens communities and offers at-risk youth a clear pathway to self-sufficiency and long-term success.

City of Lincoln

Operation Tipping Point (OTP) focuses on working directly with young people, ages 11-17, who are at risk of gang affiliation within Lancaster County. Operation Tipping Point has more than 20 community partners (including a direct partnership with 17 Lincoln Public Schools) and justice stakeholders. OTP addresses the increasingly violent crimes associated with gangs through intervention/prevention strategies. A full-time Gang Outreach Specialist serves as a link between primary and secondary prevention/intervention efforts and the engagement of community partners. The Gang Outreach Specialist is located within the Lincoln Police Department Gang Unit.

New Life Family Alliance (NLFA)

This Safe Youth Program aims to reduce youth violence in Omaha, particularly among South Sudanese refugee and immigrant youth, through a holistic approach that includes community engagement, mentorship, and educational initiatives. Led by the New Life Family Alliance (NLFA), which has served at-risk youth for over 10 years, the program will provide alternatives to violence and foster positive youth development. Key outcomes include a reduction in street and gang violence, fewer homicides and firearm-related injuries, and the creation of youth employment opportunities in high-crime neighborhoods. Ultimately, the program seeks to build safer communities and improve educational and life outcomes for refugee youths.

Program Evaluation

Pursuant to 73 NAC, ch.1, § 012, a plan for ongoing evaluation of programs shall be developed by an evaluation party and the Commission. A portion of grant funds may be set aside for an external third-party evaluation of the effectiveness of the Office of Violence Prevention Program. Any program evaluations independently arranged by the program must submit the evaluations to the Director of Office of Violence Prevention no later than 45 days after the grant has ended. The Director and the Advisory Council will review the evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the programs funded by the Office of Violence Prevention Grant Program.

The Office of Violence Prevention Program and Advisory Council aims to evaluate all programs for effectiveness and future system involvement at least once every four years after receiving an award. These evaluations can be organized by either the Crime Commission or the individual programs themselves.

In May 2025, the OVP Advisory Council approved the awarding of funds to the University of Nebraska–Omaha School of Criminology and Criminal Justice to build standard logic models, quarterly reports templates, and annual report templates. Statewide grantees will use these standardized tools as a roadmap moving forward.

The collaboration with University of Nebraska – Omaha, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice Institute with the support of the Office of Violence Prevention Advisory Board have developed a plan for ongoing evaluations that will evaluate the use of the grant funds and the evidence of the effectiveness of the programs who have achieved successful outcomes.

Effective July 1, 2026, the University of Nebraska – Omaha Juvenile Justice Institute will work with OVP grantees on developing program logic models and begin program evaluations. Formal program evaluations are currently under way for four funded programs.

University of Omaha – School of Criminology and Criminal Justice

During FY 2026, the University of Nebraska – Omaha – School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (UNO – SCCJ) focused on developing evaluation infrastructure and provided training/technical assistance (TTA) to OVP grantees. During FY 2026, the scope of work built on prior fiscal year's effort included a logic model how-to guide, a recorded webinar with integrated workshopping time to facilitate initial logic model drafting, and a revised quarterly report and annual report templates in alignment with TTA materials. The goals were to enhance clarity and consistency in reporting activities and outputs that are directly linked to program goals, and to align reporting requirements with federal templates should grantees seek additional external funds. All resources were made available to grantees and posted on the OVP website as well as UNO's website (public access).

Successes

1. Once grantees engaged in TTA, collaborations were smooth and productive with the evaluation team having confidence in programs' knowledge and ability to do evaluation work.
2. Programs that needed and engaged in TTA had logic models developed and established or were establishing measurement plans by the end of the fiscal year.
    a. For some programs this process led to updating other program materials, as the focus and goals had shifted over time. In other words, programs were able to articulate more accurately the work they are doing and why it is beneficial for internal program knowledge, evaluation, and outward facing program promotion/description.
3. UNO – SCCJ focused on relationship building and helping programs understand why evaluation is beneficial, how collecting program data can help them obtain other grant funds, and how they can develop an evaluation plan that supports programmatic efforts.
4. Established a foundation for long-term evaluation infrastructure. A designated TTA provider makes it easy for grantees to know where to get help and maintain consistency in evaluation efforts over the life of the award.

Challenges

1. Not all grantees were initially responsive to invitations to engage in the process and utilize TTA. As a result, some programs engaged in this work earlier in the fiscal year, and some not until later in the fiscal year.
2. Grantees were in different places in terms of evaluation preparedness. Some had logic models and data collection systems already in place while others did not.
3. Turnover in personnel among grantees impacted consistency in collaboration.
4. Developing evaluation capacity takes time, and additional time is needed for requisite data to be collected. At the start of this collaboration, OVP grants were for a single year which does not align with effective evaluation. Future grant opportunities will be extended to two year project periods which UNO - SCCJ supports as a necessary and beneficial improvement.

Program Monitoring

To continuously monitor how funds are being used by the program and assess progress and success regarding the stated goals of each program, the Office of Violence Prevention Director conducts program site monitors and desk monitors of grantees. Beyond ensuring compliance, these site visits serve to strengthen partnerships with grant recipients. On-site monitoring allows the Director to observe the program environment, engage with participants, verify the proper use of grant funds, and identify future stakeholder funding needs.

FY 2026 on-site monitors were conducted with the following programs, reporting the following outcomes:

City of Lincoln – Operation Tipping Point

The Director met with **Operation Tipping Point** program specialists at the Lincoln Public Schools District Office before touring the program's operations at Park Middle School. The program served over 90 youths, providing targeted intervention and prevention strategies for middle and high school students who have a personal or family affiliation with gangs.

FY 2026 outcomes include:

- Achieved a 100% graduation rate over the past five years for seniors who remained in the program, with only one recent senior needing an additional semester.
- Multiple students obtained driver's licenses and secured employment, with notable cases of students at risk of not graduating succeeding due to program intervention.
- The program has successfully diverted numerous youths from the criminal justice system by intervening before arrests or criminal activity.
- National recognition received, including the Mayor's Award of Excellence and an upcoming feature in TED Talks.

Latino Center of the Midlands

The Director met with administrative staff in South Omaha to review the **Pathways to Success – Xochikalli (SOH-chee-cah-lee)** program. Utilizing the National Compadres Network model, the program successfully enrolled 194 students in its Healing Círculos.

FY 2026 outcomes include:

- 52 girls and young women served
- 134 Healing Círculos sessions provided
- 46 participants newly enrolled
- 52 participants exited
- 40 participants exited successfully, having completed all sessions and the post-assessment
- 77% successful completion rate

Black Men United

The Director met with the administrative and program staff in North Omaha for a comprehensive program overview and site monitor of the **Kumani Excel** program. The initiative recently completed a cohort of 15 students (ages 14–21), with 13 successfully graduating.

New Life Family Alliance

The Director conducted a program compliance site visit with the staff of the **Safe Youth** program in North Omaha. The monitoring visit revealed significant issues regarding compliance with grant requirements. The Safe Youth Program was not implemented with OVP funds and the grant was deobligated.

YouTurn

The Director met with administrative staff in Omaha for a comprehensive briefing on their programming. The **Make a 180 Against Violence** program utilizes the evidence-based Cure Violence Global model, serving over 200 youth in FY 2026. An ongoing evaluation indicates the program is achieving positive participant outcomes.

FY 2026 outcomes include:

- 72.7% of conflicts mediated by YouTurn did not escalate into violence
- 84.3% of conflicts mediated resulted in at least partial stabilization (resolved or conditional)
- 36.4% assessed as likely to re-occur
- 33.3% involved gun-related factors
- 30.3% experienced secondary violence

International Council for Refugees and Immigrants (ICRI)

The Director met with administrative staff in North Omaha to review the **Bridge to Prosperity Workforce Development** program. The program addresses immigration-related barriers that hinder young people from entering the workforce, helping them secure sustainable jobs, successfully enrolling over 40 youth.

FY 2026 outcomes include:

- Surpassed its annual enrollment goal by providing comprehensive education, employment, and career development services to 47 at-risk youth aged 14–21 in Douglas County.
- Employment outcomes demonstrated significant improvement, with 23 youth securing jobs and an additional 15 participants actively engaged in the placement pipeline.
- Educational advancement remained a central tenet of the program, with support provided for high school re-enrollment, GED and ESL programs, and college applications for 15 youths, as well as FAFSA completion for 7 youths.
- 7 youths successfully graduated from high school, and several others are on track for graduation.
- Program served 49 youth throughout Douglas County

Office of Violence Prevention Advisory Council

The Office of Violence Prevention Advisory Council was established in NRS § 81-1447 and consists of six members of each congressional district with at least one member of each congressional district on the council. The Governor appoints the members of the council representing the following areas, if practicable: two members representing local government, two members representing law enforcement, one member representing community advocacy and one member representing education with some expertise in law enforcement and juvenile crime.

Each member shall serve a four-year term and may be reappointed at the expiration of their term. The Advisory Council shall meet at least quarterly. Among the Advisory Council's responsibilities, the council is directed to recommend to the Crime Commission the rules and regulations regarding program fundraising, program evaluation, coordination of programs, and the criteria used to assess and award funds to violence prevention programs.

The additional duties of the Advisory Council shall include, but are not limited to, receiving applications for violence prevention funds, evaluating such applications, and making recommendations to the Crime Commission regarding the merits of each application with the recommended amount of any funds that should be awarded. The Advisory Council shall continuously monitor how such funds are being used by the program, conduct periodic evaluations of programs, and assess the progress and success regarding the Office of Violence Prevention goals of each program's awarded funds. The Advisory Council shall recommend to the Crime Commission any modification, continuation, or discontinuation of funding.

Advisory Council Members	Agency	Representation
Brenda Beadle	Douglas County Attorney's Office	Local Government
Karen Bredthauer, Vice-Chair	Hall County Board of Commissioners	Local Government
Royal "Dean" Kottwitz	Grand Island Police Department	Law Enforcement
Marcus Taylor	Omaha Police Department	Law Enforcement
Micaela Wuehler	Lincoln County Board of Commissioners	Community Advocacy
Scott Sasse, Chair	University of Nebraska – Omaha, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice	Education with some expertise in law enforcement and juvenile crime

Strategic Planning

The OVP Advisory Council finalized the 2025 – 2029 OVP Strategic Plan on February 19, 2026. The plan focuses on the following priorities:

- **Maximize funding impact**: Minimize grant deobligations, realign review criteria toward high-impact projects, and diversify revenue streams.
- **Expand reach:** Extend funding support to rural and tribal communities.
- **Expand community impact:** Launch a violence-prevention training conference and track grantee effectiveness through consistent evaluations.
- **Enhance administrative operations:** Conduct annual form updates alongside biennial reviews and revisions of OVP rules, policies, and monitoring protocols as needed.

This framework integrates key recommendations from the OVP Advisory Council to ensure evidence-based, localized interventions.

To ensure maximum impact, implementation is divided into two distinct fiscal biennia:

- **Biennium 2025 – 2027:** Initial deployment phase, focusing on urgent state alignments and immediate recommendations from the OVP Advisory Council.
- **Biennium 2027 – 2029:** Secondary scaling phase, shifting focus to long-term programmatic goals, expanded oversight, and incorporating final program evaluations.

Office of Violence Prevention Achievements

At the National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC) Training Conference in Chicago (August 2–5, 2026), Nebraska's Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) was showcased as a premier national model. Following the publication of the 2025 OVP Annual Report, NGCRC invited OVP Director Chris Carlile to present *"Addressing Violence Prevention as a Statewide Approach; Nebraska Office of Violence Prevention."* Her session provided other states with a blueprint for efficient grant management and robust program evaluation. Remarkably, the NGCRC ranks Nebraska first in the nation for transparency when reporting state gang violence to the legislature, with Texas ranking second.

Marking a significant milestone for the state, the NGCRC presented the prestigious Frederic Milton Thrasher Award to Crime Commission staff members OVP Director Chris Carlile and Amy Hoffman, Director of Justice & Youth Programs. The award celebrates their outstanding dedication and exceptional contributions to the field of gang violence prevention.

Key Fiscal Year Milestones

Fiscal Year 2025: FY 2025 introduced significant programmatic changes designed to optimize grant efficacy. A foundational enhancement was the implementation of the *Grantee's Annual Report*. This tool was specifically created to capture critical data and evaluate whether each funded program successfully aligned with its stated goals and outcomes.

Fiscal Year 2026: Building upon the framework established in the previous year, FY 2026 expanded its operations into active data collection. This phase focused on gathering the performance metrics required for comprehensive data collection, laying the foundation for formal program evaluations and ongoing compliance.