

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy, Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, and Former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords Announce Winners of Grants for Nine Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs Across New Jersey

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New Jersey is at the Forefront of Using Federal VOCA Funding to Assist Gun Violence Victims and Reduce Violence

JERSEY CITY – Governor Phil Murphy, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal, and former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords today announced the winners of grant funding to establish nine hospital-based violence intervention programs across New Jersey.

The trio were joined by community leaders and grant recipients as they announced the awards at the Mary Bethune Center in Jersey City. The programs are being launched with \$20 million in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, the largest VOCA award ever in the nation for hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs). New Jersey is one of the first states to use VOCA funds to implement the programs, which are designed to enhance services to victims and break cycles of violence in hard-hit communities.

“The funding awarded today further reinforces our Administration’s commitment to reducing gun violence in New Jersey by enhancing the tools at the disposal of public health facilities and victim service providers,” said Governor Murphy. “With the implementation of hospital-based violence intervention programs, our state is better equipped to support victims and offer best practices to the community organizations working to prevent additional violence from occurring.”

“This is an exciting day for New Jersey and a big victory for all of the organizations and individuals who work tirelessly each day to serve victims and prevent violence,” said **Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal**. “The violence intervention programs receiving millions of dollars unite hospitals and community organizations all across the state to help break cycles of victimization and violence. As New Jersey’s Chief Law Enforcement Officer, I am proud to work with these groups to holistically tackle the ongoing gun violence epidemic and better serve our communities, not just today but every day.”

“The resilience of Jersey City in the wake of the recent attack embodies the strength of New Jersey,” said **former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, co-founder of Giffords**. “The state has always met tragedy with action, and never stopped pushing forward in addressing the gun violence crisis. Today, leadership stepped up yet again. Providing communities the resources to fight this epidemic is a necessary leap in the right direction. I’m proud to stand with Governor Murphy and Attorney General Grewal to announce this community-driven approach that will help communities like Jersey City make real progress in saving lives and

 back to top

addressing the trauma of gun violence.”

“The epidemic of everyday gun violence is ravaging our urban communities,” **said U.S. Senator Cory Booker.** “We need bold, innovative ideas, like Governor Murphy and Attorney General Grewal are announcing today, to help New Jersey tackle this challenge and make our communities safer. Community-based violence prevention programs have been proven to help reduce violence, which is why I have proposed a similar initiative at the federal-level. The work on this important legislation was enhanced by the tireless advocacy and leadership of Congresswoman Giffords. Together, we will confront this crisis with solutions that work.”

Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) reach victims of gun violence and others touched by violence right at the time of crisis and are proven to reduce repeat injury. They seek to leverage these crucial moments, when medical treatment and recovery services can be combined with education, counseling, social services, and case management to prevent future involvement in violence. HVIPs serve victims of many types of violence, including human trafficking.

A primary goal of the New Jersey Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program (NJHVIP) is to link hospitals and other medical facilities with community-based organizations that are already working to assist victims and reduce violence.

Governor Murphy, AG Grewal, and Congresswoman Giffords today announced that, pursuant to a competitive application process, the following sites have been selected to serve the geographic areas indicated:

1. Center for Family Services – City of Camden, Camden County
2. Trinitas Health Foundation – Elizabeth, Union County
3. AtlantiCare – Atlantic City, Atlantic County
4. Capital Health – Trenton, Mercer County
5. Jersey City Medical Center (RWJBarnabas) – Jersey City, Hudson County
6. RWJ University Hospital – New Brunswick – Serving Middlesex, Somerset and Union Counties
7. University Hospital – Newark, Essex County
8. Jersey Shore University Medical Center/Hackensack Meridian – Monmouth County – Focusing on Asbury Park, Neptune Township and Long Branch City
9. St. Joseph’s Health – Paterson, Passaic County

The Governor, Attorney General, and Congresswoman also announced the selection of The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI) as the training and technical assistance provider for the New Jersey Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program. HAVI has extensive experience in providing training, technical assistance, and support for HVIPs across the United States. HAVI will receive a VOCA grant to support all nine of the programs in New Jersey to ensure that they have all the tools they need to follow national best practices.

“The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention applauds the State of New Jersey for taking this monumental step to support health-based violence intervention strategies,” **said Fatimah Loren Muhammad, Executive Director of The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention.** “The HAVI is honored to serve as lead technical assistance provider to expand hospital-based violence intervention programs across New Jersey, developing much-needed support services for victims of violence, and ultimately helping to interrupt the vicious cycle of violence in communities throughout the state.”

The awarding of VOCA funds by the AG’s Office represents the first time that the State has funded HVIPs. This new initiative dovetails with legislation approved by Governor Murphy and the Legislature last year that, among other things, mandates such programs at top-level trauma centers in New Jersey and provides for additional types of support from the Department of Health and Victims of Crime Compensation Office.

The \$20 million in VOCA grants will fund the nine HVIP sites for a period of 21 months.

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[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

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[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

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[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

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