



Coming together to reduce
gun violence in our community

OVERVIEW



Together to reduce gun violence

American cities of all sizes have experienced a surge of deadly violence since 2019, spurred by many factors during the pandemic. It's been heartbreaking to see the impact on Memphis. Youth Villages works in 23 states and the District of Columbia, but our home is in Memphis, where more than 1,300 of our employees live and work. It is the city we love.

In 2020 we began to hear strong calls from our leaders asking the community to step up and support gun violence reduction. **“It takes all of us—state and local officials, families, neighborhoods, churches and businesses—working together toward the long-term goal of reducing violent crime,”** said Mayor Jim Strickland.

We could not sit on the sidelines and stepped up to answer the call. We can't fulfill our mission to help children and families live successfully when so many are traumatized by continual gun violence in their neighborhoods. We are uniquely qualified to contribute to a solution and to support other efforts seeking to tackle this violence head on.

Over the last year, Youth Villages delved deep to find an effective way that our organization could contribute to a reduction in gun violence. We knew we could not succeed alone and would need to learn from and empower other community groups and organizations. Youth Villages has significant experience in the development and implementation of evidence-based program models, particularly when it comes to accountability measures, oversight and supervision and continual performance improvement. We've also worked extensively in developing successful strategic business plans designed to impact entrenched societal problems while working through partners in implementation.

We have launched Memphis Allies as a collaborative initiative bringing together community groups and resources to create safer neighborhoods in Memphis and Shelby County. Many Ally organizations, of which Youth Villages is only one, will join the gun violence reduction efforts of the City of Memphis and others, multiplying impact and results.

Memphis Allies will work in both intervention and prevention of gun violence. In conjunction with experts from across the country, our clinical staff has developed a program model for gun violence reduction called SWITCH (Support With Intention To Create Hope). This will allow us to intervene with adults, as the average age of a person charged with murder in Memphis is 28. At the same time, we are dramatically increasing intensive services to more delinquent youth, especially those at the highest risk of involvement with gun violence.

Youth Villages believes that it is time for all of us—individuals, foundations, business leaders, the Governor and the state legislature—to step up and do what must be done to support our city and ensure that all of our children have the opportunity grow up safely and thrive as adults.

In the next four years, Memphis Allies will reach more than 2,000 youth and adults and offer them and their families a chance to change the trajectory of their lives forever.

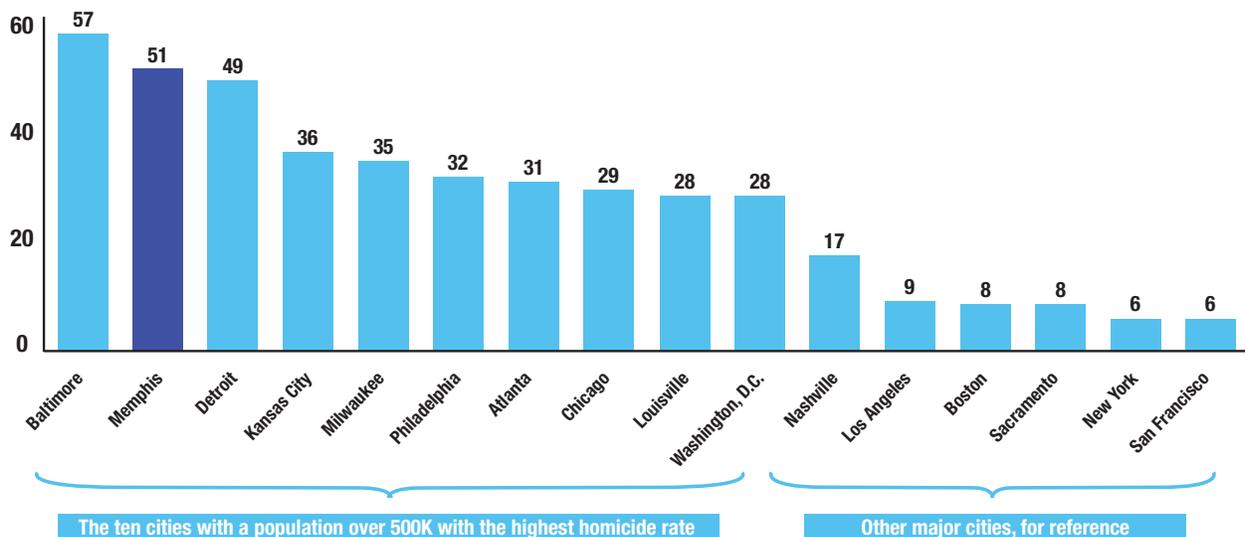
We believe that Memphis Allies can support law enforcement’s public safety goals by providing life-changing services to adults and youth at the highest risk of involvement in gun violence. We support the critical roles that the police and judicial system must play if Memphis is to be successful. **It will take all of us.**

We believe that working together, Memphis can reduce homicides by 30% in the next four years. We believe this goal is a significant first step toward a safer Memphis and reversing the trend of escalating violence in our community. Success will require intense collaboration with existing community safety efforts in our city, such as the City of Memphis’ Group Violence Intervention Program, the Shelby County Health Department’s Cure Violence initiative and the Memphis Crime Commission’s new plan. We are glad to contribute to the overall effort to reduce gun violence. One life lost to violence is too many.

Youth Villages has pursued multiple strategic plans over the past two decades. All of these plans have led us to new and important work. But the plan for Memphis Allies stands out: an opportunity has never compelled us as profoundly as this one does today, because of both the gravity of the challenge and the strength our city can put to work in meeting it.

The Challenge: Meeting an Urgent Need

Homicide Rate per 100,000 (2020)



Any violence in Memphis is and always has been a tragedy. It devastates victims’ families and loved ones and traumatizes the communities that raised them. Since 2019, homicides in the City of Memphis have gone up 81%. In 2021, 346 people were killed, including 31 children and youth under age 18. The violence shows no signs of slowing down.

If we can make a difference in Memphis, we might also inspire other cities to take action, incorporate the lessons we learn and create safer neighborhoods for their residents.

We can do it together

As great as the challenge of gun violence is, the unique assets that we can put to work in confronting it are even greater. These assets include:

1. Exceptional partner organizations—the “Allies” that comprise Memphis Allies.

Over the last year, Youth Villages has worked alongside other trusted nonprofits from communities most impacted by gun violence to build relationships with them and discuss potential solutions. Youth Villages cannot do this work alone, and these Ally organizations bring expertise, credibility and trust in communities most affected by violence. They will be central in all elements of Memphis Allies work, from identifying the highest-risk individuals to making strategic choices about how to scale services in the city. And critically, they are helping to ensure that the solution we create is tailored uniquely to Memphis.

Building the network of Ally organizations is therefore among our top priorities in the near term. Three Ally organizations will be working alongside Youth Villages as Memphis Allies launches.

2. We’ve seen in other communities that change is possible, and we have experts familiar with those successes advising our team.

While our goal of helping to reduce homicides by 30% by 2025 is bold, other cities have created change on this scale.

Examples of cities that have stimulated substantial reduction in gun violence—and programs that have spurred meaningful change in their participants’ lives—include:

Oakland, California: The Ceasefire effort contributed to **five straight years of decline** in violence (2013-2018). During those years, Oakland’s homicides declined 46% while homicides nationwide rose by 17%.

New York City: A study of NYC’s Crisis Management System (CMS)—a network of nonprofits financed and managed by the Mayor’s Office to Prevent Gun Violence—found that gun violence in neighborhoods covered by CMS **decreased by 28%** in the two years after they began receiving services.

Chicago, Illinois: Chicago’s landscape of violence reduction services, which is largely philanthropically funded, contributed to a **35% reduction** in violence from 2016 until 2020’s nationwide surge in violence. And during the pandemic, areas served by community safety organizations like Chicago CRED were often able to stave off increases in violence.

Stockton, California: Stockton’s Office of Violence Prevention—using a program similar to Oakland’s—helped orchestrate a **26% reduction** in non-fatal shootings from 2017-2020.

Homicide reduction in Stockton, California



Our expert advisors have contributed to these and other community safety strategies around the country and bring unique assets to our work. **David Muhammad of the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR)** has advised on several cities' strategies, including Oakland's community safety strategy that achieved a 46% decline in homicides in its first five years. **DeVone Boggan, the founder and CEO of Advance Peace**, has developed and replicated comprehensive services to reduce gun violence in Stockton and other cities. **Melvyn Hayward of Chicago CRED** has trained on-the-ground staff in more than 30 cities, including in Memphis.

3. Youth Villages' experience creating and scaling evidence-based programs.

Memphis Allies presents a challenge unique among those Youth Villages has taken on, as it is fundamentally place-based, and the solutions we design must be tailored to our city's strengths and needs. We believe that our 40 years of experience in program development and scaling have prepared us to play a unique role in this work. Youth Villages can offer:

- **Experience scaling services through partnerships.** For instance, at the end of our first year scaling our LifeSet™ program for youth aging out of foster care through partnerships, we had one implementing partner serving 39 young people. Four years later, we have grown to work with 20 implementing partner agencies across nine states and D.C., helping us provide LifeSet services to more than 5,000 young people annually.

Our Intercept® program, which helps children and families find their way to well-being, was launched in Memphis and has expanded to serve more than 10,000 families each year across the country. It is now fully funding through government support.

- **Data and evaluation infrastructure:** The Youth Villages data science team—staffed by 31 specialists and led by Dr. Sarah Hurley—brings extensive expertise measuring the outcomes resulting from our services. We have also worked with nationally recognized independent evaluators, including Dr. Mark Courtney of the University of Chicago and Dr. Fred Wulczyn from Chapin Hall, to conduct rigorous studies which found significant positive impacts for both our LifeSet and Intercept® programs.
- **Capacity for securing private and public funding.** Memphis Allies is launching as a public/private initiative and will work to secure sustainable public sector financing over time. Youth Villages has pursued this path with several of our programs, including LifeSet. Philanthropy has been the engine in launching new initiatives at Youth Villages, with public funding streams supporting long-term sustainability. We will apply learnings from this and other experiences to build sustainable public sector funding streams for Memphis Allies.



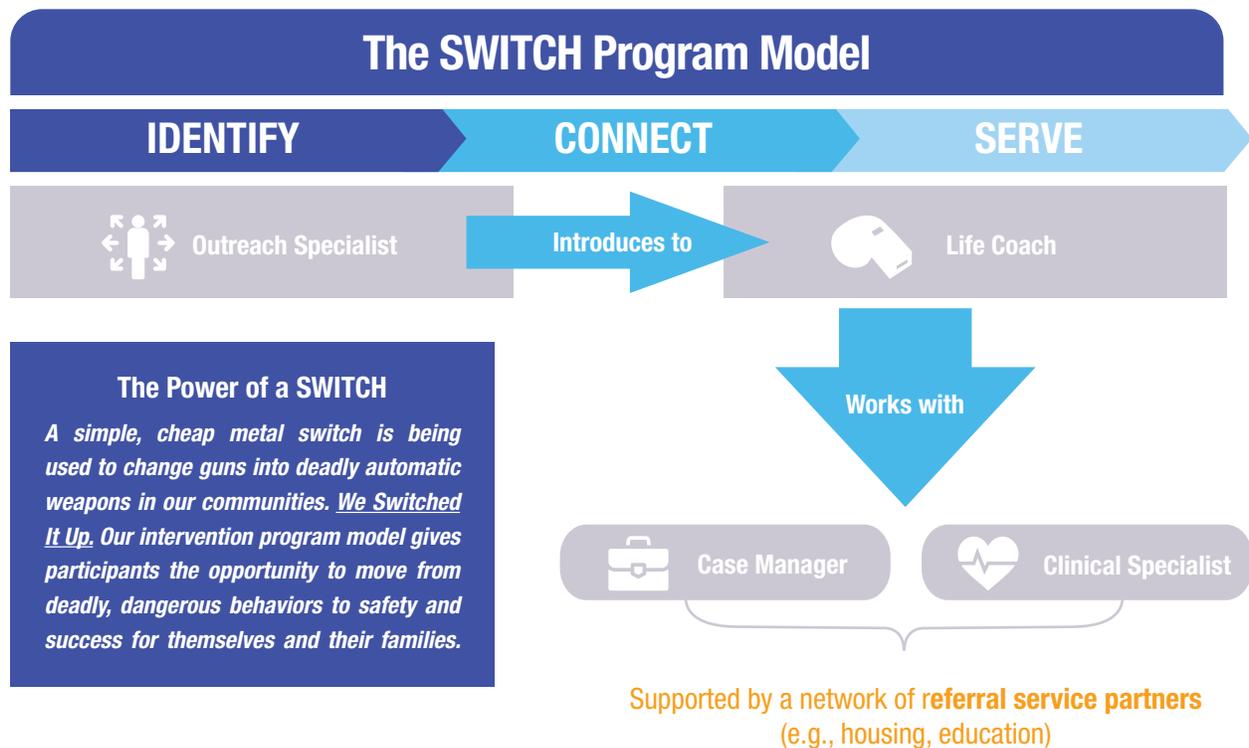
In the next four years, Memphis Allies will reach more than 2,000 youth and adults at high risk for gun violence.

Memphis Allies Approach: Reducing gun violence through targeted services

Our strategy includes both violence intervention and prevention. Through SWITCH, we will provide violence intervention: targeted supports for adults and older youth at highest risk of involvement in violence. This approach is informed by research demonstrating that: 1) a small number of individuals typically drive the majority of a city's violence; 2) most of those individuals have common risk factors, such as having been recently shot themselves; and 3) that intervening with services for those individuals can reduce violence.

Identifying participants: Memphis Allies **Outreach Specialists** have deep relationships and credibility in communities and neighborhoods most affected by violence, and they will use these assets to proactively identify individuals needing services. Memphis Allies will also receive referrals from partners and use data-driven practices to support Outreach Specialists. For example, we will coordinate with law enforcement to determine who is connected to recent shooting victims and at risk of retaliation.

Connecting with participants: After making initial contact, the Outreach Specialist will connect the person to a **Life Coach and Clinical Specialist** who will build a caring, trusting relationship with them. As with Outreach Specialists, credibility will be critical for Life Coaches. Many may have relevant lived experiences, such as previous victimization from gun violence, which enables them to establish a common understanding with each participant. Given the importance of trust at this stage, Memphis Allies will partner with trusted individuals and groups in communities most affected by violence—especially faith leaders—in building relationships with participants.



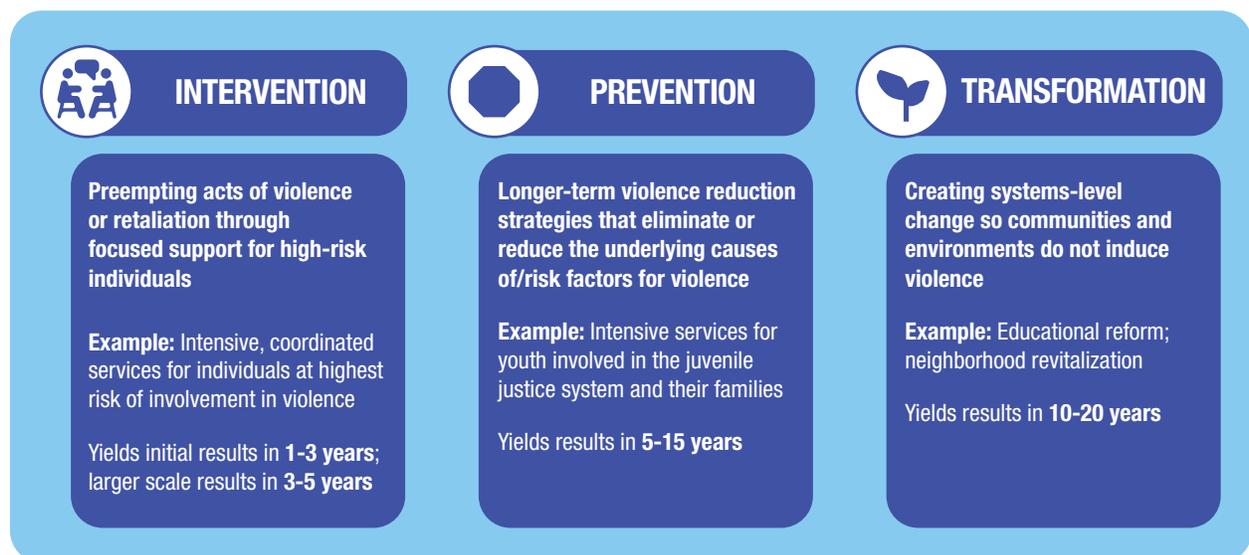
Serving participants: The participant will receive intensive services from a team of Memphis Allies staff including:

- The **Life Coach** works with the participants to express their short- and long-term goals in a Life Plan; facilitate the provision of stipends for the participants as they hit milestones in their Life Plan; and provide unconditional support and mentorship.
- A **Clinical Specialist** provides individual or group therapy to help participants develop healthy coping strategies and behaviors in stressful situations.
- A **Case Manager** connects the participants and their families to specialized services that drive successful achievement of goals in their Life Plan.
- Furthermore, a **network of specialist referral partners** supports participants with particular needs (e.g., housing, education, or job placement).

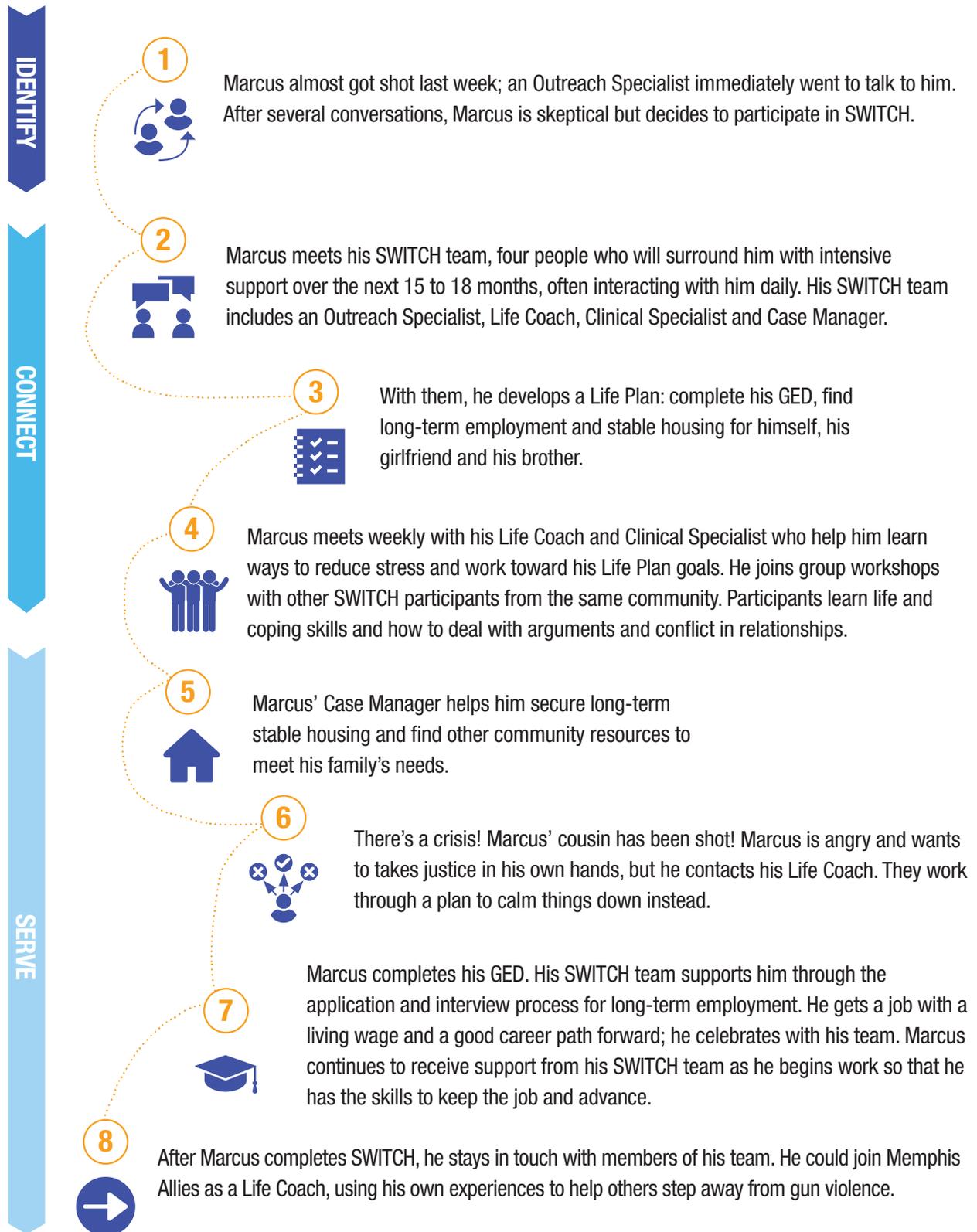
In addition to SWITCH, Memphis Allies will invest in:

Building a stronger network of support services for youth. Over the last year of conversations in our city, we learned that 1) broadly, youth in Memphis could benefit from greater access to opportunity and guidance, and 2) in particular, system-involved youth need greater support services. We recognize these needs, and in response, will bolster youth services. We will also connect high-risk youth identified through outreach and referrals from justice system institutions to both relevant Youth Villages programs—LifeSet, Intercept, Multisystemic Therapy® (MST)—and Ally organizations with effective youth service offerings.

Revitalizing communities affected by violence. We seek to transform the systems and circumstances that create violence through physical revitalization (e.g., restoring and reinvigorating public spaces), economic revitalization (e.g., through support for neighborhood community development corporations) and elevation of opportunities for criminal justice and policy reform. This investment in systems-level change is much more than a means to reduce violence in the longer term. It is essential to our vision for a Memphis in which all children, families and neighborhoods are cared for and can thrive.



How SWITCH works



Resource requirements: Creating a sustainable path forward

We project Memphis Allies will cost **approximately \$60 million in its first four years of service**, adding 316 committed team members in direct intervention and prevention services for youth and adults.

Memphis Allies will require up-front investment from philanthropy. We are seeking a major philanthropic investment to demonstrate results, and make the case to the public sector that our work demands their attention and resources. We are committed to securing long-term public funding to ensure sustainability.

Cost category	Budget	Description of expenditures
SWITCH Service Delivery	\$38.8M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ramp-Up of 21 SWITCH teams (totaling 210 Full-Time Employees). Teams will include staff that directly deliver services to participants along with support staff in each of the seven regions of the city. In addition to salaries/benefits, this also includes occupancy/infrastructure, participant support and staff support/travel.
Prevention Services	\$12M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes Intercept, LifeSet and MST services for high-risk youth and young adults. Operating and indirect costs
Leadership and Community Support	\$8.6M	Memphis Allies leadership, including an Executive Director, Director of Operations, a full Clinical team, Trainer, Project Manager, Volunteer Coordinator and other support staff.
National Experts/Training	\$.6M	National experts to advise on best practices, train, analyze data and provide support/guidance.
Total	\$60M	

Understanding these costs—and the return on investment

If this investment seems significant, consider what success means for our community: a 30% reduction in gun violence would result in 100 homicides averted per year. Those 100 Memphians would get to live full lives, avoiding the associated trauma for families, neighborhoods and the community.

Researcher Thomas Abt writes that the conservative cost of a single murder is \$10 million. Using this estimate, homicides cost the people of Memphis \$6.7 billion over the last two years. The scale of these costs makes action against gun violence not only a moral imperative, but also a cost-effective investment for society.

In addition to our focus on immediate violence intervention, this plan will also address the growing number of

youth and young adults whose lives could be redirected through effective services, thus preventing another generation of death and loss.

Through Intercept, MST and LifeSet, more youth, young adults and families will receive the resources and support they need to live successfully in the community. Helping young people avoid deep involvement in juvenile and adult justice systems pays extraordinary benefits to our community.

The Path Forward

Over the next four years, we will scale Memphis Allies' services, reaching more than 2,000 youth and adults in our city at highest risk of involvement in violence. Our research suggests that services at this scale will drive the reductions in violence we hope to help achieve. We will begin in the Raleigh and Frayser neighborhoods, which, our initial analysis suggests, experience violence most acutely, before scaling across the city. Our greatest priorities as we scale will be:



Delivering successful services. Creating city-wide change starts with delivering quality services for participants, which requires 1) identifying the highest-risk individuals, 2) engaging them in relationship-based services and 3) supporting staff with the training and resources they need. We will build systems of learning to understand the impact of our services and make changes to enhance it.



Collaborating with the public sector. We hope that this relationship will begin with data sharing to understand not only who experiences violence and where, but also why it is occurring, which can inform more effective solutions. In the longer term, we strive to prove that Memphis Allies' results make it an essential part of our city's community safety infrastructure and secure committed funding from local government. We will look for opportunities to align and collaborate with the violence reduction efforts ongoing in the public sector. We visited a community where the lead nonprofit organization coordinating violence prevention services told us that its job was to support its city government to be as successful as possible. Our job is the same.

To take our services to scale, prove their impact for participants and neighborhoods and ultimately secure sustainable public sector funding, we are seeking support from philanthropists who believe in our vision for a safer Memphis.

Together, we can create a path toward that safer Memphis. A path rooted in empathy for communities most affected by violence, and built upon the deep assets that already exist in those communities. A path constructed collaboratively with our city's nonprofits, government, faith leaders and residents. A path that balances hope for a safer city with humble appreciation for, and commitment to, the hard work and cooperation it will take to create it.

At the end of this path is a Memphis that keeps all families and their children, safe—and where all of our neighborhoods are vibrant, cared for and thriving.

Join us now, so together, we can forge a new path full of healing and opportunity for all Memphians.



MEMPHIS ALLIES



youthvillages.org

Youth Villages is a national leader in children's mental and behavioral health, committed to building strong families, delivering effective services and significantly improving outcomes for children, families and young people involved in child welfare and juvenile justice systems across the country. Founded in 1986, the organization's 3,400 employees help more than 32,000 children annually in 23 states and the District of Columbia. Youth Villages has been recognized by the Harvard Business School and U.S. News & World Report and was identified by The White House as one of the nation's most promising results-oriented nonprofit organizations.

