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# Cincinnati spent millions on anti-violence programs. Why are bullets still flying? | Opinion

*Mayor Aftab Pureval's silence on Cincinnati's failed anti-violence programs speaks loudest.*

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Cincinnati Mayor [Aftab Pureval's](#) "holistic" strategy to reduce gun violence in the city is not working. Pureval recently appeared on [91.7 WVXU's "Cincinnati Edition"](#) to discuss gun violence. It's important to note what the mayor *did not say* [during the interview](#).

Pureval listed several factors for Cincinnati's increase in gun violence: poverty, "crazy" gun laws, the accessibility of guns, and social media. He also pointed out the need for greater parental engagement and that too many careless gun owners are having their firearms stolen from their parked vehicles and then used in shootings. Pureval didn't provide any specific data for his assertions.

Remarkably, the mayor said nothing about the city's primary initiative to address gun violence, "Act for Cincy." The program, officially launched in January 2025 with a budget of about \$3 million, was sold as Cincinnati's "holistic" solution to violence.

**ICYMI:** ['Act for Cincy' plan launches. Shootings, car thefts fell but violent crime is up. Here's why](#)

## Gun violence rises while City Hall funds dance lessons

In practice, Act for Cincy is a social justice and social services strategy, not a law enforcement one. Instead of putting more cops on the beat, it put "Boots on the Ground," a city program that funds 41 external organizations, dividing more than \$830,000. Grants ranged from \$10,000 for hip-hop dance lessons to \$25,000 to address senior loneliness.

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Act for Cincy also includes the "Safe and Clean Fund" with a budget of \$500,000. The goal of the fund is "crime prevention through environmental design, where improved beautification enhances community ownership and reduces violence." So far in 2025, seven external organizations have been awarded \$148,066 for projects that serve "the neighborhoods with the highest gun violence, actively engaged/led by youth, and enhance community ownership."

Lastly, Act for Cincy includes \$1.68 million for the "Human Services Violence Prevention Fund," which awarded grants to 23 external organizations. The grants range from \$25,000 for "Mentoring Youth Minds" to \$127,000 to provide "vital social services" to at-risk residents in one of the city's "most socio-economically challenged neighborhoods," which means nothing specific.

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You would think that the mayor would have said something about Act for Cincy and its "Blueprint for Reducing Violence," if for no other reason than to inform the public of its existence, even if there are no discernible impacts on violence.

## Groceries and stipends haven't stopped the shooting

Pureval also failed to mention the \$275,000 sole-source contract that was awarded to the California nonprofit, [Advance Peace](#). According to the IRS, Advance Peace was granted its 501c3 status in 2020. The IRS website shows only an employer identification number, and no other information, financial or otherwise, is available.

In 2021, "[Urban Transformations](#)," a platform for publishing scholarly research related to urban studies, reported that "Advance Peace is a program that aims to reduce urban gun violence using formerly incarcerated community members as street outreach mentors and violence interrupters." In 2017, the "Sacramento Bee" reported that the organization is controversial because it has been accused of essentially [paying program participants](#) thousands of dollars in stipends not to commit a crime.

**More:** [A program pays gun offenders to step away from crime. Could it work in Cincinnati?](#)

Cincinnati's are still waiting for a report on whether Advance Peace has had any impact on youth violence. The fact that the mayor didn't highlight any of the program's successes during his radio appearance speaks for itself.

The city intends to spend at least \$850,000 on "food insecurity" in Fiscal Year 2026, specifically on a program for delivering groceries to households. Their thinking seems to be that being "hangry," slang for when someone becomes irritated or angry because they haven't eaten or are hungry, contributes to gun violence.

Curiously, the mayor did not discuss any of these initiatives intended to address gun violence on "Cincinnati Edition." The most likely explanation is that the city has once again invested millions of dollars with no discernible way to measure its return on investment.

This is just another case of optics over outcomes.

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