

## Legislation Text

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Calling on Mayor James F. Kenney and his Administration of the City of Philadelphia to establish and implement an Academic Expert Advisory Team in its selection and evaluation of recipients of the Anti-Violence Community Expansion Grant program and other anti-violence efforts during Fiscal Year 2022 and beyond.

WHEREAS, With gun violence and homicides at an all time high in Philadelphia, in June of 2021, the City Council of Philadelphia adopted the City's Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2022 which included approximately \$155.7 million in anti-violence spending. These funds were prioritized by the Kenney Administration and City Council and are now being allocated towards, amongst other programming, Anti-Violence Community Expansion Grants; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Violence Prevention has implemented a Group Violence Intervention ("GVI") program to support and enhance its *Philadelphia Roadmap to Safer Communities* plan and should ensure that all features of this program, and other funded initiatives, are managed with fidelity and include proper data management and documentation necessary for ongoing evaluation; and

WHEREAS, The grant application opened in August of 2021. Applicants are applying for funding from a \$22 million allocation approved by City Council to engage community partners in stemming the tide of gun violence in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The City will provide grants between \$100,000 and \$1 million to organizations with annual operating budgets below \$15 million. The grants are targeted towards mid-sized groups with a proven track record of working in neighborhoods vulnerable to and affected by gun violence. The grants will also focus on providing culturally-relevant services with a meaningful impact on the community served; and

WHEREAS, To facilitate the grant process, the City has created the Violence Prevention Opportunity Monitoring Group. This body is comprised of Councilmembers and representatives from the Kenney Administration including from the Managing Director's Office, Office of Policy and Strategic Initiatives for Criminal Justice and Public Safety, Department of Public Health, Department of Commerce, Office of Children and Families, Department of Human Services, and Department of Behavioral Health & Intellectual Disability Services; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the Monitoring Group, City government should make use of the rich academic expertise available in Philadelphia to facilitate and evaluate the grant program and anti-violence programming tied to the FY22 budget and beyond as the we move through the City's Five Year Plan goals; and

WHEREAS, Council has called upon academics at all of Philadelphia's institutions of higher education while developing policy to prevent gun violence. Many of these academic experts have made a career of program evaluation and will provide great value in helping the City target its resources to impactful programming and to monitor the effectiveness of that programming over time; and

WHEREAS, Universities and other research institutions in and around Philadelphia have funding streams

inaccessible to government for research on gun violence prevention and harm reduction strategies. They are a resource the City should take advantage of by forming a partnership to evaluate local programs working to reduce the loss of lives to gun violence and to help determine the most effective approaches to curbing the ongoing crisis facing Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The academic partners selected to participate as members of this Team should be experts on Philadelphia's specific challenges and integrated with the communities in which these programs are and will be deployed. Cultural competence and sensitivity are essential in program evaluation at all levels to ensure that evaluations are designed without implicit biases affecting their results. To that end, academic experts considered for the Academic Expert Advisory Team must demonstrate a connection to Philadelphia's neighborhoods and citizens most affected by gun violence; and

WHEREAS, Appointing an Academic Expert Advisory Team with the funds allocated for program evaluation would assist the Monitoring Group and City Council in ensuring that funding is given to programs with research-based approaches and results in order to derive the most value from this essential allocation of the City's budget; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Does hereby call upon Mayor James F. Kenney and his Administration of the City of Philadelphia to establish and implement an Academic Expert Advisory Team in its selection and evaluation of recipients of the Anti-Violence Community Expansion Grant program other anti-violence efforts during Fiscal Year 2022 and beyond.