

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

THE COST

OF GUN VIOLENCE

THE DIRECT COST TO TAXPAYERS

Baltimore, Maryland, the largest city in the state, has long been known for its high rates of violence and controversial police department. Following the death of Freddie Gray in 2015 and the civil unrest that followed, the city entered into a settlement agreement with the Department of Justice to undergo a series of police reforms. The COVID-19 pandemic came shortly after, and like nearly every large city in the country, Baltimore saw a sharp rise in gun violence. There were 160 homicides in 2014, with a spike to 299 in 2015 following the death of Freddie Gray. Every year since, for seven consecutive years, there have been more than 300 homicides in Baltimore.

As in many American cities in the twentieth century, the significant loss of factory jobs combined with a mass exodus of the city's more affluent population has led to striking levels poverty and disinvestment. At the same time, Baltimore's strategic location along the I-95 corridor has made it a fertile environment for drug trafficking.

Today, Baltimore's population is approximately 60% Black, 28% White, 6% Latino, 2% Asian, and 6% two or more races. Researchers have described Baltimore as one of the most segregated cities in America while noting that in the beginning of the twenty-first century, predominantly White neighborhoods received more than three times the capital investments that majority-Black neighborhoods received.

Baltimore has recently made promising investments in violence reduction. In December 2020, Mayor Brandon Scott established the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE). In 2021, the city adopted its first Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan, and in January of 2022, MONSE launched its Group Violence Reduction Strategy in partnership with the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) and the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office. The strategy focuses intensive intervention efforts on those individuals and groups identified as being at the very highest risk of being involved in

gun violence. At the end of 2022, the Western District, where GVRs efforts had been focused, **experienced a 34% reduction in homicides**. Mayor Scott announced that GVRs will expand to additional districts and eventually be a citywide strategy. In 2022, the Scott administration also began **investing \$50 million** in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds toward community violence intervention programs.

When someone is shot in Baltimore, there is an immediate, multifaceted, and very expensive response from an array of government agencies. The Fire Department dispatches Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), government-contracted ambulances respond, and several BPD units as well as MONSE staff descend on the scene. Investigators from the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office also often arrive, and if the victim is declared dead on the scene, the Coroner is called. All of this is only for the shooting scene itself. For a surviving victim, there is also typically a hospitalization, which is frequently paid for by tax dollars. Rehabilitation follows

in the case of serious injury, and victim compensation is generally provided. There is also often a lengthy investigation by BPD and the State's Attorney's Office, who are sometimes joined by the US Attorney. With the BPD homicide clearance rate at 42% in 2021, a trial and a long incarceration period frequently follow. When there are multiple victims and/or suspects, these efforts and costs multiply for a single shooting incident. These are just some of costs of each injury shooting in Baltimore.

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) has conducted this Cost of Gun Violence study that documents the government expenses accompanying every injury shooting in Baltimore. In tracking the direct costs per shooting incident, NICJR has deliberately used the low to mid end of the range for each expense. This study does not include the loss-of-production costs when the victim or suspect were working at the time of the incident. Nationally, those costs have been estimated at an additional \$1-2 million for each shooting incident. This means that NICJR's calculated cost of \$2,427,333 for a homicide in Baltimore is a conservative estimate; the real cost is likely even higher.

In the past three years, Baltimore has averaged approximately 1,050 combined homicides and non-fatal injury shootings annually, which cost taxpayers more than \$734 million per year. If Baltimore could reduce its gun violence rate by just 20%, that could result in government savings of almost \$147 million every year.

The City of Baltimore should move forward with citywide expansion of its successful GVRs initiative and plan to maintain the investments made in violence reduction efforts from ARPA dollars that run out in 2026. As the city has experienced, a relatively small investment in effective gun violence intervention strategies can yield significant reductions in shootings, save lives, and produce massive savings.

Greater Community Cost of Gun Violence

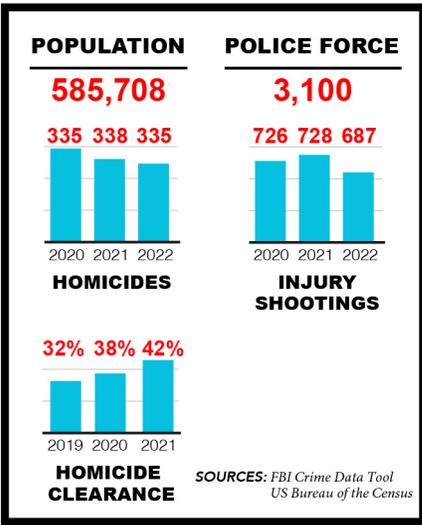
Beyond the direct costs included in NICJR's calculations, there are significant community costs of gun violence. Areas with high rates of gun violence experience the loss of community resources, with businesses, community events, and other vital resources often fleeing from violent neighborhoods. These neighborhoods also often experience decreases in property values. A recent study by the Philadelphia Controller examining the economic impact of gun violence on property values found that "a single homicide lowers sale prices by 2.3% in the immediate neighborhood (within 0.75 miles of the homicide)."

Community tension and trauma are also very real burdens borne by residents in neighborhoods where rates of violence are highest. The normalization, or even expectation of violence can lead to high rates of gun possession, tension, and the resolving of minor disputes with gun violence. In "The Contagious Spread of Violence Among US Adolescents Through Social Networks," the National Institutes of Health found that "Contagious diseases and violence tend to cluster in similar ways.... There are geographic 'hot spots' for contagious diseases, such as the 2015 measles outbreak linked to Disneyland in California involving clusters of unvaccinated children. Likewise, there are geographic hot spots for violent crime on specific streets and in specific neighborhoods."

Finally, children who experience violence, witness violence, and have close friends or family members victimized by violence are deeply impacted by trauma and vicarious trauma. The groundbreaking Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente in the 1990s revealed that young children who have traumatic experiences have significantly higher rates of poor health outcomes as they age. Additional studies have shown that the experience of trauma negatively impacts the brain function of young people and can cause depression, behavioral challenges, academic disruption, and delinquency.



BALTIMORE, MARYLAND COST BREAKDOWN




1 CRIME SCENE RESPONSE

The crime scene response to a severe injury shooting or homicide typically includes a heavy police presence, fire/ EMT staff, and medical transport staff. Based on national averages, the Baltimore Police Department could deploy up to 15 officers, including patrol, homicide unit personnel, and other supervisory-level officers, to respond to a typical homicide shooting.



2 HOSPITAL & REHABILITATION

Once a victim has been transported to the hospital, the costs of treatment in a trauma unit, surgery, inpatient stay, and rehabilitation are exorbitant. Average costs can range from \$88,000 to \$144,000 per incident. With a little more than 40% of gunshot victims either uninsured or on Medicaid, these costs represent a tremendous strain on Baltimore's hospital network.



3 CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Justice system costs include police investigation, prosecution and defense attorneys, court personnel and judges, and the use of court facilities. Due to the consequences of a homicide conviction, these cases go to trial more often than other types of cases. Sometimes these cases involve multiple suspects with multiple court dates and separate trials. From the time of arrest, court proceedings in an injury shooting or homicide case average about two years.



4 INCARCERATION

Incarceration accounts for a large portion of the total cost once a suspect is arrested. A stay in the Baltimore County jail system costs \$49,640 for pre-trial incarceration. Following a trial, an inmate is incarcerated within the Maryland state prison system, with costs of \$1,228,269 for those convicted of attempted murder and \$2,029,314 for those convicted of homicide.



5 VICTIM SUPPORT

The majority of victim support costs are covered by the Maryland Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. The maximum compensation of \$45,000 per victim includes burial expenses, lost wages for a year, medical expenses, and counseling. Other costs in this category include social services and autopsy costs, as well as the long-term cost of families losing a financial contributor.



6 LOST TAX REVENUE

In Baltimore, a person who earns \$30,000 per year pays \$1,374 in income taxes. The sales and use tax is 6% (both local and state combined). When an injury shooting or homicide occurs, the City loses the ability to collect both income and sales tax from the incarcerated individual(s) and homicide victim(s). Each incident can represent lost tax revenue from a minimum of two individuals for 25 to 40 years.



The Cost Per Shooting

The governmental cost of gun violence to the City, County, and State.



BALTIMORE
MARYLAND



Homicide Cost

Injury Shooting Cost

\$3,099 Police Response
\$4,000 Scene Cleanup
\$1,584 Fire/EMT

CRIME SCENE

\$8,683



CRIME SCENE

\$7,600

\$2,016 Police Response
\$4,000 Scene Cleanup
\$1,584 Fire/EMT

\$1,428 ER/Trauma Center
\$87,097 Gunshot Surgery

HOSPITAL

\$88,525



HOSPITAL

\$144,617

\$1,428 ER/Trauma Center
\$87,097 Gunshot Surgery
\$56,092 Rehabilitation

\$18,070 Police Investigation
\$17,854 DA & Public Defender
\$18,133 Court Process

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

\$54,057



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

\$9,627

\$5,265 Police Investigation
\$3,241 DA & Public Defender
\$1,121 Court Process

\$49,640 Pre-Trial Incarceration
\$2,029,314 Prison Placement

INCARCERATION

\$2,078,954



INCARCERATION

\$1,277,909

\$49,640 Pre-Trial Incarceration
\$1,228,269 Prison Placement

\$2,497 Coroner's Office
\$3,697 Victims of Crime
\$33,240 Social Service Benefits
(one year support for two families)

VICTIM SUPPORT

\$39,434



VICTIM SUPPORT

\$18,435

\$1,815 Victims of Crime
\$16,620 Social Service Benefits
(one year support for one family)

\$157,680 Tax Revenue
(both suspect & murder victim)

LOST REVENUE

\$157,680



LOST REVENUE

\$51,246

\$51,246 Tax Revenue

\$2,427,333

Homicide
Shooting

assuming one suspect

\$1,509,434

Injury
Shooting

assuming one suspect

Data Sources



BALTIMORE
MARYLAND

CRIME SCENE	Subject:	Police Response	Fire/EMT Transport	Scene Clean Up
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NICJR National Cost of Gun Violence Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baltimore Fire Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixr Hazmat Cleanup
	Notes	Initial police response to a homicide scene typically includes 6 Patrol, 1 Lieutenant, 2 Sergeants, and 6 Detectives. They remain on scene for 2-6 hours. Initial police response to an injury shooting scene typically includes 6 patrol, 1 Sergeant, and 2 Detectives. They remain on-scene between 2-6 hours.	Fire and EMT Budget: \$159.6 Million Total Responses: 42,000 Average cost per response = \$3,800	Average cost among competitive vendors to clean up crime scenes involving blood: \$4,000
HOSPITAL	Subject:	Emergency Room/Surgery for Gunshot Victim		
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2020 National Trends and Cost Burden of Surgically Treated Gunshot Wounds in the US 2021 Firearm Injuries: Health Care Service Needs and Costs 		
	Notes	Average cost of gunshot victims treated and released the same day: \$1,428 (ER base cost) Average cost of gunshot victims requiring surgery and hospital stay: \$87,097 (surgery cost) + \$56,092 (hospital stay and care) Average cost of gunshot victims requiring surgery, hospital stay, and release to outpatient care: \$144,667 (ER, surgery, rehabilitation) Formula: base cost + surgery cost - 20% of surgery cost = \$70,820 per shooting victim requiring surgery and rehabilitation		
CRIMINAL JUSTICE	Subject:	Police Investigation	District Attorney & Public Defender	Court Process
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time estimates from NICJR National Cost of Gun Violence Report Hourly salary calculated from Baltimore Police Department data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time estimates from NICJR National Cost of Gun Violence Report Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office Maryland County Government Salary Schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time estimates from NICJR National Cost of Gun Violence Report Judicial salary data from National Center for State Courts, Survey of Judicial Salaries
	Notes	The cost of the police investigation is calculated by multiplying the average salary and benefits of a Sergeant in the Baltimore Police Department by the average amount of time spent investigating homicides and non-lethal shootings. \$65/hour X 278 hours = \$18,070 for a homicide \$65/hour X 81 hours = \$5,265 for a non-fatal shooting	The cost of prosecution and defense is calculated by multiplying the average amount of time spent by attorneys and support staff by hourly salaries. DA: \$35/hour X 84.1 hours for a homicide = \$2,944 plus support staff costs of \$4,504 = \$7,448 Public Defender: \$36/hour X 236.1 hours for a homicide = \$8,500 plus support staff costs of \$1,906 = \$10,406 DA: \$35/hour X 7.3 hours for a non-fatal shooting = \$256 plus support staff costs of \$271 = \$527 Public Defender: \$36/hour X 60.1 hours for a non-fatal shooting = \$2,164 plus support staff costs of \$550 = \$2,714	The cost to the court system is calculated by multiplying the average amount of time spent by judges and court staff by hourly salaries. Hourly rate for judge, \$89/hour X 48.8 hours for a homicide = \$4,343 Combined hourly rate for court staff, \$70/hour X 197 hours for a homicide = \$13,790 Hourly rate for a judge, \$89/hour X 3 hours for a non-fatal shooting = \$267 Combined hourly rate for court staff, \$70/hour X 12.2 hours for a non-fatal shooting = \$854
INCARCERATION	Subject:	Pre-Trial Incarceration	State Prison: Attempted Murder Case	State Prison: Murder Case
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baltimore County Jail Budget Baltimore County Jail Annual Report Clearance rate from NICJR National Cost of Gun Violence Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maryland Department of Corrections Clearance and conviction rates from NICJR National Cost of Gun Violence Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maryland Department of Corrections Maryland Government Manual Clearance and conviction rates from NICJR National Cost of Gun Violence Report
	Notes	Baltimore Department of Corrections Budget: \$44.6 million Average daily population: 1,805 Average daily cost per inmate: \$68 Average period of pre-trial incarceration: 2 years \$68/day x 2 years = \$49,640	Maryland Department of Corrections annual cost to house an adult: \$53,403 Injury shooting conviction sentence: 25 years, subtracting pretrial time served \$53,403 x (25 - 2 years) = \$1,228,269	Maryland Department of Corrections annual cost to house an adult: \$53,403 Murder conviction sentence: 40 years, subtracting pretrial time served \$53,402 x (40 - 2 years) = \$2,029,314
VICTIM SUPPORT	Subject:	Victims of Crime Act	Social Service Assistance	Medical Examiner's Office
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NICJR National Cost of Gun Violence Report VOCA Nationwide Performance Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDA SNAP Baltimore TANF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maryland Department of Health Annual Report
	Notes	VOCA reports the number of victim support claims by type, including homicide and felony, as well as the cost per claim. Average cost for homicide claims over the past 5 years: \$3,697 Average cost for assault claims over the past 5 years: \$1,815	A severely injured shooting victim often cannot return to work immediately. Since the victim and perpetrator may be major financial contributors to their households, many families may need to apply for social services support. This study estimates 1 year of assistance. USDA SNAP: \$658 for family of 3 Baltimore TANF: \$727 for family of 3 \$1,385/month x 12 months x 2 families = \$33,240	Baltimore County FY21 Chief Medical Examiner's Budget: \$14,574,765 FY21 number of autopsies conducted: 5,838 Cost per autopsy = \$2,496
LOST REVENUE	Subject:	Lost Tax Revenue: One Person Incarcerated	Lost Tax Revenue: Murder (Loss of Revenue for Two People)	
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021 State and Local Tax Form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021 State and Local Tax Form 	
	Notes	Total annual income tax at 30,000/year: \$1,371 Sales and use tax (county and state): 6% Total annual sales tax for person earning \$30,000/year and spending 1/3 of income: \$600 Total annual combined tax: \$1,971 Lost tax revenue for a 25-year sentence for attempted murder (\$1,971 x 25 years): \$49,275 If the shooting victim does not work for one year, an additional \$1,971 of revenue is lost. Total lost tax revenue = \$51,246	Total income tax at \$30,000/year: \$1,371 Sales and use tax (county and state): 6% Total sales tax for person earning \$30,000/year and spending 1/3 of income: \$600 Total combined tax: \$1,971/year Lost tax revenue for a 40-year sentence for murder (\$1,971 x 40): \$78,840 A shooting victim who loses their life represents another 40 years of lost revenue. Total lost tax revenue (\$78,840 x 2) = \$157,680	