

Gov. Evers: Allocates nearly \$800,000 for community safety initiatives in the City of Racine

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MADISON—Gov. Evers today announced nearly \$800,000 in federal funding for community safety initiatives in the city of Racine, focusing on a public health approach to violence prevention. The investment builds on the governor's previous efforts to enhance community safety statewide and in Southeastern Wisconsin.

"Every Wisconsinite deserves safe neighborhoods to live, work, learn, and play in, and gun violence and crime has no place in our communities," said Gov. Evers. "These investments, in addition to the strategic investments we have already made, will help curb the cycle of violence in Southeastern Wisconsin while ensuring young people are meaningfully engaged in their communities this summer and supporting local community programming to interrupt violence before it starts."

The nearly \$800,000 allocation includes \$225,000 to stand up a "Safe and Sound" program that engages youth, neighbors, and community organizations in working proactively and collaboratively with law enforcement, \$150,000 to help fund a dedicated Violence Interruption Coordinator at the City of Racine Public Health Department who will work towards creating an overarching plan for tackling the factors that contribute to violence, and \$50,000 will help Racine expand their credible messenger program that connects credible messengers with at-risk or justice-involved youth. Finally, more than \$250,000 is available to be used for purchasing license-plate readers, surveillance cameras located in high-crime areas, and summer overtime costs for law enforcement officers.

"I take the safety of our residents incredibly seriously and know that we must do everything we can to address the gun violence that is spreading throughout the

community,” said Racine Mayor Cory Mason. “However, I also know that the city can’t do this on its own and that it takes partnerships—at many levels—to make real impacts. I can’t thank the governor enough for recognizing the crisis we face and for his willingness to partner and invest real resources into our city to help keep us all safe. His support brings additional resources to support law enforcement but also build on community programs aimed to stem the violence and reduce the trauma felt throughout the community.”

The governor’s investment adds to the work already underway in Racine to address these issues in the short-term as they continue to collaborate with key partners on longer-term solutions. For example, Racine partnered with Racine Unified Schools and funded more mental health services for youth this summer, created a youth jobs program, through which they have hired more than 40 youths to work this summer in various city departments, and extended the hours of their community centers to be open later into the evening with increased programming. Additionally, Racine has increased funding and resources to Neighborhood Watch so that they can operate and organize in more neighborhoods, and invested in public safety infrastructure, including new body cameras and increased funding for streetlighting. Finally, Racine is coordinating discussions between law enforcement agencies and community partners to talk about what other strategies and programs can be implemented quickly to address the very acute needs in the community around gun violence.

This allocation also comes as Gov. Evers joined U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin in sending a [letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Justice to request immediate assistance on behalf of the cities of Racine and Milwaukee to respond to the disturbing increase in crime and gun violence in recent months.

“Existing grant programs at the Department of Justice, including the Justice Reinvestment Initiative and the Community Violence Initiative, are invaluable to helping communities address the complex factors that drive crime and recidivism,” they wrote. “Nevertheless, communities like Racine and Milwaukee require immediate assistance beyond these grant mechanisms to respond to ongoing violence. We are asking that the Department of Justice directly communicate with local officials in Racine and Milwaukee to provide technical assistance and identify federal resources that could be immediately leveraged to address this urgent situation.”

Since October of 2021, the governor has invested nearly \$100 million in violence prevention and community safety statewide and in Southeastern Wisconsin, including:

- [\\$45 million](#) for statewide violence intervention efforts and support for crime victims;
- [\\$50 million](#) for local and tribal law enforcement agencies, as well as to help alleviate the pandemic-related backlog of criminal cases through additional public defender and assistant district attorney support;
- [\\$2.2 million](#) to help the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) take immediate steps to address crime and violence; and
- More than [\\$1 million](#) for summer youth programming and job training in Milwaukee.

Additionally, in August of last year, Gov. Evers awarded nearly [\\$50 million](#) to over 100 out-of-school and childcare providers across the state through the Beyond the Classroom Grant Program. Beyond the Classroom grants were provided to eligible nonprofit organizations providing virtual and in-person programming for school-aged children to help increase enrollment capacity, provide additional learning opportunities, or increase mental health support for school-age children during the 2021-2022 school year and summer months of 2021 and 2022. In addition to providing mental health and educational opportunities for kids, out-of-school programming continues to support community safety efforts by ensuring young people are meaningfully engaged, making connections with mentors, and positively contributing to their communities throughout the summer months.