

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL
WORKGROUP TO STUDY GUN VIOLENCE
MINUTES
May 28, 2025

• Members Present

Krystal Oriadha, Council Vice Chair, Council Member District 7, & Co-Chair
Perry Paylor, Deputy State's Attorney, State's Attorney's Office, Co-Chair
Terence Clark, Director, Department of Corrections
Christine Wiseman, Deputy Chief, Office of the Sheriff
Elana Belon-Butler, Director, Family Services
Shawne Waddy, Assistant Deputy Chief, Police Department

• Members Absent:

Juanita Agnew, The Jayz Agnew Foundation
Tyrone Collington Sr., Chief, Police Chiefs' Association
Stan Moore, Assistant Sheriff, Office of the Sheriff
Lisa Garry, Deputy Secretary of Community Services for the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services
Barry L. Stanton, ACAO
Terence Clark, Director, Department of Corrections
Brittany Vazquez, Program Manager, Division of Behavioral Health, Department of Health
Dr. Tyreese McAllister, Ayanna J. McAllister Legacy Foundation
Melissa Pryce, Public Defender
Carlesa Peterson, Assistant Director, Department of Social Services

• Others Present:

Hannah Adkison,
WUSA

• Staff Present

Sandra Eubanks, HHSPS Committee Director
Rhonda Riddick, HHSPS Committee Aide
Leroy Maddox, Legislative Attorney
Tiffany Hannon, Chief of Staff to Council Member Oriadha
Nikia McBride, GOFP Committee Aide

Gun Violence Workgroup

Draft Minutes

May 28, 2025

- **Welcome & Opening Remarks**

Council Member Oriadha, Vice Chair of the County Council and Co-Chair of the Gun Violence Workgroup, welcomed participants, emphasized the public and transparent nature of the meetings and materials, and expressed appreciation for the group's efforts as it nears completion of recommendations for the incoming County Executive and Council.

Co-Chair Perry Paylor, Deputy State's Attorney, echoed his gratitude for the collaborative work and dedication of the group in addressing gun violence in Prince George's County.

- **Consideration of Minutes**

The Workgroup reviewed and approved the minutes from the April 16th meeting following a motion by Co-Chair Paylor and seconded by Co-Chair Oriadha.

- **Presentation:**

Children In Need of Support (CINS)

Hannah Adkinson, Case Manager, Children, Youth and Family Division
Department of Family Services

Ms. Adkinson presented an overview of the CINS program. The program is a youth diversion and prevention initiative aimed at disrupting delinquent behavior among middle and high school students in Prince George's County. It provides case management, resources, and group services to support youth and families in avoiding school dropout and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Referrals come from schools, agencies, families, and community members. The program follows a Positive Youth Development framework (a framework set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) and also includes support for younger students in grades 4 and 5 facing behavior and emotional challenges.

Ms. Adkinson explained that the CINS program includes both youth and parent engagement components offered in the fall and winter. Each session consists of an eight-week education course, one for youth and one for parents.

The parent sessions, facilitated by Dr. Salim, focus on building peer support, understanding childhood trauma, and learning effective communication and discipline strategies. This group has fostered strong connections among parents beyond the program.

The Youth sessions use the Why Try? Curriculum, which emphasizes life skills, teamwork, healthy habits, and positive self-talk. Additional sessions are offered during spring break, such as the "Game of Life" theme, where students explore goal setting and future planning through interactive activities.

Gun Violence Workgroup

Draft Minutes

May 28, 2025

There is an upcoming summer enrichment program (July 7-August 1) that will offer daily lessons using the Botvin's LifeSkills curriculum, focused on self-image, personal development, social skills, and coping strategies. This curriculum has shown significant reductions in drug use, aggression, and delinquent behavior. Youth attend Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Ms. Adkinson concluded the presentation with highlights from the Summer Enrichment Program, which includes Shark Tank Junior, an entrepreneurship activity designed to develop creativity, communication, and business skills. Youth participants design and present business models to local leaders and entrepreneurs. Past projects included mental health short stories, organic dog treats, and protein smoothies. Winners received cash prizes funded by local business owners. Some youth continued their ventures beyond the program.

Ms. Adkinson expressed that CINS collaborates with key county partners, including the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), Prince George's County Public Schools (particularly counselors and pupil personnel workers), the Department of Social Services, and other local service providers. The program is funded by DJS and maintains a case manager presence at the Upper Marlboro courthouse four days a week to assist families directly.

- **Q & A**

Co-Chair Oriadha asked what the typical number of youth referred annually is, and how many receive services?

Ms. Adkinson responded, stating that on average, 10-15 youth are referred each month. Of those, the team typically reaches and completes intake with at least seven youths. Program participation and engagement with services generally range from 7-10 youth monthly.

Co-Chair Oriadha asked how the program's completion and success are measured.

CINS is a 90-day program, and progress is tracked using the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS) assessment, administered at 30, 60, and 90 days. It evaluates domains such as home life, school mental health, and substance use. Lower scores over time indicate progress.

Co-Chair Oriadha asked if there is a system of mandatory referrals before youth enter the justice system.

Ms. Adkinson expressed that while CNIS cannot mandate participation, referrals sometimes come from entities like truancy court or DJS as part of efforts to avoid formal charges. In those cases, participation may be part of a diversion agreement. However, enforcement authority lies with schools or courts, not the CINS team.

Gun Violence Workgroup

Draft Minutes

May 28, 2025

Co-Chair Oriadha asked if schools or courts mandate participation as a condition for diversion or avoiding charges.

Ms. Adkinson responded, Yes, but that mandate must come from the referring agency (e.g., school system, truancy court, DJS). CINS itself has no legal authority to require participation, but it aims to be the first point of intervention before behaviors escalate to that level.

Another participant further clarified that the CINS program is positioned as an early intervention just before a youth may incur formal charges. In some cases, to avoid a charge, another entity may require a youth to participate in CINS, and the program will then track and report progress back to the referring agency. However, this requirement does not stem from CINS but from the outside entity's conditions.

This distinction underscores the program's preventive role, which aims to engage youth and families before formal system involvement becomes necessary.

Co-Chair Oriadha sought clarity on program capacity and underutilization.

Ms. Adkinson confirmed that each case manager can handle up to 25 cases but is currently averaging around 10, indicating available capacity and a need for great awareness and referrals.

Co-Chair Oriadha asked about the program's broader structure, including partnerships.

Ms. Adkinson explained that therapeutic services are provided through external partners and organizations and that they have access to state funding to support needs like food insecurity and job readiness.

Co-Chair Oriadha requested a list of preferred service providers used by CINS for potential collaboration and resource alignment.

- **Focus Topic Discussion/Recommendations**
Mental Health and Diversion Impact

Implementation and enforcement of Extreme Risk Protective Orders (ERPO)

This measure will enable courts to remove firearms from individuals considered a risk to themselves or others. It will also promote greater awareness, clarity, and enforcement of extreme risk protective orders as tools for mental health intervention and gun violence prevention.

Gun Violence Workgroup

Draft Minutes

May 28, 2025

Co-Chair Paylor offered further clarification, noting that Maryland does have an ERPO law in place. He explained the conditions under which a judge may issue an ERPO and emphasized that, once granted, the individual is required to surrender all firearms and ammunition to law enforcement.

He further explained that a judge can also restrict the use of a firearm in a regular protective order. The judge can also restrict a new possession, a new purchase, or no new purchases if they feel the firearm is used in connection with the abuse.

Co-Chair Oriadha suggested recommending that all protective orders include a standard firearm inquiry and potential temporary surrender provision, rather than limiting this to extreme cases.

Co-Chair Paylor noted that there may be some pushback regarding the requirement that a lawful gun owner who has not misused their firearm in the situation surrender it. He also indicated that he would review court forms to ensure they prompt judges to ask about firearms in the home during protective order proceedings.

Expand Community-Based Violence Interrupter Programs

Invest in and expand programs that employ trained outreach workers, often individuals with lived experience or who were formerly incarcerated, to mediate conflicts and engage at-risk individuals.

Increase Access to Trauma-Informed Mental Health Services in Schools

Improve integration of behavioral health and trauma counseling in schools, particularly those with high-risk student populations. Ensure the allocation of psychologists or trauma-informed professionals is data-driven and equitable across schools.

Co-Chair Oriadha provided clarification, noting the limited funding, how are decisions made regarding the placement of psychologists or trauma-informed professionals? Is the process data-driven to ensure that the most vulnerable schools receive adequate support despite financial constraints?

Co-Responder Models

Develop and expand co-responder models that pair mental health with police or EMTs on emergency calls involving behavioral health issues. There is a need for proactive dispatching of mental health professionals based on initial 911 operator evaluations.

Gun Violence Workgroup

Draft Minutes

May 28, 2025

Discussion centered around whether the county currently operates a mobile crisis unit, but concerns were raised about its deployment protocol. Initially, the unit could only be requested by responding officers, rather than being automatically dispatched based on 911 call assessments.

Co-Chair Oriadha expressed the need for proactive dispatching of mental health professionals based on initial 911 operator evaluations.

Co-Chair Paylor agreed to follow up to confirm whether the protocol has changed or if law enforcement is still required to initiate the request.

Christine Wiseman, Deputy Chief of the Office of the Sheriff, noted that a 911 diversion pilot exists, involving coordination among Homeland Security, Police, Fire, and the Sheriff's Office. The pilot allows call takers to assess and route mental health calls, but the group agreed to follow up on whether this includes automatic mobile crisis unit deployment and the pilot's current status.

Shawne Waddy, Assistant Deputy Chief of the Police Department, explained that communication dispatchers can route calls to the Mental Health Mobile Unit. However, she was unsure whether the service operates 24 hours a day and stated that she would look into it.

Expand Resources and Capacity for Gun Possession Diversion Court Programs

The Workgroup supported recommending additional investment to expand capacity and reach the existing Back on Track program, which is a diversion court for gun possession offenses. The program is limited to non-violent, first-time gun possession charges.

Co-Chair Paylor explained that participants must plead guilty and complete 180 hours of community service, mentoring, and academic or vocational training. Upon successful completion, they are granted probation before judgment or may qualify for immediate expungement. The program is currently funded through asset forfeiture, but its capacity is constrained by limited staffing. Additional funding is needed to expand staffing and scale the program, which has already demonstrated positive outcomes.

Creating a County program offering free or discounted gun safes and locking devices

The recommendation includes creating a county program offering free or discounted gun safes and locking devices, especially for households with children or mental health concerns. Emphasis was placed on preventing child access to firearms.

There was discussion about making the program a “no questions asked” option to encourage more people to participate, including those whose firearms may not be legally registered. It was noted that the goal is safety, and restricting access to only lawful gun owners may undermine the

Gun Violence Workgroup

Draft Minutes

May 28, 2025

impact. It was agreed that a non-punitive, accessible model would better serve the community's gun safety needs.

- **Identify Next Steps**

Co-Chair Oriadha explained that the group will finalize all recommendations at the next and final meeting on June 18th. At that time, members will review each section, approve or remove items, and suggest additional items. Any duplicative item can be merged offline during the final report preparation.

- **Next Meeting**

June 18, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Gun Violence Workgroup

Draft Minutes

May 28, 2025