



CITY OF SCRANTON

340 North Washington Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503 | (570) 348-4101 | www.scrantonpa.gov

Scranton, Lackawanna County Join Forces Against Violent Crime

SCRANTON, PA. – In an ongoing effort to address and prevent violent crime in Scranton, the city government will enter a \$105,262.84 contract with Social Contract, LLC, to design and develop a community violence intervention (CVI) and prevention strategy. The cost will be shared by the City of Scranton and Lackawanna County. Scranton’s funds are allocated as part of its \$68.7 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, and the County will draw its funds from its separate ARPA allocation.

“We have been working for years to build a broad plan for better community safety,” Mayor Paige G. Cagnetti said. “Scranton is a safe city with a robust police force, but events earlier this year raised awareness of gang activity, especially within our youth population. By drawing on Social Contract’s expertise in building CVI programs and looking at our specific needs, we can do more to keep Scranton safe and lift some of the burden off our police officers and teachers.”

“The Scranton Police Department is committed to strengthening public safety through community engagements and partnerships as a long-term violent crime prevention strategy,” Scranton Police Chief Thomas Carroll said. “As such, we look forward to working with Social Contract to establish a sustainable community violence intervention program in the City to increase the health and safety of our residents.”

“Violent crime isn’t just a Scranton problem,” Lackawanna County Commissioner Bill Gaughan said. “It adversely affects everyone and there’s no doubt that it will spread if we don’t take aggressive steps to contain and reduce it. We’re happy to work with the city to address the root causes of violent crime.”

“Enforcement is important but mostly reactive and after the fact,” Commissioner Matt McGloin added. “This program is proactive, an effort to identify the causes of violent crime, create opportunities to help young people get on the right track and prevent violent crime.”

“While law enforcement will continue to take an aggressive stance against violence in our communities, we know we need to do more to address the underlying causes,” said Lackawanna County District Attorney Mark Powell. “This program will allow us to work with our community partners to reach out and prevent violence from happening in the first place. It’s definitely a step in the right direction.”

Social Contract will work with Scranton and Lackawanna County to develop an evidence-based CVI program targeted to individuals experiencing violence, tailored to the unique needs of the Scranton community, and which can be sustained. Social Contract applies a strategic framework to violence reduction efforts informed by empirical evidence, national expertise, and experience in building similar programs in Delaware and Pennsylvania.



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Scranton’s proactive efforts to analyze and reduce community violence began nearly two years ago. The Scranton Police Department received a Scranton ARPA Behavioral Health and Violence Prevention grant for \$100,000 in November 2022. That grant funded the recently released Scranton Community Health and Safety Landscape Analysis, which outlined recommendations to expand social and community services and collaboration in order to take pressure off of law enforcement while continuing to invest in police and public safety.

This Spring, Scranton officials reallocated a total of \$847,225.78 in unspent and underspent ARPA funds throughout the year to support the establishment of its CVI.

In June of this year, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued an advisory titled “Firearm Violence: A Public Health Crisis in America.” According to the advisory, firearm-related deaths reached a near three-decade high in 2021, and firearms are now the leading cause of death for adolescents ages 19 and under. The implementation of CVI programs is among the top prevention strategies recommended by the Surgeon General’s advisory:

“Community violence interventions (CVI) use evidence-informed, multidisciplinary, and tailored strategies to disrupt cycles of violence and connect individuals at risk of violence involvement with services that address trauma and improve physical, social, and economic circumstances. The CVI approach employs credible messengers and practitioners to resolve potential violent conflicts and deliver key intervention elements such as connecting individuals with healthcare, housing, employment services, and other resources.”

Among its goals, Social Contract aims to develop long-term solutions to address social inequalities that are often the root cause of community violence. The 2024 Landscape Analysis identified risk factors including housing, education quality, health risks, social participation, and income inequality. The plan will also include potential fundraising structures to financially sustain the CVI. The organization has offices in Wilmington, Del., and Philadelphia, Pa.

ABOUT THE CITY OF SCRANTON: Incorporated in 1866, the City of Scranton has a population of approximately 80,000 residents and is the sixth-largest municipality in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Scranton City Hall is located at 340 N. Washington Ave., Scranton, PA 18503. Residents requiring services should visit www.scrantonpa.gov.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) OF 2021: ARPA is a \$1.9 trillion federal economic stimulus bill. The City of Scranton received \$68.7 million in ARPA funds to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency and its economic impacts. The mission of Scranton’s ARPA program is to give people access to resources, rebuild the infrastructure systems that impact their everyday lives, and foster equitable wealth generation that targets the needs of Scranton residents.

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