



# Gun Violence Prevention Task Force Structures

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## **OBJECTIVE**

Analyze the creation and structures of Gun Violence Prevention Task Forces around the country to determine what model would work best for the City of Gainesville.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Task forces created for the purpose of addressing gun violence are usually created by the city commission or mayor by executive order, ordinance, or resolution. These groups are created with the goal of researching the state of gun violence within their jurisdiction, oftentimes with an end goal of creating a set of policy recommendations for consideration of the elected officials. These task forces often consist of governmental staff, experts, activists, community leaders, and other stakeholders. Elected officials and government staff can serve as either official members of the task force or as ex-officio, non-voting members. The number of task force members varies greatly, with examples surveyed for this report ranging from 9 to 37 members. These groups are also often divided into subcommittees, such as those addressing gun violence in schools, domestic violence, violence intervention, and enforcement. Typically, task forces meet at minimum monthly and are generally instructed to report back on progress to the Mayor or local governing body at set intervals. Gun Violence Task Forces from New York City, NY; Roanoke, VA; Houston, TX; Austin, TX; Orange County, FL; Anne Arundel County, MD; and Philadelphia, PA were surveyed for this report. A previous report on Equity Task Force Structures<sup>1</sup> was conducted in 2020, and a report on law enforcement oversight boards was conducted in 2023.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Equity Task Force Structure Research Report.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Law Enforcement Agency Oversight Report.pdf](#)

**PRACTICES FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS**

	<b>Created By</b>	<b># of Members</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Member Selection</b>	<b>Reporting Requirement</b>
<b>New York City, NY</b>	Executive Order	N/A, 20+	Three co-chairs	Mayor	Regular updates to Mayor
<b>Roanoke, VA</b>	City Ordinance	9	Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary	Applications and Council appointment	Yearly presentation to Council
<b>Austin, TX</b>	Resolution	11	Chair and Vice-Chair	Each Council member nominates one member, subject to council approval	N/A
<b>Orange County, FL</b>	Mayor	37	Two Co-Chairs	Mayor	N/A
<b>Houston, TX</b>	Mayor	37	One Chair, three Honorary Chairs	Mayor	3 months for first report
<b>Anne Arundel County, MD</b>	Executive Order	20 appointed and 15 ex-officio	Chair and two Vice-Chairs	County Executive (18) and City Council (2)	N/A
<b>Philadelphia, PA</b>	Resolution	N/A, 20+	Three Co-Chairs	Council President	N/A

**New York City Gun Violence Prevention Task Force**

Creation: Gun Violence Prevention Task Force was created on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 by Executive Order of the Mayor of New York City.

Purpose and Duties: Learn from communities most impacted by gun violence, inventory existing programming and services and identify the need for any additional programming and services, identify and recommend opportunities to expand successful programs into new neighborhoods and communities, coordinate actions and responses among City agencies, facilitate community-driven solutions, and ensure collaboration between City governments and impacted communities.

Leadership: The Task Force is co-chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives and one community representative, appointed by the Mayor.

Membership: The Task Force includes the Police Commissioner, the First Deputy Mayor, the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, the Deputy Mayor for Economic and Workforce Development, the Deputy Mayor for Operations, the Chancellor of the Department of Education, and the Chief Housing Officer. The Task Force shall consist of representatives from City agencies, including but not limited to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the New York City Housing Authority, and the Department of Social Services. The Task Force shall also include

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community safety leaders from the non-profit, academic, and philanthropic communities. The Chairs shall add additional agencies, community members, and community organizations to the Task Force, as necessary, to accomplish its objectives.

Meeting Frequency: Weekly

Reporting: The Task Force shall regularly track and share its progress with the Mayor.

Additional: Each City agency shall appoint an Anti-Gun Violence Liaison to serve as the primary agency point of contact. The Liaison will be responsible for working with representatives from other city agencies and coordinating action to address gun violence challenges and opportunities identified by the Task Force and other non-profit and community-based entities.<sup>3</sup>

### **Roanoke, VA**

Creation: The Gun Violence Prevention Commission was created on March 15, 2021, by the passage of City Ordinance No. 42012-031521.<sup>4</sup>

Purpose and Duties: The purpose of the Gun Violence Prevention Commission is to study the issue of gun violence in the community; recommend strategies for prevention, intervention, and response to reduce incidents of gun violence and address its effects on the community (with recommendations to the city council); and to work with citizens and community partners in developing programs that create meaningful opportunities for positive non-violent pathways for health and wholeness.

Leadership: The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary are chosen among the commission members at their first meeting. The Chair serves as the presiding officer. The secretary shall prepare agendas for each meeting, take minutes at each meeting, ensure that proper legal notice of all meetings is provided, and file meetings with the City Clerk.

Membership: The Gun Violence Prevention Commission shall consist of nine (9) members, one (1) member shall be a member of city council and the remaining eight (8) shall be residents of the city, such residency requirement is waived by City Council. The mayor will serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the Gun Violence Prevention Commission. Members of the gun violence prevention commission are appointed by the City Council and must submit applications to be considered for appointment. The appointed member of the city council shall serve only during their respective term of office, all other members shall serve for terms of three (3) years.<sup>5</sup>

Meeting Frequency: Monthly. The commission shall develop a schedule for regular meetings for each calendar year at the initial meeting of each calendar year.

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<sup>3</sup> [eo-19.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#)

<sup>4</sup>

[https://library.municode.com/va/roanoke/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=COCI\\_CH2AD\\_ARTXIVAUBOCOCOG\\_E\\_DIV2PECOBO\\_S2-306GUVIPRCO](https://library.municode.com/va/roanoke/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COCI_CH2AD_ARTXIVAUBOCOCOG_E_DIV2PECOBO_S2-306GUVIPRCO)

<sup>5</sup> [Gun Violence Prevention Commission | Roanoke, VA \(roanokeva.gov\)](#)

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**Reporting:** The task force makes recommendations to the city council for potential actions that the city may take to reduce the epidemic of gun violence within the community and to make recommendations for enhancing existing resources and campaigns. The gun violence prevention commission shall make at least one (1) public presentation to the city council each calendar year. The purpose of this public presentation is to update the council and the public on the progress being achieved in preventing gun violence within the community.<sup>6 7</sup>

**Deliverables:** The Commission produced a youth and gang violence report, and a violence prevention framework.

### **Austin, TX**

**Creation:** The Task Force on Gun Violence was created by Resolution No. 20190822-069 on August 22, 2019, and was dissolved upon the completion of its report.

**Purpose and Duties:** The purpose of the Task Force was to advise the Council on potential actions the city may take to reduce gun violence on the local level. The task force was to make recommendations for enhancing existing resources and campaigns and recommend actions the city could take to partner with other levels of government or private organizations to make communities safer. They also researched best practices from across the country regarding gun violence safety.

**Leadership:** Members of the Task Force selected a Chair and Vice Chair at their first meeting.

**Membership:** The Task Force consisted of eleven members. Council members and the mayor could each nominate one member to be approved by the Council. Members were to have expertise in the fields of gun violence, public health, public safety or advocacy and were to reflect the diversity of the Austin community.

**Reporting:** The Task Force on Gun Violence reported to the Mayor and City Council.

**Deliverables:** A report containing recommendations was to be issued within six months of the first task force meeting. The Task Force was to be dissolved either upon the issuance of its first report or after eight months of member appointment, whichever came first.<sup>8</sup> The finalized report presented action items recommended for the City Council; a prevention blueprint; and synopses of different types of gun violence, including mass shootings, suicide, domestic violence, community violence and police violence.<sup>9</sup>

### **Orange County, FL**

**Creation:** The Orange County Citizens Safety Task Force was first convened in 2020 to engage faith-based leaders and community-based organizations met to brainstorm solutions and strategies to reduce and

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<sup>6</sup>

[https://library.municode.com/va/roanoke/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=COCI\\_CH2AD\\_ARTXIVAUBOCOCOG\\_E\\_DIV2PECOBO\\_S2-306GUVIPRCO](https://library.municode.com/va/roanoke/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COCI_CH2AD_ARTXIVAUBOCOCOG_E_DIV2PECOBO_S2-306GUVIPRCO)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.roanokeva.gov/2698/Gun-Violence-Prevention-Commission>

<sup>8</sup> [Task Force on Gun Violence | AustinTexas.gov](https://www.austintexas.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11111111)

<sup>9</sup> [document.cfm \(austintexas.gov\)](https://www.austintexas.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11111111)

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prevent gun violence and violent crime. The task force was reconvened in 2021 and 2022 to re-examine past recommendations, make modifications as needed, as well as to ensure the recommendations continue to meet the public safety needs of the community.

**Leadership:** Two co-chairs, chosen by the Mayor of Orange County.

**Membership:** The task force is comprised of 37 members appointed by the mayor representing diverse backgrounds, including faith-based leaders, behavioral health professionals, mentors, community advocates, education and prevention professionals, law enforcement, and service-based organizations.

**Subcommittees:** Prevention, Intervention, Enforcement, and Prosecution, led by dedicated co-chairs. Each group was assigned a county staff member to liaison between the subcommittees and the County, as well as schedule meetings, produce agendas and minutes, schedule presentations and assist wherever needed. The staff liaison was one with expertise in the committee topic, such as the assistant county attorney serving on the prosecution subcommittee.

**Meeting Frequency:** Meet as needed over a 120-day period to come up with initial recommendations, and as-needed when reconvened.

**Purpose and Duties:** The task force was created to help identify solutions and strategies to prevent and reduce gun violence and violent crime for the Mayor and Orange County Board of Commissioners to review.<sup>10</sup>

**Deliverables:** The Task Force produced a 2020 report on the force's actions and recommendations, a 2020 crime survey by members of the community on their perceptions of violence and safety (~2,000 respondents), a 2021 re-examination of past meetings, a 2022 update on what has changed since the initial convening, and a 2023 re-do of the crime survey (~2,000 respondents).<sup>11</sup>

### **Houston, TX**

**Creation:** The Mayor's Commission Against Gun Violence was established on May 23, 2018, by the Houston Mayor.

**Purpose and Duties:** The commission's charge is to develop and propose specific recommendations to improve gun safety in schools, neighborhoods and communities through action on the local, state and federal levels.

**Leadership:** The commission has one chair, chosen from the body, and three honorary chairs. In addition, each sub-committee elects a chair.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.orangecountyfl.net/EmergencySafety/CitizensSafetyTaskForce.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> [Citizens Safety Task Force - Orange County Government, Florida \(orangecountyfl.net\)](#)

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**Membership:** The entire commission consisted of 37 members, appointed by the mayor, including members of the public, activists, members of faith-based and civil rights organizations, law enforcement and city staff. Within this group, there were seven sub-committees.<sup>12</sup>

**Subcommittees:** School Safety; Students Sub-Committee; Community Safety; Firearms Safety and Access; Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; Community-Based Prevention, Intervention, and Reintegration; and Gun Violence as a Public Health Issue.

**Meeting Frequency:** As needed.

**Reporting:** The Mayor charged the Commission with submitting an initial set of recommendations for review prior to the school year beginning, no later than August 1, 2018. This first set of recommendations was to focus, primarily, on school safety issues. These sub-committees cross-coordinated to gather, review, and submit initial recommendations in the following areas: 1. School Safety; 2. Firearms Safety and Access; 3. Community Safety; 4. Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.<sup>13</sup>

**Deliverables:** The Commission produced an August 2018 report on school safety, a December 2018 report on legislative proposals for violence prevention, and a letter to the governor.

### **Anne Arundel County, MD**

**Creation:** The Gun Violence Prevention Task Force was created by Executive Order #9 in April 2019 and served until June 2020 when a final report was completed.<sup>14</sup>

**Purpose and Duties:** The Task Force researched and compiled data relating to gun violence in Anne Arundel County. This information included the types of gun violence observed in the county each year, what kind of guns were used and how the guns were obtained. Additionally, the Task Force was to investigate the circumstances of gun violence incidents, research how the public health system could be used to aid those in need of behavioral health services and recommend proposals to reduce gun violence in the county.

**Leadership:** The Task Force consisted of a Chair and no more than two Vice Chairs, appointed by the County Executive.

**Membership:** The task force consisted of twenty appointed members representing a broad spectrum of experience and expertise in public safety, emergency operations, behavioral health, and community outreach. The task force also included sixteen local government officials in an ex-officio capacity. The County Executive has the discretion to appoint no more than eighteen at-large members, while the City Council appointed two at large members. The County Executive also designated one member as Chair and no more than two Vice Chairs.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.houstontx.gov/mayor/press/commission-against-gun-violence.html>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.houstontx.gov/govtrelations/gun-violence-commission-recommendations.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> [Gun Violence Task Force | Anne Arundel County, MD \(aacounty.org\)](https://www.aacounty.org/gun-violence-task-force)

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**Meeting Frequency:** The frequency of meetings was flexible, as members met when deemed necessary. There was at least one meeting per month.

**Reporting:** The research completed by the Task Force was reported to the County Executive.

**Deliverables:** The Task Force submitted a preliminary report within six months and a final report within one year detailing their research to the County Executive. The final report deadline was extended due to COVID-19 and completed on June 5, 2020.<sup>15</sup> The completed report includes sections on the scope of gun violence as a public health problem; background information, data assessment, and recommendations on state, community, interpersonal and individual levels of gun violence; and a final discussion.<sup>16</sup>

### **Philadelphia, PA**

**Creation:** The Special Committee on Gun Violence Prevention was created via a resolution introduced by the Council President and two other Councilmen in June of 2017.<sup>17</sup>

**Purpose and Duties:** The Special Committee was created to convene research and leaders from sectors including law enforcement, government, public health, social services, and community development. The duties of the Special Committee include convening for regular meetings, examining the efficacy of current programs and policies, identifying best local and national practices, engaging community leaders, increasing capacity for data collection, developing metrics to measure progress toward strategic goals, reviewing City resources to ensure the optimization of results, and holding public hearings to highlight the Committee's progress and gather public input.<sup>18</sup>

**Leadership:** The Special Committee has three co-chairs, including the City of Philadelphia Managing Director, a City Councilman and a law enforcement expert.

**Membership:** Members of the Special Committee were named by the Council President upon the creation of the committee. The Council President also named the co-chairs. Members included representation from the City Council, Police Department, Office of the District Attorney, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Behavior Health and Intellectual Disability Services, Department of Human Services, Office of Violence Prevention, Office of Criminal Justice, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Network, the Philadelphia Anti-Violence Coalition, the National Homicide Justice Alliance, Mothers in Charge, and Town Watch Integrated Services, among others.

**Subcommittees:** Illegal Guns, Public Health/Trauma Informed, Social Services/Opportunity, Intervention/Outreach, Program Review Team, Victim Advocates.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> [KM\\_C368-20190405105659 \(aacounty.org\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [fina-report-20200605.pdf \(aacounty.org\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION - Philadelphia City Council \(phlcouncil.com\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> [SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION - Philadelphia City Council \(phlcouncil.com\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> [SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION - Philadelphia City Council \(phlcouncil.com\)](#)



Meeting Frequency: The Committee met once in 2017, three times in 2019, six times in 2020, seven times in 2021, four times in 2022, and once in 2023.<sup>20</sup>

Deliverables: The Special Committee on Gun Violence Prevention holds hearings to review and examine the perpetrators of the last 100 shootings in Philadelphia, as well as to investigate the source of guns used to commit violent crimes and the role of the criminal justice system in the offender's life.<sup>21</sup> As of 2023 resolution 220985, the Special Committee on Gun Violence Prevention additionally conducts hearings to develop a comprehensive approach to supporting youth who are at risk of being involved or are currently involved in gun violence.<sup>22</sup>

## **BEST PRACTICES AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The following section outlines best practices for developing multisector task forces.<sup>23</sup>

### Define the Goals and Actions of the Task Force

Prior to creating the task force, clear goals and intended actions should be outlined so task force members know what they are working towards, and so it will be clear when the task force is able to be dissolved. This may be an explicit gun violence action plan, or a general series of recommendations meant to inform the elected officials on the topic of gun violence prevention.

### Determine the Institutional Leader of the Task Force

Determine which institutional partner will be the leader of the task force, and thus have responsibility for staffing and providing authority to the task force.

### Define the Relationship of the Task Force to the Larger Group

- *The task force operates independently.* In this situation, the larger group delegates authority for the issue in question to the task force that's working on it. It may come back to the larger group for help, support, or resources, or to report on its progress, but the decisions about how to proceed are its own.
- *The task force operates fairly independently, but reports back to the larger group on a regular basis.* It doesn't need approval to do most things, but can't commit the larger group to anything, or act in its name, without an official okay.
- *The task force needs permission to take any action steps at all.* Operating this way, it is best to formulate a plan in advance and get it approved by the larger group. Then, it would have to check with the larger group only if the plan changed.

### Find the Right People to Lead Your Task Force

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<sup>20</sup> [Transcript Room - Committee Hearings](#)

<sup>21</sup> [City of Philadelphia - File #: 200436 \(legistar.com\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> [City of Philadelphia - File #: 220985 \(legistar.com\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Chapter 9. Developing an Organizational Structure for the Initiative | Section 3. Developing Multisector Task Forces or Action Committees for the Initiative | Main Section | Community Tool Box \(ku.edu\)](#)

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Identify and designate individual(s) to chair the task force. This may be an elected official, staff person, institutional partner, or a combination thereof. Chairs should be responsible for scheduling meetings, setting meeting agendas, and leading discussions. These individuals may be appointed by the Mayor or City Manager, or elected by the full Task Force.

It may also be necessary to designate a staff person to the task force and each of its subcommittees to schedule meetings, produce agendas and minutes, schedule presentations, etc.

### Identify Individuals or Groups Whose Participation Your Task Force Can't Do Without

Determine any institutional partners whose participation is critical. The following list is from the June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 City of Gainesville Public Safety Committee's discussion of a Gun Violence Task Force.<sup>24</sup>

- Alachua County Board of County Commissioners
- Alachua County Health Department
- Alachua County Manager
- Alachua County School Board and Superintendent
- Alachua County Sheriff's Office
- City of Gainesville
- Children's Trust
- Gainesville Community Resource Paramedicine Program
- Gainesville Police Department
- HCA Florida North Florida Hospital
- Interrupters
- One Nation One Project
- Randall VA Medical Center
- Santa Fe College
- University of Florida
- University of Florida Health Shands Hospital
- Other organizations and community groups as needed

### Recruit Members

Have the Mayor, Task Force Chair, or designated staff person extend invitations to requested task force members. Alternatively, the institutional leader could choose to open applications for task force membership, with or without specific membership and background requirements, and have members be selected by the City Commission, Task Force Chair, or designated staff person.

### Gather the Group and Define its Purpose

Have a designated staff person arrange a first meeting of the task force based on availability of institutional partners. Typically, the task force should meet as a full group once a month. At the first meeting, it is crucial to ensure the purpose of the group is clear and the group has agreed upon

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<sup>24</sup> [filestream.ashx \(escrībemeetings.com\)](https://filestream.ashx(escrībemeetings.com))

expectations and timelines for the work. It may be useful to create subcommittees on specific topics to allow more focused work.<sup>25</sup>

## **CHALLENGES**

- Ensuring the correct stakeholders are at the table.
- Scheduling multi-sector task forces can be challenging, as it is difficult to balance member availability and the need for the group to make progress.
- The task force would require staffing, in regards to meeting scheduling and potentially task force assignments.
- It may be difficult to ensure task force members commit to the action items recommended by the task force.

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<sup>25</sup> [Chapter 9. Developing an Organizational Structure for the Initiative | Section 3. Developing Multisector Task Forces or Action Committees for the Initiative | Main Section | Community Tool Box \(ku.edu\)](#)