



Governor's Statewide Safety Council

90-Day Preliminary Report
April 2026

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Executive summary

Introduction

On Dec. 16, 2025, Governor Tim Walz signed Executive Order 25-13 establishing the Governor's Statewide Safety Council. The Council was created in response to two acts of targeted violence that shook Minnesota in the summer of 2025: the assassination of state representative Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, and the shooting of state senator John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette, while they were in their home with their daughter, Hope, on June 14, and the shooting at the Church of the Annunciation in Minneapolis on Aug. 27 that killed two children and wounded 28 others.

The Council brings together leaders from five state agencies, the judiciary, law enforcement, the fields of education and mental health, and affected communities to develop a comprehensive blueprint for preventing mass violence, targeted attacks and domestic terrorism in Minnesota. While the Council's mandate centers on mass violence, targeted attacks and domestic terrorism, it recognizes that gun violence takes many forms in Minnesota, each with distinct drivers and requiring distinct responses. The broader landscape is addressed in the introduction to this report.

This preliminary report is submitted within the 90-day timeline required by the executive order. It documents the Council's formation and process, summarizes the research that has informed its early work and presents 10 initial recommendations agreed upon by the Council for the governor's consideration.

What the Council has learned

The Council received a research briefing from The Violence Prevention Project Research Center at Hamline University, drawing on the most comprehensive database of mass public shootings in the United States. Key findings include:

- Mass public shootings and political assassinations are forms of public violence, meant to be watched and witnessed by others.
- Public shooters follow a common pathway that includes early trauma, experiencing a personal crisis, studying other shooters (social contagion) and having the opportunity to carry out the shooting.
- Over 80 percent of mass shooters display observable warning signs before they attack.
- More than half of the perpetrators had an existing relationship with the location they targeted, for example, as current or former students or employees.
- Perpetrators are often suicidal. Mass public shootings are designed to be a final act.
- The relationship between serious mental illness (i.e., delusional disorders) and violence is complicated.
- Perpetrators increasingly study previous attackers and are radicalized online into "nihilistic extremism."
- The share of attacks involving assault-style weapons has risen dramatically, with these weapons producing roughly twice the casualties of handguns.
- Political violence against elected officials has reached record levels.

- The mental health impact of those exposed to gun violence is profound and long-lasting.
- Different types of gun violence require different prevention strategies.

Preliminary recommendations

The Council presents 10 recommendations across five focus areas. These are deliberately narrow, targeting specific gaps where progress is achievable in the near term. These recommendations were developed and agreed upon by all members within the first two meetings. The Council's final report, due Jan. 6, 2027, will present a broader set of recommendations informed by monthly topic-focused meetings running through 2026.

Behavioral threat assessment and management

1. Clarify what information can be shared, and with whom. Commission scenario-based guidance documents that spell out when and how educators, crisis counselors and law enforcement can share information about a person of concern under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), HIPAA and Minnesota's Data Practices Act.
2. Define what constitutes a reportable threat or concern and create a single reporting pathway. Establish plain language statewide guidance focused on behavioral patterns and warning signs, paired with in-service training, and publish a single pathway for reporting concerns to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's (BCA) Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management system.

Social media and online threats

3. Establish a standard process for preserving online threat evidence. Create a single standardized form with defined timelines that law enforcement can send to social media platforms the moment a credible online threat is identified.
4. Require age verification for platforms serving harmful content to minors. Require sites to verify user ages before granting access if they host content that facilitates self-harm, glorifies violence or promotes extremist radicalization, and identify a way to enforce this requirement.

Firearm access during crisis

5. Implement a statewide, multilingual initiative to educate about the importance of storing firearms locked, unloaded and separate from ammunition. Distribute through schools, healthcare visits, public health programs, firearm retailers and hunting safety courses simultaneously, with practical guidance that addresses secure storage practices, high-risk situations and youth safety education.
6. Train crisis responders to address firearm access during psychiatric emergencies. Every crisis responder in Minnesota, including mobile crisis teams, co-responder units and alternative response teams, should be required to complete a documented firearm access assessment that includes whether a firearm is in the home, whether the individual is willing to store it temporarily and whether they are aware of the Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) process.
7. Standardize the ERPO process and fund statewide training. Establish a single statewide standard for ERPO implementation and fund training for law enforcement, educators, healthcare workers and community faith leaders on when and how to use the order.

Healing, learning and recovery

8. Fund mental health support for communities after a targeted violence incident. Establish a dedicated survivors and community recovery fund that activates automatically after a qualifying incident to provide long-term, community-grounded mental health support.
9. Equip schools to support children exposed to gun violence. Ensure every school district has access to staff training and age-appropriate student curriculum covering both immediate trauma responses and the longer-term effects of gun violence exposure, including for students who witnessed violence in their homes or neighborhoods.
10. Require and fund evidence-based violence prevention training in schools. Expand Minnesota Statute 121A.038 so that all K-12 schools provide evidence-based, age-appropriate and trauma-informed violence prevention programming that covers topics such as warning signs and where to report, with dedicated funding for curriculum development and teacher training.

The work ahead

The Council will continue to meet monthly through September 2026, with each session focused on a specific topic: mental health and suicide (March), behavioral threat assessment (April), social media and radicalization (May), political and religious extremism (June), school violence (July), victim survivors and trauma (August), and firearms (September). An October retreat and meetings in November and December will integrate findings into a comprehensive set of recommendations for the final report. The Council recognizes that no single intervention will prevent all acts of targeted violence, but each layer of prevention addresses a different point on the pathway to violence. Together they can close gaps that currently leave Minnesota communities exposed.

Acronyms and definitions

The following table defines acronyms, abbreviations and key terms used in this report.

Term	Definition
Active shooter	An individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area. Distinct from “mass shooter” in that the term describes an ongoing event, not a threshold of casualties.
Assault-style weapon	A semiautomatic firearm, typically a rifle, with features associated with military-style weapons, including a detachable magazine, pistol grip or folding stock. No single legal definition exists; the term is used in this report consistent with the 1994 Federal Assault Weapons Ban and The Violence Project database coding.
BCA	Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
BTAM	Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management. A structured, evidence-based process for identifying, assessing and managing individuals who may pose a threat of targeted violence.
Contagion effect	The phenomenon by which high-profile acts of mass violence increase the short-term risk of similar attacks, often through media coverage and online amplification that provides behavioral scripts for individuals already on a pathway to violence.
DCYF	Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families.
DHS	Minnesota Department of Human Services.
Domestic terrorism	As defined under federal law (18 U.S.C. section 2331), acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state criminal law and appear intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence government policy through intimidation or coercion, or affect government conduct through mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping, occurring primarily within U.S. territorial jurisdiction. The term is used in Executive Order 25-13 and in this report to describe acts of targeted violence motivated by ideological, political or hate-based grievances. It is a legal and analytical category, not a clinical diagnosis.
DPS	Minnesota Department of Public Safety.
ERPO	Extreme Risk Protection Order. A civil court order that temporarily prohibits an individual from purchasing or possessing firearms when they pose a significant danger to themselves or others. Minnesota’s ERPO law took effect Jan. 1, 2024.

Term	Definition
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. A federal law governing the privacy of student education records.
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation.
HCMC	Hennepin County Medical Center.
High-capacity magazine	A firearm magazine capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition.
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. A federal law governing the privacy of individual health information.
Insider	In the context of mass shootings, a perpetrator who had an existing relationship with the location targeted, such as a current or former student, employee, or member.
Leakage	Communication of intent to do harm to a third party before an attack, whether through direct statements, social media posts, writings or other means. A key indicator in behavioral threat assessment.
Lethal means safety	A prevention strategy focused on reducing access to the most lethal methods of suicide or violence during periods of acute crisis, particularly firearms and medications.
MAD	Management Analysis Division, Minnesota Management and Budget. Provided facilitation support to the Council.
Mass public shooting	As defined by Congressional Research Service and used in The Violence Project database: a single incident in which four or more people are shot and killed with firearms in a public location, with no primary connection to other criminal activity such as robbery, gang conflict or domestic dispute.
MCPA	Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association.
MDE	Minnesota Department of Education.
MDH	Minnesota Department of Health.
MNASA	Minnesota Association of School Administrators.
MSA	Minnesota Sheriffs Association.
NAMI	National Alliance on Mental Illness.
Nihilistic extremism	A form of radicalization rooted in despair, alienation and hatred of society at large, characterized by a desire for indiscriminate destruction rather than a coherent political ideology.
OJP	Minnesota Office of Justice Programs.
QPR	Question, Persuade, Refer. A suicide prevention training that teaches people to recognize warning signs, ask directly about crisis and connect individuals to help.

Term	Definition
Social proof	In the context of mass violence, the process by which individuals in crisis study, romanticize or identify with previous attackers, treating prior mass shootings as models for their own actions.
SRO	School Resource Officer. A sworn law enforcement officer assigned to a school.
Targeted violence/targeted attack	Violence directed at a specific person, group or location, preceded by a period of deliberation and planning. Includes mass public shootings, political assassinations and attacks on houses of worship, schools and workplaces.

Introduction

On June 14, 2025, Minnesota state representative Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, were killed at their home in Brooklyn Park. Earlier that morning, the suspect also shot and seriously injured state senator John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette, while they were at their Champlin home with their daughter, Hope. The attacks were premeditated and politically motivated. The accused perpetrator carried a list of nearly 70 potential targets, including state and federal elected officials, abortion rights advocates and healthcare providers. A two-day search involving hundreds of officers ended with an arrest in Green Isle. Federal and state charges, including murder, stalking and firearms offenses, followed. The case is currently pending.

Seventy-four days after the June 14 shootings, on Aug. 27, 2025, a gunman opened fire on a school-wide Mass at the Church of the Annunciation in southwest Minneapolis. Two children, Harper Moyski, 10, and Fletcher Merkel, 8, were killed. Twenty-eight others were wounded, including 24 schoolchildren and three elderly parishioners. The attack lasted only two minutes. Approximately 116 rifle casings were recovered from the scene. The shooter, a former Annunciation middle school student, died by suicide. Before the attack, the shooter posted a prerecorded video online outlining their plans and inscribed the names of previous mass shooters on the firearms they used. Federal authorities investigated the attack as an act of domestic terrorism and an anti-Catholic hate crime. The day before, another mass shooting outside Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Minneapolis killed one person and injured six.

These events did not occur in isolation. They followed a period of rising threats against public officials, schools and houses of worship nationwide, increasing rates of targeted violence and concern about the role that digital platforms and the contagion of prior attacks play in motivating and shaping acts of violence. They shook communities across Minnesota. Parents buried their children. A lawmaker lay in state at the Capitol for the first time in a generation. Classrooms and congregations questioned whether their sanctuaries were safe. First responders who had rushed toward the sound of gunfire to help their neighbors were left to reckon with what they had witnessed.

On Dec. 16, 2025, Governor Tim Walz signed [Executive Order 25-13](#) (Appendix A), establishing the Governor's Statewide Safety Council. The order brought together leaders from the departments of Public Safety, Education, Health, Human Services, and Children, Youth, and Families, alongside the Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court, the BCA, the Minnesota State Patrol, the Attorney General, and representatives from law enforcement associations, school administrators, the National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota (NAMI) and Annunciation Light Alliance (see Appendix B).

The Council was charged with developing an immediate action plan to prevent mass violence, targeted attacks and domestic terrorism; recommending strategies to combat radicalization, politically motivated violence and extremist ideologies; addressing the intersection of mental health and gun violence; promoting behavioral threat assessment and threat management across the state; coordinating with federal, state and local partners; and making policy and funding recommendations to the governor.

That mandate is necessarily focused. However, the Council is mindful that gun violence in the United States is not one problem, but several, each with distinct causes, dynamics and

solutions. Roughly 60 percent of all gun deaths are suicides, driven by personal crisis, social isolation and ready access to lethal means, often in the absence of any connection to behavioral health services. Another 35 percent stems from community and street violence, where gang involvement, group conflicts, retaliatory cycles and concentrated disadvantage intersect with easy access to firearms, particularly in neighborhoods that have experienced decades of disinvestment. Domestic and intimate partner violence accounts for 4 to 5 percent of gun deaths, rooted in patterns of coercive control, power and escalation within households where firearms are present. Accidental and unintentional shootings, less than 1 percent of total gun deaths, most often involve unsecured firearms and inexperienced handlers, disproportionately affecting children. These categories demand different prevention strategies, different partners and different policy tools.

While the scope of Executive Order 25-13 centers on mass violence, targeted attacks, and domestic terrorism, this Council recognizes that a meaningful reduction in gun deaths statewide will ultimately require attention to all forms of gun violence. The recommendations in this report are tailored to the Council's mandate, but they are offered with full awareness that the broader landscape of gun violence in Minnesota warrants a similarly coordinated, evidence-informed response.

This preliminary report, submitted within the 90-day timeline required by the executive order, represents the Council's initial findings and recommendations. It reflects input from Council members, subject matter experts, affected communities and practitioners working in prevention, law enforcement, education, mental health and faith-based settings across Minnesota. A final report with comprehensive recommendations is due within 365 days of the executive order.

The Safety Council's objectives are to:

- a) Develop an immediate action plan to prevent mass violence, targeted attacks and domestic terrorism.
- b) Recommend strategies to combat radicalization, domestic terrorism, politically motivated violence and extremist ideologies.
- c) Address the intersection of mental health and gun violence.
- d) Promote and support Threat Assessment and Threat Management Teams across Minnesota.
- e) Coordinate with federal, state and local partners to align efforts and share best practices.
- f) Make policy and funding recommendations to the governor.
- g) Meet monthly or at the call of the chair.
- h) Submit a preliminary report to the governor within 90 days.
- i) Submit a final report to the governor within 365 days.

The work so far

Council meetings are open to the public in compliance with Minnesota's Open Meeting Law. Meeting schedules, summaries and the Council roster are posted on the Minnesota Department of Public Safety website. The executive order did not charge the Council with gathering public input, and given the volume of work to be completed within the statutory timeline, the Council has not included a public comment period during meetings. Members of the public are welcome to observe.

Meeting 1: Jan. 23, 2026

The Council held its inaugural meeting on Jan. 23, 2026, at the Veterans Service Building in St. Paul. Commissioner Bob Jacobson of the Department of Public Safety chaired the meeting. Facilitation support was provided by Stacy Sjogren and Kristin Van Amber of the Management Analysis Division (MAD) of Minnesota Management and Budget. Drs. James Densley and Jillian Peterson from the Violence Prevention Project Research Center at Hamline University attended in their role as resident experts and report writers for the Council. The Violence Prevention Project Research Center, a nonpartisan research center dedicated to reducing violence through accessible and actionable research, maintains the most comprehensive public database of mass public shootings in the United States and has published widely on the causes and prevention of targeted violence.

Commissioner Jacobson opened by reviewing the Council's charge under Executive Order 25-13, noting the breadth of the order and the timeline it imposed: a preliminary report due within 90 days and a final report within 365 days. He acknowledged that many members came to this work through painful personal and professional experience and asked the group to approach its deliberations with care for those who have experienced trauma.

Members introduced themselves and were asked to share what resources and experiences they bring to the effort, along with their biggest hope and biggest concern about the initiative. The support team structure was outlined: MAD would handle meeting planning, facilitation, documentation and member assistance; the Violence Prevention Project Research Center would provide data, serve as subject-matter experts during deliberations, and draft the interim and final reports; and DPS would provide administrative coordination and the Commissioner would serve as chair.

Drs. James Densley and Jillian Peterson of the Violence Prevention Project Research Center then delivered a 40-minute research presentation covering the epidemiology of mass public shootings in the United States, the common pathway to violence identified in The Violence Project Mass Shooter Database, the role of crisis and suicidality, the contagion effect and social media amplification, firearm access and lethality trends, and data on political assassinations and targeted violence against public officials (see "What the Council has Learned"). The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer period and a group reflection in which members were asked what surprised or resonated with them and what they wanted to learn more about.

The meeting closed with a logistics briefing. A SharePoint site was approved for members to access meeting materials. The meeting concluded with a round-robin closing in which each member offered a single word to describe what they were feeling about the work ahead.

Meeting 2: Feb. 27, 2026

The Council's second meeting took place on Feb. 27, 2026, at the Homeland Security and Emergency Management facility in Blaine. Commissioner Jacobson chaired the meeting. Facilitation was provided by Stacy Sjogren and Kristin Van Amber from MAD.

The meeting had three objectives: confirm Council logistics, including how members would access materials and how the work would unfold over the coming months; establish operating agreements for how members would work together; and begin the process of developing early recommendations for the 90-day preliminary report.

Members participated in a structured exercise to define how the Council would function as a group. Using a "tap in" practice designed to focus attention and build relationships, members formed small groups to review a starter set of proposed agreements and suggest adjustments. The exercise reflected the Council's recognition that this work touches on deeply painful events and politically charged issues, and that productive deliberation requires shared commitments around how members engage with one another.

The Council adopted nine operating agreements to govern how members engage with one another throughout the process. Among them: members agreed to speak from their own perspective without generalizing or speaking for others; to assume best intent and offer one another the chance to restate a comment that landed differently than intended; to center the experience of trauma and acknowledge its influence on how members engage; and to honor Open Meeting Law by refraining from discussions about pending decisions with other members outside of official meetings. The full set of operating agreements is available in Appendix C.

The facilitators presented a month-by-month schedule of Council meetings running from March through December 2026, each organized around a specific topic area with a designated Council member as lead. The schedule is as follows:

1. Mental health, illness, and suicide (March, led by Marcus Schmit of NAMI)
2. BTAM (April, led by Superintendent Drew Evans of the BCA)
3. Social media, radicalization and child protection online (May, led by Drs. Densley and Peterson)
4. Political and religious extremism and violence (June, led by Colonel Christina Bogojevic of the State Patrol)
5. School violence (July, led by Matt Hillman of MNASA and Willie Jet of MDE)
6. Victims, survivors, resiliency and recovery (August, led by Kim Babine of OJP)
7. Firearms (September, led by Chief Jay Henthorne of the MCPA and Sheriff Lon Thiele of the MSA)

October through December are reserved for gathering and organizing recommendations, structuring the final report and securing Council review and approval.

The Council adopted a four-step process for generating and refining recommendations. Before each monthly meeting, members submit information about what their agencies and organizations are already doing on the upcoming topic. At the meeting itself, a subject matter presentation is paired with activities that generate potential recommendations. After each

meeting, members receive a “gradients of agreement” survey so they can weigh in on the proposed recommendations. Results are shared at the following meeting, with items requiring further work flagged for the October retreat.

The facilitators also presented guidance for what constitutes a strong recommendation: it should reflect a specific, actionable change; be realistic in scope; identify who should be responsible for implementation; and be written in plain language that anyone affected by it could understand.

Drs. Densley and Peterson presented a set of twelve initial recommendations across five focus areas: behavioral threat assessment and management; social media data and online threats; crisis response; firearm access during a crisis; and healing, learning and recovery after violence. Members reviewed the recommendations through a station-based activity, marking their level of agreement and providing written feedback at each station. The facilitators identified areas of strong consensus and flagged recommendations requiring further refinement. Members could also suggest new recommendations to be considered, which were incorporated.

The recommendations presented at this meeting, as refined through Council member feedback collected during and after the session, form the basis of the preliminary recommendations in the latter part of this report. Between the second and third meetings, for instance, Council members provided additional input on the early recommendations through an electronic survey. The recommendations presented in this report reflect that input, including specific concerns and suggested revisions from individual Council members, which are noted where applicable.

Meeting 3: March 27, 2026

The Council’s third meeting took place on March 27, 2026, at the New Brighton Department of Public Safety. The meeting ran from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., the first extended session, reflecting the depth of the month’s topic: mental health and mental illness.

As part of its process, the Council conducted an inventory of mental health programs and services currently operated or funded by member organizations. Council members were asked to identify existing activities relevant to the intersection of mental health, crisis intervention and violence prevention (see Appendix D).

The meeting opened with an update on the 90-day preliminary report. Kristin Van Amber from MAD presented the draft report, and the Council unanimously confirmed its support for release to the governor.

The substantive portion of the meeting was led by Dr. Jillian Peterson of the Violence Prevention Project Research Center and Molly Peterson of NAMI Minnesota, consistent with the Council’s model of pairing research presentations with practitioner perspectives. The presentation provided an overview of the relationship between mental health, mental illness and targeted violence, a topic the Council identified as central to its charge and one that is frequently mischaracterized in public debate. It also covered risk and protective factors, treatment options, barriers and evidence-based practices that address mental health within the criminal justice system.

Following a break, members participated in small-group discussions designed to generate potential recommendations on mental health and crisis intervention. Small groups were formed based on areas of experience and expertise (e.g., courts, schools, law enforcement and public health). Each group discussed challenges related to mental health and mental illness from their perspective, noted areas of greatest need and brainstormed potential avenues for policy. Four note-takers transcribed the discussions to be shared with Drs. Densley and Peterson, who will format them into formal policy recommendations for council feedback.

This meeting marked the Council's transition from foundational work (establishing process, reviewing research, developing early recommendations for the 90-day report) to the topic-by-topic deliberation that will continue through September 2026. Recommendations generated at this session and refined through the post-meeting survey will inform the Council's final report.

What the Council has learned: Mass public shootings in the United States

The following section draws on peer-reviewed research and data presented to the Council on Jan. 23, 2026, by Drs. Jillian Peterson and James Densley of [The Violence Prevention Project Research Center](#) at Hamline University, including The Violence Project Mass Shooter Database (Version 10).

Scale and scope

The United States accounts for roughly 4 percent of the world's population but between 16 and 26 percent of all public mass shootings globally. The Violence Project defines a mass public shooting as a single incident in which four or more people are shot and killed with firearms in a public location, with no connection to other criminal activity such as robbery or gang conflict. By this measure, 198 mass public shootings occurred between 1966 and 2025, killing 1,410 people and injuring more than 2,100 others.

These events are statistically rare relative to other forms of gun violence. Suicide accounts for roughly 60 percent of all U.S. gun deaths; community and street violence accounts for about 35 percent. Mass public shootings account for less than 1 percent. But their reach is far wider than their numbers suggest. A recent national survey found that approximately 7 percent of American adults report having been present at the scene of a mass shooting in their lifetime, with half of those exposures occurring since 2015. Among those directly exposed, nearly all reported lasting mental health consequences, including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Who commits these attacks

Perpetrators range in age from 11 to 72, but most are adult men, with notable clustering in early adulthood and midlife. The average age is 34. Ninety-eight percent are male. About half had an existing relationship with the location they attacked. In workplaces, schools and offices, "insider" rates exceed 75 percent, meaning the attacker was known to the institution (e.g., as a current or former student or employee). This pattern has direct implications for prevention: the most dangerous person in many settings is not the stranger at the gate but someone already inside who is in crisis and moving toward violence.

A common pathway

Data from The Violence Project reveal a common pathway to mass public shootings, with four overlapping stages:

1. *Early trauma:* Adverse childhood experiences are common among perpetrators.
2. *A crisis point:* The majority of mass shooters were in an identifiable personal crisis before they attacked, often involving suicidality. More than 80 percent displayed observable warning signs such as depression, paranoia, withdrawal, agitation or difficulty functioning. Over a third died by suicide during the attack. An additional fifth provoked a lethal response from law enforcement. For most perpetrators, the shooting was a final act.

3. *Social proof*: Mass shooters study other mass shooters. They are radicalized through a process that is social, iterative and increasingly shaped by online environments. Within some corners of the internet, past attackers are romanticized, idolized and held up as models. Perpetrators may reference prior shooters in their own communications, adopt their symbols or treat casualty counts as benchmarks. This contagion effect is well documented. Research shows elevated risk for copycat attacks following high-profile incidents, particularly when media and social media coverage emphasizes the perpetrator, tactics or body count.
4. *Opportunity*: Perpetrators need the means to carry out their plans and access to the people and places they intend to target.

The role of mental health

Mass public shootings are frequently attributed to untreated mental illness. The reality is more complicated. Mental health conditions were present in a substantial share of cases (72 percent of perpetrators had some form of mental health history), but the nature and severity of those conditions varied widely. Psychotic disorders appear at higher rates in mass shooters than in the general population (27 percent), but psychosis directly drove a minority of attacks (10 percent). Psychiatric medication usage among perpetrators matches usage rates in the general population. In most cases, violence emerged from the interaction of crisis, grievance, loss, isolation, radicalization and access to firearms rather than from a specific diagnosable condition alone. From a prevention standpoint, mass shootings often resemble suicide crises with outward-directed violence layered on top.

Leakage and warning signs

Research presented to the Council found that nearly half of mass public shooters communicated their intent to do harm before the attack, a phenomenon known as leakage. Some shooters leaked specific plans about a mass shooting. Others leaked nonspecific plans about generalized violence. Leakage was associated with receiving counseling and with suicidality, suggesting it may represent a cry for help and a critical moment for intervention. Among school mass shooters, 94 percent leaked their plans prior to the shooting, most often to classmates. Digital platforms have expanded the channels through which leakage occurs, making monitoring harder but also creating new opportunities for early detection.

Firearms and lethality

Many mass public shooters obtained their weapons through legal channels, which means prevention cannot rely solely on identifying prohibited persons or detecting illegal firearms. It must also focus on identifying high-risk trajectories early and restricting access during periods of acute crisis through lawful mechanisms such as ERPOs.

The share of attacks involving assault-style weapons has risen dramatically. Since 2020, assault-style weapons have been used in roughly 60 percent of mass public shootings. Attacks involving these weapons produce, on average, twice as many fatalities and injuries as those involving handguns alone. High-capacity magazines are present in more than 60 percent of mass shootings with four or more fatalities. Weapon and magazine capacity directly influence casualty counts, particularly when victims are densely gathered and first responders face

delayed access. These weapons also increase the risk faced by law enforcement officers who must engage the shooter.

Among perpetrators aged 18 and under, 59 percent obtained their weapons by stealing or borrowing from a family member or friend. Only about half of U.S. gun owners report storing their firearms locked and unloaded, and roughly a third report having immediate access to a firearm at all times. Secure storage laws, practices and messages remain an important point of intervention, particularly for preventing youth access.

Political and nihilistic violent extremism

The Council also reviewed data on political assassinations and attempts in the United States. The past five years represent the highest period of assassination attempts against politicians on records dating back to the 1960s. Perpetrators of political violence range in age from 20 to 72, are overwhelmingly male (90 percent) and white (79 percent). Among perpetrators under age 30, 83 percent had a documented mental health history and were in crisis at the time of the attack. These patterns overlap substantially with the broader mass shooter profile, suggesting that many of the same prevention strategies apply.

Increasingly, however, perpetrators are younger and highly connected to online social networks where violence is not just discussed but aestheticized, gamified and treated as content. The FBI has begun using a new term to describe this threat: “nihilistic violent extremism.” Unlike traditional ideological extremism, nihilistic violent extremism does not organize around a coherent political program. It is rooted in loneliness, humiliation and a loss of purpose. It feeds on algorithmic environments that reward outrage and novelty, and it thrives in private servers and gaming platforms where grooming toward violence occurs with little oversight. The result is a form of radicalized despair in which the perpetrator’s goal is not to advance a cause but to destroy. The ideology, to the extent one exists, borrows freely from white supremacy, misogyny, accelerationism and online subcultures that glorify past attackers. For young people already in crisis, these spaces can provide the sense of belonging and recognition that their offline lives lack, making the pathway from consuming violent content to planning an attack shorter than it has ever been. This emerging threat does not fit neatly into the left-right political categories that dominate public debate, which is part of what makes it difficult to detect and counteract through traditional law enforcement and intelligence frameworks.

Implications for prevention

The research points toward a layered prevention model. No single intervention will prevent all attacks. But each layer of defense addresses a different point on the pathway to violence. Effective strategies include building institutional capacity to recognize and act on warning signs among known insiders, rather than relying solely on physical security measures designed for outside threats; expanding crisis intervention and suicide prevention as upstream strategies for reducing mass violence risk; addressing the contagion effect through responsible media practices, platform accountability and child protection in online spaces; strengthening behavioral threat assessment and management teams across schools, workplaces, houses of worship and communities; using ERPOs and secure storage practices to restrict firearm access during acute crises; and reducing the lethality of attacks when prevention fails, including through policies addressing assault-style weapons and high-capacity magazines.

Different types of gun violence require different solutions. The strategies that reduce mass public shootings are not the same as those that reduce community gun violence, domestic violence homicides or firearm suicides. Effective state policy requires distinguishing among these problems and matching interventions to each.

References and further reading

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Preliminary recommendations

The following recommendations reflect the Council's initial priorities for action within the first 90 days. They are deliberately narrow in scope. They target specific, identifiable gaps where progress is achievable within existing legal authority or through modest legislative action. The Council's 365-day final report will present a broader set of recommendations informed by continued research, stakeholder input and assessment of the state's prevention infrastructure.

These preliminary recommendations fall into four areas, each corresponding to a stage on the pathway to targeted violence identified in the research:

1. Behavioral threat assessment and management: Addresses the systems needed to recognize warning signs and act on them before violence occurs.
2. Social media and online threats: Addresses the digital environments where radicalization accelerates and where evidence of planning often first appears.
3. Firearm access during crisis: Addresses the tools and protocols needed to reduce access to lethal means during the most dangerous periods.
4. Healing, learning and recovery: Addresses what communities and institutions need after violence has already occurred, so that the harm does not compound and the next generation is better protected.

Each recommendation includes context, the recommendation itself, known challenges and relevant Current State Activity.

A note on evaluation

The Council recommends that every policy, program or protocol adopted in response to this report include a built-in evaluation component. Specifically, the state should fund independent evaluation studies one to two years after implementation to assess whether each measure is functioning as intended, reaching the populations it was designed to serve and producing measurable outcomes. Prevention policy that is not evaluated becomes permanent regardless of whether it works. Minnesota should commit from the outset to learning what is effective, adjusting what is not and discontinuing what fails. The Council's final report will identify specific evaluation metrics and responsible parties for each recommendation.

Recommendation 1: Clarify what information can be shared and with whom

Background. Professionals working in schools, mental health, law enforcement and social services regularly encounter situations where sharing information about a person of concern could prevent harm. Two federal laws cause the most confusion: the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which governs student records, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which governs health information. Both laws contain exceptions that permit disclosure in certain circumstances, including health and safety emergencies. But in practice, teachers hesitate to contact probation officers to share information. Crisis counselors are unsure when they can loop in law enforcement. Principals worry about liability if they share records without a signed release. The result is that information gets siloed at the very moment it needs to move.

Recommendation. The Council recommends that the commissioner of Public Safety commission a set of concrete, scenario-based guidance documents that spell out exactly when and how information can be shared across agencies in the context of potential threats of violence or self-harm. They should describe real situations with clear answers, as opposed to legal briefs: when a teacher can call a probation officer, when a crisis counselor can contact law enforcement, when a principal can share records without a release. The documents should be developed jointly by legal counsel, educators, mental health professionals and law enforcement and distributed to every school district, community mental health center and law enforcement agency in Minnesota to alleviate confusion.

Challenges. Federal law sets the floor, but Minnesota's Government Data Practices Act adds additional state-level privacy requirements that practitioners must also navigate. Guidance must address both frameworks without oversimplifying either one. There is also a risk that written guidance gives practitioners a false sense of legal certainty when case-specific facts still matter. The guidance should be paired with training and access to legal consultation. The council recommends funding an evaluation study one to two years after implementation to ensure the guidance is helpful and useful and to uncover any gaps needing to be addressed.

Current State Activity. No single bill addresses this gap directly. However, HF 3370/SF 2993, which would require school districts to establish behavioral threat assessment teams, creates an institutional structure in which clear information-sharing protocols become essential. Governor Walz's proposed budget also recommends expanding the BCA's Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) unit by nine personnel, including mental health professionals, which would increase the state's capacity to provide technical assistance on information-sharing questions.

Recommendation 2: Define what constitutes a reportable threat or concern and create a single reporting pathway

Background. What one school counselor flags as a credible threat, another treats as venting or dark humor. That inconsistency is a gap. Without shared language for what warrants a report and a clear place to send it, schools, mental health providers and community organizations are left to improvise. Some overreport. Many underreport. The result is that threats of real concern can be lost in noise or missed entirely.

Recommendation. The Council recommends establishing plain language statewide guidance to help front-line professionals recognize behaviors and patterns that should trigger a report to the statewide BTAM system operated through the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. The guidance should focus on behavioral patterns and escalating warning signs rather than attempt to catalogue specific words or phrases. It should be accompanied by in-service training for school staff, mental health providers and community-based organizations. Additionally, Minnesota should publish a single, easily accessible reporting pathway so that anyone with a concern knows where and how to report it.

Challenges. Council member Marcus Schmit of the National Alliance on Mental Illness raised an important concern during deliberations: overly specific guidance risks creating false parameters that discourage people from reporting behaviors not explicitly named on a list. The Council concurs that guidance should lower barriers to reporting rather than raise them. Language should be framed around patterns and trajectories rather than checklists of prohibited words or behaviors. In-service training may be more effective than written guidance alone for building the professional judgment needed to distinguish between a student who is struggling and one who is moving toward violence. The council recommends funding an evaluation study one to two years after implementation to ensure the guidance is helpful and useful and to uncover any gaps needing to be addressed.

Current State Activity. HF 3370/SF 2993 would require school districts to establish threat assessment teams, creating the institutional infrastructure into which this reporting pathway would feed. HF 3602 would establish a School Safety Advisory Council and fund the Minnesota School Safety Center to support districts in developing and implementing safety plans. The BCA's BTAM unit responded to more than 130 calls for assistance in 2025; the governor's proposed expansion of that unit would increase capacity to receive and act on reports statewide.

Recommendation 3: Establish a standard process for preserving online threat evidence

Background. When a credible threat appears on social media, time matters. Posts get deleted. Accounts get scrubbed or taken down. Platform companies may remove content as part of their own moderation before law enforcement has a chance to preserve it. Currently, there is no standardized process in Minnesota for requesting that a platform preserve evidence when a potential threat is identified or after violence is carried out. Individual officers and agencies navigate this on their own, often with inconsistent results.

Recommendation. The Council recommends that Minnesota establish a standard evidence preservation request, consisting of a single form with defined timelines that law enforcement can send to social media platforms the moment an online threat is identified. The form should be developed in consultation with the BCA, county attorneys and the Attorney General's office. Researchers working on violence prevention should have a parallel access pathway, with appropriate institutional oversight and privacy protections, to study the online dimensions of targeted violence.

Challenges. Social media platforms are governed primarily by federal law, particularly Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act and the federal Stored Communications Act, which limits what state actors can compel platforms to produce. A state-level preservation request process would likely operate as a formalized version of what federal law already permits (18 U.S.C. section 2703(f) allows law enforcement to request that providers preserve records pending issuance of legal process), but it would standardize the practice and reduce the lag between identification and preservation. Platform cooperation varies and cannot be guaranteed. The researcher access pathway will require careful balancing of academic freedom, privacy and evidentiary integrity.

Current State Activity. No Minnesota bill currently addresses social media evidence preservation specifically. However, the broader legislative conversation around platform accountability and online safety, including HF 1875/SF 2614 (social media regulation for minors) and HF 1434/SF 2105 (age verification for harmful content), reflects growing legislative willingness to assert state-level standards for platform conduct.

Recommendation 4: Require age verification for platforms serving harmful content to minors

Background. Research presented to the Council documented how online environments contribute to the radicalization process that precedes some acts of targeted violence. Within some social media spaces, mass shooters are romanticized, idolized and treated as models. Extremist content, gore and self-harm material circulate in private servers and gaming platforms with little oversight. For young people already in crisis or seeking identity and belonging, algorithmic recommendation systems can accelerate a progression from mainstream content to increasingly extreme material. Protections against harmful content that have long existed in the physical world have not been fully extended to the digital environment.

Recommendation. The Council recommends that the Legislature require sites hosting content that is demonstrably harmful to minors, including content that facilitates self-harm, glorifies violence or promotes extremist radicalization, to verify user ages before granting access. The Council further recommends that the Legislature identify an appropriate enforcement mechanism, whether through the Attorney General's office, the Department of Commerce or a combination.

Challenges. Age verification raises significant privacy concerns. Platforms would need to collect sensitive identifying information from users, creating data breach risks. First Amendment considerations apply to content-based restrictions, and federal courts have struck down some state-level age verification statutes on these grounds. Industry opposition is substantial and well funded; however, many states have these policies in place. Effective legislation will need to navigate these constraints carefully, potentially through anonymous or privacy-preserving verification methods.

Current State Activity. Multiple bills are moving through the Minnesota Legislature. HF 4138, which would require age monitoring and verification for social media platforms and parental approval for accounts held by children under 15, was approved by the House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee on March 17, 2026. HF 1875/SF 2614 would regulate social media use for minors age 15 and younger and require anonymous age verification for websites with harmful content. HF 1434/SF 2105 would require age verification for websites where a substantial share of content is harmful to minors, with enforcement by the attorney general and a private right of action for parents. These bills reflect bipartisan interest and align with the Council's recommendation.

Recommendation 5: Develop a statewide initiative for secure firearm storage

Background. Approximately half of U.S. gun owners report storing their firearms locked and unloaded. Among perpetrators of mass public shootings aged 18 and under, 59 percent obtained their weapons by stealing or borrowing from a family member or friend. Safe storage is one of the most direct interventions available for preventing youth access to firearms, whether the risk is a mass shooting, a suicide or an unintentional injury. Research shows that the most effective way to increase safe storage is through a conversation with a trusted person, such as a family doctor or school principal. But in Minnesota, safe storage messaging is fragmented, often emphasizing general principles without providing specific, situational guidance that reflects the realities of firearm ownership. There is no consistent statewide message for schools, medical professionals and public health to use.

Recommendation. The Council recommends implementing a statewide, multilingual secure firearm storage initiative built on a clear and consistent core message: store firearms locked, unloaded and separate from ammunition. Materials should be available in the languages most commonly spoken by Minnesotans and simultaneously distributed through schools, pediatric and primary care visits, public health programs, firearm retailers and hunting safety courses.

The initiative should go beyond awareness to provide practical guidance that reflects how firearms are actually used and stored in Minnesota households. This includes promoting layered storage practices such as trigger locks, lockboxes and safes, with clear definitions of what constitutes secure storage; encouraging stricter practices and voluntary temporary out-of-home storage during periods of elevated risk, such as a mental health crisis or a domestic violence situation; offering scenario-based guidance for safe handling during everyday use, transport and cleaning; educating gun owners on available storage devices and encouraging routine reassessment as household circumstances change, such as when a child enters the home; and pairing adult storage responsibilities with age-appropriate firearms safety education for youth.

The core message should be nonjudgmental and consistent across settings, but the Council recognizes that the messenger and framing will need to vary. A pediatrician in Minneapolis and a hunting safety instructor in rural Minnesota will deliver the message differently, and what feels credible coming from one source may not from another. Effective implementation should allow for that variation without fragmenting the message itself.

Challenges. Firearm storage messaging is politically sensitive. Any effort perceived as anti-gun rather than pro-safety will lose credibility with the gun-owning households it most needs to reach. Research shows that storage behavior is shaped more by personal fear and perceived risk than by legal mandates, which suggests that messaging should focus on safety, responsibility and child protection rather than compliance and punishment. Engaging firearm owners, retailers, hunting organizations and veterans' groups in the development and distribution of materials will be essential to their effectiveness.

Current State Activity. HF 4300, which would expand Minnesota's firearm storage requirements to specify that firearms must be stored unloaded with a locking device or in a locked storage unit, passed the Minnesota House on a 68-64 vote in 2025 and was sent to the

Senate. Governor Walz's 2026 gun violence prevention package includes secure storage among its 15 proposals, and safe storage information disseminated by schools is a component of the governor's Executive Order 25-12. The Council's recommendation is complementary to but distinct from these efforts: it focuses on public education and messaging rather than statutory requirements, and it can be implemented administratively without new legislation.

Recommendation 6: Equip crisis responders to address firearm access during psychiatric emergencies

Background. Minnesota communities are expanding how they respond to individuals in mental health crisis. Mobile crisis teams, co-responder models pairing law enforcement with social workers, alternative response teams and embedded mental health providers are all part of a growing crisis response infrastructure. When any of these responders encounters an individual in psychiatric distress, the presence of a firearm in the home is often the difference between a crisis that stabilizes and one that turns fatal. This is especially true for suicidal individuals: firearms are used in roughly half of all suicides in the United States, and the lethality rate for suicide attempts involving firearms exceeds 85 percent. Minnesota has invested in expanding these services, but there is no consistent statewide protocol requiring crisis responders to assess firearm access as part of their response.

Recommendation. The Council recommends that every crisis responder in Minnesota, including mobile crisis teams, co-responder units and alternative response teams, be required to complete a documented firearm access assessment during a crisis response. This assessment should include whether there is a firearm in the home; whether the individual is willing to store it temporarily outside the home; whether the individual or family members are aware of Minnesota's ERPO process; and whether a domestic violence risk assessment is warranted. Crisis responders should be equipped to provide information on the ERPO process and how to connect to support when filing a petition. Teams should document whether they have reported a serious threat of violent behavior or a significant risk of suicide to the local sheriff under Minnesota Statute 62A.7171, Subdivision 5. This is not about seizing firearms. It is about getting through the most dangerous hours, days and weeks safely.

Challenges. Crisis responders may worry that asking about firearms will damage rapport with the individual in distress or their family. Training must emphasize that this is a safety conversation, not an enforcement action. Some counties may lack protocols or relationships with local law enforcement or firearms dealers for voluntary temporary storage. Developing those relationships will require coordination at the county level. Rural areas present particular challenges in terms of both response times and storage logistics. Community members who wish to file an ERPO petition may need legal assistance to understand and navigate the process, particularly during a crisis when time and clarity are limited.

Current State Activity. Minnesota's mobile crisis services statute (256B.0624) establishes standards for staffing, assessment and intervention, but it does not require crisis responders to assess firearm access or complete a lethal means safety plan as part of the crisis response. Governor Walz's December 2025 executive order (EO 25-12) directed the Department of Public Safety to expand ERPO education and training for crisis professionals. HF 3668/SF 513 would establish an Office of Gun Violence Prevention within the Minnesota Department of Health, which could serve as a coordinating body for developing standardized crisis response protocols that include lethal means assessment. The Legislature has also considered bills to fund mobile crisis teams and eliminate out-of-pocket costs for individuals who use them.

Recommendation 7: Standardize the ERPO process and fund statewide training

Background. Minnesota’s Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) law took effect on Jan. 1, 2024. In its first year, 135 ERPO petitions were filed statewide, and courts granted 95 percent of emergency orders and 78 percent of long-term orders. By December 2025, Minnesotans had used the law more than 400 times. These numbers suggest the tool works when it is used. But the process varies from county to county. Forms differ. Hearing timelines differ. Storage procedures differ. And awareness remains low. Law enforcement can file ERPOs, but so can family members and household members. Most people do not know that. Many school administrators, hospital staff, clergy and even law enforcement officers have not been trained on when and how to use the tool.

Recommendation. The Council recommends establishing a single statewide standard for ERPO implementation: one set of forms, clear timelines for hearings, defined storage procedures and a transparent process for returning firearms when an order expires. Counties should report basic ERPO data, including filings, outcomes and timelines, on a monthly or quarterly basis, publicly. The Council further recommends funding a statewide training initiative that reaches law enforcement, K-12 and higher education staff, healthcare workers, community faith leaders and other community credible messengers.

Challenges. The Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association has raised a practical concern: under current law, law enforcement agencies appear to be required to compensate respondents at fair market value when firearms are permanently surrendered, creating an unfunded obligation. Storage logistics also vary widely by county. Standardization will require buy-in from sheriffs, county attorneys and the courts. Political opposition to the ERPO law itself remains, with some viewing it as an infringement on Second Amendment rights. Training efforts should be framed around the law as it exists, emphasizing due process protections built into the statute.

Current State Activity. The Statewide ERPO Implementation Coordinator started with the Office of Justice Programs on March 11, 2026, and will lead statewide efforts to ensure Minnesota’s ERPO law is implemented effectively, consistently and equitably across all system partners. This coordinator is responsible for duties related to ERPO outlined in the Minnesota [Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program plan](#) and required in the governor’s [executive order 25-12 “Taking Steps to Reduce Gun Violence in Minnesota,”](#) which directs the Department of Public Safety to expand ERPO training, develop best practices and collect and publicly report ERPO statistics. This recommendation is intended to accelerate, fund and scale the efforts outlined in those documents. The Statewide ERPO Implementation Coordinator can use the comprehensive [Minnesota ERPO Implementation Guide](#) published by the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, in partnership with The Violence Prevention Project, released in July 2025, as a resource in these efforts.

Recommendation 8: Fund resiliency and recovery services and support for communities after a targeted or mass violence incident

Background. The immediate aftermath of a mass violence event often receives resources. Federal victim assistance programs are activated, community members often donate to individual families and the media covers the community's grief. But the long tail of a mass violence event is largely unfunded. Months and years after the cameras leave, affected communities continue to experience elevated rates of anxiety, post-traumatic stress, depression and hypervigilance. Research presented to the Council found that among individuals directly exposed to a mass shooting, 94 percent reported mental health consequences, most of which last longer than one year. Children are particularly vulnerable. Parents of Annunciation students have described their children being diagnosed with severe PTSD and struggling with images that, as one father put it, only the most seasoned combat veterans might experience.

Recommendation. The Council recommends establishing a community recovery program that activates automatically after a qualifying incident to provide ongoing, community-grounded resiliency and recovery services and supports. The program should cover services beyond the immediate crisis period, including long-term therapy, peer support, case management and community healing initiatives. Services and supports should extend to direct victims, witnesses, family members, first responders and community members.

Challenges. Defining a "qualifying incident" and establishing activation criteria will require careful consideration to ensure the fund covers the right events without becoming either too narrow or fiscally unmanageable. State funding sources must be identified. Long-term mental health support requires a workforce that is already stretched thin in Minnesota. Any program must account for provider capacity, particularly in greater Minnesota.

Current State Activity. Sen. Ron Latz announced in August 2025 that additional support for victims of gun violence, including counseling and other resources, would be a priority in the 2026 session. The federal Office for Victims of Crime has provided resources specific to the Minneapolis shootings. It has designated the Annunciation shooting as eligible for Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program funds, though those funds have yet to be awarded to Minnesota.

Recommendation 9: Equip schools to support children exposed to gun violence

Background. Children exposed to gun violence, whether at school, in their neighborhoods or in their own homes, carry that exposure into the classroom. Teachers and school staff are often the first adults to see the behavioral and developmental changes that follow: withdrawal, aggression, difficulty concentrating, regression. But most educators receive little training on how to recognize the effects of violence exposure or how to respond. The need is not limited to communities that have experienced a mass shooting. Children living in neighborhoods with high rates of community gun violence face chronic exposure that accumulates over time. This is not a problem confined to any single community or region in Minnesota.

Recommendation. The Council recommends that every school district in Minnesota have access to training covering both the immediate trauma responses and the longer-term developmental and behavioral impacts of gun violence exposure. The training should be designed for educators and school staff. In addition, the Council recommends the development of age-appropriate curriculum for students, spanning early childhood through college level, that helps young people understand the effects of violence exposure and develop healthy coping strategies. Schools should be connected with community-based victim services organizations and provided with resource directories for their regions.

Implementation should draw on mental health practitioners and trainers who already do this work in clinical and community settings, rather than requiring teachers to learn and deliver clinical curricula themselves. Many providers currently offer trauma-informed training that can be brought into schools without building a program from scratch. The goal is to pair educator awareness with expert delivery.

Healing does not happen only in schools. Community organizations, cultural centers and faith-based spaces are often the first places families turn after a violent incident and may be more trusted than institutional settings. Training and resources should extend to these community-based providers, with coordination between schools, social service agencies and community organizations so that staff across settings share a common language and approach. OJP has already begun receiving requests from schools for Psychological First Aid and Mental Health First Aid training, suggesting demand already exists for this coordination.

Challenges. Council member Chuck Roehrdanz raised an important question during deliberations: as originally phrased, it was unclear whether this recommendation concerned training for staff or curriculum for students. The Council clarifies that both are needed. Developing age-appropriate curriculum for students will require dedicated funding and expert input, as no existing off-the-shelf curriculum adequately addresses this need. Council member Teresa Steinmetz, speaking on behalf of Shireen Gandhi, DHS commissioner, cautioned that without careful design, this type of programming can increase anxiety and retraumatize the young people it aims to help. The Council agrees: any curriculum or training must be evidence-based, age-appropriate and trauma-informed, developed with clinical input, and piloted before statewide rollout.

Current State Activity. HF 3602 would establish a School Safety Advisory Council and fund the Minnesota School Safety Center. HF 3492 would authorize \$25 million in school safety

facility grants. Governor Walz's gun violence prevention package includes additional school safety measures. The Council's recommendation addresses a gap that physical security investments alone cannot fill: the human capacity of schools to support children who have already been affected by violence.

Recommendation 10: Require and fund evidence-based violence prevention training in schools

Background. Minnesota Statute 121A.038 already requires middle and high schools that conduct active shooter drills to also provide one hour of violence prevention training to students. That training must cover the warning signs of violence, risk factors and how to report concern. This is a sound foundation supporting the notion that if we require students to drill responding to violence, we should also teach them how to help prevent it from occurring. But this legislation applies only to schools that conduct “active shooter drills,” and it does not ensure that the training delivered is evidence-based, age-appropriate or trauma-informed. In practice, the quality and content of violence prevention training varies widely across districts.

Recommendation. The Council recommends expanding the existing statute so that all K-12 schools in Minnesota provide evidence-based, trauma-informed violence prevention training programs that meet the requirements of 121A.038. Schools should be provided with a menu of approved curricula and trained on how to deliver the programming. The Council further recommends that the Legislature appropriate funding to support implementation, including curriculum development, teacher training, ongoing technical assistance and evaluation.

Challenges. Council member Deb Henton of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators noted that this recommendation will require additional specificity regarding the content of the training and funding to support delivery. Schools are already managing competing demands on instructional time and professional development budgets. Without dedicated resources, this mandate risks becoming an unfunded obligation that produces compliance without quality. Council member Teresa Steinmetz reiterated that poorly designed interventions can cause harm, particularly for students who have already experienced violence. The Council strongly endorses the position that any training or curriculum approved for statewide use must be vetted for trauma-informed practice and developmental appropriateness before it reaches students.

Current State Activity. HF 3370/SF 2993 would require school districts to establish behavioral threat assessment teams, creating a structural context in which violence prevention training becomes more actionable. HF 3602 would fund the Minnesota School Safety Center, which could serve as the coordinating body for approving curricula and delivering training statewide. The governor’s gun violence prevention package includes school safety measures that could provide a funding vehicle for this recommendation.

Appendix A: Authorizing executive order

The following is the full text of Executive Order 25-13, signed by Governor Tim Walz on Dec. 16, 2025, establishing the Governor's Statewide Safety Council.

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Executive Department

Governor Tim Walz

Executive Order 25-13

Establishing the Governor's Statewide Safety Council

I, Tim Walz, Governor of the State of Minnesota, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and applicable statutes, issue the following executive order:

Creating the solutions needed to address and prevent mass violence, targeted attacks, and domestic terrorism at this critical moment requires an all hands on deck approach. Minnesota is fortunate to have so many dedicated leaders committed to building a future free of this violence.

The establishment of the Governor's Statewide Safety Council brings together a multi-disciplinary group of leaders who will develop a comprehensive blueprint for prevention and preparedness by aligning policy efforts and driving meaningful action within the existing legal framework.

For these reasons, I order as follows:

1. In order to make every effort to prevent mass violence, targeted attacks, and domestic terrorism, the Governor's Statewide Safety Council ("Safety Council") is established.
2. The Safety Council's objectives are to:
 - a. Develop an immediate action plan to prevent mass violence, targeted attacks, and domestic terrorism;
 - b. Recommend strategies to combat radicalization, domestic terrorism, politically motivated violence, and extremist ideologies;
 - c. Address the intersection of mental health and gun violence;
 - d. Promote and support Threat Assessment and Threat Management Teams across Minnesota;
 - e. Coordinate with federal, state, and local partners to align efforts and share best practices;
 - f. Make policy and funding recommendations to the Governor;
 - g. Meet monthly or at the call of the chair;
 - h. Submit a preliminary report to the Governor within 90 days; and
 - i. Submit a final report to the Governor within 365 days.
3. The members of the Safety Council are:
 - a. The Commissioners of the following agencies or their designees:
 - i. Department of Public Safety, who shall serve as chair and arrange for logistical and administrative support for the Safety Council
 - ii. Department of Children, Youth, and Families
 - iii. Department of Education
 - iv. Department of Health

- v. Department of Human Services
- b. Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court or their designee
- c. The Superintendent of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension or their designee
- d. The Colonel of the Minnesota State Patrol or their designee
- e. The Attorney General or their designee
- f. One representative from the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association
- g. One representative from the Minnesota Sheriffs Association
- h. The Executive Director of the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs or their designee
- i. One representative from the Minnesota Association of School Administrators
- j. One representative from Annunciation Hope Alliance
- k. One representative from the National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota

This Executive Order is effective fifteen days after publication in the State Register and filing with the Secretary of State. It will remain in effect until rescinded by proper authority or until it expires in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2025, section 4.035, subdivision 3.

A determination that any provision of this Executive Order is invalid will not affect the enforceability of any other provision of this Executive Order. Rather, the invalid provision will be modified to the extent necessary so that it is enforceable.

Signed on Dec. 16, 2025.

Tim Walz, GOVERNOR

Filed According to Law:

Steve Simon, SECRETARY OF STATE

Filed Dec. 16, 2025

Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Steve Simon

Appendix B: Statewide Safety Council members

The table below lists Council members, their organizational affiliations and designated alternates, as specified in Executive Order 25-13 and confirmed through Council proceedings.

Organization	Member	Alternate(s)
Department of Public Safety (Chair)	Commissioner Bob Jacobson	—
Department of Children, Youth, and Families	Commissioner Tikki Brown	DC Leah Montgomery AC Kate Weeks
Department of Education	Commissioner Willie Jet	—
Department of Health	Commissioner Brooke Cunningham	Catherine Diamond
Department of Human Services	Commissioner Shireen Gandhi	Michelle Lakso (DHS-SHEM) AC Theresa Steinmetz
Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court (designee)	Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator	Dawn Torgerson Jenn Super
Superintendent of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension	Superintendent Drew Evans	Deputy Superintendent Dana Gotz
Colonel of the Minnesota State Patrol	Colonel Christina Bogojevic	—
Attorney General (designees)	Chuck Roehrdanz Liz Johnston	—
Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association	Chief Jay Henthorne, Richfield Police Department	—
Minnesota Sheriffs Association	Sheriff Lon Thiele, Steele County	—
Minnesota Office of Justice Programs	Executive Director Kim Babine	Deputy Director of External Relations Becky Rabb
Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MNASA)	Deb Henton, Executive Director	Dr. Matt Hillman, Executive Director (effective July 1, 2026)
Annunciation Light Alliance	Kristen Neville Brittany Haeg	—

Organization	Member	Alternate(s)
National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota (NAMI)	Marcus Schmit, Executive Director	—

Appendix C: Council operating agreements

At its second meeting on Feb. 27, 2026, the Council adopted the following operating agreements to govern how members engage with one another throughout the process. The agreements were developed through a facilitated small-group exercise and reflect the Council's shared commitment to productive, transparent and trauma-informed deliberation.

1. **Speak your own truth.** Share your perspective without generalizing or speaking for others.
2. **Assume best intent.** Give each other the benefit of the doubt and ask for clarification when you aren't sure of intent. Offer "do-over" opportunities if a comment lands differently than intended and take responsibility for your impact.
3. **Center trauma experience.** Acknowledge the impact of those experiences on how you or others might engage in your conversations.
4. **Build connections.** Actively work to build relationships with members you don't know well.
5. **Share the air.** Balance listening and speaking. Make space for others to contribute. Allow people to finish their thoughts.
6. **When here, focus here.** Avoid multitasking and minimize distractions to stay fully engaged during meetings.
7. **Be responsible.** Take ownership of meeting preparation, accessing necessary information, completing special assignments, and staying connected with your constituents.
8. **Safe conversations for meetings.** Voting Council members should not engage in discussions about pending decisions with other members outside official meetings. Engaging in these conversations outside of meetings can lead to Open Meeting Law violations.
9. **Honor the critical and urgent nature of this work.** Attend or send your alternate. Lean in on the between-meeting tasks asked of you.

Appendix D: Mental health programs and services inventory

As part of its process, the Council conducted an inventory of mental health programs and services currently operated or funded by member organizations. Council members were asked to identify existing activities relevant to the intersection of mental health, crisis intervention and violence prevention. The following table summarizes responses received. It is not exhaustive; many member organizations administer additional services beyond what is listed here. The inventory is intended to establish a baseline understanding of what is already in place and to identify gaps that the Council’s recommendations should address.

Organization	Relevant Programs and Services
Minnesota Association of School Administrators	<p>Suicide prevention trainings (Youth Mental Health First Aid, QPR) used across districts.</p> <p>Crisis response teams in most districts conduct threat assessments.</p> <p>Some districts employ school resource officers; many partner with local law enforcement for home visits when threats are identified.</p>
Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association	<p>Expanding use of Alternative Response Teams, Co-Responder Models, and Embedded Social Workers across departments.</p> <p>Law enforcement trained to file ERPOs in gun violence and mental health situations.</p> <p>Annual officer training on mental health conditions relevant to crisis calls.</p>
Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families	<p>Hosts the MN Juvenile Justice–Mental Health Continuum of Care Initiative, a federally funded project (DOJ-OJJDP) in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).</p> <p>Three regional sites identify mental health service gaps driving youth deeper into the juvenile justice system and develop practices to connect youth with appropriate care.</p> <p>Regional findings will inform a statewide tool.</p>
National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota (NAMI)	<p>Offers QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer), a 90-minute training that teaches people to recognize signs of suicide, ask directly about crisis and connect individuals to help.</p> <p>Designed for community members without clinical backgrounds.</p>

Organization	Relevant Programs and Services
Steele County Sheriff's Office (Minnesota Sheriffs Association)	<p>Contracts with SPERO for therapist and mental health services.</p> <p>Partners with MN Prairie for mental health case workers.</p> <p>Mobile crisis response available for on-scene intervention.</p>
Minnesota Judicial Branch	<p>Online training for judicial officers and staff on stress, secondary traumatic stress and burnout prevention.</p> <p>Accessible links to employee wellness resources, including the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.</p> <p>Workplace Wellness Advisory Council with liaisons across judicial districts.</p> <p>Critical Incident Response Guide for human resources staff following workplace incidents.</p>
Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)	<p>Crisis Response Services: Mobile crisis teams of mental health professionals provide rapid, face-to-face intervention in homes and community settings. Available statewide for adults and children, with most teams covering after hours and weekends.</p> <p>Coordinated Specialty Care for First Episode Psychosis: Early intervention for individuals ages 15–40 showing early signs of psychosis. Evidence indicates youth experiencing psychosis face elevated suicide and violence risk; early treatment improves recovery outcomes.</p> <p>School Diversion Program: Connects students experiencing behavioral or emotional challenges to services, keeping them in school and out of the juvenile justice system. Identifies students in distress and strengthens protective factors.</p> <p>Note: DHS administers many additional treatment and behavioral health services across Minnesota. The programs listed here are those most directly relevant to the Council's charge.</p>

Organization	Relevant Programs and Services
<p>Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs (OJP)</p>	<p>Crime Victim Services Grants: Distributes approximately \$60 million annually to more than 170 programs providing crisis intervention, mental health support and services for individuals affected by homicide, domestic violence, suicide and other violent incidents.</p> <p>Community and Victim Specialists: On-the-ground staff who connect individuals and families affected by violence with resources, provide follow-up after incidents and deliver trauma-informed training including Psychological First Aid and Mental Health First Aid.</p> <p>Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs: Connects survivors of gun violence and other violent injuries with mental health services and case management at the point of care, aimed at reducing retaliatory violence and repeat injury.</p> <p>Mass Violence Response: Mobilizes Family Assistance Centers and Neighborhood Assistance Centers after mass shootings, providing mental health referrals, trauma-informed support and reimbursement for counseling expenses.</p> <p>Crime Victims Reimbursement Program: Covers counseling, therapy and other mental health costs for victims of violent crime, including gun violence, reducing financial barriers to recovery.</p> <p>State Crisis Response Grant Program: Funds Co-Responder and Alternative Response Team models that embed social workers and mental health providers alongside law enforcement during crisis calls, as well as non-law-enforcement crisis response teams.</p> <p>Byrne-SCIP Crisis Intervention Grant Program: Launching in 2026, funds organizations providing crisis intervention services, behavioral health supports and training to strengthen early intervention and reduce escalation toward self-harm or gun violence.</p> <p>Byrne-SCIP Firearms Storage Grant Program: Provides funding to law enforcement agencies for secure storage equipment and administrative costs associated with firearms removed under ERPO.</p>

Organization	Relevant Programs and Services
<p>Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs (OJP) (continued)</p>	<p>Statewide ERPO Implementation Coordinator: Established March 2026 to provide technical assistance, develop training and model policies, manage data collection and strengthen cross-system collaboration on ERPO implementation. An external research partner is conducting a comprehensive evaluation of all ERPO petitions filed since the law's enactment.</p> <p>Byrne-SCIP Advisory Board: Multidisciplinary board established in 2023, including representatives from law enforcement, courts, behavioral health and victim services, to guide Minnesota's gun violence reduction and crisis intervention initiatives.</p> <p>Suicide Prevention and Behavioral Health Partnerships: Collaborates with community partners including Canvas Health, NorthPoint Health and Wellness, Beltrami Area Service Collaborative, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe to provide crisis response, youth mental health services, and integrated substance use support.</p> <p>Community Crime Intervention and Prevention Grants: Funds community-centered programs providing mental health support, substance use treatment, mentoring, and employment services to address root causes of violence.</p> <p>Coordinated Entry and Housing Partnerships: Works with housing providers and crisis response teams to improve suicide risk awareness and connect individuals with stabilizing services. Housing stability is treated as a core violence and suicide prevention strategy.</p>

Organization	Relevant Programs and Services
Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)	<p data-bbox="553 222 1468 548">Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Unit: Strengthens mental health supports and promotes lethal means safety as strategies to prevent suicide and reduce firearm-related harm. Key activities include promoting safe firearm storage, distributing gun locks in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and supporting safety planning through CALM (Counseling on Access to Lethal Means) training for healthcare providers and CALM Conversations training for community members.</p> <p data-bbox="553 558 1450 737">Community-Based Suicide Prevention Training: Partners with community organizations to deliver evidence-informed trainings including QPR, safeTALK, ASIST, Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health First Aid and postvention training for communities after a suicide loss.</p> <p data-bbox="553 747 1455 926">Local Prevention Coalitions: Funds community grantees to form local coalitions that coordinate mental health and suicide prevention efforts based on local needs and data, connecting partners from healthcare, education, public health and community organizations.</p> <p data-bbox="553 936 1422 1115">Lethal Means Safety Subcommittee: A subcommittee of the Minnesota State Suicide Prevention Task Force currently developing recommendations and resources to help communities implement safe storage and lethal means safety practices, particularly related to firearms.</p>

Appendix E: Related Minnesota legislation, first quarter 2026

The Council’s recommendations were developed alongside, but independently of, an active legislative session. During the first quarter of 2026, lawmakers introduced a substantial number of bills touching on school safety, firearms, criminal penalties, crisis intervention and violence prevention research. Many of these proposals address issues within the Council’s charge. Some align directly with specific recommendations in this report; others go further or take different approaches than the Council has proposed at this stage.

The following tables provide a snapshot of relevant legislation as of late March 2026. Inclusion in this appendix does not constitute an endorsement or opposition by the Council. The tables are intended to situate the Council’s work within the broader legislative landscape and to identify where its recommendations intersect with proposals already under consideration.

Bill status changes frequently during a legislative session. Readers should consult the Minnesota Legislature’s website (revisor.mn.gov) for current information.

School Safety

Bill Number(s)	Subject	Status (March 2026)	Committee
SF 3713/HF 3653	Increase safe schools revenue to districts	Introduced	Education Finance
SF 3925/HF 3511	Funding increase for school safety and local aid	Introduced	Education Finance
SF 3930	Safe schools revenue; expansion to charter and nonpublic schools	Introduced	Education Finance
SF 4031/HF 3529	Increase safe schools revenue; expand eligible recipients	Introduced	Education Finance
SF 3996/HF 3602	School Safety Advisory Council; school safety plans and policies	SF passed as amended (3/18)	Judiciary/Ed Finance
SF 3811/HF 3538	Gender identity instruction ban; firearm and archery safety programs	Introduced	Education Policy

Bill Number(s)	Subject	Status (March 2026)	Committee
SF 3572/HF 3401	Modify when firearms are permitted on school property	SF passed to Finance (3/23)	Finance/Ed Policy

Firearms Restrictions

Bill Number(s)	Subject	Status (March 2026)	Committee
SF 3654/HF 3433	Ban on possession of semiautomatic assault weapons	HF recall motion failed (3/26)	Judiciary/Public Safety
SF 3655/HF 4170	Ban on assault weapons and large-capacity magazines	SF passed as amended (3/18)	Finance/Public Safety
SF 3681/HF 3434	Prohibition and criminal penalties for assault weapons	Introduced	Judiciary/Public Safety
SF 4290	Ban on assault weapons and large-capacity magazines	Introduced	Judiciary/Public Safety
SF 3714/HF 3402	Possession of large-capacity magazines banned	HF motion failed (3/26)	Judiciary/Public Safety
SF 3661/HF 3407	Prohibit sale and possession of unserialized firearms (ghost guns)	SF second reading (3/18)	Public Safety

Criminal Penalties and Public Safety Enforcement

Bill Number(s)	Subject	Status (March 2026)	Committee
SF 3600/HF 3350	Lifetime firearms ban for domestic assault offenders	HF second reading (3/16)	Judiciary/Public Safety
SF 4703/HF 3658	Extreme Risk Protection Order modifications	HF passed as amended (3/23)	Judiciary/Civil Law

Bill Number(s)	Subject	Status (March 2026)	Committee
SF 4873/HF 4741	Repeat Domestic Violence Offender Registry	Introduced	Judiciary/Public Safety
SF 4896/HF 3498	Increase penalties for straw purchases and transfers	Introduced	Judiciary/Public Safety
SF 4910/HF 4699	Enhanced penalties for unlawful firearm possession	Introduced	Judiciary/Public Safety
SF 3825/HF 3497	Safe storage requirements to prevent unauthorized access	SF second reading (3/18)	Public Safety
SF 3549/HF 3351	Repeal state preemption of local firearm regulations	Introduced	Judiciary/Elections
SF 3631/HF 3357	Capitol Complex dangerous weapons prohibition	Introduced	Judiciary/State Government

Health and Violence Prevention Research

Bill Number(s)	Subject	Status (March 2026)	Committee
SF 4238/HF 4731	Health impacts of lead-containing bullets	Introduced	Health and Human Services
SF 513/HF 3668	Establish MDH Office of Gun Violence Prevention	SF passed as amended (3/17)	Health and Human Services
SF 1580/HF 134	Violence prevention research center appropriation	SF passed as amended (3/18)	Finance

About this report

This report was prepared for the Governor's Statewide Safety Council by Drs. James Densley and Jillian Peterson from the Violence Prevention Project Research Center at Hamline University, with facilitation support from the Management Analysis Division of Minnesota Management and Budget and administrative support from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. The findings and recommendations reflect the deliberations of the full Council and do not represent the views of any single member or organization.