

THE CONFLICT CENTER

DENVER DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

# RESTORATIVE DENVER ANNUAL REPORT 2024

**Denver DA**

JOHN WALSH District Attorney



# INTRODUCTION

*This past year, a participant went out drinking with his coworkers after work. After drinking for several hours, they eventually ended up at a club. On the way home, a coworker said something about the participant's children that he thought was rude, and it triggered him. He reacted by striking his coworker in the face multiple times. She went to the hospital where she learned she suffered several facial fractures.*

*This case eventually was referred to Restorative Denver. The person who caused harm (defendant) expressed how sorry he felt about the incident and took accountability for being so intoxicated that he could not control his actions. The incident was traumatic for him, because his actions did not reflect the person he wanted to be. He knew how severely he impacted the person harmed (victim) and another coworker who was with them that night.*

*Restorative Denver facilitators and community members created a safe space for the person who caused harm (PCH) and the person harmed (PH) to talk about the incident, the impact and the harms that occurred, and to work together to create a healing agreement that all participants agreed on that would repair the harms caused by the incident.*

*As part of this individual's healing agreement, he attended a class on addressing conflict and anger effectively. He said the class was "a big eye opener... about how my actions that come from my emotions affect myself and others around me." He also said, "I have been practicing lessons learned such as pumping the breaks [sic] when I feel angry or thinking about my anger thermometer getting too high when I feel uneasy [sic]... I take deep breaths and try to think about how one action based off anger can affect my entire life, again."*

*He also started attending therapy as part of his healing agreement. "Before starting therapy, I used to think I couldn't benefit from it and people would call me 'crazy' for needing a therapist. It turns out that it is something that has been missing from my life for a long time. My therapist believes everyone can use therapy sessions as mental health is so overlooked. After these sessions and courses, I believe it."*

*The last part of the healing agreement included the PCH and PH going out for coffee together so he could give her the handwritten apology letter he wrote and talk about what he was learning in therapy. After they met, she said, "I feel much better about my decision to pursue this program. I feel like it was very helpful to both me and the person that caused harm to really understand what happened and how we both were affected by the incident ... and to help us both grow from this incident."*

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IS A RESPONSE TO  
CRIME THAT FOCUSES ON ADDRESSING AND  
REPAIRING THE HARM CAUSED BY A  
CRIMINAL OFFENSE.

# WHAT IS RESTORATIVE DENVER?

Restorative Denver addresses crime, harm, and public safety through a victim-centered, community-based restorative justice program. Restorative justice, which traces its beginnings to Indigenous cultures, helps crime victims (people harmed) feel supported and empowered and allows defendants (people who caused harm) to understand the impact of their actions and to repair the harm they caused to the greatest extent possible.

Restorative justice focuses on ***making things right for the victim*** and ***reintegrating defendants back into the community*** with the skills and awareness to prevent future crime.

**Restorative Denver** began in October 2019 and is a partnership between the Denver District Attorney's Office and the community-based nonprofit organization The Conflict Center. The DA's Office screens eligible cases and refers them to The Conflict Center to be handled through a community-based restorative justice process. The restorative justice model used by **Restorative Denver** is called Community Group Conferencing.

## RESTORING RESPONSIBLE GUN USE

In December 2023, Restorative Denver launched a new thematic restorative justice group process for specific misdemeanor gun possession charges called **Restoring Responsible Gun Use (RRGU)**. The purpose of RRGU is:

- (1) to increase equity in referrals to Restorative Denver by removing discretion and ensuring that eligible cases are automatically referred,
- (2) to increase the capacity of Restorative Denver by utilizing a group process where fewer volunteers are needed to fully process each case, and
- (3) to create a specialized restorative justice process for gun possession offenses that is more impactful for persons who caused harm, because they hear directly from people who have been impacted by gun violence.

This report uses both victim/defendant and person harmed/person who caused harm language – recognizing that while victim and defendant are the common terminology in the criminal justice system, restorative justice seeks to move away from those traditional labels and instead refer to the parties in terms of their relationship to the harm caused or experienced.

## HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

### PREPARATION:

Trained facilitators conduct separate meetings with the victim (or their surrogate) and with the defendant to prepare them to speak with each other. Victims and defendants may bring a support person with them during each part of the process. All aspects of the restorative justice process are voluntary and confidential.

### DIALOGUE:

Once the parties are ready, facilitators bring everyone together in a safe and supportive environment for an open, honest, and guided conversation about what happened, the resulting harm, and how the harm can be repaired.

During the conference, victims have an opportunity to ask questions and let the person who caused harm know how they were affected by what happened.

Victims may participate in person or virtually, have a surrogate participate on their behalf, write a letter to be read during the conference, or choose not to participate at all.

### UNDERSTANDING & REPAIR:

At the end of the conversation, participants develop a written agreement of what the defendant can do to repair the harm.

Victims offer ideas of how the person who caused harm can make amends.

Defendants who fulfill their agreements will successfully complete the program and have their case dismissed and sealed.



# RESTORATIVE DENVER DATA SUMMARY

This section summarizes the data gathered from participants during the fifth year of the program (January to December 2024), which included 101 successfully completed cases. The table below briefly describes and breaks down respondents by stakeholder group, where “N” is the total number of responses.

Year 5 Statistics		Overall Statistics Since Restorative Denver Began	
105	Case Referrals	481	Case Referrals
101	Successfully Completed	415	Successfully Completed
2	Withdrew Prior to Starting Programming	14	Withdrew Prior to Starting Programming
2	Unsuccessful	10	Unsuccessful

Person Who Caused Harm (PCH)	Person Harmed (PH)	Facilitator	Community Member (CM)
Defendant or the person charged with committing a crime	Victim of the crime	People who volunteer with Restorative Denver and oversee the case. Two facilitators are assigned to each case	People who volunteer with Restorative Denver and represent the greater Denver community. Two community members are assigned to each case
Feedback was gathered via pre-process surveys (N = 100) and post-process surveys (N = 98).	Feedback was gathered via pre-process surveys (N = 11) and post-process surveys (N = 11).	Facilitators complete a 16-hour training and ongoing professional development.  Feedback was gathered via post-process surveys (N = 192).	Community members complete a 2.5-hour training and ongoing professional development.  Feedback was gathered via post-process surveys (N = 152).



# PERSONS WHO CAUSED HARM (PCH)

Persons who caused harm (PCHs) were referred to Restorative Denver on a variety of charges, including assault, burglary, child abuse, assault on a peace officer, driving under the influence (DUI), felony menacing, theft, and trespassing.

**80% of all referred cases were misdemeanors, and 20% were felonies.**

Before entering the restorative justice process, persons who caused harm shared a range of what they hoped would result from participating in the program, including:

- **Learning from actions** (learning how to self-monitor, advocate for solutions; learning to help others to make better decisions);
- **Repairing damage and harm caused by actions;**
- **Repairing and restoring relationships** (family, victim, and community);
- **Self-improvement** (becoming a better person and/or parent);
- **Supporting victim’s healing and well-being; and**
- **Taking accountability for and understanding the impact of their actions** (“I hope I can get input from the community to learn more about the impact of my actions and to work on reversing the damage I caused”).

**Nearly all PCHs (96 out of 99) reported being very or somewhat satisfied with their experience in Restorative Denver.**

PCH: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

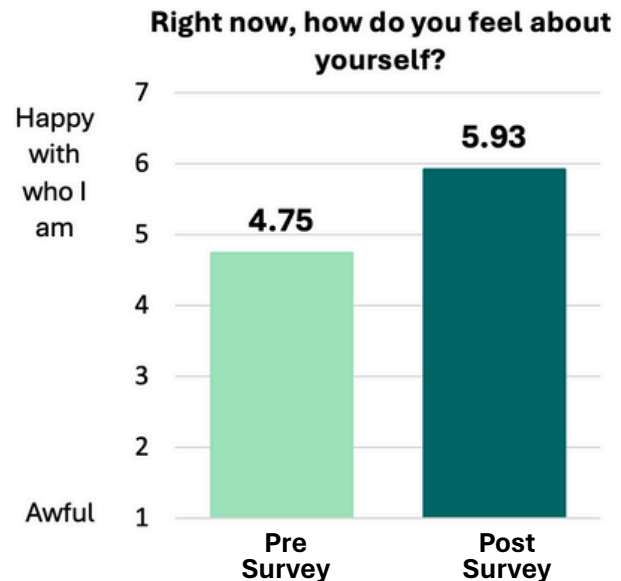
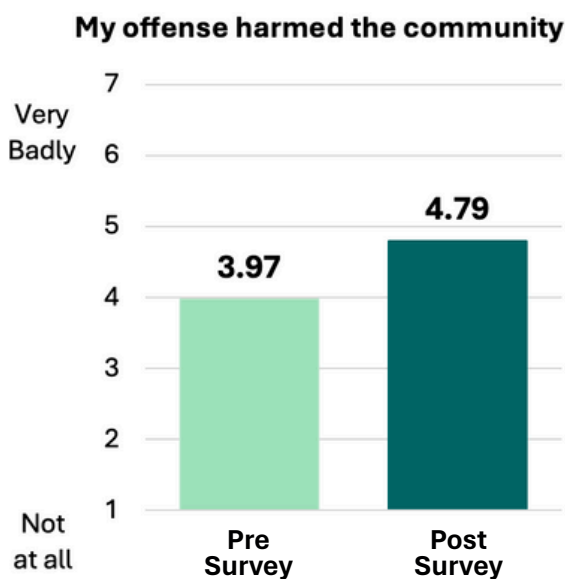
	2024 Restorative Denver	2022 Misdemeanors Charged in Denver
Total Cases	101	6941
Gender	60% Male 39% Female 1% Non-Binary	73% Male 26% Female 1% Unknown
Race*	24% White 43% Latinx 21% Black 7% Asian 2% Multiracial 2% Native American	71% White 3% Latinx 21% Black 2% Asian 3% Unknown
Age	46% 13-24 37% 25-39 17% 40-55 1% 56 & over	20% 13-24 51% 25-39 23% 40-55 6% 56 & over

\* Misdemeanor data does not disaggregate ethnicity and race; the white/Latinx data is skewed.

Education Completed	Employment Status	Attorney Type
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary School: 18%</li> <li>• GED: 8%</li> <li>• High School: 56%</li> <li>• Associates: 2%</li> <li>• Bachelors: 15%</li> <li>• Graduate: 1%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-Time: 51%</li> <li>• Part-Time: 11%</li> <li>• Unemployed: 31%</li> <li>• Student: 6%</li> <li>• Disability: 1%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Defender: 71%</li> <li>• Private Counsel: 21%</li> <li>• Pro se: 8%</li> </ul>

A distinctive theme that emerged from the PCH’s pre-conference surveys was the pivotal role of community input in understanding the impact of their actions and in determining reparative actions. As an example, one participant shared that they were “eager to work with the community to help heal and move forward.”

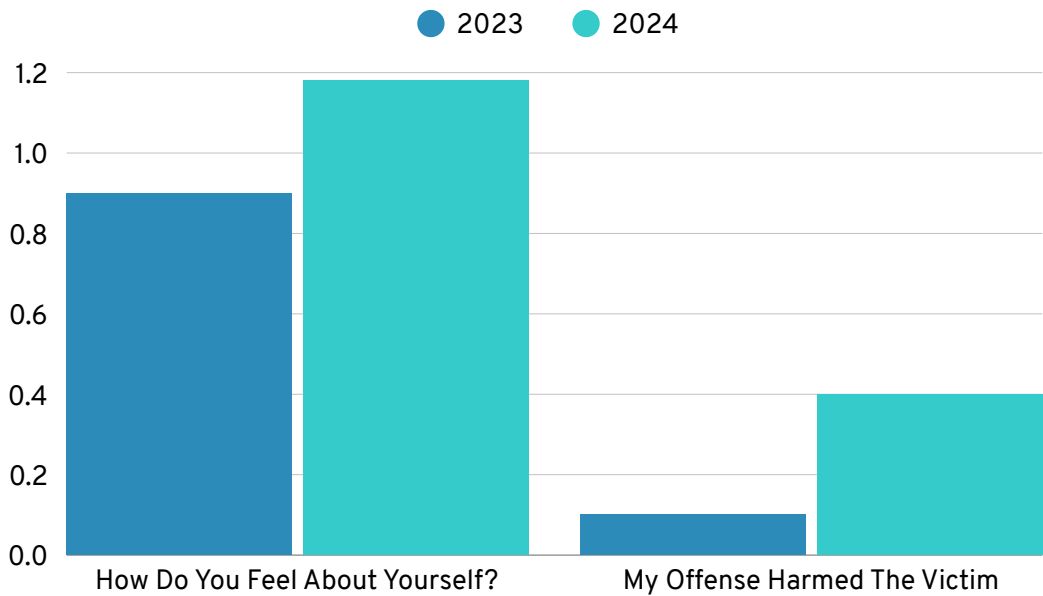
Overall, the two areas where persons who caused harm showed the **greatest growth** when comparing their responses from before and after participating in Restorative Denver were **(1) an understanding of how their offenses impacted the community, and (2) overall self-esteem.**



This growth suggests that participation in restorative justice led to a deeper understanding of the ripple effect of a criminal offense and its impact beyond a direct victim. This survey item has consistently shown the greatest growth from before and after participating over the past four years, with increases ranging from 0.82-1.02 on a scale where 1 = Not at All / Awful, and 7 = Very Badly / Happy with who I am.

Additionally, the average response from PCH pre- to post-conference noticeably increased in two additional items compared to last year (shown below). This also suggests that PCH’s who participated in restorative justice developed a greater understanding of how their actions impacted the person harmed and felt better about themselves after participating in the restorative process.

**NOTICEABLE INCREASE PCH PRE-POST CHANGE SURVEY RESPONSES  
IN 2024 COMPARED TO 2023**



**HIGHEST AVERAGES FROM THE PCH POST-CONFERENCE SURVEYS**  
(RANGE 1 - 7)



## PERSON CAUSED HARM PRE- AND POST-PROCESS SURVEY RESPONSES

<b>Response Range (1-7): 1 = Not At all, 4= Somewhat, 7 = Very Badly</b>	<b>Pre-Process M (SD)* (N = 73-100)</b>	<b>Post-Process M (SD)* (N = 98)</b>
My offense harmed the victim**	<b>4.79</b> (1.72)	<b>5.19</b> (1.72)
My offense harmed the community	<b>3.97</b> (1.94)	<b>4.79</b> (1.76)
My offense harmed my family	<b>4.89</b> (1.90)	<b>5.49</b> (1.61)
My offense harmed me	<b>5.89</b> (1.50)	<b>5.93</b> (1.35)
<b>Response Range (1-7): 1 = Awful, 4 = Neutral, 7 = Happy With Who I Am</b>	<b>Pre-Process M (SD) (N = 73-100)</b>	<b>Post-Process M (SD) (N = 98)</b>
Right now, how do you feel about yourself?	<b>4.75</b> (1.76)	<b>5.93</b> (1.25)
<b>Post-Conference Only Response Range (1-7): 1 = Not at All, 4 = Somewhat, 7 = Completely</b>		
The Restorative Justice Program is treating me with respect	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.82</b> (0.64)
I felt prepared, ready	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.22</b> (1.03)
I felt the process was fair	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.62</b> (0.85)
I felt comfortable expressing my true feelings during the process	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.38</b> (1.17)
Others in the room listened when I spoke	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.83</b> (0.60)
Others in the room were looking out for my best interests	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.74</b> (0.67)
The agreement we came to will help repair the harm that has been caused	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.63</b> (0.93)

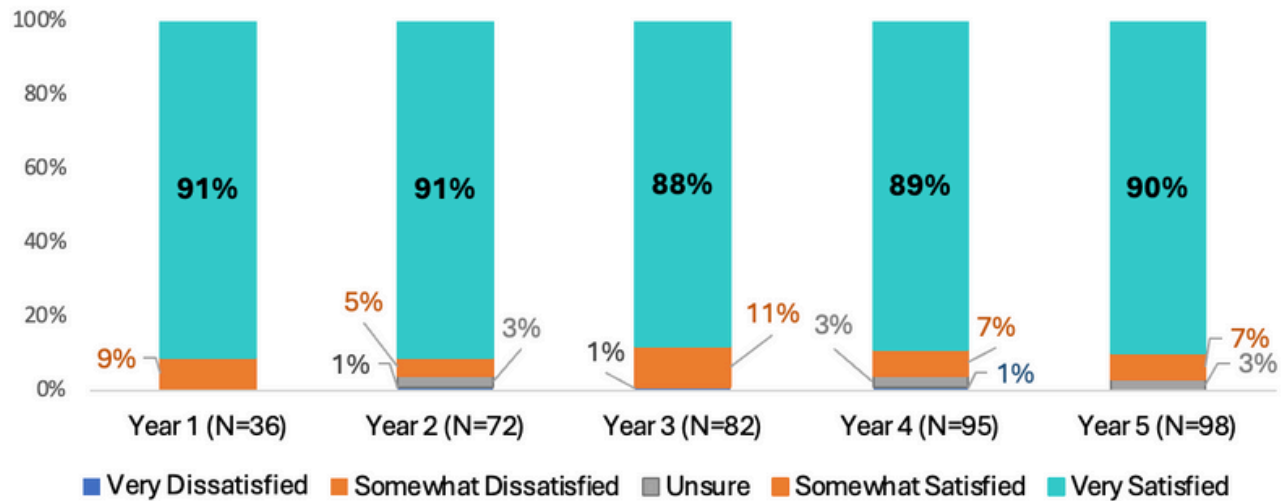
\* "M" is the average and "SD" is the standard deviation or measurement of variation in a set of responses.

The higher the SD, the greater the variation or range in responses.

\*\* Item not included when community was the victim



## PCH POST-PROCESS SATISFACTION WITH RESTORATIVE DENVER (YEARS 1-5)



## PCH SELF-REPORTED THEMES AFTER PARTICIPATING IN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

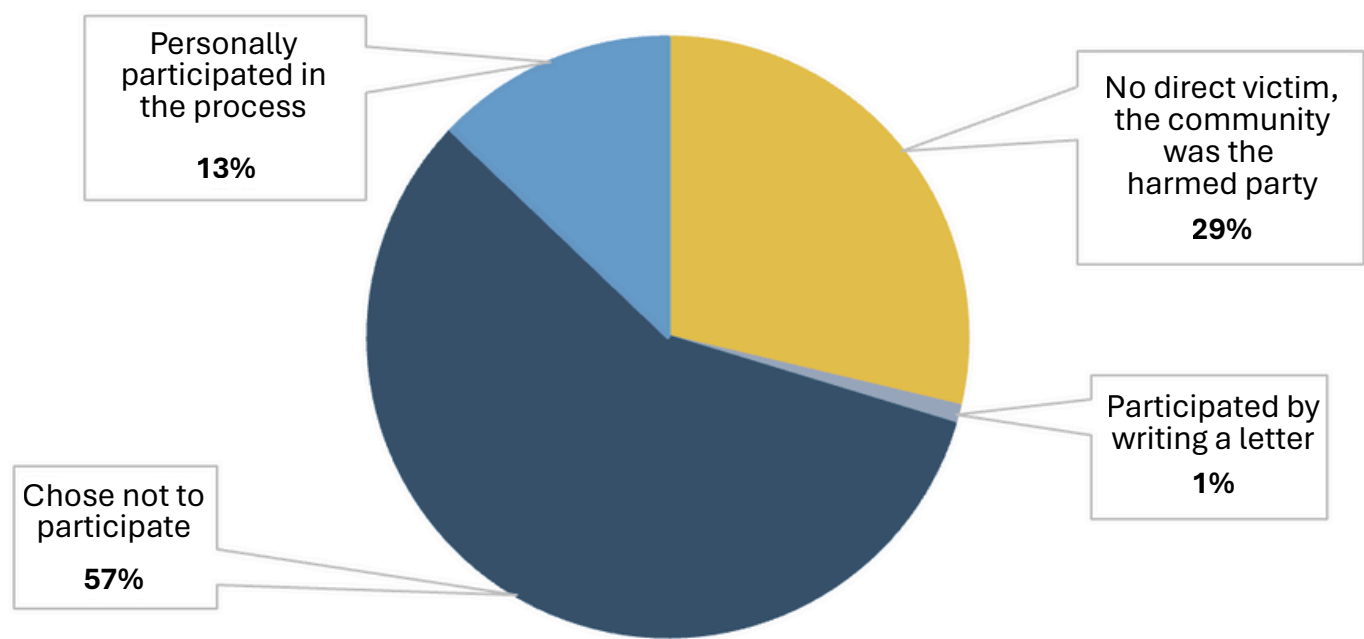


# PERSONS HARMED

Restorative Denver successfully increased victim participation and feedback collection over the fifth year of the program. A total of 14 harmed parties participated in Restorative Denver, either personally or via letter writing, which is a 14% participation rate. This rate increased from last year where 9% personally participated in the process and an additional 2% wrote a letter for a total of 11% participation rate. Although the increase is modest, Restorative Denver is slowly growing its harmed party participation rate each year. This year most of the harmed parties completed the pre-process survey (12 out of 13) and the post-process survey (11 out of 13).

The reasons persons harmed choose not to participate varies; often, they simply want to put the incident behind them. Persons harmed are given a variety of options for participation: they can personally participate, have a surrogate participate on their behalf, or choose to send a letter, video, or contract item suggestion. Regardless of whether they choose to participate in the process, a victim must agree to have their case resolved through Restorative Denver for the case to be referred.

YEAR 5 PERSON HARMED PARTICIPATION RATES



When asked what, if anything, had changed for them as result of their participation, harmed parties reported they gained senses of growth, hope, resolution, and understanding (*“improved understanding between me and the person that caused harm”*) through the process. In addition, all persons harmed indicated they felt prepared and ready to participate and expressed confidence that the developed contracts would help to repair the harm.

## PERSONS HARMED PRE- AND POST-PROCESS SURVEY RESPONSES

<b>Response Range (1-7): 1 = Not At all, 4 = Somewhat, 7 = Very Much</b>	<b>Pre- Process M (SD) (N = 12)</b>	<b>Post- Process M (SD) (N = 11)</b>
The offense harmed me	<b>4.17</b> (1.86)	<b>5.10</b> (1.87)
The offense harmed the community	<b>3.42</b> (1.80)	<b>4.18</b> (1.80)
The offense harmed my family	<b>3.67</b> (2.29)	<b>5.18</b> (2.44)
I feel angry	<b>2.75</b> (1.59)	<b>2.36</b> (1.30)
I feel like my community cares about me	<b>5.58</b> (1.66)	<b>5.64</b> (1.87)
My case is being handled fairly	<b>5.75</b> (1.48)	<b>6.45</b> (0.99)
<b>Post-Conference Only Response Range (1-7): 1 = Not at All, 4 = Somewhat, 7 = Completely</b>	<b>Pre- Process M (SD) (N = 12)</b>	<b>Post- Process M (SD) (N = 10-11)</b>
The Restorative Justice Program is treating me with respect	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.60</b> (0.80)
I felt prepared and ready	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.80</b> (0.80)
I felt the process was fair	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.30</b> (1.42)
I felt comfortable expressing my true feelings during the process	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.70</b> (0.90)
Others in the conference listened when I spoke	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.80</b> (0.60)
The agreement we came to will help repair the harm that has been caused	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.60</b> (0.66)
<b>Post-Conference Only Response Range (1-5): 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 3 = Unsure, 5 = Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Pre- Process M (SD) (N = 12)</b>	<b>Post- Process M (SD) (N = 11)</b>
How satisfied were you with the overall process?	<b>NA</b>	<b>4.40</b> (1.20)

\* “M” is the average and “SD” is the standard deviation or measurement of variation in a set of responses.  
The higher the SD, the greater the variation or range in responses.

The increase in feedback from persons harmed this year facilitated a more in-depth understanding of how the restorative process can facilitate reflection and healing among group members. Several persons harmed expressed relief that the persons who caused harm held themselves accountable for their actions and impact.

“It really meant a lot just to hear [them] take accountability and apologize.” –Person Harmed

Other persons harmed indicated that the process enabled them to revisit and reflect on harm previously experienced safely, and that this was facilitative of reparation and healing. One participant shared they were deeply affected by the person that caused harm’s apologetic demeanor.

“It changed my perspective on what I want to value ... it made me speechless ... [they were] being authentic with their words ... I wanted to physically hug them out of forgiveness.”  
–Person Harmed

All persons harmed who completed post-process surveys reported they were very or somewhat satisfied with the process. Harmed parties expressed appreciation for the program and opportunity to participate, and in one case, a person harmed mentioned they would like to be involved in the program as a community member volunteer moving forward.

“I really appreciated this process, and I feel like it allows both parties to come together to repair damage that one or both may feel. I think this is a wonderful alternative to the typical criminal justice system.”

–Person Harmed





# COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Generally, two community member volunteers participate in each community group conference. Community member volunteers represent the greater Denver community and speak to the impact that the criminal offense had on the community and how the harm can be repaired. A total of 152 community members participated in Restorative Denver in year five.

**94% of community members reported they were completely or somewhat satisfied with the restorative justice process, an increase from 89% in year four.** When asked whether the agreement developed during the CGC would help repair the harm caused, 90% gave a “6” or “7” rating on a 7-point scale.

When asked what, if anything, had changed for them as result of their participation, community members highlighted personal learning and growth, learning about the lived experiences and needs of diverse populations, increased interpersonal connection and understanding, and confidence in the Restorative Denver process.

## COMMUNITY MEMBER SURVEY RESPONSES

Post-Conference Only (N = 152) Response Range (1-5): 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Somewhat Dissatisfied, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Somewhat Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied		M (SD)
How satisfied were you with the overall process?		<b>4.73</b> (0.73)
Post-Conference Only (N = 152) Response Range (1-7): 1 = Not at All, 4 = Somewhat, 7 = Completely		M (SD)
I felt the process was fair		<b>6.70</b> (0.72)
The agreement we came to will help repair the harm that has been caused		<b>6.51</b> (0.74)
The case is being handled fairly		<b>6.67</b> (0.64)



## COMMUNITY MEMBERS SAY:

“I love participating in cases, it's such important work and the PCHs are committed and reflective. It's a beautiful process to be part of.”

“I am very proud to be a part of this program and hope there is no time wherein it isn't an option.”

# FACILITATORS

In most community group conferences, two facilitators are assigned to protect against facilitator bias and to support facilitator transfer of learning. In year five of Restorative Denver, 192 facilitators filled out post-process evaluations, and 97% of facilitators indicated they were very or somewhat satisfied with the overall restorative justice process (gave 4 or 5 rating on a 1-5 scale). Most facilitators (90%) reported that the agreement created during the community group conference was developed through a collaborative process and that all stakeholders had an equal say.

Across the different stakeholder groups, participants shared that they felt prepared, supported and actively included while participating in Restorative Denver.

Persons harmed felt the facilitators were “attentive and compassionate” throughout the process and ensured all participants were heard. The facilitators were also complimented for resolving issues related to the contract development, offering ideas and ensuring all items were clearly stated.

Community members described the facilitators as well-prepared, approachable, “compassionate,” “professional,” respectful, and “very knowledgeable of the restorative justice process.” Several community members emphasized the value of the pre-conference in clarifying expectations, providing case context, and supporting their preparation.

“THESE WERE GREAT FACILITATORS....  
THEY TOOK THE TIME TO ORGANIZE A  
PRE-CONFERENCE CALL WITH THE  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS, WHICH WAS  
HELPFUL TO ALL BE ON THE SAME  
PAGE BEFORE THE CGC. THEY KNEW  
WHEN TO ASK QUESTIONS AND WHEN  
TO LET THERE BE ROOM FOR SILENCE  
AND OTHERS TO SPEAK UP.”

–COMMUNITY MEMBER

Persons who caused harm valued how the facilitators helped them prepare for the process, “listened with understanding and without judgement,” and provided insight into the impact of their actions while supporting their healing plans.

“THEY MADE IT FEEL LIKE A VERY SAFE  
SPACE TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK FREELY  
AND REALLY GET TO THE ROOT OF  
HOW TO REPAIR THIS HARM.”

–PERSONS WHO CAUSED HARM

“[Our facilitator] was extremely good at communicating with us through all phases. We met virtually, in person, and via phone, and we always left feeling like we were heard, knew what the next steps would be, and had some sort of timeline so we weren’t flapping in the wind. I don’t think anyone could have done one thing better!”

–Person Harmed



# RESTORING RESPONSIBLE GUN USE

Restoring Responsible Gun Use utilizes a group restorative justice process where two to three trained facilitators bring together three to six people who were charged with misdemeanor gun possession offenses, each of whom can bring a support person, along with victims of gun violence, gun safety experts, and community members who generally were also impacted by gun violence in some way.

This section provides a summary of the data collected from RRGU participants during the first year of the program (January to December 2024), encompassing 27 successfully completed cases.

## PCH: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Age		Race		Gender	
• 18-24:	32%	• Latinx:	42%	• Male:	96%
• 25-39:	68%	• Black:	35%	• Female:	4%
		• White:	15%		
		• Multiracial:	4%		
		• Native American:	4%		

Education Completed		Employment Status		Attorney Type	
• Primary School:	26%	• Full-Time:	56%	• Public Defender:	52%
• GED:	11%	• Part-Time:	4%	• Private Counsel:	26%
• High School:	59%	• Unemployed:	37%	• Pro se:	22%
• Bachelors:	4%	• Disability:	3%		

Before beginning Restoring Responsible Gun Use (RRGU), most PCHs reported they hoped to learn from and take accountability for their actions, and stated they were looking forward to working with people in the community. Some PCHs noted they wanted to share what they learned through the process with community members to advocate for gun safety. Other PCHs shared they hoped to “come out with a different mindset” and that they were “looking forward to reflecting on my choices.”

**All RRGU persons who caused harm indicated that they were very satisfied (97%) or somewhat satisfied (3%) with the overall process, and that program staff and volunteers were treating them with respect.**

## RRGU PCH PRE- AND POST-PROCESS SURVEY RESPONSES

<b>Response Range (1-7): 1 = Not At All, 4= Somewhat, 7 = Very Badly</b>	<b>Pre-Process M (SD) (N = 31)</b>	<b>Post-Process M (SD) (N = 13)*</b>
My offense harmed the community	<b>4.19</b> (1.89)	<b>4.60</b> (1.96)
My offense harmed my family	<b>4.84</b> (2.09)	<b>5.08</b> (1.21)
My offense harmed me	<b>5.84</b> (1.23)	<b>5.85</b> (1.51)
<b>Response Range (1-7): 1 = Awful, 4 = Neutral, 7 = Happy With Who I Am</b>	<b>Pre-Process M (SD) (N = 31)</b>	<b>Post-Process M (SD) (N = 13)</b>
Right now, how do you feel about yourself?	<b>5.45</b> (1.41)	<b>6.15</b> (1.10)
<b>Post-Conference Only (N = 30)</b> <b>Response Range (1-7): 1 = Not at All, 4 = Somewhat, 7 = Completely</b>		
Program staff and volunteers are treating me with respect (N = 13)	<b>NA</b>	<b>7.00</b> (0.00)
I felt prepared, ready (N = 30)	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.50</b> (0.92)
I felt the process was fair (N = 30)	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.90</b> (0.40)
I felt comfortable expressing my true feelings during the process (N = 30)	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.83</b> (0.52)
Others in the circle listened when I spoke (N = 30)	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.93</b> (0.25)
Others in the circle were looking out for my best interests	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.80</b> (0.65)
The agreement we came to will help repair the harm that has been caused	<b>NA</b>	<b>6.80</b> (0.54)

\*Note: The difference in pre-post Ns is due to 17 participants filling out the incorrect post-conference survey.

When asked what, if anything, had changed for them as a result of participating in the program, the most frequent responses were changes in attitude and perspective, increased sense of accountability, and self-improvement.





RRGU helped me gain a better understanding of accepting accountability for my actions, taught me ways to handle a firearm, and also taught me discipline.”

–Person Who Caused Harm

Similar to Restorative Denver’s Community Group Conference model, the area where persons who caused harm showed the greatest growth when comparing their responses from before and after participating was an ***understanding of how their offense impacted the community***. The response, ***“My offense harmed the community,”*** increased from 4.19 to 4.60 on a 7-point scale from pre to post-process surveys.

## RRGU COMMUNITY MEMBERS

During **Restoring Responsible Gun Use’s (RRGU)** first year, **34 community members** participated in the process. Generally speaking, community members had some experience where they were directly impacted by gun violence, such as retired police officers, people who had family members or friends shot and killed, and former military.

All **Restoring Responsible Gun Use (RRGU)** community members reported they were completely satisfied (97%) or somewhat satisfied (3%) with the restorative justice process. When asked what, if anything, had changed for them as a result of their participation, more than half of the community members reported personal learning, such as changes in gun laws, increased community involvement, or learning from PCH narratives. The second most frequent response was appreciation for the RRGU process.

“With every one of these gun cases I learn more about gun laws and how to frame these issues. I always learn a little more about my community when involved, which is very important to me.



–RRGU Community Member

## RRGU COMMUNITY MEMBER SURVEY RESPONSES

Post-Conference Only (N = 34)	
Response Range (1-5): 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Somewhat Dissatisfied, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Somewhat Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied	M (SD)
How satisfied were you with the overall process?	4.97 (0.17)
Post-Conference Only (N = 34)	
Response Range (1-7): 1 = Not at All, 4 = Somewhat, 7 = Completely	M (SD)
I felt prepared and ready	6.44 (0.91)
I felt the process was fair	6.82 (0.45)
I felt comfortable expressing my true feelings during the process	6.91 (0.28)
Others in the room listened when I spoke	6.65 (0.76)

## RRGU FACILITATORS

Each RRGU circle uses two facilitators, and all facilitators completed a post-process evaluation. The facilitators indicated they were very satisfied (89%) or somewhat satisfied (11%) with the overall restorative justice process (gave 4 or 5 rating on a 1-5 scale). In open-ended feedback, several facilitators highlighted the value and impact that the community members imparted to the PCHs' learning and reflection, emphasizing the role of community representation in the restorative process and the value of community members' expertise with firearms and lived experiences.

Persons that caused harm shared that the facilitators helped them prepare for the process, listened “*with no judgement*,” and were supportive partners as they processed their actions, impact, and contemplated how to repair the harm.

RRGU community members described the facilitators as “*professional, empathetic, and well-organized*.” Several community members expressed appreciation for how the facilitators “kept us on track” and ensured that everyone had the opportunity to participate in the circle and contribute to the development of the healing agreement.

“

[Our facilitator] had a special gift for synthesizing ideas and turning them into items for the healing agreement.”

–Community Member



“The facilitator during the circle was a great listener and actively brainstormed effective and relatable solutions to help restore harm done.

”

–Community Member

# SUCCESS & RECIDIVISM

## RESTORATIVE DENVER

Restorative Denver runs a statewide recidivism report every year and reports recidivism rates after one year and after three years. For Restorative Denver, a person has recidivated if they successfully completed the program and then received a new misdemeanor or felony criminal conviction for a case with a date of offense after they completed the program. Recidivism rates do not include traffic convictions, other than careless or reckless driving, or municipal court convictions.

Restorative Denver collects data on recidivism in Colorado by searching two databases: Colorado State Courts- Data Access, which identifies if a person has a felony or misdemeanor case throughout the state of Colorado, and CourtNet, which identifies if a person has a misdemeanor case in Denver.

### ONE-YEAR RECIDIVISM RATE:

As of December 31, 2024, 99 people successfully completed Restorative Denver within the last year. Of these successful participants, two reoffended – **a recidivism rate of 2%.**

### THREE-YEAR RECIDIVISM RATE:

As of December 31, 2024, 298 people successfully completed Restorative Denver over the past three years. Of these successful participants, 18 reoffended – **a recidivism rate of 6%.**

Notably, of the 18 cases where the defendant reoffended within three years, the victim chose to participate in only four of the cases. Furthermore, both of the cases where the defendant reoffended after one year were community-harm cases, where a victim did not participate. This is notable because even lower rates of recidivism are anticipated in cases where the victim participates in the process and speaks to the defendant directly about the impact of his or her actions.





While it is difficult to estimate the recidivism rate for those similarly situated people who go through the traditional criminal justice system, for comparison purposes, defendants who successfully completed misdemeanor probation in 2022 recidivated at a rate of 6%. Probation only tracks recidivism for one year, so there is no data to compare to Restorative Denver's three-year recidivism rate. Additionally, the data for Restorative Denver is for both misdemeanors and felonies, while probation's data is only for misdemeanors. Finally, **31% of people who are sentenced to probation unsuccessfully terminate within the year.** Thus, while probation's recidivism rate might not seem dismal, a third of the people who are sentenced to probation do not even complete the program, compared to Restorative Denver, which has a 2% unsuccessful rate over the entirety of the program. This data was provided by a data analyst in Denver County Court.

## RESTORING RESPONSIBLE GUN USE (RRGU)

Since Restoring Responsible Gun Use began in December 2023, the recidivism data is only for one year thus far. Over the past year, 40 people were referred to RRGU. 100% of participants successfully completed the program, 0% withdrew before starting programming, and 0% were unsuccessful.

### ONE-YEAR RECIDIVISM RATE:

As of December 31, 2024, 21 people successfully completed Restoring Responsible Gun Use and no one reoffended - **a recidivism rate of 0%.**





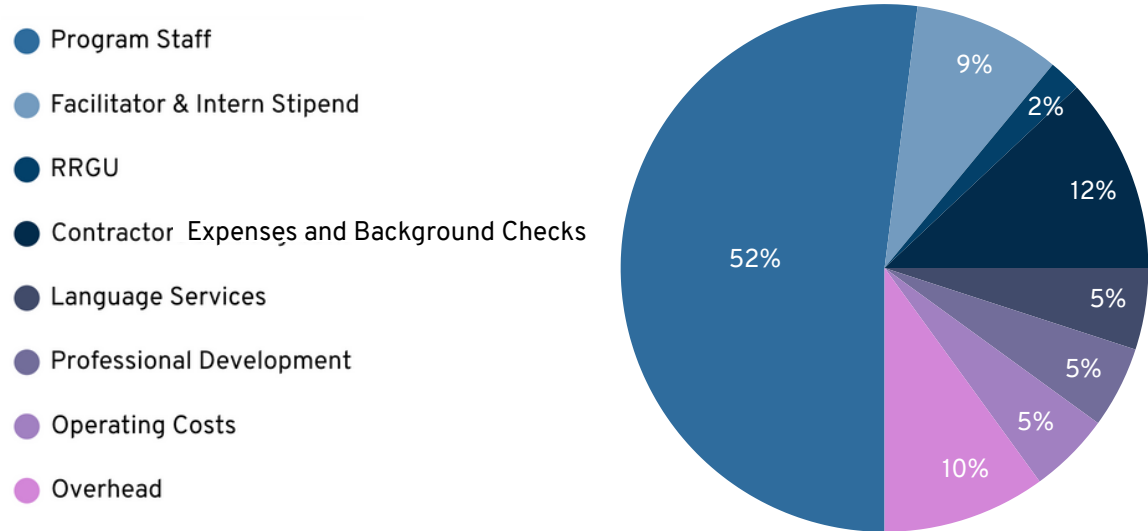
# FUNDING & COSTS

Restorative Denver’s funding comes from a variety of sources including the Denver District Attorney’s Office, grants, individual donations and The Conflict Center’s general operating funds.

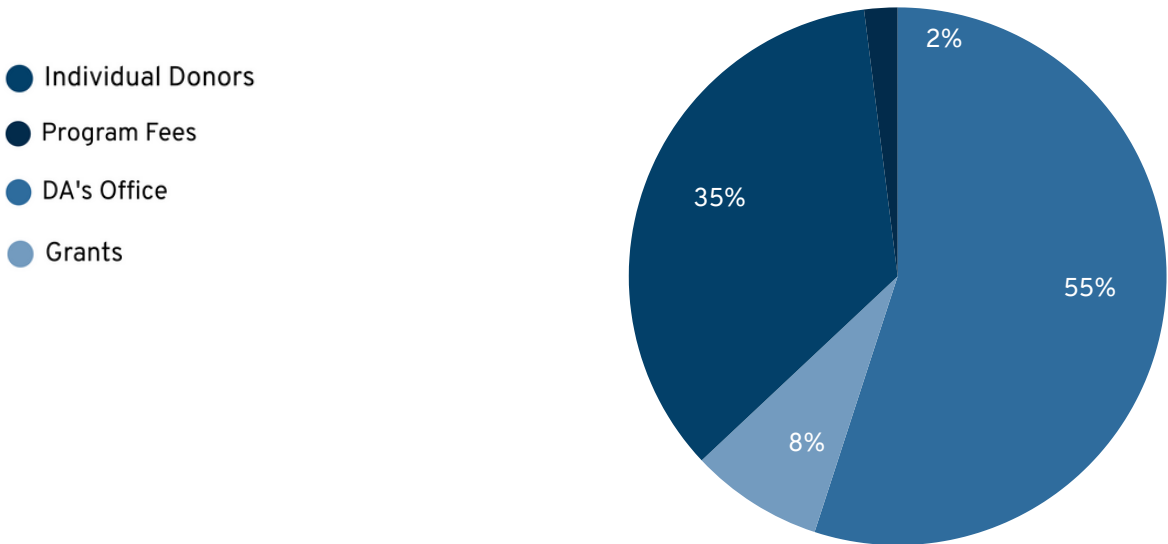
Restorative Denver is free for indigent defendants (persons who caused harm), provided at a reduced rate to those who are on some form of government assistance, and requires a \$250 program fee for defendants who do not fall into either category. However, about 77% of defendants referred to the program are indigent. The participant fees Restorative Denver does receive offset some of the program costs incurred, such as interpretation.

Additionally, Restorative Denver is one of a few programs in the state that offers a volunteer stipend for facilitators. This recognition of the hard costs of volunteering also provides an increased opportunity for a more diverse volunteer pool.

## RESTORATIVE DENVER EXPENSES



## RESTORATIVE DENVER REVENUE



# DATA ANALYSIS

All data analysis and summary reporting was prepared by Katie Golieb, MSW, with Colorado State University. Questions and comments about the quantitative and qualitative analysis and thematic writing can be directed to her at [Katie.Golieb@colostate.edu](mailto:Katie.Golieb@colostate.edu).

## QUESTIONS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions about Restorative Denver, please contact Chris Brown-Haugen at the Denver District Attorney's Office at [christina.brown@denverda.org](mailto:christina.brown@denverda.org) or Heidi Cardenas at The Conflict Center at [heidi.cardenas@conflictcenter.org](mailto:heidi.cardenas@conflictcenter.org).

*This report was designed by Sam Green.*

**Denver DA**  
JOHN WALSH District Attorney

