



Where did the gun
come from?

GUNS & CRIME

A Plan to Reduce Straw Purchasing of Guns by Women

New research shows that when a woman buys a gun for someone else, that gun is twice as likely to be used in a crime. Buying guns on behalf of someone who cannot pass a criminal background check is called a straw purchase. It's one of the most common ways guns are trafficked into urban neighborhoods, where they're often used in shootings. Women and girls are easy prey for gun traffickers. They're being exploited to buy, hide and carry guns for partners, family members and friends who can't get guns legally.

Introducing **LIPSTICK: Ladies Involved in Putting a Stop to Inner-City Killing**. Citizens for Safety has developed a groundbreaking program of peer-to-peer education, community organizing and social service intervention to prevent women from being used to provide guns used in crime. **LIPSTICK is women talking to women about the risks of straw purchasing—in beauty shops, churches, schools, domestic violence and homeless shelters in communities devastated by gun violence.** LIPSTICK turns victims into activists, creates peer leaders, and gives women the support to say no to exploitation, and yes to a brighter, safer future.

Opportunities for Impact

- Addresses a common source of illegally trafficked guns used in urban shootings
- Changes community norms
- Mobilizes populations in high-crime neighborhoods
- Doesn't require legislative action
- Doesn't threaten 2nd Amendment rights
- Provides new research to inform public policy

Core Strategies

- Educational forums to train leaders on gun trafficking sources and solutions
- Community actions to harness the power of women as leaders, spokespeople, advocates and change agents
- Research into the needs, attitudes and behaviors of women vulnerable to straw purchasing
- Protocols and materials for service providers to prevent the exploitation of women as straw buyers of guns

Lead Team

U.S. Dept. of Justice, Massachusetts Dept. of Public Safety, Harvard School of Public Health, Suffolk County DA, MassHousing, Project RIGHT

Facts

- Women are disproportionately involved in the sale of guns that end up in the hands of criminals (*Wintemute, Journal of Urban Health, 2010*)
- Criminal justice data shows young women in urban centers are often recruited as straw purchasers (*Washington Post, "The Hidden Life of Guns," 2010*)
- A majority of guns that are purchased and quickly used in crime were purchased by minority women (*Brandl and Strohshine, Criminal Justice Policy Review, 2010*)
- 50% of trafficking investigations involve a straw purchase (*ATF, "Following the Gun, 2000*)