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Contact: [Diane.Shinn@dc.gov](mailto:Diane.Shinn@dc.gov), 202-727-8991

## ODCA's NEAR Act Report Receives National Evaluation Award

**June 11, 2024 (WASHINGTON)** The Office of the District of Columbia Auditor (ODCA) report on the landmark legislation The Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results Amendment (NEAR) Act of 2016, has received a 2024 Certificate of Impact from the [National Legislative Program Evaluation Society \(NLPES\)](#) for “documented public policy changes, program improvements, dollar savings, or other public impacts.”

The NEAR Act was intended to implement a public health approach to prevent crime and violence in the District of Columbia by addressing root causes. ODCA initiated its work to assess whether the legislation had been implemented as intended and to document its demonstrated impacts thus far.



**2024**  
Certificate of Impact  
Award

NLPES is a professional staff association that includes employees of state legislative agencies engaged in program evaluation or performance auditing affiliated with the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The report, [NEAR Act Violence Prevention and Interruption Efforts: Opportunities to Strengthen New Program Models](#), was issued in June 2022. It was based on a review of program records and data, and interviews with dozens of D.C. government officials, contractors, grantees, business representatives, community leaders, and program clients and produced 13 recommendations for policy, process, and statutory changes.

A three-person panel of judges considered ODCA's documentation of the report's impact as evidenced by a number of program improvements that resulted from the implementation of the report's recommendations:

- Commissioning a comprehensive, independent study of the District's violence interruption programs, led by national leaders in violence prevention research, to examine the impacts of the programs on violent crime.
- Making recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits automatically eligible for the District's private security camera voucher program.
- Pairing five behavioral health professionals and five police officers to respond jointly and more effectively to emergency calls resulting from behavioral health crises.

The report was researched and written by ODCA Senior Analyst Jason Juffras, assisted by Auditor Abigail Edwards and Program Analyst Fredericka Shaw. “We’re very proud of the team’s work and the contribution this has made to the District’s effort to prevent violence,” said D.C. Auditor Kathy Patterson. “We also appreciate the endorsement of Councilmember Brooke Pinto who chairs the D.C. Council public safety oversight committee, in submitting the report for NLPES consideration.”

Juffras was also recently awarded a 2024-25 oversight fellowship by [The Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy](#), a national organization established in 2015 to carry on the legislative oversight legacy and vision of Carl Levin, Michigan’s longest serving Senator. The fellowship will support Juffras’s work to conduct case studies on legislative oversight in six states and produce a scholarly paper on state-level

oversight. Juffras also is a member of the NLPES Executive Committee and chairs its professional development subcommittee.

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**The mission of the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor (ODCA) is to support the Council of the District of Columbia by making sound recommendations that improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of the District government. Learn more at [www.dcauditor.org](http://www.dcauditor.org).**