

## Community Violence Prevention as a Family Strengthening Strategy

### Policy Brief No. 5

**This brief examines community led violence prevention initiatives which seek to engage diverse community stakeholders. Programs are highlighted that seek to define community assets as well as their challenges, root causes of violence and prevention strategies.**

Building a nurturing and supportive environment in which healthy families can pursue long term goals is critical for family success over time. Essential components for that success include access to affordable housing, strong neighborhood institutions, safe streets, supportive social networks, and an environment that promotes community and strengthens bonds between families. Strong neighborhoods offer a web of vital resources and opportunities such as formal and informal social networks, employers and public services. By making these networks, economic opportunities and services more accessible to families, neighborhoods thrive and families have the supports they need to succeed.

The Family Strengthening Policy Center (FSPC) asserts that families are strong when they are supported by safe and thriving neighborhoods and that building socially, economically and environmentally vibrant communities is a key to reducing crime and enabling children and families to feel safe at home, at school, and in public.

With that as context, FSPC examines community led violence prevention initiatives which seek to engage diverse community stakeholders. Programs are highlighted that seek to define community assets as well as their challenges; root causes of violence and prevention strategies.

### Violence Prevention: Definition

Prevention is the most constructive way to build safe communities. Local communities are the experts in identifying their particular community's problems (Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2004). Prevention is defined as

*a comprehensive and multifaceted effort to address the complex and multiple root factors associated with violence including: poverty, unemployment, discrimination, substance abuse, educational failure, fragmented families and domestic abuse. Efforts build on resiliency in*

*individuals, families, and communities. Violence prevention is distinct from violence containment or suppression. Violence prevention efforts contribute to empowerment, educational and economic progress, while fostering healthy communities in which people can grow in dignity and safety. Finally, efforts realign institutions to be more inclusive and receptive in responding to community needs.*

Adapted from SB2097, State of California, February 2000.

Prevention programs may consist of mentoring initiatives, after-school programs, family support services, skills training programs, youth leadership development, or athletic/recreational programs (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2002).

According to David Brown with the For Life Foundation, *“The early years of children are the time to begin helping them form strong, positive self-images, teach them to respect and get along with people. There has been research that children begin to absorb both the positive attitudes and negative biases attached to life experiences at a very early age.”*

*The Institute for Community Peace states that “violence is a complex phenomenon arising from individual, systematic and societal factors; therefore, responses that combat it should be comprehensive and arise from local community contexts, and solutions must engage a broad array of disciplines and sectors”*

(Bowen, Gwiasda, & Brown, p.357, 2004).

## Violence in America

The following statistics highlight changing attitudes regarding approaches to crime prevention:

### Attitudes toward approaches to lowering the crime rate in the U.S.

	Attack social problems	More law enforcement	Don't know
1990	57%	36%	7%
August 1992	67	25	8
August 1994	51	42	7
2000	68	27	5
2003	69	29	2

Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002

- Mark A. Cohen of Vanderbilt University (1998) estimated that the country would save \$1.7 million for each high-risk youth prevented from adopting a life of crime.
- Taxpayers save 2 million dollars for each child who is prevented from beginning a life of crime (Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2004)
- A study of delinquency prevention programs in California demonstrated that every dollar spent on prevention resulted in a direct savings of \$1.40 to law enforcement and the juvenile justice system (Bownes & Ingersoll, 1997).

## Community Engagement

Violence cannot be prevented without a mobilized public and partnerships between residents and others with power and resources in the community. When community members are involved in developing and leading a violence prevention project from the beginning, community ownership and commitment are created which facilitates involvement of others in the community, and ensures that specific activities are designed to meet the actual needs of people in the area (Carter, 2003).

In addition to community ownership, community involvement establishes supportive social ties and social relationships, which are also essential for strong families (Carter, 2003). A mobilized and engaged community is imperative for community violence prevention. Indeed, studies have shown social isolation to be linked to community and family violence (Carter, 2003).

## Violence Prevention: Planning and Process

The process of preventing violence involves developing various capacities like community engagement and skills such as how to gather relevant data within the community and use it to assess, analyze, and address the issues that cause violence. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2003) highlights specific goals at each stage of the planning process.

## Community Planning Process Goals

**Mobilization**

**Assessment**

**Planning**

**Implementation**

**Mobilization:** To mobilize and involve all stakeholders in working collaboratively toward the development of a plan to ameliorate identified problems that pose a threat to public safety.

**Assessment:** To build a database profile for your community that fosters understanding the factors that contribute to the problems.

**Planning:** To develop an integrated, systemwide plan for research-based, targeted responses to problem behaviors.

**Implementation:** To act on and evaluate strategies for ameliorating problem behaviors and increasing public safety.

*Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2003*

***The following are issues to consider during the various stages of a violence prevention planning process:***

### **How to involve people most affected by crime**

People who experience a problem have a more direct and realistic outlook on their needs. Potential obstacles to participation may include: limited experience; resistant leaders; lack of time, transportation or child care; and a sense of powerlessness.

### **How to identify the root causes of violence**

It is important to examine the social, political and economic structures that give rise to violence in order to be successful reducing or preventing it. Information gathering strategies that planning groups can use include: mapping assets and needs; conducting community forums; listening projects, and resident interviews to identify gaps, resources, concerns and solutions. Taking action without identifying what factors contribute to the problem can result in misdirected efforts.

### **How to develop a plan for increasing participation in community action**

Prevention planning groups may include: youth, parents, business leaders, community groups, city and school officials, police, social service, health care, and mental health providers. In order to mobilize within the community, a plan with structure and focus is imperative for successful implementation. Finally, a successful prevention plan should include collaboration among grassroots organizations and neighborhood residents. Diverse community stakeholders are needed to identify key community concerns.

### ***Other questions to consider when planning a violence prevention program***

Does your group feel as if they have a holistic understanding of the nature of violence in the community? Does the planning team reflect the community's racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity? Does the group include young people? Will the focus be on the individual, family, community or system level? Do your strategies make sense given the communities' targeted violence issue? What will be used as evidence of success?

## **Benefits of Neighborhood Action**

***Neighborhood action can reduce crime.*** Studies have shown that cohesive neighborhoods are associated with lower crime levels, with the further suggestion that the cohesion may be responsible for the crime reduction.

***Neighborhood action can improve health.*** Through neighborhood action, the social and interpersonal support networks in the community grow stronger. Researchers have learned that people who have strong support networks are healthier.

***Neighborhood action can produce better outcomes for children.*** Stronger neighborhoods produce more resilient, goal-oriented, and better adapted young people.

***Neighborhood action can stimulate local economic development.*** Neighborhood residents can expand their available social contacts, which may have economic value. The more contacts you have, the more likely you will know someone who can help get you what you need, or who knows someone who can. (Community ToolBox, 2004)

## **Q & A with Heather Dade, Institute for Community Peace**

The Institute for Community Peace (ICP) serves as a leading national organization working to prevent violence and promote peace. They support strategies that emphasize resident engagement, community empowerment and expanded national attention to the range of factors that contribute to and prevent violence and promote peace.

**Q: How do we move from the focus on individuals to an emphasis on community engagement?**

**A:** The Institute for Community Peace (ICP) actually began its work by focusing on community engagement. Founders of the organization, originally called the National Funding Collaborative on Violence Prevention (NFCVP), discovered that very little attention was focused on primary prevention to address root causes of violence and concluded that the best way to respond was through community engagement. Their premise was that communities knew better what kinds of violence problems they were experiencing and could implement their own solutions. We asked them to form broad based, multi-sectoral collaborations that included those most directly affected by violence—victims, perpetrators and witnesses. Such an inclusive collaboration assured a focus on community strengths and needs, rather than just individual deficits.

We continue to allow communities to lead this charge, and accept what they identify as the problems and the solutions. We prod the collaboratives to routinely reflect on what they have done to prevent violence and to question whether or not their work is done by encouraging them to delve deeper in their analysis of

what they originally thought were the root causes of the problems. This process helps them recognize that individual behaviors are a reflection of larger community norms, biases, and lack of opportunities.

Unfortunately, community change is difficult to evaluate with standard evaluation measures. Funders often discourage community engagement work in lieu of individual change interventions that are more amenable to traditional evaluations. In fact, the current evidence-based approach to evaluation often forces a focus on individual change because these are the only ones that traditional evaluation can prove works.

**Q: How do you incorporate knowledge of the community context within your community violence prevention plan?**

**A:** Given their firsthand experience, community members have a deeper understanding of their violence problems than outsiders. To complement their intuitive sense of violence problems and solutions, collaborative members collect official data and statistics such as police beat information, child welfare statistics, domestic violence information and data from the school and health systems. We also encourage them to supplement this information with informal data collected from residents via town hall meetings, community forums, focus groups and individual conversations. These combined information sources should give them a good grasp of violence issues and that is supplemented with asset mapping and needs assessments. We work with them to analyze all the data that emerges.

**Q:** How do you foster an understanding of the factors that contribute to community problems?

**A:** We found that communities usually have a deep understanding of the complexity of their violence problems and can generally identify the root causes of it. An outside agent can provide a venue for community members to talk about the issues, identify effective prevention strategies, and tie together the various pieces that make up a successful violence prevention plan. Agents can also assist communities by providing best practice examples and model programs, and by giving them access to successful methods of solving community violence problems. What we ultimately provide for communities is the opportunity to be heard and to reach informed conclusions about local violence problems.

Besides the extensive data and asset mapping, public education to promote understanding and action is essential. As communities begin to understand the depth of issues that cause violence, it is critical to communicate findings to the broader community to gain the support of ordinary citizens as well as those who broker resources. The prevention of violence calls for transformation in a broad range of behaviors, both by those who perpetuate violence and by all of those who are silent witnesses to it. Helping people to connect violent incidents with larger societal issues is essential to this transformation. When communities reach this point, they understand that preventing violence is only one component of a peaceful community and they are prepared to work on deeper concerns.

**Q:** What are the key ingredients for a successful community violence prevention effort?

**A:**

1. *Meaningful resident engagement* – this means engaging residents as leaders and decision-makers to conceptualize, implement, evaluate, and communicate the causes and solutions to violence problems.
2. *Broad-based, multi-sectoral collaboratives* – violence is complex and its physical manifestation is more symptom than cause. It requires an equally complex solution developed by all community stakeholders.
3. *Strong analysis of violence problems and community context* – rather than focusing on one violence issue, communities should examine all forms of violence and analyze both community needs and assets before solutions are implemented.
4. *A vision of what community peace looks like beyond the absence of violence* – we ask communities to envision what they WANT TO BE, not just what they are trying to prevent.
5. *Ample time* - the view has to be at least generational. You may be able to stop crime in a few years, but to reach primary prevention and community peace, one needs to take a long view of change.
6. *Resource base* that includes, but is not limited to, financial sources which are important, but not the most important resource that can be brought to bear on violence problems. Solutions to violence require that all parties change their traditional approach to community and that these changes be permanently institutionalized.

7. *Continued attention to and analysis of violence problems as they arise* – a transformed community has to continually attend to ever present threats to prevention and peace.

8. *Continued focus on issues of equity (race, sex, gender, sexuality, etc.)* – Inequities drive many violence problems. Community peace calls for addressing inequities caused by racism and powerlessness and creating an environment that equally values all members of a community.

**Q: How do you involve those most affected by violence?**

**A:** ICP defines those most affected by violence as witnesses, victims, survivors and perpetrators of violence—basically everyone who lives in a “violent” community has a role to play. Neighbors who know that intimate partner violence is occurring, that children are being abused, that youth are being harmed by adults and other youth have to reach a place where they understand that their inaction is also a form of violence.

Community organizations can reach out to residents through flyers, announcements at other community events, focus groups, town hall meetings, going door-to-door, and passing information by word of mouth. Casting a wide net helps to attract diverse representation from the community.

### Practices from the field

Central to family-centered practice and community building are the following principles:

- Families are resources to other families and to communities

- Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.
- Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive and accountable to the families served. (Family Support America, 2004)

The following programs adhere to the idea that community members are assets and resources for prevention efforts which increases their effectiveness.

- **The Flint Youth Violence Prevention Center’s Youth Empowerment Solutions for Peaceful Communities (YES)** seeks to use empowerment theory and positive youth development as its cornerstone.

*“Youth in a designated school attendance area will identify and assess conditions in their community that may contribute to youth violence, communicating their findings to peers and adults, plan and carry out community change in partnership with neighborhood organizations, and assist in evaluating the effectiveness of those projects.”*

Lee Bell, Program Coordinator

### KidSpeak is

*“a public hearing forum of YES that presents young people with the opportunity to talk about issues that concern them. The original format gives youth from around the state of Michigan a chance to testify before members of the state legislature and invited guests such as elected officials, funders, law enforcement officers, judges, college administrators, school board members, and other high profile stakeholders. Many of the topics talked about by the youth such as school safety, conditions, policies, aggression/conflict resolution, neighborhood conditions, and lack of*

*activities/places for youth can contribute in some manner to youth violence.”*

Lee Bell, Program Coordinator

**The Alliance of Concerned Men** is a Washington, D.C. non-profit, community-based organization that provides a comprehensive, community-wide approach to serving low-income, at-risk youth and families. Interrelated strategies are aimed at community mobilization, violence suppression, social intervention, opportunities, education and training. The Alliance's programs intend to bring about a change in the attitudes and values of local youth to lead productive lives instead of turning to crime and violence. The Alliance's intention to improve the outcomes of at-risk youth and low-income communities is evident in programs and outreach activities that aim to:

- Foster strong parent-child relationships;
- Use outreach programs that help develop survival skills for managing social, family and work settings;
- Develop job readiness and life skills; and
- Provide other valuable skills through workshops on various topics including education opportunities, alcohol abuse, parenting skills, family strengthening & financial planning.

- **National Crime Prevention Council's *Embedding Prevention in State Policy and Practice Initiative***

Since 2001, the National Crime Prevention Council has supported a five year initiative to promote prevention as the preferred choice of local governments and communities for reducing crime, violence and substance abuse. NCPCC aims to create self-supporting movements to promote and embed prevention within state policy. One

example is Kentucky's Justice Cabinet which has allocated funds to primary prevention and is currently developing a comprehensive database of prevention programs. Oregon is in the process of implementing legislation (S.B. 555) requiring localities to produce a comprehensive plan across agencies, incorporating all local prevention needs and priorities that will also include prevention indicators such as improved school readiness, teen pregnancy reduction, and high school retention.

## Federal Initiatives

- **Promoting Safe and Stable Families**

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families program funds community-based services that prevent child abuse and neglect through parenting-education, family strengthening services for troubled families, adoption services, and other preventive programs.

- **Department of Justice – Weed and Seed**

The U.S. Department of Justice's Operation Weed and Seed is a strategy to control violent crime, drug trafficking, and drug-related crime in targeted areas and to provide a safe environment for residents to live, work, and raise their families. It takes a comprehensive approach to addressing violence and crime by connecting community development with law enforcement strategies and establishing collaborative partnerships between diverse stakeholders, including community residents; federal, state, and local law enforcement; local government; the private sector; and faith-based organizations to create and sustain safe neighborhoods. The strategy involves a two-pronged approach: "Weeding" activities include concentrated and enhanced law enforcement efforts to identify, arrest and prosecute

violent offenders, drug traffickers, and other criminals operating in the target areas. The weeding process is supported by community policing initiatives that engage community residents and businesses as problem solving partners in the law enforcement effort (Dunworth & Mills, 1999, p. 3). “Seeding” initiatives represent a broader and more complex array of activities, including prevention and intervention programs for youth, neighborhood restoration, community building and community development, adult employment and economic advancement programs, family support services and community economic development (Dunworth & Mills, 1999, p.3).

- **Title V Community Prevention Grants**

The Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs is the only federal funding source dedicated solely to the prevention of youth crime and violence. It provides communities with funding and a guiding framework for developing and implementing comprehensive, community-based three year prevention plans. The program embraces these core components of a violence prevention strategy:

- Promoting community action through locally controlled initiatives;
- Offering young people opportunities to engage in productive and positive activities as a means to halt violent crime *before* it begins;
- Engaging diverse public and private stakeholders along with parents, community members and youth to reduce risk factors for delinquency and put protective factors in place;
- Organizing activities that address all areas of young people’s lives, including their family, school, peers and community; and

- Collecting data to better understand the root causes of violence and how best to address them.

The grants program requires communities to leverage the expertise of diverse stakeholders to develop resources, share information, and obtain additional funding to sustain a long-term delinquency prevention strategy. Communities are required to form multidisciplinary Prevention Policy Boards (PBPBs) which typically include community leaders, program developers, researchers, and others who are involved in mobilizing the community, governing, or serving children.

- **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act**

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) is the principal federal legislation specifically addressing the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. CAPTA provides federal funding to improve state child protection services (CPS) and community-based prevention services.

- **School Dropout Prevention**

The School Dropout Prevention program supports effective, sustainable, and coordinated dropout prevention and reentry programs that include remedial education, counseling and mentoring for at-risk students, reduced pupil-to-teacher ratios, and increased professional development.

- **The 21st Century Community Learning Centers**

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program is the federal government’s principal after-school investment. It awards grants to establish and run after-school programs that provide educational enrichment opportunities for elementary

and secondary school students and their families. Grantees offer students youth development activities, counseling, art, music, recreation, technology, and character education programs.

## Proposed Federal Legislation

**The Younger Americans Act (YAA)** is a legislative *proposal* that would establish a comprehensive, coordinated national youth policy. YAA would provide communities with assistance to mobilize and support youth development programs to engage youth in building the skills and character needed to become effective citizens and adults. Under the proposal, communities would be able to use YAA grants to fund a variety of activities, including: character and ethical enrichment activities; mentoring activities; community youth centers and clubs; after-school, weekend, and summer programs; sports and recreational programs; academic enrichment, peer counseling and literacy activities; camping activities; workforce preparation and technological and vocational skills building; and community service activities.

**The Federal Youth Coordination Act (H.R. 4703)** was introduced in June 2004 by Representatives Tom Osborne (R-NE), Peter Hoekstra (R-MI) and Harold Ford (D-TN). This bipartisan legislation was drafted in partnership with member agencies of the National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) and is a response to a report issued by the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth in December 2003. The report describes the current federal response to the needs of youth as lacking in focus and recommends evaluation, coordination and improvement of federal youth-serving programs. The legislation establishes a Federal Youth Development Council to facilitate interagency collaboration, coordinate federal research, and identify and replicate model programs.

## Lessons Learned: Recommendations for Action

To create a unified and sustainable violence prevention system, community residents must be engaged in the planning process. Initiatives that rely on bottom-up, participatory decision-making comprise a family strengthening approach because they are structured to engage and support the entire family.

The following recommendations are adapted from the National Evaluation of Weed and Seed (1999) and the Embedding Prevention in State Policy and Practice Report (2003). They reflect the importance of shared responsibility and community engagement when developing and implementing a violence prevention plan.

### State and Local Level

As this analysis reveals, prevention and violence reduction are essential for viable neighborhoods in which families can raise healthy children. As such, violence prevention strategies are fundamental to family strengthening. Decision makers and residents should consider the following in developing community violence prevention strategies.

- **Institute a structure for violence prevention in local communities that establishes leadership and accountability.** The community must have accountability for public safety outcomes and requires designated leadership to move activities forward. Successful prevention efforts should extend decision-making power to neighborhood residents, youth and community groups, as well as leaders of local and state government.

- **Increase public awareness about the underlying contributors to violence.** Increasing public awareness can foster understanding about violence and empower broader involvement in the solution.
- **Identify additional methods of support as well as potential barriers that the state imposes on local community violence prevention efforts and request assistance.**
- **Establish a set of shared violence prevention principles by which all service providers support violence prevention efforts in their everyday work.** Shared principles provide common objectives and standards for accountability for violence prevention efforts.
- **Build and maintain collaborative relationships across agencies.** Successful prevention initiatives must build relationships across agencies that serve youth and families, including local, government, private and foundations.
- **Organizations should consider increasing coordination and collaboration with varied funding sources,** Include public and private funding streams that focus on a wide spectrum of community investment strategies, ranging from neighborhood revitalization to youth development.

## RESOURCES

### **Adults and Children Together Against Violence**

<http://www.actagainstviolence.org/index.html>

ACT—Adults and Children Together—Against Violence is a violence prevention project that focuses on adults who raise, care for, and teach young children ages 0 to 8 years. It is designed to prevent violence by helping adults to be positive role models and learn the skills to teach young children nonviolent ways to resolve conflicts, deal with frustration, and handle anger.

### **Alameda County Violence Prevention Initiative**

<http://www.preventioninstitute.org/alameda.html>

This four-phase process will culminate in a violence prevention blueprint in 2004. The phases are 1) defining the problem, 2) defining overall solutions, 3) defining sectoral solutions, and 4) building a strong implementation movement grounded in strategy.

### **The Alliance of Concerned Men**

[www.allianceofconcernedmen.org](http://www.allianceofconcernedmen.org)

The Alliance of Concerned Men (ACM) is a community-based organization that provides outreach, prevention, intervention, social services, cultural enrichment and recreational activities for low-income, at-risk youths and families within the District of Columbia. The purpose of ACM is youth crime and violence intervention/prevention.

### **Backfire**

<http://www.luckyucorp.com>

The BACKFIRE effort is a positive attempt to unite individuals, young and old. And to address issues and challenges that life will present.

**Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention:  
A Sourcebook for Community Action**

[www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/bestpractices.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/bestpractices.htm)

Best Practices, a resource from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention looks at the effectiveness of specific violence prevention practices in four key areas: parents and families; home visiting; social and conflict resolution skills; and mentoring. These programs are drawn from real-world experiences of professionals and advocates who have successfully worked to prevent violence among children and adolescents. The sourcebook also documents the science behind each best practice and offers a comprehensive directory of resources for more information about programs that have used these practices. Spanish resource: *Prácticas Óptimas para la Prevención de la Violencia Juvenil: Libro de Referencia para la Acción Comunitaria*.

**Bureau of Justice Statistics Sourcebook  
of Criminal Justice Statistics**

<http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/index.html>

Brings together data from more than 100 sources about many aspects of criminal justice in the United States.

**Center for the Study of the Prevention of Violence**

[www.colorado.edu/cspv/](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/)

CSPV has a threefold mission: to conduct research on the causes of violence and the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs; to collect research literature and resources on the causes and prevention of violence as well as providing direct information services to the public through topical searches on customized databases; and to offer technical assistance for the evaluation and development of violence prevention programs.

**Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions  
and Supports (PBIS)**

[www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)

Provides information about preventing problem behavior; teaching and encouraging pro-social behavior; creating sustainable systems to support behavioral programming efforts; research on validated practices of positive behavior support; establishing collaborative systems with schools, families, and communities; positive behavioral interventions and supports; and functional behavioral assessments.

**Community ToolBox**

<http://ctb.ku.edu/index.jsp>

The Tool Box provides over 6,000 pages of practical skill-building information on more than 250 different topics. Topic sections include step-by-step instruction, examples, check-lists, and related resources.

**Concerned Parents of Pueblo**

[www.concernedparentsofpueblo.org](http://www.concernedparentsofpueblo.org)

Concerned Parents of Pueblo was founded in response to the increasing levels of youth violence in local schools and the community of Pueblo, Colorado. This grassroots organization has operated on the philosophy that parents and youth need to have significant and meaningful opportunities for bettering community life through volunteerism. Concerned Parents of Pueblo uses a multifaceted approach to serving youth and families that includes engaging and rewarding youth for positive behaviors and service to the local community; educating parents and youth about critical issues through workshops; encouraging greater parent involvement in schools and communities; and providing mentoring services to local youth.

### **Evolution to Effective Prevention Diagnostic Scale**

[http://www.preventioninstitute.org/pdf/Evolution\\_worksheet.pdf](http://www.preventioninstitute.org/pdf/Evolution_worksheet.pdf)

The Evolution to Effective Prevention Diagnostic Scale can help organizations, communities, and collaboratives assess the development of their prevention efforts, analyze current efforts, and assist groups to make their interventions more comprehensive and effective.

### **Family and Community Violence Prevention Program (FCVP)**

<http://www.fcvp.org/>

The purpose of the FCVP is to impact the increasing incidence of violence and abusive behavior in low income, at-risk communities through the mobilization of community partners. The FCVP coordinates the activities of Family Life Centers (FLCs) at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and other minority-serving institutions in 17 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The FLCs are engaged in violence prevention activities which address the academic, personal, cultural and career development of youth who are at risk for involvement in violent and other abusive behavior.

### **Fight Crime: Invest in Kids**

<http://www.fightcrime.org/>

a bipartisan, nonprofit anti-crime organization led by more than 2,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, victims of violence and leaders of police officer associations. It conducts research on and evaluates the effectiveness of crime-prevention strategies, develops policy recommendations, and analyzes the crime-prevention impact of public policy proposals.

### **Flint's Youth Violence Prevention Center**

<http://www.sph.umich.edu/yvpc/>

The mission of the Flint's Youth Violence Prevention Center is to develop, implement, and monitor comprehensive strategies that help prevent youth violence and promote healthy development. Through collaboration among community, university and health department partners the Center focuses on interdisciplinary, ecologically and culturally relevant, and community-based approaches.

### **The For Life Foundation**

<http://www.forlifefoundation.org/index.html>

Provides educational and instructional services in the area of health and wellness for children.

### **Institute for Community Peace**

[www.instituteforcommunitypeace.org](http://www.instituteforcommunitypeace.org)

The Institute for Community Peace (ICP) serves as a leading national organization working to prevent violence and promote peace. ICP is guided by three fundamental beliefs: that violence is preventable, peace is possible, and that both are best achieved through community-driven strategies that demonstrate the power of collective local action. They support strategies that emphasize resident engagement and community empowerment and expanded national attention to the range of factors that contribute to and prevent violence and promote peace.

### **Join Together**

[www.jointogether.org](http://www.jointogether.org)

Provides news and funding coverage, resource links and advocacy tools supporting community-based efforts to reduce and prevent substance abuse and gun violence.

### **National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise**

<http://www.ncne.com/index.cfm>

The mission of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise is to empower neighborhood leaders to promote solutions that reduce crime and violence, restore families, revitalize low-income communities, and create economic enterprise.

### **National Crime Prevention Council**

[www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)

The National Crime Prevention Council is the nation's focal point and voice for crime prevention as well as a source of help for individuals, neighborhoods, communities and governments. NCPCC enables people to create safer and more caring communities by addressing the causes of crime and violence and reducing the opportunities for crime to occur.

### **National Crime Prevention Council's "Embedding Prevention in State Policy and Practice"**

[www.ncpc.org/embedding](http://www.ncpc.org/embedding)

The Embedding Prevention in State Policy and Practice Initiative of the National Crime Prevention Council aims to create within five years, self-supporting movements in six states (Arizona, California, Connecticut, Iowa, Kentucky and Oregon) and their communities that promote and implement prevention as the policy of choice for reducing crime, violence and drug abuse. The Initiative's website serves as a repository of resources and information for key documents including its quarterly bulletin, *The State of Prevention*, initiative evaluation reports, and an inventory of prevention information and promising policies.

### **OJJDP Model Programs Guide**

[http://www.dsgonline.com/Model\\_Programs\\_Guide/Web/mpg\\_index.htm](http://www.dsgonline.com/Model_Programs_Guide/Web/mpg_index.htm)

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Model Programs Guide is designed to assist practitioners and communities in implementing evidence-based prevention & intervention programs.

### **Prevention Institute**

<http://www.preventioninstitute.org/home.html>

Prevention Institute is a non-profit national center dedicated to improving community health and well-being by building momentum for effective primary prevention. The organization has focused on injury and violence prevention, traffic safety, health disparities, nutrition and physical activity, and youth development.

### **Public/Private Ventures, Youth Policy and Programming**

[www.ppv.org/ppv/youth/youth.asp](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/youth/youth.asp)

Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the effectiveness of social policies, programs and community initiatives, especially as they affect youth and young adults. One of P/PV's core areas of research is youth programming and policy, with a focus on mentoring, after-school programs, high risk youth and volunteering.

## Street Law

[www.streetlaw.org](http://www.streetlaw.org)

Street Law, Inc.'s programs and curricula promote knowledge of legal rights and responsibilities, engagement in the democratic process, and belief in the rule of law, among both youth and adults.

## U.S. Department of Justice, Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO)

[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/)

The CCDO oversees the network of more than 300 Weed and Seed communities, enhances law enforcement and prosecution coordination among federal, state, and local agencies, and awards Official Recognition to unfunded sites

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**This series of policy briefs produced by the Family Strengthening Policy Center (FSPC)** seeks to describe a new way of thinking about how to strengthen families raising children in low-income communities and how this approach can and should influence policy. The premise of “family strengthening” in this context, and as championed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is that children do well when cared for by supportive families, which, in turn, do better when they live in vital and supportive communities. The series describes ways in which enhancing connections within families and between families and the institutions that affect them result in better outcomes for children and their families.

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This brief reflects the findings and views of the Family Strengthening Policy Center, which is solely responsible for its content. Additional policy briefs are available at [www.nassembly.org/fspc](http://www.nassembly.org/fspc).

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