

PART ONE: OVERVIEW

The UNITY City Network Convening brought together city, state and national leaders for two days of peer learning and strategizing at Prevention Institute's Oakland office. With more than 50 participants and almost twenty hours of focused discussion the convening resulted in an impressive breadth and depth of outcomes and learnings. The following notes provide a summary of key elements of the convening.*

PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES

Participants reported arriving at the convening eager for the opportunity to work with others that shared their, "energy," "optimism," "focus" and "genuine concern to end youth violence." As they worked through an ambitious set of outcomes, participants shared their expertise and learned from colleagues, trainings and discussions with national experts. Participants described their experience at the convening as, "creative," "inspiring," and "energizing." In addition to building the capacity of participants to prevent violence, many participants recounted feeling refreshed and reinvigorated, ready to revisit their approaches to the challenging issue of preventing violence. As participants built rapport and came together around a shared vision they shifted from individuals with common goals to an emerging network of coordinated members. Participants reported leaving the convening, "seeing that what we are doing locally is a part of a larger whole" and "feeling the new momentum of our movement."

The participants worked through a comprehensive agenda over the convening. The major outcomes, listed here, are detailed below:

1. Peer networking
2. Orientation to a prevention/public health approach to preventing violence
3. Consensus and fine-tuning of a shared framework for preventing violence
4. Identifying agenda and mechanisms to advance a national agenda
5. Providing guidance on ways to maximize the impact of UNITY and the UNITY Network

1. Peer Networking: The convening was the first opportunity for members of the UNITY Network to meet each other and make the type of personal connections that will sustain and link the Network via technology. In the evaluation almost all participants *strongly agreed* with the statement: "I established meaningful contacts with representatives of other cities."

2. Orientation to a Prevention/Public Health Approach to Preventing Violence: Participants represented a diverse set of professional and educational backgrounds. For this reason a Prevention/Public Health Approach was introduced by Deborah Prothrow-Stith, UNITY Co-Chair and discussed throughout the day. While only a few of the participants came from a public health background the participants concluded that a prevention/public health approach was very tangible, doable and an important way to approach cities, community leaders and young people. Further, the evaluation showed that participants could describe key components of a prevention/public health approach. For example, almost all participants strongly agreed with the statement: "I can explain the difference between conducting a program and implementing a city-wide strategy."

* If further detail on any particular section would be helpful, please contact Prevention Institute directly.

3. Consensus and Fine-tuning of a Shared Framework for Preventing Violence: The *UNITY RoadMap(URM)* has been developed over the last three years and the convening provided the time and small group discussions to orient, fine tune and affirm the *URM* as a tool that is relevant to national and local leaders alike. Participants saw the *URM* as a valuable tool that filled a void in their work. The evaluation reflected that sentiment with an almost unanimous 93.8% of participants strongly agreeing that, “I will refer to the UNITY materials at work.” The *UNITY RoadMap* was the highest rated convening component with a mean score of 4.8 on a five point scale where 5 is “Very Useful.”

4. Identified Agenda and Mechanisms to Advance a National Agenda: To best support local efforts, convening participants identified short term and long term mechanisms for a national agenda that UNITY will work towards in the upcoming years. Almost all participants strongly agreed with the statement, “My city will support a national agenda to prevent youth violence.”

5. Guidance on Ways to Maximize the Impact of UNITY and the UNITY Network: After becoming familiar with the goals of UNITY and the City Network, participants provided concrete advice on ways the initiative can leverage resources and maximize outcomes. Participants indicated they wanted more time to discuss, formulate and work together on a national agenda. They also made specific requests for assistance from UNITY on local efforts including: evaluation design, training, development and review of strategic plans, and orientation/transition support as city staff turnover.

Evaluation results indicated that participants found the convening goals and outcomes valuable. Scores evaluating the convening components ranged from 4.4 to 4.8 on a five point scale where 5 is “Very Useful.” The highest rated components were Peer Networking and the *UNITY RoadMap*, with mean scores of 4.80 and 4.79 on a 5 point scale respectively. The overall quality of the sessions and the overall content of the sessions earned high marks with mean scores of 4.75 where 5 is “Excellent.” The diverse representation across fields was a remarked on strength of the convening in addition to other attributes participants “liked most,” including: networking, information sharing, and getting energized and focused.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants representing many sectors including public health, government, criminal justice, law enforcement, education, research and human services shared their approaches and effective practices and identified areas of consensus and places for deeper exploration.

UNITY City Teams: Individuals representing San Diego, Tucson, New Orleans, Oakland, Minneapolis, St. Louis, Louisville, Cleveland and Boston attended. The following cities are being kept up to date on the city network as they finalize and/or explore membership in the UNITY City Network: San Francisco, Seattle, Denver, Nashville, Detroit, Philadelphia, Newark, and Los Angeles County.

State and National Partners: Tom Simon, Corrine Graffunder & Neil Rainford of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Gary Slutkin of Chicago CeaseFire; Gina Wood of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Health Policy Institute; Barbara Shaw of the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority; and Lori Dorfman of Berkeley Media Studies Group.

UNITY Staff: HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH: Deborah Prothrow-Stith (*UNITY Co-Chair*, LeSette Wright, Derrick Cordy); PREVENTION INSTITUTE: Larry Cohen (*UNITY Co-Chair*), Rachel Davis (*UNITY Project Director*), Annie Lyles, Sonia Lee, Anthony Perez, and Howard Pinderhughes (UCSF); SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA INJURY PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER, UCLA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH: Billie Weiss (*UNITY Co-Chair*) and Daniel Healy.

PART TWO
THE *UNITY ROADMAP*: A FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

1. Key findings from the UNITY City Assessment In an effort to inform urban efforts to reduce violence, UNITY conducted an assessment to establish baseline measurements of the magnitude of youth violence, the level of concern within the city and collaborative efforts to address and monitor the issue. The assessment was conducted by the Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center (SCIPRC) at UCLA School of Public Health. The study included standardized interviews with Mayors, Police Chiefs, Health Department Directors and School Superintendents, or their designees in a representative sample of the largest cities (populations of 400,000 or more) across the U.S. Billie Weiss, who led the UNITY assessment, provided an overview to participants and each city received a copy of the full document. **The major findings** included:

- Research has shown that violence is a serious issue for cities. Despite the evidence little data have been collected reporting on cities' overall strategies, resources, and activities to address this problem.
- Most cities cited a lack of a comprehensive strategy.
- Public Health Departments are not generally included in city strategies.
- Law enforcement and criminal justice are the most prevalent strategies used in the cities.
- Gang violence was identified as the major type of youth violence.
- Cities, for the most part, lack clearly developed outcomes, evaluations, or evaluation plans to measure and monitor their efforts.
- **Cities with the greatest coordinated approach also had the lowest rates of youth violence.**

For a complete version of the report or a summary, please link to: <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY.html>

2. Overview of the *UNITY RoadMap* The *UNITY RoadMap* shaped the day's agenda and informed discussions throughout the day. The *UNITY RoadMap* is a framework for mapping out solutions to effectively and sustainably prevent violence. It was developed after the UNITY City Assessment revealed that although youth violence is a serious concern, cities generally characterize their responses as inadequate. The *RoadMap* builds on similar tools that have been effective for other challenging issues – similar in their complexity. In fact, many of the categories were drawn from the AIDS Program Efforts Index (API) developed by The POLICY project, USAID, and UNAIDS to measure the effort put into national HIV/AIDS programs throughout the world. Various components of the *UNITY RoadMap* have undergone a literature review and/or been informed by interviews with violence prevention practitioners and city representatives. The *UNITY RoadMap* has been reviewed by city representatives and refined based on their input. The *UNITY RoadMap* is comprised of nine elements in three clusters:

A. WHO does it take to prevent violence before it occurs? **Partnerships**

1. High-Level Leadership; 2. Collaboration & Staffing; and 3. Community Engagement

B. WHAT does it take to prevent violence before it occurs? **Prevention**

4. Programs, Practices & Policies (Note: this section describes *the upfront, in the thick and aftermath strategies* that city representatives and youth had previously prioritized and their evidence base); 5. Communication; and 6. Training & Capacity Building

C. HOW can we maximize and sustain efforts to prevent violence before it occurs? **Strategy**

7. Strategic Plans; 8. Data & Evaluation; and 9. Funding

For a complete version of the *UNITY RoadMap* please link to: <http://preventioninstitute.org/RoadMap.html>

3. The UNITY RoadMap Gauge. The *UNITY RoadMap Gauge* can provide a snapshot of a city's efforts, gauge the city's level of effort and effectiveness, and prioritize areas of focus for a city committed to preventing violence. Participants had the opportunity to rate how well their city has implemented various elements of the *UNITY RoadMap* by completing the *UNITY RoadMap Gauge*. This rating, early in the day, helped guide their discussion throughout the day.

For a copy of the *UNITY RoadMap Gauge* please link to: <http://preventioninstitute.org/RoadMap.html>

4. Using the UNITY RoadMap to Strengthen Local Efforts The bulk of the day was focused on distilling implications for local work based on the participants' shared understanding of the public health approach, the *UNITY RoadMap* tool and the results of their self evaluation on the *UNITY RoadMap Gauge*. Representatives from each city had the opportunity to share various elements of their work with the group as well; summaries are included in the appendix. As a group, participants identified key issues, new opportunities and potential solutions for cities along the three clusters of the *UNITY RoadMap*.

Partnerships: *High Level Leadership; Collaboration & Staffing; and Community Engagement*

Participants agreed that both high-level leadership and community engagement were important but pointed out that many efforts focus on one or the other rather than ensuring staff are focused on bringing together the key players, along with multiple partners, working on the issue. Participants affirmed the importance of community engagement but also pointed out the tension that can occur between high-level leadership and community engagement, especially when the two groups have different perspectives. Several cities shared that they were able to maintain successful work groups that incorporated representatives from both groups by setting shared goals, indentifying clear roles, and having agreed upon, measureable outcomes at the start. Many participants shared the concerns that the funding for coordination was one of the first cuts cities were making even though a small investment in coordination resulted in better outcomes for efforts. Making the case for coordination as a key element of prevention was a skill participants saw as valuable for future UNITY trainings.

Prevention: *Programs Organizational Practice and Policy; Communication; and Training and Capacity Building*

When discussion turned to the "what" of preventing violence, participants were inspired by the breadth and variety of successful programs in local areas but felt frustrated at their ability to bring promising programs, which often had earned strong local support, to scale in their cities and states. There was consensus among participants that it would be valuable for UNITY to offer technical assistance on bringing successful programs to scale and also facilitate a process for the Network to develop clear, concise language that reflects the complexity of the preventing violence, makes the case for prevention and fosters buy-in for prevention strategies and priorities. A continuum of prevention strategies prioritized by city representatives in 2007 and labeled by Philadelphia youth was shared and affirmed as an example of clear, concise language. The strategies, taken from a public health approach, are labeled with more widely understood terms in place of technical ones. Starting with *Up Front* (primary prevention) strategies that everyone needs, the continuum then moves to *In the Thick* (secondary prevention) strategies to support those who may be at increased risk, and concludes with *Aftermath* (tertiary prevention) strategies that deal with the consequences of violence after it has occurred to reduce that chances it will reoccur. For a list of the strategies, see the UNITY website at <http://preventioninstitute.org/documents/UNITYPrioritizedStrategies.pdf>

Dr. Gary Slutkin was on hand, in part, to share information about Chicago CeaseFire. Based on a public health model, CeaseFire works to interrupt the cycle of violence and to change norms about behavior. CeaseFire develops partnerships between community-based organizations and focuses on street-level outreach, conflict mediation, and the changing of community norms to reduce violence, particularly shootings. The model relies on highly trained outreach workers and violence interrupters, faith leaders, and other community leaders to intervene in conflicts, or potential conflicts, and promote alternatives to

violence. CeaseFire also involves cooperation with police and it depends heavily on a strong public education campaign to instill in people the message that shootings and violence are not acceptable. Finally, it calls for the strengthening of communities so they have the capacity to exercise informal social control and to mobilize forces -- from businesses to faith leaders, residents and others -- so they all work in concert to reverse the epidemic of violence. To access data on Ceasefire's effectiveness and learn more about the initiative see: <http://www.ceasefirechicago.org/>

Also in attendance to discuss prevention was special guest, Lori Dorfman of Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG) who presented major findings and the implications for effective communication in support of preventing violence from a draft framing paper, *Moving from "Them" to "Us": Challenges in Reframing Violence Among Youth*. UNITY commissioned BMSG to develop the paper which included conducting a literature review on framing and preventing violence. Key findings detail the challenges and opportunities of shifting the dominant frames given the conflation of race, violence, crime, and youth in the media and the belief that government is not part of the solution/doesn't solve complex problems. To counter the default frame and shift thinking she recommended creating messages that cue audiences to a focus on environment and using high profile actions to support messages. Participants found the framing discussion valuable and indicated it would be important to continue the discussion with greater time for detail. Specifically, they indicated that a focused effort to develop messages that Network members could use to make the case for starting or expanding *upfront* strategies that complimented existing *in the think* and *aftermath* strategies was a priority. It was also pointed out that messages tailored to specific, strategic audiences would be most successful. The participants identified key audiences including policy makers, elected officials, grassroots groups, public health leaders and law enforcement.

Strategy: *Strategic Plans; Data and Evaluation; and Funding*

Following a panel where several cities shared their strategic plans, participants discussed strategy more broadly. Many participants felt their city's plans, while comprehensive, would benefit from incorporating additional elements from the *UNITY RoadMap*. They also shared that bringing public health into the planning process was sometimes challenging. Tension over lack of funding to support public health's involvement and the ambiguity of the role of law enforcement in plans focused on a public health approach, were both topics participants wanted to explore further in the future. Groups also reported that they were still facing challenges developing evaluations with measurable outcomes for primary prevention strategies. This was exacerbated by the difficulty of developing cost effective ways to evaluate their strategies. Participants felt their city's plans would benefit from better skills at 1) building momentum and buy in from criminal justice and public health in developing strategic plans and 2) developing more effective and sustainable evaluation components of their strategic plans.

As the discussion turned to funding, groups spoke to the lack of funding for preventing violence which evoked some discussion about the pros and cons of relying on dedicated violence prevention funds versus using other funding to get at the problem or common underlying risk factors. Health Disparities funding streams were noted as one example of a resource that can support many strategies to prevent violence. Some noted the added value of also having dedicated dollars for preventing violence. While the current lack of dedicated funding streams for primary prevention for violence has resulted in "breaking through funding silos" (such as using dedicated dollars for health disparities), in some cases it was seen as "diluting" efforts through the "piecemealing of plans." This results concerns that it is a challenge to sustain a comprehensive approach, particularly when prevention is first to be cut across the board. For this reason dedicated funding for preventing violence remains a key priority for sustainable efforts. It was proposed that this be one issue the Network takes up for more deliberation.

5. Day One Outcomes: Lessons Learned and Local Examples* At the close of day one, participants met in city teams and prioritized next steps to strengthen their efforts. Their plans included: sharing information and ideas with other city leaders and staff; revisiting city plans, indentifying concrete ways to increase collaboration with UNITY; promoting a national agenda; and convening additional stakeholders to expand efforts to prevent violence before it occurs. Highlights from each city's report back follow:

Tucson: Leverage decreases in resources by investing more in coordination of the City's breadth of efforts with an expanded group of partners including local and state groups.

Louisville: Strengthen the local network by revisiting their partners though the lens of the *UNITY RoadMap*.

Cleveland: Increase work between UNITY, local government, and community, including parents.

New Orleans: Expand efforts to attract new stakeholders for their work on preventing violence through a social determinants focus.

Minneapolis: Enhance efforts at community engagement by sharing ideas regarding media and exploring partnerships with more neighborhood coalitions.

San Diego: Create a Youth Commission that will support local efforts and provide meaningful opportunities for youth participation in the City's strategic plan.

Boston: Work more closely with the US Conference of Mayors on intersection of violence prevention efforts in health reform/education/recovery.

St. Louis: Revisit current criminal justice based strategies based on a new understanding of the value of primary prevention/public health approach.

Oakland: Due to last minute conflicts Oakland was not able to participate in this section.

National partners: Seek out more direct work with city public health leadership including city leaders and national organizations such as NACCHO.

PART THREE

MAXIMIZING THE IMPACT OF UNITY AND THE UNITY NETWORK TO SUPPORT LOCAL EFFORTS

UNITY's goals are to support cities and build national momentum for preventing violence. With that in mind, participants discussed the priorities for maximizing UNITY's visibility and impact in terms of enhancing local efforts and building national momentum - including detailing next steps in accomplishing those priorities. Through discussion, participants prioritized the following roles for UNITY:

1. Provide training, updates and facilitate networking and information sharing;
2. Help cities prioritize and tailor strategies for local implementation though site specific technical assistance;
3. Highlight community successes and problem solve challenges – sharing the lesson's learned broadly;
4. Continue institutionalizing UNITY within cities by establishing formal and regular points of contact for each city;
5. Host additional convenings to support in-depth capacity building and strategy development for the City Network;
6. Create and finalize a national agenda with City Network.

Participants also discussed the role of participating cities in the Network. Cities felt the Network could be best used to share information and build support for national agenda. In fact, a large proportion of the participants who responded already plan to share and use the information they gathered at the UNITY convening: 93.8% reported they will, "inform my colleagues about UNITY" and "use UNITY materials in my work."

* For a description of local examples provided by each UNITY City see Appendix A.

PART FOUR

ADVANCING OUR SHARED OBJECTIVES: FOCUS ON NATIONAL SUPPORT AND MOMENTUM

1. Input on a national strategy/agenda that would support local, urban efforts

Participants were asked to identify three to five items that would need to happen on a national level to advance a prevention agenda in support of local efforts. Each participant reported out on his/her most important priority and responses, which fall along, and are synthesized here by, the *UNITY RoadMap*. Participants noted that this made sense as a way to organize their input and a national agenda. Within each section participants identified key mechanisms to advance the national agenda in support of local efforts, including specific opportunities that the Network would work together on achieving.

Partnerships

- **High Level Leadership:** Work with leaders at the federal level to develop and detail a federal commitment to violence prevention that includes dedicated staffing to facilitate work across federal agencies. Leadership from a national youth violence czar or office (in the White House) dedicated to youth violence prevention would be valuable, especially in concert with a national youth commission.
- **Collaboration and Staffing:** Establish an interagency council/workgroup for agencies such as Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Justice, Department of Education, Housing and Urban Development, etc charged by the President with coordinating federal activity related to violence prevention; ensure there is a legislative mandate, including resources and policies, to direct multi-sectoral coordination at the federal level.
- **Community Engagement:** Engage community members, particularly youth and adults from neighborhoods highly impacted by violence, in planning and implementation of local plans, collaborative efforts and the national movement.

Potential Mechanisms: Broaden the coalition of groups engaged in national strategy development. Connect state & city health/youth violence initiatives. Create a strong alliance between public health and public safety. Infuse opportunities into conferences to capture a broader audience.

Prevention

- **Programs, Organization Practices, and Policies:** Consider financial incentives for local efforts to address violence as a public health issue; passing a mental health parity bill that mandates a benefit package for mental health services that cover recovery work, collateral services & group work for youth; fund career employment stream for youth trained as peer mediators; provide health care coverage for all youth and their families; use economic development initiatives to employ people from communities at risk for violence
- **Communication:** Via multiple channels such as the media, public officials, and others in the public sphere, convey positive messages about youth, build an understanding of effective violence prevention, make the case for prevention, and foster buy in into strategies and priorities. Develop consistent messages, talking points, op eds, PowerPoint slides etc. that can support cities as they are striving to implement local strategies by reinforcing messages they are already using or providing resources that they can use locally.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Enhance public health's capacity and infrastructure at the federal, state, and local levels to start or expand coordination, data collection, and implementation of programs and policies.

Potential Mechanisms: **Programs, Organization Practices, and Policies:** Integrate UNITY/preventing violence into existing national priorities (education, health care, environmental reform); Outline a

legislative framework for large-scale multisectoral violence prevention like the National Emergency Response Plan which details roles in the case of national emergencies & use our legal system to regulate & enforce it; **Communication:** Create a social marketing campaign to promote violence prevention agenda with: compelling, visible champions to frame the movement, telling stories of victories over violence, stressing the urgency and importance of youth violence prevention across the world; develop 3 to 5 minute DVD highlighting the need for and advantage of violence prevention and how UNITY can help. Create a boiler plate 5 slide presentation for cities to use with various audiences. **Training and Capacity Building:** Offer a national training program and/or national recognition that violence is a public health issue; opportunities to talk with face to face or through webinars with other communities; resources for technical assistance around what is working (programs, policies, strategies), implementation, success stories, and empowering people to use this information to make decisions;

Strategy

- **Strategic Plans:** Develop a national plan that supports, in alignment with the *UNITY RoadMap*, comprehensive strategies in cities.
- **Data and Evaluation:** Identify dedicated resources to support ongoing evaluation and translation research and research on injury/violence prevention cost savings.
- **Funding:** Support initiatives that are multiagency as opposed to one agency focused; Issue block grants that are multi focused or youth-focused such as peer educators/outreach workers; Bureau of Justice Assistance funding that requires neighborhood focus; Align federal resources along the lines of primary/secondary/tertiary prevention; Ensure that Department of Justice and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funding for violence prevention includes a requirement to link to local public health departments; Creation of a dedicated funding stream denoted solely to youth violence prevention; Create accessible funds for youth violence prevention on a national level; Establish federal funding terms for BCPR that account for the time it takes for community collaboration; Provide financial resources for prevention programs that are tied to outcomes; Redirect federal funds allocated to jails to support violence agenda; Resources to build prevention infrastructure at the local, state & national levels.

Potential Mechanisms: Better define what it means to “build a movement” thought strategic, facilitated conversations via the web. Use data collection to figure out where we are as a “movement” and conversations with experts on what to do to get where we need to be.

Minneapolis shared their four-part youth violence prevention national agenda which includes the following priorities:

1. ***Amending the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act***, including refocusing attention on prevention programs intended to keep children from ever entering the criminal justice system
2. ***Health and Human Service Funding Stream*** to enhance public health’s capacity and infrastructure at the federal, state, and local levels to address the ongoing public health crisis of violence.
3. ***Creation of White House Council on Youth Violence Prevention***
4. ***Expansion of funding for Centers of Excellence on Violence Prevention***

One part of the group’s discussion emphasized the importance of revising/reforming the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act as called for in the Minneapolis agenda because it could be an important mechanism to accomplish many of the national priorities that the group outlined.

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APPENDIX A HIGHLIGHTS OF LOCAL EXAMPLES SHARED AT THE CONVENING

Note: The following are based on very brief presentations by participants from the City teams. Though they are only brief snippets and don't do justice to all that was shared, let alone the breadth, depth, and diversity of efforts going on in each of the city's, we are sharing them here to provide an overview of the range of approaches going on across the Network. We apologize for any errors or misrepresentations and welcome input and modifications.

City of Tucson: Mayor's Healthy Tucson Initiative: Addressing violence first from the perspective of domestic violence and sexual assault, this initiative worked within local schools to mentor young men. This included a partnership with the local university, where they gave a training on sexual assault and domestic violence prevention to the members of the basketball team, as well as with several middle schools and high schools. There are multiple efforts in place throughout the city addressing multiple forms of violence. Further, Tucson initiated The Mayor's Global Alliance for Community Wellness – the priorities of which are safety, violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, physical health and emotional health.

City of St. Louis: Innovative Concept School: This school combines youth from the public school system that have been expelled or suspended with youth that have been incarcerated. It is led by a group of influential leaders in the community, and contains resources such as police representatives, mental health representatives, and a media room (to get students to read and be articulate).

City of Louisville: Kids Track: This program allows community based organizations to access aggregate data on grades, attendance, suspensions, etc. They can use this information to evaluate and strengthen the outcomes of their programs, as well as to create new programs. For instance, the city was able to develop a program to lower dropout rates in these schools based on attendance rates for 9th grade students.

City of Cleveland: Youth Development Committee: This committee acts as the city's ear to the community and informs/advises the Mayor on activities. It focuses on engaging youth and making sure that youth are included in the decision making process.

City of Oakland – City County Neighborhood Initiative: A partnership between the Alameda County Public Health Department and the City of Oakland, this initiative focuses on a data driven approach to preventing violence in two neighborhoods in West & East Oakland. It strives to work with the communities in these areas to create institutional change. Although these types of initiatives usually focus on programs, this project focuses more on organizing and creating a grassroots movement within the community.

City of New Orleans: New Orleans emphasized building a plan around the community rather than bringing a plan to the community. Instead of using cookie cutter programs and controlling the process, they are creating a collaborative with members of the community in order to prioritize the issues of most interest to them and create a comprehensive set of solutions. They are also working with important leaders in the community such as faith leaders/churches. New Orleans is focusing on addressing underlying/social determinants of health to reduce violence.

City of Minneapolis: Blueprint for Action The Minneapolis plan is the result of a multi year building process which included proposing the notion of addressing youth violence as a public health issue. There are 4 goals under the Blueprint (Connect every youth with a trusted adult, Intervene at the first sign that youth are at risk for violence, Restore youth who have gone down the wrong path, and Unlearn the culture of violence in our community.) The City has now created the position of Youth Violence Coordinator to elevate the importance of youth violence prevention, they have organized an oversight structure, and partners with a wide range of individuals. The City has also pushed forward legislation at the state level that recognizes youth violence as a public health issue and calls for the Minnesota Public Health Department to dedicate time to this issue. You can link to the Minneapolis plan and website here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/yv.asp>

City of San Diego: Gang Commission A woman's shooting a few years ago prompted the Mayor to want to do even more. The Commission on Gang Actions and Intervention was formed and actions included real discussions with community members. They now have a Strategic Action Plan and workplan. Among many other partners (e.g. schools, law enforcement, etc.) San Diego State is a partner in the collaborative to help with research and evaluation.

City of Boston- Violence Intervention Prevention (VIP) This effort is a collaboration between The Health Commission, police, and various city services. The specific goals in 4 neighborhoods (selected because of elevated rates of gun violence) are: 1) Support engagement and resident voice, 2) Increase capacity, and 3) Use of Innovative media. The approach uses a community organizing model to work with neighborhoods to 1) Develop organization with at least 51% resident led coalition and 2) Work with city government. Themes that have emerged in the work include challenges with dealing with built environment (street lights, cameras) and addressing trauma.

APPENDIX B: COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

With funding from The California Wellness Foundation, UNITY commissioned Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG) to conduct a literature review on framing and preventing violence, with a particular emphasis on the confluence of youth, crime, violence, and race in the media. BMSG Executive Director, Lori Dorfman, briefly discussed major findings and the implications for effective communications in support of effective prevention and her comments are summarized here. She shared that based on their research, the fundamental challenge in reframing violence is moving from "them" to "us": until violence among youth is understood as a broad-based problem, it will be difficult to muster support for broad-based solutions. To reframe violence among youth, the UNITY program will have to understand and address several interrelated issues. They are:

1. **Message is never first:** There is a natural tendency to think that the right frames will lead to the right words, and with the right words we can convince anyone of the virtue of our path. However, framing is not just about words, though words are important. Reframing can be about actions. Actions speak louder than words, the actions that everyone is taking in preventing violence, matters. Collaborative work is the essence of reframing (you are demonstrating what prevents violence). Once you figure out what you want to do by identifying and implementing specific actions, others can follow. There is a need for a tool to make it easier for particular sectors within government and in community-based programs to see their role in preventing violence in their current and future activities. The tool should illustrate different sectors' role in preventing violence and provide a lens through which people can see their own work and link with others engaged in preventing violence.
2. **But frames matter:** Frames are the conceptual bedrock for understanding anything. People are only able to interpret words, images, actions, or text because their brains fit those texts into an existing

conceptual system that gives them order and coherence. Just a few cues — a word, an image — trigger whole networks of concepts that structure meaning. These cues trigger frames which lead to certain interpretations. Our realities are based on the dominant frames. In the US, the frame of individualism dominates, much like a spotlight illuminates an actor onstage but leaves the rest of the set in shadows. The tendency in the U.S. is to focus on people’s motivations rendering the surrounding elements almost invisible, essentially reinforcing the idea of personal responsibility and minimizing the role of larger structural forces. This default frame makes advocating for healthy public policy challenging, since many policies are designed to change the conditions or situations surrounding individuals. We have to be able to set up cues that trigger a focus on environment.

3. **News matters:** The news matters because it is where policy makers and other decision makers tend to get their information. But typical news frames tend to reinforce the default frame (individual responsibility without the context surrounding an individual). Reporters try to illustrate the impact of violence on a person’s life, rather than describe the context or policy implications, because they believe that readers and viewers are more likely to identify emotionally with a person’s plight than with a tedious dissection of policy options. They might be right. But this is a significant problem for violence prevention advocates. Research shows that news stories focused this way reinforce a “blame the victim” view and result in the solutions to social problems being seen as nothing more than individuals taking more responsibility for themselves.

A simple way to distinguish news frames is to think of the difference between a portrait and a landscape. In a news story framed as a portrait, audiences may learn a great deal about an individual or an event, heavy on the drama and emotion. A landscape story pulls back the lens to take a broader view. It may include people and events, but connects them to the larger social and economic forces. Landscape stories connect the plight of the person to a broader context and thus highlight the importance of fixing the context as part of fixing the problem.

4. **Race, Violence, and Youth are conflated:** Depictions of crime in the news are not reflective of either the rate of crime generally, the proportion of crime which is violent, the proportion of crime committed by people of color, or the proportion of crime committed by youth. The problem is not the inaccuracy of individual news stories, but that the cumulative choices of what is included — or not included — in the news presents the public with a false picture of higher frequency and severity of crime than is actually the case. If news audiences are taking the crime coverage at face value, they are accepting a serious distortion. They are likely to believe that most crime is extremely violent and that perpetrators are Black and victims, White. If news audiences have little contact with young people, they are likely to believe that youth are dangerous threats, in part because there are so few other representations of youth in the news to the contrary.
5. **The Role of Government in Preventing Violence:** Government is part of the problem when it is supporting ineffective programs or is attending only to law enforcement or criminal justice approaches that do not give prevention adequate resources. Yet government is also the solution since community-wide prevention efforts, brought to scale, will have to come from/be supported by government. The negative view of government, while perhaps deserved on some counts, presents a problem for advocates of a public health approach to preventing violence. If communities don’t believe their government can bring people together and solve problems, they won’t support the sorts of policies that can prevent violence before it starts. The suspicion many people view government with, as noted above, makes gaining support for government solutions difficult. The most positive result comes when government is viewed as a “protector” from physical or financial harm or “problem solver” that can address social issues or provide opportunity.