

Preventing Violence Before it Occurs

Overview of the UNITY RoadMap

A Framework for Effective and Sustainable Efforts

► SUMMARY

■ PARTNERSHIPS

- > High-Level Leadership
- > Collaboration & Staffing
- > Community Engagement

■ PREVENTION

- > Programs, Organizational Practices, & Policies
- > Communication
- > Training & Capacity Building

■ STRATEGY

- > Strategic Plans
- > Data & Evaluation
- > Funding

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UNITY builds support for effective, sustainable efforts to prevent violence before it occurs so that urban youth can thrive in safe environments with supportive relationships and opportunities for success.

This is a summary of the **UNITY RoadMap**, a comprehensive framework for preventing violence. For complete references and a full version of the **UNITY RoadMap**, please visit our website at www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY.html or contact us at 510.444.7738.

Additional UNITY Resources to prevent violence

- Information on what works
- Tools
- Training
- Consultation
- Peer networks
- City Voices & Perspectives
- Making the Case

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The UNITY RoadMap:

A Framework for Effective and Sustainable Efforts to Prevent Violence Before it Occurs

THE UNITY ROADMAP is a resource for cities to *prevent violence before it occurs* by mapping out solutions to effectively and sustainably prevent violence. The *UNITY RoadMap* 1) helps cities understand the current status of their efforts (starting point), 2) describes the core elements necessary to prevent violence before it occurs (milestones), and 3) provides information, resources, and examples to support cities in planning, implementation, and evaluation. As a framework, the *UNITY RoadMap* is most effective when tailored to the needs of a particular city.

Who should use the **UNITY RoadMap**?

The *UNITY RoadMap* is a technical tool, aimed at people in government and/or those interested in long-term solutions to preventing violence before it occurs. In particular, it is designed for:

- **Government Leaders:** Mayors, city managers, police chiefs, public health officials, school administrators, and other government leaders can use the *UNITY RoadMap* to assess and inform a systematic, collaborative solution.
- **Advocates and Community Members:** For those who do not have the support or infrastructure to comprehensively prevent violence before it occurs, the *UNITY RoadMap* can be used as a guide for raising awareness about what it would take to strengthen efforts in your city. For advocates and community members, the *UNITY RoadMap* provides a set of elements to hold local city officials accountable.

Where did the **UNITY RoadMap** elements come from?

Organized by Partnerships, Prevention, and Strategy, the *UNITY RoadMap* has nine elements, each selected for its importance in affecting and sustaining efforts to prevent violence before it occurs in cities. The *UNITY RoadMap* builds on similar tools that have been effective for other complex, challenging issues. 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 national effort on HIV/AIDS programs throughout the world. The *UNITY RoadMap* has been informed by a literature review and interviews with violence prevention practitioners. It has been reviewed by city representatives and refined based on their input.

"Cities spend many resources addressing violence after the fact—in the form of criminal justice and law enforcement costs, medical and social services costs, and lost revenue. But, violence is not inevitable. It is a predictable behavior in the unsafe environments where people live. Changing these environments and ensuring that young people have ample opportunities can prevent violence before it occurs."

—*UNITY RoadMap*

Elements of the UNITY RoadMap

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships is a top-down (**high-level leadership**)—bottom-up (**community engagement**) venture. In the middle, strong **collaboration** is supported by ongoing attention from dedicated **staffing**.

PREVENTION

Prevention addresses multiple underlying contributors (risk and resilience/protective factors) through **programs**, **organizational practices**, and **policies**. These efforts can be strengthened by clear and consistent **communication** that makes a compelling case for prevention. Further, **training** and **capacity building** is needed to ensure that people have the necessary skills to support successful implementation.

STRATEGY

Strategy leads to better outcomes by promoting approaches that are well coordinated, responsive to local needs and concerns, and build on best practices and existing strengths. Further, the process of strategy development builds a shared understanding and commitment and enables participants to establish working relationships. **Strategic plans** and ongoing implementation should be informed by **data and evaluation** and have adequate **funding**.

WHO does it take to prevent violence before it occurs?

WHAT does it take to prevent violence before it occurs?

HOW can we maximize and sustain efforts to prevent violence before it occurs?

AN ASSESSMENT OF YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES IN USA CITIES

The **UNITY RoadMap** is designed to meet the needs of cities and was informed by the report, *UNITY Assessment of Youth Violence Prevention Activities in USA Cities*. The assessment established 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 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 across the US.

Major Findings:

- 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 strategy 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.

You can read the complete report at <http://preventioninstitute.org/UNITY.html>

The UNITY RoadMap Checklist

Does your city have the right elements in place to effectively and sustainably prevent violence before it occurs? Use the UNITY RoadMap checklist below to see.



WHO? → Partnerships

- HIGH-LEVEL LEADERSHIP:** The mayor and other local leaders insist that the violence stops, provide necessary supports and resources, and hold people accountable.
- COLLABORATION & STAFFING:** There is a formal structure for multidisciplinary collaboration to coordinate priorities and actions across multiple jurisdictions and there is dedicated staffing in place to support collaboration and implement priorities.
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Members of the community—youth and adults, community-based organizations, the faith community, the business sector, and survivors—are actively engaged in setting priorities and ongoing activities.

WHAT? → Prevention

- PROGRAMS, ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES, & POLICIES:** There are effective and far-reaching efforts in place to prevent violence, particularly in highly-impacted neighborhoods.
- TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING:** Participants, practitioners, and policy makers have the skills and capacities necessary to work across multiple disciplines and in partnership with community to implement effective prevention programs, policies, and practices.
- COMMUNICATION:** The case has been made for preventing violence before it occurs and people are aware of what's being done to prevent it.

HOW? → Strategy

- STRATEGIC PLAN:** There is a plan in place that prioritizes prevention, is well-known, and informs priorities and actions for multiple departments, agencies, jurisdictions, and community groups.
- DATA & EVALUATION:** Efforts are informed by data and continuously improved through ongoing evaluation.
- FUNDING:** Adequate resources support collaboration and staffing; community engagement; the implementation of programs, policies, and practices; skills development and capacity building; communications; strategic planning; and data and evaluation.

To learn more about each of these elements, their key characteristics, and what cities around the country are doing, visit the UNITY website at www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY.html