

# YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION CENTERS

# IMPACT REPORT

Youth Violence Prevention Centers (YVPCs) use proven, evidence-based strategies to reduce youth violence by equipping local communities to prevent it before it occurs.

Exposure to violence has lasting impacts on young people, disrupting their ability to thrive. Whether witnessed or experienced at home, in school, or in the community, violence increases risk of anxiety, depression, cognitive disruption, poor performance, social withdrawal, and long-term physical and mental health challenges. Preventing youth violence is essential not only to protect youth from harm, but to support healthy development and interrupt trauma cycles continuing into adulthood.

Since 2000, YVPCs have built lasting **academic–community partnerships** that leverage expertise from local schools, public health agencies, and organizations to **design, implement, and evaluate youth-centered and equity-driven prevention strategies**.

These efforts

- identify risk and protective factors for youth violence
- implement evidence-based prevention strategies
- evaluate outcomes
- share effective, scalable models promoting youth well-being
- advance community-driven and youth-informed efforts

- Homicide is the **third leading cause of death** for young people ages 10–24. (CDC, 2023)
- More than **1 in 7 youth** (ages 10–24) are involved in physical violence each year, either as victims or perpetrators. (CDC, 2022)
- In 2020, youth homicides and nonfatal assault-related injuries resulted in **\$122 billion in combined costs**. (CDC, 2023)

## YVPC Strategies

- School- and community-based prevention programs
- Hospital-linked interventions
- Environmental improvements
- Youth organizing, leadership, and mentoring

## YVPC Priorities

- Multi-level approaches (individual, relationship, community, and societal)
- Reducing disparities
- Meaningful youth and community engagement
- Cross-sector collaboration
- Building community capacity to sustain prevention efforts

# TIMELINE

## 2000 – Initial Launch

The initial goals of the YVPCs were to:

- Build collaborations between researchers and communities
- Empower communities to address youth violence
- Develop the scientific foundation for effective prevention strategies
- Study risk and protective factors
- Advance interdisciplinary research
- Strengthen the workforce through mentoring and training

## 2005 to 2011 – Expansion & Impact Demonstration

Emphasis: Monitor magnitude and distribution of youth violence

YVPCs continue advancing the scientific infrastructure and begin

- Evaluating effectiveness of comprehensive strategies to achieve community impact
- Utilizing multi-level approaches (individual, family, school, and neighborhood)

## 2015 to 2021 – Equity, Systems Change, and Resilience

Emphasis: Implementing community- and policy-level strategies to achieve community-level impact

CDC emphasizes youth voice and systems-level change and begins focus on

- high-burden communities
- the intersection of violence and other social determinants of health

YVPCs contribute to pandemic-era resilience efforts, adapting programs to virtual and hybrid formats.

Since 2000, there have been five cycles of YVPC funding and 20 unique YVPCs.

## 2000 to 2005 – Early Program Development

Emphasis: Develop scientific infrastructure, partnerships, and surveillance capacity

YVPCs begin

- Refining the community-academic partnership model.
- Conducting initial evaluations focusing on risk/protective factors, violence surveillance, and program feasibility

## 2010 to 2016 – Scaling and Innovation

Emphasis: Implementing and evaluating comprehensive, community-based strategies to achieve community-level impact

YVPC programs broaden to include

- Environmental design
- Youth employment and leadership
- Trauma-informed school strategies

YVPCs develop public-facing toolkits and practice guides and collaborate on shared metrics and cross-site evaluations.

## 2021 to Present – Current Cycle

Emphasis: Reducing community rates of youth violence through rigorous evaluation

YVPC centers increase emphasis on:

- Community transformation
- Policy and environmental strategies
- Sustainable implementation science

Many centers are integrated into citywide public health strategies.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS ACROSS CENTERS

YVPCs have produced many significant accomplishments since the initiative began.

**47%** reduction in youth assaults following combined interventions in Flint, MI (University of Michigan)

**44%** decrease in violent crime arrests through the Becoming a Man program in Chicago, IL (University of Chicago)

**36%** drop in youth arrests in intervention neighborhoods in Richmond, VA (Virginia Commonwealth University)  
**39%** decrease in youth homicides in Kansas City, KS (University of Kansas)

**75%** reduction in arrests for youth violence using the Communities That Care strategic planning framework in a Denver, CO neighborhood (University of Colorado Boulder)

**47%** reduction in illegal behavior outside school and an **18%** decrease in aggravated assaults in Greensboro, NC (University of North Carolina at Greensboro)

**Youth and community leadership are central to YVPCs' mission.**

YVPCs elevate youth voice through advisory boards, youth-led research, and leadership roles that make youth partners in decision-making. They engage community members as co-leaders, ensuring lived experience and expertise shape priorities and guide action.

## Scientific Contributions

Generated rigorous, community-level data on what works to prevent youth violence, including multi-site evaluations.

Advanced understanding of risk and protective factors, particularly in high-burden communities.

Published hundreds of peer-reviewed articles, briefs, and toolkits that inform both research and practice.

## Rigorous Evaluation & Accountability

Applied long-term study designs and comparison areas to evaluate impacts on youth homicide, assault, firearm injuries, school discipline, and protective factors.

Demonstrated measurable improvements in both safety and well-being across funded communities.

## Innovative Tools & Training

Developed user-friendly toolkits, implementation guides, and training curricula used nationally by schools, nonprofits, and public health departments

Created pipelines for future leaders through mentoring, internships, and fellowships, helping diversify the violence prevention workforce.

## Data & Real-time Monitoring

Designed and tested community dashboards that track real-time violence trends and inform local decision-making.

Used data systems to guide and adjust strategies based on local conditions and emerging risks.

## Nationwide Influence on Policy & Practice

Helped shape CDC technical packages and state-level violence prevention plans.

Advised health departments and lawmakers, translating research into action and public awareness campaigns.

## CURRENT REACH & INNOVATION

### Center for Youth Equity in New Orleans

Tulane University addresses violence in the Gulf South through a youth-led organizing program and a hospital-based, community-integrated intervention.

### Violence Prevention Research Center - Kansas City

The University of Kansas prevents youth violence in high-burden areas of Kansas City by mobilizing youth, collaborating with partners, and evaluating the multiple hospital violence prevention programs in the community.

### Michigan Youth Violence Prevention Center

The University of Michigan links emergency departments and neighborhoods to prevent firearm injuries, addressing structural racism and producing community-engaged prevention toolkits in Muskegon and Washington, DC.

### Healthy Communities for Youth in Richmond, VA

Virginia Commonwealth University serves high-burden communities with trauma-informed, culturally responsive school, hospital, and community programs focused on structural equity, youth-adult partnerships, and positive youth development.

### Youth Violence Prevention Center Denver

The University of Colorado Boulder mobilizes youth leaders to develop innovative strategies like the Power of One app, real-time bystander intervention, and builds the capacity of grassroots youth-serving organizations to reduce youth violence in high-burden Denver neighborhoods.

To ensure this progress continues:

- Maintain funding for YVPCs through federal appropriations and private donations.
- Expand and ensure the sustainability of youth-driven, trauma-informed programming.
- Support cross-agency collaboration

### 2015-2021 By the Numbers

- 80+ YVPC-related peer-reviewed publications
- 10+ dissertations/theses
- 190+ presentations
- 250+ community meetings/forums
- 75+ media appearances

### Return on Investment

Funding YVPCs generates long-term savings and systemic benefits:

- Reduced medical & justice system costs
- Improved school climate & graduation rates
- Safer neighborhoods, higher youth engagement, & stronger community infrastructure
- Scalable models for youth violence prevention that inform national policy & local practice
- Proven programs that communities depend upon
- A pipeline of engaged leaders and youth advocates trained through YVPCs

**YVPCs are a model of public health in action, demonstrating that violence is preventable. Continued investment in these centers is an investment in safer, healthier, and more equitable futures for youth and communities nationwide.**



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