

HOPE ON THE HORIZON

A series published by the



The Peace Alliance
F O U N D A T I O N
Empowering Civic Engagement for a Culture of Peace

Making Cents of Peacebuilding

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October 2006

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Imagine reducing child abuse and neglect by 79%.

Imagine reducing maternal behavioral problems due to alcohol and drug abuse by 44%.

Imagine reducing the duration of dependency on Aid to Families with Dependent Children by 30 months.

How many tax dollars are these social benefits worth? \$100,000 per at-risk family? \$50,000 per family? \$10,000 per family?

Now, what if it were possible to save money with such a program? Imagine a net savings to taxpayers of over \$17,000 per at-risk family.

Does this sound like a far off utopia? Well, it's not. Such success has been achieved by the Nurse Family Partnership. The program has existed for over 20 years and been rigorously assessed by public policy experts. It provides nurses who work with families in their homes during pregnancy and the first two years of a child's life. The program is designed to help women improve their prenatal health and the outcomes of pregnancy; enhance the care provided to infants and toddlers in an effort to ameliorate the children's health and development; and advance women's own personal development, giving particular attention to the planning of future pregnancies, women's educational achievement, and parents' participation in the work force.

The Washington State Institute of Public Policy estimates the costs of the program at about \$9,000 tax-dollars per at-risk family. The benefits, however, it estimates at over \$26,000 to taxpayers. These benefits include not only the direct outcomes listed above but also longer term ones, such as reduced dependency on welfare and Medicare, lower rates of incarceration, lower rates of family violence, and improved scholastic attendance. This means fewer tax dollars are spent, accruing a net savings for the taxpayer.

This is just one of many programs that actually help reduce and prevent violence and improve overall wellbeing while saving tax dollars. Other such programs address juvenile delinquency, gang violence, youth and school violence, family violence, hate crimes, and provide less expensive, effective alternatives to the current penal system.

This paper provides a snapshot of the current state of violence in the United States and a sampling of proven, statistically verifiable programs that successfully prevent and reduce violence. While these programs remain hampered by inadequate and inconsistent funding, lack of resources and limited geographic reach, the fact remains that they are beneficial for Americans' social well-being and for Americans' financial bottom line.

The good news about violence in the United States is that Americans have found incredibly innovative and resourceful ways to address violence and its root causes. All that is missing is an infrastructure to give these programs more visibility and viability, allocate them more funding resources, and to make them a matter of local, state, and national policy.

But first, let's take a look at how much violence there is in the United States...

The Extent of Violence in the United States

Youth Violence: Fact Sheet¹

Occurrence

Youth violence is an important public health problem that results in deaths and injuries. The following statistics provide an overview of youth violence in the United States.

- In 2003, 5,570 young people ages 10 to 24 were murdered—an average of 15 each day. Of these victims, 82% were killed with firearms.
- Although high-profile school shootings have increased public concern for student safety, school-associated violent deaths account for less than 1% of homicides among school-aged children and youth.
- In 2004, more than 750,000 young people ages 10 to 24 were treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained due to violence.
- In a nationwide survey of high school students:
 - 33% reported being in a physical fight one or more times in the 12 months preceding the survey.
 - 17% reported carrying a weapon (e.g., gun, knife, or club) on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey.
- An estimated 30% of 6th to 10th graders in the United States were involved in bullying as a bully, a target of bullying, or both.

Consequences

- Direct and indirect costs of youth violence (e.g., medical, lost productivity, quality of life) exceed \$158 billion every year.
- In a nationwide survey of high school students, about 6% reported not going to school on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to and from school.
- In addition to causing injury and death, youth violence affects communities by increasing the cost of health care, reducing productivity, decreasing property values, and disrupting social services.

Groups at Risk

- Among 10 to 24 year olds, homicide is the leading cause of death for African Americans, the second leading cause of death for Hispanics, and the third leading cause of death for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Asian/Pacific Islanders.
- Of the 5,570 homicides reported in 2003 among 10 to 24 year olds, 86% were males and 14% were females.
- Male students are more likely to be involved in a physical fight than female students (41% vs. 25%).

We don't have to look far to find evidence of violence in the United States. Indeed, sometimes it seems that when we turn on the television or open the newspaper, all we see is violence. Many of us are also victims of or witnesses to violence happening in our homes, our schools, and our communities.

One of the best resources for tracking violence in the United States is the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) *Uniform Crime Reports* (UCR). The UCR program has been in place for over 75 years and compiles statistics on crimes committed in the United States based on information collected from nearly 17,000 law enforcement agencies. It is very useful for comparing crime rates across states and for looking at trends over time.

It should be noted, though, that the UCR only discusses *crimes*. Unfortunately, not all acts of violence get reported as crimes, and much violence, particularly in the areas of domestic violence and hate crimes, goes unreported.

The FBI's *Preliminary Annual Uniform Crime Report 2005* states,

*"Preliminary figures indicate that, as a whole, law enforcement agencies throughout the Nation reported an **increase of 2.5 percent in the number of violent crimes brought to their attention in 2005 when compared to figures reported for 2004.** The violent crime category includes murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault."*²

An estimated 1,390,695 violent crimes occurred nationwide in 2005.

During 2005, there were an estimated 469.2 violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants.³

The most notable increase is the 4.5 percent change in the murder rate. The figure becomes more dire when you analyze the murder rate in terms of the population of a city. Cities with populations between 50,000 and 500,000 reported murder rate increases between 9.4 percent and 12.5 percent!

“In 2004, there were an estimated 1,367,009 violent crimes nationwide. Of these, aggravated assaults comprised 62.5 percent; robbery, 29.4 percent; forcible rape, 6.9 percent; and murder, 1.2 percent.”⁴

That means across the United States in 2004, there was:

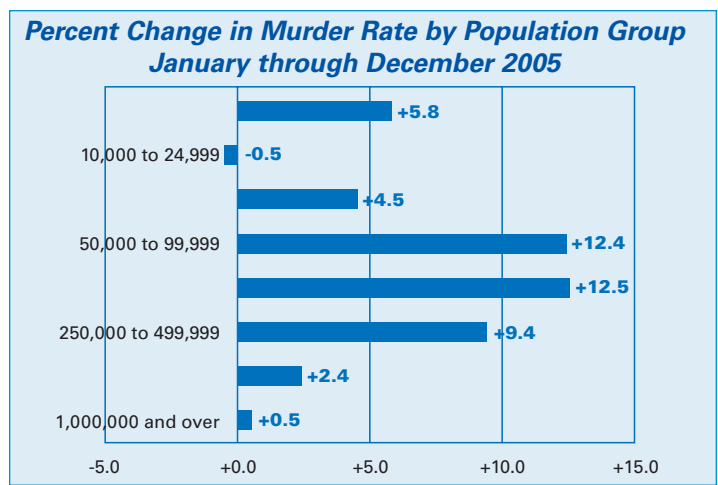
Every 23.1 seconds: One Violent Crime

Every 32.6 minutes: One Murder

Every 5.6 minutes: One Forcible Rape

Every 1.3 minutes: One Robbery

Every 36.9 seconds: One Aggravated Assault



In the United States, youth homicide rates are more than 10 times that of other leading industrialized states, on par with the rates in developing states and those experiencing rapid social and economic changes. In the late 1990s, the youth homicide rate in the U.S. stood at 11.0 per 100,000 compared to Japan (0.4 per 100,000), France (0.6 per 100,000), Germany (0.8 per 100,000) and the United Kingdom (0.9 per 100,000).⁵

All this violence is costly. A 2004 World Health Report estimated the cost of interpersonal violence in the United States (excluding war-related costs) at \$300 billion per year. The health-related costs of rape, physical assault, stalking and homicide committed by intimate partners exceed \$5.8 billion each year. Of that amount, nearly \$4.1 billion are for direct medical and mental health care services, and nearly \$1.8 billion are for the indirect costs of lost productivity or wages.

All told, the United States spends billions of dollars simply reacting to violence.

So, with all this violence going on in the United States, what can be done about it?

Programs that Reduce Violence

The good news is that many programs have been developed, tested, and proven to reduce and prevent violence in the United States.

Programs are effective in reducing:	Programs are successful at improving:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - crime rates - hate crimes - days of incarceration - recidivism rates (i.e. relapsing into crime) - involvement in gangs - delinquency - drug use - shop-lifting - vandalism - physical assault - rape and sexual assault - child abuse and neglect - mental health problems - depression and sadness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self-esteem - anger management - quality of personal relationships - family functioning - access to medical care and counseling services - academic achievement and GED preparation - classroom behavior - community awareness - crisis support - cultural awareness and sensitivity - reintegration into society - career development and job skills - job placement and stability.

Not all programs work in all these areas. They take a variety of approaches, focusing on specific populations and implementing interventions in homes, schools, and community centers. A sample of successful programs is listed in the appendix. Each has been the subject of research-based studies, including those conducted by Blueprints for Violence Prevention, the Re-entry Policy Council, and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. These studies are considered to be benchmarks in the field and are consistently consulted and referenced by experts.

Blueprints Study

“Blueprints for Violence Prevention’s main objective is that of violence prevention in children and adolescents from birth to age 19. Programs focus on violence, delinquency,

aggression (including predelinquent aggression), and substance abuse. Criteria for Model and Promising programs include: evidence of deterrent effect with a strong research design (experimental or quasi-experimental) on one of the above outcomes. Other criteria that Model programs must meet include sustained effects for at least one year post-treatment and replication at more than one site with demonstrated effects.”⁶

The idea of the Blueprints study is to carefully research programs and identify which ones are model programs that could then be replicated in other communities. Blueprints makes available information on all aspects of the programs, from design to implementation, so that groups can learn from each other and apply proven methods to address similar issues in their own communities. By taking the lessons learned

from one program, it increases the chances of successful replication at a new site.

As an example, here is one Model Program that Blueprints has identified:

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care

Program Summary: Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) is a cost-effective alternative to group or residential treatment, incarceration, and hospitalization for adolescents who have problems with chronic antisocial behavior, emotional disturbance, and delinquency. Community families are recruited, trained, and closely supervised to provide MTFC-placed adolescents with treatment and intensive supervision at home, in school, and in the community; clear and consistent limits with follow-through on consequences; positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior; a relationship with a mentoring adult; and separation from delinquent peers.

Program Targets: Teenagers with histories of chronic and severe criminal behavior at risk of incarceration.

Program Content: There are three main elements to the program:

According to the American Correctional Association, the mean cost of incarcerating a youth is \$140 per day, that is \$4,200 per month.⁸

MTFC Training for Community Families. Emphasized behavior management methods to provide youth with a structured and therapeutic living environment. After completing a pre-service training and placement of the youth, MTFC parents attend a weekly group meeting run by a program case manager where ongoing supervision is provided. Supervision and support is also given to MTFC parents during daily telephone calls to check on youth progress and problems.

Services to the Youth's Family. Family therapy is provided for the youth's biological (or adoptive) family, with the ultimate goal of returning the youth back to the home. The parents are taught to use the structured system that is being used in the MTFC home. Closely supervised home visits are conducted throughout the youth's placement in MTFC.

Parents are encouraged to have frequent contact with the MTFC case manager to get information about their child's progress in the program.

Coordination and Community Liaison. Frequent contact is maintained between the MTFC case manager and the youth's parole/probation officer, teachers, work supervisors, and other involved adults.

Program Outcomes: Evaluations of MTFC have demonstrated that program youth compared to control group youth:

- Spent 60% fewer days incarcerated at 12 month follow-up;
- Had significantly fewer subsequent arrests;
- Ran away from their programs, on average, three time less often;
- Had significantly less hard drug use in the follow-up period; and
- Quicker community placement from more restrictive settings (e.g., hospital, detention).

Program Costs: The cost per youth is \$2,691 per month; the average length of stay is seven months.⁷

Reentry Policy Report

"To assist policymakers and practitioners seeking to improve the likelihood that adults released from prison or jail will avoid crime and become productive, healthy members of families and communities, the Council of State Governments (CSG) established the Re-Entry Policy Council. The Policy Council comprises 100 key leaders at the local, state, and national levels, including: state legislators; criminal justice policymakers and practitioners; workforce development and employment services officials; housing providers and housing system officials; representatives of health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment systems; victim advocates; people who have been incarcerated and their families; and ministers and others working in faith-based institutions. The Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council provides hundreds of recommendations, which reflect the common ground reached

by this wide-ranging, diverse group of leaders--Republicans and Democrats alike--who collectively represent every region of the country.”⁹

The Reentry Policy Report lists dozens of programs that have proven to reduce rates of recidivism and help participants to successfully reintegrate into society after being convicted of a crime.

One program studied by the Reentry Policy Council is:

Access Support and Advancement Partnership (ASAP)

Organization: Support and Training Result in Valuable Employees (STRIVE)

Year established: 1984

Overview: Support and Training Result in Valuable Employees (STRIVE) provides young adults who have experienced difficulty in securing and maintaining employment with tools to successfully enter the job market. Working in conjunction with several other community-based organizations, STRIVE is a nationally recognized program operating in Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Fort Lauderdale. Its central office is in East Harlem, New York City.

Description: STRIVE operates a three-week job readiness workshop focused on encouraging a positive attitude and teaching communication skills that are essential for finding and maintaining employment.

The training model emphasizes rigorous self-examination, critical thinking, relationship management, and team building as a means to increase a participant’s sense of empowerment.

STRIVE also offers a career development program called Access Support and Advancement Partnership (ASAP) for graduates who have successfully maintained employment for eight months. ASAP provides training to help program participants advance

in the labor market and acquire jobs earning a livable wage in growth industries. ASAP training lasts from four to nine months and consists of courses developed or endorsed by employers in those fields to achieve specific skills, plus support services (both in training and after placement). Evening-hour training sessions are available to better suit program participants’ work schedules. ASAP’s goal is to help its graduates obtain jobs paying at least \$22,000 a year—about \$12 per hour—by preparing them for work in such fields as telecommunications, financial services, and computer technology.

Most ASAP students are black or Hispanic men and women, ranging in age from 18 to 40 years old.

Outcome data: Eighty percent of STRIVE graduates are consistently placed in jobs, and 75 percent to 80 percent of those placed are able to retain employment for at least two years. In 1997, STRIVE’s New York-based operations placed 2,639 young men and women in private sector jobs. The most recent quarterly follow-up showed that roughly 77 percent were still employed.¹⁰

More programs from the Reentry Policy Report are listed in the appendix.

Washington State Institute for Public Policy Study

“The Institute’s mission is to carry out practical, non-partisan research—at legislative direction—on issues of importance to Washington State. The Institute conducts research using its own policy analysts and economists, specialists from universities, and consultants. Institute staff work closely with legislators, legislative and state agency staff, and experts in the field to ensure that studies answer relevant policy questions.”¹¹

The main policy implications of these findings are straightforward and analogous to any sound investment strategy. To ensure the best possible return for Washington taxpayers, the

Legislature and Governor should:

- Invest in research-proven “blue chip” prevention and early intervention programs. Most of Washington’s prevention portfolio should be spent on these proven programs.
- Avoid spending money on programs where there is little evidence of program effectiveness. Shift these funds into successful programs.
- Keep abreast of the latest research-based findings from around the United States to determine where there are opportunities to use taxpayer dollars wisely. The ability to distinguish a successful from an unsuccessful research-based program requires specialized knowledge.
- Embark on a strategy to evaluate

Washington’s currently funded programs to determine if benefits exceed costs.

- Pay close attention to quality control and adherence to original program designs. This directive recognizes the fact that achieving “real-world” success with prevention and early intervention programs is difficult; successful prevention strategies require more effort than just picking the right program.

Through its research, WSIPP provides a comprehensive approach to assessing the financial implications of various programs provided in the state of Washington. Below is included an example of the type of data that careful analysis can provide in determining the costs and benefits of prevention programs. This is a clear example of how prevention can be practical and profitable.

Summary of Benefits and Costs (2003 Dollars)

Estimates as of September 17, 2004

Measured Benefits and Costs Per Youth

	Benefits	Costs	Benefits per Dollar of Cost	Benefits Minus Costs
Pre-Kindergarten Education Programs				
Early Childhood Education for Low Income 3- and 4 Year-Olds	\$17,202	\$7,301	\$2.36	\$9,901
HIPPY (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters)	\$3,313	\$1,837	\$1.80	\$1,476
Parents as Teachers	\$4,300	\$3,500	\$1.23	\$800
Child Welfare/ Home Visitation Programs				
Nurse Family Partnership for Low Income Women	\$26,298	\$9,118	\$2.88	\$17,180
Home Visiting Programs for At-risk Mothers and Children	\$10,969	\$4,892	\$2.24	\$6,077
Parent-Child Interaction Therapy	\$4,724	\$1,296	\$3.64	\$3,427
Youth Development Programs				
Seattle Social Development Project	\$14,426	\$4,590	\$3.14	\$9,837
Guiding Good Choices	\$7,605	\$687	\$11.07	\$6,918
Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14	\$6,656	\$851	\$7.82	\$5,805
Child Development Project	\$448	\$16	\$28.42	\$432
Good Behavior Game	\$204	\$8	\$25.93	\$196
Mentoring Programs				
Big Brothers Big Sisters	\$4,058	\$4,010	\$1.01	\$48
Big Brothers Big Sisters (tax payer cost only)	\$4,058	\$1,236	\$3.28	\$2,822

continued >

Summary of Benefits and Costs (2003 Dollars) (cont'd)

Estimates as of September 17, 2004

Measured Benefits and Costs Per Youth

	Benefits	Costs	Benefits per Dollar of Cost	Benefits Minus Costs
Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs				
Teen Outreach Program	\$801	\$620	\$1.29	\$181
Juvenile Offender Programs				
Dialectic Behavior Therapy (in Washington)	\$32,087	\$843	\$38.05	\$31,243
Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care	\$26,748	\$2,459	\$10.88	\$24,290
Washington Basic Training Camp	\$14,778	-\$7,586	n/a	\$22,364
Adolescent Diversion Project	\$24,067	\$1,777	\$13.54	\$22,290
Functional Family Therapy (in Washington)	\$16,455	\$2,140	\$7.69	\$14,315
Other Family-Based Therapy Programs for Juvenile Offenders	\$14,061	\$1,620	\$8.68	\$12,441
Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)	\$14,996	\$5,681	\$2.64	\$9,316
Aggression Replacement Training (in Washington)	\$9,564	\$759	\$12.60	\$8,805
Juvenile Offender Interagency Coordination Programs	\$8,659	\$559	\$15.48	\$8,100
Mentoring in the Juvenile Justice System (in Washington)	\$11,544	\$6,471	\$1.78	\$5,073
Diversion Programs with Services (v. regular juvenile court processing)	\$2,272	\$408	\$5.58	\$1,865
Other National Programs				
Functional Family Therapy (excluding Washington)	\$28,356	\$2,140	\$13.25	\$26,216
Aggression Replacement Training (excluding Washington)	\$15,606	\$759	\$20.56	\$14,846
Juvenile Boot Camps (excluding Washington)	\$0	-\$8,474	n/a	\$8,474

If each of these programs were successfully replicated across the country, they could save taxpayers billions of dollars while improving the lives and welfare of thousands of Americans.¹²

Challenges Limiting the Success of Programs

If all these programs exist and are so effective, why is it that we still have so much violence in the United States?

Part of the reason has to do with the fact that there is so much violence in the United States in the first place. So while these programs are successful at addressing specific areas of violence, their effect might seem like a drop in the ocean.

Additionally, the development, implementation, assessment and funding of violence reduction and violence prevention programs is currently conducted in a very decentralized manner. Specific programs are developed on an as-needed basis and implemented in a few communities. Very few have been replicated at a national level, the greatest exception to this being Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

Much of the research and funding for these and other violence prevention programs has been ad hoc. There is no systematized way of tracking the positive effects of violence

prevention, as there is for tracking violence (that is, through the Unified Crime Report). Part of the reason is methodological: how do you measure something that is prevented? Another part has to do with the fact that only recently have we developed a sophisticated understanding of violence and ways to address it effectively. So there simply has not been enough time to measure trends over several years.

In terms of funding, each program has to raise its own funds, often with very little support from government agencies. There are very few dedicated funding sources. Programs often have to apply to private donors and seek income from a variety of sources, and are rarely assured a stable, continuous source of funding.

Two of the greatest obstacles to extending the success of such programs and impacting the overall level of violence in this country are the lack of adequate infrastructure and lack of funding.

Building an Infrastructure for Peace

Why is an infrastructure for violence prevention and reduction necessary? Imagine that violence is a disease that infects society, like smallpox. Up until the late 1960s, smallpox was infecting up to 15 million people annually and killing 2 million. With a structured vaccination program that was supported by governments, health professionals, and society at large, smallpox was declared eradicated in 1979 by the World Health Organization.

What if the same principles could be applied to the disease called “violence”? We have known and proven methods to reduce and prevent violence: programs that teach conflict and anger management so that conflict does not escalate to violence, skill-building programs, counseling programs, etc.

An infrastructure, encompassing both the public and private sectors, is necessary to design and disseminate information about policies and programs that reduce and prevent violence in the United States. Such an infrastructure would provide:

- *Increased awareness, information sharing, and coordination about policies and programs that work to reduce and prevent violence*

- *Coordination and cooperation with government agencies at all levels on policy and program proposals for violence reduction and prevention*
- *Policy suggestions for interagency and intergovernmental coordination*
- *Development and replication of successful programs*
- *Cross-pollination across fields of knowledge and implementation techniques*
- *Increased program awareness through the media*
- *Analysis of the impact on peace (nonviolent human relations) of governmental and nongovernmental violence prevention programs*
- *Identification support of grants for research in the field of peacebuilding to increase our understanding of conflict and its transformation.*
- *Re-allocation of financial resources towards proven and cost-effective programs at the local, state, and national level that would save billions of dollars for citizens across the United States.*

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