YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION CENTER-DENVER (YVPC-D)

PROJECT OVERVIEW and FAQs

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The mission of the Youth Violence Prevention Center-Denver (YVPC-D) is to reduce violence among 10- to 24-year-olds in the Montbello and Northeast Park Hill (NEPH) communities. The Center builds upon Montbello’s Steps to Success initiative, which used the Communities that Care (CTC) framework to identify and implement appropriate individual-, peer-, and family-level strategies to address factors associated with youth violence. Moving forward, the Center will serve both Montbello and NEPH, again using the CTC framework as a guide. However, the Center will focus on identifying and implementing community- and policy-level strategies to prevent or reduce youth violence. These are strategies that target risk and protective factors in the civic, social, and physical contexts of communities and have a broad reach to affect widely held values and normative behavior.

The early phases of the Center’s work will focus on collaborating with existing community networks and local efforts to recruit, engage, and mobilize community members in this effort. Both Montbello and NEPH will use surveys and already existing data to develop community profiles. Community members will prioritize the needs indicated by the data. They will then develop an action plan that includes selecting community-level, evidence-based strategies matched to their respective prioritized needs. Examples of possible community strategies include social norming campaigns, community garden projects, and Safe2Tell. A list of strategies meeting the research standards required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will be developed and shared with the community. Selection of the strategies will be determined by each neighborhood’s community board based on their priorities and fit. Implementation of those strategies will be guided by the CTC model to ensure that milestones and benchmarks are met. Ultimately, with funding from the CDC, the goal of the YVPC-D is to develop a scalable and localized model to empower communities to curb youth violence.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are community-level strategies different from community-based strategies?

Community-based prevention strategies are implemented in a community setting but target change in individual, peer, or family-level factors (e.g., attitudes, knowledge, skills, etc.). In contrast, Community-level prevention strategies - the focus of this project - target modifiable risk and protective factors that are characteristic of communities and that are empirically or theoretically associated with youth violence (e.g., neighborhood disorganization, neighborhood physical environment, availability of alcohol in the neighborhood, etc.).

What is policy-level prevention?

For YVPC-D purposes, policy is defined as a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions (e.g., schools, business entities) and is frequently reflected in resource allocations. Policy-level strategies are differentiated from programs, practices, and other strategies in that they are applied to an entire location or entity as a whole and could be implemented at the community, city, state or national level. Policies generally operate at the systems level, apply to large units/sectors or populations, and set the context in which individual decisions and actions are made.

How were the communities selected?

The YVPC-D builds upon the work of Montbello's Steps to Success, a previous 5-year grant from the CDC to fund youth violence prevention. When developing the proposal for the new CDC grant opportunity, it was clear that YVPC-D was an ideal opportunity to continue and enhance the work already being done in Montbello by expanding its continuum of prevention strategies to include community-level prevention strategies.

Northeast Park Hill was selected because community data, that is foundational for CTC implementation, was already being collected as part of the previous CDC project, and community stakeholders were beginning to address youth violence and other problem behaviors. The proposed YVPC-D was required to submit current crime statistics and other information, as well as prove that each neighborhood could be defined as “high-burdened” per the CDC standards (see below for further information).

What is a high-burdened community?

In order to be considered for CDC funding, YVPC-D was required to demonstrate that the communities it would serve met the CDC’s definition of “high-burdened,” which is a community that has multiple empirically robust risk factors for youth violence and where rates of youth violence are higher than national averages (e.g., juvenile rates of fighting, juvenile arrest rates for violent offenses, homicide rates among youth ages 10-24, emergency department data on violence-related injuries among youth, and school data on disciplinary incidents involving violence).
While Montbello and NEPH met the CDC’s definition of high-burdened community, it is important to note that this definition does not mean that these communities are terrible places to live. Both communities have rich histories and resilient residents, and at times have been impacted more significantly by changing economic times and limited resources. This initiative proposes to support youth and families while addressing critical research questions about community youth violence prevention.

COMMUNITIES THAT CARE (CTC)

What is Communities That Care and why are you using it?

YVPC-D is using the Communities that Care Model (CTC) as the framework to promote positive youth development and reduce youth violence and other problem behaviors. It is a proven community change process for dealing with youth violence and delinquency. YVPC-D will have the benefit of using the web-based, more accessible version of CTC called eCTC, that allows for easier training with community members to implement this 5-stage prevention process.

The eCTC process supports building a prevention infrastructure (a network of supportive dependable relationships and focused resources to prevent problem behavior and promote healthy development) in communities that align with a community’s individual needs. There are other benefits to using Communities That Care – including encouraging local control, building community capacity and positively impacting risk factors to prevent problem behavior, specifically:

- Local control
  - The community determines which risk factors to prioritize.
  - The community chooses which evidence-based strategies to implement to address their top concerns.
- Community capacity
  - Data-based decision making
  - Community organization

What did prior Communities That Care communities do to get good results?

Success strategies included:

- Implementing the Communities that Care model with fidelity
- Prioritizing 2-5 risk factors to be targeted by tested and effective prevention programs
- Receiving up to $75,000 per year for evidence-based programs (on average communities selected 2.75 evidence-based programs)
- Hiring a full-time site representative
- Training communities with a certified Communities That Care trainer

YVPC-D is designed to implement the Communities That Care model with fidelity. The Community Board Risk and Protective Factor Work Group will be prioritizing 2-5 risk factors to be targeted, which will lead to the careful selection of community-level prevention strategies.
matched to need. Additionally, each community will be encouraged to work with their stakeholders to leverage resources for evidenced-based programs identified as potentially impactful, but not funded by the CDC grant. This lays the groundwork for “buy-in” and sustainability beyond the initial CDC 5-year grant. YVPC-D will also have four eCTC trained facilitators on staff consulting with the developers at the University of Washington to ensure fidelity to the CTC model. If we follow the model of this tested effective intervention, we should expect positive results for Montbello and Northeast Park Hill.

FUNDING

What is the grant award amount and how will the funds be allocated?

The original award for the YVPC-D was $5.9 million, approximately $1.18 million per year for 5 years.

Direct Support to the Communities.

CDC Requirements. CDC’s YVPC-D Program requires that an academic institution partner with a high-burdened community to implement community and policy level strategies to prevent violence and promote positive youth development. These strategies must rely on the best evidence about effective violence prevention programs and measure the effect of the comprehensive prevention strategies on youth violence in the community.

Resources to Support the Communities. The Communities That Care model has been used as a framework in Montbello’s Steps to Success project for the initial comprehensive approach. It will also be used for the continued work in Montbello and the new work in Northeast Park Hill. We will be using the CDC grant dollars to support the full implementation of the Communities that Care model. This includes:

- Data collection (readiness assessment, process measures, community surveys)
- Training and technical assistance in the Communities That Care approach
- Formation of Community Board and Key Leader Advisory Board
- Developing a Community Action Plan
- Selection and implementation of tested and effective community-level strategies to address priority risk factors.
- Approximately $75,000 per year will be allocated to each community for community-level prevention strategies (Years 2, 3, 4).

Violence Risk Screening Tool – Community Policy Change. Direct program costs will also include the implementation of a violence risk screening tool, VIPRS, to be used in 5 target primary health care settings in Montbello and Northeast Park Hill. This tool will be integrated into the routine risk assessment that already occurs during an adolescent visit. Considered a community policy-level change, this tool will focus on youth violence as a healthcare issue and help practitioners begin to address it with families, as well as refer them to appropriate supports. Through the initial 5-year grant award, project staff convened a working group of professionals (diversion program personnel, schools, and providers of Strengthening Families,
Multisystem Family Therapy and Functional Family Therapy) to develop an early intervention system of referral for youth screened through VIPRS and in need of intensive services. This group worked to create a continuum of care for youth and will be continued as part of the YVPC-D work.

**Indirect Costs.** CU Boulder has an indirect cost rate of 26% of modified total direct costs. This is significantly lower than the 54% indirect cost rate that is applicable to on-campus projects.

**DATA COLLECTION**

**What is the purpose of surveying the community?**

YVPC-D will begin by presenting the results of the the follow-up data collection from the first CDC grant. This data was collected in both neighborhoods from youth ages 10-17 and their parents between September 2015 and August 2016. This data will be used to prioritize the top risk and protective factors to address as part of the Communities That Care Process. It will also provide information to Montbello regarding the impact of the prior CDC program efforts.

An additional community survey will be conducted with adults in each neighborhood in Years one and five of the YVPC-D to understand key community social processes (e.g., institutional resources, social norms, collective efficacy, and relationships) and other neighborhood conditions. This new community survey data will help inform the community-level prevention strategies that will be chosen by each Community Board and provide information about the impact of CTC and the community-level prevention strategies on neighborhood social processes. Law enforcement data will be used to study the impact of the overall project on youth violence, crime and delinquency.

**My community has been surveyed a lot. Why do we need to do it again?**

There is a lot of direct value to the community by surveying the neighborhood using rigorous scientific methods. For example, the community will use the recently collected survey data to prioritize their risk and protective factors. This supports the community in strategically addressing the underlying causal processes that lead to youth violence and problem behaviors. The survey data also allows the community to know if the interventions that are being put into place are working.

Additionally, the new community survey that will be conducted in 2017 to assess community level risk and protective factors and social processes such as institutional resources, social norms, collective efficacy, and relationships will allow the community to understand how the selected community-level prevention strategies impact neighborhood social processes. Research shows these are very important social processes to understand and address to prevent and reduce youth violence. The funding for this project provides a unique opportunity to (a) collect data on these neighborhood measures and (b) support community-level prevention strategies to positively impact these neighborhood social processes.
Will there be research articles coming out about this project?
Yes, there will be publications about this work, which will focus on lessons learned that might help other communities reduce youth violence and promote healthy youth development. However, research articles are not the project’s primary purpose. The primary purpose of this project is to engage in a partnership with the Montbello and Northeast Park Hill to reduce youth violence and promote healthy youth development.

PROGRAMMING
I have a program. Can I get on the list for funding?
The YVPC-D will provide a list of potential community-level prevention strategies to the community boards that will include cost and a program budget. Project staff will work closely with the boards to identify and vet strategies based on community priorities and fit. Selection of the strategies will be the decision of the community boards. For inclusion on the potential strategies list, strategies must:

- be designed to have sufficient reach and dosage to have a community-level impact on serious forms of youth violence.
- be justified via theoretical support that explains how they are expected to impact rates for serious youth violence and have some reasonably strong degree of existing empirical support.
- have the ability to be implemented within the structure of CTC, fit the local context, be sufficiently well designed to be adequately implemented, and have evidence that if well implemented will lead to reductions of youth violence.

In summary, evaluation quality, intervention impact, intervention specificity, and dissemination readiness will be considered when identifying potential community-level prevention strategies for funding.

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