

# Youth Violence Prevention Center – Denver



YV  
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YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION CENTERS



***“Just like we build roads and bridges, this project is about building a prevention infrastructure that strengthens the capacity of local communities to support and intervene on behalf of children, youth and families.”***

**— Beverly Kingston, YVPC-D**

## THE TOLL OF YOUTH VIOLENCE

Youth violence is a serious public health problem. Homicide is a leading cause of death for youth aged 10–24 years. Each day, about 13 youth die from homicide and more than 1,300 are treated in emergency departments for nonfatal injuries. Youth violence has lasting harmful effects on young people, their families, and their communities. Research by CDC’s National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention

(YVPCs) shows prevention is possible. In communities that are experiencing some of the nation’s highest rates of youth violence, YVPCs are:

- Partnering with community organizations, schools, law enforcement and other community stakeholders with the common goal of reducing youth violence
- Rigorously evaluating prevention strategies
- Working to ensure effective strategies can be adapted and used in other communities

## THE MISSION

The Youth Violence Prevention Center - Denver (YVPC-D) brings together researchers, community representatives, practitioners and policymakers to reduce youth violence in high-burden communities in Denver, CO. Through these collaborations,



YVPC-D developed the infrastructure for its hallmark initiative, *Steps to Success*, a youth violence prevention system focused on community ownership, empowerment and capacity. *Communities That Care* (CTC), a model that engages the community to use data to understand youth violence and identify, implement and rigorously evaluate comprehensive, evidence-based strategies, is the guiding framework for *Steps to Success*. *Steps to Success* showed positive, violence-reduction effects in the Montbello neighborhood following the multi-year implementation of evidence-based individual and family level prevention programs.

## THE COMMUNITY

The YVPC-D is currently working in two Denver neighborhoods, Montbello and Northeast Park Hill. While both communities have rates of youth violence significantly greater than the national average, they also have a strong history of and commitment to organizing to address community concerns. Montbello and Northeast Park Hill are predominantly Hispanic/Latino and African American urban communities where approximately a quarter of families live in poverty. Despite a history of social and economic disadvantage, YVPC-D and its community partners are mobilizing to implement prevention strategies that can significantly reduce youth violence and improve youth outcomes.

## PREVENTING YOUTH VIOLENCE

The YVPC-D is a collaboration among the University of Colorado - Boulder, University of Colorado School of Medicine/Children's Hospital Colorado, and the Montbello and

Northeast Park Hill communities, with input from local public, private, and nonprofit organizations. To prevent youth violence, this unique academic-community partnership is implementing *CTC* using a community-driven process to collect data on risk and protective factors, create an action plan of prevention strategies, and implement and evaluate the impact of the strategies. YVPC-D and community partners will select community- and policy-level strategies to implement that match community needs, values, and resources. Both communities will also integrate a violence risk screening tool into routine adolescent health risk assessments in clinical settings to help practitioners address youth violence as a healthcare issue.

## EVALUATING IMPACT

YVPC-D and its partners are evaluating the impact of *CTC* and the implemented prevention strategies on youth violence outcomes in Montbello and Northeast Park Hill. These activities will advance the science and practice of youth violence prevention and provide an implementation roadmap for future replication across the country. The YVPC-D will:

- Assess the impact of *CTC* and the implemented prevention strategies on community-level youth crime and violence via a community survey and archival crime records.
- Analyze how prevention strategies driven by community partnerships affect youth violence risk and protective factors and outcomes.
- Assess the impact of community readiness and capacity to build a local youth violence prevention infrastructure and reduce youth violence.



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