

# A Lifetime Commitment to Violence Prevention: The Alameda County Blueprint

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## ALAMEDA COUNTY VIOLENCE PREVENTION PRINCIPLES

***Violence is preventable:*** Violence is a learned behavior that can be unlearned or not learned in the first place. Therefore, violence is preventable. Alameda County can be a safer place.

***Violence prevention is local:*** This *Blueprint* is grounded in the understanding that local violence prevention activities are critical and County government should support these local activities. To truly serve in a supporting role, County government must both be aware of city and community concerns and needs and also be responsive to them. This *Blueprint* puts a structure in place based on interdepartmental, interdisciplinary partnerships within County government and between County government and other stakeholders. In recognition of the value of local efforts, the County will not compete with local stakeholders for funding. Rather, the County will endeavor to attract resources that will support local efforts.

***Honor what's working:*** The County is home to excellent efforts that address multiple forms of violence. This *Blueprint* builds on effective, existing efforts to establish priorities based on need and prevention research, align resources, and maximize efforts.

***Diversity must be respected:*** The diversity of the County is a great strength and it must be respected. This includes ensuring that the recommendations in this *Blueprint* are implemented with cultural competence and sensitivity. What might be appropriate with one age group or a particular ethnic/racial community may need to be modified for another. Cultural values, beliefs, and traditions should be taken into account in shaping policies, programs, and information.

***Prevention is not the same as containment and suppression:*** This is a *Violence Prevention Blueprint* and prevention is a vital part of public safety. The combined recommendations foster violence prevention skills, nurture safe neighborhoods, and shift norms about acceptable behavior *before* the onset of violence and the need for intervention. While acknowledging the invaluable contribution of law enforcement efforts, this *Blueprint* recognizes that law enforcement efforts, by mandate, are largely aimed at containment and suppression and further, that law enforcement alone cannot prevent violence. This is because the underlying contributing factors –poverty, hopelessness, oppression, mental illness, substance abuse, victimization history, etc.– are beyond the scope of law enforcement efforts. Rather, they span the mandate of multiple stakeholders. Law enforcement has an important prevention role to play including advocating for prevention resources, data collection, making appropriate referrals, and building a perception of safety. Further, the recommendations within this *Blueprint* will help free up law enforcement to focus on the most urgent, dangerous, and persistent problems.

***We are all stakeholders:*** Either directly or indirectly, violence affects everyone in Alameda County. We all have a stake in ending it, and there is a role that each of us can play. It is incumbent on violence prevention leaders to find a way to meaningfully engage us all in the solutions, including those most afflicted by violence, such as youth and adult residents in highly impacted neighborhoods.

***Violence prevention is a long-term effort:*** The factors that contribute to violence did not develop in a short period of time, and they will not disappear immediately. We need a lifetime commitment to preventing violence. We also need interim indicators to track reasonable progress.

## INTRODUCTION

*[Violence] is not the problem of one neighborhood or group, and the response and solutions are not the responsibility of one sector of the community or of one agency, professional group, or business. Coming together and owning this problem and the solutions are central.*

*Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Harvard School of Public Health*

Alameda County is energetic, diverse, and creative. However, like many other counties in the nation, we experience serious violence problems. Violence takes multiple forms, including child and elder abuse, intimate partner violence, date rape and sexual assault, suicide, youth and community violence, and hate violence. Comprehensive approaches have proved successful in preventing violence across the country.

Although there are numerous valuable violence prevention initiatives in Alameda County, there has been no coherent strategy by which to organize them systematically. Furthermore, there is no distinct place within government where the responsibility for violence prevention rests and no identified venue where planning consistently takes place. Stand-alone programs may be competitive and duplicative, usually do not involve all of the necessary constituencies, and, alone, do not have the clout to affect underlying risk factors and change norms. Further, funds cannot be as well spent and it can be hard to determine if initiatives are working.

Few individuals and even fewer families experience violence as a discrete phenomenon. Often, different forms of violence—domestic violence, child abuse, sexual violence, gang violence, suicidal behavior—coexist within the same home or community. Each experience of these types of violence is a risk factor for other forms.

Given the complexity of issues, policies, and systems that promote or prevent violence, success beckons for an action plan that coordinates, supports, and strengthens a range of efforts. By strengthening community assets and reducing the community risk factors for violence, this *Blueprint* can help protect all community members from experiencing the many forms of violence that exist. Because the cost of delay is too high in terms of risk, pain, suffering, and premature death, its focus is to address problems *before* violence occurs. This is called primary prevention. This *Blueprint* emphasizes community-wide or ‘environmental’ outcomes and addresses all forms of violence in the county, spanning across all ages and communities.

Violence prevention is not only the responsibility of those agencies mandated to address violence and related issues. Violence is a problem that, in varying degrees, affects everyone in Alameda County. Productivity is diminished in the workplace not only by workplace violence, but also when workers experience it outside the workplace, such as battering. The county's reputation as having a lot of violence affects business prosperity and property values and deters would-be residents, employees, and businesses from locating here. Abused children have more difficulties learning and may miss more school. Therefore, in addition to directly affecting thousands of lives, the indirect affects are nearly immeasurable. This *Blueprint* is a framework to identify the range of roles and partnerships in which all of these stakeholders can engage and activities that will prevent violence in all its forms.

## VIOLENCE DATA AND VIOLENCE COSTS: BRIEF FACT SHEET

### ALAMEDA COUNTY VIOLENCE DATA \*

- **Intimate partner and dating violence:** In 2001, there were 5,700 domestic violence related calls made to police, and it is estimated that only 20% of incidents are reported.
- **Sexual assault and rape:** In 2001, there were 495 reported forcible rapes and the FBI reports that only one in nine women who are sexually assaulted report the crime.
- **Child abuse:** In 2000, there were 17,273 allegations of child abuse reported to the Child Abuse Hotline.
- **Homicide:** In 2001, there were 108 homicides and in 2002 there were 144 homicides. Alameda County ranks third in deaths due to homicides among all California counties.
- **Suicide:** In 2002, there were 134 fatal suicide attempts<sup>1</sup> and suicides accounted for over 20% of the fatal injuries in 2002.
- **Hate violence:** In 2001 there were 63 hate crime incidents reports and in 2002 there were 56.

### ALAMEDA COUNTY VIOLENCE RELATED FINANCIAL COSTS

- **Annual medical cost of intentional injuries:** In 1996-1997, suicide related injuries accounted for \$ 9.5 million, assaults accounted for \$32.9 million, and firearm-related costs were \$ 12.4 million in Alameda County.
- **Average hospital bill for one gunshot wound in the US:** Over \$40,000 with 60-80% of these costs paid by the public.<sup>2</sup>
- **Annual detention costs at California Youth Authority:** \$27,000 per year/per youth.
- **Additional costs include:** foster care placement, emergency medical response, court fees and costs for prosecution, lost productivity, adult protective services, shelter and counseling services.

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\* For more definitions and more detailed violence data for Alameda County, please see Appendix B

## OVERVIEW OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Goals

The goals of this *Blueprint* are threefold:

- 1) To decrease the presence of risk factors that contribute to violence and increase the presence of resilience factors that are protective against violence at the individual, family, and community levels.
- 2) To increase accountability for violence prevention related outcomes, foster violence prevention leadership in the County, increase coordination of violence prevention efforts, and enhance understanding of effective violence *prevention* approaches, programs, and policies.
- 3) To decrease the level of all forms of violence throughout the County over time.

### Objectives and Recommendations

In order to achieve the goals, this *Blueprint* delineates four objectives. Each objective has an associated set of recommendations that are designed to achieve the objective.

#### ***Objective 1: Promote positive child and youth development***

##### **Recommendations:**

1. *Violence prevention skill development:* Adopt evidence-based, developmentally appropriate curricula in child care settings, preschools, schools, and youth detention facilities aimed at fostering social-emotional development, resolving conflicts, violence prevention skills, violence-free relationships, bullying-free campuses, and racial relations and understanding diversity.
2. *Mentoring:* Establish and support mentoring programs that link young people at risk of violence or school drop-out to their communities, such as adopt-a-school initiatives.
3. *Positive environments:* Foster preschool, child care, school, classroom, after-school, detention, and extra-curricula environments in which violence is intolerable, children and youth feel safe, and trust and communication is strong.
4. *Meaningful activities:* Develop and expand recreational, artistic, and civic opportunities for all young people.
5. *Career paths:* Establish opportunities for all young people to learn about multiple career paths through information exchange, internships, and apprenticeships and bolster literacy and vocational skills to maximize entry into desired careers and fields.
6. *Trauma reduction:* Provide appropriate mental health and case management services to children and youth who have been traumatized, particularly through witnessing or experiencing violence.

#### ***Objective 2: Ensure supported and functioning families***

##### **Recommendations**

7. *Parenting skills:* Integrate parenting skills and child development classes into pre- and post-natal healthcare and other settings for parents.
8. *Risk assessment:* Develop diagnostic systems and practices for identifying families in which child abuse, elder abuse, and/or intimate partner violence is occurring or may occur.
9. *Support services:* Provide appropriate services for families in which violence is identified as a potential risk or problem including counseling, therapy, case management, anger management, home visiting, and substance abuse treatment.
10. *Male responsibility:* Infuse fatherhood and male responsibility programs into settings with men and boys whereby men teach males about gender norms and gender roles with an emphasis on preventing sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and dating violence.

### ***Objective #3: Foster safe and vibrant neighborhoods***

#### **Recommendations**

11. *Firearms*: Reduce the availability and usage of firearms through policy and norms change.
12. *Conflict resolution*: Create pro-active dispute resolution structures and support at the neighborhood level.
13. *Gang prevention*: Reduce gang violence through appropriate services, programs and outreach to those at risk of gang participation and to those already involved.
14. *Alcohol availability*: Decrease the density of alcohol outlets and advertising in neighborhoods afflicted with high crime and violence.
15. *Drug markets*: Shrink drug markets by simultaneously decreasing the demand side through appropriate economic development, health and human service efforts and decreasing the supply side through targeted criminal justice approaches.
16. *Restorative justice*: Implement restorative justice programs with community organizations and the justice system.
17. *Reentry*: Create more viable connections between communities and inside detention facilities, provide incentives for hiring ex-felons, and support transition from detention to the community through mental health services, substance abuse treatment, job training and employment services, and supports for family members.
18. *Employment*: Tie job training and placement programs for community residents to neighborhood beautification/maintenance, infrastructure and commerce development, and female economic empowerment.
19. *Physical appearance*: Improve the physical appearance of neighborhoods by fostering arts programs and community gardens, improving park and neighborhood maintenance, and removing graffiti and blight.
20. *Social connectedness*: Support communities to foster strong social connections and to heal from community violence while translating fear and anger into action to prevent future violence.

### ***Objective # 4: Ensure program and government effectiveness***

#### **Recommendations**

- I. *Strategy and coordination*: i) Create an Alameda County Violence Prevention Coordinator position; ii) Establish and maintain a public-private Leadership Council.
- II. *Training, communications, and information*: iii) Enhance violence prevention skills through interdisciplinary training and conferences; iv) Provide information about effective and promising models and approaches; v) Establish campaigns designed to shift norms about violence, build understanding that violence is preventable, and foster hope that violence will be prevented.
- III. *Resource alignment and allocation*: vi) Identify gaps and priority areas (e.g. specific populations or locations) and align and allocate existing resources to serve major priority needs and gaps; vii) Establish stable funding sources to support effective violence prevention efforts in the county and develop resources for special projects and efforts.
- IV. *Assessment and evaluation*: viii) Establish data systems that are coordinated and enable effective tracking of associated risk and resilience factors and violence indicators and milestones, and that will enable good decision-making across departments and agencies while informing policy; ix) Ensure that county departments and agencies and service providers are held accountable for violence prevention efforts in the county.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is violence?**

The World Health Organization defines violence as: the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.<sup>3</sup>

### **What causes violence?**

There is no single cause that accounts for violence. Rather, underlying risk and resilience factors contribute to violence or its prevention. For example, society teaches the use of force to resolve conflict and fosters a sense of entitlement and right of control over others with less power without compensatory models. Those conditions or characteristics that put an individual, family, or community at higher risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence are risk factors. Those that are protective against violence are called resilience factors. A growing body of research demonstrates the interrelationship between risk and resilience<sup>4</sup>, the ability of resiliency to mitigate the effect of some risks,<sup>5,6</sup> and the importance of focusing on both sets of factors.<sup>7</sup> Alameda County’s violence-related risk and resilience factors are summarized in the table and detailed descriptions and related data are available in Appendix A.

<b>Risk Factors</b>	<b>Resilience Factors</b>
1. Poverty and economic disparity	1. Economic Capital
2. Illiteracy and school failure	2. Meaningful opportunities for participation
3. Alcohol and other drugs	3. Positive attachments and relationships
4. Firearms	4. Good physical and mental health
5. Negative family dynamics	5. Social capital
6. Mental illness	6. Built environment
7. Incarceration/reentry	7. Services and institutions
8. Community deterioration	8. Emotional and cognitive competence
9. Discrimination & oppression; power & control	9. Artistic and creative opportunities
10. Media violence	10. Ethnic, racial, and intergroup relations
11. Experiencing and witnessing violence	11. Media/marketing
12. Gender socialization	

### **Isn’t violence a problem of a relatively small number of individuals?**

Intimate partner violence, child and elder abuse, sexual assault, dating violence, youth and community violence, homicide and suicide, hate violence, and police brutality, are all examples of violence that directly harms far too many people in Alameda County, including many of our children, parents, siblings, neighbors, friends, and colleagues. Indirectly violence is an issue that affects us all. Violence takes its toll on victims’ family members, friends, and neighbors. Additional widespread impacts include fear, the reputation of being an undesirable place to live or work, a negative business climate, and a heavy financial burden. Violence affects everyone in Alameda County.

### **Is violence preventable?**

Violence is in fact preventable, but its prevention requires an investment of resources, people, leadership, and commitment. Violence is a complex problem that requires a comprehensive solution and participation from multiple sectors and stakeholders. The need for such an approach



is underscored by the National Crime Prevention Council's study: *Six Safer Cities*. The description of city crime prevention efforts informs a countywide prevention effort.

*Several cities in the United States have distinguished themselves in the fight to reduce crime over the past decade. These cities have surpassed national decreases and dramatically reduced crime through collaborative partnerships and the use of targeted policy and program strategies to address priority crime and quality of life concerns. At the heart of successful implementation of community-wide approaches is a deliberate process of bringing together formal and informal leaders to establish priorities for action. The process these cities engage in includes diagnosing local crime problems, assessing community assets and resources, forming coalition and partnership-based networks, and integrating crime control and prevention strategies into a balanced approach. At a fundamental level, such activities reinforce bonds among partners, holding each accountable for helping co-produce more comprehensive policies, innovative resource development tactics, and specific programs that recognize the fundamental role of prevention-oriented strategies.<sup>8</sup>*

### **What is violence prevention?**

Violence prevention is a comprehensive and multifaceted effort to address the complex and multiple risk factors associated with violence including, but not limited to, poverty, unemployment, discrimination, substance abuse, educational failure, fragmented families, domestic abuse, internalized shame, and felt powerlessness. Efforts build on resilience in individuals, families, and communities. Violence prevention is distinct from violence containment or suppression. Violence prevention efforts contribute to empowerment, educational and economic progress, and improved life management skills while fostering healthy communities in which people can grow in dignity and safety. Finally, efforts realign institutions to be more inclusive and receptive in responding to community needs. Violence prevention efforts targeted toward young children work to prevent experiencing or witnessing violence when young as well as to reduce the risk of future perpetration or victimization of violence.<sup>9</sup>

### **Who is responsible for violence prevention?**

Everyone living and working in Alameda County has a role to play in preventing violence. However, elected officials and those with mandates and resources must be held accountable to ensure effective use of resources to prevent needless injury and death and to minimize the need for after-the-fact services (incarceration, hospitalization, trauma services, protective custody, domestic violence shelters, etc.).

### **Why do we need a violence prevention strategy?**

Alameda County violence prevention efforts have been hampered by an absence of coherent leadership, a lack of accountability for violence prevention outcomes, no established venue for necessary and ongoing coordination, and misconceptions about what effective violence *prevention* entails. Therefore, while the county is spending precious resources, there is no way to know if they are being directed in the most important places, whether or not they are being maximized, and how we might be more effective. The complexity of violence underlies the need for a strategic approach, which is the key to determining priorities, maximizing discrete efforts and ensuring that they build on each other. The term strategy refers to analyzing the issue,

delineating a final goal, defining what steps need to be taken and by who, and finally, executing the plan. It 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 work out the relationships needed to enhance the likelihood of success. Strategy development won't solve violence problems but it will put Alameda County onto a roadmap for doing so. Having a good plan is also attractive to funders. For example, one California city of about 150,000 people developed a plan<sup>10</sup> which attracted over eight million dollars in funding over three years for infrastructure development and programming.

### **Hasn't this already been done?**

Alameda County does not have an overall plan to prevent violence and has not developed one over the last two decades, at least. Some cities have plans and many different stakeholders throughout the county are working different pieces of the puzzles. This *Blueprint* is designed to support local plans and align existing efforts for greater impact. In the past, some stakeholders have tried to bring multiple players together through unified planning processes. However, they lacked either the mandate or the authority to drive a coherent effort spanning the necessary jurisdictions and disciplines. This *Blueprint* was developed with broad input and buy-in and initiated, tracked, and supported in the highest levels of county government.

### **What types of violence does the *Blueprint* address?**

The *Violence Prevention Blueprint* for Alameda County strives to address all forms of violence that affect communities within the county. These include homicide and suicide, child and elder abuse, intimate partner and domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and rape, youth and community violence, hate violence, and sanctioned violence, such as police brutality. The *Blueprint* is structured this way because the various forms of violence are interrelated and effectively preventing one form of violence necessarily requires attention to other forms.

### **Who developed the Alameda County Violence Prevention *Blueprint*?**

The *Blueprint* was developed by a diverse group of stakeholders from across the county (see appendix C) representing city and county elected officials, county departments and agencies, city program staff and police chiefs, legislators, community based organizations, and youth. Participants met regularly over the course of nine months to discuss structure and content issues and reviewed materials in between. Further, their work was informed by interviews and focus groups with additional elected officials, law enforcement, youth, community-based and grassroots organizations, agency and department staff and leadership, and others. Finally, the *Blueprint* was informed by research and practitioner wisdom from around the country.

Prevention Institute authored the *Blueprint* and facilitated the development process. Based in Alameda County, Prevention Institute is a nonprofit, national center dedicated to improving community health and well-being by building momentum for effective primary prevention. Primary prevention means taking action to build resilience and to prevent problems before they occur. The Institute's work is characterized by a strong commitment to community participation and promotion of equitable health outcomes among all social and economic groups.

### **Why do we need a Violence Prevention Coordinator?**

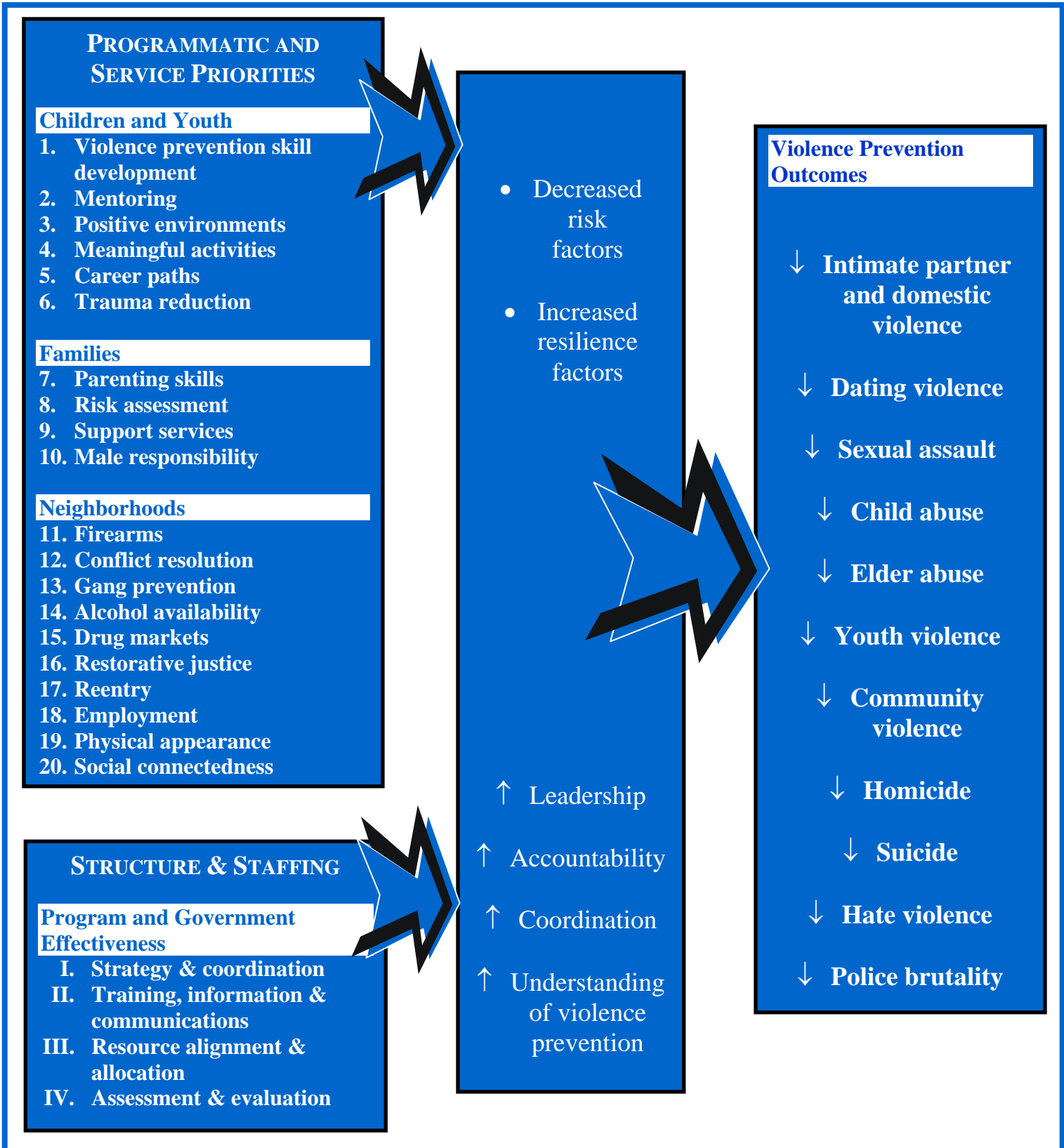
A Violence Prevention Coordinator provides a focal point for violence prevention in the county as well as the staffing to conduct necessarily cross-cutting activities that will reduce duplication and improve quality, such as: provision of training, information, and campaigns; resource development; engaging the necessary stakeholders; implementing strategy; assessing progress; and fostering coordination. There are multiple violence prevention efforts underway in the county and many departments and agencies working on particular parts of the problem. Further, there are multiple local efforts driven by schools, cities and municipalities, and community-based and grassroots organizations. However, there is no central intelligence to the entire effort. People don't know where to turn when they have a question or need resources and information. Departments wanting and needing to collaborate must initiate partnerships from scratch. Training is haphazard and varies, and there is no unified voice speaking out about violence prevention. Further, raising money to support violence prevention takes place without the added value of a strategic plan and without an understanding of priorities. Funders have grown frustrated with the large amounts of money invested throughout the county without really being able to know if it is the best investment for the county's needs. Finally, there is no concerted effort to engage the range of necessary stakeholders in systematically addressing violence in the county. A Violence Prevention Coordinator will facilitate coordination, conduct training, provide information about models and best practices, coordinate data efforts, make recommendations about resource alignment and allocation, and develop funding sources.

### **Why are we doing this in a time of budget deficits?**

Even in good financial times, there is never enough money to address all of the county's need. That being said, one of the most fiscally prudent things we can do in both good and tough times is to ensure that our resources are being put to good use. Preventing violence can save money in the long-run by reducing the costs of law enforcement, healthcare, foster care and other costs. This plan is about aligning the existing resources in the County that are already being spent on violence prevention and making sure that they are being used in the most effective manner. Plans such as this one are attractive to outside funders; they can feel confident that their money is being put to good use and that there is a structure to use the funding in the way it was intended. In flush budget times we may too often be content with the status quo, but budget deficits force us to make tough decisions and propel us to make needed changes. Prioritizing violence prevention is right for Alameda County.

### **How will this be funded?**

After-the-fact responses are expensive. Putting resources into effective prevention is an investment that can save precious resources such as those devoted to trauma and hospitalization, shelters, and criminal justice. However, while in the long-run prevention strategies hold the promise of saving money, they are not free. Resources are needed for staffing and programmatic investments. It is recommended that the Violence Prevention Coordinator be funded out of the county budget to ensure stable funding and to reinforce the message that violence prevention is a major county priority. Additional funding should come from multiple sources including in-kind staffing, department and agency contributions, foundation and government grants, Federal and State appropriations, private contributions, and appropriate license and registration fees. In addition, non-county jurisdictions, such as cities and schools can support local efforts.



## BLUEPRINT OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*All too often our public policy process ignores the wisdom of prevention, funding repairs rather than maintenance, prisons rather than positive interventions, and restoration rather than prevention. To the extent that policy is a promise, we promise that if someone is bad, expensive and sometimes harsh solutions await. We need a companion promise that elicits the best from individuals and communities.*

*-Jack Calhoun, founder, National Crime Prevention Council*

These recommendations focus on how to support the development of healthy children and youth, families, and neighborhoods where violence does not occur. In order to prevent violence before the need for any type of response, it is critical to *reduce contributing risk factors and bolster contributing resilience factors* through *programmatic and service* action and policy affecting children and youth, families, and neighborhoods. Programs and actions must take place in all three areas in order for the plan to be effective over time. However, priorities about which to implement and when need to be established, monitored, and adjusted on a regular basis. All activities will have the greatest impact on violence when they are grounded in strategy, well coordinated, and directed in the appropriate way. Therefore, programmatic and service priorities are bolstered by *structure and staffing*. The recommendations will contribute to healthy child and youth development, supported and functioning families, and safe and vibrant neighborhoods, all contributing to *violence prevention outcomes*.

### ***Blueprint Objectives***

Objective #1: Promote positive child and youth development

Objective #2: Ensure supported and functioning families

Objective #3: Foster safe and vibrant neighborhoods

Objective #4: Increase program and government effectiveness

## **OBJECTIVE #1: PROMOTE POSITIVE CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Young people need skills and supports that will enable them to negotiate potentially volatile situations, form strong attachments and relationships, participate in their schools and communities in a meaningful way, and have hope about the future. Providing these supports and opportunities is vital for both short-term and long-term reductions in violence.

### **PRELIMINARY OUTCOME MEASURES:**

- Increased school attachment and achievement
- Increased participation in internship and apprenticeship programs
- Increased/developed pro-social values
- Increased feeling of efficacy
- Decreased bullying
- Increased civic participation and community involvement
- Improved/developed quality relationships with adults
- Increased perceptions of safety
- Decreased time spent on the street

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**1) Violence prevention skill development: Adopt evidence-based, developmentally appropriate curricula in child care settings, preschools, schools, and youth detention facilities aimed at fostering social-emotional development, resolving conflicts, violence prevention skills, violence-free relationships, bullying-free campuses, and racial relations and understanding diversity.**

*There is a powerful consensus that youth violence is, indeed, our Nations' problem, and not merely a problem of the cities, or of isolated rural regions, or of any single segment of society. Equally encouraging have been our findings that intervention strategies exist today that can be tailored to the needs of youths at every stage of development, from young childhood to late adolescence.*

*-Dr. David Satcher, former Surgeon General*

There are multiple evidence-based curricula that have been shown to improve violence prevention skills and related skills such as impulse control, empathy, problem-solving, and social-emotional development. Specific curricula should be selected with consideration of need and the context, such as the student body and input from teachers and students. In addition to utilizing specific curricula, engaging students in related discussions has been shown to surface key issues and solutions relevant to campus violence, racial relations, and dating violence. It should be acknowledged that curricula can foster specific skills when implemented with fidelity; however, they are not a panacea and should be implemented as part of a broader strategy.

**2) Mentoring: Establish and support mentoring programs that link young people at risk of violence or school drop-out to their communities, such as adopt-a-school initiatives.**

*As we reflect on the role of caring in young people's lives, what becomes clear is that youths need to grow up in a world infused with and organized by care... To become the caring citizens we need them to be, young people need to have made real the vision of interdependent lives organized around public, as well as private,*



*caregiving responsibilities... They must see care made the serious work of public life, rather than a private lifestyle choice. They must grow up in a community where they can both expect the constancy and trust of caring and know that such responsibility will be expected of them.*

*-Diane Mendley Rauner, They Still Pick Me Up When I Fall*

Mentoring programs have proven effective in fostering caring relationships, promoting academic achievement, and in reducing risk behaviors, including violence, substance abuse, and risky sexual activity. In addition to fostering individual relationships, mentoring programs can foster relationships with the community or with specific entities in the community such as governmental services (e.g. law enforcement) or other community stakeholders such as local employers and businesses. Therefore, mentoring initiatives such as a business or a department adopting a school can promote strong linkages between young people and the community.

**3) Positive environments: Foster preschool, child care, school, classroom, after-school, detention, and extra-curricula environments in which violence is intolerable, children and youth feel safe, and trust and communication is strong.**

*Individual behavior is most markedly affected, if not generated, by various aspects of the environment.*

*-Henrik Blum, U.C. Berkeley*

The National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine concluded that positive environments can promote youth development and desired outcomes, such as safety and academic achievement. The features of these settings are: physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, support for efficacy and mattering, opportunities for skill building, and integration of family, school, and community efforts.<sup>11</sup> Within any setting for young people, staff play a critical role in establishing these environments, and they need appropriate training and support to do so, including, for example, training for teachers on positive classroom management skills. Measurable and observable elements of safe and healthy schools have been described in numerous publications concerned with health and well being, school functioning, students, families, communities, and the educational system. The emerging body of literature provides a vision for what healthy, productive learning environments look like while providing guidelines for evaluating efforts aimed at producing such environments. For example, *Safe and Healthy Schools*, a publication of the California Department of Education, articulates the characteristics of safe and healthy schools:

*Safe and healthy schools are orderly and purposeful places in which students and staff practice healthful behaviors and are free to learn and teach without the threat of physical or psychological harm. Such schools have developed a strong sense of community. They show signs of student affiliation and bonding to the school and sensitivity and respect for all persons, including those of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Safe and healthy schools provide an environment of nonviolence, set clear behavioral expectations, institute disciplinary policies that are consistently and fairly administered, and accord recognition for positive behavior. These schools have established policies for proactive security procedures; emergency response plans; the timely maintenance, cleanliness, and*



*attractive appearance of the campus and classrooms; and systems to promote the health of students and adults.*<sup>12</sup>

**4) Meaningful activities: Develop and expand recreational, artistic, and civic opportunities for all young people.**

*Art and sport have the power to change the world, the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else can. Art and sport speak to people in a language they understand. Art and sport can create hope where there was once only despair. They are instruments for peace, even more powerful than governments. Together they break down racial barriers. Art and sport laugh in the face of all kinds of discrimination.*

*-Nelson Mandela*

Young people need positive things to do. When they are engaged in structured activities they are developing their own skills and relationships, may be contributing to their community, and are not unsupervised and left on their own. Examples of meaningful activities include recreational, artistic, and civic opportunities. Recreational activities provide a structure, foster interaction, and expose young people to new experiences and opportunities.

The visual and creative arts enable people at all developmental stages to appropriately express their emotions and to experience risk taking in a safe environment. For those who have witnessed violence, art can serve as a healing mechanism. Artistic and cultural institutions also create environments that engage youth and other populations; cultural participation has been linked with lower delinquency and truancy rates in several urban communities.<sup>13</sup> For example, a study by Brice Heath, *et.al.*, showed that, compared to a national sample, at-risk youth working in the arts during their out of school hours were four times more likely to have won school-wide attention for their academic achievement, three times more likely to be elected to class office within their schools, four times more likely to participate in a math and science fair, three times more likely to win an award for school attendance, and over four times more likely to win an award for writing an essay or poem.<sup>14</sup> Positive gains were found in another study conducted in partnership by Americans for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and three community arts groups. It was found that youth who participated in selected arts programs expressed anger appropriately, communicated effectively, increased their ability to work on tasks, engaged less in delinquent behavior, had fewer court referrals, and showed improved attitudes, improved self-esteem, greater self-efficacy, and greater resistance to peer pressure.<sup>15</sup>

Civic engagement provides people with a sense of empowerment: “When people share a strong sense of community they are motivated and empowered to change problems they face, and are better able to mediate the negative effects things over which they have no control.”<sup>16</sup> Researchers assert that changes that benefit the community are more likely to succeed and more likely to last when those who benefit are involved in the process.<sup>17</sup> Youth development and youth-driven programs focused on community development and improvement provide a vital arena for young people to connect with their community while having a positive impact. Studies show that teens who are civically engaged are much more likely to be similarly engaged as adults. In addition,

these same youth are more likely to succeed in school, avoid teen pregnancy and illicit drug use, and, be more hopeful about the future.<sup>18</sup>

**5) Career paths: Establish opportunities for all young people to learn about multiple career paths through information exchange, internships, and apprenticeships and bolster literacy and vocational skills to maximize entry into desired careers and fields.**

*The ideas of one generation become the instincts of the next.*

*-D.H. Lawrence*

In too many cases, young people are unaware of opportunities they could pursue. They are outside witnesses to the glamorous –yet largely unachievable– status of entertainers and professional athletes and feel hopeless about what lies ahead. Young people need hope and an understanding of the range of opportunities they could pursue. They also need skills, such as literacy and vocational training, to achieve their desired careers. Opening up multiple career paths can be accomplished through career fairs, information sharing, career clubs, mentoring programs, vocational training, widespread internships, and apprenticeships.

**6) Trauma reduction: Provide appropriate mental health and case management services to children and youth who have been traumatized, particularly through witnessing or experiencing violence.**

*It is only the overwhelming accumulation of risk without a compensatory accumulation of assets that puts kids in jeopardy.*

*-Dr. James Garbarino, Cornell University*

Witnessing and experiencing violence can be traumatizing and lay the foundation for mental health problems, fear, and/or violence, including for vengeance. It is critical that mental health and case management services be provided in a timely manner to allow young people to deal with the trauma and to be able to move on. Such services are appropriate in all settings for young people from pre-school and school settings to detention facilities can include support with handling rage and dealing with shame and stigma.

## **OBJECTIVE #2: ENSURE SUPPORTED AND FUNCTIONING FAMILIES**

Families are a cornerstone in the community and the place in which many values, beliefs, and norms are learned and passed on. Families are expected to be safe and nurturing places. Yet family members need appropriate skills and support in order to achieve this.

### **PRELIMINARY OUTCOME MEASURES:**

- Improved understanding of developmental needs of children among caregivers
- Improved understanding of child-rearing and disciplinary practices
- Improved/developed training for recognition of family violence and intervention
- Decreased substance abuse rates
- Increased community supports for parents and families
- Increased utilization of family support services
- Increased pro-social attitudes and norms related to gender relations and gender roles
- Increased access to mental health services

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **7) Parenting skills: Integrate parenting skills and child development classes into pre- and post-natal healthcare and other settings for parents.**

*How do we know how to be good parents? This gives you the tried and tested techniques to help you raise your child.*

*-Parenting class participant*

Raising children is hard work and parents often need help and skills. Integrating culturally appropriate and effective skill development into settings with parents and ensuring widespread access will foster parenting skills and enable parents to form nurturing relationships, set appropriate boundaries, and foster social-emotional development. Skill development will be enhanced through family support because when caregivers are supported, empowered, and successful in other areas of life, they make better parents and are more able to raise healthy children. The goal of all family support programs is to increase the ability of parents to nurture their children and to ensure their optimal healthy physical, emotional, and cognitive development.

#### **8) Risk assessment: Develop diagnostic systems and practices for identifying families in which child abuse, elder abuse, and/or intimate partner violence is occurring or may occur.**

*Family is a critical component in almost all ethnic groups and health behaviors are greatly impacted by family beliefs, values, and actions. And, if prevention is about starting early, it means starting young and that means family has to be the center.*

*-Mareasa R. Isaacs, Ph.D., Howard University*

Experiencing neglect, abuse, and witnessing violence is traumatizing and puts people at significant risk for developmental failures, emotional disturbance, and additional victimization or perpetration of violence. Further, the effects of neglect, abuse, or witnessing violence often go unnoticed and untreated, and many never receive the care and support services they need. In

particular, the effects of neglect and witnessing violence may be less visible than those of physical abuse and careful attention must be paid to ensuring that both the physical and emotional needs of those afflicted are met.

It is critical that Alameda County has the capacity to identify families in which there is risk for violence or violence is occurring. This includes risk of all kinds of violence including elder and child abuse and intimate partner violence. An important element of this includes training for the range of service providers that interact with families including social services, mental health, educators, law enforcement, courts, youth programs, elder facilities, community clinics, emergency rooms, pre-schools and day care settings, and community-based organizations. Identifying families at risk requires understanding risk factors and signs including rage and the use of power and control over members of the family. Further, Samaritans can be encouraged to refer families to necessary services. For example, parents, teachers, youth leaders and others can be trained to recognize warning signs and make appropriate referrals. Another important element of identification and diagnosis is ensuring that the appropriate data sharing and coordination systems are in place so that families do not fall through the cracks.

**9) Support services: Provide appropriate services for families in which violence is identified as a potential risk or problem including counseling, therapy, case management, anger management, home visiting, and substance abuse treatment.**

*We believe in homeland defense. But when you defend your homeland, what are you defending? Why do you defend your home? You defend it because of the people in your home—the people in your home—which means you invest in the people. You invest in their health, you invest in their education, and you invest in their well being. Anything other than that is not homeland defense.*

*-Michael Bird, The National Native American AIDS Prevention Center*

Once families in need are identified, it is critical that they have access to services and supports that will minimize the risk of violence and foster nurturing and trusting relationships within the family. Such services can take many forms and should be based on the needs of the entire family. They may include case management, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, support for dealing with rage, and addressing shame and stigma that family members may experience as a result of violence and abuse in the family, or other support services that are warranted by the situation. Building on existing support systems, such as the faith community or cultural communities may be very helpful for some families.

**10) Male responsibility: Infuse fatherhood and male responsibility programs into settings with men and boys whereby men teach males about gender norms and gender roles with an emphasis on preventing sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and dating violence.**

*It is time we tried something new. Men's violence against women, children and other men has persisted at pandemic rates for far too long. This violence, in particular domestic and sexual, has destroyed too many families, torn away at the fabric of our communities, and absorbed a tremendous amount of precious resources.*

*-Jackson Katz*

Traditional beliefs about manhood are associated with a variety of poor health behaviors, including drinking, drug use, and high-risk sexual activity.<sup>19</sup> An estimated one in three adult women experiences at least one physical assault by her partner during adulthood. Men are also more often reported for the sexual abuse of children. Perceptions of acceptable male behavior and expectations influence male behaviors. It is critical to question these perceptions and expectations in order to shift norms in behavior. Efforts to shift norms in male behavior should be integrated widely into programs for men and boys including in schools, after-school programs, community events, recreation and sports programs, detention facilities, probation and parole programs and others. These efforts should be led by men and emphasize shifts in norms about tolerable behavior.

### **OBJECTIVE #3: FOSTER SAFE AND VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS**

Much violence is concentrated in certain neighborhoods and a lack of community accountability allows violence to be perpetrated. Significantly reducing these levels of violence requires a concentrated focus within these neighborhoods to assure an appropriate level of services, a synergy between efforts, and achieving a tipping point at which violence levels will fall. Place-based strategies have proven effective around the country and the county already has several promising place-based strategies in place. Building on these and ensuring the coordinated alignment of resources is critical. As a starting point, the recommendations in this *Blueprint* can be piloted in a few neighborhoods throughout the County, bringing County resources together strategically to support local efforts and success.

#### **PRELIMINARY OUTCOME MEASURES:**

- Increased social cohesion and trust
- Increased positive feelings about living in specific neighborhoods
- Decreased number of alcohol outlets in each community
- Decreased patterns of gun ownership and possession
- Decreased supply of drugs in communities
- Increased perception of the community's ability to make change for the common good
- Increased perceptions of safety
- Increased/developed family re-entry services
- Increased job placement for formerly incarcerated individuals
- Increase the number receiving job training and placement
- Increased number of jobs in each community

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

##### **11) Firearms: Reduce the availability and usage of firearms through policy and norms change.**

*Why is it that we can walk to get any kind of gun, drug or alcohol that we want, but we have to take the bus to get school supplies?*

*- Oakland Youth*

Even if a reduction in the number of hostilities could not be accomplished, a mere reduction in the availability of guns and ammunition would decrease the lethality and injury associated with violence. Therefore, it is critical to both reduce the availability of firearms and to decrease usage of firearms. Achieving both requires a combination of policy advocacy and informational and social norming campaigns. This includes: generating information and educational media campaigns about legislative and systems changes to reduce gun violence, informing people about how to dispose of guns and the consequences of *not* obeying the law, reducing the flow of guns into illegal markets, taking a stand against the top sellers of guns used in crime, improving gun tracing, obtaining agreement across agencies that confiscated firearms are destroyed after tracing, advocating to restrict the age for possession of firearms-statewide, regulating bb and pellet guns, promoting regional strategies for control of firearms, prohibiting the sale of guns

without safety devices, promoting the passage of a consistent statewide concealable firearm law, enforcing existing laws that prevent domestic violence offenders from carrying and owning firearms, and advocating for federal policies to reduce the availability of firearms. Education should be focused on information to large groups of providers who are trusted by their constituents.

**12) Conflict resolution: Create pro-active dispute resolution structures and support at the neighborhood level.**

*Community participation, when it's real, is your main investment in accountability. It's your main investment in sustainability...community participation is when, truly, you involve people in creating a mechanism for themselves to define change.*

*- America Braccho, Latino Health Access*

Conflict resolution can foster understanding and promote cooperation across different ages, ethnicities, and other differences. It promotes meaningful involvement, exposes unhealthy communication that leads to violence, models respect for other people's boundaries in a way that actually helps to decrease violence and leaves people feeling heard and empowered, can model appropriate expressions of rage, and allows for real and significant disputes to be worked out without violence. In addition to resolving disputes such as between neighbors, conflict resolution structures should be broad and pro-active focusing on conflicts experienced in the neighborhood such as among gangs, interracial conflict, or conflicts with law enforcement in the case of harassment and police brutality, as well as with other service providers, such as schools. Structures can be set up to encourage and support positive roles for bystanders within the community, thus contributing to community accountability. Pro-active dispute resolution non-violently resolves conflicts that divide individuals and groups and propagates norms about how conflicts can and should be solved.

**13) Gang Prevention: Reduce gang violence through appropriate services, programs, and outreach to those at risk of gang participation and to those already involved.**

*The chief problem in any community cursed with crime is not the punishment of the criminals, but the preventing of the young from being trained to crime.*

*- W.E.B. Dubois*

Reducing gang violence necessitates targeted interventions for people in gangs as well as those at risk of gang membership. Street-based engagement is one important element of reaching this population. By ensuring that gang-involved youth and youth at-risk of involvement have alternative activities in their community and school, gang violence can decrease and participation can become less of an option. A critical element is connecting young people to their schools and other positive institutions in the community. In 1999, the US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs developed a comprehensive model to reduce gang violence by: 1) mobilizing community leaders and residents to plan, strengthen, or create new opportunities for gang-involved youth and at-risk youth; 2) developing education, training, and employment programs targeting gang-involved youth and at-risk youth; and 3) ensuring schools, youth serving organizations, and other community-based organizations act as links between at-risk youth, gang-involved youth, their families, and needed health and social service agencies.<sup>20</sup>



**14) Alcohol availability: Decrease the density of alcohol outlets and advertising in neighborhoods afflicted with high crime and violence.**

*Reducing the physical availability of alcohol through limitation on the number and placement of outlets will result in reductions in alcohol-related problems.*

*- World Health Organization*

Low socioeconomic status census tracts and predominately black census tracts have significantly more liquor stores per capita than more affluent communities and predominately white communities.<sup>21</sup> Reducing the density of alcohol outlets has been shown to reduce crime and violence in the immediate area. One coalition that successfully shut down nearly 200 liquor stores documented an average 27% reduction in violent crime/felonies, drug-related felonies or misdemeanors and vice (e.g., prostitution) within a four-block radius of each liquor store that was closed.<sup>22</sup> The impact that is perhaps most salient to residents in the short-term is a feeling that the neighborhood is a safer, more pleasant place to be. Oakland already has a successful track record in reducing alcohol density.

**15) Drug Markets: Shrink drug markets by simultaneously decreasing the demand side through appropriate economic development, health, and human service efforts and decreasing the supply side through targeted criminal justice approaches.**

*Order is not pressure which is imposed on society from without, but an equilibrium which is set up from within.*

*-Jose Ortega y Gasset*

Too often drugs destroy individuals and communities, undermine sustainable human development and cause crime.<sup>23</sup> Diminishing the prevalence of drug markets through viable employment and educational opportunities across the lifespan can decrease the demand for and usage of drugs. Research also highlights that the fastest and most cost effective way to reduce the demand for illicit drugs is to treat chronic hard core drug users.<sup>24</sup> This means, individuals that use drugs need access to the appropriate and effective health care, substance abuse, and mental health services. Further, ensuring viable economic opportunities for youth and adults at the neighborhood level can reduce the temptation or need to turn to dealing as a source of income. There is also an imperative role for the criminal justice system in reducing drug markets through law enforcement efforts.

**16) Restorative justice: Implement restorative justice programs with community organizations and the justice system.**

*Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.*

*-Martin Luther King Jr.*

Restorative justice models recognize that violence hurts individuals, families, communities, and the perpetrator and creates an obligation to make things right.<sup>25</sup> In this model, the victim's perspective is critical in determining how to repair the harm that has been caused and the perpetrator takes responsibility for the violence and takes steps to make amends. Restoration includes repairing the harm caused and rebuilding relationships in the community. Restorative

justice has been shown to have a positive effect on victims, perpetrators, and the community. Through community support, defining the harm caused, and decision-making about how to repair the harm caused, victims experience increased recovery from the trauma. Through understanding the impact of their behavior and taking responsibility for it, perpetrators can become integrated into the community. By fostering community involvement and relationships between community members, communities become safer.

**17) Reentry: Create more viable connections between communities and inside detention facilities, provide incentives for hiring ex-felons, and support transition from detention to the community through mental health services, substance abuse treatment, job training and employment services, and supports for family members.**

*The tremendous growth of California's prison population has given some residents a sense of safety and security, but they seem surprisingly unconcerned—or are possibly unaware—that more than 90% of those who enter prisons eventually return to the community, and most do so in less than two years. In any given year, about 40% of California's prisoners are released.*

*-Joan Petersilia, California Policy Research Center, University of California*

Ensuring that adults and youth who have been detained can successfully return to the community is a vital element of preventing violence in Alameda County. Achieving this requires focusing both on meeting the needs of people while they are detained and transitioning them successfully back into the community. The first can be supported by mental health and substance abuse services, vocational and job training, and maintaining connections to the outside. The second includes continued mental health and substance abuse services as needed, fully reintegrating ex-felons back into the community, and ensuring a welcoming environment in the home, community, and among employers. According to the Urban Institute, “Families are an important source of housing, emotional support, financial resources, and overall stability for returning prisoners. Strategies and resources designed to strengthen family ties during the period of incarceration and after release (e.g., prerelease family conferencing sessions) are recommended.”<sup>26</sup> Strategies to integrate ex-offenders must also include attention to job placement and retention for youth and adults. Since many employers are reluctant to hire ex-felons, it is critical to change hiring policies and practices of employers throughout the county, including those of local government entities.

**18) Employment: Tie job training and placement programs for community residents to neighborhood beautification/maintenance and infrastructure and commerce development, and female economic empowerment.**

*Nothing stops a bullet like a job.*

*-Father Gregory Boyle, Homeboy Industries*

Employment and being able to support oneself and one’s family fosters self-sufficiency and dignity while reducing the stresses associated with being unemployed. When adults and youth cannot find appropriate employment, they are more likely to turn to crime and violence and associated illicit activities, such as selling drugs. It is critical that Alameda County adults and youth—particularly those in areas most afflicted with violence—have employment opportunities. Establishing employment programs that link employees to their community fosters community

ownership and connection and can result in positive changes for the neighborhood. Many neighborhoods afflicted with high-violence are also in greater disrepair and could use more improvement services. Commerce development is not only associated with more opportunities for local employment, it has also been linked to lower crime rates as foot traffic increases. Therefore, employment opportunities should be linked specifically to efforts to improve particular neighborhoods. The county should promote first source hiring policies as a method of job creation for local residents. In addition to increasing the number of available jobs within neighborhoods, entrepreneurship should be fostered and supported. It is critical that efforts include attention to fostering female economic empowerment.

**19) Physical appearance: Improve the physical appearance of neighborhoods by fostering arts programs and community gardens, improving park and neighborhood maintenance, and removing graffiti and blight.**

*...Disorder invites even more disorder— ...a small deviation from the norm can set in motion a cascade of vandalism and criminality.*

*-Malcolm Gladwell, New Yorker contributor*

Appearance influences both perceptions of safety and reductions in crime. The New York Times reported on one Chicago housing project that had been transformed through an award-winning architectural makeover. Prior to the renovation, tenants did not feel safe enough to sit outside their front door, where chain-linked fences enclosed corridors and created a prison-like environment. As the president of the Tenants' Association explains, “Nobody thought the idea of putting glass over the sides of the buildings would really work, but it changed everything. You couldn't help but see a rosier day.” In addition to anecdotal praise, the head of the local Chamber of Commerce has found that reports of small theft and violence from the building have stopped.<sup>27</sup> The physical environment can affect attitude, behavior, and subsequently safety. In one experiment a car was parked in a relatively affluent neighborhood and abandoned for a week, during which the car was fine. When the experimenter smashed one of the car windows and again abandoned it, the car was vandalized and destroyed within a few hours.<sup>28</sup>

Efforts to improve the physical appearance of a neighborhood should include people who live in the neighborhood and reflect the local culture. Such efforts can include mural projects and other art programs, making sure that parks are clean and well-maintained, and removing graffiti immediately, and addressing blight in a timely manner. Some communities have developed programs to take over blighted property, fix it up, and sell it to or make it available to members of the community. Community events can focus on neighborhood appearance including planting community gardens or median strips and street clean-ups.

**20) Social connectedness: Support communities to foster strong social connections and to heal from community violence while translating fear and anger into action to prevent future violence.**

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

*-Margaret Mead*

Strong social networks and connections correspond with lower rates of homicide, suicide, and alcohol and drug abuse.<sup>29,30</sup> One study showed that children were mentally and physically healthier in neighborhoods where adults talked to each other.<sup>31</sup> Both individuals and families benefit through their social connections when networks are used to find a job, companionship, or support in times of need. As interactions between diverse sets of people increase, a community moves towards a norm of generalized reciprocity: I'll do this for you without expecting anything specific back from you, in the confident expectation that someone else will do something for me down the road.<sup>32</sup> Such networks also produce and enforce social sanctions and controls to diminish negative behavior and reduce the incidence of crime, juvenile delinquency, and access to firearms within communities.<sup>33, 34</sup>

In communities that experience a lot of violence, residents live with fear, anger, and hopelessness. It is important to acknowledge these feelings, provide opportunities for them to be processed and worked through, that families are supported through their grief, and that the community can come together to collectively reduce the chances of future violence. Community gatherings, grief counseling, appropriate and sensitive media coverage, support to victims' families –including helping them navigate different government systems and departments– developing a crisis response network, and translating the contributing factors to the violence into effective policy action can all help prevent violence.

#### **OBJECTIVE #4: ENSURE PROGRAM AND GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

Programs and services for children and youth, families, and neighborhoods need to be well thought-out, coordinated, and build on what is already working and promising practices. Ensuring that resources are used in the most effective way, that service providers have the requisite skills, and that the county is addressing its highest priority needs requires staffing and structure. Further, the programmatic and service recommendations are a framework that represents the best thinking of people throughout Alameda County and reflects violence prevention research. However, on an ongoing basis they must be prioritized and assessed. It will require dedicated staffing to establish and carry-out the specifics.

#### **PRELIMINARY OUTCOME MEASURES:**

- Increased accountability for violence prevention outcomes
- Increased coordination of violence prevention planning and activities
- Increased leadership on violence prevention
- Increased understanding of effective violence prevention

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

##### ***I. Strategy and coordination (see organizational structure on page 30)***

##### **i) Create an Alameda County Violence Prevention Coordinator position.**

*If we do not change direction, we are likely to end up where we are headed.*  
-Chinese proverb

A Violence Prevention Coordinator can carry out major responsibilities associated with successful implementation of the *Blueprint*. The Coordinator should report to someone at a high level in county government in order to promote accountability and to ensure authority to work with all relevant stakeholders within county government.

*Responsibilities:* The Coordinator will be charged with carrying out activities that promote violence prevention outcomes throughout the county. To achieve this, the Coordinator will be responsible for:

- Carrying out day to day responsibilities for coordinated violence prevention efforts;
- Fostering coordination and collaboration, including staffing the Leadership Council and its subcommittees;
- Training, campaigns, and information about models and best practices;
- Resource development;
- Assessing resource allocation and alignment;
- Implementing strategy and priorities and associated activities.

*Staffing:* The Coordinator should be supported by a combination of dedicated and in-kind staffing. In-kind staffing should come from participating County departments and agencies. Dedicated staffing overtime may include one or two additional support positions. The Coordinator should have a solid understanding of violence prevention, the capacity to coordinate

and staff the bodies that make up the structure, the ability to engage diverse public and private stakeholders in an ingoing and effective manner, and the ability to work with all constituencies including but not limited to members of the Board of Supervisors and other elected officials, agency directors and departments, program staff, community members and youth.

**ii) Establish and maintain a public-private Leadership Council.**

*Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.  
-Sitting Bull*

Violence prevention efforts “require a comprehensive effort from all segments of the community, beginning with the individual and involving education, community action, social support, and competency building.”<sup>35</sup> In order to ensure a ‘central intelligence’ to violence prevention in Alameda County and to establish a venue for well-thought-out coordination, the County should establish a diverse public-private Leadership Council.

*Responsibilities:* The Leadership Council will serve in an advisory capacity and be responsible for:

- Providing advice about violence prevention priorities, resource allocation, policies, and on-going strategy
- Assessing where resources are used and their outcomes as well as the need for reallocation to support priorities and making recommendations accordingly
- Determining appropriate relationships to and coordination with other related efforts
- Considering how County efforts can be more supportive and non-competitive with local efforts and making appropriate recommendations
- Making recommendations about appropriate violence prevention policy for the county
- Fostering community engagement/input
- Establishing and maintaining effective public/private partnerships
- Coordinating with community efforts
- Establishing effective working groups and maintaining or disbanding as appropriate
- Promoting a sense of hope that violence is preventable

*Participants:* The Leadership Council should include representatives from county and local governments, county departments and agencies (see County Coordinating Council), legislative representatives, community members, youth, business, labor, the faith community, community-based and grassroots organizations, schools and school districts, colleges and universities, parks/recreation, media, California Department of Corrections, California Youth Authority, Housing Authority, the Community College District, the County Administrator’s Office, and other relevant stakeholders.

*Subcommittees:* The Leadership Council should identify other groups in the County working on similar or related issues and establish mechanisms to link with them and not duplicate efforts. The Leadership Council should also establish subcommittees as a primary vehicle for getting work done and should be explicit about who should be in each to maximize outcomes and minimize meeting time for participants. Attention should be paid to including individuals who have knowledge about given issues and the capacity to influence resources and policy. To the extent possible, subcommittees should be ad hoc in nature with specific goals and timeframes.



To begin with, the Leadership Council should establish subcommittees for initial priorities. In addition, the Leadership Council should continue the data working group (See *Assessment and evaluation: Establish data systems*). In addition, one subcommittee, *County Coordinating Council*, should include only County agencies and departments to enhance effective governmental collaboration and service delivery.

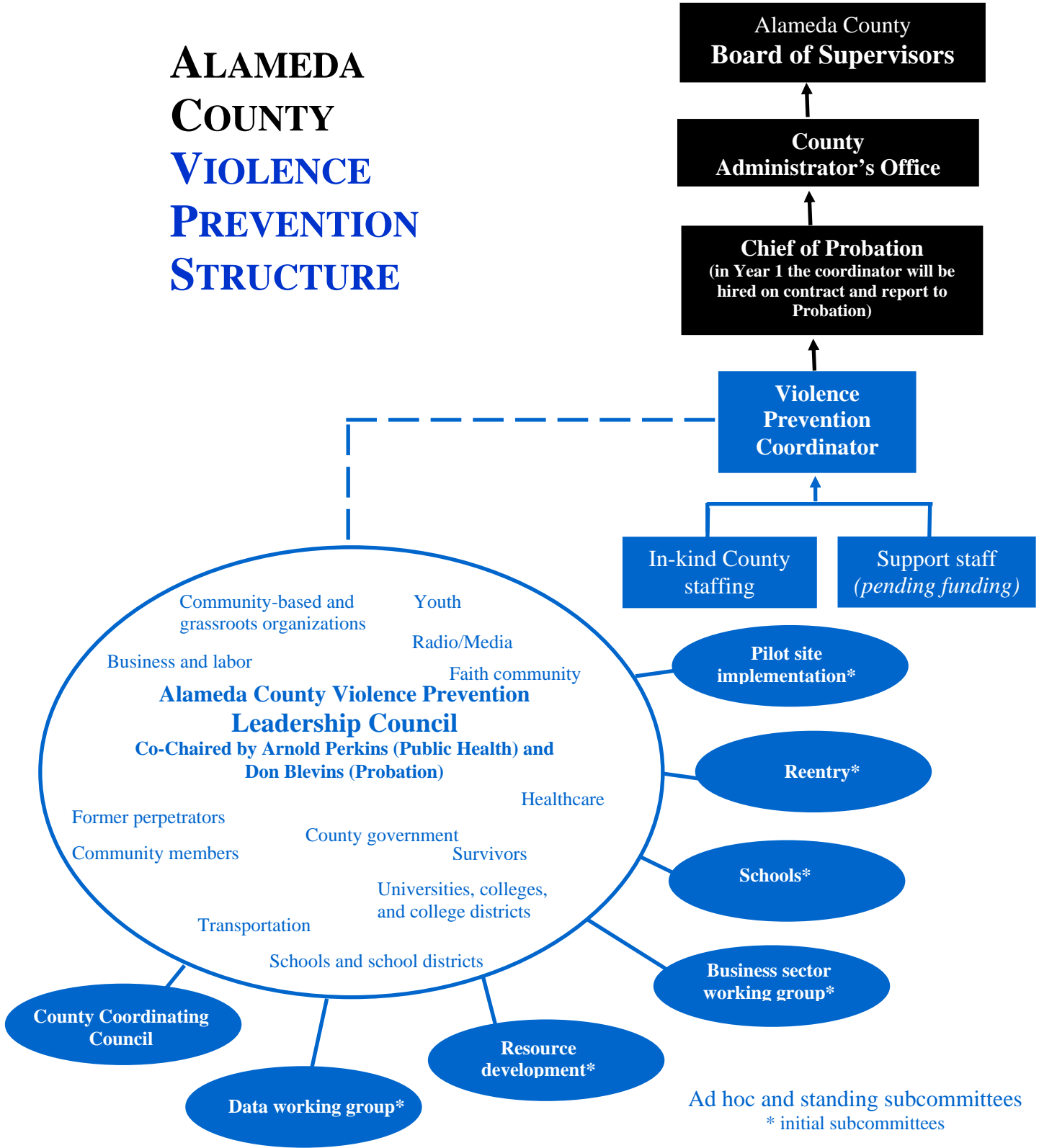
*County Coordinating Council:* The County Coordinating Council will be a venue for relevant county entities to collaborate on violence prevention activities. Violence crosses the boundaries between criminal justice, health and human services, and education. As such, the responsibility for reducing and preventing violence in Alameda County spans multiple jurisdictions, numerous agencies, departments, and programs, each addressing a different part of the larger problem. Further, there are multiple efforts within schools and school districts, cities and municipalities, and those lead by grassroots and community-based organizations, all of which make important contributions to reducing violence throughout the country. Too often, these varied sources are not coordinated effectively enough or are duplicative. As a result, the resources and services provided by County government to address community problems are delivered in a way that is not always as helpful to local efforts as they can or should be. When violence occurs, it does not affect the sectors of the community represented by agencies and departments in isolation, but rather affects multiple community sectors simultaneously and indiscriminately. For this reason, a cohesive violence prevention approach spanning multiple disciplines is required. While expertise within each department and discipline is essential to advancing violence prevention knowledge and understanding, this can create a system that is difficult for community practitioners to access and navigate.

*Purpose:* The County Coordinating Council and its members will be responsible for ensuring high-level governmental coordination and leadership, sharing and coordinating data, reducing duplication and building on existing efforts, identifying and reducing gaps in governmental services and functions, implementing violence prevention strategy within participating departments and agencies, promoting individual agency and department follow through, ensuring all staff is working in a coordinated matter, ensuring current effective violence prevention city-county efforts continue, communicating in a common voice, and establishing mechanisms to pool prevention resources across jurisdictions.

*Participants:* This subcommittee should consist of only county department and agency directors whose budgets are controlled by the Board of Supervisors and who have mandates related to violence prevention, the recommendations delineated in this *Blueprint*, and the risk and resilience factors associated with violence in the County. These include: probation, public health, social services, behavioral health, sheriff's office, district attorney, public defender, firefighters, libraries, general services administration, and the County Administrator's Office.



# ALAMEDA COUNTY VIOLENCE PREVENTION STRUCTURE



## **II. Training, communications, and information**

### **iii. Enhance violence prevention skills through interdisciplinary training and conferences.**

*For it isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it.*

*-Eleanor Roosevelt*

Practitioners, service providers, program directors and elected officials need skills to prevent violence. Cross-disciplinary training will build a common language, foster understanding about different roles, and build necessary skills. Training topics include a public health approach to violence prevention, risk and resilience factors, interdisciplinary collaboration, behavioral and gender norms, best and promising practices, violence-specific topics (e.g. sexual assault, child abuse, youth violence, etc.), advocacy, working with the media, engaging youth, community engagements, and leadership development. Training workshops and conferences provide one venue to share this information.

### **iv. Provide information about effective and promising models and approaches.**

*Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing.*

*- Rollo May*

Service providers and members of the community need information about what is going on across the county, best practices, and where to go for specific violence prevention-related information and services. Some information may be made available upon request. The information should include promising and best practices that support the *Blueprint* recommendations and are applicable in Alameda County. There should be a mechanism for various jurisdictions in the County to share information and resources and relevant county agencies, departments, and community-based organizations can help ensure that the appropriate information is available and disseminated.

### **v. Establish campaigns designed to shift norms about violence, build understanding that violence is preventable, and foster hope that violence will be prevented.**

*Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.*

*- Robert F. Kennedy*

Information campaigns should be designed to build awareness that violence is preventable and an understanding of how to prevent it, foster hope, and build on the county's assets, including its diversity. Information campaigns can include the use of multiple channels including radio, television, internet, posters, and presentations at community meeting, neighborhood centers, to elected officials, and at government meetings such as superintendents, police chiefs, and agency and department heads. In addition to information campaigns, other campaigns should focus on

shifting norms about violence from the point at which violence is tolerable to the point at which violence is unacceptable. One campaign option is to create a ballot initiative. As a county-wide initiative, voters can have the opportunity to voice their support for violence prevention efforts. A ballot initiative could include specific items, be a referendum on the *Blueprint*, or could contain general language about the need for safe homes, safe streets, safe schools, and safe neighborhoods. The process could help build voter understanding that violence is preventable and forge a greater mandate for violence prevention.

### ***III. Resource alignment and allocation***

#### **vi. Identify gaps and priority areas (e.g. specific populations or locations) and align and allocate existing resources to serve major priority needs and gaps.**

*They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.*

*-Andy Warhol*

The county already has multiple resources invested in violence prevention. It is critical that these resources be aligned for the greatest impact. Further, since resources are scarce in comparison to need, it is critical that resources be allocated to meet the greatest need, with the greatest chance of success, and in sufficient dosage to have an effect. To accomplish this, the county should map how it is addressing its priorities related to children and youth, families, and neighborhoods, assess the need in each of these areas, and allocate resources accordingly.

#### **vii. Establish stable funding sources to support effective violence prevention efforts in the county and develop resources for special projects and efforts.**

*The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.*

*-Martin Luther King Jr.*

Too often prevention efforts are cast adrift in tough budget times, in spite of the promise that prevention can improve the quality of lives, while saving lives and money. In order to ensure adequate funding levels, a combination of funding sources is required. They are:

- *Designated county resources:* It is vital that there be designated resources in the county budget to pay for staffing and supplies –and to send a clear message that violence prevention is a county priority.
- *Agency and department contributions:* Agencies and departments should contribute a percentage of their budget to support implementation of the violence prevention programmatic and services recommendations and the activities of the coordinator, such as training events and campaigns. The County Administrator should recommend the appropriate amount. While agencies and departments have been forced to go through tough budget reductions, individual contributions will build ownership in the combined efforts, ongoing attention, and commitment to success. It also reinforces the message that violence prevention is a priority and that many stakeholders are part of the solution.
- *In-kind staffing:* Relevant agencies and departments should contribute in-kind staffing to support the functions of the coordinator and the goals of the *Blueprint*. This will ensure better

communication and coordination across departments and build shared ownership of violence prevention activities and priorities.

- *Government and foundation grants:* Additional funding to support special projects and/or to establish mini-grant programs should be raised from non-county sources including through foundations, corporate donations and giving programs, individual contributions, federal appropriations, and grants to state and federal agencies. These funds should be raised to support efforts consistent with the *Blueprint*. Local elected officials, office staff, and other stakeholders should work with state and federally elected officials to bring in resources such as through federal appropriations or waivers that will increase flexibility in state and local requirements to support the county's priorities.
- *Federal and State appropriations:* Violence prevention staff should explore opportunities to bring state and federally appropriated dollars into the county to support county-wide efforts and to bolster local initiatives.
- *Filing, registration, and license fees:* Violence prevention staff and appropriate county staff should assess opportunities to add incremental fees that could support violence prevention efforts. In many cases, these might include adding fees associated with the costs of violence and investing these into prevention. For example, court filing fees associated with violence and assault charges could be increased. Whatever fees are deemed appropriate, it is critical that they not displace current funding for prevention and treatment. For example, a portion of marriage license fees support domestic violence programs and these levels should remain intact.
- *Private contributions:* Violence prevention staff should establish a mechanism through which private contributions can be made to support violence prevention efforts in the County and contributors can feel confident that their contributions are being used efficiently and effectively.

#### ***IV. Assessment and evaluation***

**viii. Establish data systems that are coordinated and enable effective tracking of associated risk and resilience factors, violence indicators and milestones, and that will enable good decision-making across departments and agencies while informing policy.**

*When I hear about a program that saved one person, I hear a failed program.*

*-Unknown*

Alameda County needs improved data systems that enhance access, facilitate sharing across departments, and answer questions that will promote the most effective violence prevention efforts. This includes ensuring that data collected not only counts the incidence of violence but can track progress on reducing associated risk factors and bolstering associated resilience factors. Specific indicators should be established for the priority action areas in this *Blueprint* and progress should be tracked and reported to the Board of Supervisors, agency and department leaders, and to the public. Further, this information should be used to shape future policies and set priorities for action.

One method for informing policy with data are review teams. Review teams assess cases on an individual basis and use findings to inform policies. For example, the *Not Even One Campaign* brought together representatives in public health, law enforcement, education, business, and

firearm victims, and used public health research methods to review firearm related deaths of youth in their communities and identify strategies that could have prevented these deaths. These findings were shared with community leaders and local agencies to help prevent similar outcomes in the future. Child death and domestic violence review teams have worked in similar ways. It is important that the findings translate into preventive policy and action.

Evaluation is a critical component of ensuring that efforts are effective and addressing the identified need; therefore adequate resources should be put into data and evaluation efforts. Good evaluation will increase the viability of funding streams to the county and to community-based organizations by demonstrating effectiveness and establishing credibility. Those responsible for assessment need evaluation guidelines as well as technical assistance and resources to conduct evaluations. In developing evaluation guidelines, the appropriate level of resource should be considered. For example, proven programs need only be evaluated for fidelity and fiscal management, while new programs need more scrutiny to ensure they are achieving the desired outcomes. Finally, evaluation methodology is has not caught up entirely with the understanding that violence prevention efforts must be comprehensive to be effective. To the extent possible, evaluation should consider the overall context and not demand only linear programming.

**ix. Ensure that county departments and agencies and service providers are held accountable for violence prevention efforts in the county.**

*Leaders are made, they are not born. They are made by hard effort, which is the price which all of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile.*

*-Vince Lombardi*

The county needs more concerted leadership speaking up about preventing violence and holding those responsible more accountable. County leaders can spread hope and meet with community constituencies to hear their perspective and keep them updated. Further, county leaders must hold those accountable for expected activities and outcomes. This includes hiring agency and department leaders and program staff and managers with an understanding of violence prevention and a commitment to it and assessing performance in annual reviews. In addition, people within the County need high-quality services and need to know that their resources are being used effectively. Therefore, all service providers should be supported in their efforts to provide quality services and should also be held accountable for doing so.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: RISK AND RESILIENCE FACTORS

#### RISK FACTORS

Risk factors are characteristics or circumstances that increase the likelihood of an individual, family, or community being affected by or perpetrating violence. The effects of risk violence are complex, interactive, and cumulative. Not everyone exposed to these risk factors will become involved in violence, but those who are exposed to multiple risk factors have a higher prevalence of antisocial behaviors and a greater likelihood of decreased intelligence and social competence.<sup>36,37,38</sup> The combination, frequency, and severity of risks influence whether or not problems develop.<sup>39</sup> According to Dr. James Garbarino, "No one risk or asset counts for much by itself. It is only the overwhelming accumulation of risk without a compensatory accumulation of assets that puts kids in jeopardy".<sup>40</sup> Interviewees identified a number of risk and resilience factors.

#### **1. Poverty and economic disparity**

Many interviewees identified poverty as a significant risk factor in Alameda County. Lack of employment opportunities creates a sense of hopelessness and is a stressor. Some who cannot earn an adequate or living wage as part of the mainstream economy may turn towards drug dealing or other illegal activities to make a living. Several interviewees suggested that this is the case in Alameda County. For example, according to one person, "People are selling dope; they are getting involved in the drug markets because they need food". Furthermore, if the local economy is in decline, there tend to be less support services available to residents and deterioration of the local infrastructure. One interviewee said that gangs, which are developing as a response to disenfranchisement, represent a major risk factor for violence within the county. Declining quality among schools and housing contribute to the feeling among youth that society does not care about them; violence is often the mechanism by which youth express their frustrations and anger about the disparities that exist within their worlds.

#### **2. Illiteracy and school failure**

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 17.6 percent of adults in Alameda County over the age of 25 have not completed high school. Although this figure is only slightly lower than the statewide rate of 18.8 percent, the high school drop out rates for the Berkeley, Oakland and Newark Unified School Districts are significantly higher than the statewide average. According to the Alameda County Public Health Department, the Oakland Unified School District alone has a high school drop out rate of 19.7 percent, which is almost double the state's average rate of 10 percent. The countywide drop-out rate for minority students, however, is significantly higher. According to the Alameda County Health Care Foundation, Latino/a youth have the highest drop-out rate of any ethnic group within the county (24.3 %) followed by African-American students, whose current drop-out rate is 21.9 percent. This in turn impacts future opportunities. As one interviewee put it, "There is no true employment for uneducated people and people without work experience."



Many interviewees identified the educational system, academic failure, and truancy as a major risk factor for violence in the county. Many young people have unmarketable skills and a lack of opportunity as a result. Further, youth in the juvenile justice system with a learning disability and in need of special services don't get those needs necessarily met by the schools.

There is a strong correlation between school failure and aggressive or violent behavior.<sup>41,42</sup> Further, research shows that chronic exposure to violence harms a child's ability to learn.<sup>43</sup> When children's energies are redirected because they are defending themselves against outside dangers or warding off their own fears, they have difficulty learning in school.<sup>44</sup> The relationship between violence and learning is particularly significant because cognitive skills form the foundation of academic success, self-esteem, coping, and overall resilience.

### **3. Alcohol and other drugs**

Interviewees identified substance abuse and the presence of drug markets as major contributors to the problem of violence in the county. Substance use and abuse contribute to violence in the home and the community. For example, it was associated with intimate partner violence as well as with shootings that happen at parties and cultural celebrations. Finally, many interviewees postulated that drug markets and struggles over them contribute to violence and in particular to homicides.

Nationwide, alcohol is the drug most closely associated with violent incidents; some researchers estimate that it is implicated in 50 to 66 percent of all homicides<sup>45</sup>, 20 to 36 percent of suicides<sup>46</sup>, and more than half of all cases of domestic violence.<sup>47</sup> The scientific literature strongly suggests that alcohol, like other drugs, acts as a "multiplier" of crime. The use of alcohol and drugs results in higher levels of aggression and crime. And in neighborhoods where there is a concentration of liquor stores, that neighborhood often suffers from alcohol-related social problems.<sup>23</sup>

### **4. Firearms**

Even if a reduction in the number of hostilities could not be accomplished, a mere reduction in the availability of guns and ammunition would decrease the lethality and injury associated with violence. Firearms significantly contribute to the lethality of violence in Alameda County. For example, in Oakland in 2002, nearly 85% of the 113 of homicides were committed with a firearm.<sup>48</sup> Firearms play a major role in domestic violence and can make domestic disputes more lethal. In 2001, there were many domestic violence related calls and of those calls weapons were often involved. In Oakland, 200 of the 2,043 domestic violence related calls involved a weapon.<sup>49</sup> Other cities in the Alameda County recording the following: San Leandro (264 of 268), Alameda (203 of 203), Albany (14 of 14), Berkeley (234 of 342), Emeryville (15 of 16), Fremont (556 of 560), Hayward (415 of 425), Livermore (98 of 222), Newark (129 of 137), Piedmont (3 of 17), Pleasanton (93 of 123), and Union City (12 of 242).<sup>50</sup> In addition, in the courts, security is threatened by firearm usage as well, particularly related to domestic violence cases. Some interviewees called for reductions in access to guns.

### **5. Negative family dynamics**

Many people underscored the contribution of family and home life as contributing to violence. People said that families have a responsibility to model and teach responsible and non-violent behavior. Family dynamics refers to family relationships, interactions, structure, parenting skills,



family communication, and methods of discipline. An unsupportive home life including psychological or physical abuse can begin or maintain a cycle of violence—in and outside the home. A lack of nurturing interactions between parents and their children harms child development and increases the risk of involvement in violence. Parental practices such as failure to set clear expectations for children’s behavior, poor monitoring and supervision, lack of involvement, and severe and inconsistent discipline, have been shown to consistently predict later delinquency.<sup>51, 52</sup>

## **6. Mental illness**

The California Youth Authority reported that in 2000, 45 percent of male inmates and 65 percent of female inmates had mental health problems. Indications also exist that point to a high rate of behavioral problems among Alameda County’s preschool-aged children. In the Child Care Planning Council’s February 2002 report, Preventative Mental Health Services for Young Children in Alameda County, the top concerns of childcare center directors included the “aggressive and violent behavior of children.” Significantly, in a study conducted by the City of Denver, these same behaviors were observed among approximately half of all serious violent offenders and they are, according to the U.S. Surgeon General, “linked directly to violent behavior.”<sup>53</sup>

A 2001 report by the U.S. Surgeon General on youth violence argued that the prevalence of mental illness among violent youth is significantly higher than the prevalence of mental illness among non-violent youth. According to this report, surveys conducted by the State of New York and the City of Denver both demonstrated that serious violent offenders were at least twice as likely to suffer from mental health problems as either non-violent offenders or non-offenders. Among violent youth offenders, the rate of mental illness was 28 percent, however, non-violent, youth offenders were plagued by mental health problems at a rate of only 13 to 14 percent. Similar studies in the U.S. and New Zealand have demonstrated that for both young and middle-aged adult populations, the greatest risk factor for violence stems from a combination of mental illness and substance abuse.<sup>54</sup>

## **7. Incarceration/Reentry**

Reentry is increasingly being identified as a contributor to violence in the county. Residents are returning following years of incarceration without adequate services, job training, or economic opportunities. Because state law requires the return of parolees upon their release to the county of their most recent residence, Oakland has been dubbed the “ex-con capital of California”. According to Oakland’s Department of Human Services, the California Department of Corrections (CDC) paroled 2,989 adult ex-offenders into Oakland during the 2000 fiscal year<sup>55</sup>. A recent article in the Los Angeles Times estimated that one out of every 14 adult males in the City of Oakland is on parole or probation.<sup>56</sup> The article also estimated that approximately 11,400 parolees and probationers currently reside within the city limits. Similarly, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) found that on a daily basis, “approximately 700 parolees in Oakland are wanted for some type of [parole] violation and that over 50% of reported crime in Oakland is committed by persons on probation or parole.”<sup>57</sup> One interviewee said that the number of homicides in an area correlates with the number of people on probation. For younger parolees, there are concerns about what opportunities exist for them. For example, school districts may not want parolees back in school due to safety concerns.

The United States has the highest incarceration rate per capita in the Western world.<sup>58</sup> The huge expenditures for prison building are a major determinant of available resources for schools, health, and other government necessities. California's rate of incarceration and expenditure make it one of the highest in the U.S. both for adults and for youth. Men and women are socialized within a violent subculture in prison and this is often spread to communities upon release.<sup>59</sup> Some interviewees noted the trend to high incarceration rates. As one interviewee expressed, "young adults no longer have the luxury to make mistakes."

## **8. Community deterioration**

Community deterioration includes both a breakdown of supportive networks among community members and a lack of resources such as community recreation areas or health and educational facilities. According to one interviewee, "People are living in negative environments and need to get people out so they can get their heads together." Families living in such communities may be socially isolated, without the personal resources to make up for the lack of goods and services or to escape to a more affluent community. Many interviewees noted the deterioration of some neighborhoods and one person said, "We've lost all connection to our community." The combination of neighborhood poverty and family poverty poses a double risk for young children. Research suggests that moving to a more affluent community enhances the physical and psychological health of children as well as their academic performance, and reduces violent crimes committed by adolescents.<sup>60,61</sup> In addition, the absence of networks and organizations that help reinforce positive values contributes to high rates of violence.<sup>62</sup> For example, lack of validation of violence-free lifestyles in the community may undermine parents' efforts to teach their young children positive behaviors.<sup>63</sup>

## **9. Discrimination and oppression; power and control**

Oppression, which includes sexism, racism, and discrimination on the basis of age, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation or culture results in inequality and feelings of powerlessness, which underlie many types of violence. Many people interviewed identified discrimination and prejudice as a significant contributor to violence in Alameda County. According to one person, "At the root, it's all the 'isms. Racism, sexism, age-ism – you name it, all the 'isms." Youth may experience oppression based on their age, or the perception that they cannot actively contribute to society in meaningful ways. Several people mentioned young people of color as specifically experiencing discrimination in the county. According to one person, "The system is less responsive, such as police and healthcare. I deal with expendable kids. They're not seen as worth investing in." Another identified racial tension as a major contributor to school violence. Racial tension and conflict was also identified as a contributor to community violence as well as a barrier to positive relations within neighborhoods. Promoting safety in low-income communities can be ineffective because racism, bias, and discrimination can foster conflicts that leave the residents feeling powerless, divided, and alienated.<sup>64</sup> Further, power and control and particularly power over others can be a significant risk factor for violence, particularly for intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

## **10. Media violence**

Media portrayals of violence enforce the message that violence is a common and appropriate way to solve problems. In addition to the barrage of violent images that children are exposed to

on a daily basis through magazines, newspapers, films and computers, it is estimated that children in the United States view 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence on television before completing elementary school.<sup>65</sup> Such exposure models violent behavior, increases fearfulness which can impel one to become involved in violence as a means of protection, leads to desensitization to violent images and acceptance of violence as normal, and increases desire for involvement in violent activities.<sup>66</sup> Numerous studies have shown that excessive exposure to media violence increases aggressive behaviors in children and is associated with long-term negative effects.<sup>67,68,69</sup> In addition to television and movies, it has also been shown that violent video games produce a lower sensitivity to violence as well as contribute to violent behavior in youth.<sup>70,71</sup> Children under age five who witness television violence are especially vulnerable.<sup>72</sup> Without appropriate guidance, children can internalize the message that violence is a common and appropriate way to solve problems. This results in an increased likelihood for children to behave violently towards others and a decreased sense of empathy when they observe violence being perpetrated against others.<sup>73</sup> Additional research shows that the more violence a child watches at age five, the lower their grades later on in school.<sup>74</sup>

### **11. Experiencing and witnessing violence**

Many people identified violence as a now 'normal' or common occurrence in many homes, schools, and neighborhoods. According to one person, "It feels like a fact of life in Oakland. The kids we work with are used to gunshots." Youth in Alameda County are saying, "Why should I worry about tomorrow when I don't think I'll live past today?"

Witnessing and/or experiencing violence is a traumatizing incident that can leave one feeling scared and helpless. Studies have found symptoms of post-traumatic stress and disorders among infants and toddlers exposed to community violence.<sup>75</sup> Witnessing violence when young can create a norm of violence as an acceptable behavior and increase children's risk for perpetrating or being victimized later in life.<sup>76</sup> It can also model violent behaviors and create and build upon norms of violence as an acceptable form of behavior and place people at greater risk for perpetrating or being victimized by further violence. Young children who witness violence often mimic those behaviors and have difficulty controlling their own aggressive impulses and getting along with parents, teachers, and other children. They also tend to exhibit behavior problems such as aggression, poor impulse control and problem-solving skills; lower levels of empathy, social competence and self-esteem; depression; inability to concentrate; and low academic performance.<sup>77,78,79</sup> Repeated (chronic) exposure to violence- such as that associated with living in a violent home or neighborhood- often result in negative effects that persist and accumulate over the long term.<sup>80,81</sup> For example, boys who witness violence against their mothers when young have an increased likelihood of using violence against their domestic partners when they are adults.<sup>82</sup> A study conducted for the U.S. Department of Justice study found that childhood experience of maltreatment increases the likelihood of an arrest as a juvenile by 59%, as an adult by 28%, and of arrest for a violent crime by 30%.<sup>83</sup>

### **12. Gender socialization**

Boys and men are disproportionately represented among both perpetrators and victims of violence, including physical and sexual assaults. Most boys learn in a variety of ways that 'rough and tumble' play, fighting, risk-taking, and lack of emotional expression are typical and natural male characteristics.<sup>84</sup> This kind of socialization can cause boys and men to be less empathetic

than girls and women and more prone to engaging in bullying and other violent behaviors. Society particularly teaches boys to resolve conflicts through force and reinforces this with men, while promoting a sense of entitlement or right to control another with less power. A growing body of research has documented a strong link between socialization into this stereotypical code of masculinity and an increased risk for violence.<sup>85,86,87</sup>

## **RESILIENCE FACTORS**

The capacity to develop positively despite harmful environments and experiences is called resilience. Fostering resiliency has been shown to improve academic, emotional, social, and cognitive outcomes<sup>88,89</sup> and to reduce violence later in life. Further, building community resilience factors or assets can counteract the negative effects of risk factors. Research shows that, like risk, the effects of resiliency factors accumulate, with those with more assets being less likely to engage in violence and other high-risk behaviors. According to Search Institute data, only 6% of children with more than 30 assets were violent, compared to 61% of the children with less than 10 assets.<sup>90</sup> Having more assets also increases the chances that young people will have positive attitudes and behaviors such as good health, success in school, self-control, and value for diversity.<sup>91</sup> Resiliency factors function at a number of different levels to produce healthy and positive outcomes. Social and economic opportunities, strong and vibrant communities with cohesive social networks, supportive and nurturing families, and individuals who are mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually healthy are all important goals of a comprehensive violence prevention approach.

### **1. Economic capital**

Economic capital, including adequate living wage employment opportunities, job training, local ownership of businesses, homeownership, access to loans and investment capital can be encouraged and promoted at a local level. According to the most recent data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, 33 percent of businesses in Alameda County are owned by minorities and 31.8 percent are owned by women. Both of these figures demonstrate rates of minority-owned and women-owned firms that exceed statewide averages. The county also has the Economic Development Advisory Council, which is engaged with hundreds of private and public partners in economic development, including workforce development.

There is a strong correlation between economic factors and health and safety outcomes. These activities promote local access to resources, the opportunity to increase local capital that can be reinvested into the community, and stability among residents. Increases in local business are associated with reduced crime, and achieving living wages may be correlated with reduced stress levels and better housing.

### **2. Meaningful opportunities for participation**

Interviewees overwhelmingly noted a lack of opportunities for youth and young adult in the county. While there was consensus that, "Kids need to have a sense of responsibility—a sense of contributing to something bigger," many pointed out the lack of such opportunities. One noted that, "We offer few opportunities for them (youth) to belong." Other commented, "There is nothing positive for kids to do." Several people mentioned a decrease in activities and opportunities with budget and funding cuts. The impact on youth is profound. In addition to

filling unstructured time with meaningless or risky behavior, young people feel uncared for and unimportant. For example, one said, “I’m not worth anything, so it doesn’t matter what I do.” One interviewee said, “I’m seeing kids take more risks because they don’t think it makes a difference. They think, ‘at least in jail I get food and a bed.’” The end result is that the county’s young people feel, “no one wants to be interested in me, and I’m expendable.” Some programs are fostering meaningful opportunities for participation and have witnessed reductions in violence on some school campuses.

Research has consistently supported the positive role of meaningful opportunities and participation. In their report, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*, the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine outlined characteristics of positive youth development settings. These opportunities are vital for an adolescent’s social development. Bonnie Benard, a leading trainer on youth resilience highlights meaningful participation as a significant protective factor. According to Benard, environments that promote positive youth development must provide youth with real choices and with ample opportunities for decision-making authority. Efforts that promote meaningful inclusion can successfully counter anti-social behavior among youth.<sup>92</sup>

### **3. Positive attachments and relationships**

Many interviewees talked about the importance of relationships. Whether they are between service providers, the police and community members, neighbors, or children and youth and adults, they are protective. Interviewees noted the value of mentoring programs. Others noted an absence of quality relationships. For example, one person stated, “We’ve lost all compassion for our young people. When you lose compassion for the young people, that’s a major issue.” Others noted the lack of positive role models, particularly men of color.

Children show significantly better cognitive and language skills, as well as positive social and emotional development, when they are cared for by adults who are attentive to their needs and who interact with them in encouraging and affectionate ways.<sup>93,94</sup> Research shows that when children have secure attachments early in life, they tend to develop better as they grow older, do better in social situations, and enjoy better academic achievement.<sup>95</sup> Attachment to parents, parental supervision, and consistency of discipline have been found to be the most important family protective factors in preventing delinquency in high-risk youth.<sup>96,97</sup>

### **4. Good physical and mental health**

Good health and mental health is associated with fewer behavioral and social problems as well as higher cognitive functioning and learning ability,<sup>98,99</sup> factors that can significantly reduce involvement in violence. Interviewees noted the relationship between violence prevention and health, highlighting the need for all people to have effective services and care.

One interviewee stated that, all county schools should offer adequate health and mental health services to their students.

### **5. Social capital**

Social capital is the “connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.”<sup>100</sup> In 1999, the *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study* found that the majority of single parents in Oakland, one of the most



economically disadvantaged populations in Alameda County, have extended family, upon whom they can rely for social and economic assistance. According to the study, “nearly all unmarried parents [interviewed] in Oakland said there was someone in their family to whom they could turn for help with financial problems, housing or childcare.” More specifically, the study reported that 44 percent of unwed mothers in Oakland received help from a family member with housing and that 33 percent received assistance from a family member with childcare.

Strong social networks and connections correspond with significant increases in mental health, academic achievement, and local economic development, as well as lower rates of homicide, suicide, and alcohol and drug abuse.<sup>101,102</sup> Participation in cooperative networks fosters mutual trust and increases community members’ willingness to intervene in the supervision of children, participate in community-building activities, and maintain public order. Participation also increases supportive relationships, such as sharing, reciprocity, and recognition that the needs of others are needs of all.<sup>103,104</sup> Such networks also produce and enforce social sanctions and controls to diminish negative behavior and reduce the incidence of crime, juvenile delinquency, and access to firearms within communities.<sup>105, 106</sup> A group willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good<sup>107</sup> has been shown to be a “robust predictor of lower rates of violence.”<sup>108</sup> For example, a neighborhood in South Central Los Angeles came together to put a stop to drive-by shootings. Residents worked together on a number of activities including outreach to local gangs to significantly reduce instances of gang-related gun violence in their streets.<sup>109</sup>

The behavioral and social norms within a community or social network “may structure and influence behaviors and one’s motivation and ability to change those behaviors.”<sup>110</sup> Current social norms and behavior contribute to many preventable social problems such as substance abuse and levels of violence. Successes have been made through social support networks that enable positive social norms to be developed and strengthened within the organization or community, such as those provided to African Americans through church activities.<sup>111</sup> Fostering positive gender norms within communities can promote respect and safer behaviors. Traditional beliefs about manhood are associated with a variety of poor health behaviors, including drinking, drug use, and high-risk sexual activity.<sup>112</sup> The behaviors that men engage in often affect the health and well-being of women, children, other men, and the community. For example, an estimated one in three adult women experiences at least one physical assault by her male partner during adulthood. Men are also more often reported for the sexual abuse of children. Focusing on gender norms will therefore not only lead to improved safety conditions for men and boys, but will also contribute to building healthier families and communities.

## **6. Built environment**

The term 'built environment' encompasses man-made physical components such as buildings and streets,<sup>113</sup> and includes land use, public transportation, and the style and permitted uses of businesses and residences. Land use, built environment, and zoning can have a positive impact on violence prevention. For example, "Land-use patterns that encourage neighborhood interaction and a sense of community have been shown not only to reduce crime, but also create a sense of community safety and security."<sup>114</sup> Further, good community design can contribute to a general increase in community networks and trust by creating a “neighborhood feel” through which people are encouraged to interact with each other in a safe environment. Residents of

buildings with green space had a stronger sense of community and reported less violence in dealing with domestic disputes.<sup>115</sup>

There are a number of built environment elements that promote violence prevention, including housing, transportation, product availability, and aesthetic/ambiance. Poor and inadequate housing is associated with increased risk for violence<sup>116</sup> and psychological stress.<sup>117</sup> Alternatively, the availability of safe and affordable housing can reduce stresses associated with living in unsafe, noisy, or overcrowded conditions or not being able to secure housing. Decisions about housing and its design can promote social interaction, community stability, and build a solid tax base to fund needed services, including violence prevention. Reliable and affordable transportation can ensure that people have access to jobs and services. Zoning can also influence the availability of beneficial products such as books and school supplies, sports equipment, arts and crafts supplies, and other recreational items as well as limit availability or lack, of potentially harmful products such as tobacco, firearms, alcohol, and other drugs can also have an impact on violence within a community. Low-income communities and communities of color have greater access to alcohol and tobacco products due to the high prevalence of local liquor stores. Specifically, low socioeconomic status (SES) census tracts and predominately black census tracts have significantly more liquor stores per capita than more affluent communities and predominately white communities.<sup>118</sup> Firearm availability is also disproportionately high in communities of color and low-income areas, leading to higher risk of violence in those neighborhoods. Youth in low-income communities and communities of color often recount stories of how easy it is to obtain a weapon, often a gun. As one youth resident of a low-income area of Oakland observed, "I can walk down to the corner and buy a gun, but I have to get on a bus to get school supplies."<sup>119</sup>

The aesthetic/ambiance of an environment can also impact violence levels. Appearance can impact both perceptions of safety and reductions in crime. The New York Times reported on one Chicago housing project that had been transformed through an award-winning architectural makeover. Prior to the renovation, tenants did not feel safe enough to sit outside their front door, where chain-linked fences enclosed corridors and created a prison-like environment. As the president of the Tenants' Association explains, "Nobody thought the idea of putting glass over the sides of the buildings would really work, but it changed everything. You couldn't help but see a rosier day." In addition to anecdotal praise, the head of the local Chamber of Commerce has found that reports of small theft and violence from the building have stopped.<sup>120</sup>

## **7. Services and institutions**

The range and quality of services within a community represent an opportunity to overcome barriers to safety and to foster strengths. One interviewee noted that, "Violence must be dealt with at every level from childhood on and before. The pattern that leads to violence starts early." Therefore, a broad range of services and institutions must be engaged in a solution. However, interviewees noted a disparity in services in some communities and some neighborhoods. "Partnerships aren't as strong as they should be."

Public and private services and institutions includes: local government, public health and health, social services, education, public safety, community groups and coalitions, community-based organizations, faith institutions, businesses, and arts institutions. These services must be



available, accessible, high quality, culturally competent, and appropriately coordinated. Further, it is critical that community services be connected to broader systems and policy bodies, including those at the city, state, and federal levels in order to ensure that decisions that are made will have a positive impact on the community.

Community services and institutions may serve as the focal point from which community change can be planned and implemented. These places may have resources, including mandates and funding, staffing, facilities, connections beyond the community, and community support and credibility, to foster and engage the necessary momentum and participation. The capacity of such organizations to lead or catalyze such change is an important element in the community.

### **8. Emotional and cognitive competence**

People who understand and can regulate their emotions, exercise self-discipline, and develop impulse-control, judgment, and coping mechanisms can better deal with aggressive or violent experiences without negative effects. To learn this, children need to experience healthy and appropriate behaviors, such as open and positive communication, consistent discipline, and problem-solving modeled by the adults around them<sup>121</sup>.

Cognitive competence includes oral, written, reasoning, and problem-solving skills, as well as creative expression and ability to learn. Cognitive skills lay the foundation for educational success and academic achievement<sup>122,123</sup>- factors which are highly protective against involvement in violence.<sup>124,125</sup>

### **9. Artistic and creative opportunities**

The visual and creative arts enable people at all developmental stages to appropriately express their emotions and to experience risk taking in a safe environment. For those who have witnessed violence, art can serve as a healing mechanism. More broadly, art can mobilize a community while reflecting and validating its cultural values and beliefs, including those about violence. Artistic and cultural institutions have been linked with lower delinquency and truancy rates in several urban communities.<sup>126</sup> For example, a study by Brice Heath, et.al., showed that, compared to a national sample, at-risk youth working in the arts during their out of school hours were four times more likely to have won school-wide attention for their academic achievement, three times more likely to be elected to class office within their schools, four times more likely to participate in a math and science fair, three times more likely to win an award for school attendance, and over four times more likely to win an award for writing an essay or poem.<sup>127</sup> Positive gains were found in another study conducted in partnership by Americans for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and three community arts groups. It was found that youth who participated in selected arts programs expressed anger appropriately, communicated effectively, increased their ability to work on tasks, engaged less in delinquent behavior, had fewer court referrals, and showed improved attitudes, improved self-esteem, greater self-efficacy, and greater resistance to peer pressure.<sup>128</sup>

Finally, promoting arts and cultural opportunities may have other advantages. For instance, city planners have recommended the placement of theatres and other artistic institutions within the

center of downtown blocks. Such placement increases foot traffic in these areas, which can contribute to retail sales, decreased crime, and increased perceptions of safety.

### **10. Ethnic, Racial, and Intergroup Relations**

Positive relations between people of different races and ethnic backgrounds can promote violence prevention goals. Several interviewees noted programs or individuals that are forging interracial interaction, dialog, and relations. They associated these efforts with reduced conflict and reduced risk of violence. With a sense of community based on place rather than race or ethnicity, neighborhood efforts to address safety related goals could be unified. House and Williams summarize the wide impact of racial/ethnic relations: "...racial/ethnic status shape[s] and operate[s] through a very broad range of pathways or mechanisms, including almost all known major psychosocial and behavioral risk factors for health."<sup>129</sup> While racial discrimination certainly can be traced beyond community boundaries, it is critical that communities foster positive intergroup relations. To the extent that there are positive relations, people within diverse communities can work together to achieve change that will impact the overall well being of the community.

### **11. Media/Marketing**

Marketing and media can play a positive role that supporting safe behaviors and environments through positive messages and role models. Local initiatives that engage the media as a partner in community safety are critical and effective. "In view of research findings on ways of changing attitudes or behavior, violence prevention efforts seem surer of success if they combine strategies to limit access to guns with comprehensive programs that use the proven power of television, videotapes, and films to change attitudes towards guns and violence."<sup>130</sup> Use of the media in preventing problems such as violence should focus on the social issues at hand, rather than behavior change. "[M]edia approaches should focus on increasing the reservoir of social capital by engaging people and increasing their involvement and participation in community life... mass media strategies should also provide citizens with the skills to better participate in the policy process to create these conditions [for people to be healthy]."<sup>131</sup> Local media outlets can also play a role in supporting community safety through their advertising policies. For example, the Boston Globe set an internal policy to not accept advertising for firearms and gun shows.

## APPENDIX B: VIOLENCE DEFINITIONS AND RELATED DATA

**Intimate partner and dating violence** Intimate partner violence is often referred to as domestic violence. "It includes violence between spouses, individuals in dating relationships and former partners or spouses, and can occur inside or outside the home. Domestic violence often involves a pattern of behavior that includes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and psychological abuse. The California Penal Code defines abuse as 'intentionally or recklessly causing or attempting to cause bodily injury, or placing another person in reasonable apprehension of imminent, serious bodily injury to himself, herself or another.'"<sup>132</sup> Nationally, battery is the leading cause of injury to women ages 15 to 44 years. In 2001, there were 5,700 domestic violence related calls made to police in Alameda County,<sup>133</sup> yet it is estimated that only 20% of incidents are reported. Nationally, each year, it is estimated that over 3 million children are at risk of witnessing parental violence.<sup>134</sup> Child abuse is 15 times more likely in families in which there is intimate partner violence. Further, children who witness domestic violence are at a higher risk for becoming either a perpetrator or victim of violence in the future.<sup>135</sup>

**Sexual assault and rape** Sexual assault is an act of sexual aggression and violence expressed through force, anger and/or intimidation in which a person is made to engage in sexual activity without consent.<sup>136</sup> According to the Criminal Justice Statistics Center, in Alameda County in 2001, there were 495 reported forcible rapes.<sup>137</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigations reports that only one in nine women who are sexually assaulted report the crime.<sup>138</sup> National statistics show that a woman is raped every 46 seconds.<sup>139</sup>

**Child abuse** "Child abuse is a physical injury which is inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person"<sup>140</sup> In the year 2000, 17,273 allegations of child abuse were reported to the Child Abuse Hotline in Alameda County.<sup>141</sup> Studies show that maltreatment during childhood increases the likelihood of juvenile arrest by 53%, and arrest as an adult by 38%.<sup>142</sup> Research has also shown that an overwhelming majority (85%) of convicted felons were abused as children.<sup>143</sup>

**Elder abuse** "Elder abuse is a term referring to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult."<sup>144</sup> Broadly defined, abuse may be physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, exploitation, neglect, or abandonment. Elder abuse affects people of all ethnic backgrounds and social status and affects both men and women. In California, more than 225,000 cases of elder abuse occur annually.<sup>145</sup>

**Youth violence** Youth violence encompasses a range of types of violence in which young people engage, including homicide and manslaughter, robbery, aggravated assault, and forcible rape.<sup>146</sup> Youth violence also encompasses school violence and gang violence. "Gangs often form along ethnic and racial lines, although there is a current trend of youth joining gangs for economic motives, or for the glamour, excitement or 'high' achieved by committing acts of violence and participating in crimes. Gangs generally identify themselves by a name derived from a street, neighborhood, or housing project where they are based; a rock band they like; a cult they follow, or their ethnicity."<sup>147</sup> Research shows that youth are at a much greater risk of being the victims than the perpetrators of violent crime.<sup>148</sup>

**Homicide** “Homicide...is any intentionally inflicted fatal injury to another person.”<sup>149</sup> Homicide is the most publicized form of violence in Alameda County. Alameda County ranks third in deaths due to homicides among all California counties (County Health Status Profiles 2004). There were 108 homicides in 2001 and 144 in 2002 (Federal Bureau of Investigations [FBI] Uniform Crime Reports [UCR]). In Alameda County, homicide is the leading cause of death among 15-24 year olds and the second leading cause of death among 25-34 year olds. African-Americans are 10 times more likely to die as a result of homicide than all other race/ethnic groups combined (ACHSR, 2003). In 2002, there were 144 homicides in Alameda County.<sup>150</sup> Approximately 66% of the homicides in Alameda County in 2002 occurred in the city of Oakland.

**Suicide** “Suicide is defined as any purposely self-inflicted injury that is fatal...”<sup>151</sup> From 2000 to 2002, Alameda County had an annual average of 116 fatal suicides<sup>152</sup> and suicides accounted for over 19% of the fatal injuries in Alameda County.<sup>153</sup> Between 2000-2002 Alameda County had a lower suicide rate (8.0 per 100,000) compared to the statewide average (9.5 per 100,000) and neighboring counties of San Francisco (10.9 per 100,000), and Contra Costa (9.0 per 100,000). The suicide rate in Santa Clara (7.1 per 100,000) County was lower than that of Alameda County.<sup>154</sup>

**Hate violence** Hate violence is defined as, “any act of intimidation, harassment, physical force or threat of physical force directed against any person, or family, or their property or their advocate, motivated either in whole or in part by hostility to their real or perceived race, ethnic background, national origin, religious belief, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation, with the intention of causing fear or intimidation, or to deter the free exercise or enjoyment of any rights or privileges secured by the Constitution of the laws of the United States or the State of California whether or not performed under color of law.”<sup>155</sup> While Alameda County's total numbers of hate crime incidents dropped from 63 in 2001 to 56 in 2002, Berkeley's hate crime occurrences rose from 11 to 29. Hate crime events based on race, ethnicity or national origin account for the majority (more than 62 percent) of hate crime events.<sup>156</sup> Following the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, many Muslims, people of Middle Eastern descent, and those perceived to be Muslim and/or of Middle Eastern descent have experienced increased hate violence.

**Sanctioned violence (police brutality)** Police Brutality is defined as “the use of excessive force. It is often physical force greatly exceeding the threat encountered, and sometimes used when there is no threat.”<sup>157</sup> In some communities there is widespread fear of the police, which has been reinforced by the case of the Riders. According to some interviewees, "The police are threatening, and we are powerless." Others noted that, particularly in Oakland, "The police don't live in the community, so how can they care about it?" Unfortunately, data is rarely kept on police brutality, which places no accountability for the actions of police departments.

## APPENDIX C: CORE GROUP AND ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

This *Blueprint* was developed with insight and guidance from a county-wide Advisory Board. A smaller subcommittee, the Core Group, provided more frequent input and ongoing direction and content input. The following are members of the Advisory Board; Core Group members are indicated by an asterisk:

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