

Safety in All Policies

A Brief to Advance
Multi-Sector Actions
for a Safer California

This brief was developed by Prevention Institute and funded by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF). Created in 1992 as a private independent foundation, TCWF's mission is to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education and disease prevention. Prevention Institute would like to thank Steve Wirtz, Chief of Injury Surveillance and Epidemiology at the Safe and Active Communities Branch of the California Department of Public Health for providing input and review the brief.

Prevention Institute is a nonprofit, national center dedicated to improving community health and wellbeing 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. Since its founding in 1997, the organization has focused on community prevention, injury and violence prevention, health equity, healthy eating and active living, positive youth development, health system transformation and mental health and wellbeing.

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Violence is preventable. Multiple sectors in addition to criminal justice – including early childhood development, education, housing, community development, business, transportation, and more – have a role in addressing the underlying contributors to violence. Indeed, the State’s crime rate has decreased, in large measure due to interventions across multiple sectors. Further, each of these sectors has a vested interest in reducing violence, as violence impacts the outcomes of multiple sectors. While each sector has an important role, outcomes will be even greater when actions are coordinated across sectors. For example, a national assessment of large cities and violence prevention found that communities with more coordination and communication across multiple sectors have lower violence rates.¹ A window of opportunity is opening in California to promote a common vision and shared priority for safety across multiple sectors, in order to save and improve lives, and create safer communities – through *Safety in All Policies*.

The notion of *Safety in All Policies* (SiAP) comes from *Health in All Policies* (HiAP), a collaborative, multi-sector policymaking approach gaining national momentum. HiAP was first used in 2006, with the aim of collaborating across sectors to achieve common goals. HiAP is a strategy to include health considerations across different sectors that influence health, such as transportation, agriculture, land use, housing, public safety, and education. In California, a Health in All Policies Task Force was created in 2010 by Executive Order of the Governor to bring together 22 state agencies, departments, and offices to work together to support a healthier and more sustainable California.² Growing momentum notwithstanding, the term – HiAP or SiAP – can be misleading as it can imply a focus on policy only and it doesn’t explicitly acknowledge the win-win nature of such an approach. In fact, considerations for health and safety can be embedded in policies, as well as organizational practices and broader decision-making of multiple sectors. Further, these considerations can serve to improve outcomes for participating sectors. For example, safe schools promote higher attendance and improved learning outcomes. This brief lays out the core elements of a *Safety in All Policies* approach to advance multi-sector actions for a safer California.

Despite successes in prevention, violence still remains among the most serious health threats to Californians today. California’s violent crime rate is higher than the national rate, and ranks 16th among all states.³ All told, the cost of violence remains unacceptably high. Violence impacts the physical, psychological, social, and economic health of individuals, families, and communities, and is a major barrier to healthy eating and active living, community cohesion, and community economic development. To advance community safety and violence prevention, a multi-sector approach is needed that emphasizes:

1. Taking action to prevent violence in the first place;
2. Influencing the policies and practices of multiple sectors that impact violence;
3. Working within the inherent mandates and functions of sectors to identify win-win strategies that advance sector-specific goals and also prevent violence;
4. Addressing disparities in rates and types of violence to promote equity in safety outcomes; and,
5. Advancing joint strategies that break down sector boundaries and silos to achieve greater impact and efficiency.

Four areas of coordinated action at the State level are needed:

1. High-level State leadership

Elements of safety are embedded into the mandates and activities of multiple sectors, yet there isn't an overarching commitment to a common agenda of safety and accountability for shared outcomes. High-level state leadership is needed to articulate the priority of safety and provide vision, direction, and accountability.

2. State Collaboration

An ongoing mechanism for collaboration within State government is recommended to facilitate buy-in to a shared agenda from multiple agencies working to enhance mutually reinforcing activities. A collaborative group can designate roles and accountability across relevant agencies and departments, align initiatives, establish joint or braided funding streams, and implement interoperable data and evaluation systems.

3. State Legislature and Legislative Committees

In addition to broad support throughout the State Legislature, the creation of a Legislative Committee on Community Safety and Violence Prevention is recommended, to analyze legislative proposals, advance legislative solutions and sustainable funding mechanisms, and support safety and violence prevention through the state budgetary process.

4. State Agencies and Departments

State agencies and departments that have a role in impacting risk and resilience factors associated with violence can play considerable roles in its prevention.¹ State agencies and departments can implement agency/department-specific policies and practices as well as joint policies and practices across multiple agencies/departments, with attention to addressing disparities and promoting equity. For example:

- The education sector can foster safe environments at and around schools, promote social support, and close achievement gaps.²
- The housing and community development sector can promote stable and supportive community environments, especially for young people and people returning from incarceration.³
- The parks and recreation sector can foster community connectedness and opportunities for meaningful participation and artistic expression.
- The health and human services sector can promote employment and other economic opportunities and access to supports.
- The transportation sector can promote transit design that fosters safety and strengthen the capacity of transit operators to diffuse interpersonal conflict.
- The criminal justice sector can prioritize community policing, alternatives to detention, and re-entry efforts.

1 For detailed information about the roles and contributions of multiple sectors and how to maximize collaboration, see Prevention Institute's *Multi-Sector Partnerships for Preventing Violence: A Guide for Using Collaboration Multiplier to Improve Safety Outcomes for Young People, Communities and Cities*.

2 For a more detailed discussion of the role of the education sector, see Prevention Institute's *Safety in All Policies: Engaging the Education Sector in Preventing Violence in California*.

3 For a more detailed discussion of the role of the housing and community development sector, see Prevention Institute's *Safety in All Policies: Engaging the Housing and Community Development Sector in Preventing Violence in California*.

Violence is prevented through the actions of multiple sectors. As detailed in *Multi-Sector Partnerships for Preventing Violence: A Guide for Using Collaboration Multiplier to Improve Safety Outcomes for Young People, Communities and Cities*,⁴ multiple sectors – criminal justice, mental health, education, housing, community development, business, transportation, planning and others – influence the underlying factors for violence through their policies and practices.⁵ These sectors, and more, already contribute to safety, and are positioned to build safety considerations more prominently into their policies and practices – to create win-wins, that prevent violence while advancing core mandates. Beyond individual sector contributions, it’s also critical that the work of multiple sectors be coordinated; communities with more coordination and communication across multiple sectors also have lower violence rates.⁶ A window of opportunity is opening in California to promote a common vision and shared priority for safety across multiple sectors, in order to save and improve lives, and create safer communities – through *Safety in All Policies*,⁴ a multi-sector approach to preventing violence.

Violence remains among the most serious health threats to Californians today. Violence occurs in public and private settings and can be inflicted physically, sexually and/or psychologically toward oneself, another person, or a group of people. Violence is a leading cause of trauma, injury, disability, and premature death in California. The State’s violent crime rate is higher than the national rate, ranking 16th among all states.⁷ Violence impacts the physical, psychological, social, and economic health of individuals, families, and communities, and is a major barrier to healthy eating and active living, community cohesion, and community economic development. Though the State’s violent crime rate has decreased, in large measure due to interventions across multiple sectors, the cost of violence remains unacceptably high. (See Appendix A for data on the toll of violence in California.)

A multi-sector, collaborative approach to preventing violence emphasizes:

1. Taking action to prevent violence in the first place;
2. Influencing the policies and practices of multiple sectors that impact violence;
3. Working within the inherent mandates and functions of sectors to identify win-win strategies that advance sector-specific goals that also prevent violence;
4. Addressing disparities in rates and types of violence to promote equity in safety outcomes for all Californians; and,
5. Advancing joint strategies that break down sector boundaries and silos to achieve greater impact and efficiency.

This brief presents evidence that violence is preventable and describes a multi-sector, proactive, and collaborative approach that embeds a violence prevention lens into the decision-making processes and activities of multiple sectors. It is designed as a roadmap for State governmental entities to assist them in promoting policies, practices and actions in support of safe communities. This brief also describes the toll of violence in California, and includes a list of additional resources. Many of the recommendations described in this brief could be operationalized through California’s HiAP Task Force; for example, to address the “safe communities, free of crime and violence,” element of its Healthy Community Framework.⁸ The recommendations in this brief will also need to be implemented through means outside of the scope of the HiAP Task Force.

⁴ The notion of *Safety in All Policies* (SiAP) comes from *Health in All Policies* (HiAP). HiAP is a strategy to include health considerations across different sectors that influence health, such as transportation, agriculture, land use, housing, public safety, and education. Growing momentum notwithstanding, the term – HiAP or SiAP – can be misleading as it can imply a focus on policy only and it doesn’t explicitly acknowledge the win-win nature of such an approach. In fact, considerations for health and safety can be embedded in policies, as well as organizational practices and broader decision-making of multiple sectors. Further, these considerations can serve to improve outcomes for participating sectors.

VIOLENCE IS PREVENTABLE

Though violence is widespread and often viewed as an inevitable, it is in fact preventable. Now more than ever, there is clear evidence about the factors that contribute to – or help to prevent – violence, and how to influence them.⁹ ¹⁰Violence can be prevented by addressing the interplay of risk and resilience factors at the community, neighborhood, relationship, and individual levels.⁵ Risk factors at the neighborhood and community levels include norms that support aggression toward others, high alcohol outlet density, low neighborhood social cohesion, social inequalities, high unemployment, residential segregation, incarceration, and other factors.¹¹ Resilience factors at the neighborhood and community levels include norms that support non-violence and alternatives to violence, educational and economic opportunities, community support and connectedness, opportunities for artistic and cultural expression, and other factors.¹² No one factor alone causes or prevents violence. The accumulation of risk factors increases the likelihood of violence, and the accumulation of resilience factors reduces its likelihood.¹³ ¹⁴ Prevention efforts are especially effective when they improve factors at multiple levels, but especially at the community level, such as community connectedness and neighborhood educational and economic opportunities, and when they improve coordination and synergy among efforts. (See Appendix B for examples of multi-sector violence prevention strategies that have shown to be effective.)

SAFETY REQUIRES MULTI-SECTOR ACTION

At the State level, State government, including our State leadership, State legislature, and State agencies and departments can advance a multi-sector approach by embedding violence prevention and community safety considerations into decision-making processes. This begins with identifying and understanding the relevant risk and resilience factors for violence that are influenced by each entity or sector. Then, working within the inherent mandates and functions of the entity or sector, win-win opportunities can be identified to advance sector-specific goals while reducing risk factor(s) and/or bolstering resilience factor(s). These opportunities can be shaped into specific policy and/or practice recommendations, with attention to examining disparities in rates and types of violence impacting different populations and communities to ensure promotion of equity in safety outcomes for all Californians.

Applying a violence prevention/community safety lens can illuminate specific policies and practices that can be implemented by a particular entity and/or within a specific sector. More often, however, given that violence is shaped by the interplay of multiple risk and resilience factors, and risk and resilience factors are often shaped by multiple State entities and sectors, a shared violence prevention lens points to the need for coordination of multiple State entities and sectors, to ensure that effective systems, infrastructures and resources are in place. Thus, at the State level, a multi-sector approach fosters change in the way that State government processes occur, as well as in how specific programs, policies and practices are implemented. The goal is to create joint strategies that break down sector boundaries and silos to achieve greater impact and efficiency.⁶

⁵ Risk factors are conditions or characteristics in individuals, families, communities and society that increase the likelihood that violence will occur. Resilience factors are conditions or characteristics in individuals, families, communities and society that are protective, thus reducing the likelihood that violence will occur, even in the presence of risk factors.

⁶ Collaboration Multiplier is a Prevention Institute tool to maximize multi-sector contributions and actions. By clarifying the roles and contributions of specific sectors and fostering the development of joint strategies, Collaboration Multiplier fosters meaningful collaboration across sectors for greater impact. For complete guidance on the roles and contributions of multiple sectors and maximizing multi-sector collaboration to prevent violence, see Prevention Institute's [*Multi-Sector Partnerships for Preventing Violence: A Guide for Using Collaboration Multiplier to Improve Safety Outcomes for Young People, Communities and Cities*](#).

Four areas of action are needed at the State level in support of local communities:

1. High-level State leadership

An overarching commitment to safety and shared accountability will maximize outcomes, as safety is embedded into the mandates and activities of multiple sectors. High-level State leadership can articulate a common vision and promote its priority across multiple sectors. Further, high-level State leadership can provide direction and accountability, and designate staff members responsible for overseeing prevention efforts.

2. State Collaboration

An ongoing mechanism for multi-sector collaboration within State government is recommended to facilitate buy-in to a shared agenda from multiple agencies working to enhance mutually reinforcing activities. A collaborative group can designate roles and accountability across relevant agencies and departments, align initiatives, establish joint or braided funding streams, and implement interoperable data and evaluation systems. This approach is a recommendation by the Little Hoover Commission, an independent state oversight agency that investigates state government operations and promotes efficiency, economy and improved service.¹⁵

3. State Legislature and Legislative Committees

In addition to broad support throughout the State Legislature, the creation of a Legislative Committee on Community Safety and Violence Prevention is recommended, to analyze legislative proposals, advance legislative solutions and sustainable funding mechanisms, and support safety and violence prevention through the state budget process. Legislative Committees such as the Assembly and Senate Appropriations, Budget, Education, Health, Housing and Community Development, and Public Safety Committees could hold hearings to learn about effective violence prevention and the roles for various sectors, agencies and departments in promoting safety. Particular attention could be given to mechanisms for funding for violence prevention in a manner such that cost savings that result from prevention efforts are funnelled back into further violence prevention efforts.¹⁶ For example, financial savings as a result of a decrease in incarceration of young people can be invested into education and employment initiatives, and efforts to support people returning from incarceration.

4. State Agencies and Departments

State agencies and departments that have a role in impacting risk and resilience factors associated with violence can play considerable roles in its prevention. State agencies and departments can implement agency/department-specific policies and practices as well as joint policies and practices across multiple agencies/departments.

Some preliminary recommendations for action for a select number of California agencies and departments are offered.

The Education Sector: California Department of Education, State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction

The education sector has a vested interest in safety: experiencing and witnessing violence interferes with students' learning,^{17 18 19 20 21 22 23} decreases school attendance,²⁴ interferes with teaching and school administration, reduces funding for schools,²⁵ and consumes limited and valuable resources. The education system enhances resilience factors and reduces risk factors associated with violence, in particular by promoting connection and commitment to school and minimizing academic failure.

This sector could: 1) expand initiatives to address pedestrian and bicycle safety such as Safe Routes to School to also address gangs, graffiti, blight, and alcohol outlet density; 2) establish joint/shared use agreements with community groups to ensure that young people have safe places to be during non-school hours; 3) build on the attention to trauma-informed practice to acknowledge and prevent trauma at the community level; 4) close the achievement gap between African American and Latino students and white students through improved school attendance and extended learning; 5) promote positive discipline approaches, including restorative justice practices; 6) expand positive school climate efforts, including universal violence prevention programs; 7) promote opportunities for social support, school connectedness, and youth development through curricular and extra-curricular activities; and, 8) expand school-based family engagement and education efforts, especially through programs targeted toward families with young children.⁷

The Housing and Community Development Sector: California Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency

Community safety is supportive of stable housing and economic development. Indeed, a lack of safety reinforces residential segregation and deters business investments. Stable, secure housing promotes mental well-being and feelings of safety and control,²⁶ while sub-standard housing can increase the risk of community violence.

This agency could: 1) promote housing and community design strategies that reduce crime and violence and support mental and social well-being; 2) reduce alcohol density and youth access to alcohol through the use of the law of Public Convenience or Necessity and other strategies; 3) engage community residents, especially young people, through input, dialogue and participation to incorporate safety considerations in neighborhood improvement efforts; 4) promote stable and affordable housing with linkages to supportive services for people returning from incarceration as a pathway for stable education and employment and reduced risk for recidivism; 5) promote partnerships with the business sector to expand education and employment opportunities for youth and formerly incarcerated individuals; 6) promote banking opportunities and alternatives to payday lending for people who face barriers to opening and maintaining a bank account; and, 7) recommend changes to licensing and training of professionals to engage professionals in preventing violence.⁸

The Parks and Recreation Sector: California Department of Parks and Recreation

People are less likely to use parks or take advantage of recreational opportunities if the locales do not feel safe or they cannot be safely accessed. The Department of Parks and Recreation can support the decrease of risk factors for violence such as low neighborhood cohesion, while bolstering resilience factors such as opportunities for artistic and cultural expression, opportunities for meaningful participation, and positive relationships and attachments.

⁷ For a more detailed discussion of these recommendations and the role of this sector in the prevention of violence, see Prevention Institute's *Safety in All Policies: Engaging the Education Sector in California*.

⁸ For a more detailed discussion of these recommendations and the role of this sector in the prevention of violence, see Prevention Institute's *Safety in All Policies: Engaging the Housing and Community Development Sector in California*.

This department could: 1) strengthen the infrastructure for service delivery for neighborhoods that have been historically marginalized or are most affected by violence to ensure safe parks, through quality programming, design and lighting, community involvement and blight removal; and, 2) promote opportunities for meaningful participation in a variety of neighborhood activities in parks and public spaces among residents, especially in neighborhoods highly impacted by violence.

The Health and Human Services Sector: California Department of Health and Human Services

Violence is a leading cause of injury, disability, and premature death; it increases the likelihood of other health problems, including chronic illness;²⁷ and it is a major health inequity across the State. The California Health and Human Services Agency can support the decrease of risk factors for violence such as neighborhood poverty, high alcohol outlet density, lack of neighborhood cohesion, and residential segregation, while bolstering resilience factors such as employment and other economic opportunities, access to mental health and substance abuse services, community support and connectedness, and strong social networks.

This Department could: 1) strengthen the infrastructure for service delivery for neighborhoods that have been historically marginalized or are most affected by violence; 2) coordinate efforts to address trauma in children, youth, and families, including guidance on recognizing and addressing trauma; 3) promote reductions in alcohol density in low-income communities; and, 4) provide support for an array of prevention and intervention services to address community violence (e.g., community building efforts, street outreach, conflict resolution training, fatherhood programs that promote healthy norms, and job training and employment for people returning from incarceration).

The Transportation Sector: California State Transportation Agency

The transportation sector is concerned with safe, comfortable and efficient ways for people to get from place to place, which is jeopardized when places are not safe. The California State Transportation Agency can influence risk factors for violence such as residential segregation and experiencing or witnessing violence, while bolstering resilience factors such as community design that promotes safety.

This Department could: 1) clarify opportunities within community planning grants to address violence; 2) encourage the implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles into transit design, including near bus stops and transit stations; 3) prioritize strengthening transit services in communities most affected by violence, for example, by linking these communities to jobs and recreation; 4) support training for transit operators in non-violent conflict resolution so they have the social-emotional skills to defuse interpersonal conflict between passengers; and, 5) provide institutional support for bus drivers and other transportation department staff to reinforce positive norms around riding public transportation.

The Criminal Justice Sector: California Department of Justice, California Attorney General's Office, and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

While too often seen as the default sector to address violence, the criminal justice sector alone cannot prevent violence. At its core, this sector is committed to safety and order, and so collaborating with a range of other sectors that can influence the underlying contributors to violence supports this sector in achieving its central mandate.

These departments and offices can: 1) prioritize community policing that includes training to prevent racial bias and discourage “broken windows” policing; 2) explore universal use of police officer body-worn cameras and dash cameras in police vehicles;²⁸ 3) develop robust referral systems in coordination with other sectors, so officers can connect residents, including those at risk for violence, to needed support services and resources; 4) enhance alternatives to detention, such as restorative justice practices, teen court and drug court; and, 5) prioritize re-entry efforts to minimize recidivism and re-arrest, including increased access to employment, education, housing and social services for inmates and those on parole and probation. Further, as part of reducing demand on their own systems, they can champion prevention strategies that can be embedded into other agencies and departments.

In California, violence is a leading cause of trauma, injury, disability, and premature death.

- California’s violent crime rate of 422 per 100,000 residents is higher than the national rate, and ranks 16th among all states.²⁹
- There were 1,745 homicides reported in 2013. This number represents a 7.1 percent decrease from the 1,878 reported in 2012 and a 27.1 percent decrease from the 2,394 reported in 2004.³⁰
- After declining four years, the juvenile homicide arrest rate increased 13.0 percent from 2.3 per 100,000 population at risk in 2012 to 2.6 in 2013.³¹
- Despite increasing in 2012, all violent crime categories experienced double-digit decreases in number and rate from 2008 to 2013.³²
- According to the National Study of Children’s Health conducted in 2011–12, 18.3% of parents/caregivers surveyed in California reported that their children feel safe in their community or neighborhood “never” or “sometimes.”³³
- According to the same survey, 7.7% of parents/caregivers surveyed in California reported that their children witnessed or was victim of neighborhood violence since he/she was born.³⁴
- According to the California Healthy Kids Survey on School Climate and Student Well-being conducted in 2011–2013, 11% of 7th graders, 9% of 9th graders, and 7% of 11th graders have been in a physical fight at least one time. Additionally, 13% of 7th grade, 10% of 9th grade and 7% of 11th grade students have been afraid of being beat up at least once.³⁵

There are significant disparities in rate and types of violence:

- Youth are nearly three times more likely than adults to be victims of serious violent crimes.³⁶
- Women are 4 times more likely to be victims of intimate partner and sexual violence, and young women ages 18 to 24 are at greatest risk.^{37 38}
- From 2004–2013, the majority of homicide victims have been male. The largest proportion of victims has consistently been Hispanic, and the largest percentage of homicide victims has consistently been aged 18–29.³⁹
- Homicide is the leading cause of death among African–American males ages 15–34.⁴⁰

Violence impacts the physical, psychological, social, and economic health of individuals, families, and communities.

- Adults who are exposed to violence as children are more likely to suffer from chronic health conditions, compared to adults who were not exposed to violence as children.^{41 42}
- Fear of crime is associated with poor mental health outcomes.^{43 44}
- Violence affects young people’s ability to succeed in school, develop their potential and be engaged in civic life.^{45 46 47}
- Violence, crime and perceptions about safety impact health-related behaviors that contribute to chronic disease by creating barriers to physical activity and healthy eating, such as walking, bicycling, outdoor play, and access to healthy foods and beverages.⁴⁸
- Violence affects the livability of neighborhoods and the overall perception of safety, influencing choices related to housing, shopping, and other facets of life.⁴⁹
- Violence reduces social interactions that would otherwise contribute to community cohesion, shape social norms and foster healthy behaviors.^{50 51}
- Violence is a barrier to attracting community investment.⁵²
- Violence is extremely costly due to emergency medical care costs, school absences, criminal justice expenses, and loss of employment opportunities when local businesses deem an area too dangerous and move elsewhere.^{53 54}
- Crime and violence pose a threat to the sustainability and local capital of communities. The economic impacts of crime and violence include lowered property value and government expenditures.⁵⁵

Though violence is widespread and often viewed as an inevitable, it is in fact preventable. More so now than ever, research has revealed specific factors at the community, relationship, and individual levels that contribute to – or help to prevent – violence and how to influence these factors through multi-sector strategies.^{56 57} Some examples include:

- Assessments of recent strategies and interventions have shown that cities that give more attention to preventing violence and have greater communication and coordination among sectors in their efforts have lower rates of violence.^{58 59 60}
- *Cure Violence* is a program that is being implemented in more than 50 sites detects and mediates potentially violent conflicts and changes community norms through a collaboration of law enforcement and public health. The program has been shown to be effective by evaluations in three cities, showing 41-73% reductions in shootings and killings^{61 62} and a return of businesses to the intervention neighborhoods.⁶³
- *Parks After Dark* is a summer program that extends park hours and programs on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings in neighborhoods with high rates of violence through a collaboration of public health, parks and recreation, law enforcement and other sectors with community members. In the neighborhoods surrounding parks in which the program was implemented in Los Angeles, serious, violent crime declined 32% over a 4 year period, compared to an 18% increase in nearby communities where the program didn't operate.⁶⁴
- In an effort led by a community coalition, the zoning commission and city council collaborated to prevent 200 liquor stores from re-opening in South Los Angeles in 1992. Evaluation documented a 27% reduction in crime and violence within a four-block radius of each liquor store that that was closed.⁶⁵

APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Prevention Institute. *Multi-Sector Partnerships For Preventing Violence: A Guide For Using Collaboration Multiplier To Improve Safety Outcomes For Young People, Communities And Cities*. Oakland, CA. 2014.

Prevention Institute. *A Multi-Sector Approach to Preventing Violence: A Companion to Multi-Sector Partnerships for Preventing Violence, a Collaboration Multiplier Guide*. Oakland, CA. 2014.

Prevention Institute. *Safety in All Policies: Engaging the Education Sector in Violence Prevention in California*. Oakland, CA. 2015.

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