

# Community Violence Interventions

Community violence—violence between people who are unrelated, usually outside the home—is a widespread problem that impacts all of us, but particularly people who are disproportionately impacted by poverty, racism, and a lack of educational and economic opportunities. Assaults, shootings in public areas like schools and communities, fights among gangs and other groups ... all of these are examples of community violence.

Some community violence is associated with bias and motivated by prejudice related to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

The good news is that we can stop community violence. By using a holistic, asset-based approach and the best available evidence to prevent violence, we can reverse historic injustices and address underlying factors that drive violence and health inequities.

AIR partners with diverse sectors at the national, state, and local levels to implement evidence-based community violence intervention (CVI) strategies. These strategies prevent violence from occurring, interrupt violence that is already underway, and lessen harm among those who have already experienced violence. Explore below to see examples of current and past AIR projects related to CVI.

## Equity is at the heart of our work.

**AIR's mission** is to generate and use rigorous evidence that contributes to a better, more equitable world.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

Public health departments are responsible for the overall health and well-being of the communities they serve. They have a critical role to play in violence prevention.



The [Violence Prevention Technical Assistance Center](#), operated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and AIR, helps health departments partner with community stakeholders to implement and evaluate community violence interventions. VPTAC's focus is on primary prevention (i.e., approaches that take place before violence occurs) and comprehensive, cross-cutting strategies that promote health equity.

### JUSTICE

Root causes of community violence are established over generations. Communities with higher rates of violence experience greater justice system contact, disproportionately affecting people of color. Through [ReSOLV \(Research on Lowering Violence in Communities and Schools\)](#), funded by the National Institute of Justice, AIR studies root causes of violence, and community readiness to prevent violence.



AIR has been at the forefront of research on interventions that focus on individuals most at risk for gun violence—most notably the [Safe and Successful Youth Initiative \(SSYI\)](#).

## HOUSING

Affordable and supportive housing reduces community violence by giving residents a stable foundation for education, employment, and services.



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides housing to low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities. AIR created a suite of resources for HUD on [Preventing Sexual and Other Discriminatory Harassment in Housing](#) designed to address persistent harassment in public housing.

Segregation by race in housing has contributed to stark and persistent disparities in well-being. The [AIR Equity Initiative](#) is studying ways to promote mobility through housing policies and community investments.

## SCHOOLS

Welcoming, supportive [school climates](#) improve conditions for learning and reduce violent behavior.



The [National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments](#), funded by the U.S. Department of Education and operated by AIR, offers information and assistance to states, districts, schools, institutions of higher learning, and communities on improving school climate and conditions.

AIR's [National Center for Healthy Safe Children](#) fosters partnerships for safe and healthy school and community environments that prevent youth violence, promote mental health, and support the overall well-being of children and youth.

## WORK

Equitable opportunities for skill-building and connecting to livable-wage jobs reduce community violence by giving residents access to employment opportunities in growing industry sectors and occupations with strong career pathways for economic mobility.



AIR's work generates and helps apply evidence to [strengthen pathways to college and careers](#), [transform postsecondary institutions to promote student success](#), and [provide strong employment supports](#).

## NEIGHBORHOODS

Characteristics of neighborhoods can prevent or provoke violence.



[School and community programming](#) can promote connectedness and build upon community assets to shield against violence. Through AIR's youth, family, and [community engagement](#) work, we are [creating pathways to thriving](#).

Unfortunately, many communities have been torn apart by inequities institutionalized by policies such as redlining and the war on drugs. AIR's [Center for Addiction Research and Effective Solutions](#) draws on a social-determinants-of-health framework to address root causes and enhance well-being.

## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Supportive organizations and services can lessen the harms of violence exposure and prevent the continuation and escalation of violence.



AIR supports the adoption of [organizational trauma-informed care](#) through training and technical assistance, resource development, and research and evaluation.

For example, AIR's [Trauma-Sensitive Schools and Social and Emotional Learning](#) brief explains how to mitigate the effects of trauma and help students build skills that foster resilience while advancing educational equity.

## INTERNATIONAL

Migration to the United States from Latin America and the Caribbean region is driven by lack of economic opportunities and persistent community violence, often fueled by narcotics trafficking by gangs.



[Through its work with the U.S. Agency for International Development \(USAID\)](#), AIR studies the link between violence and migration, desistance from gang involvement, and [evidence-based strategies for countering violence](#), including violent extremism. A new eLearning module developed by AIR builds the capacity of diverse stakeholders to use evidence-based strategies to prevent violence.