

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Violence remains a public health crisis and a leading cause of death for individuals in Illinois. However, research and evidence-based practices have taught us that violence can be prevented.** Violence prevention efforts seek to decrease vulnerability (i.e., factors that place individuals at a higher risk for violence) and increase resiliency (i.e., factors that protect individuals from violence) through various strategies. These evidence-based strategies can include supporting the healthy development of families, providing high quality education, focusing on positive youth development, creating and sustaining protective communities, and intervening and supporting those impacted by violence (David-Ferdon, 2016).

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) aims to continue funding and supporting violence prevention efforts across the state. This report was written in efforts to inform ICJIA's violence prevention planning for 2020-2024. An important step in planning is to conduct a thorough needs assessment (i.e., What is the problem? What are the solutions that can be strengthened or implemented?)

**Therefore, this report aimed to address these key questions in this planning phase:**

- **What is the prevalence of violence across and within Illinois?**
- **What groups are at highest and disproportionate risk?**
- **What efforts are already happening?**
- **Where should we target efforts?**

We obtained and analyzed various data sources and reports, presenting these findings back to a group of state and community violence prevention stakeholders, leaders, providers, and researchers (referred to as the violence prevention planning group). By beginning to answer these key questions within this report, ICJIA can most effectively target funding opportunities and make sure future prevention efforts are aligned with need.

**This consolidation, collection, and analysis of data allowed the violence prevention planning group to write five violence prevention goals for ICJIA funding, well-informed by the data. These overarching goals include:**

- 1) Stop the violence and promote safety
- 2) Support children, youth, and families
- 3) Advance equity
- 4) Support health
- 5) Promote collaboration across state, municipal, and community-based agencies

Another theme that emerged from the planning meetings is that there needs to be more connection and collaboration across sectors. For example, for the state to prevent violence more effectively, there needs to be more coordination, productive collaborations, and consolidated efforts. The plan includes goals and strategies for how to continue building and expanding collaborative violence prevention efforts.

This report also details information from the needs assessment and review of existing programs, both of which informed the goals for ICJIA funding. We summarize some of the key take-aways here (the full write-ups of these analyses and reviews can be found in the Appendices).

**Notably, this is one of the first statewide plans that reviews and consolidates the many different forms of violence**, including child maltreatment (e.g., abuse, neglect), youth violence (e.g., bullying, cyberbullying, dating and sexual violence, physical fighting, weapon carrying), juvenile violence offenses that resulted in detention, adult violent offenses (including arrests and convictions), gun violence, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and adverse childhood experiences. The report includes additional data from specific groups of individuals such as incarcerated women, parents and caregivers, and older adults. We analyzed publicly available data and obtained data from numerous sources to write a thorough and inclusive needs assessment.

*Some of the key findings from the needs assessment include:*

Across most forms of violence, Illinois had higher rates of violence compared to the rate in the United States (see pages 19-20 of the report for a full comparison of rates). Specifically, in Illinois:

- About 1 in 4 youth reported experiencing bullying in the past year
- About 1 in 5 youth reported engaging in physical fighting in the past year
- An estimated 1 in 3 women experience sexual violence or violent victimization by an intimate partner in their lifetime

Some of the groups at highest risk for violence include racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender minorities. Disparities were also seen within community types and counties (see Appendices for specific rates).

- Black youth and adults experienced disproportionately high rates of juvenile detention and adult arrests and convictions for violent offenses.
- The firearm death rate was highest among Black adults compared to White and Hispanic adults.
- Adolescents who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other diverse gender identities reported higher rates of victimization compared to their non-LGBTQIA peers.

Also, youth who experienced violence were at a significantly higher risk for depressive feelings, suicidal ideation, and substance use, compared to those who had not experienced violence.

Several gaps in the existing data were identified by the violence prevention planning group, including hearing from violence prevention and intervention staff. To address this gap, we surveyed 130 violence prevention and intervention staff about their perceptions of violence prevention efforts and collaborations, as well as gaps and resources within their communities.

*Some of the key findings include:*

- Although staff felt that violence was a concern to families and community residents, they perceived that violence was less of a concern to community leaders and community elected officials.
- Staff perceived that only about 1 in 3 providers across the state are knowledgeable about evidence-based violence prevention programs.
- Staff perceived individual (e.g., social skills) and relational (e.g., family relationships) factors to be of high importance in preventing violence. However, many of them felt their communities were not adequately addressing these important factors.

Another gap in the existing data was hearing from adult residents and their experiences with violence prevention programs, adverse childhood experiences, and mental health and trauma. So, we surveyed 712 adult residents across the state around these topics.

*Some of the key findings include:*

- About 41% of adult residents were aware of organizations or programs in their community that addressed the needs of individuals who experienced violence or trauma.
- 63% of adult residents reported experiencing at least one adverse childhood experience (ACE) and 29% had experienced four or more ACEs. Experiencing ACEs was associated with greater levels of depression, anxiety, and traumatic stress symptoms.
- Across ACEs, Black or African American adults experienced the highest levels of adversity.

This report also highlights the exceptional work of organizations, agencies, and groups that are all tirelessly working to prevent violence from happening and healing those who have been impacted by violence. For example, this report details 88 state violence prevention programs that were implemented in Illinois during 2018 and strategies from ICJIA-funded violence prevention programs. See pages 16 and 25 of the report, as well as the Appendices for details on these programs and their prevention strategies.

Full details of these data analyses, results, and programs can be found in the Appendices. In addition to presenting full statistics about violence and disparities for the state, we also present violence data by community types (i.e., city of Chicago, suburban Chicago counties, other urban and suburban counties, and rural counties) and for all 102 counties in Illinois. Service providers, schools, organizations, and other

stakeholders within these locations may find these data helpful in informing their own local and regional efforts for violence prevention.

Although the data and statistics within this report can help illuminate risk and disparities, they do not fully capture the impact that violence can have on individuals, families, and communities. Violence can impact one's mental health, development, or relationships, and create long-lasting pain and trauma. Violence not only impacts the victim or target of violence, but also the one perpetrating the violence, those witnessing or exposed to the violence, and those connected to those involved in the violence. More work is necessary to fully capture the distinct experiences of those impacted by violence.

These statistics also may be difficult to read; it is clear from these numbers that violence is widespread and disproportionately experienced by historically marginalized groups of individuals. The goals of this plan aim to address these inequities by increasing access to grant and economic opportunities, promoting restorative justice, and prioritizing trauma-informed practices both across the state and within the communities most impacted by violence. However, this is just a start. Focused and deliberate efforts need to ensue in order to begin the process of healing and finding justice within communities that have faced persistent inequities, structural racism, and other systemic barriers.

Compiling violence statistics and reports in one location is a strong first step towards more effective and coordinated violence prevention efforts in the state of Illinois. These numbers should continue to be consolidated for the ability to track progress in moving towards eliminating disparities and violence.

**Thus, we hope that the plan and needs assessment is useful to state agencies, community organizations, city and county governments, and other groups looking towards cultivating strong violence prevention initiatives.**

**“Violence is a health issue, not a crime issue.”**

- Respondent, Violence Prevention and Intervention Staff Survey



**The full report includes:**

1. Violence prevention framework, details about the planning process, and violence prevention plan goals.

**Goal #1: Stop Violence and Promote Safety:** The ability to live without fear of harm is a fundamental human right and essential to individual, family, and community development and success.

**Goal #2: Support Children, Youth, and Families by Emphasizing Programs that Foster Social Connectedness and Belonging:** Increase the quantity and quality of programs that emphasize healthy and nonviolent relationships.

**Goal #3: Advance Equity:** Address systemic inequities by increasing access to grants and other economic opportunities.

**Goal #4: Support Health:** Violence prevention programming should build, support, and sustain mentally and physically strong individuals, families, and communities.

**Goal #5: Promote Collaboration across State, Municipal, and Community-Based Agencies:** Violence prevention efforts should occur through coordinated, cross-sector collaborations, using research and data.

2. Overview of findings from the needs assessment and violence prevention efforts.

**The appendices include:** 1) a review of violence prevention efforts, and 2) a needs assessment of violence

Type of Violence	Year	Source
<b>Child Maltreatment</b> (Abuse, Neglect)	2018	Publicly Available Data: IL Department of Children & Family Services (Children and Family Research Center at University of Illinois; CFRC) & Children’s Bureau
<b>Youth Violence</b> (Bullying, Dating Violence, Physical Fighting, etc.) & psychosocial indicators	2018-2019	Publicly Available Data: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; CDC, 2019) 2018 Illinois Youth Survey data obtained from Center for Prevention Research & Development (CPRD) at UIUC
<b>Juvenile Justice Detention for Violent Offenses</b>	2018	Data obtained from Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission & CPRD
<b>Adult Violent Crime</b>	2018	Publicly Available Data: Uniform Crime Report Index Offense Explorer (ICJIA). Rates by demographic factors were obtained from ICJIA – Criminal History Record Information data request
<b>Gun Violence</b>	2018	Publicly Available Data: CDC WONDER Online Database
<b>Adult Domestic Violence &amp; Sexual Assault</b>	2010-2018	Publicly Available Data: ICJIA Research Hub Datasets (2018) & CDC’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (2010-2012) Victim service utilization data obtained from InfoNet (ICJIA)
<b>Additional Reports</b>	2015-2020	Abuse among Older Adults & Persons with Disabilities (Adult Protective Services) Human Trafficking (Illinois State Police, FBI) Incarcerated Women (Research reports) Parent/Guardians (National Survey of Children’s Health) Injury and Violence, Illegal Possession of Firearm (ICJIA, IDPH) Victim Needs (ICJIA)



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