URBAN NETWORKS TO INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH

UNITY

through Violence Prevention

# The UNITY RoadMap for urban youth violence prevention

## Developing city methodology and policy to support effective violence prevention strategies

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting 2007
Session 4118.0: Strategies to Prevent Risk Behaviors
Tuesday, November 6th 1:30-2:00pm

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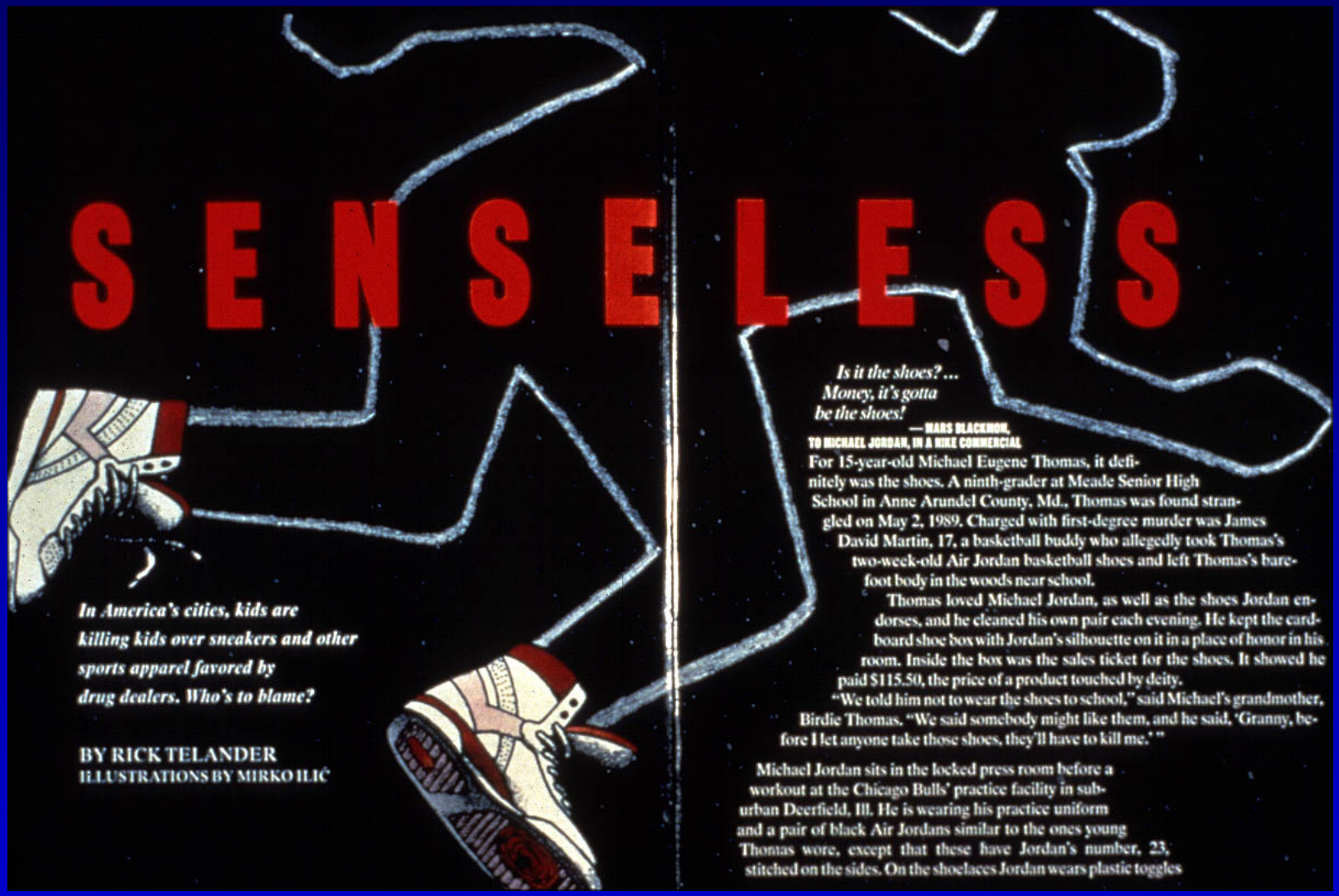


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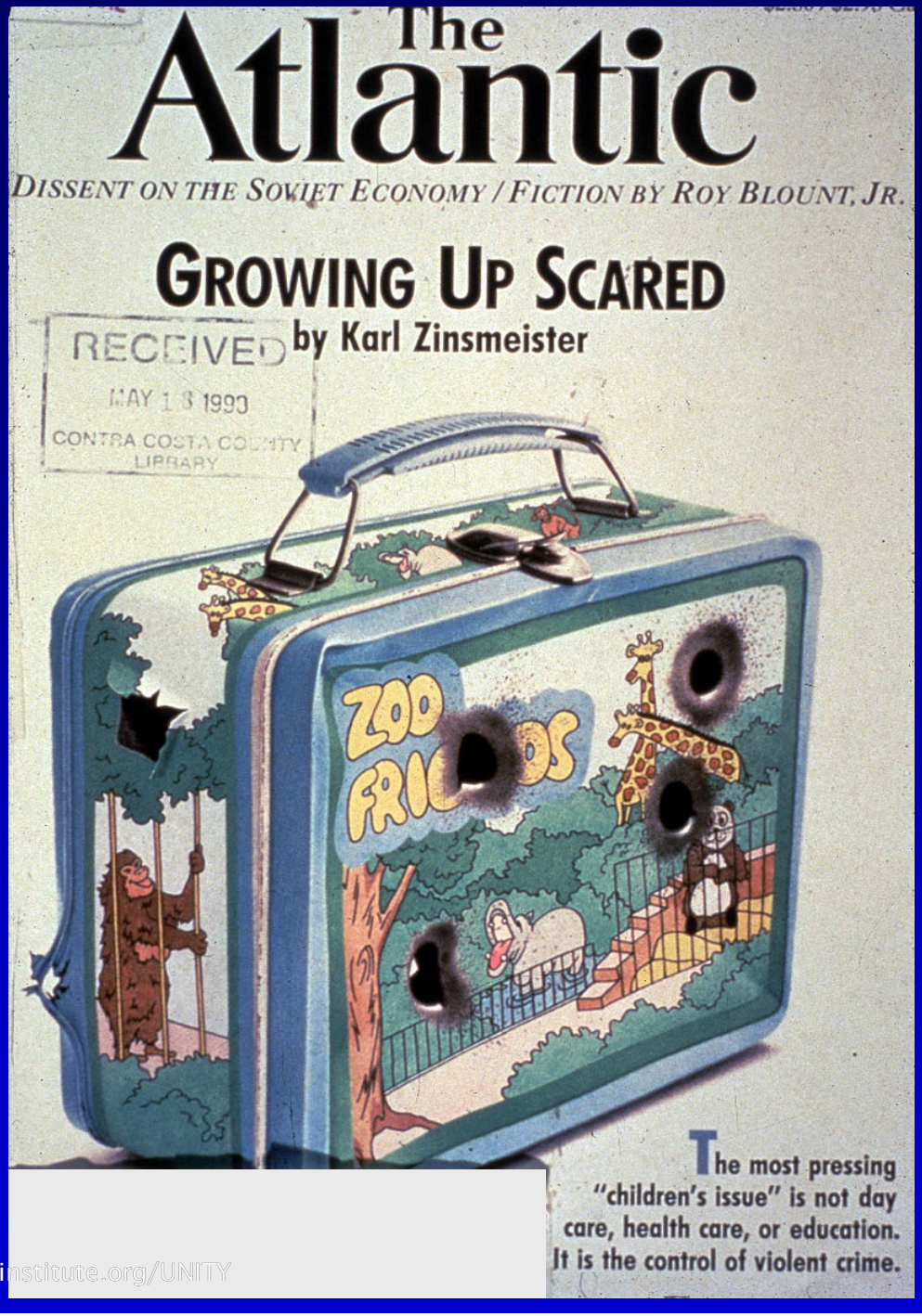


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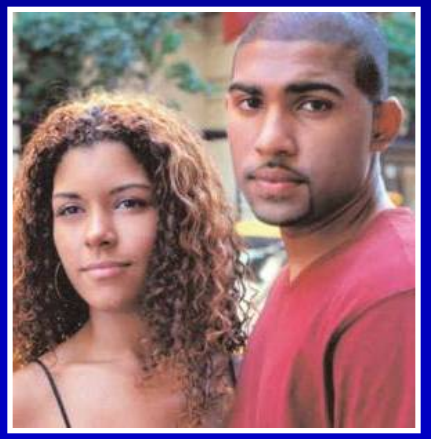
# UNITY Basics

- Focus on urban youth violence prevention
- Provide tools, resources and work with the largest cities in the US
- Foster sustained violence prevention efforts in urban areas and nationally
- Funded by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and The California Wellness Foundation



www.mystrength.org

*UNITY is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the CDC. UNITY is also funded by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation.*

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Billie Weiss, MPH
Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center, UCLA School of Public Health

Deborah Prothrow-Stith, MD
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Larry Cohen, MSW
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# UNITY Activities

- Conduct an assessment
- Foster effective communication
- Foster a peer network
- Conduct training and technical assistance
- Develop a national strategy
- Develop a *RoadMap* for effective and sustainable youth violence prevention

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DATA and ASSESSMENT

# *Data Collection Methodology*

- Telephone Interviews with City Key Informants
  - Mayors
  - Police Chiefs
  - Public Health Directors
  - School Superintendents



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DATA and ASSESSMENT

# *Findings*

- Informants identified youth violence as a serious issue for their city.
- Few reported that their city uses primary prevention to stop violence before it occurs.
- Informants lack a shared knowledge of existing youth violence prevention resources available in their city.

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Preventing violence *before* it occurs.

# UNITY *RoadMap* for Effectiveness and Sustainability

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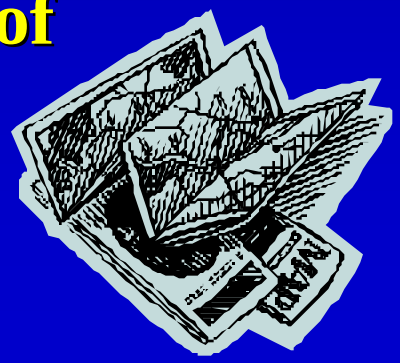
UNITY *RoadMap*

# Definition

- Plan that allows people to reach a desired destination
- Describes the infrastructure - primary routes, landmarks, alternate options - for going from one place to another
- Describes your starting point and how to get to the desired outcome
- Answers: **How can we get to the point of preventing violence *before* it occurs?**



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UNITY *RoadMap*

# Purpose

1. Delineate and describe core programmatic and infrastructure elements
2. Help cities assess the current status of their efforts
3. Provide information, resources, and models to help cities implement the core programmatic and infrastructure elements

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UNITY *RoadMap*

# Overview

- Cities can take action to effectively and sustainably prevent violence *before* it occurs by focusing on:

1. **Leadership**
2. **Prevention**
3. **Strategy**

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# Who: Leadership

Violence prevention is a bottom-up - top-down venture. It also requires dedicated staffing and clear roles and responsibilities for multiple players.

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UNITY *RoadMap*

# Leadership

WHO does it take to prevent violence *before* it occurs?

**Key Components:**

- ☑ Community Engagement
- ☑ Political Will & Support
- ☑ Organizational Structure & Staffing

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"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*

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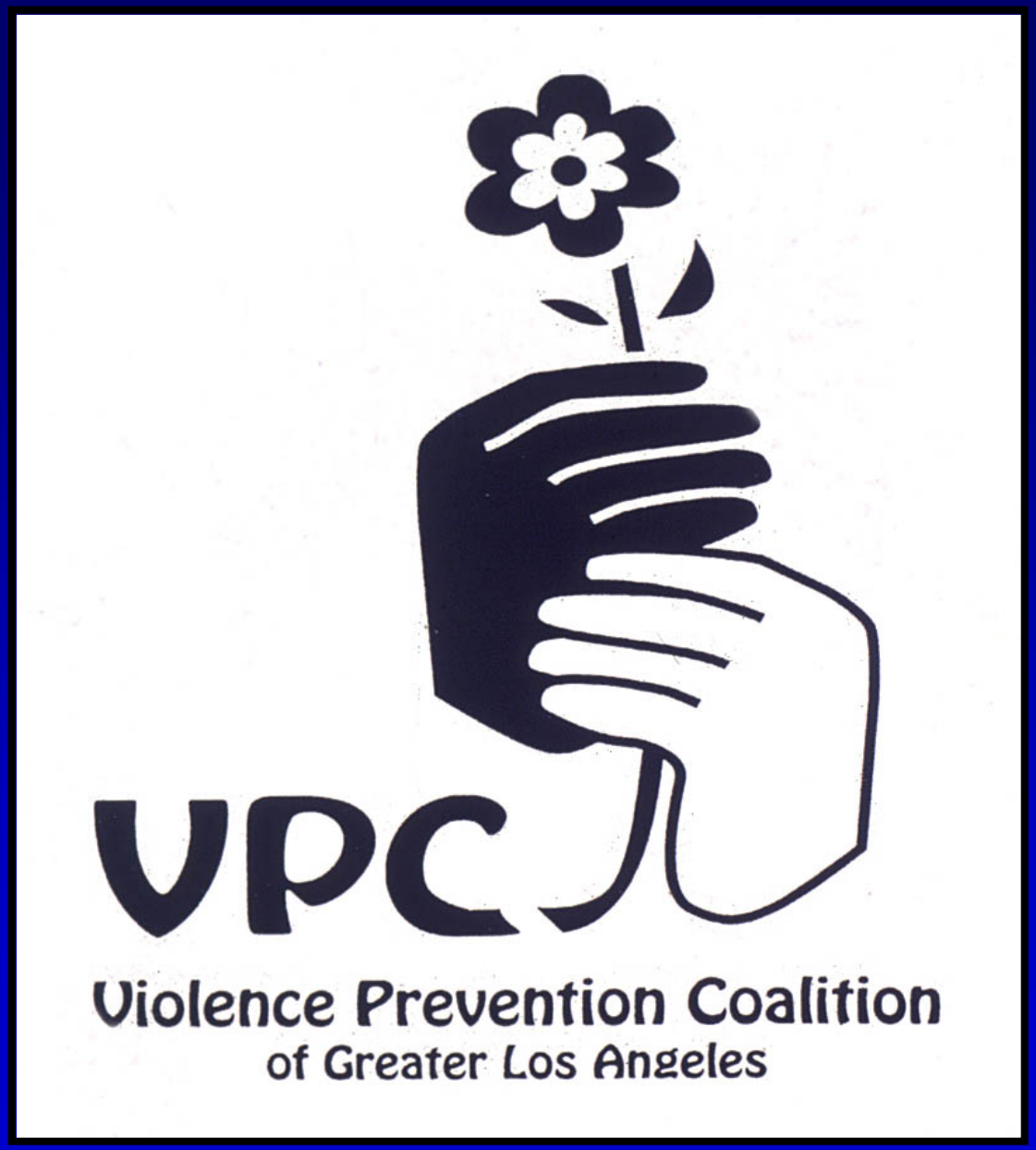


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# What: Prevention

Violence prevention addresses multiple underlying contributors through programs, organizational practices, and policy. These efforts can be strengthened by strong communication and training.

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# The Spectrum of Prevention

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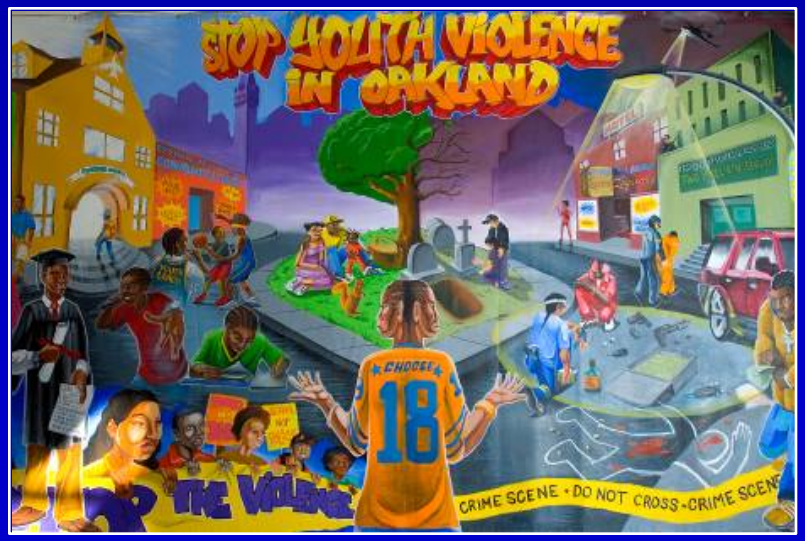
# What: Prevention

WHAT does it take to prevent violence *before* it occurs?

**Key Components:**

- ☑ Programming, Organizational Practices & Policy
- ☑ Communication
- ☑ Training & Skills




www.youthuprising.org

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UNITY Cities' Program Priorities

# Primary Prevention: UP FRONT

- Positive early care and education
- Positive social and emotional development
- Parenting skills
- Mentoring
- Quality after school programming
- Youth leadership
- Social connections in neighborhoods
- Quality education
- Economic development

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# The Violence Prevention Lens

**Career Paths/ Jobs**

Goal: ensure that a diversity of career paths are available for and known by all – especially young people, formerly incarcerated people, people living in neighborhoods highly impacted by violence, and women – and that these individuals have the training, skills and support they need to succeed in employment

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UNITY Cities' Program Priorities

# Secondary Prevention: IN THE THICK

- Mental health services
- Family support services
- Conflict resolution/interruption

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UNITY Cities' Program Priorities

# Tertiary Prevention: AFTER THE FACT

- Mental health services
- Successful reentry

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MOTIVATIONAL
EDUCATIONAL
ENTERTAINMENT

PRODUCTIONS

# BLUEPRINT

## for a Safer Philadelphia

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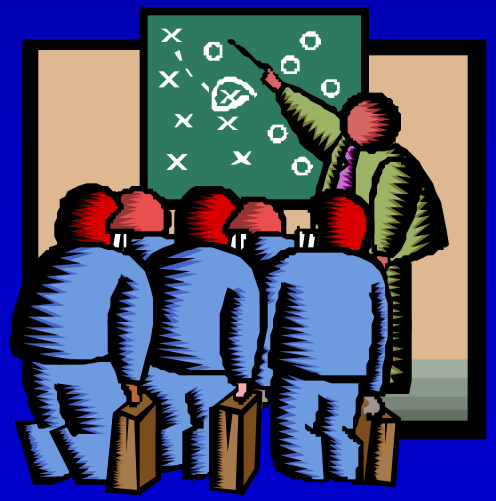
UNITY *RoadMap*

# How: Strategy

Strategy promotes approaches that are well coordinated, responsive to needs and concerns, and build on best practices and existing strengths. 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.



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# How: Strategy

HOW do we maximize and sustain efforts to prevent violence *before* it occurs?

**Key Components:**

- ☑ Plans
- ☑ Data & Evaluation
- ☑ Funding

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# Los Angeles Advancement Project

***In March 2006, Los Angeles City Council's Ad Hoc Committee and Gang Activity and Youth Development funded AP to develop a comprehensive gang activity reduction strategy for Los Angeles.***

- **Phase I:** Review current gang reduction programs in LA
- **Phase II:** Identify and determine the ideal programs and best practices locally and nationally
- **Phase III:** Propose options for implementing and ideal approach for LA to ensure the safety and vitality of all children

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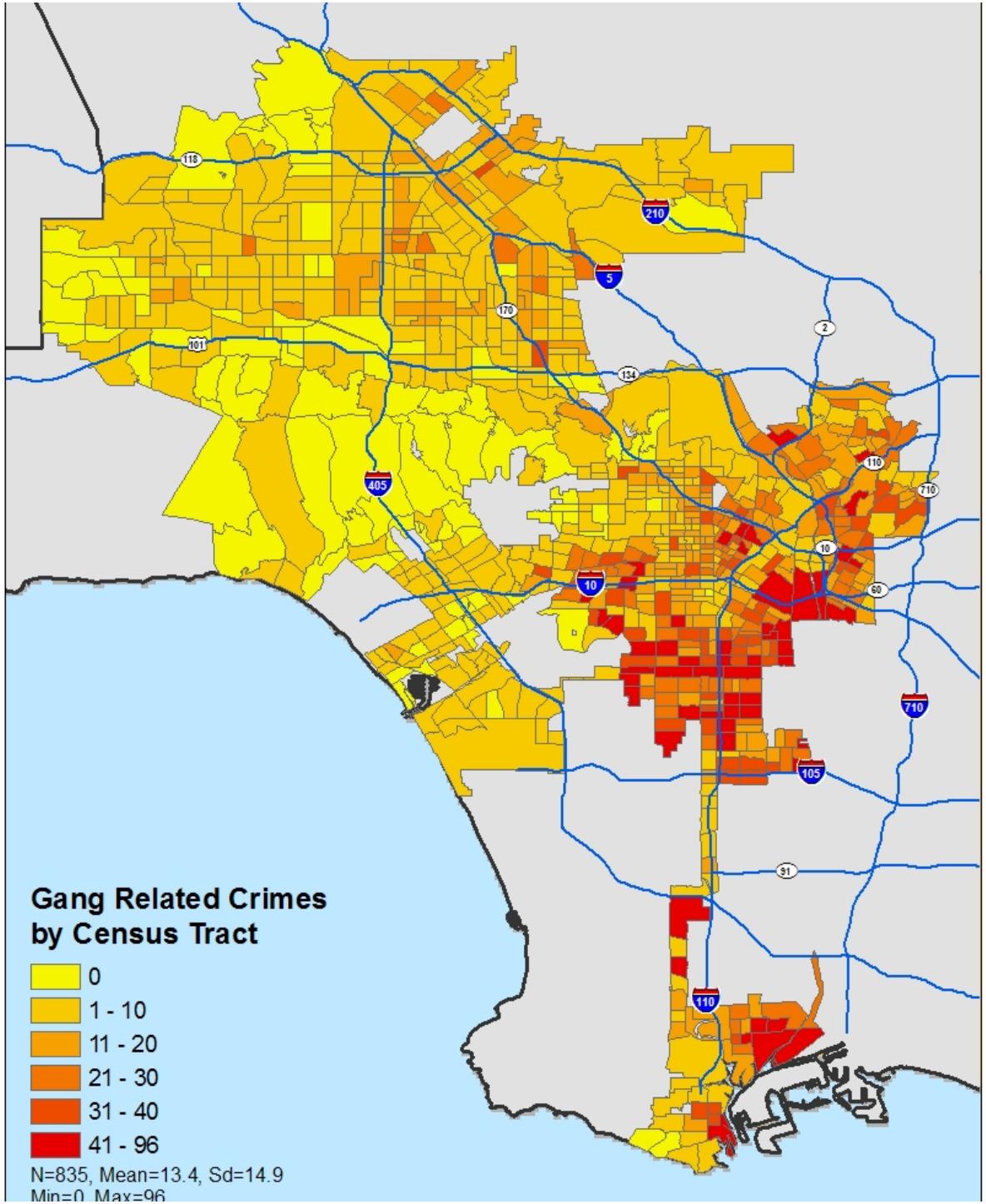


ADVANCEMENT PROJECT

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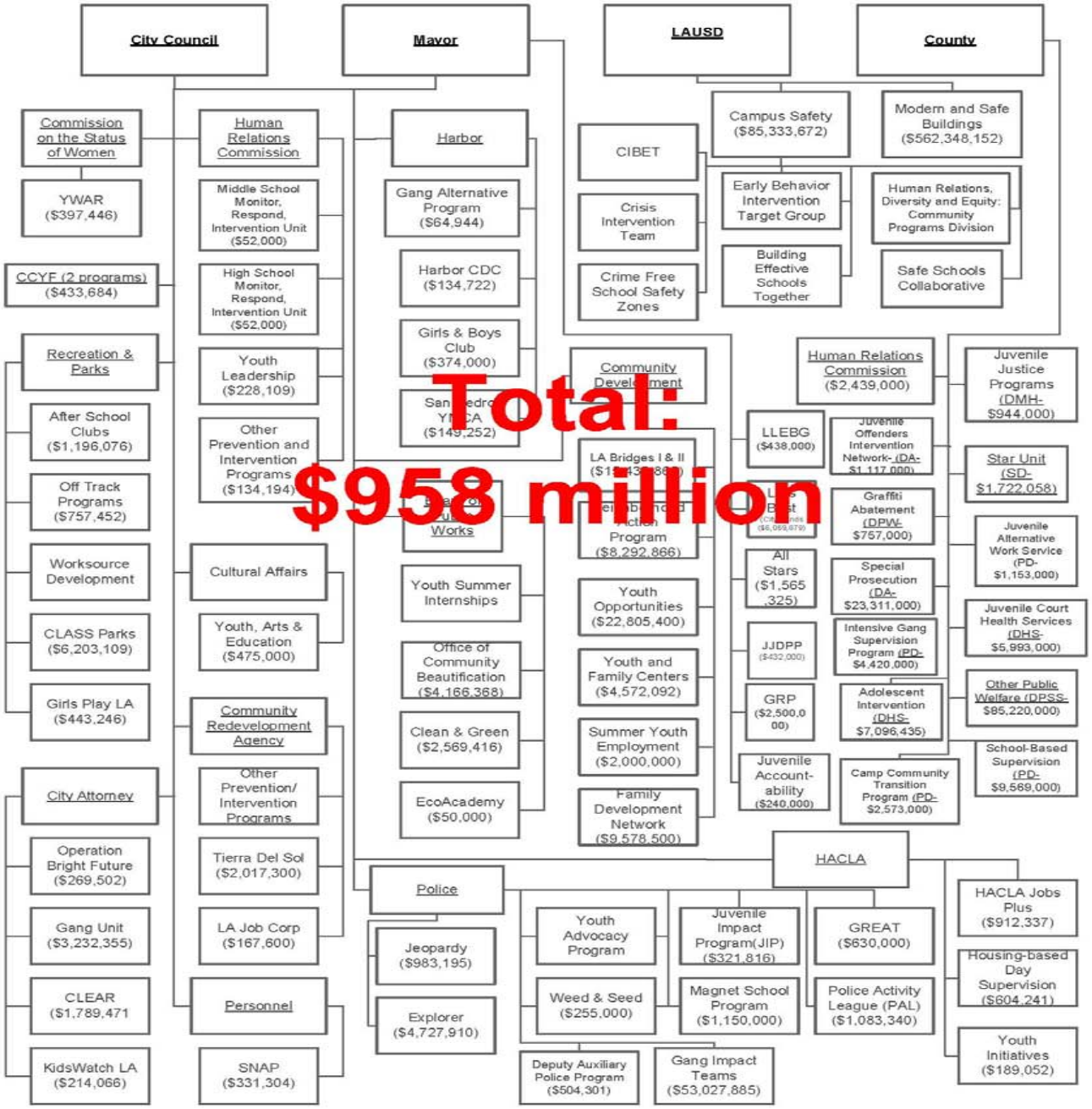
# Diagram of City and County Programs: Inadequate Coordination and Accountability




Note: County budget figures represent net County cost

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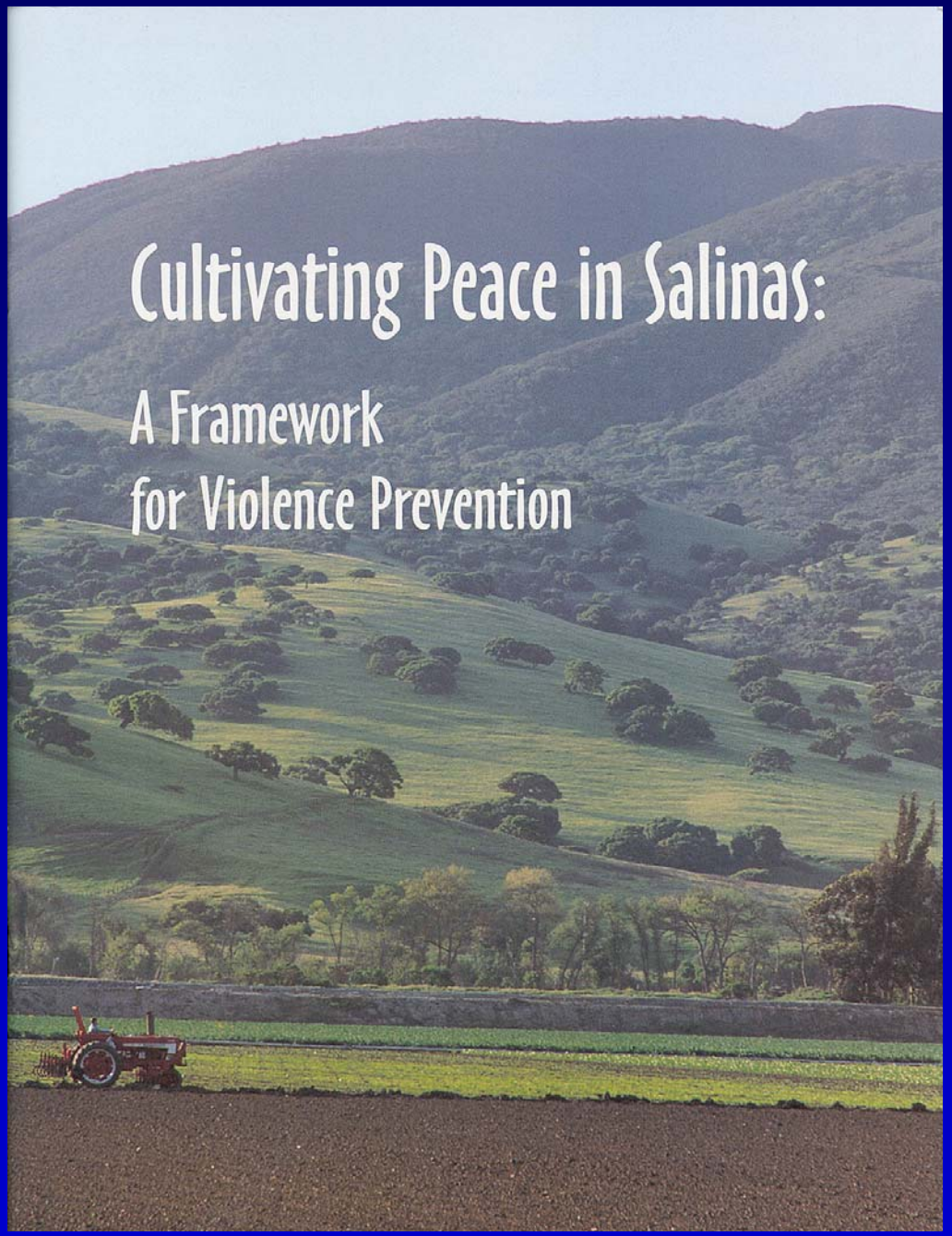


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# Web-Based Toolbox

- Overview
- Assessment Tool
- For each component (Who, What, How):
  - Key Elements
  - Models / Case Studies
  - Tools & Resources

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## Who - Leadership

- ☑Community engagement
- ☑Political Support
- ☑Organizational Structure

## What - Prevention

- ☑Programming and policy
- ☑Capacity/skills
- ☑Communication

## How - Strategy

- ☑Plans
- ☑Data & Evaluation
- ☑Funding

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*"Several [locales] in the United States have distinguished themselves in the fight to reduce crime… 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."*

-Jack Calhoun, founder, National Crime Prevention Council



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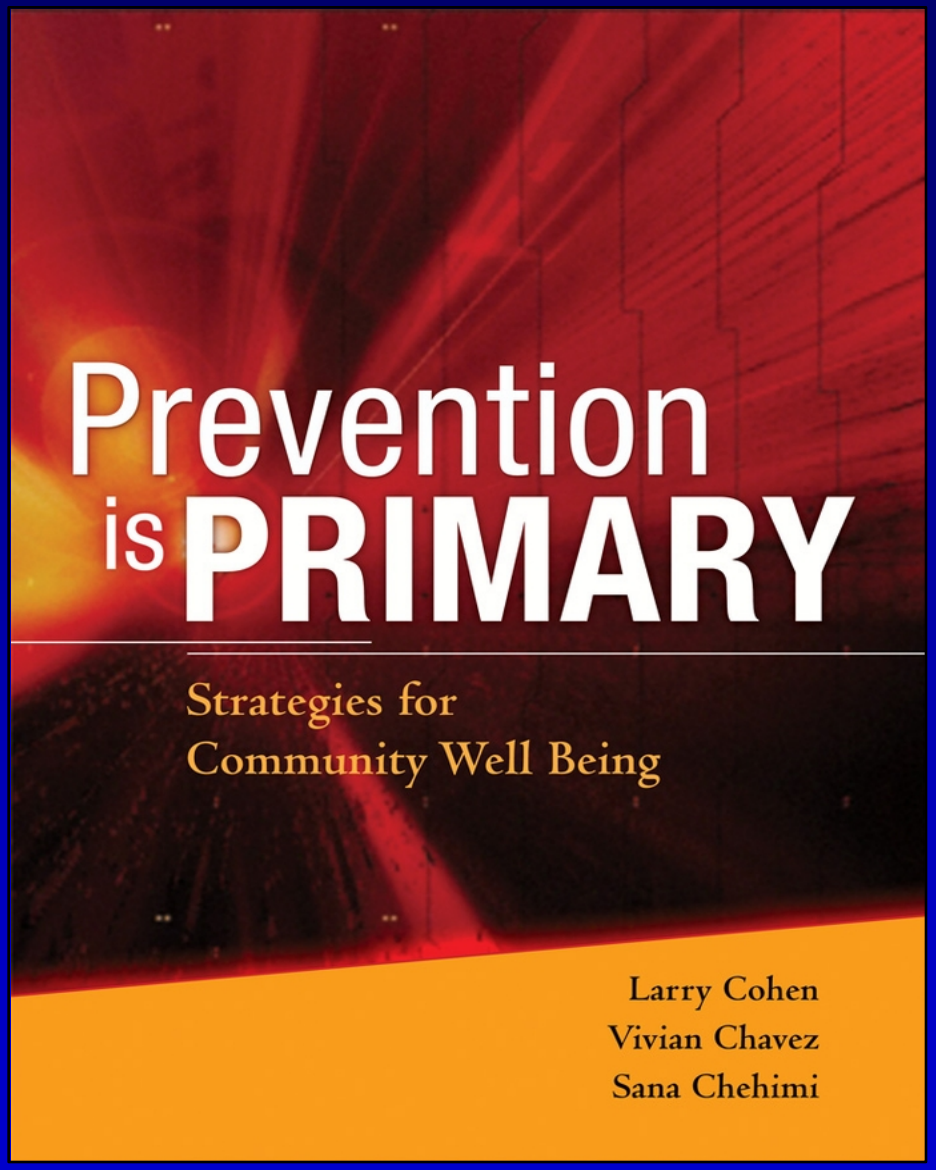


**Foreword**
By Georges C. Benjamin

**CHAPTER 14**
**Strengthening the Collaboration between Public Health and Criminal Justice to Prevent Violence**
By Deborah Prothrow-Stith

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