

# CDC is preventing violence in Massachusetts communities

Violence is one of the leading causes of death in the US. CDC has been the leading federal agency focused on preventing injury and violence for over 40 years.

## Violence is preventable. It's scientifically proven.

When traumatic events happen to children—such as experiencing abuse or neglect, living in a home with substance misuse, or witnessing community violence—these adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, can cause lasting, negative effects on health including an increased risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence later in life. CDC is uniquely positioned to help communities across the country prevent ACEs and other forms of violence, to ensure that all people are safe, healthy, and thriving.

**In 2024, Massachusetts received \$1,998,974 from CDC to prevent violence before it happens.** CDC funds states and communities to use data to implement proven prevention approaches with the greatest potential to reduce violence. CDC scientists provide data analysis, the latest research findings and additional expertise to support state and local health departments, community organizations, and others working to prevent violence. Their efforts help save lives and improve community safety and well-being.

## Violence prevention is critical for Massachusetts

Violence doesn't only affect victims and their families in the immediate term—it has long-term effects on their surrounding communities. Violence can lead to physical and mental illness, chronic diseases, fewer employment opportunities, childhood developmental delays, and premature deaths. Violence can discourage people from participating in neighborhood activities, limit business growth and prosperity, strain education, justice, and medical systems, and slow community progress.

### Example Prevention Approaches

- Safe routes to and from school
- Home visitation programs to support new mothers
- Mentoring and afterschool programs
- Job training programs
- Cleaning and maintaining vacant lots
- Programs in hospitals that provide social and job support to victims to prevent future violence

## Violence in Massachusetts, by the numbers

**182**

homicides  
in 2023

**16%**

of adults have  
experienced four or  
more ACEs in their  
lifetimes

**30%**

of women have  
experienced rape  
or survived rape  
attempts in their  
lifetimes



# CDC funds violence prevention programs in Massachusetts

CDC has been researching violence for over 40 years—building, implementing, and evaluating programs designed to reduce and prevent violence for entire populations.

Programs with a check mark below are active in Massachusetts and are using the best available evidence to inform prevention in the state. Programs without a check mark are other CDC programs that Massachusetts can apply for in the future.



### **National Violent Death Reporting System**

is CDC's flagship state-based data system that links up to 700 unique data elements about the "who, when, where, and how" of violent deaths and suicides and provides insights about "why" they occurred to inform prevention activities.



### **Rape Prevention and Education Program**

funds sexual violence prevention approaches such as bystander programs, anti-bullying, and anti-sexual harassment policies in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



**DELTA** funds state domestic violence coalitions to prevent intimate partner violence by engaging in statewide prevention efforts and providing training, technical assistance, and financial support to local community organizations.



**Essentials for Childhood: Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences through Data to Action** supports states and communities to prevent ACEs by improving data collection to best guide programs for their area.



### **Preventing Violence Affecting Young Lives**

recipients implement proven strategies that prevent youth violence, teen dating violence, and ACEs in communities with high violence rates.



### **National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention**

connect community leaders with research universities to create and study lasting youth violence prevention methods, such as programs that reduce rates of violence through bystander reporting, social media monitoring, and youth involvement in activities to improve community parks, vacant lots, and public spaces.



**FASTER: AVERT** provides near real-time data from emergency department visits for a range of violence-related injuries and mental health conditions to inform community-level prevention of violence and suicide.



### **Rigorously Evaluating Approaches to Prevent Adult-Perpetrated Child Sex Abuse**

recipients conduct research to learn what prevents child sexual abuse and sex trafficking, by rigorously evaluating different programs, policies, and practices.

## CDC Supports Massachusetts

CDC's Preventing Violence Affecting Young Lives funding supports the Boston Public Health Commission to implement programs to reduce violence among young people. In Boston, 11.5% of high school students experienced sexual dating violence. In addition, research shows that only a small fraction of victims of teen dating violence seek help and the most common source of support they consult is friends. To address this issue, the Boston Public Health Commission is implementing Start Strong, a youth led program that works to prevent teen dating violence and promote healthy relationships. Through their social media outreach campaign and producing the *Real Love Real Talk* podcast, the campaign centers on the experiences and perspectives of adolescents and young adults in the city, communicating positive social norms related to consent and healthy relationships. As a result of this campaign, Strong Start has a 250,000+ viewer monthly reach across all their social platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook, with a total of over 4.3 million individual accounts reached. By promoting healthy relationships, this campaign reduces risk factors for teen dating violence.