



Federal Way Violence Prevention Coalition Steering Committee

Report to the Mayor and City Council

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

The vision of the Federal Way VPCSC is to engage and empower Federal Way youth to become thriving and successful citizens

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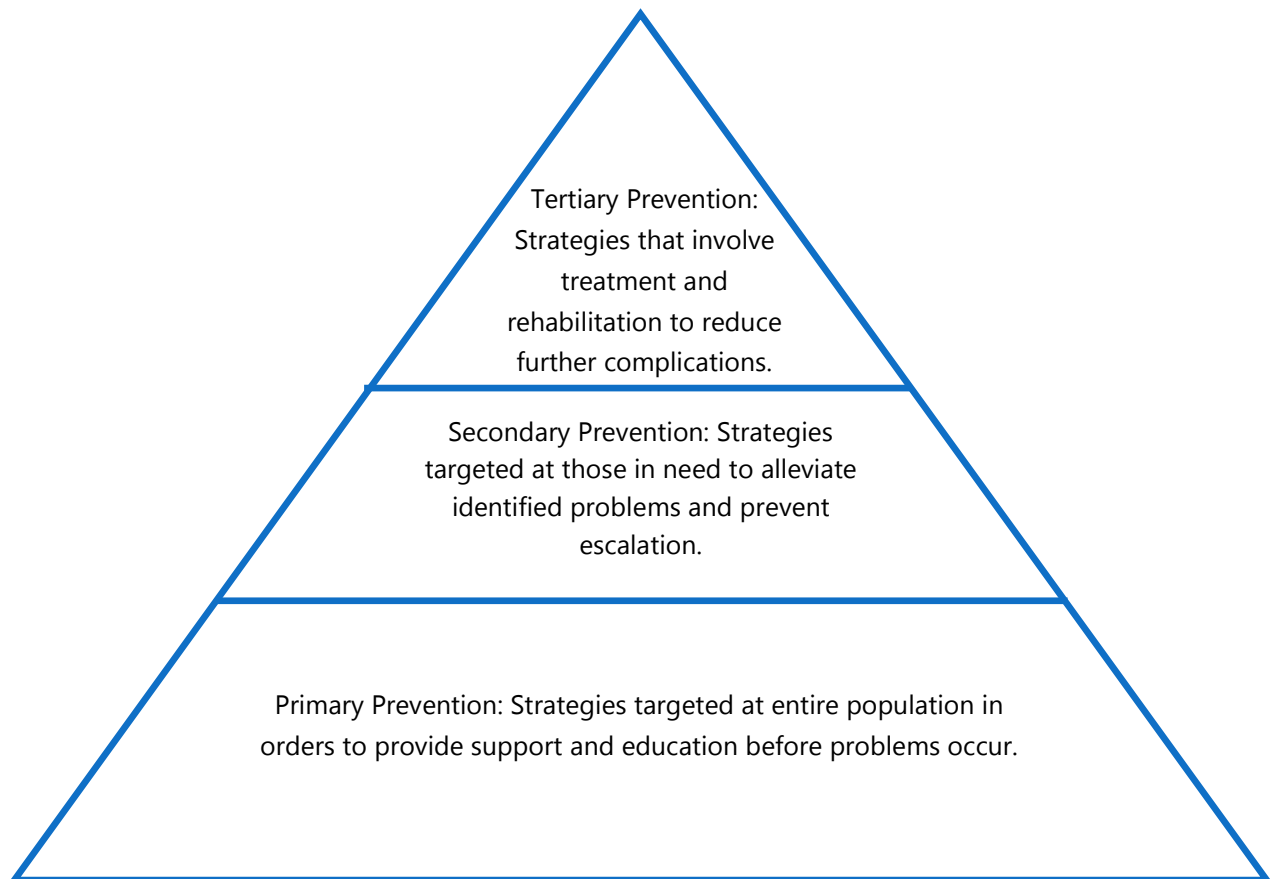
Community Challenge and Formation of VPCSC

The Violence Prevention Coalition Steering Committee (VPCSC) was created by Mayor Jim Ferrell in August 2016 in response to an increase in homicides, including three homicides within a 48-hour period in May. The 14-member committee was tasked with being a liaison with the community to formulate and submit recommendations regarding what is needed to reduce violence in Federal Way. The VPCSC spent six months gathering feedback from the community via an online survey and a public meeting, hearing about needs and opportunities from social service organizations and researching strategies that could reduce violence. National statistics show that most gun violence happens with young people ages 15-24; the VPCSC focused our recommendations on impacting violence in that age group.

The VPCSC heard from over 400 Federal Way residents and over a dozen community organizations. The VPCSC has ten recommendations to submit to the Mayor and City Council.

Public Health Model

The VPCSC decided to base their public feedback and recommendations on the public health model, which separates prevention strategies into three areas: primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.



Violence Prevention is complicated, and no single strategy can prevent future violence. The VPCSC focused our feedback and recommendations on all three tiers of the public health pyramid. This was to ensure that recommendations would help reduce violence in the short-term and work to create long-term solutions.

Public Meeting Key Results

A public meeting was held on October 26th at Federal Way City Hall. The goal was to solicit feedback and ideas from community members on how to reduce incidents of violence in our city.

Attendees were broken into groups and asked violence prevention guiding questions relating to each tier of the public health pyramid. Some key themes that emerged were:

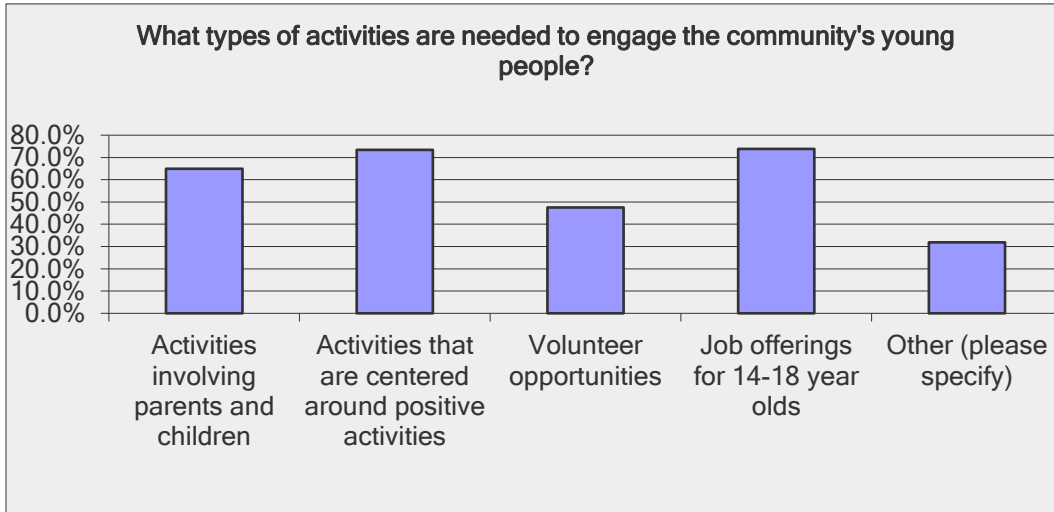
- Need for better communication regarding programs and opportunities to get involved.
- Increased access to programs, both at existing locations and lesser served locations in Federal Way. Reduce transportation and income barriers to participation in programs.
- More community and youth education on relevant topics, such as stress relief, restorative justice, trauma-informed care, etc.
- Youth employment programs.
- Ensuring all services are culturally relevant, including youth culture.

Online Survey Key Results

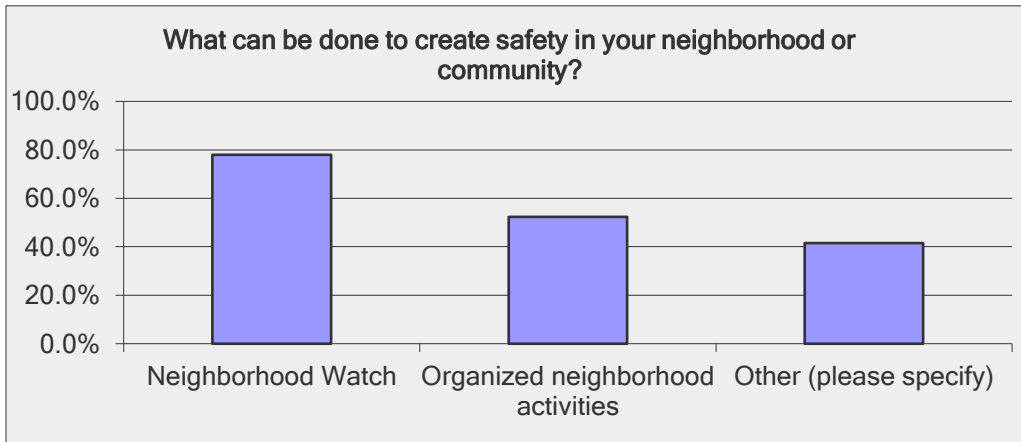
The VPCSC created an online survey with the goal of garnering wider community input on what Federal Way residents see as challenges and opportunities to reduce violence. The survey received 387 total responses. Listed below are the questions and highlights from the results.

- **Do you feel safe in your community in general? (scale of 1-5)**
 - 2.93 average
- **Where are the areas that you feel unsafe?**
 - Top Answers:
 - Commons Mall
 - Major Corridors, such as Pacific Highway, 320th Street, and 21st Ave SW
 - All Over – many commenters felt uneasy walking in Federal Way or going out after dark.
- **What do you think can decrease crime in your area?**
 - The overwhelming majority of commenters mentioned increasing police presence across Federal Way.

■ **What types of activities are needed to engage the community's young people?**



■ **What can be done to create safety in your neighborhood or community?**



■ **I believe that school staff are trained/equipped to address At Risk Youth issues? (scale of 1-5)**

- Average of 2.09

■ **What, specifically, would make school staff more effective at working with At-Risk Youth issues?**

- Top Answers:
 - Training and education for school staff
 - Better support services to help struggling youth
 - Changes in school discipline policies

- **I believe that existing community spaces should be used to create after school programs and activities? (scale of 1-5)**
 - Average of 3.96

- **There are enough resources for youth and young adults who have exhibited dangerous behaviors? (scale of 1-5)**
 - Average of 2.09

- **If not, what resources do you think are lacking in Federal Way (such as youth employment, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling)?**
 - Top Answers:
 - Everything
 - Mental health counseling
 - Substance use treatment
 - Youth employment
 - I don't know

- **What would you, as a community member, do to help youth and young adults reach their full potential?**
 - Top Answers:
 - Become a mentor
 - Take an active interest in and encourage neighborhood youth
 - Volunteer at a school, faith community or sports league
 - Be a good role model to their children, grandchildren or other family members

- **How do you recommend we keep firearms out of the hands of youth and young adults in Federal Way?**
 - Top Answers:
 - Responsible gun ownership and safe gun storage
 - I don't know
 - Firearm safety classes
 - Enforcing existing laws better or creating stricter laws regarding gun ownership

Meetings and Presentations

The VPCSC members spoke to individuals and organizations from throughout the area with expertise in violence prevention or who manage support programs. Some gave formal presentations at VPCSC meetings, and some were through informal meetings with VPCSC members.

- Multi-Service Center
- Federal Way Youth Action Team
- Youth LINC
- Tacoma Goodwill
- Domestic Abuse Women's Network
- Nexus Youth & Family Services
- Kent Youth & Family Services
- Valley Cities Counseling & Consultation
- FWPS Mentor & Me Program
- Communities In Schools of Federal Way
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound
- Dr. Erin Casey – University of Washington Tacoma
- Dr. Todd Herrenkohl – University of Washington Seattle

Positive Activities Already Happening

The VPCSC learned about several positive violence prevention activities that have already begun. We applaud these programs and encourage the city to support their success.

- City of Federal Way committing to hire more police officers.
- Expansion of cameras in high-crime parts of Federal Way.
- Citizens using technology to become more connected through Safe City Federal Way and Next Door.
- FWPD Positive Ticket Program, School Resource Officers, Explorer Scout Post and Youth Citizen's Academy.
- Federal Way Youth Action Team and the Positive Outcomes Program – working to keep Federal Way youth out of the juvenile justice system.
- Youth LINC's work with gang and group-involved youth.
- FWPS creating the Mentor & Me program and hiring Restorative Practices Coordinators at all middle schools. FWPS has made Goal 2 of their strategic plan, which promotes whole child development, a priority for all FWPS schools this school year.
- King County Prosecutor's Office initiative to identify and vigorously prosecute gun violence offenders.
- Federal and state law enforcement agencies working together to identify ballistic connections between inter-jurisdictional gun crimes.

Federal Way Violence Prevention Coalition Steering Committee Recommendations

The Federal Way Violence Prevention Coalition Steering Committee is making ten recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. These recommendations are based on challenges and opportunities learned during our public meeting, online survey results, presentations from social service organizations and meetings with experts and community members.

To be listed as an official recommendation, an idea needed to have all four of these criteria:

- Does the recommendation address an actual community challenge?
- Is the recommendation proven to be effective?
 - The VPCSC used the risk and protective framework from the Centers for Disease Control as a guide to show effectiveness.
- Are there natural partners to help implement the recommendation?
- Does the recommendation have the support of the community?

The recommendations are meant to be a starting point as the city explores a comprehensive approach to violence prevention. Our coalition took care to select recommendations from all three levels of the public health pyramid and to select strategies that focused on both youth and how the wider community can be involved in keeping our city safe.

It is the VPCSC's hope that the City of Federal Way will use these recommendations to guide existing resources and staff energy toward effective violence prevention strategies. Also, these recommendations are a base to seek funding and support from the county, state, federal and private foundation sources.

The recommendations are broken down into three categories: Community Training & Awareness, Youth-Centered Programs, and City of Federal Way Staff.

Community Training & Education

Primary Prevention Recommendation

The FWVPCSC recommends the City of Federal Way support a community-centered bystander awareness project.

Community Challenge

Residents of Federal Way want knowledge, tools, and support to prevent more violence in the city. People are afraid to intervene if they see concerning or suspicious behavior. The Green Dot initiative is a bystander training program that can provide training for residents to safely intervene and ask for help if they see unsafe behavior in any setting.

Research Support

A CDC review from 2014 showed Green Dot to reduce multiple forms of interpersonal violence. Green Dot was created to reduce gender-based violence however the bystander training techniques included have potential to reduce bullying and other aggressive behavior.

Community Support

There were multiple comments throughout the survey results that show residents want to get involved and find ways to keep their city safe. Residents are interested in community training. Green Dot is a well-supported and researched initiative that already exists.

Partners

DAWN (Domestic Abuse Women's Network) is already spearheading a community Green Dot project in Kent and is willing to be a lead partner if Federal Way adopts Green Dot. There are multiple groups that care about safety that are natural partners for receiving Green Dot training, such as block watches, homeowners associations, faith communities, high schools and social service agencies.

Success

A number of trainings and number of community members empowered through Green Dot would be interim measures of success.

Community Training & Education

Primary Prevention Recommendation

The FWVPCSC recommends the City of Federal Way to institute restorative justice practices as a city initiative to reduce crime and violence amongst youth in Federal Way.

Community Challenge

We need a robust marketing campaign promoting the benefits of restorative justice practices. With the Mayor's backing and Council's approval, we're giving residents and parents skills to effectively interact with youth in Federal Way. Furthermore, the only the way to effectively address the issues of violence and crime is seeking more ways to address the "root" issues oppose to the "fruit" problems. Promoting restorative justice principals and embedding them in our community will help address root causes of violence.

Research Support

Our research concluded a specific remedy to offset youth violence in Federal Way is instituting restorative justice practices throughout all places where youth occupy. It's not a 'magical pill' that solves violence and crime. However, it has proven it can reduce both. Also, it provides a secondary value of skills being added to concerning adults who are seeking to be part of the solution and building emotional intelligence in youth.

Community Support

According to the VPCSC survey results, residents of the Federal Way community believe one of the systemic issues linked to youth violence and crime are a result of inadequate social-emotional training.

Partners

Though there are many partners that can help assist in the promotion of social/emotional training, our pivotal partners must be the City of Federal Way, and Federal Way Public Schools to ensure sustainable success.

Success

Success for this recommendation will be how many Federal Way residents are reached with training and/or messages about restorative justice principles.

Community Training & Education

Primary Prevention Recommendation

The FWVPCSC recommends the City of Federal Way promote and incentive the purchase and use of gun safes/locking storage in homes and vehicles for firearm owners.

Community Challenge

According to BRFSS data, in 2013 among King County adults (18 years and older) with a firearm in or around their home (371,000 adults), an estimated 52% (194,000 adults) reported the firearm was unlocked. Federal Way Police Department report that a significant number of firearms used in local crimes are stolen.

Research Support

There is little research done around safe gun storage, but we believe that reducing the number of guns stolen from homes and vehicles could reduce firearm violence in our city. The best evidence on the effectiveness of gun storage shows the need to couple education with free (or very low cost) storage devices.

<https://www.thetrace.org/2016/03/safe-gun-storage-research/>

Community Support

Encouraging safe firearm storage was the top comment received from community members who completed the online survey.

Partners

King County Public Health has promoted safe firearm storage for several years. They have expressed a willingness to enhance the work with the City of Federal Way on the creation and implementation of this recommendation.

Success

We would consider this recommendation successful if the number of Federal Way gun owners purchase and use gun safes. We would like to see the number of crimes involving weapons decrease and the number of reported stolen firearms decrease.

Community Training & Education

Secondary Prevention Recommendation

The FWVPCSC recommends the City of Federal Way provide an incentive, such as paid work time or flexible schedules, to city employees to become mentors to a Federal Way youth. Furthermore, we recommend the City of Federal Way encourage residents to become positive role models and volunteer with youth throughout the community.

Community Challenge

Local organizations report a need for more caring adults to become positive role models, such as mentors, tutors, coaches and youth leaders. While any number of youth could benefit from more positive role models, there is a special need for positive men to mentor the next generation. Local organizations state that the main barrier serving more youth in their programs is the lack of available volunteers.

Research Support

Community-Based Mentoring is a promising blueprint program to reduce youth violence (University of Colorado). School-based mentoring is shown to reduce school behavior infractions. One of the protective factors compiled by the CDC is connectedness to adults outside of the family.

Community Support

The Violence Prevention Coalition community survey asked: "What would you, as a community member, do to help youth and young adults reach their potential." The top answer was volunteering in the community, and mentoring was called out as an example more than any other suggestion.

Partners

There are many potential partners, such as mentoring programs and youth-serving organizations in need of caring adult volunteers. Communities In Schools of Federal Way, Federal Way Public Schools Mentor & Me program and Big Brothers Big Sisters are the primary mentoring programs in Federal Way. Potential partners to help recruit volunteers include city staff, the faith community, and the business community.

Success

Success for the recommendation is shown in the number of volunteers who are recruited and become active volunteers with partner organizations.

Youth-Centered Programs

Secondary Prevention Recommendation

The FWVPCSC recommends the City of Federal Way explore opening a “One-Stop” community resource center for youth and young adults.

Community Challenge

Currently, there is no “One-Stop” community resource center for young adults in Federal Way. At present, when youth or young adults are seeking education, employment, housing support, mental health treatment, and drug/alcohol treatment, they need to visit several different social service agencies within and outside of Federal Way.

Research Support

Involvement with drugs/alcohol, lack of involvement in conventional activities, poor academic performance, and history of treatment for emotional problems are all risk factors the CDC sees as perpetuating youth violence. A “One-Stop” community center for youth and young adults can provide services to address all of this risk factors.

Several communities within the United States have successful “One Stop” programs.

Tacoma, WA: reachtacoma.org

Gainesville, GA: <https://www.unitedwayhallcounty.org/compasscenter/>

Community Support

One question asked in the community survey was “What resources do you think are lacking in Federal Way?” The majority answered: Employment, mentoring, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services. Also, many stated that they believed there could be these services in Federal Way but were not aware of where.

Partners

Goodwill has expressed an interest in developing/partnering with the city in opening a Reach Center in Federal Way. The Reach Center provides young adult between the ages of 16-24 education, employment, housing support, advocacy and counseling all within one location. They currently have a successful Reach program in Tacoma, which can be easily replicated.

Success

Success for this recommendation would be for more young adults to be provided these services within their community. This would impact their connection to Federal Way and increase their commitment to the services as they no longer have to work with multiple agencies or travel to other communities.

Youth-Centered Programs

Primary Prevention Recommendation

The FWVPCSC recommends the city of Federal Way explores the creation of additional after-school programs throughout the city.

Community Challenge

The unsupervised hours from 3 pm to 6 pm after school has been released for the day and the time until parents arrive home from work is the most critical time for our youth. Federal Way needs more after school opportunities that provide safe places for youth to be and incorporate evidence-based violence prevention strategies.

Research Support

The CDC cites involvement in pro-social activities and attachment to school as protective factors that reduce youth violence.

Community support

In reviewing the community surveys results from at least three of the questions, there is community support and evidence that this type of program will help our youth and reduce violence while making our community more livable and safer. Question 4 asked what type of activities is needed to engage the community and 74% of respondents stated positive activities and job offerings (high school students could be hired to work in these positive programs).

Question 8 stated that existing community spaces be used to create after school programs. A majority of responses were in high agreement with this statement.

Question 11 asked the respondents what they could do, and the results showed the citizens of our community would volunteer and help in any way they can to make programs successful and to attain the positive results.

Partners

Federal Way Public Schools, AmeriCorps, Communities In Schools, Boys and Girls Clubs as well as other nonprofits are natural partners for after school programs. Federal Way Parks and Recreation is open to programming at middle schools.

Success

Would be determined by less youth violence, improved academic performance and better health and nutrition in the youth participating in the after school programs.

Youth-Centered Programs

Primary Prevention Recommendation

The FWVPCSC recommends the City of Federal Way support the creation and expansion of social/emotional learning to more schools, after school programs and other youth-serving organizations.

Community Challenge

Youth and families need more access to programs and classes that intentionally build skills to deter youth violence. Education could focus on building strong family dynamics, anger management, deterrence of substance use and curbing other risky activity.

Luckily, there is good work already happening in Federal Way Public Schools. FWPS have adopted the Second Step social/emotional learning curriculum for elementary schools and have begun implementing restorative practices in secondary schools. More can be done to encourage wider adoption of these types of programs and expand this learning to entire families and other environments where youth can build positive social skills.

Research Support

Social/Emotional Learning builds many of the CDC's listed protective factors that are shown to reduce youth violence. These include: positive social orientation, highly developed social skills/competencies, intolerant attitude toward deviance, ability to discuss problems with parents, and parental/family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems (provision of models of constructive coping).

Community Support

Training, positive places for youth, and parental involvement came up at recurring themes in public feedback.

Partners

Federal Way Public Schools, youth-serving organizations, the faith community, and parent support networks are natural partners to expand social/emotional learning in our city.

Success

The number of schools and youth programs implementing social/emotional learning curriculum would be a measure of success for this recommendation.

Youth-Centered Programs

Tertiary Prevention Recommendation

The FWVPCSC recommends the City of Federal Way explore opportunities to expand youth substance use treatment in Federal Way and reduce barriers for families and youth seeking treatment.

Community Challenge

Youth who battle addiction face multiple barriers to seeking help. Most agencies that provide youth substance use treatment require youth to travel to their offices in Kent, Auburn, Burien or other neighboring cities. There are very few options for youth outpatient treatment inside Federal Way.

Research Support

The CDC lists substance use as a risk factor leading to youth violence. Reducing barriers to treatment will help youth make better decisions.

Community Support

The Violence Prevention Coalition community survey asked: "What resources do you think are lacking in Federal Way?" Substance use and mental health resources were 2 of the top 3 answers. While there are multiple barriers to mental health counseling, there is an even more severe lack of substance use treatment and counseling in Federal Way.

Partners

Kent Youth & Family Resources and Nexus Youth and Families (formerly Auburn Youth Resources), while not headquartered in Federal Way, do serve Federal Way youth and are interested in expanding programs in the city. Valley Cities Behavioral Health Care provides substance use treatment to adults and is interested in expanding to youth in the future.

Success

New and or expanded substance use treatment services and a measured increase in youth receiving treatment would show success for this recommendation.

Youth-Centered Programs

Secondary Prevention Recommendation

The FWVPCSC recommends the City of Federal Way provide a comprehensive job training program for youth in Federal Way

Community Challenge

Federal Way needs city-wide support and partnerships with local employers to hire and train youth and young adults. Youth in Federal Way have trouble getting a job and building their resume. A comprehensive job training program in Federal Way would include job placement, job readiness training, and youth-specific job fairs. Finding ways to employ youth and young adults, both in summer and all-year long, would help youth build the skills to find and keep employment through adulthood.

Research Support

Our research concluded two specific remedies to offset youth violence in Federal Way. First, we need to form a robust job training program that helps train and place local youth in employment opportunities. Second, the job training and placement program should provide access to mentorship and career exposure opportunities.

<http://chicago.suntimes.com/news/study-shows-benefits-of-summer-jobs-program/>

Also, a teen employment program could reduce the risk factors relating to low parental education and income and diminished economic opportunities. Youth employment would build up the protective factors of highly developed social skills and positive social orientation. These are all risk and protective factors listed by the CDC.

Community Support

VPCSC survey results show strong support for youth employment program expansion in Federal Way. Youth employment was the top single answer of question 10, "What resources do you think are lacking in Federal Way."

Partners

Though there are many partners that can help assist in the promotion of youth employment, our pivotal partners must be the City's Department of Economic Development, Federal Way Public Schools, Greater Federal Way Chamber of Commerce, Multi-Service Center and Goodwill of the Olympics & Rainier Region.

Success

Increasing the number of youth and young adults successfully employed in these programs will show success for this recommendation.

City of Federal Way Staff Time

The FWVPCSC recommends the City of Federal Way devote dedicated staff time to implementing VPCSC recommendations, seeking funding and building relationships with community-based organizations

The VPCSC recognizes that implementation of many of these recommendations will take a significant investment of time and resources to turn into reality. Our final recommendation is that the City of Federal Way either create a new staff position to help move effective violence prevention strategies forward or reallocate existing staff so they would have ample time to devote to violence prevention. We hope that our initial recommendations are a starting point for anyone in this position. Over time, we hope dedicated staff time to violence prevention would explore many more evidence-based strategies to bring to Federal Way and explore more ways the City of Federal Way can leverage new and existing resources.

Any city staff working to implement VPCSC recommendations should have a background in building relationships with diverse communities, creating partnerships with community-based organizations, and effective grant writing skills.

Resources

The Federal Way Violence Prevention Coalition Steering Committee found these resources helpful as we researched effective violence prevention strategies.

CDC Youth Violence Prevention Homepage	https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/index.html
Veto Violence	https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/stryve/
Public Health Seattle & King County Violence Prevention	http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/violence-injury-prevention/violence-prevention.aspx
Gun Violence in King County Report	http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/violence-injury-prevention/violence-prevention/~//media/depts/health/violence-injury-prevention/documents/firearm-violence-king-county-2014.ashx
Prevention Institute	https://www.preventioninstitute.org/
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention	https://www.ojjdp.gov/
Catholic Health Initiatives United Against Violence Resource Guide	http://catholichealthinitiatives.org/documents_public/Advocacy/CHI%20Violence%20Handbook%207-16a.pdf
Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative	http://safeyouthseattle.org/
Seattle Youth Violence Needs Assessment	https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/HumanServices/Reports/Final_SYPVI_NeedsAssessment.pdf
Essentials for Childhood Framework	https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/essentials.html