

Meeting the Grand Challenge to **Build Healthy Relationships to End Violence**

Policy Recommendations

- Fully fund existing and new data collection, reporting, and research efforts that center violence prevention and intervention.
- Fund research on safe alternatives to incarceration for some violent offenses, centering the voices of marginalized communities.
- Invest in policies and programs that have been found to strengthen relationships, reduce or prevent violence, or lower community risk factors associated with violence.
- Focus on violence prevention in social service programs, such as programs for unhoused individuals, centering gender and pushing back against gender assumptions in seemingly neutral social policies.
- Develop and invest in programs that reduce economic stressors associated with violence, such as asset building, flexible funding, and universal basic income programs.

Policy Recommendations

1. Fully fund existing and new data collection, reporting, and research efforts that center violence prevention and intervention.

Fully fund existing and new data collection and reporting efforts like the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) to ensure that data can be made public at a faster pace (in keeping with the speed of publication of the Child Maltreatment reports which are produced within 12 months of data collection). For data collection efforts not specifically focused on intimate partner violence, such as the NVDRS, ensure that data are being collected which provide the important relationship, contextual, and risk factor information needed to better understand (and thus prevent) these violence and death.

Link data and reporting systems (federal, state) to track the incidence and prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual violence, stalking, and psychological abuse by former and current intimate partners.

- Track variations across places and population groups to identify an array of programming options that best advances health relationships and reduces violence (federal, state).

- Gather information outside of what is reported to criminal-legal agencies to develop a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of our response to IPV (federal, state). Focus this effort on how the response to IPV is affecting child abuse reporting, child safety, and family stability.
- Accelerate basic elements of linked data and collaboration across multiple programs for multiple purposes, including surveillance, evaluations of existing and new policies, planning and implementation of community-level violence prevention and interventions, child maltreatment prevention strategies, IPV prevention and intervention, and evaluation of services (federal, state, local).

2. Fund research on safe alternatives to incarceration for some violent offenses, centering the voices of marginalized communities.

Reframe public safety by identifying, researching, and modifying punitive policies like mandatory arrest, centering the voices of marginalized communities to identify safe alternatives to criminal-legal system intervention in lower risk IPV incidences.

Revise Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and other related legislation (e.g., Victims of Crime Act [VOCA] and Family Violence Prevention Services Act [FVPSA]) to eliminate barriers to providing women with services that are trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and responsive to the well-documented desires of many victims to achieve safety by strengthening relationships. Invest in research on safe alternatives to incarceration for lower risk IPV cases, such as mediation, restorative practices, counseling, and accountability alternatives, specifically focusing on identifying interventions that are effective for marginalized populations such as women of color, older women, LGBTQ women and men, and youth.

3. Invest in policies and programs that have been found related to strengthening relationships, reducing violence, and lowering community risk factors associated with violence.

Policy mechanisms are needed for demonstration projects to better develop and test community interventions to strengthen relationships, home visiting, psychoeducation for children and youth who have experienced violence, and support groups for parents exposed to violence or using violence. Innovative policies can support new mechanisms to address neighborhood poverty, high alcohol content density, community violence, diminished economic opportunities, high unemployment, and low neighborhood support/cohesion and better understand the impact on reducing relationship violence.

4. Focus on violence prevention in social service programs, such as programs for unhoused and housing insecure individuals, centering gender and pushing back against gender assumptions in seemingly neutral social policies.

Social service programs too often reflect siloed service delivery systems that fail to respond to critical needs of individuals, families, and communities consistently and holistically. Increase support for program development, implementation, and evaluation; technical assistance; and training that seek to embed relationship strengthening and other violence prevention strategies within prevailing service delivery.

5. Develop and invest in programs that reduce economic stressors associated with violence, such as asset building, flexible funding, and universal basic income programs.

Economic stability is a well-established protective factor against many forms of violence. Invest in programs that reduce economic stressors to support families and strengthen relationships to end violence (federal, state, local), including refundable EITC programs, children's development accounts, and programs that provide unrestricted funds for survivors of violence to meet their economic and housing needs. Asset building programs that contribute to relationship strengthening to end violence deserve wide scale testing. Studies on universal basic income should include preventive impact on IPV.

About the Grand Challenges for Social Work

The Grand Challenges for Social Work was launched by the American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare in 2016 to harness the ingenuity, expertise, dedication, and creativity of individuals and organizations within the field of social work and beyond to champion "social progress powered by science." Additional information on the Grand Challenges may be found at [GrandChallengesforSocialWork.org](https://www.GrandChallengesforSocialWork.org).

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