

A photograph of the Milwaukee skyline at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and blue. The city lights are on, and the buildings are reflected in the water. The foreground shows a rocky shoreline and some trees.

MILWAUKEE

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

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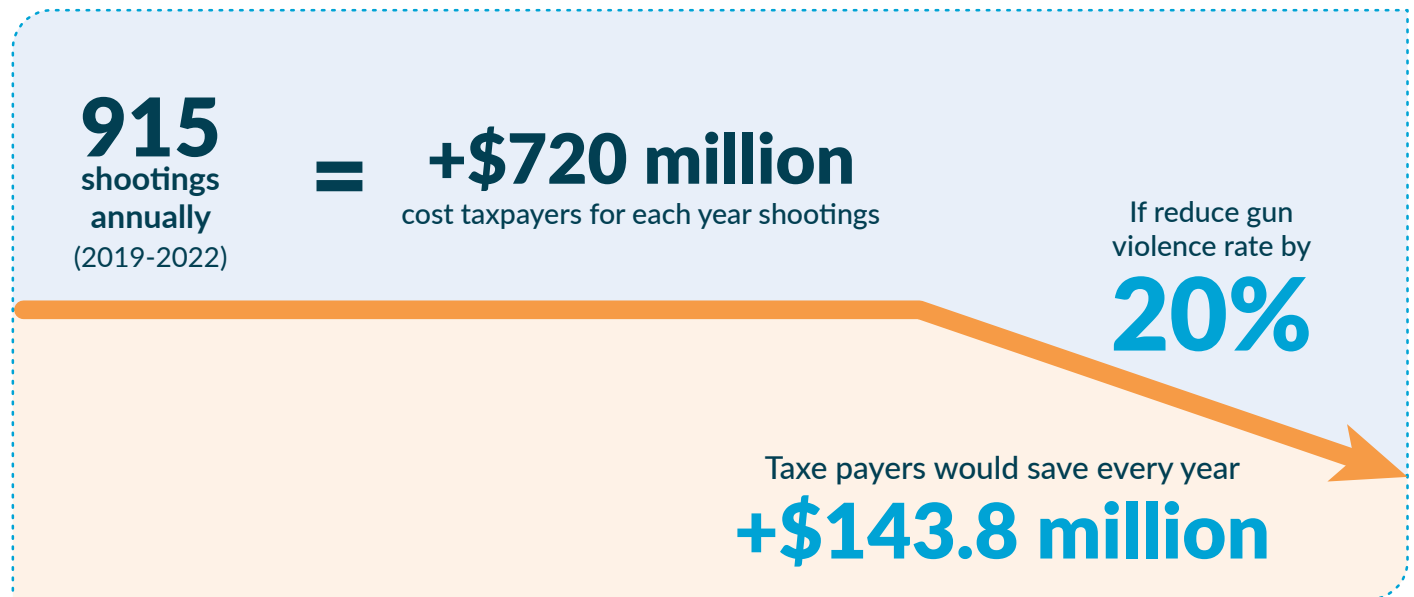
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Milwaukee has grappled with high rates of gun violence for many years and like most cities in the country, the city experienced an increase in gun violence with the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic. In 2023, Milwaukee achieved a 21% decline in homicides from the previous year.

This violence has very tangible costs for all Milwaukee residents. Between 2019 and 2022, the city averaged approximately 915 combined fatal and nonfatal shootings annually. According to the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform's (NICJR's) Milwaukee Cost of Gun Violence report, this gun violence will ultimately cost taxpayers more than \$720 million for each year of shootings. If Milwaukee were able to reduce its gun violence rate by just 20%, taxpayers would save more than \$143.8 million for every year of shootings.¹

Milwaukee is also frequently acknowledged as one of the most segregated cities in the United States, with the lasting effects of redlining remaining prominent.²

NICJR conducted this Landscape Analysis to review current violence reduction, youth development, and reentry services in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. NICJR's Landscape Analysis includes information on over 30 programs, services, and organizations involved in violence reduction in Milwaukee. In most cases, the information regarding initiatives and programs is drawn directly from their respective websites.



¹ Milwaukee, Wisconsin: The Cost of Gun Violence

² How Redlining Continues To Shape Racial Segregation In Milwaukee

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

I. Violence Reduction

The NICJR violence reduction framework includes three categories: violence prevention, violence intervention, and community transformation. Each of the violence reduction programs, services, and organizations identified in Milwaukee fit within one or more of these categories.

Violence prevention refers to the elimination or reduction of the underlying causes and risk factors that lead to violence.³ Violence prevention efforts are thus designed to prevent violence occurring in the first place. **Violence intervention** efforts, on the other hand, are designed to prevent the recurrence of violence or intervene and prevent the imminent act of violence.

Both violence prevention and intervention hinge on deploying services that identify and address age- and context-appropriate risk and protective factors. Violence prevention efforts are most often targeted toward children and youth, as well as reentry populations, whereas violence intervention efforts are focused on the people who are at the greatest immediate risk of violence—typically young adults. While violence prevention is a broad field encompassing various types of programs, effective violence intervention is more narrowly defined and focused.

Community transformation refers to the elimination of system-level factors that give rise to violence in a neighborhood, such as poverty, blight, low performing schools, disinvestment, and chronic unemployment. While community transformation is a long-term strategy that can take 15–20 years to achieve, if successfully implemented, it can also be most effective at permanently reducing violence. Typically, there are several neighborhoods in cities with high rates of violence that do not need violence intervention programs because there is little violence in those particular communities. All neighborhoods should have a goal of not needing violence intervention programs.

Two additional, interconnected categories intersect with violence prevention, violence intervention, and community transformation: **youth development** and **reentry support**.

³ The VPA Approach

Prevention



5 - 10 years

Long-term violence reduction strategies like mentoring high-risk middle and high school students or cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) workshops.

Intervention



1 - 3 years

Violence reduction in the near term, like harm reduction strategies and gun violence reduction strategies such as intensive case management.

Community Transformation



15 - 20 years

Transforming communities so that they do not induce violence:

- Education reform and investment
- Economic development
- Neighborhood revitalization

II. Youth Development

Youth development is a program model designed to leverage the strengths and assets of young people while addressing their specific needs. This approach involves fostering attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills that contribute to the youth's successful transition into adulthood. Notably, youth development experiences correlate with positive outcomes, encompassing pro-social attitudes, self-efficacy, academic achievement, and readiness for employment. This complex strategy can be viewed as a form of violence prevention, as the positive outcomes serve as protective factors against the root causes of violence.

III. Reentry Supports

Reentry services support formerly incarcerated individuals in successfully “reentering” their communities at the conclusion of their in-custody period, thereby reducing recidivism, increasing public safety, and improving individual outcomes. Key reentry services include the “Big Six”: housing, employment, education, mental health services, drug treatment if needed, and a connection to a supportive adult (mentor, life coach, etc.).

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

The following section provides an overview of the various violence prevention / youth development, violence intervention, community transformation, and reentry services contained in the Organizational Profiles portion of this report by providing a few brief examples in each category as well as descriptions of larger initiatives.

Initiatives and Policy

Gun Violence Prevention Team in the Office of Community Wellness and Safety

In 2023, the Milwaukee Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) moved from the City's Health Department into the Department of Administration, where the OVP was renamed the Office of Community Wellness. In addition to overseeing the City's Gun Violence Prevention Team, the Office of Community Wellness also houses the City's Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and the Human Trafficking Taskforce of Greater Milwaukee.⁴

The Gun Violence Prevention team is responsible for advancing policy focused on reducing gun violence and access to guns, including overseeing the implementation of the Milwaukee Blueprint for Peace, the city's strategic plan to address the complex factors that drive violence through a public health approach to violence prevention.⁵

414Life Blueprint for Peace

The Milwaukee Blueprint for Peace is a comprehensive citywide violence reduction plan based on a public health approach to violence reduction. Developed in 2017 following a 10-month planning process, the Blueprint sets forth a plan to coordinate efforts to advance public safety by addressing underlying factors leading to violence, building on community assets and culture, and ensuring effective solutions using evidence-based practices.⁶ The planning process engaged more than 1,500 Milwaukee residents and stakeholders, with a focus on the communities that experience the greatest levels of violence. One of the many programs that resulted from this process was the City's first hospital-based violence interruption program, which is described on page 9.⁷



⁴ [Office of Community Wellness and Safety](#)

⁵ [414Life About](#)

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ [Froedtert Hospital Violence Interruption Program](#)

Violence Prevention / Youth Development

There are a number of programs operating in Milwaukee that can be categorized under violence prevention and/or youth development. These range from services loosely tied to a stated violence prevention outcome to those that are designed to more directly target youth or young adults engaged in high-risk behaviors.

Medical College of Wisconsin Comprehensive Injury Center

The Division of Violence Prevention at the Medical College of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Injury Center works to promote and advocate for violence prevention policy and address intentional violence.⁸ Their goals include enhancing local and statewide capabilities in violence prevention policy, research, and practice; increasing awareness about the impact of intentional injury and violence; spreading research outcomes of violence prevention; educating policymakers on evidence-based violence prevention practices; and collaborating with hospitals to provide holistic patient care.⁹

Neu-Life Community Development, Inc.

Neu-Life is a nonprofit that provides educational and recreational programs for youth from early childhood through young adulthood.¹⁰ The organization offers a range of afterschool and summer programming that includes mentorship, sports, service programs, and employment skill building.¹¹ Their Youth Work Innovation Center provides project-based programming for middle and high school students to help prepare them for the workforce.

Pathfinders Milwaukee, Inc.

Pathfinders is a nonprofit organization that provides both crisis-based and ongoing services to youth with a focus on needs related to housing insecurity or homelessness and sexual violence.¹² Housing services include a Drop-In Center to help meet basic needs like clothing, laundry, showers, and hygiene products; a Street Outreach Team with mobile health resources; and a Youth Shelter. Anti-Sexual Violence Services include counseling for survivors of sexual abuse, advocacy and system navigation services for youth who have experienced sexual exploitation, and emergency medical and legal services for youth experiencing commercial sexual exploitation.¹³

Running Rebels Community Organization

Running Rebels is a mentoring program that works with youth in low-income communities who are involved in or at risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system.¹⁴ In terms of the former, the organization works with adjudicated youth to provide mentorship and life coaching through its Intensive Monitoring Program and a Credible Messenger program. In addition, Running Rebels provides a variety of academic and athletic afterschool and summer programs, higher education support and preparedness programs, employment training, and more.¹⁵

⁸ [MCW Comprehensive Injury Center - Division of Violence Prevention](#)

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ [Neu-Life Who We Are](#)

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² [Pathfinders Our Story](#)

¹³ [Pathfinders Our Services](#)

¹⁴ [Running Rebels](#)

¹⁵ [Running Rebels Programs And Services](#)

Violence Intervention

Milwaukee has several violence intervention initiatives that involve numerous programs and organizations, some of which are highlighted below.

Advance Peace



The Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is partnering with Advance Peace to develop a gun violence reduction initiative focusing interventions on youth and young adults at very high risk of gun violence in Milwaukee.

Advance Peace is an evidence-based model that invests in those at the center of gun violence by engaging a small number of individuals in one-on-one, personalized Peacemaker Fellowships to build new opportunities and break the cycle of gun violence.

Milwaukee County selected a community-based organization to implement the Advance Peace model and to implement two non-overlapping cohorts of 20 individuals each. Each cohort runs for 18 months of services. Advance Peace interventions, or touchpoints, include being

coached through creating a LifeMap of goals, linking with needed social services (for instance, for support processing trauma or getting mental health or substance abuse care), participating in an intergenerational Elder's Circle, transformative travel experiences, and linkage with paid internships at the close of the period of foundational services. Completion of LifeMap goals is incentivized with the LifeMap allowance.

The local Advance Peace service provider will recruit participants in communities but also receive referrals from Milwaukee County's seven Credible Messenger teams, as well as from the youth justice area of DHHS' Children Youth & Family Services area and potentially from the Community Reintegration Center.

Froedtert and Medical College of Wisconsin Hospital-Based Violence Interruption Program

Established in 2019, the City of Milwaukee's hospital-based violence interruption program is located at the Level I Trauma Center at Froedtert Hospital.¹⁶ The program focuses on individuals ages 15 to 35 who have sustained a gunshot injury and provides both direct services and service linkages geared toward preventing retaliatory violence and helping clients transition away from gun violence. The team assists approximately 3,500 patients each year.¹⁷

¹⁶ Hospital-Based Violence Interruption Program

¹⁷ Ibid.

Milwaukee County Credible Messenger Program

Established in 2021, the Milwaukee County Credible Messenger Program is housed in the Department of Health and Human Services and features partnerships with community organizations, including Running Rebels.¹⁸ The program utilizes credible messengers, or individuals with lived experience, to intervene with high-risk youth and prevent crime and violence.¹⁹ Youth develop trusting relationships with their mentors and are provided with support and resources that address their specific needs. The main goals are to decrease recidivism among youth and promote positive youth engagement through credible messengers.²⁰



Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission (MHRC)

Formed in 2005, the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission strives to reduce homicides and nonfatal shootings through a multiagency homicide review process, involving stakeholders such as the Milwaukee Police Department, District Attorney's Office, Department of Corrections, and local public school districts.²¹ The commission was designed to gain a better understanding of homicide through strategic problem analysis, develop innovative and effective responses and prevention strategies, and help focus available prevention and intervention resources. During a 2013 evaluation of the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission conducted by Harvard University, Milwaukee districts where the Commission implemented violence reduction interventions experienced a 52% decrease in their monthly homicide counts.²² The MHRC also works to address domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and child deaths.²³

Milwaukee Violence Response Public Health and Safety Team (VR-PHAST)

VR-PHAST's mission is to coordinate a unified, multi-sector public health and public safety response to reduce the impact of firearm violence and homicides on individuals, families, and the community in collaboration with partners across Milwaukee County including the Medical College of Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Community Justice Council, and the US Attorney's Office.^{24, 25} The approach involves weekly or biweekly meetings to review the incidents that have occurred since the previous meeting, to identify short-term response violence intervention needs, and to pinpoint prevention opportunities. One of the main funding sources for this program is the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant.

¹⁸ Program targeting at-risk youth to expand after successful pilot

¹⁹ 'Everybody needs a shoulder to lean on': Credible messenger program connects mentors with at-risk youth

²⁰ Cream City Credible Messengers

²¹ Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission

²² Developing the Capacity to Understand and Prevent Homicide: An Evaluation of the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission

²³ Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission

²⁴ Milwaukee Violence Response Public Health and Safety Team (VR-PHAST)

²⁵ VR-PHAST Violence Response - Public Health and Safety Team Overview

Community Transformation

Common Ground

Common Ground is a nonpartisan collective of 40,000 Southeast Wisconsin citizens working to identify and address community challenges.²⁶ The organization focuses on mobilizing the collaborative power of individuals to improve communities across various issue campaigns, including organizing public housing tenants to advocate for better living conditions, advocating for firearm safety education and policy, and advocating for affordable drivers' education so that low-income young people have access to transportation.

Journey House

Journey House works toward empowering families and uplifting them from poverty through adult education, workforce development, youth development, and family engagement programs.²⁷ The organization's THRIVE (Transforming, Healthy, Reliable, Inspiring, Valued, and Employable) Training and Internship Program supports career development through networking opportunities, individualized coaching sessions, and training for employability.²⁸

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Milwaukee

LISC Milwaukee seeks to build resilient communities by strengthening community collaborations, investing in under-resourced neighborhoods, and providing resident assistance.²⁹ Affordable housing services provided include the development of multi-family rentals, financing for sustainable construction and rehabilitation, and lead foreclosure interventions.³⁰



Priceless Incite, LLC

Priceless Incite is an organization whose mission is to uplift the experiences of Black women, girls, and gender-expansive youth who are impacted by violence through community-based prevention, intervention, and leadership development.³¹ The organization provides immediate crisis intervention to someone who has been harmed or is in danger of being harmed. Priceless Incite also runs support groups for youth of various ages to build resiliency, self-esteem, and knowledge of healthy behaviors.³²

²⁶ Common Ground

²⁷ Journey House Our Mission

²⁸ THRIVE Workforce

²⁹ LISC Milwaukee About Us

³⁰ LISC Milwaukee Affordable Housing

³¹ Priceless Incite

³² Priceless Incite Programs and Services

Reentry Services

Benedict Center



The Benedict Center is an interfaith nonprofit organization dedicated to helping women affected by the criminal justice system to lead safer and healthier lives, while advocating for a system of justice that is fair and treats everyone with dignity and respect.³³ The organization's Women's Reentry Program provides case management, wellness checks, and life skills training to support women while incarcerated at the Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center and during their transition back into the community.³⁴

Employee Milwaukee

Employ Milwaukee is the local workforce development board serving Milwaukee County.³⁵ Among the adult workforce services Employ Milwaukee provides are reentry employment programs for individuals returning from incarceration to the Milwaukee community. These services, some of which are provided both before and after release, including career planning, skill training, and supportive service referrals.

Genesis in Milwaukee

Genesis is a faith-based organization that works to facilitate the successful integration of citizens returning to communities from correctional institutions, thereby increasing public safety and decreasing recidivism.³⁶ Genesis offers a comprehensive, five-phase set of services for individuals who are reentering society, with a focus on addressing housing, employment, financial literacy and management, and family development needs.

³³ [Benedict Center](#)

³⁴ [Benedict Center Women's Reentry Program](#)

³⁵ [Employ Milwaukee About Us](#)

³⁶ [Genesis in Milwaukee Five Foundational Stages](#)

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES³⁷

Violence Reduction

VIOLENCE PREVENTION / YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee

Address: 1558 North 6th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212

Organization Overview:

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee provides young people with programs and resources that help them achieve academic success, make healthy life choices, and foster the skills they need to reach their full potential. The organization's mission is to inspire and empower all young people to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens.

Program/Services:

- SMART (Skills Mastery and Resilience Training) Moves Initiative: This initiative works to strengthen youth's decision-making skills and ability to analyze media and peer influence.
- Brighter Futures Program: This program provides wraparound career development programming to high school students for careers such as phlebotomy technician and medical assistant.
- Keystone Program: The Keystone Program provides opportunities for youth ages 14–18 to participate in leadership development activities in three focus areas: academic success, career preparation, and community service.
- SPARK Early Literacy Program: This individualized reading intervention focuses on students in Kindergarten through third grade.



Population Served: Milwaukee youth



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.bgcmilwaukee.org/>

³⁷ Each organizational profile highlights a few of the most relevant programs and services offered by the organization. Please note that these profiles do not constitute an exhaustive list. For the full list, please see the organization's website linked in each profile.

City on a Hill

Address: 2224 West Kilbourn Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53233

Organization Overview:

City on a Hill is an anti-poverty organization that aims to transform families by restoring hope, enhancing quality of life, and advancing justice for all generations. The organization's programs offer youth ages 6–18 and their families with services focused on helping young people develop social and academic skills through academic support and mentoring.

Program/Services:

Youth Development:

- **Youth Center:** The Youth Center is a drop-in center where children can access a computer lab and participate in creative arts, life skills workshops, tutoring, risk prevention programs, leadership training, and recreational activities.
- **Youth and Family Resilience Program:** This program utilizes an evidence-based risk prevention and life skills curriculum to train youth and their caregivers to maintain and strengthen personal resilience in the midst of traumatic circumstances.

Community Transformation:

- City on a Hill provides healthcare and social services such as behavioral health therapy for all residents and monthly health outreach for uninsured, medically underserved, and homeless residents of the central city.



Population Served: Residents in zip codes 53233, 53208, and 53205



City Area Served: Neighborhoods in zip codes 53233, 53208, and 53205



Website: <https://cityonahillmke.org/>

Neu-Life Community Development, Inc.

Address: 2014 West North Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53205

Organization Overview:

Neu-Life is a nonprofit that provides year-round educational and recreational programs for youth. Their mission is to provide youth with the resources, support, and guidance they need to succeed in life. The organization strives to create a safe and secure environment where young people can build meaningful relationships and explore their potential.

Program/Services:

- **Youth Work Innovation Center:** This teen worker model provides project-based programming for middle and high school students to help prepare them for the workforce.
- **Farmfork:** This urban agriculture and culinary arts program helps youth develop skills in these areas.
- **Student Advocate:** This hands-on mentoring service provides young people with guidance for making positive life choices.
- **Pay It Forward:** This is a service project where youth assist in public clean-up and beautification of residential yards.
- **Life Skills:** This evidence-based program focuses on developing youth's ability to effectively deal with interpersonal challenges.



Population Served: Milwaukee youth



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.neu-life.org/>

Pathfinders Milwaukee, Inc.

Address: 4200 North Holton Street, Suite 400, Milwaukee, WI 53212

Organization Overview:

Pathfinders is a nonprofit organization that provides services to youth in crisis and their families. The organization emphasizes the importance of listening to youth and using their experiences and expertise to design, implement, and assess their programs to ensure that they are effective in helping youth thrive. Pathfinders provides homeless or housing-insecure youth with safe housing as well as support to help them address their mental health, education, and employment needs.

Program/Services:

- **Street Outreach:** The youth-focused Street Outreach team delivers resources, basic needs items, sexual and mental wellness education, and referrals to aid young people's safe exit from the streets.
- **Drop-in Center:** The Drop-in Center provides youth with access to case management, mental health and well-being services, and education and employment services.
- **Youth Shelter:** The Youth Shelter provides youth ages 11–17 with emergency short-term shelter, intensive counseling, and case management. Individuals ages 18–21 can also receive crisis counseling here. This shelter constitutes around half of Milwaukee's state-licensed youth shelter beds.
- **Southeastern Education Center:** Pathfinders operates this Milwaukee Public School, which takes a trauma-informed approach to help students who have experienced challenges in traditional school settings and works to provide them with access to mental health and wraparound services.
- The organization runs a suite of services for youth who are at high risk of sexual abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. Services offered include comprehensive group, family, and individual counseling; advocacy services to assist in navigating medical, legal, and social service systems; and after-hours emergency medical and legal assistance.
- Pathfinders also provides clinical services, using a harm-reduction approach to help youth struggling with substance use and mental health to develop skills that promote healthy lifestyles.



Population Served: Milwaukee youth and families



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.pathfindersmke.org/>

Running Rebels Community Organization

Addresses: 1300A West Fond Du Lac Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53205; 225 West Capitol Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53212

Organization Overview:

Running Rebels is a community-based organization that works with justice-involved and at-risk Milwaukee youth through mentoring, academic and education programming, and other forms of support.

Program/Services:

- **Juvenile Justice Programs:** Running Rebels offers a variety of programs and services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system, including intensive monitoring programs and a credible messenger program.
- **Violence-Free Zone:** This school-based mentoring program assists Milwaukee Public School students by helping them set and accomplish goals, strengthen preparedness for learning, and develop strategies to reduce and resolve conflicts responsibly.
- **Pipeline2Promise:** This is a partnership program where local organizations employ young people assisted by Running Rebels, while Running Rebels provides soft skills training and support.
- **Community Mentoring:** This voluntary program connects each youth with a mentor who provides ongoing guidance, helps them set and pursue goals, and assists them in connecting to out-of-school opportunities.
- **Crisis Stabilization:** In these one-on-one support programs for youth referred by Wraparound Milwaukee or Milwaukee County, crisis stabilizers build relationships with youth by engaging with them during out-of-school time and working on social-emotional skills.



Population Served: Milwaukee youth



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://runningrebels.org/>

Silver Spring Neighborhood Center

Address: 5460 North 64th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53218

Organization Overview:

Founded in 1957, the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center strives to foster safer and stronger communities in Northwest Milwaukee and help residents attain self-sufficiency. Their mission is centered around four focus areas: education, employment, youth services, and health and wellness. Their services include programming for youth, adults, and families.

Program/Services:

- **Early Childhood:** The Silver Spring Neighborhood Center offers a variety of programming related to early childhood, including childcare, healthy meals, and afterschool enrichment such as art, music, and more.
- **Teenagers:** The organization oversees teen programming that is geared toward enhancing leadership skills, connecting with employment opportunities, and reducing violent behaviors.
- **Adults:** Adult services include employment assistance such as job coaching and increasing access to career opportunities as well as literacy services and other adult education programming.
- **Families:** For families, the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center operates a nursing clinic and a food pantry.



Population Served: Milwaukee residents



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.ssnc-milw.org/>

Teens Grow Greens

Address: 322 East Michigan Street, Suite 204, Milwaukee, WI 53202

Organization Overview:

The mission of Teens Grow Greens is to empower teens by providing transformative experiences that foster belonging, life skills, and connections to leadership opportunities. Their vision is a future where healed and healthy individuals lead their communities in change.

Program/Services:

Teens Grow Greens provide a variety of internships and apprenticeships for youth, including:

- **Leading My Life:** An internship that focuses on teaching youth about the basics of nutrition and learning culinary skills.
- **Leading For Justice:** An internship that provides youth with the tools to garden and learn about food security.
- **Leading the Way:** An internship that allows youth to engage with local business owners and Milwaukee residents.
- **Leading Through Creativity:** An internship that helps youth develop entrepreneurial and professional skills.
- **Apprenticeships:** Four 10-month employment opportunities in which youth earn \$15/hour while building skills and experiences in marketing, entrepreneurship, education, or horticulture.



Population Served: Milwaukee youth



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.teensgrowgreens.org/>

Urban Underground

Address: 2342 North 27th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53210

Organization Overview:

Urban Underground focuses on youth organizing and leadership development. Their mission is to foster a new generation of leaders committed to creating safe and sustainable communities through effective programs, strategic partnerships, and youth-led activism. Since their inception, Urban Underground has had over 6,000 applicants and 600 program graduates who have gained life skills and leadership training focused on civic engagement and resilience.

Program/Services:

- Urban Underground programming includes youth development, civic engagement, youth organizing, education reform, youth-led social change, as well as community education and outreach.
- Through the City of Milwaukee Earn and Learn program, Milwaukee teens are eligible to work at Urban Underground during the summer months. This six-week internship involves a series of developmental field-trips and hands-on activities, such as college visits, career exploration, and service projects.



Population Served: Milwaukee youth



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.urbanunderground.org/>

VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

Project Ujima

Address: 8915 West Connell Court, Milwaukee, WI 53226

Organization Overview:

Established in 1996, Project Ujima is a community program at Children's Wisconsin Medical Center that focuses on aiding youth and adult victims of violence, with the goal of ending cycles of violence. Youth services include support for victims of gunshot wounds, stabbings, and physical assaults, while adult services support victims of property crime, burglary, robbery, domestic violence, assault, and homicide. Project Ujima's clients experience reduced chances of revictimization, better medical outcomes, and stronger relationships. In 2021, the organization received \$926,299 in discretionary grant funding from the US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to widen the availability of Project Ujima services, such as restorative justice programming and trauma management.³⁸

Program/Services:

- **Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program (HVIP):** Project Ujima runs an HVIP in conjunction with the Children's Wisconsin Emergency Department in Milwaukee. The program provides approximately 15 months of assistance to youth ages 7–18 who are admitted for any violence-related injuries.³⁹
- **Youth and Family Services:** Services for youth and their families include healthcare coordination, hospital-based crisis intervention, court and school advocacy, goal planning, basic needs assistance, mental health care, and youth development activities.
- **Youth and Family Enrichment:** Project Ujima also provides youth and family enrichment, including mentoring, support groups, and summer camps.
- **Adult Services:** Adult services include crime victim compensation, court advocacy, emergency assistance, home visits, basic needs assistance, mental health care, and family enrichment activities.



Population Served: Milwaukee residents



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://childrenswi.org/childrens-and-the-community/families-and-clients/family-support-services/violence-prevention-counseling>

³⁸ Project Ujima: Breaking the Cycle of Violence

³⁹ Assessing improvements in emergency department referrals to a hospital-based violence intervention program

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

Common Ground

Address: 1034 East Ogden Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53202

Organization Overview:

Common Ground is a nonpartisan collective of 40,000 Southeast Wisconsin citizens working to identify and address community challenges. The organization focuses on mobilizing the collaborative power of individuals to improve communities across various issue campaigns.

Program/Services:

Youth Development:

- **Forward Scholars:** This program provides evidence-based, individualized educational interventions for Milwaukee public school students in Kindergarten through third grade who are not reading at their grade level.

Community Transformation:

- **Tenants United:** This campaign advocates for safe and healthy housing for all Milwaukee residents by addressing pervasive issues affecting public housing.
- **Common Ground Works:** This program assists individuals in obtaining stable employment and overcoming personal and systemic obstacles.
- **Gun Safety:** Common Ground engages in gun-related advocacy that focuses on reducing gun violence while developing and promoting security products to support responsible gun ownership.
- The organization is also working to increase the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women and people of color in police and fire departments, as a means to improve community safety and reduce inappropriate use of force within communities of color.



Population Served: Milwaukee County residents



City Area Served: Countywide



Website: <https://www.commongroundwi.org/>

Journey House

Address: 2110 West Scott Street, Milwaukee, WI 53204

Organization Overview:

Founded in 1969, Journey House works to empower families and uplift them from poverty through adult education, workforce development, youth development, and family engagement programs.

Program/Services:

Youth Development:

- Journey House's youth programming involves a variety of services geared toward leadership and athletics, such as civic engagement classes and baseball leagues.

Community Transformation:

- Adult Education: Journey House offers General Education Development (GED) training, English Language Learning (ELL) classes, and support for obtaining citizenship.
- THRIVE Workforce Development: This program provides career development including networking opportunities, individualized coaching sessions, and training for employability.
- Family Engagement: Services targeting family engagement include community events, workshops, and presentations.



Population Served: Milwaukee residents, with a focus on the city's near south side



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <http://www.journeyhouse.org/>

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Milwaukee

Address: 234 West Florida Street, Suite 204, Milwaukee, WI 53204

Organization Overview:

LISC Milwaukee works to build resilient communities by strengthening community collaborations, investing in under-resourced neighborhoods, and providing resident assistance.

Program/Services:

- Affordable Housing: LISC invests in the development of multi-family rentals, finances sustainable construction and rehabilitation, and leads foreclosure interventions, among other activities.
- Beerline Trail Project: This project focuses on addressing the physical and social character of the Beerline Trail and surrounding neighborhoods by improving green spaces and promoting local businesses.
- Financial Opportunity Centers: LISC supports four Financial Opportunity Centers throughout Milwaukee that provide employment assistance as well as career services and financial coaching to build credit, savings, and assets for households.



Population Served: Milwaukee residents



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.lisc.org/milwaukee/>

Milwaukee Christian Center

Address: 807 South 14th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53204

Organization Overview:

With history tracing back to 1921, the Milwaukee Christian Center (MCC) is an organization whose mission is to build strong neighborhoods full of opportunity. The organization serves over 7,500 people each year in four core areas: housing, youth development, older adult services, and food security.

Program/Services:

Youth Development:

- **YouthBuild:** This program helps young adults ages 18–24 earn a high school equivalency diploma and gain carpentry, construction, and trade skills while building homes.
- **Violence-free Zones:** This program connects high school students in five Milwaukee Public Schools with mentors who support academic achievement, resiliency, and skill building for conflict resolution.
- **Youth Development:** This program provides academic support and leadership development for youth ages 4–18 after school and during the summer.

Community Transformation:

- **Neighborhood Improvement Project:** This project assists qualifying homeowners in addressing unsafe or deteriorating housing conditions.
- **Older Adult Center:** The Center helps connect older Milwaukee County residents with meal assistance and recreational activities.
- **Food Pantry:** The MCC Food Pantry provides food and other basic supplies to 1,100 adults and families per month.



Population Served: Milwaukee residents



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://mccwi.org/>

Priceless Incite

Address: Not available

Organization Overview:

Priceless Incite is an organization whose mission is to uplift the experiences of Black women, girls, and gender-expansive youth who are impacted by violence through community-based prevention, intervention, and leadership development.

Program/Services:

- **Diamonds Are Forever Priceless:** This 16-week gender empowerment program utilizes a curriculum focused on the lived experiences of Black women, girls, and gender-expansive youth.
- **Diamonds Are Forever Priceless Leadership Track:** This program provides internship and peer leadership opportunities to foster leadership skills among individuals who have completed the Diamonds Are Forever Priceless program.
- **Diamonds & Pearls Support Group:** This weekly support group for girls and non-binary youth ages 10–13 focuses on gender-based violence prevention.
- **Valuable Insight Project (VIP):** This gender-inclusive space allows youth and young adults ages 14–24 to gain the appropriate tools and support to identify and combat patriarchal violence.
- **Youth Activator Program:** This program empowers youth ages 14–18 to address gender-based violence by developing personal leadership and social responsibility skills.
- Priceless Incite also provides a number of services such as crisis intervention, outreach and awareness, advocacy, community-based education, and referrals to health care, education, and housing assistance.



Population Served: Black girls and women and gender expansive youth in Milwaukee



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.pricelessincite.org/>

Public Policy Institute (PPI)

Address: 728 North James Lovell Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233

Organization Overview:

The Community Advocates Public Policy Institute, established in 2008, aims to address poverty while improving the quality of life and well-being of Wisconsin residents. The organization pursues these goals by analyzing and advocating for policy changes, coordinating coalitions and convening citizens, and assisting community-based organizations.

Program/Services:

Violence Prevention / Youth Development:

- **Stronger Families Milwaukee Program:** The Public Policy Institute is the lead agency for this five-year prevention initiative aimed at reducing childhood maltreatment among families who have contact with the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services. This family-centered program utilizes a combination of case management services and peer advocates to assist families in finding local supports that fit their needs.
- **Milwaukee Brighter Futures Initiative:** This Initiative, in which PPI is a grantee, works to build a strong community system in Milwaukee for youth ages 12–21 who are at risk of being placed in out-of-home care.
- **Alliance for Wisconsin Youth:** Through this Alliance, Public Policy administers the Milwaukee region of a statewide initiative that aims to prevent substance abuse among youth by providing alcohol and drug prevention education.

Community Transformation:

- **Healthy Workers, Healthy Wisconsin:** This pilot project connects residents of economically isolated communities with employment services, health insurance, and behavioral health referrals.
- The Institute has also advocated for transitional jobs, affordable health care, raising the minimum wage, and expanding child care subsidies.

Reentry Services:

- **Milwaukee Reentry Council:** The Institute facilitates the Milwaukee Reentry Council, a group that focuses on preventing violence and increasing prosperity in the Center Street Corridor in Milwaukee. A major project of the Council is the Smart Reentry program, which involves services like a peer guide in the final year prior to release, substance use treatment, and employment assistance.



Population Served: Milwaukee residents



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://ppi.communityadvocates.net/>

Safe & Sound, Inc.

Address: 4422 West Leon Terrace, Milwaukee, WI 53216

Organization Overview:

Founded in 1998, Safe & Sound is a comprehensive, community-based response to crime and violence in Milwaukee. The organization's mission is to unite residents, youth, law enforcement, and community resources to build safe and empowered neighborhoods.

Program/Services:

Youth Development:

- The organization employs youth organizers in each police district to support youth-led initiatives that aim to enhance safety and reduce crime.

Community Transformation:

- Neighborhood Safety Coordinators: These coordinators assist in a number of services, including supporting nuisance abatement, coordinating community forums, and providing resources to prevent crime. Neighborhood Safety Coordinators also liaison with the Community Partnership Unit.
- Community Partnership Unit: This collaborative is designed to reduce crime, engage the community, and efficiently utilize limited resources to work toward neighborhood safety. This group involves the District Attorney's Office, law enforcement, Probation and Parole, the Department of Neighborhood Services, community-based organizations, and community members.
- Resident Leader Training Program: This program nurtures leaders within Milwaukee by equipping residents with tools to mobilize fellow residents, address critical community issues, and foster peace within neighborhoods.
- Safe & Sound also provides neighborhood beautification services with the Department of Neighborhood Services. Community organizers assist residents in addressing conditions of neighborhood blight such as excessive trash.



Population Served: Milwaukee residents



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://safesound.org/>

United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County (UWGMWC)

Address: 225 West Vine Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212

Organization Overview:

The United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County works to mobilize citizens and resources to improve community health, education, and financial stability. The organization has four key initiatives through which it aims to improve and transform communities: Safe and Stable Homes, Empowering Minds, Reducing Barriers to Employment & Advancement, and Techquity.

Program/Services:

- **Safe & Stable Homes:** This initiative aims to end family homelessness by changing the way that public systems and their community partners respond when a family is on the verge of homelessness. To that end, they fund crisis financial assistance, short- and long-term wraparound support, tenant/landlord resource referrals, legal aid and mediation for families facing eviction, and more.
- **Empowering Minds:** UWGMWC is supporting a pilot project at two Milwaukee area high schools that aims to reduce mental health stigma and improve access to mental health services for students.
- **Reducing Barriers to Employment & Advancement:** This initiative supports programs that increase access to living wage employment for adults with various barriers. Specific services provided through this funding include transportation support and employment certifications.
- **Techquity Program:** This collective impact initiative pursues digital equity and inclusion via four strategies: broadband, devices, skills, and advocacy. Techquity connects stakeholders from sectors including business, government, education, and social services to increase access to technical skills, devices, and infrastructure for low-income residents.



Population Served: Milwaukee residents



City Area Served: Countywide



Website: <https://unitedwaygmwc.org/>

Word of Hope Ministries, Inc.

Address: 2677 North 40th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53210

Organization Overview:

Established in 1996, Word of Hope Ministries is a branch of the Holy Cathedral Church that provides an array of social services to support the needs of individuals and families in the community.

Program/Services:

Community Transformation:

- **Employment Services:** This program includes job readiness training, resume workshops, interview preparation, and job placement.
- **Computer Technology Center:** The Center provides programming for community members to gain computer skills and prepare for their GED, as well as access to academic enrichment programs for children.
- **Healthcare Services:** The organization's healthcare services include medical screenings, healthcare referrals, and breast cancer awareness.
- **Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drug Abuse Program:** This program provides counseling, support groups, and intervention and prevention programs.

Reentry Services:

- **Prison Reentry Initiative:** Funded by the US Department of Labor, this initiative targets individuals 18 and older who have been recently released from incarceration with specialized training, job placement, mentoring, and career-focused training.⁴⁰



Population Served: Milwaukee residents



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://wordofhopeministriesinc.org/>

⁴⁰ Word of Hope Ministries Inc.

Reentry Services

Benedict Center

Address: 1849 North Martin Luther King Drive, Suite 101, Milwaukee, WI 53212

Organization Overview:

Founded in 1974, the Benedict Center is an interfaith nonprofit organization dedicated to helping women affected by the criminal justice system find hope and lead safer and healthier lives, while advocating for a system of justice that is fair and treats everyone with dignity and respect.

Program/Services:

- **Women's Reentry Program:** This program is grounded in an evidence-based curriculum designed to help identify and address the strengths, risks, and needs impacting successful reentry. Services provided include telehealth wellness checks, case management, advocacy, and mobile reentry services.
- **Women's Harm Reduction Program:** This program provides mental health and substance abuse treatment through individual and group counseling for women involved in the criminal justice system.
- **Sisters Drop-In Centers:** The organization operates two drop-in centers where women engaged in the street-based sex trade can hope and live healthier and safer lives through a harm reduction and a housing-first approach. Services include crisis stabilization, case management, personal advocacy, counseling, and education programs. Through the Centers, women are connected to housing and other critical safety net resources.
- **Justice Advocacy Program:** The organization advocates for a more equitable justice system, including public health approaches to substance use, mental illness, and trauma instead of criminalization.



Population Served: Women affected by the criminal justice system



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.benedictcenter.org/>

Employ Milwaukee

Address: 2342 North 27th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53210

Organization Overview:

Employ Milwaukee is the local workforce development board serving Milwaukee County. The organization's vision is to develop workforce solutions that promote regional economic growth and employment opportunities. Employ Milwaukee is determined to break down barriers for justice-involved individuals, their families, and the community.

Program/Services:

Violence Prevention / Youth Development:

- **EARN & LEARN Summer Youth Employment Program:** One of several youth EARN & LEARN programs, the Summer Youth Employment Program is designed to provide meaningful work experiences and career exposure to young adults ages 14–24.

Community Transformation:

- Employ Milwaukee's variety of adult programs include EveryoneOn, a digital skills training program, as well as the Milwaukee Healthcare Workforce Initiative, which aims to create a strong talent pipeline to healthcare careers in Milwaukee.

Reentry Services:

- **Reentry Employment Services:** Employ Milwaukee provides employment services to justice-involved individuals before and after release, including career planning, skill training, and supportive service referrals.



Population Served: Milwaukee County residents



City Area Served: Countywide



Website: <https://www.employmilwaukee.org/Employ-Milwaukee.htm>

Genesis in Milwaukee

Address: 1312–14 North 13th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53205

Organization Overview:

Genesis is a faith-based organization committed to facilitating the successful integration of citizens returning to communities from correctional institutions, thereby increasing public safety and decreasing recidivism. The organization's approach is built upon restoration, building community, and reconciliation.

Program/Services:

Genesis offers a set of comprehensive services that tackle housing, employment, financial literacy and management, and family development. These services take place across five phases:

- Phase 1 is in-prison mentoring, where the mentor works with the client to evaluate needs and concerns prior to release.
- Phase 2 is the Welcome Center, a peer group environment where individuals are received and supported upon their release.
- Phase 3 is the Work Center, where individuals are prepared for job placement through enrollment in a 40-hour job training program.
- Phase 4 is the Wealth Center, where participants receive financial literacy and management training.
- Phase 5, the community phase, is integrated throughout all other phases and emphasizes participants' role as community leaders.



Population Served: Currently incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <http://genesisinmke.org/>

Project RETURN (Returning Ex-incarcerated People to Urban Realities and Neighborhoods)

Address: 2821 Vel R Phillips Avenue, Suite 223, Milwaukee, WI 53212

Organization Overview:

Founded in 1980 by Cross Lutheran Church, Project RETURN focuses on helping individuals who have experienced incarceration to make a positive, permanent return to community, family, and friends. Services addressing the direct needs of these individuals are offered by Project RETURN and partnering community-based organizations.

Program/Services:

- **Circles of Support:** This program develops small groups that meet regularly to provide a stable, supportive network to individuals returning from incarceration.
- **Housing:** Project RETURN helps connect clients to housing opportunities by working with local landlords.
- **Employment:** The organization's tailored employment services assist clients with defining employment goals, resume building, interview preparation, clothing provision, transportation, and employment training opportunities.
- **Alcohol and Other Drugs Counseling:** This program contains three different support groups, which meet weekly.



Population Served: Formerly incarcerated individuals



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.projectreturnmilwaukee.org/>

A photograph of the Milwaukee skyline at dusk, featuring several tall skyscrapers with illuminated windows. In the foreground, a body of water reflects the city lights, and a rocky shoreline is visible. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue geometric shape in the top right corner.

MILWAUKEE

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES