



# SAFE AND THRIVING YOUTH

## Central Iowa's Youth Violence Reduction Plan

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### Executive Summary

#### Empowering Greater Des Moines: Building a Safer Community Together

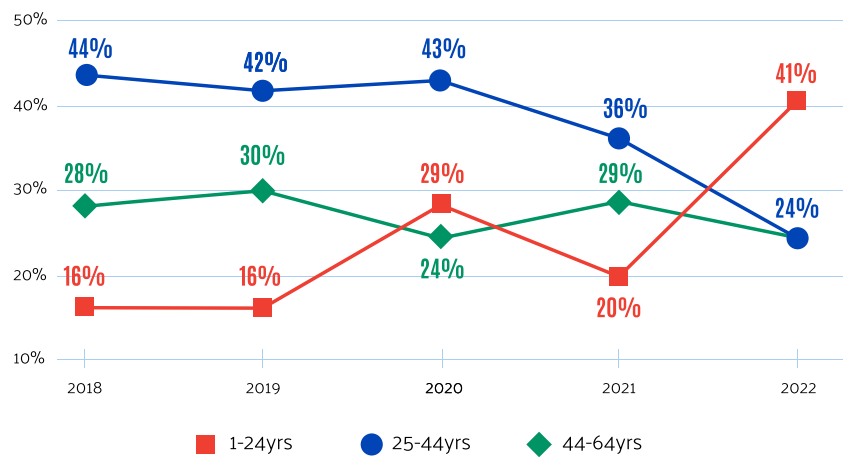
Despite the complex challenges confronting the central Iowa community, its people possess the power to spark positive change when they unite. This plan presents a comprehensive strategy to address community violence, uplift our youth, and cultivate a safer, more supportive environment for everyone.

The central Iowa community has come together with a shared vision of fostering a safer, more peaceful home. United Way of Central Iowa convened more than 100 dedicated community members through in-person and virtual sessions over 12 months to learn, provide insights and guidance, offer feedback, and reflect on opportunities. Participants have united to forge a path forward, engaging in monthly community conversations, a book study, a leadership day-retreat, and an intensive 6-week training program. These efforts, facilitated by Tony Wilson and Rachel Rockwell of Cultivating Culture

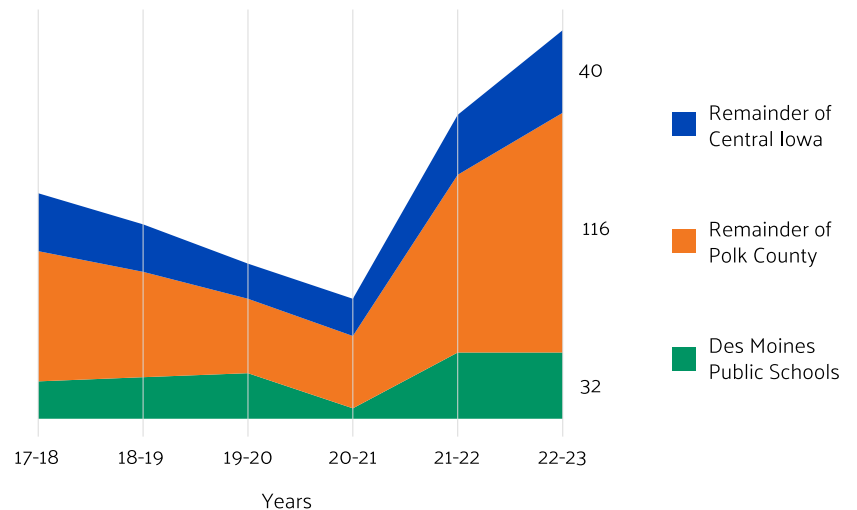
Developing Communities (CCDC), have all aimed to craft a comprehensive plan to address violence and support at-risk youth in central Iowa. A brighter, safer future for all is being built together.

Developing and implementing a comprehensive youth violence prevention strategy that departs from past practices, engages partners at all levels, and embodies the aspirations of central Iowa residents is of great importance and urgency. A critical mass of community members and leaders have united for this endeavor. By establishing robust systems, structures, and relationships, the coalition aims to significantly reduce violence within the next 5 years. Achieving sustainable long-term change requires intentional early and intermediate efforts. Community engagement, cross-sector collaboration, and coordination are seen as the cornerstones of a successful strategy to create a safer and more peaceful future.

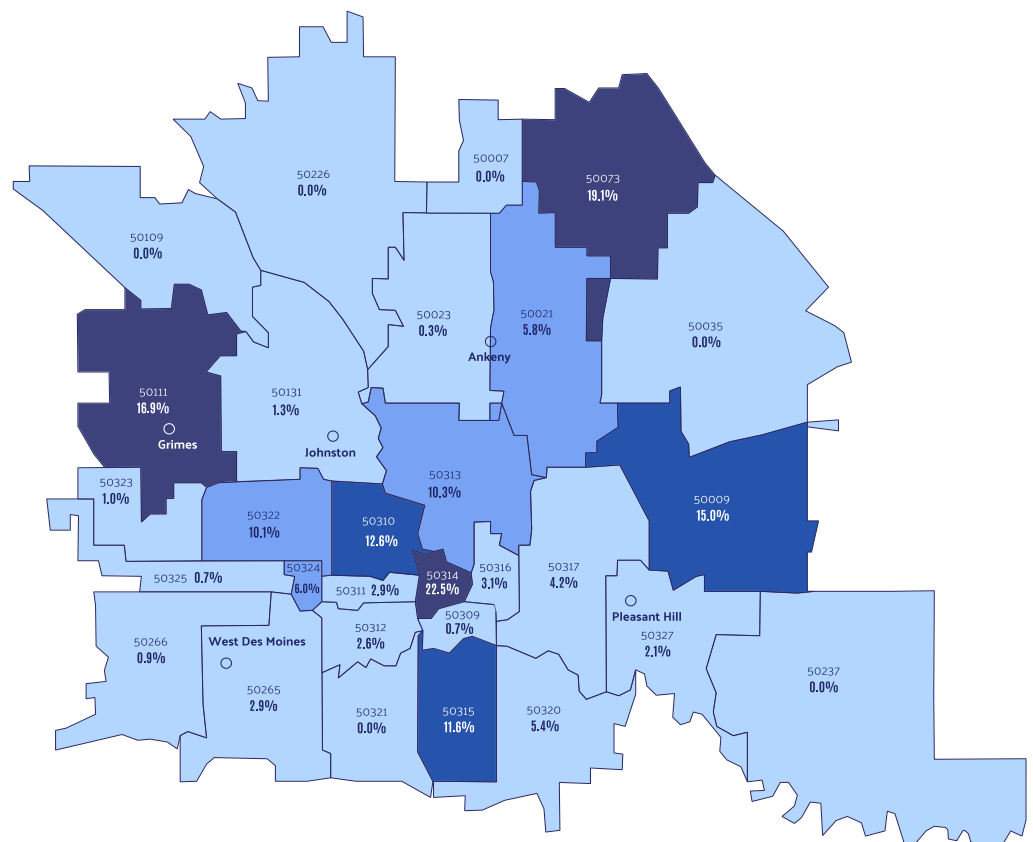
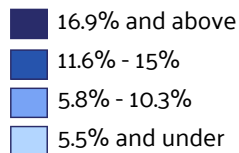
## Percentage of Total Gun-Related Deaths by Age Group (1-64 Years) in Polk County, 2018-2022



## Central Iowa Weapons-Related Suspensions and Expulsions



## Percent of Youth Disengaged by Zip Code



# Objectives

# Action Items

# Outcomes

## Reduce Community Violence

- Implement evidence-based violence prevention and intervention strategies.
- Focus on high-risk groups and individuals.
- Leverage data to drive initiatives and influence policy.

Incidents of youth violence decrease (i.e., hospitalization, homicide, and suspension data).

## Improve Community Collaboration

- Convene regular meetings of the Executive Stakeholders and subcommittees.
- Identify and address service gaps and barriers.
- Align goals, strategies, and resources across sectors.

A multisector collaborative is formed and maintained, driven by a common vision for safety.

## Increase Capacity of Nonprofit Partners

- Provide training and technical assistance on evidence-based practices.
- Offer funding opportunities to support capacity building.
- Foster a learning community for sharing promising practices.

Nonprofits have expertise and resources to implement evidence-based violence prevention strategies.

## Enhance Community Trust and Confidence

- Foster genuine partnerships between law enforcement, social services, and the community.
- Ensure collective accountability and a moral message against violence.
- Provide opportunities for positive engagement between law enforcement and the community.

Trust in law enforcement increases (i.e., decrease in officer use of force and other assessment data).

## Empower Youth and Community

- Provide opportunities for youth development and leadership.
- Engage community members in planning and decision-making.
- Support community-led initiatives and solutions.

Community leaders are identified, engaged, and empowered, with a focus on youth leadership.

## Improve Health and Well-being

- Implement trauma-informed care and restorative justice practices.
- Provide access to cognitive behavioral therapy and other supportive services.
- Foster partnerships with health and social service providers.

Victimization is reduced, mental health is improved, and access to services is increased.

## Sustain the Initiative

- Identify and attract long-term funding sources.
- Build relationships with key funders and stakeholders.
- Demonstrate impact and return on investment.

A sustained annual investment of \$1.2 million annually in community-based violence intervention (includes in-kind, volunteer, and governmental budget line items).

# Structure



## Defining Systems-Level Change

Systems-level change involves creating an interconnected, multi-sector, and broad-based geographic focus. This type of change means making deep, lasting improvements to the way things work in a community, instead of focusing on singular organizations, programs, or people.

Systems-level change focuses on changing the bigger system—such as policies, practices, or community norms—that are linked to these problems.

## Get Involved

To read the full plan and find out how you can play a part in creating a safer future for our youth, visit [www.unitedwaydm.org/safe-thriving-youth](http://www.unitedwaydm.org/safe-thriving-youth)

