

# Anti-Violence Working Group

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## *Executive Summary*



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**RACIAL &  
SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MA

# ANTI-VIOLENCE WORKING GROUP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Who is on the Working Group?

The Anti-Violence Working Group (AVWG) consisted of a diverse group of Somerville residents, advocates, non-profits, and subject-matter experts. The group collaborated closely with experts from the Urban Peace Institute to address the City's most pressing priority safety issues and propose policy recommendations that address those concerns. Who is the Urban Peace Institute (UPI)? The Urban Peace Institute is a nationally recognized non-profit that has supported numerous cities across the country in implementing tailored community safety solutions. The Urban Peace Institute provided technical assistance by reviewing relevant data, assisting with strategy development, and co-facilitating a series of working group meetings composed of community, youth, city partners, and law enforcement.

## Why was the Working Group created?

The Anti-Violence Working Group sought to target the root causes of violence while supporting those who are affected by the ongoing impacts of violence including psychological trauma, economic suppression, community breakdown, and other long-term consequences. The AVWG brought together broad voices and lived experiences from across the City of Somerville to develop policies that are socially equitable and that promote a safe community. The AVWG focused on implementing policies, programs, and initiatives that collectively promoted peace while preventing, intervening, and reducing violence.

## What were the Priority Safety Issues?

The Department of Racial and Social Justice gathered data by assessing the top five crimes in Somerville and by assessing results from the Public Safety for All (PSFA) survey that concluded in 2023. The process led to the three priority safety issues: gun and gang violence, domestic violence, and traffic safety.

## Anti-Violence Working Group Recommendations and Implementation Priority

The Anti-Violence Working Group developed community-based solutions with a structured approach. A. In total the AVWG proposed six recommendations across the three focus areas. You will find the recommendations, along with suggested implementation prioritization below.

# Traffic Safety

**One goal was created to address traffic violence in Somerville:**

- Implement a public education campaign to promote safety for all modes of transportation.
  1. Create a Communication Plan
  2. Committee connects with Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD), Inspectional Services Department (ISD), Mobility Department, and local community business organizations to implement Public Education Campaign
  3. AVWG Members advocate for transportation for their ward
  4. Organize a community event that kicks off a public education campaign

# Gun and Gang Violence

**Two goals were created to bring attention to gun and gang violence:**

- Coordinate a multi – layered communication system to provide updates to all Somerville community members regarding gun and gang violence.
  1. Identify existing communication systems and stakeholders who operate them (e.g. schools, colleges, existing city communication systems)
  2. Identify needed points of communication and frequency after an incidence of gun violence occurs (e.g. immediately after a gunshot is reported, letting residents know to avoid the area)
  3. Outreach to stakeholders to get buy-in to participate in the communication system
- Engaging and connecting youth ages 18-26 with existing community programming in areas with highest issues of gun and gang violence.
  1. Identify current/upcoming local programs, activities, and resources for youth ages 18-26
  2. Create a survey to better understand programming and resources needed and/or interested in by youth
  3. Conduct youth outreach to connect with local programs, activities, and resources

# Domestic Violence

**Three goals were created to bring awareness to the issue of domestic violence:**

- Identify ways to proactively educate the youth about domestic violence, healthy relationships, and boundaries.
  1. Research what is being done by City Departments, Community Partners, and previous programs that existed with the high school
  2. Identify the budget, staff, and timeline that is needed to support efforts
  3. Identify age groups and corresponding programs for each age group
  4. Identify community partners who can help design, implement, and facilitate programming
- Promote an educational communication campaign that provides information to the community on what to do if you are experiencing domestic violence or if you are aware of someone who is experiencing domestic violence.
  1. Identify what geographic areas within the City statistically experience more domestic violence
  2. Identify local organizations working to address domestic violence in Somerville
  3. Identify avenues for community engagement for all constituents of English speaking and non-English speaking communities
  4. Identify what materials or resources exist to educate constituents about Somerville being a Sanctuary City (SomerViva: Office of Immigrant Affairs & Health and Human Services)
  5. Discuss next steps that will ensure these resources exist and are promoted long-term
- Facilitate quarterly meetings with stakeholders to share information on what data exists around domestic violence in the city to identify what resources are needed to promote education and awareness long-term.
  1. Identify stakeholders and gaining stakeholder buy-in
  2. Schedule a quarterly meeting with stakeholders to share information on what information exists and to identify gaps.
  3. Proactively develop meeting topics for the quarterly meetings to facilitate continuity