RISE PROGRAM PRINCIPLES & PRIORITY POPULATIONS

Principle 1. Racial Equity
Principle 2. Trauma-informed service provision
Principle 3. Positive Youth Development
Principle 4. Intersectionality
Principle 5. Cultural Humility
Principle 6. Restorative Justice
Principle 7. Collective Impact
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Principle 1. Racial equity

Using a social justice lens, applicants must weave racial equity efforts into all aspects of programming. To do this, programs must have an understanding of the complexities of community violence and its context within the lives of Massachusetts young people. Providing services through a racial equity and social justice lens means acknowledging that structural and institutional racism are root causes of inequities. *Institutional racism* refers to the policies and practices of organizations (education, transportation, housing, healthcare, etc.) that create different outcomes for different racial groups.[1] *Structural racism* refers to a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing, ways to perpetuate inequities based on race.[2] Racial trauma or race-based trauma often goes unnoticed.[i,ii,iii] Without a clear and descriptive language to describe racial trauma, those who suffer cannot coherently convey their pain, let alone heal.[iv]

Principle 2. Trauma-informed service provision

Trauma is a personal experience that may result from such experiences as: interpersonal violence including sexual and relationship abuse or physical violence; severe neglect; loss; the witnessing of violence, terrorism, racism and/or disaster. Trauma may also affect groups of people collectively through cumulative exposure to traumatic events that affect communities, and trauma may affect subsequent generations. Examples of community trauma include slavery, mass incarceration, neighborhood violence, immigration raids, school segregation, war, etc. Research suggests that the causes of community trauma lie in the historic and ongoing root causes of social inequities, including poverty, racism, sexism, oppression and power dynamics, and the erasure of culture and communities.[v,vi,vii]

Principle 3. Positive Youth Development

All services must be provided through the framework of Positive Youth Development (PYD), which focuses on young people as resources ("youth-centered"), providing educational and cultural opportunities that develop self-confidence, self-efficacy, and the capacity for youth to contribute to their own, as well as others', learning and development. Youth must be engaged at multiple levels within programs, agencies and communities, and should be provided with avenues for participation, such as making decisions and contributions, employment, and taking on challenging responsibilities. Adults must be trained to work with youth in ways that maximize youth participation and encourage youth to engage in meaningful decision-making and age-appropriate personal and social responsibility.

Successful programs must have strong and active collaborations and relationships with community stakeholders, in-depth understanding of social and cultural context, and the ability to deliver individualized interventions.

Principle 4. Intersectionality

Program staff must have deep understanding of the intersectionality of the SDoH and how they affect program participants with relation to gun violence.[viii,ix,x] It is particularly important that applicants understand that young people accessing their services have experienced multiple challenges and have specific needs, especially those struggling at the intersection of poverty, trauma, violence, and oppression. In order to address this need it is imperative that the applicant utilizes a strengths-based approach.

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[1] Definition adapted from Racial Equity Tools. *Racism*. Available at:
https://www.racialequitytools.org/fundamentals/core-concepts/racisim
[2] Definition adapted from Racial Equity Tools. *Structural Racism*. Available at:
https://www.racialequitytools.org/fundamentals/core-concepts/structural-racism

Gun violence can best be addressed by working across systems, which requires acknowledging factors and circumstances such as racism, domestic violence, community trauma, and socioeconomic status. To support participants, program staff will take a comprehensive approach to meet the multi-faceted needs of participants, including those needs that do not directly relate to perpetrating or being a victim of gun violence but might impact opportunities for success.

Principle 5. Cultural Humility
Program staff must exhibit cultural humility as they work intimately and intensely with individuals to assess their needs and provide appropriate services. The American Psychological Association has defined cultural humility as an "ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]."[xi] This approach is essential to providing effective support to program participants.

Principle 6. Restorative Justice
Restorative Justice is considered both a process and a value and is a mechanism for communities to come together around an issue in a way that allows emergent wisdom to surface and to guide decision-making.[xii] It is based on a process for repairing harm that has been done through the use of circles, conferences, mediation, and community reparative boards. Successful implementation of the practice includes the following:
- Utilization of a facilitation model that will hold the space together as equals to have honest exchange about difficult issues and painful experiences in an atmosphere of respect and concern for everyone (i.e. circle model).
- Strategies that help young people learn how to solve problems on their own and to respond to conflict nonviolently.
- Dealing with the underlying issues that cause one to offend in the first place (i.e. behavioral health, social capital, unemployment, disenfranchisement, gender norm conformation etc.).
- Emphasis on restoring a sense of well-being not only to those who were harmed, but to the individual who committed the harm and to the surrounding community members.
- Recognition of the role of the community as a prime site of preventing and responding to social disorder.

Principle 7. Collective Impact [xiii,xiv,xv]
The aim of a collective impact (CI) approach is to change highly complex systems. [xvi] Successful implementation of this approach will demonstrate:
- A strong understanding of institutional racism and how certain communities in the Commonwealth are more impacted by health disparities than others.
- Collaboration and consistent and open communication among nonprofit organizations and other stakeholders in gun violence prevention.
- A Backbone Agency who will be responsible for coordinating activities and collecting data supporting youth in their programming
- Use of multiple activities, programs, and initiatives, all of which are coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
- Use of data and research to understand how to improve the education experience for students.
- Coordination across sectors.
- The ability to mobilize formal and informal community leaders towards the common goal of violence prevention.
- A shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
- Shared measurement, including collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants, ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

Principle 8. Build and sustain the leadership of people of color and other marginalized communities
Organizations that work directly with people of color will engage people of color in leadership roles within and beyond an advisory capacity. Creating meaningful ways to bring people of color people into the work of an organization goes beyond being "service" oriented; people of color in leadership means that people of color who directly benefit from programs are engaged in shared and meaningful decision-making about the programs that impact their lives. Organizations should systematically engage people of color in the planning, development, leadership, oversight and quality improvement of the program's services using the

"Nothing about us, without us" philosophy. Engagement and leadership of people of color values people's lived experiences without exploiting or tokenizing them and can help dismantle racism in the process.

Priority Population

As noted above, this funding is meant to support young men and women living in communities that are experiencing disproportionate levels of violence in Massachusetts, who regularly face factors that potentially imperil their ability to successfully transition into adulthood. These factors include ongoing pressures linked to institutional and structural racism. Additional challenges and negative experiences often include persistent school failures, ongoing violence in their home settings, economic dependency, high volumes of untimely deaths, and/or struggles with incarceration. While "risk" may be defined as an individual's exposure to the chance of injury or loss, the risky situations these young men and women are forced to navigate are more closely associated with environmental pressures that may compromise an individual's ability to progress or succeed in life without significant harm to their physical, mental, or emotional states.

Fall River is one of nineteen communities in Massachusetts consistently rank in the top 15 for either firearm homicides or non-fatal assault related homicide injuries.

To prioritize programming most effectively, eligible youth for this intervention are defined as follows:
- Out of school youth and/or youth aged 17-24 years living in communities experiencing a high burden of gun violence and/or violent crime.
- Groups of young people who are more likely to be involved in gun violence, such as:
  • Black and/or Latinx youth
  • Out of school youth
  • Court involved youth
  • Youth with past history of violent behavior
  • Youth who have been witnesses to or victims of violence
  • Youth having past experience with substance use disorder.

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[iv] Kenneth Hardy, 2013, *Healing the Hidden Wounds of Racial Trauma*, Reclaiming Children and Youth.

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[xii] Sharpe, Susan. Restorative Justice: A Vision for Healing and Change. Edmonton Victim Offender Mediation Society; 1998.

[xiii] Kania, J & Kramer, M. Collective Impact. (2011) *Stanford Social Innovation Review.* 9 (1).

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xv Stachowiak, S & Gase, L. Does Collective Impact Really Make an Impact? *Stanford Social Innovation Review.* Aug. 9, 2018

xvi *Shared Framework for Reducing Youth Violence and Promoting Well Being.* Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Health Approach to Violence Prevention. Updated May 22, 2016. https://www.ojjdp.gov/funding/Shared-Framework-for-Youth-Violence-Prevention.pdf