

# Medical College of Wisconsin: \$10 Million in violence prevention grants awarded to communities statewide from the Wisconsin Community Safety Fund

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**Milwaukee, Wis.** – June 7, 2023 – The [Comprehensive Injury Center](#) at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) is pleased to announce 10 communities and organizations selected to receive a total of \$10.4 million in grant funding from the Wisconsin Community Safety Fund (WCSF) to aid in reducing violence stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The WCSF was created to support local, evidence-based activities that enhance the safety and wellbeing of children, youth, and families throughout Wisconsin.

With the goal of increasing community capacity for violence prevention, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers allocated a portion of the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars received by the state to fund these grants. State and local governments were encouraged to invest ARPA funds in addressing increased levels of gun violence, suicide, and intimate partner violence since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Violence and its effects on kids, families, and communities are not inevitable, and I was glad to allocate these funds to further our work to prevent violence, interrupt the cycle of violence, and address this issue like the public health crisis it is,” said Gov. Evers. “From local municipalities, Tribal lands, and health systems, these funds will help address the root causes of violence and support community-based solutions, building healthier, safer communities for all.”

“The Wisconsin Community Safety Fund is a first-of-its-kind fund to promote safety and wellbeing in communities across the state of Wisconsin. By investing in proven violence prevention strategies, we’re investing in a future that’s healthy and safe for everyone. We wish to thank the state of Wisconsin for recognizing violence as a public health crisis and funding this life-saving work,” said Terri A. deRoon Cassini, PhD, MS, director of the Comprehensive Injury Center at the Medical College of Wisconsin. “We look forward to partnering with these communities and organizations to advance comprehensive approaches to community safety amid record violence throughout the state.”

The 10 communities selected for funding include:

- **The Alma Center** based in Milwaukee will design a statewide online and telephone intervention and prevention program called Breaking the Cycle to engage people at risk of, or who have a history of, causing harm to their intimate partner and/or family.
- The **City of Green Bay** will create an Office of Violence Prevention to increase community safety using stakeholder collaboration, resource coordination, community engagement, and community violence intervention strategies to address increased gun violence.
- The **City of Kenosha** will establish the Key Emerging Leaders Academy to engage youth at highest risk for experiencing or engaging in community violence by increasing access to experiences that develop talents, life skills, and mentor relationships historically absent in six central neighborhoods.
- The **City of Racine** will establish a citywide Office of Violence Prevention, contract with national partners, engage local stakeholders, and develop a gun violence intervention plan with a focus on youth and developed based on community input and trends.
- **Gundersen Health System** will expand its Crime Victim Services (CVS) unit to address increasingly complex needs related to sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and gender-based violence since the pandemic; add CVS advocates; invest in partnerships; and increase capacity for culturally responsive and equitable care in a six-county service area.
- **Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin** will increase coordination to expand prevention, education, and outreach strategies to specific priority-populations to increase community safety and prevent sexual assault, gender-based violence, and child abuse.

- The **Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin** will expand services that prevent and respond to sexual assault using culturally specific approaches such as “Inga-dabinawe’aag” and “Ing-azhe-ganoodaan,” and outreach through cultural settings to youth, adults, and tribal community.
- **Southeast Asian Healing Center (SEAHC)** based in Madison will address increased suicide risk and gender-based violence due to the pandemic using culturally specific strategies in Southeast Asian communities including education, prevention, and therapy with the goal of increasing overall community wellbeing.
- The **University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics** will expand their hospital-linked Violence Intervention Program; formalize a partnership with community partner, Focused Interruption; and conduct a gun violence analysis to identify strategies to address prevention, reduction, and response to gun violence.
- The **United Way of the Fox Cities’** March Forward project is a sustainable and culturally specific model to improve community wellbeing by addressing unmet mental/emotional needs and suicide risk factors in the Hmong, Black, and Hispanic/Latinx communities by creating Community Health Workers, a dedicated peer support phoneline, and mental health literacy and anti-stigma education campaigns.

To ensure funds were distributed to the most impactful projects, a public Request for Applications was announced in Fall 2022. Submissions were reviewed by an independent selection committee that included expertise in domestic violence, public health, philanthropy, youth development, emergency medicine, and violence prevention.

During the 3-year grant period, funded projects will receive ongoing support from the Comprehensive Injury Center at MCW for data, evaluation, and training. To provide this level of support, Ann McCullough was recently named to the newly created position of Community Safety Manager within the Division of Community Safety led by Reggie Moore.

For more information about MCW’s Comprehensive Injury Center, visit their page on [mcw.edu](https://mcw.edu).