Using Logic Models to Evaluate Violence Prevention Programs Across Illinois

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Abstract

Community violence is a major public health concern across the United States. Logic models are essential evaluation tools that provide a framework for organizing violence prevention program services and goals. Previous research suggests community nonprofits play an important role in reducing crime rates (Sharkey, 2017). This project examines how logic models, as a visual mapping resource, can support violence prevention programs across Illinois by adding structure and identifying gaps in service. Logic models help programs identify their target populations, services provided, risk and protective factors, changes over time, and overall program effectiveness. Systematically organizing program information helps ensure state funding supports programs that are meeting community needs. Using information from program agreements, students developed logic models and offered recommendations for potential assessment tools. These models also highlighted areas where key information was lacking. Ultimately, this research helped determine whether violence prevention programs across the state were effectively reaching their goals and adequately serving communities by improving overall well-being.

Key Words: community violence, prevention, evaluation, effectiveness, structure, reporting, recommendations, well-being

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INTRODUCTION

Logic models are essential evaluation tools that provide a structured framework for organizing program activities, outputs, and outcomes. In community-based violence prevention, they help clarify how services lead to intended impacts.

Community organizations play a critical role in reducing violence and improving public safety (Sharkey, 2017), yet many face challenges in consistently evaluating program effectiveness.

Current Study
In partnership with the state agency, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), this project provided evaluation support to organizations implementing violence prevention programs. Grant narratives were analyzed and logic models were created.

AIM

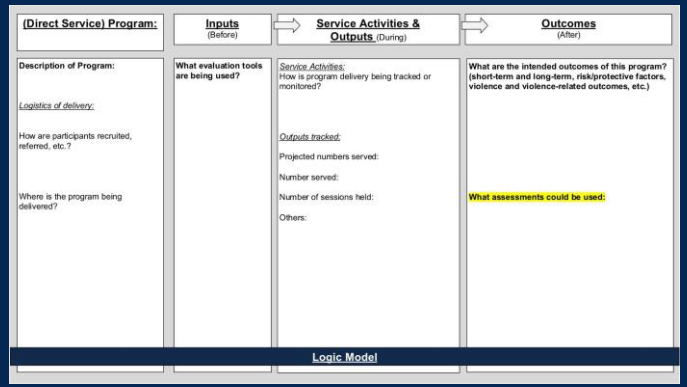
To examine how logic models support violence prevention programs across Illinois by improving program structure, identifying service gaps, and strengthening evaluation practices.

METHOD

Logic models were developed and analyzed for violence prevention programs funded by a large state agency across Illinois. In reviewing program narratives from grant proposals, organizations documented:

- Target populations
- Services provided
- Risk and protective factors
- Short and long term outcomes

Using the logic model template below, narrative information was organized for program information, inputs, service activities, outputs, and outcomes.



(Direct Service) Program:	Inputs (Before)	Service Activities & Outputs (During)	Outcomes (After)
Description of Program: *Logistics of delivery:* How are participants recruited, referred, etc.? Where is the program being delivered?	What evaluation tools are being used?	*Service Activities:* How is program delivery being tracked or monitored? *Outputs tracked:* Projected numbers served: Number served: Number of sessions held: Others:	What are the intended outcomes of this program? (short-term and long-term, risk/protective factors, violence and violence-related outcomes, etc.) What assessments could be used:

Logic Model

RESULTS

- **171 logic models** were completed across the funding periods of Fiscal Years (FY) 18-23, FY26
- Programs across **11 counties** were evaluated (Adams, Cook, DuPage, Iroquois, Jefferson, Kankakee, Lake, Macon, Peoria, Vermilion, and Winnebago)
- **8 different program types** addressing various community challenges

Found that there was a strong emphasis on **primary prevention** statewide and many organizations implemented multi-tiered prevention approaches.



CONCLUSIONS

Using logic models:

- Improved identification of outcomes and service gaps
- Led to using REDCap for grant reporting, which enhanced standardized data collection and analysis capacity

Logic models are effective tools for strengthening violence prevention programs. They support organizations in:

- Identifying gaps in services
- Monitoring program progress
- Aligning activities with measurable outcomes
- Demonstrating the impact of state funded initiatives

These findings highlight the importance of structured evaluation tools in improving accountability and effectiveness in community-based violence prevention.

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REDCap SHELL

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ILLINOIS

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