

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

UTEC leads Streetworker Conference on violence



Mack Hollins, wide receiver for the New England Patriots, does a Q&A with violence prevention workers at Gillette Stadium this week for UTEC's 2026 New England Streetworker Conference, focused on violence prevention. **COURTESY OF UTEC**

FRONTLINE EXPERTISE

Rather than treating streetworkers only as fringe participants, the conference focuses on their expertise, giving their role center stage.

This year's sessions addressed conflict mediation and de-escalation, restorative justice, reentry, data and case planning, community healing, engaging men in violence prevention, staff wellness and burnout, and the role of trusted relationships in preventing violence. The conference also created dedicated space for practitioners to exchange strategies, build partnerships and support one another in work that can carry significant emotional and personal demands.

Timmeka Perkins, senior associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, based in Baltimore, Maryland, delivered the conference

Perkins said. "Young people are looking for their credible messengers to help them navigate the next part of their life."

The program also featured Jabee, a three-time Emmy Award-winning musician, educator and community activist from Oklahoma City who serves as executive director of LiveFree Oklahoma and has built community initiatives spanning violence prevention, youth opportunity, arts and economic development. Like many streetworkers, Jabee shared how his activism is rooted in his own experience.

"My purpose has been to help people find their vision, help people find their hope, and community is a strategy," Jabee said. "Everything I do, I do in my community. Because I know, had somebody not intervened with



Emmy Award-winning musician and community activist from Oklahoma City Jabee tells fellow streetworkers how his activism is rooted in his own experience at Gillette Stadium this week for UTEC's 2026 New England Streetworker Conference, focused on violence prevention. **COURTESY OF UTEC**



Timmeka Perkins, Senior Associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, delivers the conference keynote address at Gillette Stadium this week for UTEC's 2026 New England Streetworker Conference, focused on violence prevention. **COURTESY OF UTEC**

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create relationships they can call on after returning home.

The conference opened with a Networking Night at Patriot Place before the main conference program the next day at Gillette Stadium. The program included remarks and activities led by practitioners from across the field, two rounds of breakout workshops, the keynote address, the Legacy Award presentation and a conference-wide gathering on the field.

Attendees were also joined by Mack Hollins, wide receiver for the New England Patriots. “One of the things I’ve learned over my 10 years in the NFL is you don’t have to have a ‘C’ on your jersey to be a leader,” he said. “You don’t have to be up here on stage to be a leader in your community like you all are.”

Sponsors included the Annie E. Casey Foundation Fund for a Safer Future, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Massachusetts Gun Violence Prevention Program, GIFFORDS, Health Resources in Action, The New England Patriots, Mass

other organizations and partners.

For UTEC, the continued growth of the New England Streetworker Conference reflects something larger: growing recognition that lasting public safety requires people who know their communities, have earned trust, can reach individuals whom traditional systems often cannot, and have the resources, training and professional support to do that work well.

“I’ve been a streetworker for 12 years, and I always learn something new,” said Angel “Ace” Vasquez, Lawrence

streetworker manager with UTEC. “When we come together as streetworkers, it’s not only in trainings. It’s talking with each other, having each other’s backs and making sure we’re doing check-ins with each other. That’s community for us.”

UTEC, Inc. helps boost the potential of young people ages 18–25 who are disengaged from school and work or are involved in this justice system. Through street outreach, education, social enterprises and advocacy, UTEC helps young people build skills, heal from trauma and lead change in their communities.



Glenn Daly, director of the state Office of Children and Families, is recognized on stage for 40 years of service at Gillette Stadium this week for UTEC’s 2026 New England Streetworker Conference, focused on violence prevention.

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