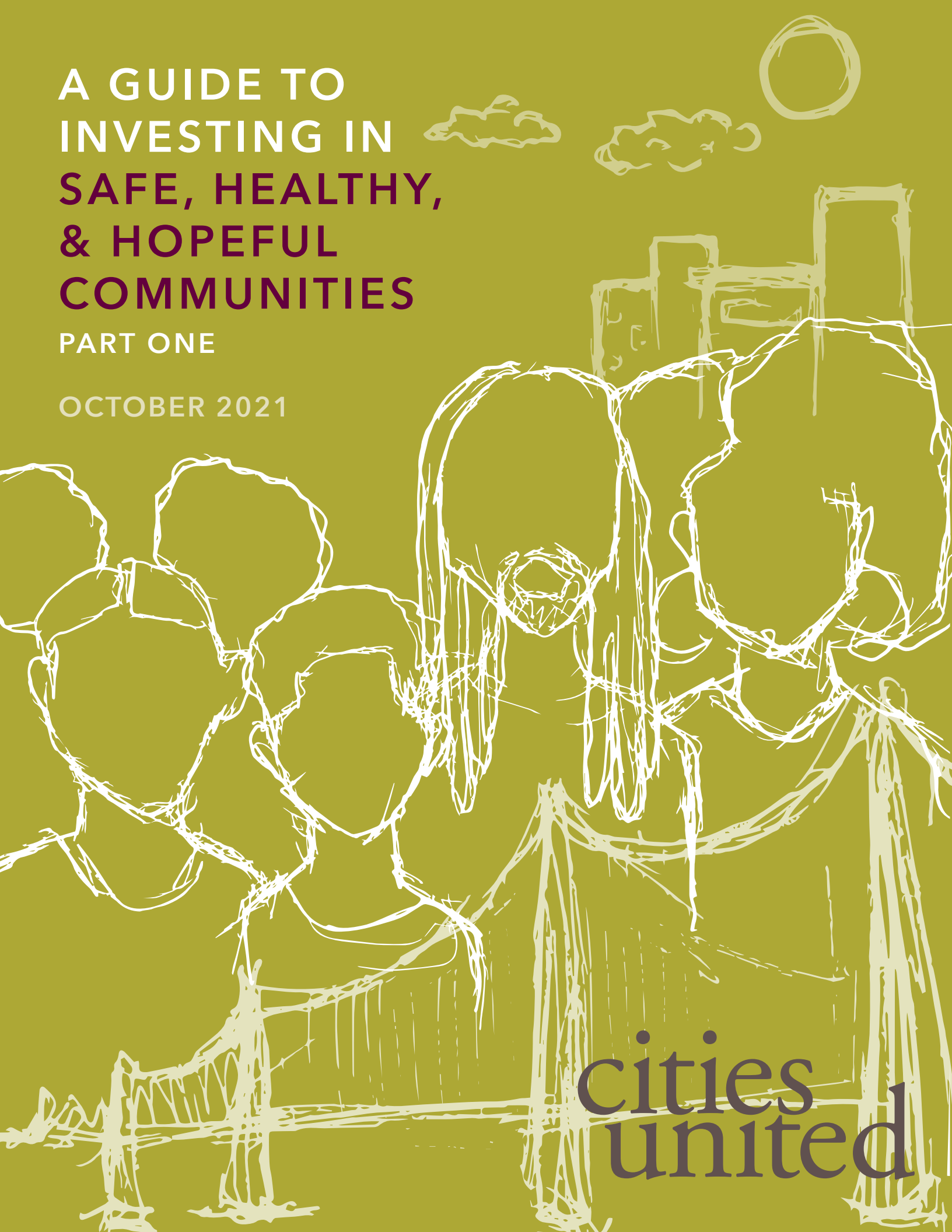


A GUIDE TO
INVESTING IN
SAFE, HEALTHY,
& HOPEFUL
COMMUNITIES

PART ONE

OCTOBER 2021



**cities
united**

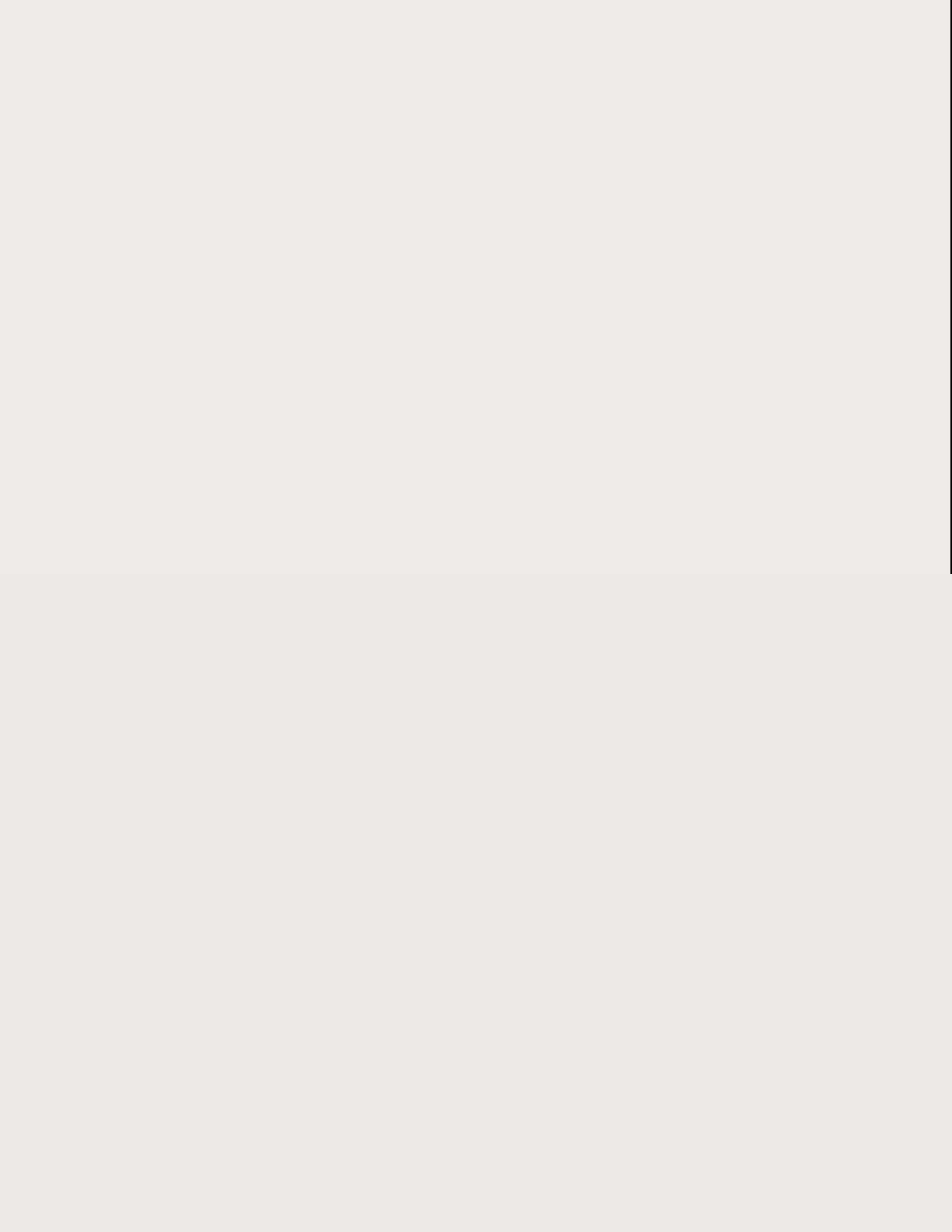


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WHY SHOULD WE INVEST IN OUR COMMUNITIES?

In a time very similar to the historic call for change in 2020, the U.S. convened a commission to study lessons and find key solutions after a number of racial uprisings in the 1960s. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, also known as the Kerner Report, laid out that the root causes for riots in several cities were the results of economic disinvestment and racial tension. The uprisings were not the problem, but a symptom of a larger problem in society. The recommendations to local governments included some of the following:

- ① Develop Neighborhood Action Task Forces as joint community efforts to establish communication, transparency, and accountability.
- ② Establish comprehensive grievance-response mechanisms.
- ③ Establish neighborhood outlets for government agencies.
- ④ Expand opportunities for Black people to participate in the formulation of public policy and the implementation of programs affecting them.

This was 1968.

Since then, though there were some policy wins, the recommendations made by the Commission went mostly unheard in cities. The lack of response gave way to a larger cry across generations for everlasting change in policy and investment. The year 2020 has brought a record number of people on every corner of the country demanding change after the fallout out of COVID-19 and an uptick in community voice. Change will not be denied or delayed. In our [Reimagining Public Safety Document](#), we've laid out the stakes we have been dealing with identifying community-led and/or supported

solutions and strategies to stop the bleeding today and investing in the dismantlement of the systems of inequity. For these solutions and strategies to fully achieve safe, healthy, and hopeful communities, cities must learn that policy and investment are essential to address the institutional barriers to success and safety.

In this document, *A Guide to Investing in Safe, Healthy, and Hopeful Communities*, we share how cities can address institutional barriers by investing their American Rescue Plan dollars and other government funding into comprehensive and solution-based efforts toward gun violence prevention. Throughout this guide, we outline Solutions in Practice and Opportunities to Invest in People-Centered Budgeting, Government Entities focused on Gun Violence Prevention, Safe, Quality and Affordable Housing, Guaranteed Income, Employment and Business Development, and Incarceration Alternatives. The guide highlights data points, challenges, opportunities, best practices, estimated cost to implement policy and practice, and examples of cities implementing the policy and practice. This guide is Part One of a suite of tools for cities, national, state, and local organizations and their partners to consider how to invest in people and strategies that will contribute to the change of how we spend and distribute capital. Cities United hopes our guide is utilized to engineer that change to directly affect a racially equitable future for our communities in the solutions we suggest, including many more. Stay tuned to Cities United for a continuation of investment guidance for safe, healthy, and hopeful communities across the nation.

A LETTER FROM ANTHONY SMITH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings Family,

As I reflect on our 10 year anniversary - I think about all the people who said yes to the vision of creating safe, healthy and hopeful communities for young Black men and boys, and their families - I think about all the shifts that I've seen in cities all across this country. Shifts that at times seem small, shifts that we can sometimes overlook and discount, but each of these shifts have the potential to redefine how we think about public safety in our cities, in our counties, in our states and in this country.

When Dr. William Bell and Mayor Micheal Nutter invited us to join them on this journey 10 years ago, they were clear that to achieve our mission we must stay true to our core principles of Social Justice, Equity, Youth Voice, Collaboration and Innovation - these principles are vital when organizing to fundamentally shift the way we define public safety. These principles have guided our work from day one - they show up in every aspect of our work. You feel them at our annual convening and other gatherings, you see them in the design of our Roadmap Academy and Young Leader Fellowship, and they shine through in our Russell: Place of Promise and Civic Engagement Fellowship initiatives.

The year 2020 forced all of us to take a hard look at how we were showing up for our people - I questioned every move I made - Was I saying enough? Was I saying the right things to the right people? Was I leading in the way that my team needed? Was Cities United helping to lead the conversation? What is Cities United's role in this moment? How do we support our network as they deal with the pandemic and new demands for police accountability and the calls to divest from our current harmful models of public safety? At times these questions made it hard for me to move, hard for me to think and hard for me to be proactive.

But leaning into our core values and working with an amazing team, we found our way. The team created space for our network to gather, developed guides to help communities navigate the impacts of COVID-19, used our office to provide resources to community members, and supported each other as we all tried to make sense of the pandemic.

The murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Tony McDade at the hands of law enforcement sparked local and global uprisings demanding justice, and new public safety models. Models that focused on justice, equity, healing and restoration - models that centered those most impacted by the injustice of our current racist models.

To provide some guidance to our network, the team under Quaniqua Carthan-Love's leadership, developed our Reimagining Public Safety: Moving to Safe, Healthy and Hopeful Communities guide, that we released during our 2020 annual convening. The Reimagining Public Safety guide highlighted three solutions that are supported by 15 initiatives - outlined below.

A LETTER FROM ANTHONY SMITH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INTERRUPTING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE	DISMANTLING SYSTEMS OF INEQUITY	INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE
Violence Interruption	Boost Education	Estimate Cost of Public Safety
Street Outreach	Expand Healing Centered Engagement	Assess City and Philanthropic Spending
Hospital-based Violence Intervention	Build an Inclusive Economy	Advance Antiracist Policy
Diversion & Alternate Pathways	Bolster Family Supports	Implement Asset-Framed Communications Strategy
Crisis Response Strategy	Reshape Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems	
Collaborative Public Safety Funding Models		

This guide serves as our pathway forward and the tool we use to support our partner cities as they work with communities to reimagine how they invest and deliver public safety strategies.

To support the guide, we are releasing "A Guide to Investing in Safe, Healthy & Hopeful Communities" to provide more elected officials, community partners, and young leaders to shift, adapt, and deepen the way they reimagine public safety.

Now is our moment to invest in the vision of safe, healthy and hopeful communities for young Black men and boys, and their families.

I want to thank the cross section of writers and researchers from Cities United staff and the Young Leader Fellowship who spent hours pulling this guide together! You will see their hard work on display throughout the guide in the challenges, opportunities, best practices, budget/estimated cost and examples of policies for each area within the Reimagining Public Safety framework. I want to give a special shoutout to Cassandra Webb and Andre Canty for serving as the co-chairs of the cross-functional team, and for leading this process.



Anthony Smith
Executive Director, Cities United

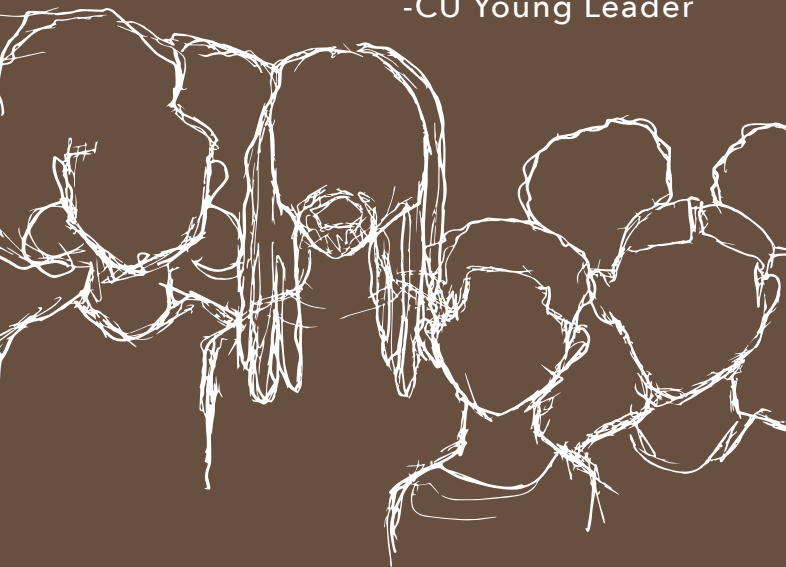
CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS IN PRACTICE, AND OPPORTUNITIES

PEOPLE CENTERED DECISION MAKING

Participatory Budgeting
(Dismantle Systems of Inequity)

City budgets should reflect the needs of the community. Young people should be a part of the development and decision making of public funds.

-CU Young Leader



DISINVESTMENT IN BLACK COMMUNITIES LEADS TO POORER LIVING CONDITIONS IN BLACK COMMUNITIES, WHICH POLICYMAKERS USE AS JUSTIFICATION FOR FURTHER DISINVESTMENT IN BLACK COMMUNITIES

CHALLENGES

Historically, underserved communities have been excluded out of the decision making process for local budgets. Local and state budgets have dedicated billions of dollars on incarceration and less on education, affordable housing, jobs, and social services.

Excluding these communities in the budgeting process has resulted in education, health, and economics gaps that will take generations to overcome.



OPPORTUNITIES

Communities of the most affected by injustices have created methods for developing decision-making power on city and state budgets.

Communities have also advocated and developed people centered budgets that reflect the interests of the people most affected.

BEST PRACTICES

Started in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989, participatory budgeting (PB) is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget.

People Centered Budgeting Initiatives involve communities being active in city budgets with determining the allocations of funds from their own expertise and experiences.

ESTIMATED COST TO IMPLEMENT POLICY/PRACTICE

For Participatory Budgeting, most processes use between 1-15% of their local city budget. For larger municipalities, the Participatory Budgeting Process suggests \$1 million per 100,000 residents.

EXAMPLES OF CITIES AND/OR STATES IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY/PRACTICE

- ⑥ [Seattle, Washington](#)
- ⑥ [Buffalo, New York](#)
- ⑥ [Denver, Colorado](#)
- ⑥ [Vallejo, California](#)
- ⑥ [New York, New York](#)

RESOURCES

- ⑥ [What is Participatory Budgeting](#)
- ⑥ [Participatory Budgeting Models](#)
- ⑥ [Ohio People's Budget](#)
- ⑥ [Los Angeles People's Budget](#)
- ⑥ [How Cities Can Implement Participatory Budgeting](#)
- ⑥ [Participatory Budget Demands from the Movement 4 Black Lives](#)
- ⑥ [PB in the United States and Canada](#)



IN 2019 THE POVERTY RATE IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY WAS 21.2%, WHICH WAS FAR MORE THAN EVERY OTHER RACE/ETHNICITY.

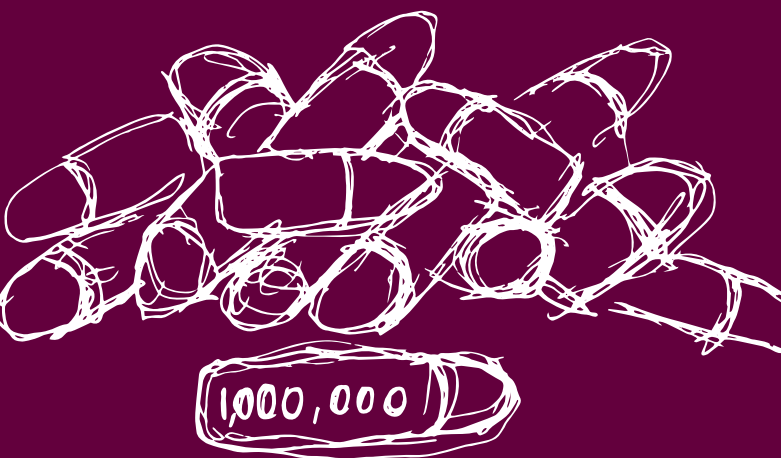


CREATION OF GOVERNMENT ENTITIES FOCUSED ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

(Interrupting the Cycle of Violence)

There is no shortage of solutions, only a shortage of investments.

-CU Staff



-CU Young Leader

CHALLENGES

Current Offices for Violence Prevention (OVP) and Public Safety are at risk of losing support, negotiation power and funding during Mayoral transitions, which creates a lack of sustainability and impact.

Cities have traditionally relied heavily on law enforcement as a mechanism for public safety instead of alternative prevention practices.

Local Health Departments and other agencies are subject to political agendas and leaders outside of their control.

OPPORTUNITIES

OVPs provide an opportunity to raise the profile of violence prevention as a city priority, institutionalize funding and/or staff positions dedicated to the issue, and present a clear vision and goals for reducing violence through a public health approach.

OVPs can act as a hub for creating and maintain relationships with allies in the realms of hospital-based intervention, injury prevention programs, academia in the public health field, and school based community health.

AS CITIES AND STATES ARE ADDRESSING COMMUNITY VIOLENCE, THERE AREN'T ENOUGH DEDICATED OFFICES FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION (OVP.)

BEST PRACTICES

Community input, especially from youth and communities most affected by violence, is essential when establishing a new OVP.

People and groups who are involved from the planning phase are more likely to stay invested in-and are critical to-its success.

ESTIMATED COST TO IMPLEMENT POLICY/PRACTICE:

From federal to local funding, OVP's normally operate with budgets from \$800,000 to \$12million in some cities. Funding sources have stemmed from HUD, city budgets, private investment, tax revenue, and philanthropy.

OVER 1 MILLION AMERICANS HAVE BEEN SHOT IN THE PAST DECADE, AND GUN VIOLENCE RATES ARE RISING ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

EXAMPLES OF CITIES AND/OR STATES IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY/PRACTICE

- Ⓞ [Minneapolis, Minnesota](#)
- Ⓞ [Louisville, Kentucky](#)
- Ⓞ [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#)
- Ⓞ [Washington DC](#)
- Ⓞ [Portland, Oregon](#)
- Ⓞ [Milwaukee, Wisconsin](#)
- Ⓞ [Newark, New Jersey](#)

RESOURCES

- Ⓞ [Minneapolis OVP City Council Ordinance](#)
- Ⓞ [Reimagining Public Safety Timeline of Austin, TX](#)
- Ⓞ [NEAR Act of Washington DC](#)
- Ⓞ [Newark OVP Ordinance](#)
- Ⓞ [Austin Gun Violence Task Force Report](#)

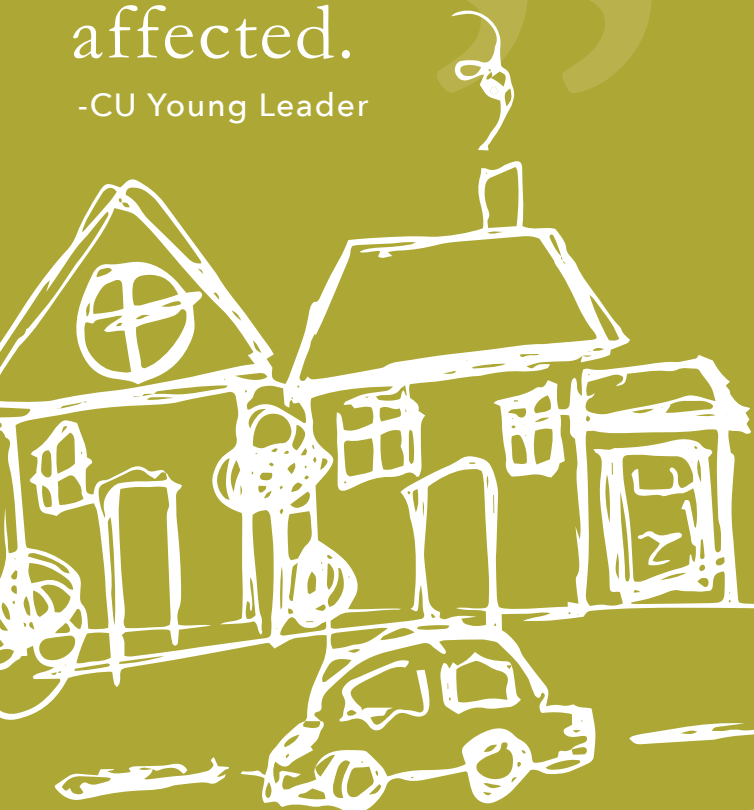
SAFE, QUALITY, & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Families, victims of violence,
and formerly incarcerated
individuals

(Dismantle Systems of Inequity)

Establish
community land
trusts to control
the property costs
and safety in the
communities most
affected.

-CU Young Leader



CHALLENGES

The racial wealth gap in homeownership is a primary factor of Americans gaining wealth.

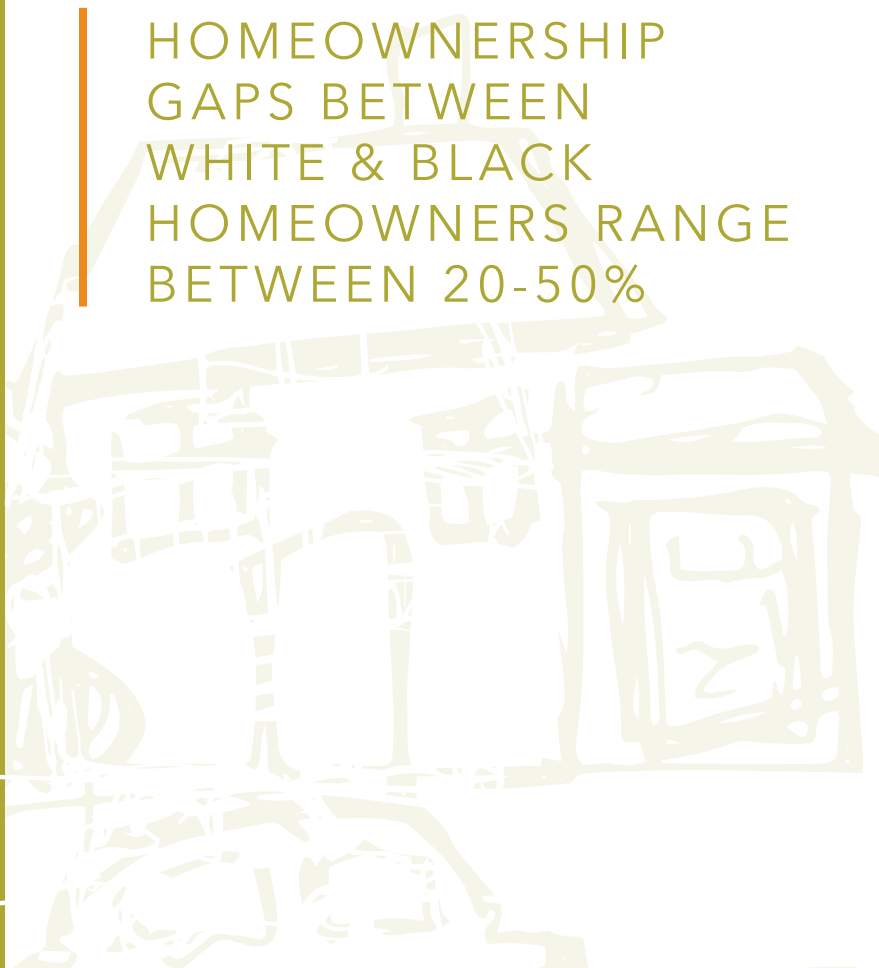
For justice involved individuals, discrimination and employment challenges prior to incarceration and afterwards often lead to housing issues.

OPPORTUNITIES

Affordable housing for the most affected can come in the form of reducing barriers for low cost development.

For families, affordable housing can be achieved by reducing barriers to rent and ownership along with providing access to systems involving individuals and the homeless (i.e., [permanent supportive housing](#), assistance with [housing planning](#), stop [exclusionary practices that impede housing access](#)).

HOMEOWNERSHIP
GAPS BETWEEN
WHITE & BLACK
HOMEOWNERS RANGE
BETWEEN 20-50%



BEST PRACTICES

Cities can help residents by starting an affordable housing community investment initiatives such as subsidies for prospective home buyers, [housing repair programs through Housing Trust Funds](#), and increased home rentals through Section 8 where individuals can have opportunity to buy the home, building equity, and increase the opportunity for family wealth.

[Ban the box on housing applications and end criminalization of homelessness.](#)

[Eviction moratorium](#) extension, in tandem with direct payments to renters for rental assistance programs.

ESTIMATED COST TO IMPLEMENT POLICY/PRACTICE:

In Chicago they are allocating up to \$330 million to community development financial institutions for lending commitment in affordable housing construction, \$56 million in partnership investment for formerly incarcerated contractor partnerships, and up to \$10 million in home buyer subsidy assistance and rental assistance funds.

FORMERLY
INCARCERATED
PEOPLE ARE
ABOUT **10 TIMES**
MORE LIKELY TO
BE HOUSELESS
COMPARED TO THE
GENERAL PUBLIC

EXAMPLES OF CITIES AND/OR STATES IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY/PRACTICE

- 📍 [Salt Lake City, Utah](#)
- 📍 [New York, New York](#)
- 📍 [Boston, Massachusetts](#)
- 📍 [Baltimore, Maryland](#)
- 📍 [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#)
- 📍 [Buffalo, New York](#)

RESOURCES

- 📍 [The Assessment Gap: Racial Inequalities in Property Taxation](#)
- 📍 [2017 Data Show Homeowners Nearly 89 Times Wealthier Than Renters](#)
- 📍 [The devaluation of assets in Black neighborhoods](#)
- 📍 [The Fair Housing Act](#)
- 📍 [Louisville's Affordable Land Trust](#)
- 📍 [Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people](#)
- 📍 [How Can Counties Create Housing Stability for Justice-Involved People?](#)
- 📍 [Council Votes to ban the Use of Credit Scores for Affordable Housing Eligibility](#)
- 📍 [Building Black Homeownership Bridges: A Five-Point Framework for Reducing the Racial Homeownership Gap](#)
- 📍 [Chicago Housing Board approves \\$22 million for affordable housing Development](#)
- 📍 [City-backed venture plans 250 homes in North Lawndale](#)

GUARANTEED INCOME

Cities exploring guaranteed income pilots

(Dismantle Systems of Inequity)

CHALLENGES

Poverty in a child's life impacts their health and health outcomes in childhood and adolescent development, which results to further detrimental impact into adulthood.

Covid-19 heightened the economic insecurity of basic public needs like food and housing, expensive health care, business closures and increased the wealth gap.

OPPORTUNITIES

Decrease the poverty rates, by lifting the income floor for families to take care of their essential needs.

Increase in funding for community-based organizations to offer cash-based guaranteed income programs to face the barriers in their communities and day-to-day lives.

Creating a research pilot program to record the effects of guaranteed income for families and individuals.

8 MILLION PEOPLE WERE FORCED INTO POVERTY AFTER THE LIMITED STIMULUS FUNDING WAS RELEASED AND EXHAUSTED.



BEST PRACTICES

Cash assistance on a recurring basis for families experiencing poverty.

Consider becoming a [Mayor for Guaranteed Income](#) to participate in the nationwide study of guaranteed income pilots and the effects on the system of poverty, individuals and families.

ESTIMATED COST TO IMPLEMENT POLICY/PRACTICE:

Cities have allocated as low as \$1.5 million to \$30 million of their American Rescue Plan (ARP) and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, & Economic Security (CARES) Act dollars towards guaranteed income pilot programs, assisting up to 5,000 families and individuals with cash no-strings attached assistance.

DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, TWO-THIRDS OF BLACK AND LATINX HOUSEHOLDS HAD DIFFICULTY MEETING BASIC EXPENSES IN THE PAST WEEK, COMPARED TO FEWER THAN HALF OF WHITE HOUSEHOLDS.

EXAMPLES OF CITIES AND/OR STATES IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY/PRACTICE:

- ⑥ [Denver, Colorado](#)
- ⑥ [St. Paul, Minnesota](#)
- ⑥ [Chicago, Illinois](#)
- ⑥ [Seattle, Washington](#)

RESOURCES

- ⑥ [Preliminary Analysis: SEED's First Year](#)
- ⑥ [Mayors for a Guaranteed Income](#)
- ⑥ [Accelerating Equity and Justice: Basic Income and Generational Wealth](#)
- ⑥ [Guaranteed income addresses poverty at its root](#)
- ⑥ [Economic Security Project : The COVID Recession and the Year of Checks April 2021](#)
- ⑥ [Helping Families Access Federal Income Supports](#)

GUARANTEED INCOME IS A SYSTEM OF RECURRING CASH PAYMENTS WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED, WITH THE LONG-TERM GOAL TO RAISE THE ECONOMIC FLOOR AND DISMANTLE THE SYSTEMS THAT PERPETUATE POVERTY.

EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Youth and formerly
incarcerated individuals
(Dismantle Systems of Inequity)

CHALLENGES

Black communities are not financially resourced with liquid assets, such as capital to start thriving businesses.

Expensive child care, unpaid job training, inadequate transportation systems, credit, GPA, drug testing, transportation are barriers restricting access to substantial jobs and careers for individuals in marginalized communities.

OPPORTUNITIES

Black Business accelerators that offer resources in operations and start capital funding.

Building equitable pathways for formerly incarcerated individuals to enter the workforce upon reentry into society with career paths trained in institutional centers.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR
YOUTH WAS 10% PERCENT
IN JULY 2021, JULY 2020
18.5% PERCENT IN JULY
2020, 9.1% JULY 2019

BEST PRACTICES

Expand and diversify summer jobs programs, including youth entrepreneurship

Black Business accelerator programs to provide resources and start-up capital for startup businesses and entrepreneurs.

Investments in cooperative business development and capital to provide Black business safety nets for start up.

ESTIMATED COST TO IMPLEMENT POLICY/PRACTICE:

Cities are allocating up to \$5 million dollars toward efforts to expand youth employment, financial support for women of color employee barriers, small business accelerators, skill-based training and job readiness to develop career pathways, and Black entrepreneurship entryways.

ACCORDING TO THE MOST RECENT CENSUS BUREAU DATA AVAILABLE, BLACK PEOPLE COMPRISE APPROXIMATELY 14.2% OF THE U.S. POPULATION, BUT BLACK BUSINESSES COMPRISE ONLY 2.2% OF THE NATION'S 5.7 MILLION EMPLOYER BUSINESSES (FIRMS WITH MORE THAN ONE EMPLOYEE).

EXAMPLES OF CITIES AND/OR STATES IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY/PRACTICE:

- [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#)
- [Colorado](#)
- [St Louis, Missouri](#)
- [Seattle, Washington](#)
- [Chicago, Illinois](#)
- [Pierce County, Washington](#)

RESOURCES

- [Employment Pathways for Boys and Young Men of Color CLASP](#)
- [Building Back Better: A National Plan for Youth Employment](#)
- [Federal Ban the Box Bill](#)
- [What Does California Owe Its Incarcerated Firefighters?](#)
- [Rhyhart, Rebecca \(May 2021\) Recommendations for the Use of American Rescue Plan Funds in Philadelphia](#)
- [Louisville Black Business Incubator](#)
- [To Expand the Economy, Invest in Black Businesses](#)

INCARCERATION ALTERNATIVES

Addressing the Prison Industrial Complex

(Interrupting the Cycle of Violence)

In order to alleviate the disproportionate impacts of incarceration on Black people, steps towards seeing Black children as children, focusing more on restorative justice practices, and tackling root causes of actions need to be addressed.

-CU Staff



CHALLENGES

Adding alternatives to incarceration to the current justice system is halted by many challenges such as financial support and alterations to perceptions and biases. There are several alternatives for incarceration that exist, but are underutilized and underfunded.

The punitive and racist justice system has deep roots in our society, which breeds issues in other intersecting sectors such as the education system (i.e., school to prison pipelines).

Most crime does not warrant the isolation, abuse, and exploitation that comes with incarceration. Additionally, other options need to be made accessible, as well as making incarceration a restorative process instead of a process that exacerbates root problems.

OPPORTUNITIES

Cities can focus more on incarceration alternatives and policy that are not only more effective, but cost cities less money to implement versus incarceration.

The Families Against Mandatory Minimums have highlighted the use of alternatives such as drug courts, probation/community corrections, halfway houses, house confinement and monitoring, fines and restitution, community service, mental health courts, restorative justice, and more.

THE U.S. CRIMINAL JUSTICE
SYSTEMS INCARCERATES 2.3
MILLION PEOPLE

BEST PRACTICES

Correctional Education is a method of reducing recidivism with training opportunities for returning citizens. Correctional education programs involves adult education, career and technical training, adult post secondary education, and special education.

Community service restitution holds offenders accountable without the harshness of prisons.

Several states have shifted to eliminate mandatory minimum sentencing.

The Young Adult Opportunity Program provides youthful defendants with structure and access to employment, counseling, and treatment resources.

ESTIMATED COST TO IMPLEMENT POLICY/PRACTICE:

The average cost for correctional education ranged between \$6-15 million.

A comprehensive drug court system typically costs between \$2,500-\$4,000 annually for each offender.

For Jail Diversion programs, costs average between \$60-\$300,000 in some states.

THE U.S. SPENDS MORE THAN \$80 BILLION A YEAR TO PAY FOR PUBLIC CORRECTIONS AGENCIES (I.E., PRISONS, JAIL, PAROLE, AND PROBATION), HOWEVER, WHEN LOOKING AT OTHER RELATED COSTS (I.E., JUDICIAL/LEGAL COST, POLICING), THIS COST INCREASES SIGNIFICANTLY.

EXAMPLES OF CITIES AND/OR STATES IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY/PRACTICE:

- ② [State of New York](#)
- ② [State of Massachusetts](#)
- ② [State of Illinois](#)
- ② [Austin, Texas](#)

RESOURCES

- ② [The Hidden Cost of Incarceration](#)
- ② [Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020](#)
- ② [The State of Illinois Ending Cash Bail](#)
- ② [Alternatives to Incarceration](#)
- ② [The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration](#)
- ② [From Incarceration to Reentry: A Look at Trends, Gaps, and Opportunities in Correctional Education and Training](#)
- ② [A Viable Alternative?: Alternatives to Incarceration across Seven Federal Districts](#)
- ② [Federal Alternative-to-Incarceration Court Programs](#)
- ② [Young Adult Opportunity Program US District Court- Southern District of New York](#)

YOUNG LEADER PERSPECTIVE

Throughout the year, the 2021 Young Leader Fellowship (YLF) co-hosted several Youth Congress events that aimed to uplift young leaders (age 14-24 years old) from cities across the country. The YLF seeks to build a pipeline of Black leaders committed to making sure all children grow up in safe, healthy, and hopeful communities while reducing the homicide and shooting rates of Black men and boys. The Youth Congress also focused on elevating young leader voices, ideas, programs, projects, and organizations working to create safe, healthy, and hopeful communities. The congresses included youth from Denver, Buffalo, Louisville, Baton Rouge, and the Youth Violence Prevention Research Center located in Louisville, KY. The solutions proposed by these young leaders reflect the solutions in the beginning of this guide along with countless people on the ground calling for change.

...Communities should allow space for youth town halls to have open dialogue among leaders on policy, programs, and practice.

-CU Young Leader

FACILITATED AND DEVELOPED BY YOUNG LEADERS, THEY'VE CENTERED THE FOLLOWING THEMES:

- **ACTIVISM**
- **COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**
- **SOCIAL JUSTICE AT THE ROOT OF YOUTH WORK**
- **JOY & HEALING**
- **FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**
- **COMMUNITY BUILDING AND COMMUNITY CARE**
- **SAFE & AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
- **PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUTH AND FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS**

THE YOUNG LEADERS IN THE THREE CONGRESSES UPLIFTED THE FOLLOWING SOLUTIONS:

- ⑧ Mental health has been a taboo topic in Black communities. To remain whole, there is a need to confront and heal from trauma.
- ⑧ Communities therefore can invest in trauma informed care in schools and recreation centers.
- ⑧ There is a need for an increase of youth community centers that provide sanctuary and recreation. Cities must invest and sustain in these centers with funding and resources.
- ⑧ To promote more youth voice on a systemic level, communities should allow space for youth town halls to have open dialogue among leaders on policy, programs, and practice. Accountability measures should be put in place to ensure youth voices are heard and action takes place.
- ⑧ Credit is a barrier to housing and employment. Through credit, generations have been excluded from careers and housing that contribute to the economic stress of families, thus contributing to community violence. Federal, state, and cities can rally behind a ban on credit as a background check for employment and provide access to affordable housing despite their credit score.
- ⑧ Banning the box on criminal charges on job and housing applications will help marginalized people build a better foundation for their future.
- ⑧ City budgets should reflect the needs of the community. Young people should be a part of the development and decision making of public funds.
- ⑧ Establish community land trusts to control the property costs and safety in the communities most affected.
- ⑧ More investment into education and access to technical and trade occupations is crucial. Investing in vocational education includes funding for classes in High School, job apprenticeships, and incentives for businesses to hire the most affected.

cities united

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Cities United team for their contributions to
“Investing in Safe, Healthy, & Hopeful Communities”

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