



# Acknowledgements

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# “Now is the time.”



Anthony D. Smith  
Executive Director  
Cities United



Now is the time for us to Reimagine Public Safety, to dream of a world where young Black men and boys, and their families are safe, healthy and hopeful.

To do this, we must be willing to move away from systems that punish and control, to ones that are grounded in justice, restoration and healing - our new models must center those most negatively impacted. As we strive to reduce the epidemic of homicides and shootings of black men and boys, we must be innovative in our approach and with any other disease, we must evolve our thinking as it spreads.

Reimagining Public Safety will not be an easy, cheap or comfortable process - it will take bold leadership at all levels - leadership that values Black Lives.

To truly Reimagine Public Safety, we must leverage our political and financial capital to invest in solutions that are supported and led by community members and community-based organizations that represent and work directly with those most impacted by community and state violence. We must also recognize that our current models are inherently racist and are designed to disrupt the quality of life in Black communities.

I believe now is our time, and with your leadership - we can Reimagine Public Safety to create safe, healthy and hopeful communities for all of us!

Now is the time to analyze the components of public safety that need to change. From our work on the ground, at the hospital, in city hall, in policy, and in funding, we must reimagine how these function.

I want to extend my gratitude to the Cities United team members who contributed to this resource. We look forward to being on this journey with you as we

Reimagine Public safety and dream of the world we ALL deserve.

## REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY

15 REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY Solutions  
Leveraging Political & Public Will to Move Towards Safe, Healthy & Hopeful Communities for All

### INTERRUPT THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

- Violence Interruption
- Street Outreach
- Hospital-based Violence Intervention
- Diversion and Alternate Pathways
- Crisis Response Strategy
- Collaborative Public Safety Funding Models

### DISMANTLE SYSTEMS OF INEQUITY

- Boost Education
- Expand Healing Centered Engagement
- Build an Inclusive Economy
- Bolster Family Supports

### INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Estimate Cost of Public Safety
- Assess City and Philanthropic Spending
- Advance Antiracist Policy
- Implement Asset-Framed Communications Strategy

# Why We Must Reimagine Public Safety

In 1979, the Surgeon General of the United States, Julius Richmond, issued a special report that identified violence as preventable and if treated would improve the overall health of the country. Since then, the CDC, WHO, government agencies and both public and private universities have applied the tools of epidemiology to track the prevalence of violence, identify risks and protective factors and evaluate what works.

One of the startling facts found, dating back to 1985 to current day, is that young Black males ages 15-24 are disproportionately impacted by fatal and non-fatal shootings. Cities United’s Violence Trends, Patterns and Consequences for Black Males in America: A Call to Action” highlighted that the “**rates of fatal and nonfatal violent victimization are far higher for young Black males living in neighborhoods of high disadvantage**”.

Traditional methods of public safety address the crime, the perpetrator and minimally the victims. As a result, police-involved shootings and in-custody deaths continue without long term justice for the victims, family or their communities. **According to the Gun Violence Archives (2020), between 2014-2020 there have been approximately 13,935 officer involved incidents where the subject- suspect was injured or killed.** The country has continued to mourn the loss and quality of life following officer involved incidents from George Floyd (2020) and Breonna Taylor (2020); to Atatiana Jefferson (2019) and Stephan Clark (2018); to Botham Jean (2018) and Philando Castille (2016); to Alton Sterling (2016) and Michelle Cusseaux (2015); to Freddie Gray (2015) and Aura Rosser (2014); to Eric Garner (2014) and Akai Gurley (2014); to Tamir Rice (2014) and Michael Brown (2014); to Rekia Boyd (2012) and Sean Bell (2006); to Rodney King (1991).

Police-involved shootings and in-custody injuries are reason enough to reimagine public safety, however it is not the only reason. Homicides continue to be one of the 10 leading causes of violence-related injury deaths in the county and number one leading cause among Black men and women (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Research conducted by Giffords Law Center (2020) and the National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice (2020) both highlighted the following potential links between police-involved shootings and community violence:

- Communities lack trust and confidence in law enforcement and thus don't call for help and thus handle problems themselves.
- Changes in police activity due to economic downturn, fear of getting in trouble and/or unforeseen changes such as COVID-19.

Understanding violence through a public health lens addresses the crime as well as the environment in which the crime took place. This is done by taking into account the risk and protective factors that surround a person, their community and the community in which they live. **Reimagining public safety means identifying community-led and/or supported solutions and strategies that stop the bleeding today and investing in the dismantlement of the systems of inequity.**



# Moving to Safe, Healthy, & Hopeful Communities

Reimagining public safety means leveraging political and financial capital to invest in solutions supported and led by community members and community-based organizations that represent and work directly with individuals most impacted by community and state violence. These solutions treat violence in the moment or within hours or days of the occurrence.

Solutions include:

- violence interruption;
- street outreach;
- hospital-based violence intervention; diversion and alternative pathways; coordinated crisis response team;
- as well as collaborative public safety funding models.

Reimagining public safety is also defined as the recognition of historical and current systems of inequity that create conditions that negatively impact the overall quality of life in Black communities. Investing in solutions that address these inequities that lead to community violence focuses on solutions such as:

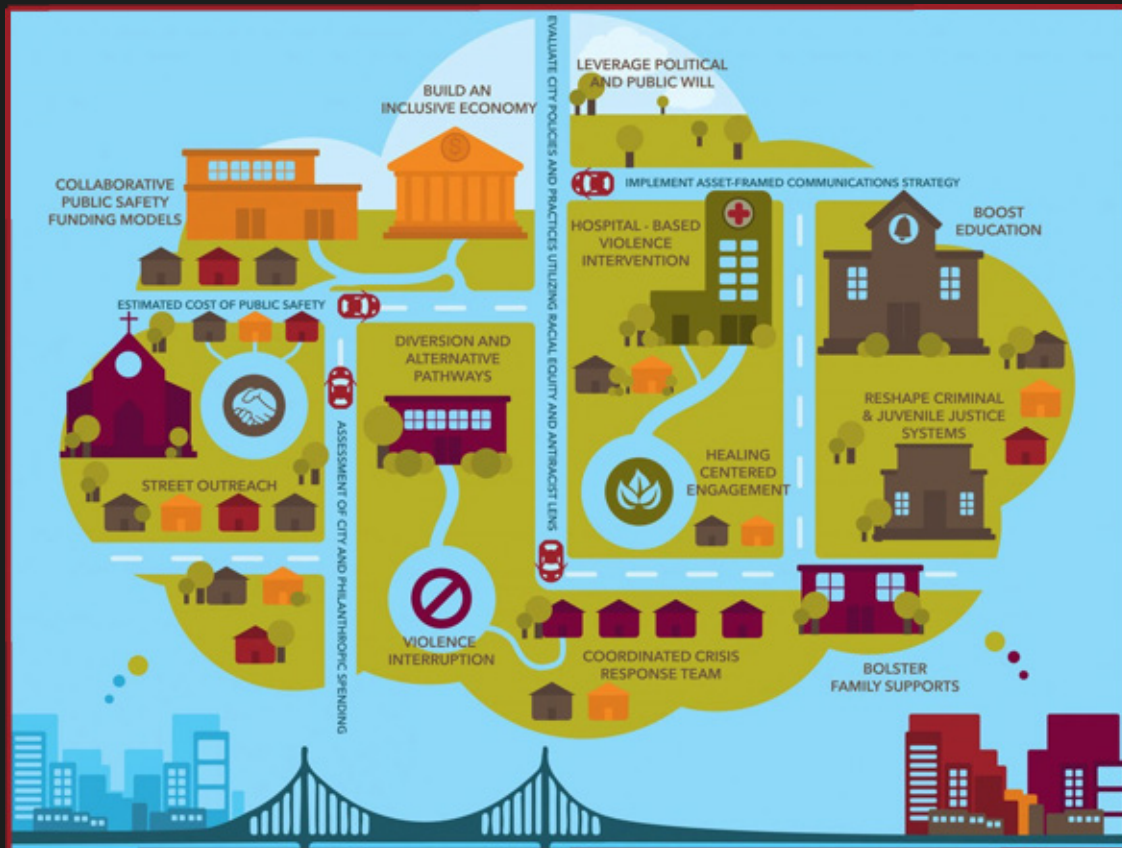
- boosting education;
- expanding healing centered engagement;
- building and inclusive economy;
- reshaping criminal and juvenile justice systems;
- and bolstering family support.

Reimagining public safety will not be an easy, cheap or comfortable process. However, the cost of violence in America outweighs the discomfort of deconstructing a system that oppresses nearly 30% of its population. In *Cities United's Violence Trends, Patterns and Consequences for Black Males in America: A Call to Action*, it was reported that homicides cost the United States approximately \$8.6 million per homicide a year. This 8.6 million does not include the loss potential or the cost of chronic trauma on families and communities.

Lastly, reimagining public safety includes investing in action planning, relationship management, information gathering, consistent evaluation, and effective communication/messaging platforms. More specifically, to address both the short and long-term variables related to community and police violence that disproportionately impacts Black communities, efforts must include the following:

- estimating cost of public safety;
- assessing city and philanthropic spending
- evaluating city policies and practices utilizing anti-racist framework
- implementing asset-framed communications strategy

Reimagining public safety means identifying community-led and/or supported solutions and strategies that stop the bleeding today and investing in the dismantlement of the systems of inequity. Cities United encourages its mayors and all city leaders to move towards implementing and addressing all of the solutions identified below. Definitions and examples of each solution will be highlighted in upcoming pages.



Graphic illustrated by Daphne Walker, Communications Outreach Specialist, Russell: A Place of Promise, Cities United.

# *Moving to Safe, Healthy, & Hopeful Communities: Interrupting the Cycle of Violence*

*“We must interrupt the cycle of community violence at the neighborhood level, partnering with youth, family and community leaders who are directly impacted” - A Strategic Resource for Mayors on Disrupting Community Violence and Preventing Homicides (Cities United, 2018)*

## **STREET OUTREACH & VIOLENCE INTERRUPTION**

Street outreach programs employ a public health approach to violence intervention, beginning with the premise that gun violence is a contagious disease, the spread of which can be interrupted. To do so, street outreach organizations provide both immediate crisis response services and long-term stabilization support to individuals and communities affected by gun violence. Street outreach programs deploy violence interrupters—often former members of street groups, with the credibility to speak to at-risk individuals—who help prevent shootings by identifying and mediating conflicts immediately in a community and working with individuals most at risk. Programs with violence interruption at their core use community engagement to stop lethal violence before it occurs, prevent its spread by interrupting ongoing conflicts, and develop community norms toward avoiding violence. In many cases, violence interruption programs include peer-based mentorship, job training, and other community support designed to help people overcome the oppressive socioeconomic inequality that breeds violence in certain communities. Street Outreach workers and violence interrupters have a common goal but have different roles. Violence interrupters are tasked with detecting violent events—such as acts of retaliation—and engaging tactics before they occur. Violence interrupters are trained in mediation and have the situational awareness to assess violent or potentially violent situations. Meanwhile, street outreach workers are similar to case managers, connectors, behavior coaches and mentors focused on short- and long-term risk factors for violence.





## EXAMPLES

- **Cure Violence** is a violence interruption strategy working to interrupt violence at the source and treats violence as a disease that spreads from person to person. Three core components of this strategy include interrupting the transmission of violence, reducing the risk of violent acts by those at the highest risk and changing community norms. The model relies on the efforts of community outreach workers who have deep and sustained relationships in the neighborhoods where they operate, enabling them to effectively engage with youth and community. The Cure Violence Model has been replicated in Cities United partner cities such as Baltimore, MD, Philadelphia, PA, Washington DC, New Orleans, LA and Pittsburgh, PA.
- **Operation Better Black, Inc** in the Homewood neighborhood in Pittsburgh, PA engages community development and organizing tactics such as street outreach to “strategize, organize and mobilize block by block”. It operates off the understanding that residents have the ability to do for themselves when provided the resources; thus, it engages the community to drive and lead their vision for their neighborhood.
- **No More Red Dots** in Louisville, KY is a campaign/movement that employs a comprehensive strategy for reducing the numbers of red dots that appear on the maps and impacting the numbers of youth/young adults who make choices resulting in them being in the pipeline that leads to prison. No More Red Dots deploys violence interrupters to intervene in potentially fatal situations through street outreach and various prevention programming.

*See reference section to learn more and view additional resources.*

# *Hospital-Based Violence Intervention*

**Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs)** focus on the role that medical staff and their community-based partners can play to reduce violence by engaging with young people impacted by violence as soon as possible after a shooting-related hospitalization. The National Network of Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (NNHVIP) views this time as the “golden moment of opportunity at the hospital bedside to engage with a victim of violence and to stop the cycle of violence.” An intervention specialist—typically a public health professional from the community who is a credible messenger—connects the young person to trauma-informed services, mentoring, home visits and follow-up intended to promote both mental and physical recovery.

## **HVIPS HAVE FOUR KEY INGREDIENTS:**

1. **Intervention:** Begins with a brief intervention in the emergency department or at the hospital bedside.
2. **Care:** Followed by intensive, long-term community-based case management services in the months following the injury.
3. **Follow-up:** Crisis intervention, linkages to community-based services, mentoring, home visits, follow-up assistance, and long-term case management are provided by culturally competent frontline workers who are from the same or similar communities as the clients they serve.
4. **Addressing Social Determinants of Health:** HVIPs elevate the issues of the revolving door of violence while addressing inequity and building partnerships with communities and survivors of violence.



## EXAMPLES

- **D.L.I.V.E. (Detroit Life is Valuable Everyday)** is a hospital-based, community-focused violence intervention initiative out of Detroit Medical Center-Sinai Grace Hospital with the Wayne State University Department of Emergency Medicine. D.L.I.V.E. works holistically with youth/young adults who have sustained acute intentional violence trauma. They work with the youth/young adults by engaging them at their bedside to cultivate a partnership that aims to collaboratively create a plan for transformation over the next 6-12 months. D.L.I.V.E. works with individual on a host of goals ranging from traumatic stress disorder to legal advocacy and more.
- **Next Step** is a hospital-based violence intervention program operated by Hennepin Healthcare and North Memorial in partnership with the City of Minneapolis with support from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety-Office of Justice Programs. Similar to D.L.I.V.E., Next Step works to provide resources and support to individuals who enter the hospital due to gunshot or stabbing.
- **Pivot to Peace** is a hospital-based violence intervention program in Louisville, KY that works with the individual who was shot or stabbed as well as their families. Pivot to Peace's caseworkers support families and help them reduce retaliation and connect to resources. Pivot to Peace has seen as 96% success rate for those individuals who opt into the program.

*“We’re changing kids’ lives. Changing what they see as possible. Changing how others see our community.” - Gideon’s Army*

# *Diversion and Alternate Pathways*

**Diversion** is based on the belief that formal system processing and/or incarceration of youths leads to a greater likelihood of future criminal behavior, and that alternatives such as decriminalization, deinstitutionalization, and diversion are better for long-term youth development. By creating informal channels to navigate youths (generally those who have committed non-violent, first-time, or status offenses) away from traditional processing, diversion programs serve as opportunities to correct youths' antisocial behaviors with the assistance of their families and the community, rather than through the justice system. There are a wide variety of diversion program types, including: teen/youth courts; mental health courts; restorative justice interventions; truancy prevention/intervention programs; and mentoring programs.

## **THERE ARE TWO PRIMARY PATHWAYS TO DIVERSION PROGRAMS: INFORMAL OR FORMAL.**

- Informal or caution, warning programs are the least invasive and serve to divert youths out of the system with little to no further action.
- Formal diversion programs usually occur after arrest and involve 1) a justice component (police decisions, probation supervision, court processes), and 2) a service component.



## EXAMPLES

- **Advance Peace** interrupts gun violence in American urban neighborhoods by providing an **alternate pathway** known as transformational opportunities to young men involved in lethal firearm offenses and placing them in a high-touch, personalized fellowship—the Peacemaker Fellowship®. By working with and supporting a targeted group of individuals at the core of gun hostilities, Advance Peace bridges the gap between anti-violence programming and a hard-to-reach population at the center of violence, thus breaking the cycle of gun hostilities and altering the trajectory of these men’s lives. Through Advance Peace Fellowships in Richmond, CA saw a reduction in firearm assaults by 85% and homicides by 65%. Sacramento saw a reduction of assaults by 27% and homicides by 21%.
- **Gideon’s Army** is a community-based, grassroots organization located in Nashville, TN that works to design programs, based on contemporary interpretations of restorative justice. It engages youth in the schools and within their communities to implement programs that address school push out, youth violence, policing and juvenile justice. It focuses on dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline through social activism by children, families and the community.
- **PowerCorpsPHL** is a cross-sector collaborative model that provides an **alternate pathway** to disconnected young adults and individuals re-entering the community from incarceration. It provides access to career pathways through fellowships and post- secondary education support, industry academies or opportunity to become a PowerCorpsPHL assistant crew leader.

*“We believe a healthy mind and body creates a more peaceful community.”*  
- Erica Ford, Founder, LIFE Camp, Inc.



## *Coordinated Crisis Response Team*

A **coordinated crisis response team** is a cross sector response to violent occurrences. This team operates under the premise that violence inflicts trauma on entire families and communities and thus the response should focus on both the individual, family and community that experienced the trauma. It is a coordinated system that is co-led by community-based partners who specialize in trauma response, violence interruption and street outreach. Partners deploy a range of resources focused on promoting peace, celebrating life, decreasing retaliation, providing trauma and healing supports as well as sharing wrap around services for the individuals involved, family and friends as well as the neighborhood/community where the incident took place.

The coordinated response team organizes to ensure that resources are deployed to support the individual, family and/or community at each of the following pivotal areas, if applicable: scene of incident, family/friend home, hospital and/or funeral. The team also works to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of key systems players such as:

- community-based organizations,
- emergency medical services,
- school system,
- faith community,
- elected officials,
- police department,
- and media.

## EXAMPLES

- **Life Camp, Inc.** is a frontline gun violence prevention and intervention team in New York City. It engages with youth and families who have been impacted by violence to secure the tools they need to succeed. Life Camp deploys their violence intervention and prevention system, youth mentorship programs and PeaceMobile to holistically address trauma following violence as well as other life stressors. The violence intervention and prevention system advances a strategic partnership which is defined as a multiagency and multidisciplinary collective that works together to provide wraparound services that meet the needs of communities most impacted by violence in New York City.
- **Neighborhood Resilience Project’s Trauma Response Team** is a collaborative initiative in Pittsburgh, PA and across Allegheny County. It utilizes the Trauma Informed Community Development framework to “establish and promote resilient healing and healthy communities so that people can be healthy enough to sustain opportunity and realize their potential” (Neighborhood Resilience Project). The Trauma Response Team addresses the needs of the family and friends following a homicide focused on reducing retaliation and working towards long-term interventions identified by the community.



# *Moving to Safe, Healthy & Hopeful Communities: Dismantling Systems of Inequity*

*“In the last 20 years, the number of Black students attending college has more than doubled. The U.S. has come a long way from when it was illegal to educate enslaved people, but there is still much work to be done.” – Soloman’s Plan: A Gift of Education from a Father to His Son by Ron Walker, Executive Director, COSEBOC (Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color)*

## **BOOST EDUCATION**

Education is the cornerstone of ensuring health, success and well-being as young people grow into adulthood. As a social determinant of health, education is influenced by and also influences the conditions where an individual lives, works, learns and plays. Boosting education is defined as strengthening the assets that allow young Black men and boys to learn in an equitable environment that responds to their unique needs. The Center for Education Equity (CEE), operated by MAEC (Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc) in partnership with AIR (American Institutes for Research) and WestEd, defines this as educational equity. CEE asserts that “educational equity means that every student has access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/or family income.”

Boosting education, or creating educational equity, must address inequities that impact young Black men and boys at all levels of change.

*Highlight:* The Community School model recognizes that there are multiple factors that contribute to learning. Its framework is rooted in stakeholder engagement that is collaborative and emphasizes capacity building. It centers students and includes authentic family engagement. Community schools can be found in the following Cities United partner cities: Philadelphia, PA, Buffalo, NY, Milwaukee, WI and Minneapolis, MN.



Utilizing systems thinking, as explained by Michael Goodman's The Iceberg Model, Cities United encourages mayors, city representatives, young leaders and community partners to strive towards the following:

### **EVENTS**

Increase access to opportunities, resources and supports based on the strengths of young Black men and boys. This includes access to quality early childhood education, school supplies, safe passage to and from school, mental health practitioners as well as culturally representative teachers and administrators.

### **PATTERNS**

Increase educational outcomes that lead to high school graduation that extends to ensuring their capacity to participate in college, career and community, based on their dreams and desires. This includes keeping young Black men and boys in the learning environment by addressing punitive disciplinary policies such as truancy laws, dress codes and zero tolerance policies.

### **STRUCTURES**

Create and sustain positive, inclusive school cultures that advance equitable systemic policies, procedures and practices. This includes increasing student access to rigorous curriculum, creating a school culture that uplifts culturally responsive family and community engagement and enhances effective partnerships to build positive youth development (MAEC's Ecosystem of Schools).

### **MENTAL MODELS**

Believe that young Black men and boys are assets in their communities and schools. Believe that they already have the capacity and potential to succeed in life, and what they require is systems change, support and resources to make their dreams and goals a reality. (A Strategic Resource for Mayors on Disrupting Community Violence and Preventing Homicides.

# *Expand Healing Centered Engagement*

*“Trauma is a fact of life. It does not, however, have to be a life sentence.”*

*– Peter A. Levine via “Trauma Across Generations” presentation by Sam Simmons, LADC, Behavioral Consultant (2020, Samuel Simmons Consulting)*

Expanding Healing Centered Engagement dedicated to young Black men and boys, their families and their communities is a critical component of reimagining public safety. At Cities United we understand that apart from the devastating impact on the well-being of young Black males, violence inflicts trauma on entire families and communities. Research concludes that exposure to trauma and adverse childhood experiences— including poverty, state and community violence, abuse or neglect— can lead to diminished health and life outcomes for young people as they grow into adulthood. Researcher, Dr. Kenneth Hardy, explains that “racial oppression is a traumatic form of interpersonal violence, which can lacerate the spirit, scar the soul, and puncture the psyche.” He also states that “many youth of color, like their adult counterparts suffer from the race-related trauma wound of rage”. Thus, Cities United encourages stakeholders to expand healing centered engagement throughout public safety efforts in order to address the multiple forms of trauma experienced as well as the resulting symptoms.

Healing Centered Engagement is rooted in the understanding that young Black men and boys are more than what they’ve gone through. It is defined by professor and activist, Dr. Shawn Ginwright, as a holistic approach that involves culture, spirituality, civic action and collective healing. According to Ginwright (2018), “a healing centered engagement views trauma not simply as an individual isolated experience, but rather highlights the ways in which trauma and healing are experienced collectively”.

*Highlight:* Cognitive behavior programs such as the Pathways Program operated out of the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement in Washington, DC, deploys a variation of cognitive behavioral therapy. Cognitive behavioral therapy addresses the thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions that led to the unwanted behavior i.e. violence. The Pathways Program provides wraparound supports including mental health services to support participants as they make the choice to change their lives by leveraging their strengths with subsidized employment.

Utilizing systems thinking, as explained by Michael Goodman's The Iceberg Model, expanding healing centered engagement includes the following:

### **EVENTS**

Increase access to mental health professional following a traumatic event and increase awareness of healing centered strategies and local resources. This includes awareness campaigns, resource fairs, door knocking campaigns as well as deploying community trauma response teams following a violent occurrence.

### **PATTERNS**

Prevent exposure, increase access to mental health resources that address the lived experiences of young Black men and boys and their families, and treat the symptoms of trauma. This includes providing free or reduced cost and consistent, mental health professionals including grief and substance abuse counselors where young Black men and their families live, work, learn and/or play.

### **STRUCTURES**

Recognize and address the organizational and racial trauma potentially experienced when encountering institutions such as social service agencies, schools, law enforcement and/or hospitals. This includes applying a healing centered approach throughout institutional-led programs, practices and policies (city, state and/or organizational).

### **MENTAL MODELS**

Dispel myths that counteract healing such as "real men don't cry", "what happens in this house, stays in this house" or "Black people don't go to therapy". This also includes the belief that Black communities cause their own ailments by behaving adversely to White culture.

# *Build an Inclusive Economy*

Economic stability similar to, education, is a social determinant of health and thus it is influenced by and also influences the conditions where an individual lives, works, learns and plays. Many of the neighborhoods where young Black men and boys live have experienced decades of disinvestment and displacement, shutting them out of opportunities for economic upward mobility. Gun violence data shows a correlation between neighborhoods with concentrated poverty and concentrated community violence. As poverty has been inherited through generations of impoverished communities, so has violence. One shooting is, in theory, a result of decades of divestment, displacement, discrimination, and economic exploitation. At times behind a victim and a victimizer of violence and homicide is a history of an area that, by design in some instances, hasn't invested fully in all of its constituents. When communities are broken due to scarce resources, poverty transforms into a form of violence that affects many years before a gun is shot.

Building an Inclusive Economy is the investment in the people and communities that have been most impacted by systemic economic injustice. It includes removing the perceived lack of financial choices by working with individuals to understand their choices, define wealth for themselves and get on the path to legacy wealth, if desired (Dr. Pamela Jolly, *The Narrow Road*).

*Highlight:* Russell: A Place of Promise (RPOP) is an economic justice-based initiative focused on generating investments in the people and places that make the Russell neighborhood in Louisville, Kentucky special. The project is a collaboration of Cities United and the City of Louisville and fiscally sponsored by the Community Foundation of Louisville. RPOP aims to address unmet needs, avoid gentrification and rely on people who live in Russell to decide how the neighborhood grows.

*“This failure to invest in gun violence victim services is a missed opportunity by states to serve victims, interrupt the cycle of gun violence, and reduce gun violence overall.*

*-A Fund for Healing, Cities United and Everytown for Gun Safety*

Utilizing systems thinking, as explained by Michael Goodman's The Iceberg Model, building an inclusive economy includes the following:

### **EVENTS**

Expand access to financial capability supports. This includes activities such as financial education workshops, financial coaching, credit building and/or counseling, incentivized savings programs and/or asset ownership programs.

### **PATTERNS**

Interrupt cycles of poverty. This includes reducing or removing predatory financial services in neighborhoods with history of disinvestment as well as increasing access to short term federal and state benefits.

### **STRUCTURES**

Support individuals and families with asset ownership. This includes assessing lending policies, requirements and expectations related to education, homeownership, small businesses as well as matched savings programs.

### **MENTAL MODELS**

Promote opportunities for all to strive to financial stability and wealth. This includes dispelling myths such as “only rich people do that”, “I’m too broke to own a home”, “you can’t trust people of color to pay you back” or “if they weren’t so lazy or irresponsible...”

# *Bolster Family Support*

Family members affected by community violence require targeted support particularly in the aftermath of losing a loved one. Beyond the immediacy of healing from violence, family members also require support to protect their loved ones and raise healthy and successful young people. Family members who lose a loved one to community violence often may be unaware of services available to crime survivors or else unable to obtain those services because of their perceived involvement in the crime. According to the Department of Justice (DOJ) in their Vision 21: Transforming Victims' Services report, Black men and boys face barriers when trying to access victims' services and thus family support must be prioritized. Law enforcement may view family and friends as a potential offender and may even put them at risk for retaliation, instead of being seen as individuals who are most at risk of being a victim of community violence. Lastly, the definition of family must be extended to close friends and/or non-married significant others.

Bolstering Family Support following a shooting and/or homicide is the connection to services, engagement by city leaders, educators, healthcare providers and other institutions who serve young people and tools and resources to be able to advocate for themselves. Cities United in partnership with Everytown for Gun Safety reported that survivors of community violence require the following vital services: medical care, case management, criminal justice and legal advocacy, mental health care and housing accommodations.

*Highlight:* VOCA victim assistance funds are an underutilized resource to provide vital services to victims of gun violence. VOCA funding is federal funding sourced from the Crime Victims Fund; the assistance grants fund programs that provide direct assistance to victims of crime. the federal Office of Victim Services allocates VOCA victim assistance funding to states and territories based on population size. Each state and territory is then responsible for granting the funding to public agencies and nonprofit organizations (e.g., state or city government agencies and community-based service providers) that provide direct assistance to victims of crime.

Utilizing systems thinking, as explained by Michael Goodman’s The Iceberg Model, bolstering family support includes the following:

### **EVENTS**

Improve access and awareness of survivor services. This includes assessing and updating agency communications strategies, staffing and availability. This also includes advancing activities such as home visits, healing circles, trauma recovery groups as well as restorative justice practices and healing centered approaches.

### **PATTERNS**

Increase funding for survivor support services. This includes accessing and applying for resources such as VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) grants for violence reduction. Learn more by downloading “A Fund for Healing”. Funding should be allocated for the vital services identified above.

### **STRUCTURES**

Remove structural barriers that impact survivors of violence. This includes reviewing, advocating and advancing equitable policies and practices that take into account the perspective and experiences of individuals, families and friends who know what it’s like in the aftermath of violence. This also includes collaborating across sector to ensure quality and availability of supports and services.

### **MENTAL MODELS**

Address individual and agency biases that lead to survivors being treated unjustly. This includes addressing beliefs such as “birds of a feather” or “if you would’ve been better parents”.

# *Moving to Safe, Healthy & Hopeful Communities: Invest in Sustainability*

## ESTIMATE COST OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Gun violence costs the United States an estimated \$229 billion every single year. This includes direct costs like emergency transport, medical and mental health treatment, as well as law enforcement, court, and prison expenses. It also includes indirect costs like lost wages and reduced quality of life for survivors who live with permanent injuries and pain. In 2018, the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) determined in a series of studies of the cost per shooting in six U.S. cities. The lowest cost for a fatal shooting was in Mobile, Ala., (\$765,000) and the highest was in Stockton, Calif. (\$2.5 million). For cities working towards violence prevention, they would have to determine the cost of violence in their cities from medical costs, prison wages lost from victims, court costs, to household values in neighborhoods affected the most by violence. Programs, initiatives, and police aimed for violence prevention will actually increase revenue for cities when lives are saved.

For example, the City of Philadelphia released a “Report on the Economic Impact of Homicides” led by the Office of the City Controller. This study analyzed homicides and approximately 220 thousand residential property sales in Philadelphia from 2006-2018. They found that A single year reduction of homicides by 10 percent translates to about a \$13 million increase in property tax revenue. Reducing homicides by 10 percent annually for five years translates to a total increase of \$114 million in property tax revenue, including \$43 million in year five alone.



## ASSESS CITY AND PHILANTHROPIC SPENDING

Sustainability of a program and/or initiative is often the main obstacle for cities to maintain a successful drive towards violence prevention. Funding, or lack thereof, can add to the microcosm of how under resourced the most affected by violence are. The gaps in adequate funding in Black communities continue to widen the gap in opportunities and disparities in access to healthcare, education, jobs, etc. These gaps translate into the violence prevention as cities and philanthropic efforts to fund city leads and organizations are reduced to making the moral and political case to save lives. Groups on the ground working towards violence prevention, have had trouble sustaining their efforts also from lack of priority and funding from cities. In a report called “Black Funding Denied”, it stated that “the gap between current funding and funding/population parity for Black communities over three years in question is \$2 billion.”

For example, Oakland voters passed Measure Y and Z on November 2, 2004. By the last year of Measure Y, it provided approximately \$22 million annually to fund violence prevention programs, additional police officers, and fire services. Measure Y funds were generated through a new parcel tax along with a parking surcharge in commercial lots. Measure Y expired in December 2014. Oakland Public Safety and Services Violence Prevention Act (Measure Z). Passed by Oakland voters in November 2014, Measure Z provides approximately \$24 million every year for ten years to fund violence prevention and intervention programs, additional police officers, and fire services. Measure Z funds are generated through a parcel tax along with a parking surcharge in commercial lots.





## IMPLEMENT ASSET-FRAMED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Liberation and freedom movements declaring the humanity of Black people date back to the abolitionist movement in 1787. Declarations of “I Am a Man” and not property or a boy carried over to the Memphis sanitation strike in 1968. Bold affirmations of “Black is Beautiful” and “Black Power” rang loud throughout the 1960s and ‘70s. Black communities and its allies have stood up against myths portrayed in films such as “Birth of a Nation”; which portrayed Black men as unintelligent and sexually aggressive beings that needed to be violently dealt with in order to uphold American values. The myth of the dangerous Black male echoed through the War on Drugs and tough on crime legislation in the 1980’s which resulted in the mass incarceration of Black and Latinx men. These misperceptions have led to numerous injustices that advocates and allies continue to confront through movements such as Black Lives Matter. Researchers have found that such misperceptions can be internalized which impacts overall quality of life.

Implementing an asset framed communications strategy that centers young Black men and boys’ strengths, hopes and dreams. It asserts that they are assets in their communities and should be protected. This strategy elevates acknowledges loss of life and the dignity of life; highlights the need for collective healing and is transparent. It also uplifts youth, family and community voices. It emphasizes the importance of trust and relationships, shares lessons learned and aims to promote a public health approach to community violence.

## Evaluate city policies and practices utilizing racial equity and antiracist lens

Cities and states from California to Wisconsin have declared racism as a public health crisis or emergency, according to the American Public Health Association (2020). Racism as a public health crisis or emergency asserts that it, along with, the prejudice behaviors and resulting racial inequities are preventable. This recognition allows for racism to be treated as any other pandemic which is addressed, in simple terms, with four key questions:

- What is the problem?
- What are the causes?
- What effective policies and programs address the problem?
- What works and who does it work for?

This approach aims to understand both the causes and consequences by applying public health principles such as social justice and equity throughout the resulting programs, policies and practices. This includes advancing racial equity and antiracist policies. It is important that city leaders commit to being antiracist or someone who is supporting antiracist policy through their actions or expressed ideas (Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist*, 2019).

This includes deploying racial equity impact assessments. Race Forward defines a racial equity impact assessment as a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by propose action or decision. Examples of such assessments are being or have been employed in King County, WA, Seattle, WA, Iowa, Connecticut as well as St. Paul, MN (“Racial Equity Impact Assessment”, 2009).





## *What Now?*

Like any worthwhile transition in life, implementing the solutions highlighted throughout this brief will come with challenges, setbacks, disagreements and loss. However, we also know that this transition will be accompanied with joy, grace, innovation and lives saved! The Cities United team, advisory board and partners are committed to being on this journey alongside you. We are committed to being innovative, supportive, collaborative, flexible and to exceed expectations. We will continue to uplift and strive for social justice, equity, youth voice, collaboration and innovation in all that we do.

Join us!

## Join the Cities United Network

Cities United has grown to support a national network of mayors committed to working in partnership with community leaders, families, youth, philanthropic organizations, government officials, and other stakeholders to reduce the epidemic of homicide-related deaths and injuries plaguing Black men and boys. Join our monthly calls to learn about Cities United, progress in other partner cities and connect to other city representatives. Schedule a call to get started!

### **PARTICIPATE IN A SIGNATURE PROGRAM**

Cities United Partner Cities and representatives are invited to participate in one of our signature programs, strategic initiatives and/or networking events. Check out our website to learn more about our Roadmap Academy, Young Leader Fellowship, Policy & Practice Learning Series or our Annual Convening!

### **REQUEST COACHING AND/OR CAPACITY BUILDING**

Cities United offers a variety of coaching and capacity building opportunities focused on reimagining public safety and navigating the road to safe, healthy and hopeful communities. Support opportunities range from building and leveraging public and political will to comprehensive public safety planning to youth-adult partnership development. Apply for support through our website!

### **ABOUT CITIES UNITED**

Cities United supports a national network of mayors committed to creating safe, healthy and hopeful communities by reducing the epidemic of homicides and shootings among young Black men and boys ages 14-24 by 50% by 2025. We are committed to working alongside mayors and representatives from their communities to develop comprehensive and equitable strategies; implement healing centered solutions using a public health approach; promote cultural specific evaluation methodology and; plan for long-term sustainability.

Since 2011, Cities United has provided training and technical assistance to an increasing network of cities and continues to serve as a valuable resource. We offer a number of programs, services and guides to our partner cities in-kind or at a reduced rate with an ultimate goal of increasing the number of cities implementing comprehensive public safety plans rooted in social justice, equity, youth voice, collaboration and innovation.

We look forward to partnering with your city to create Safe, Healthy & Hopeful communities!

# References

## Violence Interruption

- What Cure Violence Does
- Cure Violence: A Public Health Model to Reduce Gun Violence
- Violence Interrupters Are Trying To Prevent People From Resorting To ‘Desperate Measures’ No More Red Dots

## Street Outreach

- Street Outreach from City of Chicago
- Developing a Successful Street Outreach Program Operation Better Block
- Press Release on Reduction in Crime in Pittsburgh
- How COVID-19 Has Increased the Need for Street Outreach Work

## Hospital-Based Violence Intervention

- Introduction to Hospital Based Violence Intervention
- Interrupting Violence From Within The Trauma Unit And Well Beyond <https://www.thehavi.org/>
- Cost of community violence to hospitals and health systems
- Hospital-based Violence Intervention: Practices and Policies to End the Cycle of Violence Next Step Program Minneapolis
- Detroit Life is Valuable Everyday (D.L.I.V.E.) Pivot to Peace (Louisville)

## Diversion and Alternate Pathways

- <https://gideonsarmy.com/what-were-doing/>
- <https://www.advancepeace.org/about/the-solution/> <http://powercorpsphl.org/about/>
- Diversion, Positive Youth Development, Restorative Practices: Connecting the Dots Youth/Teen Court Diversion Programs
- Teen Courts: A Focus on Research
- A Guide on Implementing a Teen Court by St. Clair County Teen Court

## Coordinated Crisis Response Team

- Information on Life Camp, Inc
- What is Trauma Informed Community Development? Neighborhood Resilience Project (Pittsburgh)

## Collaborative Public Safety Funding Models

- Annual Report of BEST Program
- Collaborative Safety Strategies Funding from City of Minneapolis
- Urban Institute’s Public Investment in Community Driven Safety Initiatives
- Center for Policing Equity’s Roadmap for Exploring New Models of Funding Public Safety Participatory Budgeting
- Safety Competitive Funding Opportunity (Seattle)

## Boost Education

- The Iceberg Principle
- Social Determinants of Health (CDC) Center for Educational Equity
- Introduction to Restorative Justice in Schools by Power U
- School to Prison Pipeline Brochure by the Advancement Project
- What is a Community School from Knox County Schools
- Community Schools COSEBOC
- Why do Racial Inequities Exist in School Disciplinary Policies States Leading for Equity

## Expand Healing Centered Engagement

- Healing Centered Engagement Framework by Dr. Shawn Ginwright
- Healing the Hidden Wounds of Racial Trauma by Dr. Kenneth Hardy
- Addressing Mental Health in the Black Community
- Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment Pathways Program
- Why CBT alone is not a trauma-informed approach
- Violence Prevention & Response: Promoting Wellness across the Lifespan Key Ingredients for Successful Trauma-Informed Care Implementation
- SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach

## Build an Inclusive Economy

- The Narrow Road by Dr. Pamela Jolly Russell: A Place of Promise
- Financial Capability Services
- Breaking the Cycle: From Poverty to Financial Security for All
- Expanding Opportunities for Boys and Young Men of Color Through Employment Subsidized employment can get more people working while economy is strong Youth Summer Jobs Programs: Aligning Ends and Means

## Reshape Criminal & Juvenile Justice Systems

- Race and the Criminal Justice System
- A Timeline of the Rise and Fall of ‘Tough on Crime’ Drug Sentencing A United Vision for a World Without Youth Prisons
- Race and the Drug War
- A Positive Youth Justice System (NICJR)
- Toward an Expanded City Role Supporting Youth in the Deep End of the Juvenile Justice System JustLeadership USA
- Juvenile Justice Reform(NLC) The Sentencing Project
- Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)
- Defund Police in Schools and Expand School-Based Mental Health Divest to save Black lives. Invest to heal communities
- The Bail Project
- “The Many Roads to Reintegration”: A 50-state report on laws restoring rights and opportunities National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction
- These Political Candidates Are Embracing Their Criminal Records
- 13th: A Lesson on Race, Justice, and Mass Incarceration

## Bolster Family Support

- A Fund for Healing
- SWAG, a sisterhood with a painful bond, hopes to combat violence in Lexington Zaeveion Dobson Foundation
- Village of Wisdom
- The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration
- Baltimore Ceasefire

## Estimate Cost of Public Safety

- A Roadmap for Exploring New Models of Funding Public Safety (Center for Policing Equity) Report on the Economic Impact of Homicides (City of Philadelphia)
- The True Cost of Gun Violence (NICJR)

## Assess City and Philanthropic Spending

- Philanthropy and Racial Justice (BMAFunders.org) Public Budgets (NLC)
- The Case for Funding Black-Led Social Change
- Black funding denied: Community foundation support for Black communities How the Philanthropic Sector Can Support Violence Prevention Activities Measure Y
- Legislation for Tax City Funding of Violence Prevention
- Milwaukee’s violence prevention program needs the steady support that a new sales tax could offer

## Implement Asset-Framed Communications Strategy

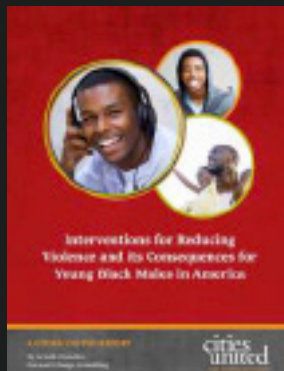
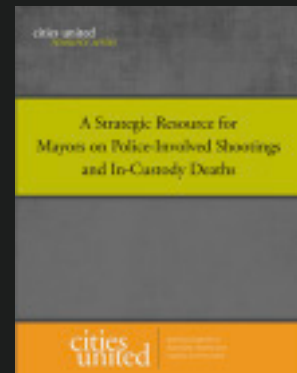
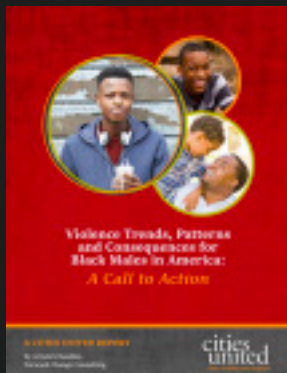
- The Myth of the Dangerous Black Man (Laura Cassidy)
- Media Representations and Impact on the Lives of Black Men and Boys Next Narrative for Black America
- Bme Community
- Building the We: Healing-Informed Governing for Racial Equity in Salinas Being Antiracist
- Racial Equity Tools Glossary
- Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide

## Evaluate city policies and practices utilizing racial equity and antiracist lens

- Uprooting Institutionalized Racism as Public Health Practice
- Key public health resources for anti-racism action: A curated list Declarations of Racism as a Public Health Issue
- 3 Principles for an Antiracist, Equitable State Response to COVID-19 — and a Stronger Recovery
- Racial Justice, Racial Equity, and Anti-Racism Reading List

# Cities United Resources

(Click to download or visit [www.citiesunited.org/#resources](http://www.citiesunited.org/#resources))

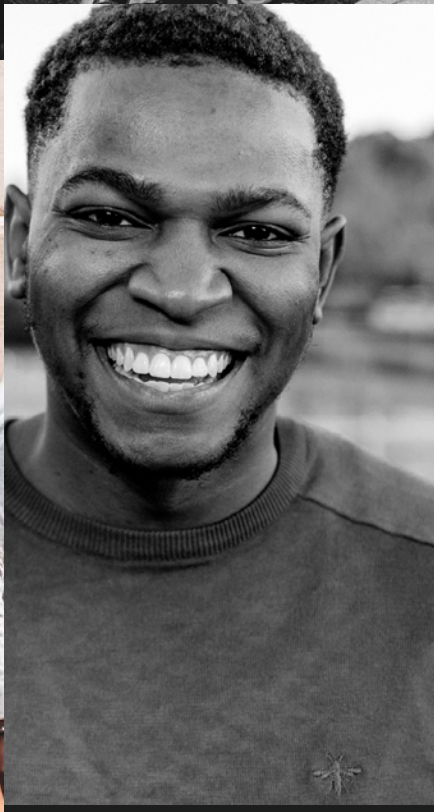




# Reimagine

Reimagining Public Safety:  
Moving Towards Safe, Healthy & Hopeful Communities  
Cities United, a project of Tides Center  
2020







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