

2022

City of New Orleans Violence Reduction Strategies



**The Honorable Mayor
LaToya Cantrell**

Prepared by the Mayor's Office
of Criminal Justice Coordination

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LETTER FROM CITY LEADERSHIP



**The Honorable
LaToya Cantrell**

Mayor, City of
New Orleans

To the New Orleans community:

We stand with you. We are outraged at the violence that is occurring in our city. The people that we have lost is unacceptable. We cannot normalize what is happening, and we must remain vigilant to fight the harm that is occurring in our communities.

Public safety is a chief priority of this administration. We understand that to prevent violence, we need both immediate and long-term solutions. We wish we could say that there are easy answers and simple solutions, but violence is a complex issue that is influenced by a range of factors, such as cumulative trauma, structural racism, and chronic life stressors.



Shaun Ferguson

Superintendent
of Police

Though there are no simple solutions, we are absolutely dedicated to reducing violence in our city. The gravity of this moment and the choices we make to address this spike in violence cannot be minimized. However, we cannot afford to not act because violence takes the lives of our neighbors, traumatizes our children, instills fear in our communities, and perpetuates racial and economic inequities. The strategies outlined within this document are a reflection of these complexities, as well as the severity of the violence in our city.

These strategies depend on coordination and collaboration. We need you, the community, to continue to stay engaged - to support the work outlined in this document and to hold us accountable for its implementation. Together, we will make our community safer and ensure that all people in every community have the resources they need to thrive.

In service and solidarity,



Tenisha Stevens

Criminal Justice
Commissioner

LaToya Cantrell *Tenisha Stevens* *Shaun Ferguson*

LaToya Cantrell

Tenisha Stevens

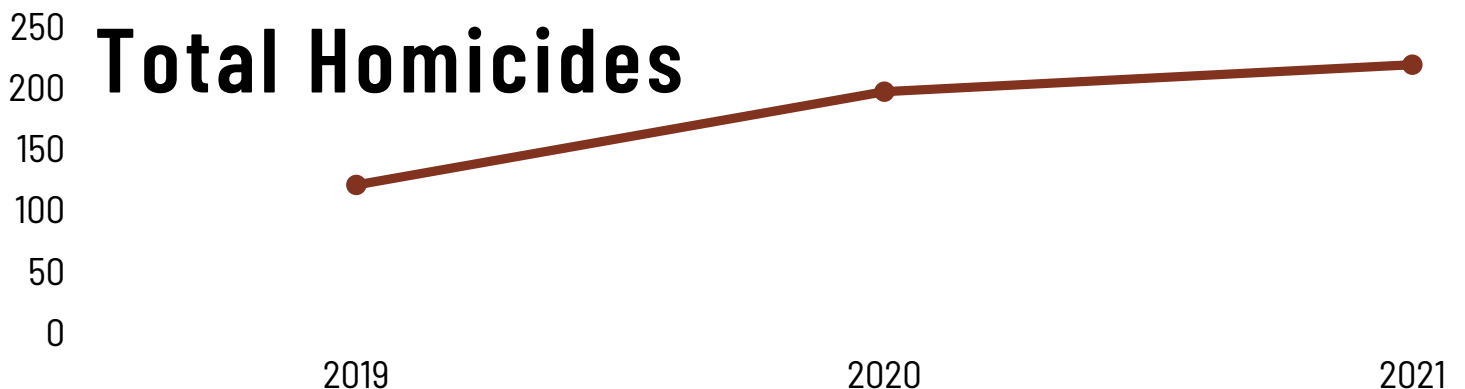
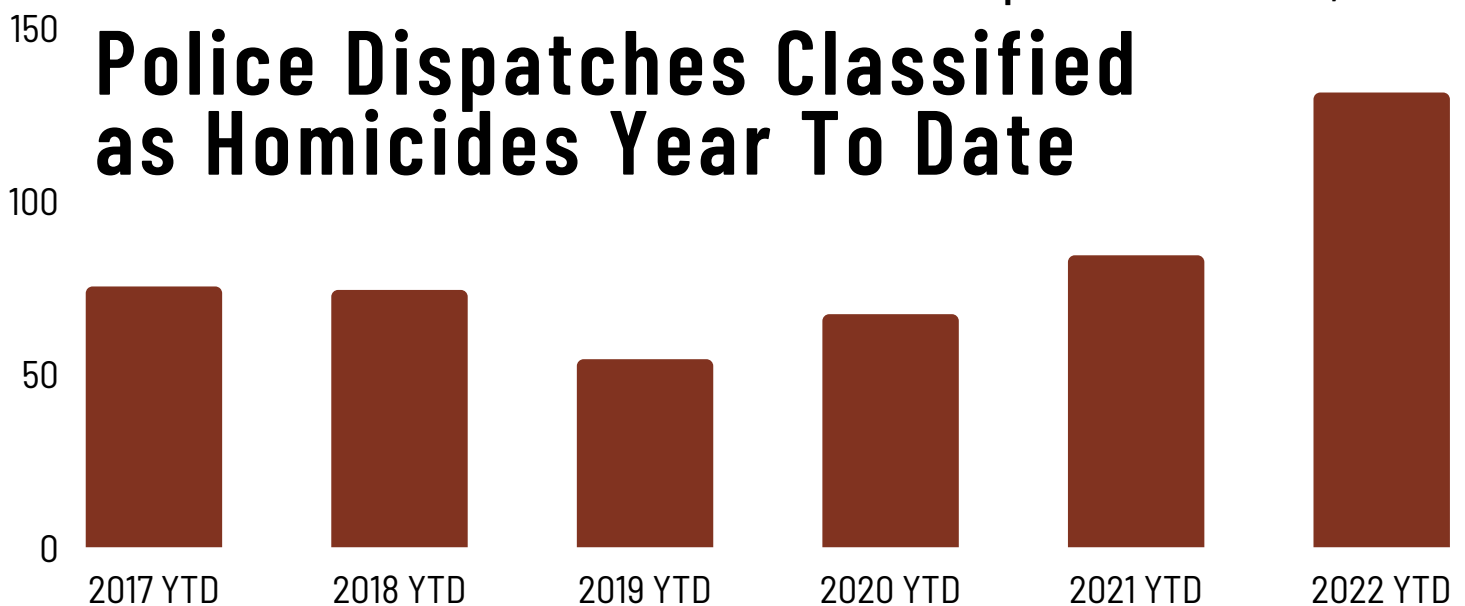
Shaun Ferguson

Introduction

After reaching a historic low in homicides in 2019, the City of New Orleans has experienced an increase in gun violence since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This spike in violence is not unique to New Orleans, but rather a trend that is happening nation-wide.

In 2021, New Orleans amassed 218 murders and is on track to out pace that number in 2022. As of June 13, 2022, there have been 137 homicides that have occurred in New Orleans.

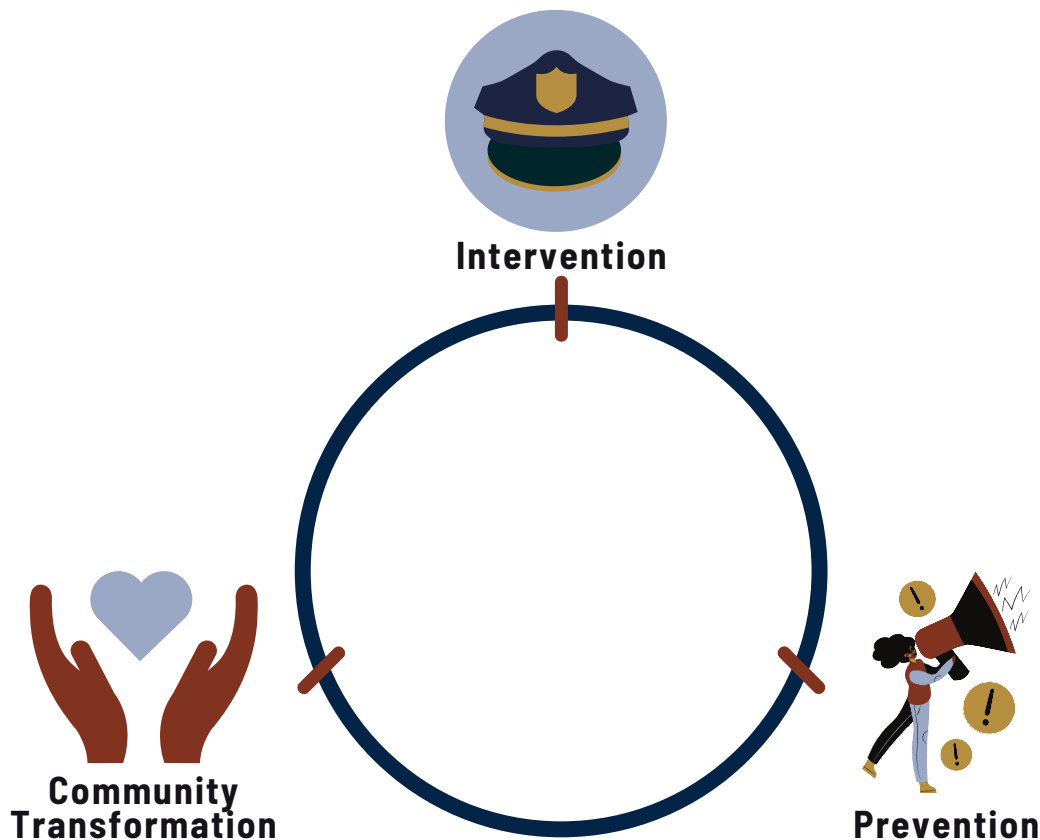
Updated as of June 13, 2022



Gun Violence Reduction Strategies

The City of New Orleans has three core strategies to mitigate the spike in violence: Prevention, Intervention, and Community Transformation. Combined, these strategies are designed to provide immediate stabilization as well as long-term, systemic solutions to prevent and reduce gun violence.

The primary focus of these strategies is intervention, as there is a clear need for short-term solutions to address the reoccurrence of violence and imminent threat of violence occurring in our city. Predominantly, these short-term solutions happen within the criminal legal system. However, we must call attention to the fact that solutions addressing the violence within the criminal legal system are reactive and cannot prevent violence in the long-run. Therefore, we also need solutions that are preventative and transform communities, which eliminate the underlying causes of violence. The goal of these solutions is to holistically, sustainably, and systemically prevent violence. We recognize that there must be both short-term and long-term solutions to address the spike in violence in our city and ultimately make our city a place where every residence can thrive without fear of violence.



Intervention

The Orleans Parish criminal legal system is designed to hold individuals accountable, especially those that have caused harm. The criminal legal system can be a powerful tool to interrupt cycles of violence and is a touchpoint to identify individuals to provide wrap-around services to reduce further criminal legal system involvement. In order to provide this accountability, the system actors must work in collaboration.

1 System Collaboration and Data Sharing

In order to advance data-driven policies and provide a platform for real-time data sharing, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Coordination (OCJC) has received a grant from Microsoft to create a data platform in 30 days that will serve as the building blocks for an Azure Cloud Environment. To create the exchanges between the system agencies to build the cloud environment, the OCJC has built a data warehouse, which houses the entirety of criminal legal system data. The warehouse is currently being validated by agencies. Once validation is complete, the OCJC will create data reports to bolster criminal legal system transparency and accountability.

2 Deflection and Diversion

We cannot arrest our way out of this spike in violence. We have seen that "broken windows" policing and prosecuting low-level alleged offenses in black and brown communities is ineffective and perpetuates structural racism. In fact, some cities and counties have found that by stopping prosecution of these kinds of low-level nonviolent crimes, violent crime rates actually went down. [1]

The City of New Orleans has invested in deflection and diversion efforts to reduce recidivism for individuals that have entered or are about to enter the criminal legal system. It is integral that we meet our people where they are, especially those that enter the criminal legal system due to mental illness or substance use.

The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program



The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program, launched in New Orleans in 2017, is a public health approach to policing for those who are criminalized for underlying and unmet behavioral health needs. The LEAD program currently operates out of the 8th police district of New Orleans, where officers exercise discretionary authority to divert individuals into community-based case management at NAMI New Orleans.

In an initial evaluation of LEAD, it was found that being in the LEAD program reduced summons issued by police from 29 to 6, reduced arrests from 17 to 11, and reduced time in jail from 707 days to 198 days, with the average length of stay being reduced from 42 days to 4 days.

In recognition of program success, the City of New Orleans was recently awarded \$175,000 to fund expansion efforts of LEAD.

Intervention

The Prosecutorial Diversion Program



Funded by the OCJC through the Safety and Justice Challenge, the Prosecutorial Diversion program is a voluntary alternative to criminal prosecution. The goals of the program are to hold individuals accountable for their actions, connect individuals within the criminal legal system to community-based services, prevent further system involvement, and reduce the caseload

burden on the criminal legal system. Once a participant successfully completes diversion, then their case will be refused/dismissed in court.

Research studies have found that diversion programs are likely to be cost-effective, as well as improve health outcomes for participants. [2]

Jail Release Navigator

The Jail Release Navigator position is designed to provide transition planning services and intensive case management to help to reduce rates of recidivism among incarcerated individuals dealing with mental health challenges and substance use needs through licensed social workers.

Pretrial Services

Pretrial Services promotes public safety by ensuring appearance in Court and compliance with release conditions as established for defendants. Pretrial services assesses defendants on the following three dimensions: risk to fail to appear (FTA) in court, risk to be re-arrested, and risk to be re-arrested for a new violent crime.

Pretrial Services also provides supervision and services to defendants through case management services.

The Evening Reporting Center (ERC)

The ERC is a 45-day alternative to detention program that provides individualized supervision to youth who would normally be held in secure pre-trial custody. Youth referred to the ERC participate in structured activities during after school hours, are supported in their school work, and provided valuable services to both occupy their time and aid in their personal growth when they are at high risk of offending.

3 Successful Reentry



It is imperative to public safety that we invest in the success of our citizens that are returning home after incarceration and detention, as effective re-entry initiatives are a key element of breaking cycles of incarceration and community harm.

The OCJC has convened the New Orleans Re-Entry Taskforce and Re-Entry Triage Team to ensure

coordination among re-entry stakeholders, which is a key element in reimagining our criminal legal system. As a part of these efforts, the OCJC, in partnership with DOC, hosted a successful Resource and Career Fair for Returning Citizens, in which over 35 service providers participated.

Intervention

4 Strategic Deployment of NOPD

Led by Superintendent Ferguson, the New Orleans Police Department is our first line of defense when violence occurs in our city. As such, we must invest accordingly and ensure that NOPD has every resource at its disposal to keep our citizens safe.



Focused Enforcement



Research shows that strategic deployment, as opposed to mass enforcement, is effective at reducing gun violence. [3] Therefore, the NOPD is utilizing intelligence to deploy resources to where there is the greatest need and target enforcement toward the small number of individuals behind violent offenses. Specifically, the NOPD is using analytic technology to help detectives identify correct perpetrators and officers have access to more comprehensive information through our virtual crime center platform, which is a platform that is shared with other regional law enforcement agencies.

Intervention

Strategic Partnerships

The NOPD is continuing strategic partnerships with regional law enforcement agencies to aid in the fight against violent crime. The agencies include: FBI; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; the Drug Enforcement Administration; U.S. Attorney's Office; Louisiana State Police; and the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office.



Operation Golden Eagle 2

To continue its mission to combat violent crime, the NOPD is once again partnering with LSP and will enact Operation Golden Eagle 2, a follow-up to the highly successful operation that ran during the summer of 2021.

At the end of May 2021, prior to Operation Golden Eagle's implementation, the city saw a spike in violent crime with an average of 82 violent crimes per week. By the end of Operation Golden Eagle in September 2021, that average was reduced to an average of 53 violent crimes per week.

The goals of this year's operation will be to:

- Increase public safety;
- Deter criminal activity;
- Identify victims of human trafficking;
- Locate and arrest fugitives from justice;
- Seize contraband;
- Remove as many illegal guns from circulation as possible;
- Implement a curfew plan for the summer that can be sustained with a truancy enforcement plan in the coming school year.

In addition to Operation Golden Eagle 2, the department will implement a pilot program this summer that will have officers in the department's eight field operations districts moving to 12-hour work shifts.

Community Policing and Engagement



The NOPD employs Problem-Oriented Policing—A proactive problem-solving approach that uses the SARA model to focus on proactive solutions, specific crime problems and achieving crime and fear reduction results.

Community policing is proven to prevent crime and is a force-multiplier and allow police to identify problems before they arise and become violent. [4]

Intervention

Recruitment and Retention

Despite leading the nation in constitutional policing and policing best practices, the NOPD, like all other law enforcement agencies in the country, is facing personnel shortages. Therefore, recruitment and retention has been a top priority of this administration. To bolster these efforts, the New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation was awarded \$900,000 to strengthen and advance recruitment efforts.

The City is also doing the following to address the personnel shortage:

- Convening a taskforce dedicated to NOPD Recruitment and Retention. The taskforce is dedicated to examining attrition, as well as identifying long-term, innovative solutions to address recruitment and retention. To implement these efforts, the Office of Criminal Justice Coordination has signed a CEA with the New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation to coordinate and bolster recruitment efforts.
- Conducting focus groups and department-wide survey to examine attrition and morale.
- Opening the New Orleans Police Department Firing Range to boost department morale.
- Exploring lateral recruitment opportunities to reduce barriers for officers from other law enforcement agencies to join NOPD.

The New Orleans Police Department has been chosen for an Enhanced Office Based Grant Review (EOBGR) for the review of COPS Hiring Program (CHP). Additionally, the OCJC will assist in the application of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services Grant award, which will aid in preventing crime by hiring career officers.

Paramount to the success of recruitment and retention efforts is ensuring that officers are able to respond to incidents of violence. The City has implemented the following initiatives, which deploy alternative responders to police for non-violent incidents: the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program, the Crisis Intervention Initiative, and deputizing city departments to respond to quality-of-life issues.



Intervention

5 Violence Interruption

The Office of Gun Violence Prevention was established in 2021 by Mayor Cantrell to work strategically to prevent gun violence in New Orleans.

Community Crisis Intervention Team (Cure Violence)

Following national best practices, the Community Crisis Intervention Team employs credible messengers—community members who are able to connect with high-risk individuals based on their shared backgrounds and life experiences—as outreach workers tasked with identifying and mediating conflicts before they turn violent. With nine current staff members, the team responds to shooting victims and their families at both UMC and New Orleans East Hospital and attempts to diffuse conflict and prevent retaliation.

The Cure Violence program stops the spread of violence by using the methods and strategies associated with disease control including detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying and treating the highest risk individuals, and changing social norms – resulting in reductions in violence of up to 70%.

Barber’s and Beauticians Collective Fellowship Program

This seven-week fellowship trains barbers in conflict resolution and mediation skills so that they can de-escalate conflicts that might arise. The fellowship's curriculum is rooted in the principles of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which can help participants develop strategies for coping with trauma, staying calm in stressful situations, and resolving conflict peacefully. [5]

Job Readiness Programs

Research shows that job readiness programs that provide pathways to careers have been shown to reduce violence and other risky behaviors among participants. [6] Therefore, the Cantrell administration has prioritized providing holistic support for at-risk individuals, particularly youth, that includes job readiness programs.

Pathways

Pathways is a 15-week work readiness program for system-involved youth, ages 14-17 years old. The program combines soft skill workshops with paid internship experiences to increase work readiness and connect to opportunities that align with youth's interest. Youth earn \$10/hour and work up to 10 hours per week.

Summer Success

Summer Success is a 5-week paid summer internship program for system-involved youth. The program seeks to address poverty, unemployment, and recidivism by matching youth with community-based, paid work experiences. In addition, youth are provided with case management services and workforce development training.

CEO Works

The City of New Orleans has contracted with the nonprofit, CEO Works, to provide transitional employment for citizens coming home from incarceration. Participants work 4 days a week doing blight reduction and grass-cutting and attend professional development one day a week, which includes soft skills training and resume development.

Jumpstart

Jumpstart is an 8-week program to connect young people who are disconnected from work and school with soft-skills training and employment opportunities through the City's Office of Workforce Development. After the two-month program, participants will be connected with a nine-month job experience and extended case management.

Prevention

Violence is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by a range of factors, including where people live, work, and grow. These conditions, sometimes referred to as structural well-being, are shaped by structural racism, which a robust body of evidence finds has a profound impact on violence. An analysis of historically redlined areas found that even after adjusting for the socio-demographic factors, “the same places that were imagined to be areas unworthy of economic investment by virtue of the races, ethnicities, and religions of their residents are more likely to be the places where violence and violent injury are most common almost a century later.” [5]

The City of New Orleans is committed to stop kicking the can down the road and commits to dismantling structural racism. A key element of advancing equity for our people and preventing violence, is investing in the next generation. Therefore, Mayor Cantrell created the Office of Youth and Families.

Investing in our Youth

The Youth Master Plan

The Youth Master Plan will serve as a 10-year, comprehensive roadmap for improving child well-being in New Orleans and contains a series of solutions across multiple sectors to improve child well-being including health, education, youth voice, and economic stability. Each of these components works to advance structural-well being for youth and mitigate factors in their environment that can contribute to violence.

City Seats

The City Seats program provides early childhood education for low-income children ages 0-2. Early childhood education dramatically reduces the likelihood of criminal legal system involvement later in life.

Guaranteed Income Program

The program will serve 125 young people between the ages of 16-24 who are disconnected from work and school. They will receive a monthly cash payment of \$350 for 10 months. The guaranteed income payments will increase participants' financial stability, connect them back to supportive services such as education or job programs, and decrease stress and other risk factors associated with economic insecurity.

Junior Civic Leadership Academy (JCLA)

JCLA is an 8-week program that will provide youth with an in-depth look at City government. The program includes hands-on demonstrations and presentations that give participants an insider's view of how the City of New Orleans operates. With this knowledge, students will be better equipped to engage their communities and help improve residents' quality of life.

Mayor's Youth Advisory Council

Mayor's Youth Advisory Council is organized to become the voice of the youth of New Orleans directly to the Mayor's office raising issues and concerns and achieving meaningful change important to the well-being of the city's youth and the community at large. The mission of MYAC is to advise and propose action items to the Mayor of New Orleans on matters relating to the youth of New Orleans.

Police Athletic League (PAL) Program

The PAL program consists of police officers who mentor/coach young people, both boys and girls, in sports, and help with homework or other school-related activities. The purpose is to build their character while strengthening police-community relations.

Prevention

Investing in our Youth and Families Holistically

Mental Health Clinicians to Provide Trauma Informed Care to System-Involved Youth

In partnership with the City, the Children's Bureau of New Orleans will provide mental health clinicians to provide evidence-based, trauma-informed care and treatment to youth who are involved with the juvenile justice system. These services will be incorporated into existing programming to more holistically serve system-involved youth.

Parent Leaders Educate for Action Program

Ubuntu Village will facilitate the Parent Leaders Educate for Action program that will work with families of the youth involved in the justice system. The program will include monthly meetings for participants to receive peer-to-peer support, educational resources, and leadership development for parents and caregivers.

Incorporating a Racial Equity Lens



The Ethnic and Racial Disparity (ERD) Working Group

Established in October 2020 in partnership with the Vera Institute of Justice, the ERD Working Group is tasked with identifying the drivers of ethnic and racial disparities in the criminal legal system and providing recommendations on how Orleans Parish, can address disparities and advance equity.



In order to prevent violence in the long-run, we must transform the neighborhood conditions that create violence. Multiple research studies have shown that concentrated poverty, densely crowded housing, and a high density of alcohol outlets, mortgage foreclosures, and vacant buildings and lots are directly associated with higher rates of violence. [7] Therefore, the Cantrell Administration has prioritized transforming neighborhoods as a key priority for our people.

Neighborhood Transformation

Neighborhood Cares Initiative

In partnership with community organizations, the Mayor's Neighborhood Engagement Office, hosts neighborhood cleanups around the city, which also include job and resource fairs. Earlier this year, the City, along with partners, hosted a Neighborhood Cares event in New Orleans East which resulted in 200 patched potholes, 50 lots cut, and the demolition of 21 units of an abandoned apartment complex and two blighted houses.

Mow to Own Initiative

The Mow-to-Own, Good Neighbor Opportunity Program empowers adjacent property owners to blighted properties the opportunity acquire qualifying properties adjudicated to the City of New Orleans.

Redevelopment Framework

The Redevelopment Framework is a national best practice for strategic utilization of government assets. The framework aligns the use of City-owned property and fills the substantial need for neighborhood amenities and other necessary infrastructure, to create prosperous, healthy, and equitable communities.

Supporting and Engaging Community

Research by Patrick Sharkey finds that local and community-based organizations are core components of preventing violence, which are often overlooked for external resources, efforts, and ideas. [8] Therefore, a priority of this administration is to provide funding to community-based organizations to implement self-determined solutions to the issues that they face, including violence.

This year, the Office of Criminal Justice Coordination, in partnership with Total Community Action (TCA), will engage residents and community-based organizations to act in their own interest and create and implement solutions to criminal legal system and violence prevention. This work is funded by the MacArthur Foundation and will center community engagement and data-driven analysis to empower community members to build and implement a Blueprint for Racial Justice and Criminal Legal System Reimagination. As groundwork for this project, TCA, the fiduciary agent of the ERD Working Group, awarded microgrants to community-based organizations to fund programs that support the following:

- New Orleans-based programs that advance criminal legal system prevention and reimagination.
- Engage communities disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system in the reform effort, particularly those that center and engage "non-traditional" stakeholders.
- Provide services to individuals who have been directly impacted by the criminal legal system.

As government actors, we have a responsibility to support our communities and to invest in solutions created by the community, especially solutions that address harm.

Moving Forward

Moving forward, we will prioritize both short-term solutions to treat the symptoms of violence, as well as long-term solutions to transform the conditions in which violence persists.

Public safety is a key priority of this Administration and we will continue to work with our partners to make New Orleans a safe place for all people to live and thrive.



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