



A Menu of Policies and Programs
to Keep Communities Safe



Introduction

We can achieve community safety by prioritizing dignity and healing for all. The practices that can achieve community safety stem from a public health framework that is evidence-based and prioritizes rehabilitating people, reducing harm, and using trauma-informed principles to lead people back to health and the pursuit of happiness.

And yet we live in a country where we arrest 1 out of every 3 people, where Black men and women live their lives expecting to have conflict with law enforcement, and people who have experienced or witnessed trauma are frequently criminalized for behaviors that are often a logical response to trauma and poverty.

Health Solutions Create Safety is a robust list of 36 replicable programs or interventions and 25 policies that respond to social challenges with public health solutions rather than punitive criminal justice processes. These programs and policies represent innovations for stakeholders invested in reducing criminal justice involvement for members of their own communities while upholding community safety goals. Programs and policies that center and support people who are often unjustly cast to the margins of society ensures a powerful foundation for long-term, sustainable impact. We hope this menu of options helps communities reach shared safety.

About the National Criminal Justice and Public Health Alliance

The *National Criminal Justice and Public Health Alliance* is a strategic alliance of criminal justice advocates and public health practitioners committed to building a society that promotes and secures health, safety, and racial equity — a society in which the justice and public health systems create the social, economic, and political conditions needed for all individuals, families, and communities to thrive. Working together, we magnify our power and ability to end criminalization and mass incarceration, which obstruct progress toward the society we envision.

A subcommittee of the *National Criminal Justice and Public Health Alliance* spent the last 18 months identifying and cataloguing local efforts to enhance public safety through public health solutions. This work was led by Human Impact Partners, Equal Justice USA, Evergreen Treatment Services, From Punishment to Public Health (P2PH) at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, the Katal Center for Health, Equity and Justice, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion National Support Bureau, the National Juvenile Justice Network, and the Los Angeles County Public Health Department.

How to use this resource

Use some or all of the examples in this resource to advocate for evidence-based, culturally responsive, and community-centered programs. While the programs, interventions, and policies are arranged into categories, many programs fulfill the goals in several categories (housing solutions *and* reducing harm, for example). We highlight specific programs, general types of interventions, and policies worth pursuing. These all support building sustainable, healthy communities. We encourage you to use this resource in the following contexts:

- At a community meeting with your local elected official to advocate for these types of programs
- At a discussion with your county's criminal justice coordinating committee
- During municipal (city, town, county, or state) budgeting processes
- In conjunction with a description of your organization's similar program(s) to advocate for "health instead of punishment"

Contact Kim Gilhuly at kim@humanimpact.org if you would like to discuss in more detail how these materials can support your efforts.

Choose practices that do the following:



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1. Respond appropriately to trauma

Many adults who are involved in the criminal justice system have experienced trauma in their youth for which they have not gotten help or support. Even in the general population, nearly 2 out of 3 adults have at least one or more adverse childhood experiences. Those in inner cities have a higher frequency of exposure to trauma, specifically the loss of an unexpected death, assaultive violence, and injury. Since incarceration is a traumatic process itself, its use should be decreased and only used as a measure of last resort.

Trauma-informed communities, as a first line of defense, embed regular training on trauma within all municipal agencies - including criminal justice and law enforcement agencies - to ensure that all service providers prioritize physical and emotional safety for themselves and the populations they serve. This creates opportunities for survivors of crime and trauma to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment, which in turn strengthens community well-being.

Programs that show results

Boston Trauma Response System

The Boston Trauma Response Team, working out of the Boston Public Health Commission, provides rapid psychological services to victims and witnesses of violence within 30 minutes of violent events. They target people aged 13 to 24 and are available on a 24-hour, year-round basis, like emergency services. Trauma professionals coordinate with and train law enforcement, city agencies, community organizations, service providers, community leaders, and others in trauma-responsive best practices, so that first responders to crises incorporate a trauma informed approach.

In the 8 trauma centers with over 5,577 visits completed, 40% of clients report that community violence brings them to the trauma centers and 70% say that chronic exposure to violence brings them to seek services. Typically, these are clients who would not otherwise seek trauma services.

UCSF Trauma Recovery Center (TRC)

The UCSF Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) provides evidence-based, trauma-informed, culturally responsive mental health services to survivors of violent crime. The model was developed to reach survivors from underserved populations who were not accessing traditional mental health or other support services after experiencing interpersonal violence or losing a loved one to homicide.

Through a combination of assertive outreach that begins at hospital bedside and clinical case management that prioritizes survivors' practical needs, the UCSF Trauma Recovery Center has improved survivors' access to high-quality, effective mental health services. Trauma Recovery Center services increased clients' return to work by 56% and reduced homelessness by 41%. Trauma Recovery Center help with law enforcement led to a 69% increase in the number of police reports filed. In addition, sexual assault survivors' rate of receiving mental health follow-up improved from 6% to 71%.

Survivor-centered programming

Programs that work with survivors of crime and violence, including currently and formerly incarcerated people, support people when they are at their most vulnerable and empower them to be agents of change.

[Mothers In Charge, Inc.](#) is a violence prevention, education, and intervention organization that supports families and communities affected by violence. They advocate for families affected by violence, provide

grief support services when a loved one is lost to violence, facilitate public discussions around violence prevention, and offer substance use disorder treatment.

The [Louis D. Brown Peace Institute](#) in Boston has peace programs focused on the individual, family, community, and societal levels. They provide survivor outreach services, intergenerational justice programs, and peace education in schools, prisons, and jails. They bring survivors together in a variety of ways and convene a provider's network as well. The Peace Institute's models are grounded in the Center For Disease Control and Prevention's socio-ecological framework that interventions at multiple levels are needed to interrupt cycles of violence.

Policies worth pursuing

Trauma-informed/ trauma-sensitive schools

In a trauma-informed school, adults are trained and prepared to respond to those who have been impacted by traumatic stress. This training and practice can make a significant difference in school disciplinary practices.

For example, at San Francisco's El Dorado Elementary, suspensions dropped 89% when trauma-informed practices were implemented. These practices improve learning environments in the classroom since there are fewer disruptions and students have support to work through trauma and focus academically. It also prevents teacher burnout by equipping them with effective classroom facilitation skills. [Compton Unified School District](#) in California required that their schools provide accommodations and resources to assist students dealing with the impact of adverse childhood experiences like violence, abuse and neglect.

Mandate and fund trauma-informed training for first responders, judges, law enforcement, and prosecutors

People who have experienced trauma sometimes react from their pain in ways that are seen as deviant or illegal, and are then criminalized (i.e. drug use or mental health crises). Trauma-informed training for all those connected with the criminal justice system can help them better understand the ways in which trauma shows up and how to approach people with more compassion.

Incentivize trauma-informed communities through procurement processes and funding. Develop trauma-informed community capacity requirements in local procurement regulations so that all social service providers are required to build competency in this area. Also, provide funding and incentives for participation in learning collaboratives aimed at sustaining trauma-informed community gains within large and medium-sized agencies (e.g., teach managers how to continually reinforce trauma-informed practices of frontline staff)

Safeguard children during and after police interventions

When police respond to calls for services there are many times that children are present and witness the interactions that take place. To ensure these interactions do not traumatize children or leave them abandoned if a parent is arrested, police departments can institute policies and practices around awareness of children and how to minimize trauma. This is especially important as we look at Adverse Childhood Experiences and the long-term effects of parental incarceration or involvement in the criminal justice system. In 2014 the Bureau of Justice Assistance, along with the International Association of Chiefs of Police issued a [model policy](#), training guide, and toolkit so that law enforcement agencies can institute a policy and training on this issue. The Osborne Association has also created a ["See Us, Support Us" toolkit](#) for communities to address the wellbeing of children whose parent/guardian is incarcerated.

To learn more about building trauma-informed communities, contact [Equal Justice USA](#), [UCSF Trauma Recovery Center](#) or the [Osborne Association](#).



2. Reduce harm

A truly healthy and safe community must be so for everyone. Though addiction is an illness, it is often addressed primarily by the criminal justice system, but we must address addiction outside of the criminal justice system. Harm reduction practices are based on the principle that treatment, rather than repeated arrests and incarceration, yields the best results for both individuals and communities. Such interventions promote less harmful alternatives to drugs or alcohol, and offer support, treatment, and services at the participant's own pace without requiring abstinence. They treat the person suffering from addiction as a human being in need of help rather than a criminal.

Programs that show results

Syringe exchange programs

Syringe exchange programs provide free sterile syringes and collect used syringes from injection-drug users to reduce blood-borne disease. These programs decrease HIV, hepatitis, and other infectious disease without increasing illicit drug use. They also decrease needle-stick injury to law enforcement and increase entry to drug treatment.

In New York, between 1990 and 2002, needle exchange programs were associated with a sharp decrease in HIV prevalence in people who inject drugs (from 50% to 17%). In Washington DC, the rate of HIV transmission among drug users has decreased by 70% since the 2008 implementation of a needle exchange program by HIPS, an organization focused on sex worker, drug user, and transgender community health. The reduced rates of HIV transmission have saved \$44 million in public funds due to lifetime health costs of HIV.

Crack pipe exchange programs are a new effort to steer people away from injecting drugs. A Seattle study found that 80% of methamphetamine users in their service area would be less likely to use drugs intravenously if they had access to pipes.

Safer injection facilities

Safer injection facilities are places where individuals can inject pre-obtained illicit drugs under the supervision of medical professionals. Staff educate clients regarding drug use, prevent overdose, and connect people with social services.

SIFs are implemented throughout the world, with 97 in 11 countries. While research has documented the numerous health, social, and economic benefits of SIFs, none currently exist in the USA. More than 20 peer reviewed evaluation studies of the first SIF in North America (Vancouver, Canada) found that the SIF reduced public disorder, syringe sharing, and risk for overdose, and increased safer injection practices and use of addiction treatment — without increasing crime or drug use.

Medication assisted treatment

Medication assisted treatment is use of legal medication similar to addictive substances to decrease urges, combined with psychotherapy. It reduces heroin and opioid use, overdose, HIV transmission, criminal activity, and financial burden among drug users. Opioid treatment programs in particular are cost effective considering decreased costs of HIV infection, reduced rates of criminal activity, incarceration, and health care service use.

Methadone treatments cost between \$350 and \$1,000 per patient per year and buprenorphine costs \$1,200 to \$3,200 per patient per year. All treatments should be done in combination with counseling.

Policies worth pursuing

[Decriminalize sex work](#)

Numerous health and human rights agencies from the World Health Organization to the United Nations Global Commission on HIV and the Law to the Human Rights Watch all call for the decriminalization of all sex work. Decriminalization in other countries has resulted in higher rates of condom use and enables sex workers to organize community-based health practices that demonstrably improve health and reduce HIV risk. Even if sex work is decriminalized, the prostitution of minors and human trafficking can and should remain criminal acts.

[Decriminalize drug use](#)

Criminalization of substance use makes it difficult to engage people in health care and other services. Many bodies — including the American Public Health Association — believe that drug policy should prioritize prevention, treatment, and recovery. Empirical evidence from around the world has conclusively demonstrated that decriminalization does not increase drug use to any appreciable degree; for example, a recent study published in the American Journal of Public Health revealed that adolescent marijuana use has not increased in states with medical marijuana laws.

Pass [Good Samaritan reforms](#) and [increase access to naloxone](#) for all people

“Good Samaritan” laws offer legal protection to those calling for help during an overdose. In addition, making naloxone — a medication that reverses the effects of opioids — available to members of the community and over the counter at pharmacies can reduce the incidence of overdose and death related to opioid abuse.

To learn more about integrating harm reduction practices, contact [North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition](#), [Katal Center for Health, Equity and Justice](#), [Evergreen Treatment Services](#), or the [Drug Policy Alliance](#).



3. Restore justice at the community level

Restorative justice is a rehabilitation practice centered on individuals' humanity. It brings survivors of crimes together with those responsible for the offense, typically in healing circles with mediators, to come to mutually agreed-upon reparations. When used appropriately, restorative justice can create better outcomes for individuals and communities such as reduced post-traumatic stress, more satisfaction with justice than the typical criminal justice system, reduced desire for violent revenge, reduced re-offending, and lower costs.

Programs that show results

[Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth \(RJOY\)](#)

RJOY has pioneered, trained, and offered assistance in the use of restorative justice in 24 Oakland, CA, public schools, which has led to a decreased suspension rate for students in schools with RJOY restorative justice programs. In addition, while absenteeism in non-RJOY schools has increased by 62%, in RJOY schools it has declined by 24%. Dropout and four-year graduation rates have improved by 56 and 60%, respectively, and close to three quarters of staff members feel that restorative justice practices improve the school climate.

[Common Justice](#)

Common Justice, located in Brooklyn, New York, is the first alternative-to-incarceration and victim service program in the country to serve adults convicted of serious and violent felonies based in restorative justice principles. Common Justice works to address participants' trauma to support healing and end cycles of violence and harm through the use of restorative justice circles, supporting those who have been harmed in various ways, and holding those responsible to account. If survivors of crimes consent, Common Justice diverts cases into a restorative process to recognize the harm done, honor the needs and interests of those harmed, and develop appropriate responses to hold the responsible party accountable. Since its inception in 2009, fewer than 7% of participants have been terminated from the program for committing new crimes. Further, in studies of other restorative justice programs, upwards of 98% of survivors of harm have been satisfied with the restorative justice process.

[Restorative Community Conferencing \(RCC\)](#)

RCC involves a meeting among the responsible youth, community, families, and survivor of a crime, with facilitation and guidance provided by a nonprofit organization trained in the practice. The goal of RCC is to produce a plan for the young person to make things right. If RCC is completed successfully, the case is closed without charges being filed. An evaluation found that 78% of youth in RCC were not rearrested (compared to 55% of matched youth) and 98% of RCC youth were not judged in court to have committed a delinquent act. 99% of survivors participating would participate in RCC again.

Policies worth pursuing

Eliminate "zero tolerance" policies and adopt alternative school discipline policies

Zero tolerance policies stemmed from a federal mandate to keep guns out of schools. Schools expanded the scope of offenses that trigger a student's suspension, expulsion, or arrest to include use of drugs or alcohol, threats, cursing, and ill-defined "willful defiance". Evidence shows that zero tolerance policies make schools no safer, harm students' health and achievement, and disproportionately target non-white students. Today, schools are rethinking severe disciplinary approaches, ending arrest and referral to police for common adolescent behaviors, and embracing restorative justice. If properly implemented and

sustained, restorative justice policies can reduce suspensions, improve high school graduation rates, and ultimately improve employment and income outcomes in a community.

Ensure that restorative justice conferencing does not lead to unnecessary prosecution of participants

During restorative justice conferencing or reconciliation sessions, those who have inflicted harm and those who have been harmed come together. To support full participation, it is important that facts divulged during the conferencing do not lead to unnecessary criminal prosecution of participants, particularly if that is not what survivors of the harm desire. Some organizations that engage in conferencing develop a memorandum of understanding with prosecutors to reduce unnecessary prosecution.

To learn more about integrating restorative justice practices, contact [Impact Justice](#) or [Common Justice](#).



4. Champion positive youth development

The best recipe for healthy growth and development of young people is to shore up strengths rather than focus on fixing problems, a framework called “Positive Youth Development” (PYD). Effective PYD programs are located within a young person’s community and use a comprehensive approach that centers on significant areas in a youth’s life, such as education, art, and leadership. For instance, for youth who may exhibit troubling behaviors, the most effective intervention for both public safety and positive youth outcomes is to help them take responsibility for their actions, provide opportunities to restore any harm done, engage with pro-social peers, and make better decisions in the future. The first three programs below follow the positive youth development framework, and the second two program, while not PYD, do support youth rather than penalizing them.

Programs that show results

[Youth Advocate Program](#)

Youth Advocate Program provides community-based alternatives to out-of-home care with safe, cost-effective direct service and advocacy for youth and families involved in numerous systems, including the child welfare, education, and adult criminal justice system. The program is based on the belief that every individual possesses unique strengths and talents, and needs access to positive people, places, and activities within their community to develop their natural potential.

A study of 3,500 participants demonstrated that Youth Advocate Program serves very high-risk youth, 86% of whom remained free of arrest while in the program, and 93% of whom remained in their communities at the time of their discharge from the program.

[South Bronx Community Connections \(SBCC\)](#)

South Bronx Community Connections is operated by local grassroots faith and neighborhood organizations, with funding from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. The program diverts arrested youth from formal court involvement by connecting them to a network of positive adults and activities in their neighborhoods. SBCC’s network of organizations engages the youth in mentoring and positive youth development activities. They focus on assets, not risks; are operated by the community; and elevate connection of youth to their communities through youth-led civic engagement projects.

An evaluation found that only 15% of the youth were re-arrested and only 5% had new charges filed against them. More than half the youth stayed voluntarily engaged after their court mandate expired, and families are highly engaged.

[Youth Uprising](#)

Youth Uprising is a neighborhood hub offering young people services and programs to increase physical and mental wellbeing, community connection, educational attainment, and career achievement among its youth members. They have served over 13,000 youth since their inception.

In 2012, 81% of participants reported that they had decreased their violent behaviors since becoming a member and 61% reported taking added precautions toward safer sex practices. In addition, a 2015 study found a relationship between program participation and a reduction in arrests for violent offenses — in the five years before program enrollment, 65% of participants were arrested, but in the second year after their enrollment, only 10% were.

[Expect Respect Work Groups \(ERWG\)](#)

Expect Respect Work Group is a school-based violence prevention program for youth who have been exposed to violence in the home, school, or community. ERWGs are usually delivered in school settings. Boys who attended ERWG sessions showed decreases in both committing and being a victim of teen dating violence. In addition, both boys and girls who participated in ERWG sessions reported decreases in aggression. While not an example of positive youth development, ERWG works to decrease the trauma of dating violence, thereby decreasing potential behavioral health issues in survivors.

[Strengthening Families Program](#)

The Strengthening Families Program is an evidence-based family skills training program. The program provides education, communication skills, structured family activities, and play therapy to improve communication, attention, understanding feelings, and limit setting. SFP has been well studied by numerous government agencies. Outcomes include decreased drug and alcohol use, enhanced protective factors and resiliency in children, improved parent-child communication, and reduced youth behavior problems.

Policies worth pursuing

Increased funding for community-based programs premised on positive youth development

Federal, state, local, and private funding should be targeted toward effective community-based alternatives to detention and incarceration that are framed in terms of the assets they seek to encourage. Grantmaking agencies should reformulate grant requirements to reward the inclusion of positive youth development principles and strengths-based strategies in programs that serve youth in the community and the juvenile justice system.

Ensure universal preschool education

On average, children gain about one third of a year of additional learning across language, reading, and math skills from state-funded pre-kindergarten education, and there are also benefits to children's socio-emotional development and health. Long-term effects include societal outcomes such as increases in high school graduation, years of education completed, and earnings, and reductions in crime and teen pregnancy.

Take police out of schools

Students in schools with "school resource officers" are 1.5 times more likely to be arrested than peers in schools without them. Schools in predominantly Black districts are more likely to have officers. Ending routine policing of schools and the practice of arrests and referrals to law enforcement for common adolescent behaviors is a step toward ridding our country of the school-to-prison pipeline.

To learn more about positive youth development solutions, contact [National Juvenile Justice Network](#).



5. Support People with Access to Basic Necessities (Housing, Employment, Access to Health Care)

Communities cannot truly be healthy and safe if members of marginalized communities do not have access to quality housing, employment, and health care. Formerly incarcerated individuals are disproportionately likely to fall through the cracks. Within the first two weeks of being released from prison, people have a 13 times higher risk of death than the general population. Their risk of death is still 4 times higher one year after release. Programs that enroll those who are formerly incarcerated either while they are still in prison or jail or soon after leaving help keep start a continuum of care and can increase access to health care, connect people to housing, other social services, benefits, and legal assistance.

One area in particular where formerly incarcerated individuals need support is employment. Millions of Americans — one in three adults — have a prior arrest or conviction records that will likely follow them throughout their lives. These records may be inaccurate or concern only minor offenses. The presence of a record severely limits access to employment and housing when a person reenters their community. Expanding opportunities for employment and educational achievement of currently and formerly incarcerated people benefits the individual as well as society.

Programs that show results: housing

[Housing First](#)

Housing First is permanent supportive housing, often targeting homeless adults with serious mental illness and substance use disorders. Based on harm reduction principles, housing is permanent and does not require sobriety or psychiatric treatment, but offers services and treatment. Often housing providers use existing voucher-based systems. This approach has been studied frequently, with results that include decreased homelessness, jail time, and recidivism, as well as a greater likelihood in remaining housed.

One Housing First program is [Frequent Users Systems Engagement](#) (FUSE), which found that their clients maintained their housing at a higher rate than a comparison group (86% compared to 42%). In addition, 70% of clients reduced their shelter use, and 40% reported a reduction in jail time.

[A New Way of Life Reentry Project \(ANWOL\)](#)

ANWOL provides safe homes for women reentering society after incarceration, in conjunction with services such as case management, leadership development, and employment assistance. ANWOL works to support each participant with an individualized focus that is not dictated by external expectations or time constraints. Their five reentry homes serve up to 31 women and children at any given time. In 2016, they served 75 women.

[El Rescate Transitional Living Program](#)

While only 7% of youth in the U.S. identify as LGBTQ, 32 to 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ. Many are homeless due to family rejection, employment discrimination, and mental health issues associated with stigmatization. When youth are homeless they may engage in survivor behavior which may lead to them being caught up in the criminal legal system. El Rescate Transitional Living Program provides identity-affirming housing for homeless LGBTQ and HIV-positive youth ages 18-24 in Chicago. Youth have access to employment and educational resources, HIV prevention, and living skills training. El Rescate provided services to a total of 62 youth during 2015-2016: 32% of the residents were provided

with mental health services, 66% were provided with free dental care, 22% continued education and/or obtained trade trainings, and 35% of the residents secured employment.

[Dudley Neighbors Inc.](#)

Dudley Neighbors Inc. is one of the nation's most successful urban community land trusts, promoting development without displacement of low-income communities of color and long-term control of the land. Through a comprehensive organizing and planning initiative in the 1980s, residents established community control over parcels of abandoned land in the Dudley Triangle neighborhood of Boston. 25 years later, more than 30 acres of formerly vacant, blighted land are under neighborhood control. This land is now 226 new affordable homes, a community greenhouse, urban farm, a playground, gardens, and other amenities of a thriving urban village.

Programs that show results: employment

[Homeboy Industries](#)

Homeboy is an 18-month program for formerly incarcerated people to re-identify who they are in the world, get job training, and work in business enterprises such as catering. Homeboy pays participants during training and while they work, and requires education, therapy, substance use disorder treatment, and job placements as part of participants' paid days. Homeboy provides all services in a trauma-informed, therapeutic community setting. In 2015, 70% of program graduates did not recidivate. Worldwide, over 9,200 people participated in Homeboy programs, job placement, and training. More than 370 families were reunited, and 329 men and women participated in the program.

[Mural Arts Philadelphia - The Guild](#)

The Guild gives formerly incarcerated individuals and young adults on probation a paid opportunity to reconnect with their community while developing job skills. Through work on creative projects like mural making, carpentry, and mosaics, members of the Guild, guided by artists and other skilled professionals, transform their neighborhoods and themselves. Designed to incorporate concepts of community, victim, and individual restoration in every aspect of the program, the Guild works to prevent re-incarceration and to further the employment or educational objectives of each participant. The one-year recidivism rate of Guild participants is much lower than the state average — 16% for participants compared to Pennsylvania's statewide rate of 35%.

Incubator programs for formerly incarcerated

Incubator programs support formerly incarcerated people to develop entrepreneurial skills to create businesses in their communities. [Refoundry](#) in New York City and [EDWINS](#) Leadership and Restaurant Institute in Cleveland are two examples of such programs. Refoundry trains formerly incarcerated people to repurpose discarded materials into home furnishings and incubates participants into their own businesses. EDWINS Leadership and Restaurant Institute teaches culinary and business fundamentals to formerly incarcerated individuals who are interested in pursuing a career in the hospitality industry. EDWINS graduates nearly 100 students a year from their programs and their graduates have a 95% employment rate.

Programs that show results: health care

[Transitions Clinic Network \(TCN\)](#)

TCN typically operates out of an existing clinic and trains formerly incarcerated people as community health workers. Having health workers with experience of incarceration themselves greatly increases enrollment and connection to needed services. A randomized controlled trial found that TCN reduces emergency department use by 50%. TCN has expanded from the original San Francisco site to 14 clinics across the country.

[Familiar Faces Initiative](#)

The Familiar Faces Initiative seeks to transform systems to improve health, housing stability and quality of life, and to reduce criminal justice involvement, avoidable hospitalization, and health disparities in King County in the state of Washington (Seattle). Familiar Faces focuses on individuals with behavioral health conditions who have had multiple jail bookings, i.e., high utilizers of expensive systems. The Initiative is piloting a multi-agency flexible, intensive care management team (Vital Team) which provides mental and physical health care, substance use disorder treatment and skills development. A cost-analysis of what the county spends on primarily the negative results of behavioral health issues found that King County spent approximately \$35 million in 2014 on the approximately 1,200 “familiar faces” in the county, 87% of which was devoted to criminal justice or crisis response. By coordinating services around the person instead of making the person navigate the systems, these costs will decrease.

[New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Health Equity Access Unit](#)

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s Health Access Equity Unit seeks to improve quality of, access to, and engagement in integrated primary care and social services for justice-involved people.

The unit will reach out to bring justice-involved people into primary care services. Participating clinics will embed community health workers who have experienced incarceration as part of the clinical team, and train providers in 1) trauma-informed care, 2) the health effects and other harms of incarceration, and 3) barriers that people who are justice involved face in health care and social services. They will partner with community-based organizations that have specific experience and expertise working with the justice involved. The Unit will also focus on improving care coordination for justice-involved communities, which has been shown to improve health and social welfare outcomes as well as reduce recidivism.

[Policies worth pursuing](#)

[Establish \[eviction protections\]\(#\) for renters](#)

Creating baseline protections for renting households safeguards the home lives of communities. These baseline protections are commonly known as “just cause” for eviction protections. They ensure that renters in good standing can only be evicted if they violate a limited set of provisions such as lack of payment or continually violating a provision of the lease after written notice to stop.

[Eliminate incarceration and conviction and arrest history as a blanket reason to deny housing](#)

For public housing, municipalities should enforce [2016 guidance](#) issued by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development that criminal justice involvement should not be used to screen people out of housing. Since 2013, New York City Housing Authority has implemented a family reunification program that supports adding formerly incarcerated people to leases of family members in public housing. The program has enabled participants to take important family roles such as eldercare. For housing in the private market, municipalities can pass policies that restrict the ability of landlords to use background checks to exclude leasing to people with a criminal record or preventing a youth who is system-involved from living with their guardian in that home. Municipal policies need to extend to any for-hire companies doing background checks for public or private housing.

[Adopt Fair Chance Hiring Policies](#)

Fair chance employment policies delay inquiries about conviction history until later in the hiring process to ensure that applicants with criminal records are evaluated on the merits of their qualifications not just on their criminal records. These policies are most effective when they 1) integrate the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission arrest and conviction record guidelines (e.g. require employers to take into account time passed since the offense, whether the offense is related to the job position, evidence of rehabilitation); and 2) adopt strong standards of accuracy and transparency to maintain the integrity of

background checks when they are required and to protect workers against arbitrary treatment in the hiring process.

Expand college access for people in prison or jail through [Pell Grants](#) and other [tuition assistance programs](#)

Pell Grants are federal need-based grants for college education. Since 1994, people who are imprisoned have been denied eligibility to Pell Grants and other similar state assistance. A study of prison education shows that every dollar invested in prison education saves \$4–5 on reincarceration costs.

For those who receive college education in prison, college teaches critical thinking skills that help people better understand and take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. College improves employment prospects, reunion with families, self-assessment, and recidivism outcomes. Reinstating eligibility to Pell Grants and other tuition assistance programs would allow for people who are incarcerated to improve their life outcomes.

End criminalization of poverty by limiting fees and fines for low-income people

Local governments have increased fees, fines and court costs levied for minor transgressions. High money bail and excessive administrative fees are municipal practices that strain low-income residents and can result in far-reaching financial consequences like bankruptcy. Municipalities can correct these injustices by analyzing their financial practices (e.g., [San Francisco's Financial Justice Project](#)) and instituting just practices (e.g., banning generating more than 10% of total municipal revenue from fines and fees).

Eliminate incarceration related restrictions of SNAP and TANF

Many states restrict eligibility to SNAP and/or TANF for people with drug-related felony convictions. SNAP and TANF are key support programs that increase stability for the most economically vulnerable, including those with incarceration histories. In 2014, the median annual income for people prior to incarceration was less than \$20,000. Adequate access to food and cash assistance can help formerly incarcerated people by reducing recidivism and make drug treatment participants more likely to complete their programs.

Protect gains from the Affordable Care Act

The ACA has resulted in many more people leaving prison and jail with health care coverage, and has vastly expanded the types of mental health and substance use disorder funding available, which can prevent people from criminal justice involvement.

Ease the ability of people who are returning from incarceration to enroll

Policies that allow for 30-day pre-release engagement for discharge from prison and assumption of health care eligibility for those returning from Jail. Lack of Medicaid activation is a major barrier to accessing care for those at higher risk of medical emergency during their first two weeks out — overdose and suicide incidence spikes.

To learn more about integrating housing first solutions, contact [Evergreen Treatment Services](#), the [Fortune Society](#), and [A New Way of Life](#).

To learn more about job possibilities for people coming out of incarceration, contact the [National Employment Law Project](#) or [Homeboy Industries](#).

To learn more about connections to care solutions, contact [Transitions Clinic Network](#), New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Health Access Equity Unit, or the [Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice](#).



6. Use public health strategies to respond to violence

Many communities are training ambassadors as community health workers to respond to community violence to interrupt the cycle of violence with intensive mediation, support, and referrals to services. Some programs operate directly in communities with the most gun violence; some operate by responding in hospitals to survivors of violence. These approaches involve deep collaboration between public health, community-based experts, law enforcement, social service providers, and hospitals.

Programs that show results

[Cure Violence](#)

Cure Violence initiated the movement to treat violence as a public health epidemic; they use methods and strategies associated with disease control — detecting and interrupting conflicts with local people formerly involved in shootings and killings themselves, changing behaviors of those at highest risk of violence, and changing community norms. Neighborhoods with Cure Violence programs have seen between 40% to 70% reductions in gun violence.

[Advance Peace](#)

Advance Peace interrupts gun violence in U.S. urban neighborhoods by providing transformational opportunities to young men involved in lethal firearm offenses and placing them in a high-touch, personalized 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 in urban areas, thus breaking the cycle of gun hostilities and altering the trajectory of these men's lives. Six years after the start of their first program in Richmond, CA, 94% of Advance Peace Fellows are alive, 83% haven't been injured by a firearm, and nearly 80% are not involved in a new firearm related crime since becoming a Fellow.

[Urban Peace Academy](#)

As part of a multi-strategy effort in Los Angeles and in response to suppression tactics by law enforcement, the Urban Peace Academy has contributed to a 30% reduction in gang-related crime and 42% reduction in shots fired. UPA has trained over 2,400 gang intervention community workers and law enforcement officers, resulting in a cadre of intervention workers in positive partnership to improve community safety. Urban Peace Academy also spearheaded the ability for their peer health workers to get college credit for their training and work.

[Youth Alive!](#) and [National Network of Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs](#)

By having peer community health workers who have experienced violence themselves directly respond to people in the hospital who have suffered a violent injury. The program relies on a peer worker responding to the person as soon as possible, bringing services if requested, addressing a number of needs, and ongoing follow-up and mentoring. Youth Alive! was the first program of its type and the start of a national movement called the National Network of Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIP). An article summarizing evaluation findings from 7 HVIPs found consistent significant evidence that HVIPs reduce reconviction, particularly for violent crime, and also reduce re-injury and hospital recidivism. For example, one randomized controlled evaluation found that participants in a Baltimore HVIP were half as likely to be convicted of any crime and four times less likely to be convicted of a violent crime, and a cohort study in San Francisco found that the control group of people not involved in an HVIP had three times the re-injury rate.

Policies worth pursuing

Establish a [homicide review board](#)

It is rare that a homicide occurs without previous warning signs or violent incidents from those who inflict harm. Homicide review boards at municipal levels can help identify the ways that social services agencies may have been in contact with or had barriers serving the victim and the person(s) that harmed them. With a comprehensive review, the municipality can take steps to address systemic failures that led to the incident of violence. This data analysis component is core to the Cure Violence model. Milwaukee's Homicide Review Commission was associated with a 52% decrease in homicide in the intervention districts.

Require health care workers be train to detect and mitigate risk of [community](#) and [interpersonal violence](#)

Healthcare and social workers should be trained how to measure and mitigate risk of violence in their patients, and properly refer patients to services instead of ceding violence to law enforcement at the first sign of aggressive behavior. The American Hospital Association has compiled best practices from across the country of hospital programs to decrease and respond to community violence.

[Fund health departments to address violence](#)

In 2016, Washington DC Council passed legislation that would treat violence as a public health issue. The NEAR Act (Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results) establishes and funds an Office of Violence Prevention and Health Equity, which sets up many of the same types of programs listed above — street- and hospital-based violence interruption programs as well as policies on police use of force and more.

To learn more about public health approaches to violence like these peer-to-peer violence interruption programs, contact [Cure Violence](#), [Youth Alive!](#), or [Urban Peace Academy](#).



7. Use justice system innovations that support health

The methods, scale, and aim of the justice system must transform to one that works in true partnership with public health, behavioral health, health systems, and communities to create environments of care, prevention, and healing. While there is a growing movement to shrink the justice system, we must also ensure that our movement replaces what exists with effective, community-centered solutions.

Programs that show results

[Crisis Intervention Training \(CIT\)](#)

CIT trains police to de-escalate situations with people who have mental illness, in collaboration with social workers or mental health professionals. CIT programs increase rates of people with mental health issues receiving treatment instead of going to jail via appropriate referral to mental health facilities and services.

[Trauma-informed policing](#)

Trains police in trauma-informed thinking and sets up collaborations with community-based providers to expand the reach of care and the types of interactions police have with community members. One long-standing [trauma-informed law enforcement program](#) in New Haven, CT generates 720 referrals involving coordinated services for 2,282 children (65%) and caregivers (35%) over a year period. Approximately 75% of children were given brief or extended treatment within 72 hours of a traumatic event.

[Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion \(LEAD\)](#)

Pre-booking diversion partnership where police, courts, homeless outreach, mental health and substance use disorder service providers work together to enroll individuals into services and treatment who might usually be arrested for violations driven by unmet behavioral health needs. The LEAD philosophy is based in harm-reduction practices, which do not require abstinence but encourage services. LEAD participants were 58% less likely to be arrested after enrollment than a comparison group in Seattle. They also were 89% more likely to have housing during follow up and 46% more likely to be employed or in training.

[Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery \(PAARI\)](#)

People who seek help with drug addiction through the police department are screened and connected with inpatient drug treatment providers and face no criminal sanctions. PAARI has resulted in 95% placement to treatment facilities rather than criminalization.

[Pre-arrest diversion policies and programs for youth](#)

Pre-arrest diversion programs are an alternative to arrest for common youth misbehavior for those under 18. With most programs, the youth must take responsibility for their actions and complete a program that involves community service, letters of apology to the victim and law enforcement officer, assessments to determine if they are at risk to reoffend, and if needed, intervention services such as counseling. A 2016 study of [juvenile civil citations](#) in Florida — one pre-arrest diversion approach — found that youth who are arrested have a higher reoffending rate compared to youth who are given civil citations.

Policies worth pursuing

[Require transparent data collection and reporting of police activity](#)

Municipalities can require officers to report both use of and threats of force. A study showed that requiring such comprehensive reporting of police activity in police departments is associated with a 25% reduction in police-involved killings. In general, public access to quality data on police activity is central to

examining racial disparities, the treatment of people with disabilities and other metrics that can help guide the formation/implementation of policies that promote community safety and well-being.

Overhaul law enforcement systems to decrease arrest and incarceration

Across the country, sheriffs and police are sounding the alarm that jails are becoming the largest mental health treatment facilities in their localities. The [Stepping Up Initiative](#) is the Council on State Governments effort to help municipalities assess and revise the local systems and resources to respond and treat people with mental health and substance use disorder concerns outside of the criminal justice system — whenever possible — and to create the best environment and systems for people with these issues if they do become involved with the criminal justice system.

To learn more about justice system innovations, contact National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) [Crisis Intervention Teams](#); [Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice](#); or [Evergreen Treatment Services](#).

To learn more about community accountability systems for policing, contact [Campaign Zero](#) and the [Council on State Governments](#) about reducing the incarceration of people with mental health issues.

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- Harm Reduction Action Center, Denver, CO
- Washington Heights Corner Project, NYC

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