

Report of the Committee on Community Investments & Alternatives to the Criminal Justice System to the District Task Force on Jails & Justice

October 29, 2020

Background

In 2019, the District Task Force on Jails & Justice published its Phase I report, with seventeen recommendations, including these five sourced from the Committee on Community Investments & Alternatives to the Criminal Justice System:

1. The District should make early investments in fulfilling the basic needs that research shows prevent justice-system involvement, focusing on safe and affordable housing, quality education, physical and mental wellness, and reducing income disparities.
2. The District should become a trauma-informed city and prioritize screening for and healing trauma as a response to community crises.
3. The District should fully resource interventions like community mediation, violence interruption, and restorative justice practices as alternatives to involving law enforcement in response to community conflict.
4. The District should enhance the quality and capacity of behavioral health services to treat mental illness and substance use disorders as the public health crises they are, through both emergency medical responses and long-term, stabilizing care, not through criminalization.
5. The District should increase support for the successful reentry of people returning to D.C. from prison and jail by investing in: housing, education, training, and employment, behavioral health treatment and social and emotional support, and providing protections in law from discrimination in housing, employment, education, and other areas based on criminal record.

In Phase II, the Committee on Community Investments is now tasked with developing an implementation plan to guide the District in actualizing these recommendations. The implementation plan should answer the following questions:

- What is the recommended action?
- What is the intended outcome?
 - Number of people impacted
 - Type of impact (e.g. fewer people held at MPD stations and CCB awaiting arraignment, fewer people admitted to jail, shorter stays, more people released, less probation/parole time)
 - Size of impact (e.g. 10% of people admitted to jail, 5% reduction in average jail time)
 - Analysis of racial inequities

- Analysis of impact on special populations:
 - People with physical health issues
 - People with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders
 - People with intellectual disabilities
 - Young adults (18-25 years old)
 - Single parents with custody of minor children
 - Elders (60+ years old)
 - “Short Stayers” (people who are in and out of jail within a week)
 - People not charged with a crime against another person
 - People who pose no risk of violence to the community
 - People who identify as women or are members of the LGBTQ+ community
- How will the outcome be measured?
 - Including how to evaluate the effectiveness of agencies and programs with the mission of reducing recidivism and/or increasing public safety (well-being outcomes: employment, education, etc.)
- What is the trigger of change? (law, regulation, policy, practice, and local or federal body with power to make that change)
- What are the steps required to achieve the outcome?
 - Actors
 - Deadlines
- How much will it cost? (budget and whether/how funded)
- How much of a priority is this? (based on impact, feasibility, community support, and ripeness - scored high, medium, low)

This memo identifies actions that could lead to the outcomes established by this Committee during Phase I: to invest resources in ways that will strengthen our communities, reducing and eventually eliminating District residents’ contact with the criminal justice system. Investments in the healing and wellness of all of our neighbors, an effective, preventative and restorative justice system, and supporting people returning to our community after incarceration through a successful reentry are vital factors for creating a D.C. in which fewer people are behind bars and more people are living full, healthy, self-determined lives.

Community Priorities for Investment

The Task Force’s Phase I Community Engagement Data Analysis provides insights into D.C. residents’ vision for using different budget models, like divestment/investment, reinvestment, and generating new sources of revenue, to build safety and reduce incarceration in the District. The Task Force heard from nearly 2,000 community members who identified close-knit and empowered communities, housing, jobs and economic opportunity, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, support for youth, and reduction and reforms of policing as their top priorities for investment. This feedback, combined with research, and expertise of this Committee’s members and advisors, resulted in the recommendations of our Phase I Committee Report and the Task Force’s ultimate recommendations.

In Phase II, the Committee on Community Investments & Alternatives to the Criminal Justice System solicited additional community feedback, closely examined the use of a variety of investment models in other jurisdictions, and studied the demands of local organizers.

Participants of the four community engagement sessions conducted by the National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens during Phase II understandably focused on the District's response to COVID-19, and how the District can support those returning home during this time. Additional points raised by participants that are relevant to this memo include:

- Accounting for the increase in public health needs that accompany decarceration and reentry back into the community;
- Issuing bonds to fund community investments;
- Recruiting crisis responders to serve the neighborhoods in which they live; and
- Creating opportunities for justice-involved individuals to give back to their community through public safety initiatives and programs.

The Committee also researched the priorities and recommendations of community organizers and organizations, with an emphasis on Black-led organizations, recognizing that other people have been leading the advocacy for these investments. The Committee prioritizes, when appropriate and relevant, reiterating the demands of these organizations. The demands highlighted in the Committee's recommendations include:

- Black Lives Matter DC, Defund MPD, and Stop Police Terror Project DC, and others' call for divestment from, up to full defunding of, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD);
- Stop Police Terror Project DC's demand that the District divest from the Metro Transit Police Department; and
- Black Swan Academy and Defund MPD's call for the removal of police from D.C. public and charter schools.

Finally, the Committee, with the support of the Vera Institute of Justice, examined different investment models. Investments in community-driven public safety are categorized into several broad models: 1) up-front investments of new funds, 2) reinvestment of existing funds, and 3) divest-invest. Up-front investments are the creation of new funding to support community-based initiatives and alternatives to incarceration. These funds may be generated through leveraging a new tax or state and federal resources or partnering with private or philanthropic funds. Reinvesting existing funds requires policy or practice changes that lower the costs associated with the criminal legal system, with the dollars saved being funneled to community-based organizations or initiatives. Finally, invest-divest is the process of shifting funding away from traditional criminal legal system agencies or functions and allocating the shifted funds to community-based organizations or initiatives that promote safety and well-being, without justice system involvement.

Through additional research, the Committee learned that when assessing local budgets for reinvestment of existing funds or divest-invest, community organizers and advocates often target general funds. General funds are typically subject to an annual process and contain uncommitted resources that can be used for broad city functions and services. These local dollars are pegged for particular uses, as approved by D.C. Council, but the Mayor has broad discretion to spend –

although the budget does come back to D.C. Council for big changes such as large reprogramming requests. For example, in late October the Mayor requested \$43 million be transferred to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to cover police overtime during D.C. protests.¹ Reinvesting or divesting-investing with restricted funds can be more challenging but can be altered through legislative and administrative advocacy.²

Specifically, in D.C.'s budget the Task Force should target local funds, and possibly some special purpose revenue. Special purpose revenue may have legally restricted uses or could sometimes be used to supplement local needs. Federal funds likely have a number of restrictions that make it hard for the District to control those dollars. As a result, while the Task Force shouldn't focus on federal funds, it can encourage the D.C. government to influence federal criminal justice agency spending through the same advocacy methods we use to influence the local budget such as letters, meetings, lobbying, etc.

Here's what this looks like in practice: If the D.C. government lobbied the federal government in favor of the District utilizing community alternatives to supervision, D.C. officials could talk with representatives from MPD or D.C. Department of Corrections (DOC), both of which receive federal funding in the local budget, about reinvesting those funds to support people returning home or into community-based organizations providing reentry support.

Implementation of the below recommendations should be done in tandem with, and be conditional on, strong accountability to the community for its outcomes and clear metrics for success. The Committee on Community Investments & Alternatives to the Criminal Justice System wants to see these recommendations meaningfully and effectively implemented, with investments going to the programs, organizations, or practices specified in this report. In order to do this, the District should:

- Facilitate a process similar to participatory budgeting to develop more comprehensive metrics for success, ensuring that these metrics are thoughtful and community-driven;
- Create a Community Advisory Board, or other community-led body, to provide oversight and evaluations of the D.C. agencies and programs mentioned in this report;
- Facilitate a retreat for community organizers, D.C. residents, directly impacted individuals, and agency heads to discuss how we – as a community – all play a part in improving justice in the District;
- Appoint community representatives to serve as advisors to each relevant D.C. agency to ensure that funds are being allocated appropriately and programs executed effectively; or
- Require District agencies, programs, and relevant community-based organizations have MOUs in place with their relevant partners to increase accountability.

¹ Barthel, Margaret. "D.C. Mayor Bowser Wants to Move \$43 Million To Cover Police Overtime During Racial Justice Protests." *DCist*. October 22, 2020. <https://dcist.com/story/20/10/22/bowser-move-43-million-cover-police-overtime-during-racial-justice-protests/>

² Humanji, K., Rao, K., Stahly-Butts, M., Bonsu, J., Carruthers, C., Berry, R., & McCampbell, D. "Freedom to Thrive: Reimagining Safety & Security in Our Communities." *The Center for Popular Democracy (CPD), Law for Black Lives, Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100)*. July 4, 2017. <https://populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Freedom%20To%20Thrive%2C%20Higher%20Res%20Version.pdf>

Investment Model Recommendations

Before detailing the Committee's recommendations, we would like to note that this is not an exhaustive list of programs, policies, or organizations in need of or deserving of investment. These recommendations simply build off of the Committee's Phase I report and feedback received at community engagement sessions. In an ideal world, the Committee would like to see every organization and program providing a social good that reduces the District's reliance on the criminal justice system and/or invests in the community fully funded.

After thorough consideration and deliberation, the Committee is recommending the following for the three investment models:

Divest-Invest

When making divestments, the District should prioritize divesting from MPD. The Committee recommends that the District government do everything within its power to implement the following actions within MPD. The cost-saving measures associated with the below actions should be reinvested into community programs like the ones detailed later in this memo. The D.C. government must ensure that MPD:

- Substantially decrease the amount of crowd-control supplies it purchases. These supplies include rubber ball grenades, high-impact sponge rounds, long-range tear gas projectiles, and pepper spray;³
- Cease purchasing military-style equipment;
- Remove all police officers from D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) schools;
 - MPD's 2020 Budget Oversight Hearing documents indicate that DCPS spent \$22,745,879 on school security contracts with MPD.⁴
- Implement the changes recommended by the Committee on Decarceration to reduce arrests; and
- Reduce the number of police officers by one-fourth.⁵

Other cities, such as New York, Los Angeles, and Austin have cut their police spending considerably. Los Angeles cut \$150 million, New York \$1 billion, and Austin \$144.5 million

³ Although MPD does not publish data on crowd-control expenditures, purchase orders confirmed that MPD spent at least \$130,000 in crowd control supplies including tear gas, rubber pellet grenades, flash bang grenades, pepper spray, and other munitions in June 2020 alone. <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/local/protests/dc-police-buy-100k-worth-of-tear-gas-now-banned-by-dc-council-protests-first-amendment-black-lives-matter-lafayette-square/65-f9005035-e213-49c3-92c5-6c2375254995>. Just a month earlier, during a five day period during springtime protests sparked by the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, MPD spent more than \$309,000 on crowd-control supplies, <https://investigativereportingworkshop.org/investigation/police-stockpile-less-lethal-munitions/>.

⁴ https://dccouncil.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FA0_FY21_Attachment-II.pdf

⁵ In FY20, MDP's approved personnel expenses totaled \$469,071,000, including both civil staff and law enforcement officers (pg. 2). A one-fourth reduction in personnel expenses would leave 117,267,750, minus civil staff salary and expenses, for reinvestment.

https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/fa_mpd_chapter_2020j.pdf

from their respective police budgets. By cutting its police budget by one-third,⁶ Austin was able to redirect funding from the city police department to homeless services, mental health services, and family violence prevention among other programs.⁷ Los Angeles proposed budget for the police before the \$150 million cut was \$1.86 billion, meaning Los Angeles cut roughly 8% of its policing budget.⁸ New York's \$1 billion decrease in police funding led to a 9.5% decrease in NYPD's budget between FY20 and FY21.⁹ These changes, particularly since they are in large cities, show that large scale reductions in police spending are possible.

Additionally, the Committee recommends that the District fully defund the D.C. Housing Authority's (DCHA's) Public Safety Division. DCHA's Public Safety Division polices public housing. Research surrounding the San Antonio Housing Authority found that 72% of violent crime, 87% of drug crime, and 72% of property crime occurred at just 5% of all public housing properties in San Antonio, TX,¹⁰ meaning that the notion that public housing is a hot spot for crime or threat to public safety is not true. Fostering a sense of community and having residents actively participate in community activities, events, and opportunities can build safety in public housing. Investments into neighborhood libraries, parks, community centers, and communal gardens can all also help foster a sense of community, and empower community members to hold each other accountable, without police involvement. In FY20, DCHA spent \$4,322,160 on their police force,¹¹ yet noted that the agency's biggest challenge in relation to public safety was retaining members of its police force.¹² While this does not account for a large portion of DCHA's \$144,173,063 FY20 budget,¹³ the District is over policed – boasting more than 30 independent law enforcement agencies operating in D.C.¹⁴ Seeing as DCHA has acknowledged the difficulties they face in retaining staff, the inordinate amount of law enforcement agencies operating in the District, and the community's desire for alternatives to policing to promote public safety, D.C. should fully defund DCHA's police force.

The Committee recommends that divested funds be invested into programs and organizations that will reduce the need for police intervention, improve public safety, and provide critical support to some of the District's most marginalized residents, detailed below.

⁶ Venkataramanan, Meena. "Austin City Council cuts police department budget by one-third, mainly through reorganizing some duties out from law enforcement oversight." *The Texas Tribune*. August 13, 2020.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2020/08/13/austin-city-council-cut-police-budget-defund/>

⁷ Holder, S., Akinnibi, F., & Cannon, C. "We Have Not Defunded Anything': Big Cities Boost Police Budgets."

Bloomberg CityLab. September 22, 2020. <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2020-city-budget-police-defunding/>

⁸ CBS Los Angeles. "LA City Council Slashes LAPD Funding By \$150M." *CBS Los Angeles*. July 1, 2020.

<https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2020/07/01/la-city-council-could-slash-lapd-funding-by-150m-as-it-finalizes-new-budget-wednesday/>

⁹ Pietrzak, Adrian, and Champeny, Ana. "Was the NYPD Budget Cut by \$1 Billion?" *Citizens Budget Commission*. August 13, 2020. <https://cbcny.org/research/was-nypd-budget-cut-1-billion>

¹⁰ Friedrich, Michael. "How to Create Safer Public Housing Projects." *Bloomberg CityLab*. November 30, 2018.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-11-30/how-to-design-safer-public-housing-projects>

¹¹ This number excludes the salaries of two Senior Outreach Works listed under "Public Safety" category.

<https://dccouncil.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/dcha.pdf>, (pg. 3-4).

¹² <https://dccouncil.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/dcha.pdf>, (pg. 19).

¹³ <https://dccouncil.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/dcha.pdf>, (pg. 5).

¹⁴ Public Welfare Foundation. "D.C.'s Justice Systems: An Overview." *Public Welfare Foundation*. October 2019. https://www.publicwelfare.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/PWF_DC-Justice-Systems-Overview.pdf, (pg. 11).

Reinvestment

Prior to COVID-19 the DOC population was around 1,800 residents a day, but emergency legislation aimed at reducing the jails' population and the spread of the virus has decreased DOC's population considerably. As population declines at the DOC and a new direct supervision model is put in place, fewer correctional officers will be necessary. Reducing the number of individuals incarcerated at the DOC reduces the District's reliance on incarceration, which disproportionately impacts D.C.'s Black residents.

The Committee recommends that as DOC's population, and therefore budget for correctional officers, is reduced, that funding be reinvested into programming designed to build healthy people and communities, solve conflict and crises without the criminal justice system, and support people returning home from prison and jail. Examples of investment priorities are detailed below.

Upfront Investment of New Funds

Given the anticipated budgetary shortfall caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee has decided to not make any recommendations for new revenue. The District government could look into alternative ways to fund the Committee's aforementioned recommendations that would not require leveraging a new tax, such as finding a private or philanthropic entity to invest in the recommendation. Were the District's financial position to unexpectedly improve, D.C. could consider leveraging a new tax to generate funding for the Committee's recommendations.

Investment Recommendations

A. Create additional housing opportunities (affordable¹⁵ housing, workforce housing, and ownership opportunities) in the District

In FY21 the DC Reentry Action Network successfully advocated for a three-year housing pilot for returning citizen men, which including wrap around services, totals about \$1 million per year. Just a 1% divestment from MPD's budget would free up \$5.2 million dollars, allowing the District to fund a second housing pilot for IRAA recipients, emerging adults, or other special populations.

Given that many participants during the Phase I community engagement session identified housing as a priority, 10% divestment from MPD would result in \$52.28 million that could be invested in building, purchasing land or an existing building for an affordable housing complex or a mixed population complex, including both affordable and market cost housing. This funding could be reinvested into the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) or the Community Land Trust model. It is worth noting that D.C. developers tend to be more knowledgeable and comfortable with using HPTF funding. Finally, the existing infrastructure at DHCD allows for

¹⁵ The Committee recognizes that what is seen as "affordable" to some may not be "affordable" to others, and that affordability varies by Ward. When using the word "affordable" the Committee is referring to housing that the District's low-income residents can afford, while still having money left over for other life expenses and savings.

special purpose, targeted funds as a part of their application processing. The Committee recommends special purpose, targeted funding for affordable or mixed population housing, workforce housing, or a condo complex that tenants can, overtime and by fulfilling certain criteria, purchase at a significantly reduced price.

Experts in the housing development field in the District estimate that the cost per square foot is between \$200 and \$400, and if each unit in the building is 650 square feet (making it a single occupancy or efficiency unit), the price per unit ranges from \$180,000 to \$310,000, with the cost of land for the building estimated at \$50,000 per unit in the building included. Some estimates however place the cost per unit at \$400,000. Alternatively, older complexes in D.C. (the majority of which are East of the river) could be acquired for roughly \$100,000 plus the costs of renovation. Leftover costs from divestment could be used to subsidize rent further or provide services to the tenants. Outcome measures could include how many individuals are being housed in the unit, services provided to residents, upward mobility of residents over a five-year period of time (are any residents able to move out of affordable housing due to an increase in income or job stability), and homelessness rate in the District.

The District, could and should, leverage all possible options for investment in housing, including funding diverted from MPD into a new development or DCHA, private or philanthropic funding, or utilizing vouchers from and contract with D.C. agencies. For example, the District could seek to replicate the model used by [OpenArms Housing](#), an organization that houses and provides services to formally homeless single women. OpenArms Housing contracts with the D.C. Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) to provide services and all clients come to the organization with a housing voucher from DBH or LSRP vouchers. The contract with DBH, and acceptance of vouchers, makes the building self-sufficient. However, this would require investments into the District's pool of housing vouchers, and possible changes to how these vouchers are administered.

However, if landlords continue to discriminate against D.C. residents who are poor, Black, have housing vouchers, or have a criminal record, many of these housing investments will be in name only. The District needs to prioritize enforcing existing anti-discrimination laws and improving tenant protections.

B. Expanding school-based mental health programs and training for D.C. educators on social-emotional learning and transformative justice approaches¹⁶

Divesting from MPD and fully defunding DCHA's police force will partially address the racial disparities found within the District's policing and incarceration practices. Investing in programs providing alternatives to justice-involvement and violence interruption will provide additional support to the District's Black and low-income residents. Specifically, investments made within D.C.'s schools will help provide crucial early-development supports for students, foster school environments that are conducive to learning, and end the criminalization of Black youth. The

¹⁶ Defund MPD and Black Swan Academy policy platforms. <https://www.defundmpd.org/police-free-schools> and <https://www.blackswanacademy.org/policefree-schools>

National Association of Social Workers states that, when a social worker is providing services to students with intensive needs, there should be one social worker for every 50 students.¹⁷

Currently, the District does not have adequate social worker staff to support D.C. students who are most in need of supports, especially considering that about 46% of DCPS students are considered at-risk and with more intensive needs.¹⁸ A [2019 report](#) from the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor found that D.C. was routinely misspending funding for social workers and psychologists in DCPS. When investing additional funds into DCPS schools for mental health programs and trainings for D.C. educators, the District must create accountability measures to guarantee that funding is being spent appropriately and effectively.

Additionally, at the September 23, 2020 “Ward 8 Reimagining Safety Forum,” panelists discussed the need for the investments in schools to also include and focus on students with disabilities and queer students, particularly Black students. Denver Public Schools, Portland Public Schools, and Minneapolis Public schools have all ended their city’s police departments, showing that it is possible to sever ties with local police departments.¹⁹ The Superintendent of Portland Public Schools said that the school district is considering investments in social workers, counselors, culturally-specific partnership, and more.²⁰

Community groups such as the Black Swan Academy also recommend trainings for D.C. educators on social-emotional learning. In addition to this recommendation, the Committee would like to see DCPS invest in violence interrupters and mentorship programs for at-risk students.

C. Implement and deploy a crisis response team similar to CAHOOTS in Eugene, Oregon and/or increase investments into DBH’s Community Response Team

The District should fund a community-based public safety model providing mental health first responders instead of law-enforcement responders for crises involving mental illness, homelessness, and substance use disorders.

One example of such a program is Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) in Eugene, Oregon. CAHOOTS deploys a two-person team consisting of a nurse, paramedic, or

¹⁷ National Association of Social Workers. “NASW Highlights the Growing Need for School Social Workers to Prevent School Violence.” *National Association of Social Workers*. March 27, 2018. [https://www.socialworkers.org/News/News-Releases/ID/1633/NASW-Highlights-the-Growing-Need-for-School-Social-Workers-to-Prevent-School-Violence#:~:text=School%20social%20work%20services%20should,suggested%20\(NASW%2C%202012\).](https://www.socialworkers.org/News/News-Releases/ID/1633/NASW-Highlights-the-Growing-Need-for-School-Social-Workers-to-Prevent-School-Violence#:~:text=School%20social%20work%20services%20should,suggested%20(NASW%2C%202012).)

¹⁸ Stein, Perry. “D.C. continues misspending funds intended for neediest in its schools, report says.” *The Washington Post*. June 28, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/dc-continues-misspending-money-intended-for-neediest-students-report-says/2019/06/28/0eadf550-9816-11e9-830a-21b9b36b64ad_story.html

¹⁹ Camera, Lauren. “The End of Police in Schools.” *US News & World Report*. June 12, 2020. <https://www.usnews.com/news/the-report/articles/2020-06-12/schools-districts-end-contracts-with-police-amid-ongoing-protests>

²⁰ KTVZ News. “Portland will no longer use police in school following protests.” *KTVZ News*. June 4, 2020. [https://ktvz.com/news/oregon-northwest/2020/06/04/portland-will-no-longer-use-police-in-school-following-protests/#:~:text=\(AP\)%20E2%80%94%20Portland%20Public%20Schools,Police%20Bureau%20school%20resource%20officers.&text=The%20district%20of%20more%20than,St.](https://ktvz.com/news/oregon-northwest/2020/06/04/portland-will-no-longer-use-police-in-school-following-protests/#:~:text=(AP)%20E2%80%94%20Portland%20Public%20Schools,Police%20Bureau%20school%20resource%20officers.&text=The%20district%20of%20more%20than,St.)

EMIT and a crisis worker with substantial training in the mental health field. CAHOOTS teams can help with a variety of mental-health related crises, including welfare checks, conflict resolution, substance use disorders, suicidal ideations or threats, all while relying on trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques. Additionally, the CAHOOTS team can handle non-emergent medical issues.²¹ There are proven cost savings with the CAHOOTS model, with the program saving the city of Eugene an estimated \$8.5 million in public safety spending annually.²²

Were the District to adopt this model, calls should come through D.C.'s 311 system or another police non-emergency number. Dispatchers should undergo training to recognize non-violent situations with a behavioral health component and route those calls to D.C.'s CAHOOTS-modeled team. Though the numbers are unknown, changing this statute so that people suffering from mental health issues are not transported by the police, and instead by a mobile crisis response unit would lead to cost savings in MPD's budget. Currently, DBH's Community Response Team (CRT) operates similarly to CAHOOTS; however, their calls are not routed through 911, and CRT provides some ongoing supports for individuals with behavioral health needs.²³ CAHOOTS largely responds to an individual's immediate needs or circumstances, though will sometimes provide referrals and follow-up with individuals.²⁴ DBH's CRT also works collaboratively with MPD, and often has MPD officers arrive with them to respond to calls. Currently, the call screening mechanism is such that MPD officers are often sent to respond to CRT calls that do not require law enforcement involvement. To reduce the amount of law enforcement involvement in the CRT's responses, the District should invest in and create a more advanced system of screening calls, which would also require additional training of emergency dispatchers fielding the calls. More advanced screening would allow emergency dispatchers and DBH's CRT to only involve law enforcement when necessary. The District should also amend the statute directing MPD to transport people suffering from mental health episodes in handcuffs to clarify that the use of handcuffs or other restraints only be used when the situation dictates their use²⁵ and change the transport vehicle to an ambulance (as opposed to a police car). The Committee recommends the District invest in both a CAHOOTS modeled team, as well as advanced screening for DBH's CRT.

D. Greater investment in the clubhouse model of psychosocial rehabilitation started by Fountain House in New York

The District should increase investments in the clubhouse model of psychosocial rehabilitation started by Fountain House in New York. Clubhouses are local community centers that provide individuals with behavioral health issues opportunities to build long-term relationships that

²¹ White Bird Clinic. "What is CAHOOTS?" *White Bird Clinic*. September 29, 2020.

<https://whitebirdclinic.org/what-is-cahoots/>

²² "The CAHOOTS program budget is about \$2.1 million annually, while the combined annual budgets for the Eugene and Springfield police departments are \$90 million. In 2017, the CAHOOTS teams answered 17% of the Eugene Police Department's overall call volume. The program saves the city of Eugene an estimated \$8.5 million in public safety spending annually."

²³ Department of Behavioral Health. "Community Response Team." <https://dbh.dc.gov/service/community-response-team>

²⁴ This is information received through a phone call with an employee of White Bird Clinic.

²⁵ This will also require additional training of MPD officers and 911 operators.

support them in obtaining housing, employment, services, and education.²⁶ The clubhouse, rather than reacting to crisis, provides a place for people to build community, and identify and work on their life goals. The facility also lays the groundwork for violence prevention and provides a safe space for people with serious mental illnesses to go to. The International Center for Clubhouse Development has standards and an accreditation process. Green Door ran a clubhouse for many years in the District, however it closed in 2010.²⁷ The Capital Clubhouse, in downtown D.C., opened in 2019²⁸ and is D.C.'s only clubhouse. The Committee recommends there be an additional facility East of the River. The District must also do everything within its power, such as provide grant funding and/or access to billing DBH's local dollars' budget, to make sure the clubhouse is not solely reliant on Medicaid funding and billing, as these were key factors in the closure of the Green Door Clubhouse.

*E. Creating or opening a facility similar to those created by Designing Justice, an Oakland-based architecture and real estate development nonprofit that creates spaces and buildings for restorative justice, community building, and housing for returning citizens.*²⁹

These spaces could be used to support existing community-based organization's programs, house returning citizens, and be utilized as a resource for community-led initiatives.

An example of reinvestment in the District can be seen in the DYRS budget over the last decade. DYRS has routinely shifted funding from incarceration to community-based services. One such example is their Credible Messenger Program. To fund this program, DYRS reduced the number of youth sent to out-of-home residential placements and then reinvested the savings into their credible messenger mentoring program, which pairs community members with system-involved youth and their families to provide support, resources, and guidance through the justice process.³⁰

To accomplish this within other agencies, the District government should engage in a process where dedicated staff look across agencies to determine where costs in traditional criminal legal system programs and agencies could be reduced, and what costs savings could be invested in. This process should allow D.C. government officials, and possibly agency heads, to think critically about where they reduce or eliminate costs, and reinvest. This process should also be done in tandem, and in consultation, with community members and those directly impacted by the justice system.

²⁶ Clubhouse International. "What Clubhouses Do." *Clubhouse International*. <https://clubhouse-intl.org/what-we-do/what-clubhouses-do/>

²⁷ Kim, J. "Only people, dedicated people, have filled the cracks in DC's mental health system." *Street Sense Media*. May 17, 2017. <https://www.streetsensemedia.org/article/only-people-dedicated-people-have-proven-able-to-fill-cracks-in-mental-health-system/#.X5iP9YhKiUk>

²⁸ Capital Clubhouse Inc. <https://causes.benevity.org/causes/840-454366185#:~:text=A%20steering%20committee%20of%20DC,Health%2C%20officially%20opening%20its%20doors.>

²⁹ Designing Justice & Designing Spaces. "Our Mission." <https://designingjustice.org/about/#mission>

³⁰ Sakala, L., Harvell, S., & Thomson, C. "Public Investment in Community-Driven Safety Initiatives: Landscape Study and Key Considerations." *Urban Institute*. November 2018. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99262/public_investment_in_community-driven_safety_initiatives_1.pdf. (pg. 6)

F. Community-based organizations providing restorative justice and transformative justice work

Investments must be made to support the work of organizations that promote collective responsibility to community safety, including building new systems or programs that hold those who cause harm accountable without police involvement.³¹ When looking for community-based organizations to invest in, the District should prioritize investing in BIPOC, LGBTQ+, or person with disability-led organizations that primarily serve D.C.'s Black residents. The District should also prioritize funding community-based organizations that serve neighborhoods with large populations of high-risk individuals.

G. Expanding the use of community violence interrupters

The Committee prioritizes grounding its recommendations in community-driven initiatives, including community-led violence interrupter programs. The Committee wishes to see increased investments in violence interruption and intervention programs. Recommending investments to the ONSE Violence Intervention Initiative³² and the OAG Restorative Justice and Cure the Streets programs³³ are contingent on the evaluation of credible metrics of success, as well as the agencies utilizing best practices in the field for this initiative.

H. Invest in housing organizations that utilize a housing first model

Pathways D.C. is the only provider in the District that follows a housing first model. The housing first model reduces recidivism by taking people off of the streets where they are vulnerable to arrest for crimes of survival. The housing first model also shows that people can be successfully housed without being stable or sober first, highlighting how housing aids them in their stability and sobriety.

I. DSLBD's Aspire program

The DSLBD's Aspire program received \$400,000 in the FY18 budget, receiving a \$100,000 decrease in the FY19 budget, sustaining FY19 funding in FY20. The District should consider investing into DSLBD's Aspire program at or above its FY18 budget amount.

J. Increasing opportunities for mentorship and investing in community-based organizations already providing mentorship opportunities

Mentorship can serve as a preventative measure, aide in a successful intervention, and support an individual upon reentry.

³¹ One such example is Collective Action for Safe Spaces (CASS). CASS is also developing a transformative justice hub in the District that is led by women, non-binary individuals, and trans people of color.

³² DC.gov. "Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement: Violence Intervention Initiative." <https://onse.dc.gov/service/violence-intervention-initiative>

³³ Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia. "Cure the Streets: OAG's Violence Interruption Program." <https://oag.dc.gov/public-safety/cure-streets-oags-violence-interruption-program>

K. Increasing OVSJG’s justice grants funding pool to support community-based reentry organizations

Community-based services providers provide critical supports to the District’s justice-involved residents. These supports both improve the reentry outcomes for returning citizens and bolster community safety.

L. Substance use disorder and mental health services

Investments should be made to ensure that District residents have access to high quality substance use disorder and mental health services in the community, while incarcerated, and upon their reentry.

Participatory Budgeting

These recommendations are a first round of ideas for shifting the way the District invests in public health and public safety. To be successful, D.C. most consistently solicit and incorporate resident feedback. The Committee recommends that the District include participatory budgeting (PB) into its annual budgeting process. PB includes community members into the city’s budgeting conversation and empowers community members to discuss and decide how to spend public money. PB is an annual cycle, with the typical process detailed in the graphic below.

PB is an annual cycle of engagement that is integrated into a regular budgeting process. A typical PB process follows these steps, usually over the course of a year:



Source: <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/>

To facilitate PB, the District must:

- Hire dedicated staff within the Executive Office of the Mayor that would organize and facilitate the District’s PB process;
- Have a dedicated source of public funding;
 - Most PB processes use between 1-15% of their local city budget. The Participatory Budgeting Project recommends, for larger municipalities, using \$1

million per 100,000 residents. This means that the District would allocate roughly \$7.06 million in its annual budget for participatory budgeting.³⁴

- Create an agreed upon process and schedule; and
- Recruit volunteers to conduct community outreach and facilitate the process.

When placing the PB staff within the EOM, the District should find a way to annualize the process to include checks-and-balances between D.C. Council and the EOM, ultimately ensuring that the PB process is completed each year. The Committee also recommends that staff and volunteers conducting PB-related community outreach work collaboratively with community organizers, advocacy groups, and coalitions to guarantee robust community engagement. Community engagement in the PB process should be reflective of the D.C. community. On the other hand, the District could also fund a community-based organization on an annual basis to conduct the PB process. However, contracting this process out could lead to inconsistent quality in the PB process if the organization facilitating the conversations changes from one year to the next, or challenges in ensuring a successful PB process (if the District issues a five-year contract to a community-based organization to facilitate the PB process there needs to be a level of accountability that each year will be a success).

³⁴ Participatory Budgeting Project. <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/>