

THE WHITE HOUSE

MEMORANDUM

TO: State and Local Officials
FROM: Susan Rice, Gene Sperling, and Julie Rodriguez
DATE: July 12, 2021
RE: How Local and State Government Can – and Should – Use the President’s Gun Crime Reduction Strategy and Historic Rescue Plan Funding to Improve Public Safety

In June, President Biden unveiled a comprehensive strategy to combat gun violence. This strategy implements preventative measures that are proven to reduce violent crime, and attacks the root causes – including by investing in effective community policing and addressing the flow of firearms used to commit crimes. Combined, the Administration’s [comprehensive strategy](#) will:

- Stem the flow of firearms used to commit violence, including by holding rogue firearms dealers accountable for violating federal laws
- Support local law enforcement with federal tools and resources to help address summer violent crime
- Invest in evidence-based community violence interventions
- Expand summer programming, employment opportunities, and other services and supports for teenagers and young adults
- Help formerly incarcerated individuals successfully reenter their communities

The core of the President’s plan is a partnership with cities and states, equipping local leaders with historic levels of federal funding and a range of tools to address the multifaceted challenge of gun violence. In particular, the strategy uses the American Rescue Plan’s \$350 billion in financial support and clear guidance to provide state, local, territorial, and tribal governments the money they need to put more police officers on the beat – including hiring above pre-pandemic levels in communities experiencing an increase in gun violence associated with the pandemic – as well as the other resources, training, and accountability they need to engage in effective community policing. The administration has clarified that these funds can also be used to support evidence-based community violence intervention programs, summer employment and educational opportunities, and other investments that we know will reduce crime and make our neighborhoods safer.

Since the President’s plan was launched, leaders across the country have already responded by taking up or supporting the take-up of these American Rescue Plan dollars for violence prevention efforts. And, as cities, counties, and states around the country consider how to allocate the historic support they’ve received through the Rescue Plan, we again encourage them to use funding to improve public safety in their communities. Already we’ve seen state and local governments utilize the funding they’ve received to put more cops on the beat, invest in community violence intervention programs, bolster community programs and economic

opportunities, and acquire technology like gunshot detection systems that will help them better confront crime head-on.

We know that the rise in violent crime over the last 18 months is a complex and multi-dimensional challenge for communities around the country, and that it requires a comprehensive response. And we know that cities and states need a strong partner in the federal government to get that done. That's why we've been heartened to see communities moving already to use the funding in the Rescue Plan to bolster public safety:

- [Utica, NY](#), plans to support “gun violence prevention and law enforcement career recruiting efforts.”
- [Walla Walla, WA](#), will “fund new police hires”
- [Tucson, AZ](#), “plan[s] to invest at least \$7 million in community safety, health and wellness, and violence interruption programs.”
- [Cincinnati, OH](#), is using Rescue Plan funds to increase its policing and emergency services budget
- [Philadelphia, PA](#), is spending “\$1.3 million to expand proven violence interruption programs” and “\$2 million for a Transitional Jobs Program to address a root cause of violence, lack of job opportunities.”
- [Albuquerque, NM](#), is investing “\$3 million to expand a gunshot detection system, \$5 million to refurbish station houses, \$1 million for new cars and \$450,000 to recruit more officers.”
- [Watertown, NY](#), will use some of its Rescue Plan funds “to reinstate four police officers and two other city staff positions.”
- [Kansas City, MO](#), seeks to “restore police departments to pre-pandemic levels”
- [Syracuse, NY](#), will invest in an “enhancement of the police department’s ShotSpotter system, which helps locate gunfire; a collaboration with mental health providers to assist with mental health-related police calls; [and] increased police transparency.”

Monday, the President will continue his ongoing conversations with local leaders about gun violence reduction. Cities represented in the meeting are using American Rescue Plan funds to improve public safety and expand community services – including by investing in community policing and bolstering law enforcement, supporting effective community violence intervention programs, and expanding programming to increase economic opportunity and steer at-risk individuals away from crime.

The historic funding from the American Rescue Plan is also being supplemented by additional federal efforts to support communities and crack down on gun crime. As part of that, the Department of Justice has announced the launch of gun trafficking strike forces in five areas nationwide – including New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and the Bay Area. Those multi-jurisdictional efforts will address the problem of guns being obtained in places with weaker gun laws and then used to commit horrific crimes across state lines. And they will augment existing efforts by the Department of Justice announced in May to target federal law enforcement efforts nationwide to address violent crime.

In addition, the President has requested additional support to better strengthen both federal and local law enforcement efforts. In his proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2022, the President asked for \$300 million more for the COPS program to boost federal assistance for community policing, and he called for over \$750 million more for federal law enforcement agencies. The President also has already taken steps to strengthen regulations to keep guns out of the wrong hands – including by cracking down on ghost guns, homemade firearms that often cannot be traced by law enforcement due to the lack of a serial number and that are increasingly being used in crimes. He also continues to push Congress to take long-overdue action to prevent guns from being used in crimes, including strengthening background checks, renewing the ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines, and ending immunity for gun manufacturers.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON THE CITIES REPRESENTED AT MONDAY'S ROUNDTABLE WITH THE PRESIDENT:

Washington, D.C.

\$59 million Investment to Reduce Gun Violence and Build Safer Neighborhoods

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser's fiscal year 2022 budget proposal uses American Rescue Plan funding to invest a collective \$59 million to reduce gun violence and build safer neighborhoods.

The Mayor's proposal would deliver:

- \$3.4M to add 100 new slots for the Metropolitan Police Department's cadet program
- \$11.4M to support returning citizens with financial assistance through community-based organizations, financial coaching, and peer navigators as they transition back into the community
- \$7.8M for additional violence interrupters and \$400K for additional credible messengers
- \$13.8M for youth safety initiatives, including an expansion of Safe Passage, out-of-school activities for youth, and enhanced training for school resource officers
- \$6.8M for the Department of Behavioral Health, the District Department of Transportation, and the Department of Public Works to respond to non-emergency 911 calls for mental health distress, minor traffic crashes, and parking complaints
- \$5.6M to create 110 dedicated employment opportunities through the Department of Public Works for individuals at risk of gun violence
- \$4.5M for D.C. Pathways, a transitional employment program, to serve an additional 100 individuals at risk of gun violence
- \$4.6M to provide more wrap-around support services including Pathways Champions positions for at-risk individuals, Project Empowerment (a work readiness program for people with multiple barriers to employment), intensive care coordination, housing assistance/relocation, and transportation support
- \$1.9M to expand trauma-informed mental health services
- \$2.2M for temporary safe housing for residents involved in gun violence
- \$1.5M for community investment grants to carry out neighborhood action plans in focus neighborhoods

In addition, the Biden Administration is providing additional support to help Washington, D.C. address violent crime:

- DOJ is launching a new law enforcement strike force focused on addressing significant firearms trafficking corridors that have diverted guns to Washington, D.C.
- Washington, D.C. is part of the White House’s new “Community Violence Intervention (CVI) Collaborative” of 16 jurisdictions aimed at sharing resources and best practices to maximize the impact of evidence-driven community violence intervention programs. The CVI Collaborative will hold its kickoff meeting this week.

San Jose, CA

Resilience Corps Program: Employment for At-Risk Youth

San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo’s approved budget allocates \$20 million in American Rescue Plan and FEMA dollars to employ hundreds of low-income young adults in jobs supporting pandemic response, climate resilience, educational recovery, and economic recovery. Today, Resilience Corps members work in summer and after-school learning programs to help students overcome learning loss, clear defensible space in wildfire-exposed neighborhoods, support COVID vaccination efforts at community health clinics, plant trees to reduce heat-island effect impacts, and engage in other resilience-building work. This evidence-driven approach recognizes that unemployment among young adults is roughly double that of the rest of our workforce, that young adults disproportionately commit and are victimized by crime, and that young people are less likely to be involved in violence if they are productively engaged.

In addition, the Department of Justice is supporting San Jose’s efforts to reduce gun violence through the launch of a gun trafficking strike force centered on the Bay Area, which will work across jurisdictions to stem the flow of crime guns.

New York City, NY

New York City’s adopted FY22 budget uses American Rescue Plan funds to add more than \$44 million to expand Cure Violence and the Crisis Management system, community violence intervention models that use credible messengers to mediate conflicts and connect high-risk individuals to services that can reduce the risk of violence. In addition, the NYPD has re-deployed an additional 200 officers performing administrative functions to the field full time, specifically assigned to high violence commands.

In the Adopted Budget, which is supported by funding through the Rescue Plan, New York City has made targeted investments to break the cycle of incarceration and reduce gun violence. This budget uses housing and employment as an anti-violence measure. That effort includes:

- Creating the Precision Employment Initiative to hire 1,000 people this summer in Mott Haven, Brownsville and South Jamaica who are most at-risk, an example of violence prevention via employment and support services. (\$24M in FY22)
- Providing reentry housing with healthcare and employment counseling for justice involved New Yorkers returning to the community (\$57M in FY22)

- Expanding “Jails to Jobs” to provide more formerly incarcerated individuals, including those on State parole, with transitional employment (\$6.6M in FY22)
- Providing peer mentorship for incarcerated individuals and those who are reentering with Crisis Management System Credible Messengers (\$5M in FY22)
- Expanding the CMS-based Hospital Violence Intervention Program into new hospital locations to support victims of violence and their family and networks (\$6M in FY22)
- Expanding CMS Services in the 40th and 44th Precincts in the Bronx and providing additional CMS supports (\$6M in FY22)

Further, New York’s in-place comprehensive summer crime strategy, Safe Summer NYC, has doubled New York’s Cure Violence workforce, has increased Summer Youth Anti-Violence employment from 800 to 2000, convenes anti-violence fairs in 30 neighborhoods, and is refurbishing basketball courts and soccer fields.

- The plan focuses police presence on the 100 blocks with the highest rate of gun violence, strengthens federal partnerships with NYPD to perform rapid tracing of firearms, expands the Community Solutions Program connecting community members to resources, and launches a gun buyback advertising campaign.
- The plan also unveils the NYC Joint Force to End Gun Violence, including NYPD, Cure Violence providers, DA offices, City agencies, the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, law enforcement, and community groups.

DOJ is launching a new law enforcement strike force focused on addressing significant firearms trafficking corridors that have diverted guns to New York.

Memphis, TN

Hiring and Training for Law Enforcement, CVI Specialists, and Investments in Wrap Around Supports

Memphis city and local enforcement leaders have announced plans to use American Rescue Plan funding for hiring and training more officers, paying for much-needed overtime for officers, youth programs, the hiring and training of additional people to work in violence intervention and funding for social efforts to help people leave criminal lifestyles. The city will also invest in wraparound services for at risk individuals.

Memphis is also part of the White House’s new CVI Collaborative.

Chicago, IL

Comprehensive Summer Crime Strategy

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Police Chief David Brown have rolled out a comprehensive summer public safety strategy to combat violent crime. The plan includes:

- Increased police presence, longer shifts for officers, and bringing partners across the city together to address the root causes of violent crime.

- Calling for city departments, including the park district, libraries, and CPS to coordinate with community partners, including faith leaders, violence prevention and youth services organizations to support at-risk individuals.
- Allocating police and city resources to 15 “hot spot” areas that are responsible for more than half of the city’s violence, based on data from the past three summers, including in the following neighborhoods: North Lawndale, West Garfield Park, South Shore, Austin, West Humboldt Park, Greater Grand Crossing, Pullman, Roseland, East Garfield Park, South Chicago And Auburn Gresham.

DOJ is launching a new law enforcement strike force focused on addressing significant firearms trafficking corridors that have diverted guns to Chicago. In addition, Chicago is also participating in the White House’s new CVI Collaborative.

Newark, NJ

Investments in Community-Based Public Safety Initiatives

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka has joined other city leaders, law enforcement and violence prevention specialists to form the Community Based Public Safety Association, an association comprised of major city leaders and violence prevention experts that will commit to funding and building the capacity of public health-based violence prevention programs. These strategies will complement policing. Programs will mirror Newark’s own Community Street Team which draws upon an evidence-based trauma informed approach to violence reduction. The association will call on other mayors and local officials to use American Rescue Plan funding to invest in these programs.

In addition, Newark is participating in the White House’s new CVI Collaborative.

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