



BUNCOMBE COUNTY COMMUNITY SAFETY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLAN & REPORT



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Safety. Community cohesion. Health. Collective efficacy. Accountability. Healing. Equity. These are the guiding principles behind Buncombe County's collaborative efforts to address violence and its disproportionate impact on historically oppressed communities. The mission of the Justice Services Department is "To collaborate with community and justice system partners to re-imagine justice, enhance public safety, and holistically support all people impacted by the justice system."

This report brings together the past few years of collective work by community leaders, government partners, and stakeholders from diverse sectors, including education, public health, law enforcement, legal systems, social work, housing, and healthcare. It aligns with Buncombe County's Strategic Focus areas of promoting Resident Well-Being and building an Educated & Capable Community, where all residents are safe, healthy, engaged, and able to thrive and demonstrate resilience throughout their lives.

Furthermore, this work builds upon the County's Foundational focus of establishing systems, policies, and practices that support equity for all people and engage in racial equity strategies to improve quality of life. It is a deeply personal endeavor, both for those working within government systems and the communities we serve. The ripples of violence impact individuals, families, neighborhoods, and entire communities.

As we move forward, our hope is to build on the foundational work documented here, and to move forward collaboratively as we center the leadership of those with lived experience who are most directly impacted by this work and find ways for system stakeholders to provide support and advocate for equity. Our youth, our families, our communities deserve to experience safety and healing. We invite you to join us in this crucial work.

Tiffany Iheanacho, Justice Services Department Director

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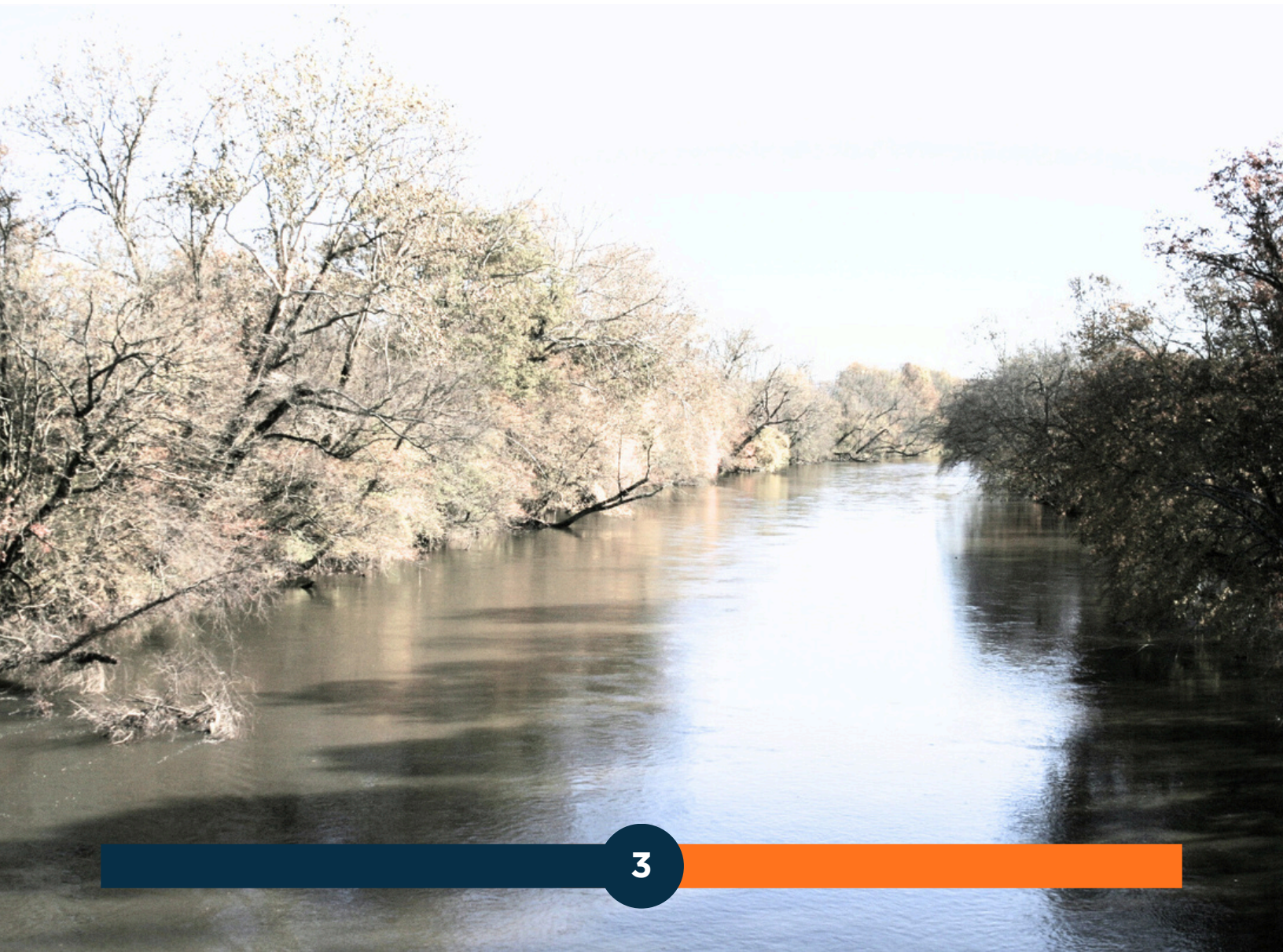
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INTRODUCTION - ROWING TOGETHER

Buncombe County is situated along one of the oldest rivers in the world, the French Broad River, which flows through the land. Groups who navigate the river in a single craft must row together to succeed. Navigating the currents and uncertain terrain, everyone is responsible for each other's safety. Likewise, this plan acknowledges the changing currents and uncertain terrain of community development and that we all depend upon each other for safety.

Buncombe County Government has been working to embed equity in its efforts to advance community safety for everyone and to prevent and reduce community violence.



BACKGROUND - A CALL TO ACTION

During 2020, several Buncombe County workgroups and advisory councils prioritized racial justice efforts to include the inequitable outcomes for African American communities. This group included the Safety + Justice Challenge Racial Equity Workgroup, Child Fatality Review Team, and the Justice Resource Advisory Council.

Buncombe County Government acknowledged the need for a coordinated approach. In 2018, Buncombe County was awarded \$1.75 million Safety + Justice Challenge grant from the MacArthur Foundation to safely reduce the local jail population.

As part of the Safety + Justice Challenge (SJC) community engagement process, SJC partners hosted planning meetings, held community listening sessions, interviewed community members, and engaged with stakeholder partners. While the goal was to reduce the jail population, much was learned about key factors leading to incarceration.

Community members expressed a deep desire for safety, and specifically for investment in community-led solutions.



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MARCH
2020

The Buncombe County JRAC Racial Equity Workgroup attends the Racial Equity Institute Groundwater Training in an effort to engage the justice community in a thoughtful process of educating stakeholders about structural racism and racial equity

JULY
2020

The Buncombe County JRAC passed a proclamation declaring racism as a public safety emergency and outlined action steps to advance racial equity and justice in Buncombe County

2018

Buncombe County is awarded \$1.75 million Safety + Justice Challenge grant from the MacArthur Foundation to safely reduce the local jail population

JUNE
2020

The Buncombe County Child Fatality Review Team identified gun violence as a growing threat to the health of youth and adults in our community, with recommendations

From these community conversations, SJC partners prioritized Advancing Community Safety and Violence Prevention as a critical strategy for safely reducing the jail population and advancing racial equity in our community. To promote community-led solutions, focus shifted to investing in leaders, programs, and community partners that work at the intersection of community safety, public health, and the justice system. Buncombe County released an RFP and awarded SJC funds to:

- The SPARC Foundation, My Daddy Taught Me That (MDTMT), Umoja Health, Wellness and Justice Collective, and the Racial Justice Coalition: to begin community violence prevention work with the goal of creating intergenerational spaces that empower safety, trust, and healing. Collaborative strategies included: community engagement, resource support, positive youth development, trauma and resilience education and listening circles, and research into violence prevention models across the country that could meaningfully support growing this work in Asheville.
- Jordan Peer Recovery: to bring community partners together to develop a collaborative and coordinated set of recommendations to prevent and respond to community violence inclusive of various community partners, agencies, municipalities, organizations, and individuals. The County also retained Prevention Institute to provide technical assistance on this work, as they support communities around the country in designing similar plans.

Safety is not a singular responsibility. Like the flowing river, our concerted efforts toward community safety began long before this report and will continue into the future. Opportunities to contribute to a safer community have been identified through strategic planning meetings, along with additional interviews, conversations, various touch points with formerly incarcerated people, those who have been impacted by violence, youth, organization representatives, law enforcement officers, and trusted community leaders.



Community Engagement Efforts

Community members are joined by justice system partners, public health officials, law enforcement, and local community groups partnered concerned that gun violence and homicides will continue to rise given intersectional stressors and systemic pressures experienced by Asheville's most impacted communities.

According to an examination of incarceration/poverty/income performed by Buncombe County data analysts, the area with the lowest median household income and highest percentage of people living in poverty (28801) is also home to the highest incarceration rates (19.1% of incarcerations, as compared to other ZIP codes that range from 1-2.8% each).

Why?

Violence – especially gun violence – and the justice system have inequitable impacts on Black or African American community members living in Buncombe County in general and the City of Asheville in particular; so much so that on August 4, 2020, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners declared racism a public health and safety crisis. This declaration raises awareness that systemic racism and racist behaviors are at the root of health and safety disparities, and are creating a crisis in the County.

In 2020: **84%** of those impacted by gun violence were Black

65% of gunshot victims were Black

32% of aggravated assault victims were Black

PURPOSE & GOALS

The Buncombe County Community Violence Prevention and Safety Plan is the result of a collaboration between community members, service providers, and stakeholders committed to fostering a safe and inclusive community. The goal of this plan is to provide recommendations that will decrease violence and advance community safety, while aligning efforts and providing collaborative support.

Goals of this Plan

Align without Duplicating

Highlight community resources and work that is already in place and needs more support.

Celebrate without Tokenizing

Affirm that no one person speaks for any whole group - that groups are dynamic and diverse. Likewise, one size does not fit all. No single program, person, or agency is the "token."

Support without Paternalizing

Acknowledge that the community knows best. While systemic power sits with institutions, shifting and sharing power with community leadership is essential to transformational change.

A STARTING PLACE

Community building is both the process and the goal: community building promotes violence prevention and violence prevention promotes community cohesion. Violence prevention cannot happen effectively or equitably without true community building. To that end, strategic plans and goals from each agency representative were requested and alignment was sought within those various plans. Further, culturally aligned violence prevention strategies are required in order to address the fact that communities of color are disproportionately impacted by violence.

METHODOLOGY

IN PARTNERSHIP

The Justice Services Department partnered with Jordan Peer Recovery and Greg Walker Wilson to bring together system stakeholders and community partners to:

- meet monthly from July 2021 – January 2022 to develop a collaborative and coordinated plan to prevent and respond to community violence;
- bring together partners across institutions and industries to build a sustainable approach to community safety.

FOUNDATIONS & FRAMEWORK

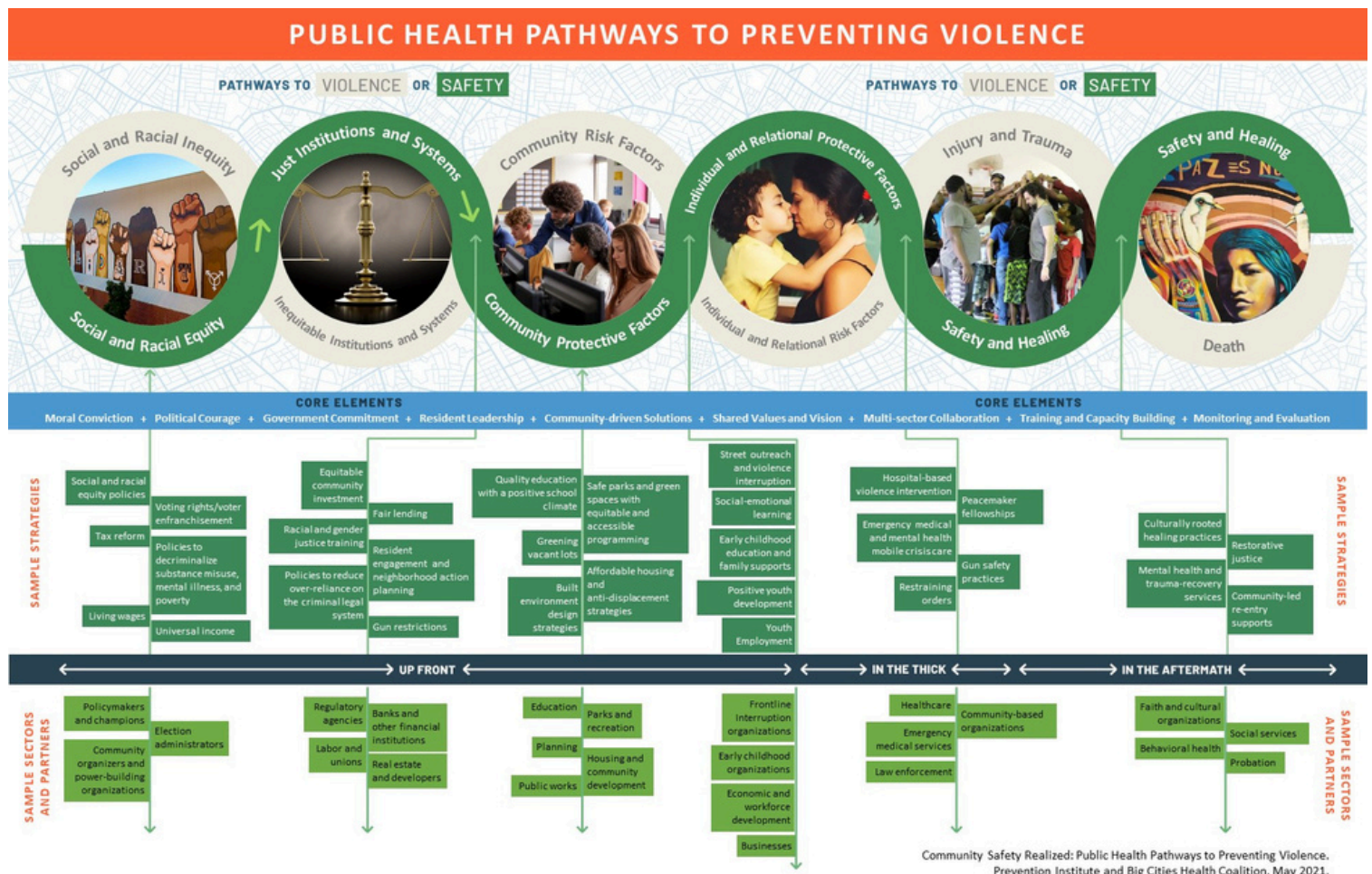
This process began with looking at [Buncombe County's Strategic Priorities](#) and then layering in the County's [Racial Equity Action Plan](#) to identify areas of alignment with Community Violence Prevention.

A review of frameworks, reports, and guidance from Prevention Institute provided additional foundation for this plan. Key foundational learnings from Prevention Institute include:

- [Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links among Multiple Forms of Violence](#) (produced in collaboration with the CDC): Concludes that the roots of all violence are connected, root causes begin before violence itself is visible, and violence impacts the whole community. The solutions, then, are not isolated but community-based. Solutions to advance violence prevention and safety must then start long before acts of violence occur in various forms.



- Community Safety Realized: Public Health Pathways to Preventing Violence: The defining features of a public health approach to community safety include:
 - Truth, racial healing, and transformation
 - Community leadership and power
 - Data and evidence driven solutions
 - Collaborative action
- The Prevention Institute's Public Health Pathways to Preventing Violence framework depicts pathways to violence or safety; highlights sample strategies, and partners along the safety pathway; and delineates core elements of effectiveness and sustainability. Decisions made at each interval move a community either towards more safety and healing or towards more death and destruction. There is an opportunity to engage at every level, but the most safety is realized by starting at the beginning and addressing social, structural, and racial inequities.



DATA COLLECTION

Between July 2021 and April 2022, at least eighteen meetings took place for the creation of this initial plan. Six of these were large collaborative meetings with stakeholders from across the community, including government officials, justice system representatives, and community leaders. Aiming to align various strategic plans and priorities across the community to identify natural points of collaboration, each participant was asked to submit either strategic plans or key priorities where individuals felt more collaboration would be helpful to advance community safety. The overarching goal was to see how and where various existing plans align towards the collective goal of community safety for Buncombe County to amplify and support the work already being done:

- Meeting 1 (August, 2021): Sharing information about our organizations and how our work contributes to community safety.
- Meeting 2 (September, 2021): Outlining key priorities to ensure the plan has systemic impact.
- Meeting 3 (September 2021): Youth-led meeting at My Daddy Taught Me That. Youth met in person and adults joined by Zoom to listen. This was a time for youth to lead. Adults were asked to be present, but listen and learn from our young leaders.
- Meeting 4 (October 2021): Alignment of "putting our ideas together."
- Meeting 5 (November 2021): Arranging the pieces of the plan.
- Meeting 6 (January 2022): Reviewing the draft of the plan.

CROSS-SECTOR REPRESENTATION

In the formation of this plan, over 100 individuals representing various agencies and organizations were invited to participate. Among them, at least 28 community agencies engaged with at least one meeting and provided input toward this plan.

REAL TIME SURVEYING

During initial planning meetings, participants completed a survey and gave open responses to the question “What do we value?”. By identifying shared values, we provide a foundation for the discussion held among participants and the recommendations outlined in this plan. Core values identified by community stakeholders included respect, compassion, growth, authenticity, loyalty, and justice.

Values Community Shares



Community Values



Wordclouds generated from Mentimeter poll responses from participants in Community Safety Planning meeting on July 30, 2021.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

One of the developmental meetings for this plan was held at My Daddy Taught Me That (MDTMT), a local non-profit organization led by former social worker and Asheville native, Keynon Lake. The session was led by the youth, and adults were not invited to speak - only to listen.

During this session, youth described feeling unsafe at school and named influential factors for this lack of safety ranging from feeling unfairly treated by teachers to feeling a need to carry guns out of a fear for their own safety because others had guns. They also vocalized feeling that there was no safe place for them in our community. They expressed the desire for more constructive activities and role models, especially adult males in the community who would mentor and advise them in life issues.

When asked where they go now to feel safe, the youth participating in MDTMT unanimously referenced the MDTMT program. MDTMT has existed for nearly 10 years and has served hundreds of young people over the years. Youth coming of age and graduating high school remain engaged with MDTMT as ambassadors leading the program for younger boys.

Youth discussed wanting more relevant recreational activities. MDTMT youth acknowledged a desire to participate in activities at local parks and recreation community centers, but expressed feeling like there was no opportunity for them with programs geared towards an older age-group and the doors closed on evenings and weekends when youth would need it most. There was specific mention of need for more basketball courts that did not share court space with other sports (for example, tennis courts more used by adults). They requested more activities within their local neighborhoods that did not require transportation for them to participate, and with trusted adults present.

Top 4 Roots of Community Violence According to Youth Surveyed:



Youth Input Session, My Daddy Taught Me That, September 20, 2021

YOUTH-LED IDEAS

Youth identified some of the root causes of community violence and potential recommendations for solutions. The final planning sessions in November 2021 and January 2022 included both adult and youth engagements. Participants were asked to rank the root causes of community violence as named by the youth and were not allowed to change the categories that had been identified by youth.

YOUTH RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

Parks and public lands access equity

Investment in a violence interrupter program

Investing in youths future

Get a real space suited for the youth to have events, programming, and a lounge area

Use reparations funds to address the lack of public space for use

Paid leadership opportunities

Safe & accessible youth programs

Increase youth programming and opportunities to create safe spaces for all

Youth-led activities for support

How are people held accountable to implementation?

Come out and put in work with the community outreach workers and the youth

Youth Input Session, My Daddy Taught Me That, September 20, 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were agreed upon by stakeholders through this process. These recommendations cannot be achieved by system responses alone, but in the community which has more flexibility, less regulation, and more local buy-in.

1. **Improve the social and built environment**
2. **Support healthy youth development and improve school climate**
3. **Cultivate a thriving workforce and economic opportunity**
4. **Create narratives of hope, safety, and community**
5. **Invest in violence prevention and intervention responses**

NEW METHODS OF COLLABORATION

The residents of Buncombe County have already been doing the work to support safety in our communities, however, the work has often been siloed and under-resourced. Implementing these recommendations requires collaboration between grassroots work and anchor institutions; adult and youth voice; and redistribution of power.

IMPROVE THE SOCIAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

1. Build/improve recreational spaces inside of neighborhoods where higher crime rates have been reported (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, CPTED).
2. Incorporate recommendations from youth detailed in previous section to increase safe, accessible, and relevant public spaces and programming for youth with support from trusted adults.
3. Decrease access to weapons and other lethal means through stricter gun purchase laws, interventions at suicide hotspots, and safe storage practices.

SUPPORT HEALTHY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

1. Invest in BIPOC/community-led programs and organizations committed to youth achievement via mentoring, afterschool programs, college and career readiness, peer support, social-emotional learning, and family/schools partnerships etc.
2. Implement the Community School model, an evidence-based strategy for equitable school improvement. Coordinated cross-sector leadership (youth, families, community, educators) connect school, family and community partners in the areas of integrated student support, authentic family and community engagement, and expanded and enriched learning opportunities.
3. Engage United for Youth Network's collective impact infrastructure for aligned and coordinated youth development and education supports.
4. Integrate Restorative Practices (RP) throughout relevant County departments and support the scale of RP with school and community partners. Implement more robust restorative justice opportunities across our community.
5. Create opportunities for community with Peer Support Specialists.
6. Create paid internship and apprenticeships in County departments.
7. Invest in youth leadership: hire and engage youth to design and operate youth-centered places and spaces.

CULTIVATE A THRIVING WORKFORCE & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

1. Recruit, hire, and train local youth and young adults for County positions via paid internships, apprenticeships, and training programs that lead to meaningful jobs.
2. Increase coordination of youth job programs and encourage employers to increase youth internship, apprenticeship, and employment opportunities.
3. Advertise jobs and business contract opportunities in places and spaces frequented by marginalized groups.
4. Increase economic stability of families by improving access and awareness for programs working on this issue.

CREATE NARRATIVES OF HOPE, SAFETY, AND COMMUNITY

1. Facilitate transformative justice model conversations with locals and law enforcement.
2. Create easily accessible data that show incarceration rates compared to economic status. Connect data on incarceration and violence with root causes recognizing that when people do not have access to critical resources for life, they are blamed for behaviors that are a symptom of systemic oppression.
3. Hire communications specialists who are skilled with utilizing social media to reach younger demographics.
4. Hold local celebrations promoting norms of nonviolence supported by the County and anchor institutions.
5. Spotlight and celebrate positive things happening in the community to instill a sense of community pride.

INVEST IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION RESPONSES

Community Healing through Activism and Strategic Mobilization (CHASM): The overarching framework recommended by the group is CHASM's Community-Based Public Health Response to Violence (CPrV). There was consensus that this would best fit Buncombe County's needs and provide an opportunity for success. Over the course of 2020, the Racial Justice Coalition (RJC) completed research on best practices and found this to be a model that Buncombe County could use to address root causes of violence. The RJC and SPARC presented these recommendations to the County's Justice Resource Advisory Council in February 2022.

The CPrV model focuses on root causes of violence and honors the lived experience of community members whose voices have historically been overlooked or downplayed. The CPrV model shifts blame from individuals alone, and examines the responsibility of systems. When systems propagate a hostile environment, individuals suffer as they try to survive. CPrV is an assets-based approach that trains trusted, credible community members to become Community Health Worker-Violence Prevention Professionals (CHW-VPPs) who provide social determinants of health interventions and drive progress through advocacy to reduce or eliminate structural violence and inequities.

Core Strategies of CPrV:

- Community Professional Development: CHW-VPP
- Youth Leadership Development: Youth Empowerment Solutions (YES)
- Repurposing the Built Environment: Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Community Qualitative Research: Community-Based Participatory Research
- Pedagogy of Empowerment: Popular Education
- Multi-sectored Stakeholder Coalition
- Community Healing Initiative

ADDITIONAL THEMES DISCUSSED AND LESSONS LEARNED

ENGAGE AND SUPPORT YOUTH AND FAMILIES

- Center youth leadership, listen to what youth want and need to feel safe, and limit making decisions without youth in the room. This promotes youth involvement and helps adults understand things that they might otherwise overlook. It also creates an open dialogue where youth can contribute to solutions that directly impact them.
- When youth are actively engaged in exciting relevant programming, they feel safe and experience success.
- LGBTQ youth and young adults need to feel safe and supported in our community.
- Access to guns is too easy; not only for adults but also for youth.
- Youth in Buncombe County revealed the presence of guns in school. They explained that youth carrying guns do not intend to provoke violence but are carrying guns for fear that others have guns and feel unsafe without it.
- Provide safe environments for parents. Parents and families report being hesitant to talk about their children, family, and community with schools, police, and social services. Additionally, some students and families may not feel safe in spaces with law enforcement.
- Provide mentors for youth and support families. During the youth-led session held at My Daddy Taught Me That (MDTMT), the youth asserted that they wanted father figures and involved males in their lives.

IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LAW ENFORCEMENT, THE JUSTICE SYSTEM, AND THE COMMUNITY

- The relationship between law enforcement and the community could improve with better communication. Asheville Police Department and Buncombe County Sheriff's Office both participated in community discussions. Benefits of these discussions include residents knowing the officers by name and vice versa. It's recommended for community conversations to continue and to include law enforcement officers in regular clothes (not uniforms) participating in conversations with residents who want to promote mutual understanding.
- People involved with the justice system could be given creative sentencing to support their growth, including opportunities for restorative justice. Local non-profit organizations like Operation Gateway, Umoja Health Wellness and Justice Collective, YMI Cultural Center, The SPARC Foundation, Jordan Peer Recovery, WNC Rescue Ministries, and others provide direct service to people involved with the criminal justice system. Justice system partners could increase diversionary referrals to these programs instead of sentencing them to incarceration.
- Support educational campaigns through social media to the general public to better understand the justice system, for example, the impact of magistrates, court processes, failure to appear charges, and related County resources.

PROMOTE A LIVING WAGE

- Addressing systemic poverty through increased access to living wages could help entire families and communities emerge from poverty, thereby fueling economic and social development, and promoting community safety.
- Buncombe County zip codes with higher rates of poverty have higher rates of crime. It would be hurtful to add more law enforcement in these neighborhoods without increasing funding and infrastructure to beneficial programs and grassroots movements. Aligned with the Community Safety Realized report and local sentiment, this group recommends a reallocation of funds away from punitive strategies and towards preventive strategies.

ENSURE EQUITY IN FUNDING

- Based on research on Overcoming the Racial Bias in Philanthropic Funding, the revenues of Black-led organizations are significantly lower than those of their white-led counterparts, and have less unrestricted funding-- a measure often seen as a proxy for trust.
- Recommendations:
 - Review programs in Buncombe County to see how BIPOC-led programs compare to white-led counterparts in unrestricted funding.
 - Support funding for grassroots, small, and mid-sized programs. Local programs doing work on the frontlines need funding for administrative functions and operations support.

PROMOTE DRIVER'S LICENSE RESTORATION

From NC's Equal Access to Justice Commission Storymap, "When Debt Takes the Wheel":

- Drivers with unpaid traffic court fines and fees in NC have their licenses suspended indefinitely, even if it is their first traffic ticket or first time being unable to pay. These court fines and fees, which have increased by 260% since 1995, are out of reach for those living at or below the Federal Poverty Level.
- Over 250,000 North Carolinians have had their licenses suspended due to inability to pay court fees and fines. This severely limits ability to work, care for children or other family members, and contribute to the economy.
- Durham's successful driver's license restoration initiative has "waived approximately \$2.7 million in fines and fees for over 11,000 low-income residents. It has also dismissed over 50,000 charges for minor offenses for approximately 35,000 people." They acknowledge the following challenges:
 - Criminal records severely limit opportunity
 - Suspended drivers licenses create barriers
 - Communities of Color disproportionately affected
 - Availability of legal relief fails to meet demand
- The Second Chance Alliance coordinates efforts across the state of North Carolina and has launched a chapter in Buncombe County.

INITIAL PILOT PROJECTS

With the support of the MacArthur Foundation's Safety +Justice Challenge we launched two pilot projects in support of this plan.

Driver's License Restoration Project

Starting in March of 2022 through June 2023, the Justice Services Department began actively collaborating with Pisgah Legal Services to implement a Driver's License Restoration Program and Driver's License Related Debt Relief pilot project. Pisgah Legal Services hired an attorney who provides assistance to individuals who have lost their license and need to acquire their licenses for various reasons. The attorney researches charges, fines and fees on behalf of the individual seeking assistance and works to get the charges addressed and fines paid.

- 51 individuals were assisted: 39.7% obtained a new driver's license or were eligible to reapply for their license, while 58.6% were still awaiting results.

Call to Action RFP

- Street Team
- Youth Mentor
- Trauma and Resilience Support
- Evidence Based Practices Research
- Development of Strategic Plan

Community Partners



The image displays four logos for community partners: SPARC FOUNDATION (a blue and white circular logo with a sunburst), RACIAL JUSTICE COALITION (a logo with raised fists and the text 'RACIAL JUSTICE COALITION'), UMOJA (a circular logo with a fist and the text 'UMOJA'), and Resources FOR Resilience (a logo with a green line graph and the text 'Resources FOR Resilience').

Community Safety Project

Reporting Period 2/2021 through 3/2022

- 99 individuals received Trauma & Resilience Training
- 38 youths partnered with mentors
- 28 adults received resource support such as employment, life skills, anger management, transportation, disability benefits assistance, etc.

Community-Based Public Health Response to Violence (CPrV) Launches

After a year of research in violence prevention models across the country, CPrV recommended model launches (more information page 18).

- In 2022, Justice Services requested funding for CPrV implementation and received a \$2.5 million award from the U.S. Department of Justice and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.
- In January 2023, My Daddy Taught Me That, The SPARC Foundation, Youth Transformed for Life (YTL), Resources for Resilience, and the Racial Justice Coalition (RJC) were selected from a competitive search to implement CPrV.
- By June 2023, 20 individuals from various organizations, including MDTMT, SPARC, YTL, RJC, Umoja Health Wellness and Justice Collective, Asheville Dream Center, LOVE, and Justice Services, completed 60 hours of CHASM training to graduate as Community Health Worker-Violence Prevention Professionals.
- In July 2023, the contracted organizations launched the CHW-VPP P.E.A.C.E. Team (Providing Education & Advocacy Thru Community Engagement).
- September 2023, additional CHW-VPPs graduated from a training program hosted by Land of Sky's GOPlaces Workforce Development and Violence Prevention Program.
- In October 2023, Youth Empowerment Solutions training and a Multi-Sector Coalition were established.



Learning and Building Community



May 2023 Mother's Day Event

More than 300 people from Buncombe County and surrounding areas gathered at Pack Square to support Mothers who have lost their children as a result of gun violence.



February 2023

The U.S. Department of Justice Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.



June 2023

Gun Violence Prevention Month

- June 2nd - Wear Orange
- June 2nd - June 9th - Light Up the Courthouse Orange
- June 4th - Moms Demand Action Wear Orange Event
- June 6th - Buncombe County Commissioner's Proclaim Gun Violence Prevention Month
- June 8th - NC S.A.F.E Gun Safety Event
- June 12th - Multi-Sector Coalition Planning
- June 14th - CPrV Community Health Worker Training Celebration



December 2023

Multi-Sector Coalition Kickoff

Buncombe County's Community-Based Public Health Response to Violence (CPrV) Coalition hosted the first multi-sector stakeholder meeting. Members of the community, law enforcement, health and human services agencies, schools, housing, medical professionals, and justice system stakeholders gathered for the coalition's kick-off where Abdul Hafeedh bin Abdullah, Co-Founder of CHASM (Community Healing through Activism and Strategic Mobilization), shared information about the coalition and the importance of community involvement.

He emphasized the need to have leadership at all levels present in each engagement, and he then encouraged those in attendance to be committed to collaborating and strengthening the work already being done inside of Buncombe County.

The coalition will be scheduling monthly meetings and figuring out best practices that will be implemented to address the barriers within our neighborhoods.



NEXT STEPS

- Support ongoing implementation of CPrV with funded partners and across Buncombe County, including:
 - Advance Youth Leadership Development through incorporating Youth Empowered Solutions strategies into work
 - Develop Multi-Sector Coalition in partnership with CPrV partners and Land Of Sky's GOPlaces
 - Build community cohesion and collective efficacy
- Increase coordination with aligned initiatives, including the Coordinated Community Response To Domestic Violence And Sexual Assault and Buncombe County Community Paramedics Program hosting CHWs with the Asheville Housing Authority
- Deepen understanding of the nature, patterns, and root causes of community violence through ongoing community assessment and community-based participatory research
- Collaboratively identify goals and measures of success
- Identify strategies to sustain and grow this work with continued community leadership
- Continue to implement community safety plan recommendations, and update annually



Photo credit: Tony Shivers, Still Smiling Photography LLC (used with permission)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you!

This document is the result of input, time, and commitment of community members involved in this process since 2020, including individuals with lived experience, student and youth feedback, and representatives from the following partners...

- Buncombe County Government: County Manager's Office, Justice Services, Sheriff's Office, Justice Resource Advisory Council, and Safety + Justice Challenge Community Engagement & Racial Equity Workgroups, Health & Human Services, Parks & Recreation, Strategy & Innovation, Public Libraries, Communications and Public Engagement
- City of Asheville: Mayor/Vice-Mayor, City Manager's Office, Parks & Recreation, Police Department, Data & Performance
- 40th Judicial District including Superior Court Judges, District Court Judges, District Attorney's Office, and Public Defender's Office
- North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice
- Land of Sky Regional Council
- Asheville Housing Authority
- Asheville City Schools
- Buncombe County Schools
- Buncombe County Re-entry Council
- Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence And Sexual Assault & Buncombe County Violence Prevention Task Force
- SPARC Foundation
- My Daddy Taught Me That
- Racial Justice Coalition
- Community Healing through Activism and Strategic Mobilization (CHASM)
- UMOJA Health, Wellness and Justice Collective
- Change Agent Cooper/Operation Gateway
- Youth Transformed for Life
- United Way/United for Youth Network
- Our Voice
- Big Brothers Big Sisters WNC
- YMI Cultural Center
- Life Over Violence Everyday
- The Dream Center AVL
- Mothering Asheville, MAHEC, YWCA, Mount Zion Community Development
- University representatives from UNCA & Western Carolina University
- Facilitation & leadership from Jordan Peer Recovery, Walker Wilson Consulting with guidance and technical assistance from Prevention Institute

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