



LIBERATE MKE SURVEY RESULTS

SEP 2019 // PREPARED BY AFRICAN-AMERICAN
ROUNDTABLE

Acknowledgements



African-American Roundtable (AART) is a collaborative model with a dedicated intention of authenticity and genuine representation. We have built bridges between Southeast Asian, African American, and Latinx communities. These new bonds open the door for us to do more together. We are learning about the needs in each other's communities in ways that are only possible through deliberate, candid, heartfelt, and raw conversations with each other. This foundation of our work. We partner with more than four dozen organizations, including Southeast Asian, Latinx, and African American organizations and individuals, to increase city residents engagement in local civics.

This report was written by Devin Anderson with the support of Andrea J. Ritchie through the Borealis Communities Transforming Policing Fund, and of Lisa Lucas of Wisconsin Voices.

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We would like to acknowledge our campaign partners for the support throughout this campaign.

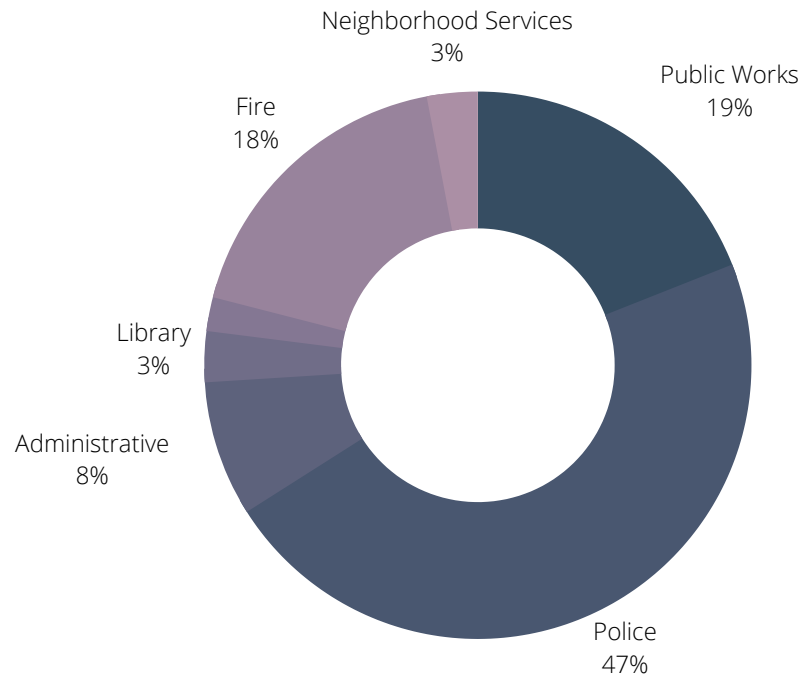
Finally, we would like to acknowledge all of our comrades around the country and the world that are leading fights to shorten the reach of this criminal legal system and that are seeking real investments into our communities.

Currently, almost half (47%) of the Milwaukee City general fund budget goes to the police department. Meanwhile, two percent goes to the library, three percent goes to the health department and three percent goes to neighborhood services (Yaccarino, 2019). Milwaukee spends a greater proportion of its general funds on the police department than other cities, including Oakland and Atlanta.

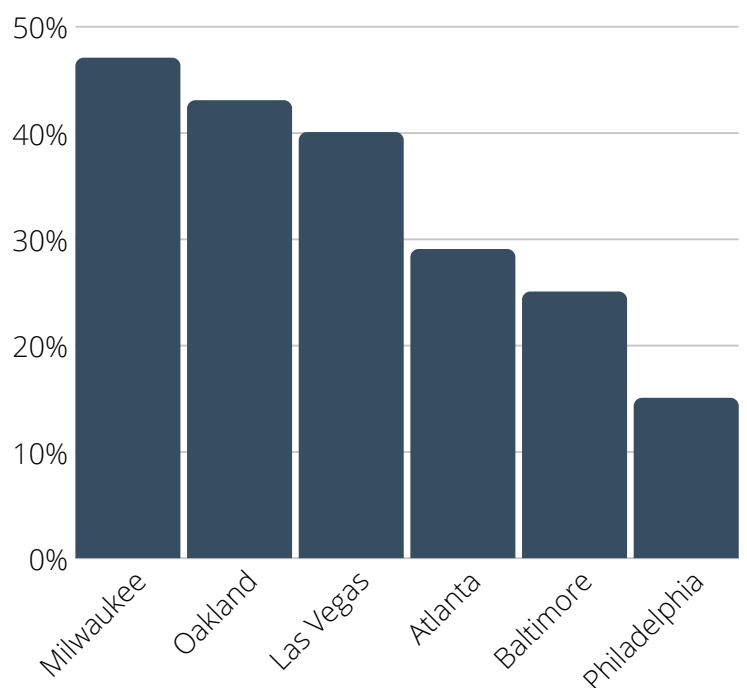
This is a budget that values policing and incarceration more than it values violence prevention and community building. The Milwaukee police budget has grown by over \$70 million in the last five years, starving nearly every other department of resources (Casey, 2018). The choice by Milwaukee's leaders to fund punitive systems instead of stabilizing and nourishing ones does not make communities safer, residents supported, or the city more vibrant. In fact, it has had the opposite effect.

It is time to recognize the truth and dispel the myth that more police make for a safer city. Study after study has shown that increasing policing and prisons does not improve public safety. In fact, the investment in policing takes away from investments in real community needs - like youth jobs, programs for affordable quality housing, and addresses the root causes of violence.

Milwaukee 2019 General Fund Departmental Appropriations



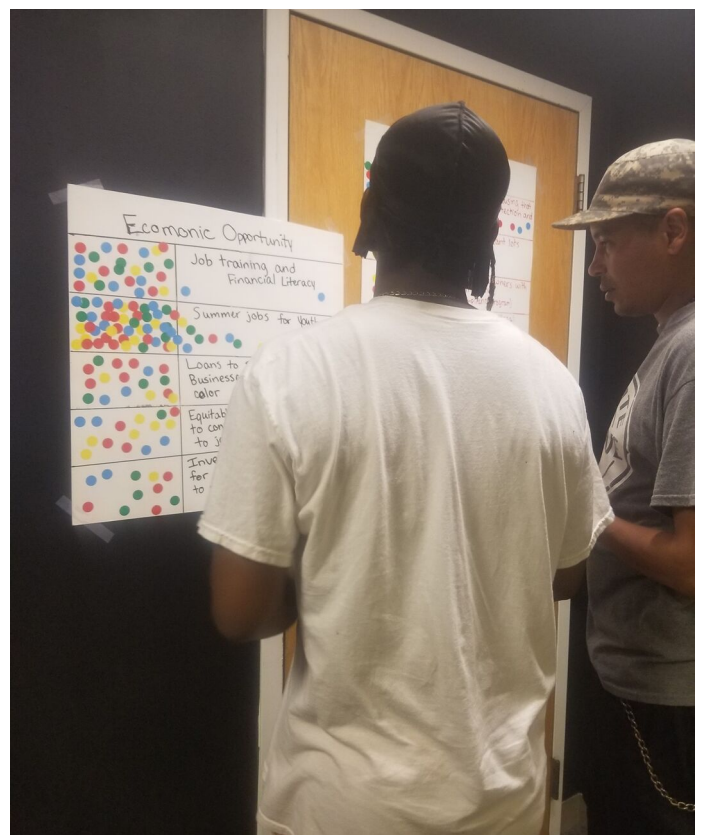
Percent of General Fund Expenditures on Police Department 2019



On June 19, 2019, the African-American Roundtable and 45 community partners launched LiberateMKE, a campaign to invest \$25 million into the community programs that advance community safety and well-being, and divest \$25 million from the Milwaukee Police Department. Over the summer of 2019, LiberateMKE surveyed over 1,100 people across the city of Milwaukee, in every aldermanic district, to see how residents really want the city to spend their money. Survey results point to three main areas Milwaukee residents want the city to invest in instead of the police department:

- Community-based violence prevention efforts that do not involve law enforcement
- Sustainable jobs for young people ages 16-24
- Affordable quality housing.

These investment priorities are consistent with the recommendations of the City of Milwaukee's *Blueprint for Peace*, developed by the Mayor, Milwaukee legislators, policy makers and community members, and reflects stakeholders best visions for a safe and just Milwaukee. They represent important steps toward bringing the Blueprint into being. Based on the priorities of Milwaukee residents, we make the following specific



recommendations for reinvestment of \$25 million dollars from the Milwaukee Police Department budget.

1. Fund community-based Violence Prevention Programs: \$9,000,000

Blueprint for Peace (2017)

Recommendations

- "2. Reduce incidence of violence through proactive prevention efforts:
- a. Utilize evidence-based outreach and violence interruption strategies to mediate conflicts, prevent retaliation and other potentially violent situations, and connect individuals to community supports. These strategies include violence interruption and focused deterrence in neighborhoods and schools.
 - b. Improve lethality assessment and safety planning measures to prevent domestic violence, homicides, and suicide.
 - d. Expand implicit bias and micro-aggression reduction and de-escalation training to include first responders, mental health providers, community health workers, and other partners.
 - e. Offer localized and culturally responsive crisis intervention support and referral services to prevent suicide and suicidal behavior (p.36)."

We demand that the City of Milwaukee listen to the people and follow the Blueprint they have laid out and fund violence prevention programs that addresses trauma and root causes, including:

- Fund violence interruption programs. Violence Interrupters who are "trained to provide support to families, friends and survivors of gun violence in hospitals and the surrounding communities" and have a proven track record of success (Waxman, 2019). This program has already successfully intervened in 26 situations before anybody was injured. Currently the city provides \$280,000 of funding for 414 Life (Waxman, 2019). We propose an additional \$220,000 to expand the Violence Interrupters to Hampton Heights and south side neighborhoods.
- Fund non-police interventions for people in mental health crisis (\$4 million). We demand that Milwaukee develop and fully implement a harm-reduction based program that can respond to people with unmet mental health needs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without the involvement of law enforcement. We further demand that it be housed in the city's Health Department rather than the Police Department, and staffed by 100 health professionals

and peer advocates paid a minimum of \$18/hour plus benefits.

For example, the CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) program in Eugene, Oregon is a mobile crisis intervention team that responds to "non-criminal crises, including homelessness, intoxication, disorientation, substance abuse and mental illness problems, and dispute resolution" (White Bird Clinic). The annual operating budget for the CAHOOTS program supporting 40 staff members, who are available 24/7 in some areas, is \$1.5 million dollars. Staff members earn \$18/hr, plus benefits, which is significantly less than the cost of hiring additional police officers (Durham Beyond Police Coalition 2019).

Additionally, Salt Lake City, Utah, has partnered with a local university and Optum Health to established a 24 hour crisis line that takes over 100 calls a day from people in distress, or from their friends or family. Mobile Outreach Service Teams (MOST), include a licensed mental health professional and a Certified Peer Specialist — a person with their own experience as a mental health patient who has been trained by the state to help others in crisis - are dispatched to assist (University of Utah). Additionally, law enforcement monitors 911 calls to

divert mental health calls to the outreach teams. The program cost for the first year was \$2.3 million (Fidel, 2019).

- Invest in culturally competent community-based mental health facilities (\$5 million). The best way to address mental health crises is to prevent them. The city of Milwaukee should invest in addressing its severe shortage of culturally competent community-based mental health care, particularly for youth and low-income residents (Wisconsin Office of Rural Health).

"MOST RESEARCH WILL
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Alderman Michael Murphy

2. Fund sustainable jobs for young people between 16-24 years old \$9,000,000 million

Blueprint For Peace (2017)

Recommendations

"5. Increase employment and workforce development opportunities for high-risk youth. Increase coordination of youth job programs to link higher need youth to subsidized jobs and supportive services to strengthen employability and earn income concurrently.

- a. Develop re-engagement centers for young people ages 14-24 who have been disconnected from school and workforce to support skill development and reconnection to educational and employment opportunities.
- b. Work with employers to increase job opportunities, on-the-job training and retention strategies for youth, with consideration of youth from undocumented families (p.40)."

The city should be investing in young people. The unemployment rate for Black youth 16-19 is six times higher than the general unemployment rate, and is highest for young Black women (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Additionally, national studies show that teens from low-income families have much lower employment

rates than those from high-income families (Fogg, Harrington, Khatiwada 2017).

In order to meet community demands and fulfill the Blueprint, the city must invest in a range of youth employment programs ranging from summer jobs for high school and colleges students to sustainable income jobs for young people who are starting families.

Specifically, the city should divert funding from the Milwaukee Police Department to the following programs:

- The Community Work Experience (CWE) component of EARN & LEARN is a specialized entry-level work opportunity for youth ages 14-24 with jobs in the non-profit, community and faith-based sectors. CWE provides youth employment through EARN & LEARN with a 7-week work experience. CWE covers the processing of their applications and work permits and pays subsidized wage rate of \$7.50 per hour for 20 hours each week; work-readiness skill development and training to make the job successful for both the youth worker and their nonprofit employer. Funding should be increased to make the program available year round to 500 youth and pay a wage of \$15.00/hour for up to 40

hours a week. Up to half of available positions should be prioritized to youth with family incomes under \$20,000 a year. Youth should be placed with organizations within their own neighborhoods when possible, and with positions that align with their interests, following a similar framework to the Promise Zones.

- The Private Sector Job Connection (PSJC) component of EARN & LEARN provides work opportunities in the private sector for youth 18 and older who have had previous work experience. Employers submit job orders that outline the essential duties, qualifications and work requirements for each position they wish to fill. Youth are screened to ensure they meet the qualifications specified by employers. Employers select from among qualified youth, and determine rate of pay, hours per week, and length of assignment, although EARN & LEARN suggests a minimum work assignment of 4-6 weeks. Funding should be increased to support 500 youth at a minimum rate of \$15/hour. At least half of available positions should be prioritized to youth with family incomes under \$20,000 a year. Youth should be placed with an employer within their own

neighborhoods when possible, and with positions that align with their interests, following a similar framework to the Promise Zones.

- The Summer Youth Internship Program (SYIP) component of EARN & LEARN is a specialized work opportunity where youth are assigned to departments within city government through exclusive funding from the City of Milwaukee's Community Development Block Grant funding. SYIP provides youth hired by the program with a 8-week work experience. They receive a subsidized wage rate of \$8.75 per hour for 20 hours each week for a maximum of 160 hours during the summer work cycle. Funding should be increased to support 1000 youth for up to 40 hours at a minimum wage of \$15/hour. Up to half of available positions should be prioritized to youth with family incomes under \$20,000 a year.
- Additionally, the city should allocate \$500,000 to fund the work of organizations and programs that work directly with young people of color, such as Programs in the Park and Tru Skool, Inc. This would allow these programs to increase their capacity, provide leadership development, and stipend young people in their program.

3. Fund Affordable, Quality Housing \$7,000,000

Blueprint for Peace (2017)

Recommendations

"4. Build resident leadership and collective action:

- a. Expand efforts to build neighborhood/resident organizing and advocacy capacity.

5. Connect residents to resources to improve their quality of life:

- a. Invest in and promote programs to increase safe and affordable housing in priority neighborhoods (p.48)."

Both the Blueprint and the community members we surveyed recognize the critical role that safe and strong neighborhoods, access to safe and affordable housing, and resident organizing and advocacy capacity play in preventing and reducing violence and creating a safe and just city. Instead of investing in policing, we should be investing in quality, safe and affordable housing. In order to move us closer to this goal, we recommend that the city reinvest funds currently allocated to the police department to:

- Increase the City of Milwaukee's contribution to Milwaukee County's Housing First program to expand the program beyond the "chronically homeless population" to reach all

homeless and precariously housed people, including newly homeless people and families, with a view to bringing the number of homeless people in the City of Milwaukee down to 0.

- Increase the quality and affordability of Milwaukee's housing stock through:
 - Landlord improvement incentives, including financial assistance to cover the cost of needed repairs and rehabilitation, tax abatements in exchange for renewing long-term affordability contracts, and rent subsidies;
 - Establishment of mandatory inclusionary zoning (IZ) policies in order to encourage production of affordable housing units within new market-rate housing developments. These policies should apply to all residential development projects and include specific requirements for very low and extremely low income levels (50 percent area median income (AMI) and below, and 30 percent AMI and below). For onsite inclusion of affordable units, these policies should require that affordability levels are set based on actual need and distribution of household income in the neighborhood.
- Create an anti-displacement fund to

provide rental subsidies and relocation funds to families at risk of homelessness through eviction and gentrification, and provide assistance with locating and securing high quality replacement housing, by prioritizing a certain percentage of new affordable housing units for residents and families who were displaced from the city or area due to publicly funded redevelopment projects (Causa Justa, 2017).

- Create and fund a community-administered housing trust that will:
 - provide loans to low and moderate income homebuyers for mortgages and down payment assistance;
 - designate and transfer public land and abandoned properties to community groups for development or rehabilitation of affordable quality housing, with a focus on the Metcalfe neighborhood (Housing Trust Silicon Valley).
- Support the development of Community Land Trusts (CLTs), Limited Equity Housing Co-Ops (LEHCs), and land and property for development of these models;
 - establishing “seed” organizations to support and train residents in forming and joining CLT’s and LEHC’s, prioritizing resident membership based on income status and lack of access to private

wealth;

- partnering with Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFI’s) support eligible low-income, low-wealth residents in obtaining access to affordable credit to cover the cost of a mortgage and down payment.
- Support community-based training for residents to participate in planning and development processes by contracting with community-based organizations to lead training programs that prepare residents for effective participation and engagement, and prioritize residents who have faced historical disinvestment and discrimination, including low-income people and people of color.
- Create and fund a renter education program focused on eviction defense and expungement, and
- Increase renter protections, including removal of barriers for formerly incarcerated people.

" Decent, affordable housing should be a basic right for everybody in this country. The reason is simple: without stable shelter, everything else falls apart."

Matthew Desmond author of *Evicted*

Conclusion

Police and prisons are not the hallmarks of a safe and healthy community. True public safety comes when a community has adequate resources to meet everyone's basic needs, when people have access to mental and physical health services, and when people are genuinely connected with their neighbors. Police can't treat mental illness or substance abuse, but public health programs can. Police can't end unemployment, but increasing jobs and education opportunities can. Police can't end homelessness, but increasing access to affordable housing can.

We urge Milwaukee city leaders to invest in the programs that are certain to improve the quality of city living for everyone. These recommendations come directly from city residents. This is the pathway that will allow Milwaukee to become the best version of itself. Milwaukee has everything we need to be a vibrant thriving city. We will get there by putting our shared resources toward programs that nourish residents' mental, physical, and economic well-being.



Campaign Partners

9to5 Wisconsin
ACLU of Wisconsin
Amani United
Black Health Coalition of WI, Inc
Black Lives Matter to Wisconsin Unitarian
Universalists
Black Leaders Organizing Communities
(BLOC)
Black Youth Project 100 Milwaukee (BYP
100)
Center for Popular Democracy
Citizen Action of Wisconsin
Coalition for Justice
Dominican Center
Ex-incarcerated People Organizing (EXPO)
Fresh Start Learning Center
Hmong-American Women's Association
(HAWA)
Leaders Igniting Transformation (LIT)
Mothers Against Gun Violence (MAGV)
Milwaukee Area Service & Hospitality
Workers Organization (M.A.S.H)
Metcalf Park Community Bridges
MICAH
Mothers for Justice
Nation of Islam
Our Democracy Coalition
Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin
Progressive Baptist Church
Red Umbrella Justice (RUJ)
Rid-Racism Milwaukee
SURJ MKE (Standing Up for Racial Justice)
MKE Transit Union ATU 998
Ubuntu Research and Evaluation
Uplifting Black Liberation and Community
(UBLAC)
Urban Underground
Voces de la Frontera
VoteRiders
Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort (WAVE)
Wisconsin Working Families Party
Wisconsin Justice Initiative Inc.
Wisconsin Voices
Women's March of Wisconsin
YWCA Southeast Wisconsin
Amanda Avalos
Debra Huntley, AFSCME Council 32
Farina Brooks
Heather DuBois Bourenane
Marcelia Nicholson
Njeri Jackson
Sequanna Taylor
Stephanie Roades



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