



PUBLIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

In the City of Atlanta today, a person can be arrested and jailed in the Atlanta City Detention Center for up to six months for loitering, public urination, panhandling, urban camping, or failure to pay traffic tickets, among many other city ordinance and traffic violations. For state charges like criminal trespassing, shoplifting, or drug possession, Atlanta residents may be booked into Fulton County Jail and subjected to unsafe and overcrowded conditions.

Jailing people for violations related to poverty, substance addiction, and mental illness exacerbates quality of life issues, rather than solving them. In the meantime, our communities continue to suffer from a lack of housing options and consistent access to income, mental and physical healthcare, and substance use treatment. Punitive responses to these structural inequities have caused incredible harm, with Black communities and other people of color bearing the greatest burden.

The City of Atlanta has both a responsibility and an opportunity to advance public safety by moving away from policies and practices that criminalize poverty and unmet behavioral health needs. Instead, it is time to invest in solutions that improve the health, stability and safety of all Atlantans. PAD recommends the following actions to advance public safety in our communities:

1

Ensure every APD officer is trained and directed to divert eligible people away from arrest and towards existing community services for activities involving youth, behavioral health challenges, and extreme poverty.

- a. Require diversion training for all new APD recruits and current personnel through the police academy, on-going in-service training, and monthly zone-level training.
- b. Provide a monthly public report on the percentage of sworn APD personnel who have completed diversion training (training saturation rate).
- c. Provide incentives to divert by ensuring performance credit for diversions to PAD as well as for diversions for youth to At-Promise Youth and Community Centers.
- d. Provide a monthly public report on the percentage of APD interactions that have resulted in diversion (diversion utilization rate).
- e. Provide a monthly public report on arrest trends, including charges, booking facility, and demographics of those arrested.

2

Identify and invest in a continuum of first responders to respond to emergency and non-emergency requests received through 311 and 911.

- a. Increase city funding to PAD to support citywide harm reduction response to 311 Community Referrals and diversions by law enforcement. Currently the City of Atlanta funds \$1.5M of PAD's \$4.5M budget, and PAD's hours are limited to weekdays, 7am-7pm.
- b. With community input, develop dispatch protocols and service partnerships to reduce police involvement in responding to 911 calls related to mental health.
- c. Identify and implement workforce policies and training that supports the health, wellbeing, and capacity of 911 call takers and dispatchers, who are critical gatekeepers to services and care.
- d. Solicit community feedback and implement technology, policies and/or training to improve 911 and 311 services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, people who require in-language services other than English, and people who are trans, non-binary or LGBTQ.
- e. Establish a civilian reporting services unit outside of the police department to fulfill administrative requests currently directed to 911 or 311, including traffic incident reporting, code enforcement, and licensing issues.
- f. Invest in evidence-based violence interruption teams, such as those based on the Cure Violence Global model, in communities where gun violence rates are high. Coordinate community violence interruption teams with hospital-based gun violence interventions, such as the programs currently being implemented at Grady Memorial Hospital.

3

Enact the recommendations of the City of Atlanta's Reimagining the Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC) Task Force to end the practice of jailing people for quality-of-life ordinance violations, traffic infractions, or inability to pay fines and fees.

- a. Implement the recommendations of the Reimagining ACDC Policy Workgroup to end the practice of jailing people for city ordinance violations.
- b. Transform the Atlanta City Detention Center into a Center for Equity to more effectively address the needs that drive minor law violations.
- c. Authorize and fund the City of Atlanta Public Defender's office to provide representation for civil legal matters and holistic services to address the barriers that lead to recurring interaction with the criminal legal system.

4

Invest in public infrastructure and programming to proactively meet people's basic needs.

- a. Invest in 24-hour public bathrooms in high traffic areas throughout the city to provide free, clean, and accessible places for residents and visitors, as is common in major cities around the world.
- b. Develop a hospitality policy for all City-owned facilities and parks to ensure that policies, programming, and facilities include amenities for people experiencing homelessness (such as places to shower, charge a cell phone, or use a storage locker). This policy should respond directly to the guidance and insight provided by people who are homeless or have experienced homelessness.

5

Utilize City resources to effectively leverage county, state, federal, and private investments in crisis services, mental health care, substance use harm reduction, and treatment services for all City of Atlanta residents.

- a. Create an advisory committee of behavioral health community stakeholders, prioritizing inclusion of people with lived experiences with mental health or substance use challenges, to provide support in the design and implementation of all services.
- b. Proactively seek out opportunities through the City's Department of Grants and Community Development to pursue federal grant opportunities to fund behavioral health needs and innovations in community safety.
- c. Advocate to Fulton County and Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities for increased investments in community-based care including peer-run wellness and respite centers, mental health urgent care clinics, Community Support Teams (CST), Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), and Intensive Case Management (ICM) teams serving the City of Atlanta region.
- d. Collaborate with Fulton and DeKalb counties to ensure walk-in crisis services, detox and drug treatment services are available to all City of Atlanta residents.



Dramatically improve the safety of residents with little or no income by ensuring safe, supportive, low-barrier, non-congregate shelter and increasing housing options throughout the city.

- a. Expand and sustain hotel partnerships that provide non-congregate emergency housing options with minimal requirements for people who desire shelter.
- b. Provide funding for incentives to private landlords to hold and lease units to people with housing vouchers, formerly incarcerated people, and people with eviction and poor credit histories.
- c. Ensure any new funding for affordable housing has a permanent supportive housing set-aside.
- d. Expand the use of housing voucher set-asides for private developments to develop and guarantee housing for people with no income or extremely low-income.
- e. Use City entitlement funds to support only evidence-based interventions, such as low barrier shelters, street outreach, and permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing, and require funded agencies to be low barrier, equal access and housing first.