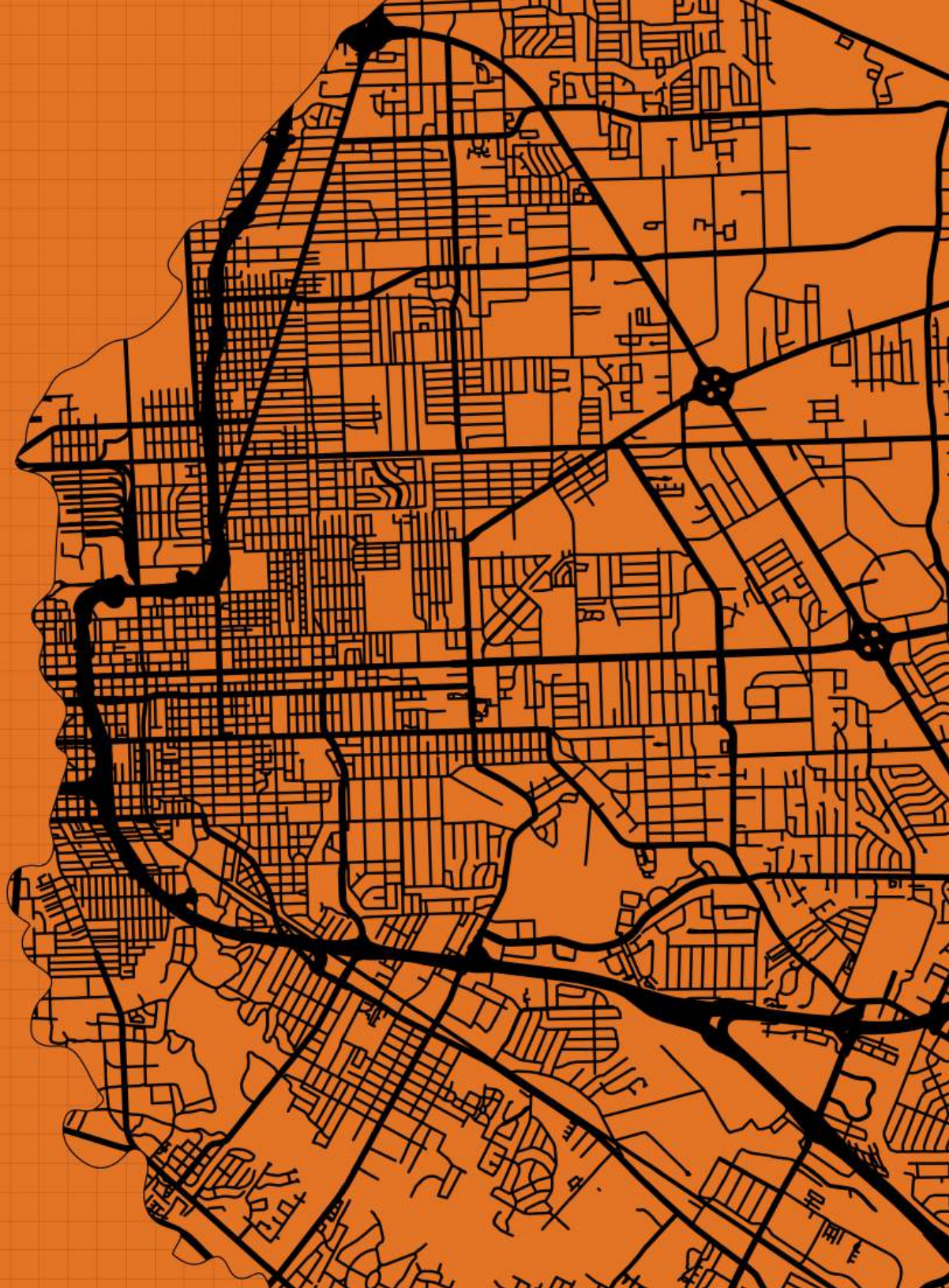
BLUEPRINT FOR A

SAFE HOPEFUL HEALTHY

BATON ROUGE





COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION (CVI)

an approach that uses evidence-informed strategies to reduce violence through tailored community-centered initiatives.



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DEAR COMMUNITY PARTNERS,

The Blueprint for a Safe, Hopeful, Healthy Baton Rouge is the result of a tremendous effort by over 500 individuals—including youth, community residents, and key stakeholders—who came together to shape a shared vision for a safer, healthier, and more equitable Baton Rouge. This Blueprint is not just a plan; it is a call to action for all who believe in a future where every Baton Rouge resident has the opportunity to thrive.

Developed over a six-month planning process, the SHHBR Blueprint elevates the voices of our community members who have long called for strategic, aligned, and sustained investments and actions to prevent violence, build resilience, and create a safer, healthier city. While the Mayor's Office played a critical role as the convenor and facilitator of this planning process, it is essential that the community takes the lead in implementing and sustaining this work. The Blueprint reflects our collective vision—crafted by the community, for the community—and must remain in the hands of the residents who will carry it forward.

This document should not be viewed as static; it must continue to evolve. As issues, priorities, and effective strategies change, this Blueprint must remain responsive and up to date, ensuring that the work stays relevant and impactful for Baton Rouge. It is our collective responsibility to advocate for these strategies, ensure they are prioritized by our leadership, and hold ourselves accountable for the progress we must make. It is a call for continued action and collaboration, for breaking down silos and working across sectors to create a safer, more just Baton Rouge for everyone. It will only be effective if we all continue to advocate for it, ensuring that its priorities remain at the heart of our city's work.

Key Themes of the Blueprint Include:

- Community-Driven Solutions: Empowering the community to lead, shape, and create a future defined by opportunity and equity.

- Reducing Violence and Enhancing Public Safety: Building a comprehensive, sustainable strategy to address the root causes of violence and keep our neighborhoods safe.

- Mental Health and Wellness: Ensuring that every resident has access to the mental and emotional resources needed to thrive.

- Economic Opportunity: Creating pathways for employment, entrepreneurship, and economic empowerment for all members of our community.

- Social Determinants of Health: Addressing the systemic barriers that prevent access to education, housing, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

We encourage you to read the Blueprint, share it with your networks, and use it as a tool to advocate for the continued progress of this shared vision. The work of creating a Safe, Hopeful, Healthy Baton Rouge is far from over, and it is only through sustained community involvement and collective effort that we can make this vision a lasting reality.

While change is inevitable, one thing remains clear: the work we've done together over the past three years must continue.

With commitment to our collective future,

SHH Baton Rouge Public Safety Ecosystem

" When we come together, no challenge is insurmountable; together, we build stronger, safer, and more resilient communities."















CITIES UNITED PROFILE







Cities United advocates for a systems-wide approach to achieving public safety by partnering with jurisdictions to develop and implement comprehensive strategies. Their work focuses on leveraging the political will of elected officials and community leaders, particularly young leaders, to interrupt cycles of violence and dismantle inequitable systems. The goal is to create safe, healthy, and hopeful communities, especially for young Black men and boys.

Since 2018, Cities United (CU) has collaborated with Baton Rouge stakeholders to build community buy-in and political will for a public safety plan. As a multi-year participant of CU's **" Roadmap Academy",** Baton Rouge was introduced the concept of a public safety ecosystem that integrates government and community resources for more effective collaboration. Through meetings, site visits, and conferences, CU helped Baton Rouge develop a violence reduction strategy and connect with national advocacy organizations and funders.

CU has also empowered active participation of Baton Rouge youth in all spaces through the Young Leaders lFellowship. The Young Leader Fellowship is designed to build the pipeline of leaders committed to reducing the homicide rates of young Black men and boys. The fellowship focuses on violence prevention and intervention, specifically targetting suicide, homicide, and gun violence amongst Black men and boys. Over the years, young leaders like Talasia Jones (SHHBR Program Coordinator (2021 - 2022; AGILE Planning Solutions Administrative Manager 2022 - present) and Emanuel Milton (Cure with Love Strategies), who engage the community in peacebuilding and advocacy. During the planning lab process to complete this blueprint Youth Ambassadors were compensated for their work, participating in ecosystem meetings and strategic discussions.

With the public safety ecosystem and plan now established in Baton Rouge, CU is focused on continued partnership with Baton Rouge community to ensure the strategy's sustainability, advocating for it to be codified in legislation and included in annual budgets to maintain long-term impact.

To connect with Cities United, visit www.citiesunited.org.

"When budgets get tight, this work [often loses funding], so we have to ensure this strategy is written in legislation and has a line item in the budget every year. And with the ebbs and flows of violence, we have to make sure people understand that we're working towards a long-term vision, working to dismantle things that have been in place for generations."

- Anthony Smith, Executive Direcotor of Cities United

COALITION TO ADVANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

CBPS COLLECTIVE | CITIES UNITED | HAVI THE HEALTH ALLIANCE for VIOLENCE INTERVENTION | NICJR National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform

The Coalition to Advance Public Safety (CAPS) is a collaborative effort focused on reducing near-term violence by expanding and strengthening the community violence intervention (CVI) ecosystem. CAPS is made up of four national Black-led technical assistance providers (Cities United; Community-based Public Safety Collective; National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform; Health Alliance for Violence Intervention) who provide support to the CVI ecosystem.

As a CAPS partner city for Cohort 1, Baton Rouge was connected with Indianapolis, Baltimore and Newark to advance best practices, strategies, and operational planning based on lessons learned in support of the Biden Administration's 18-month-long White House Community Violence Intervention Collaborative (CVIC).

Local community-based organizations 100 Black Men, A.G.I.L.E Planning Solutions, CHANGE, and TRUCE. Each organization received training to inform better CVI practices and boost their administrative back-office. In February 2023, CAPS provided $500,000 in local capacity funds to participating organizations.



KEY INVESTORS

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is committed to addressing the epidemic of gun violence by supporting grassroots, community-led initiatives across the United States. Through partnerships with Baton Rouge community violence intervention (CVI), and juvenile justice organizations — like Baton Rouge Community Street Team, Line 4 Line's PIVOT Initiative, and Someone Always Cares Foundation — Annie E. Casy Foundation backs efforts that employ trained, credible messengers to engage individuals at the highest risk of gun violence, breaking cycles of violence and retaliation.

"Ensuring community violence intervention efforts are successful will require a long-term commitment to this work from public and private partners, including those that have not historically invested in violence reduction or community safety measures.
When considering the data from a public health approach, most philanthropic missions are aligned with at least one root cause of violence or aspect of a thriving community safety ecosystem. Additionally, funders' other programmatic investments will not reach their full potential if people aren't safe — or alive — to participate."

-Timmeka Perkins, Senior Associate for Community Safety
Annie E. Casey Foundation

Equal Justice USA has partnered with Baton Rouge since 2017 to reimagine justice for our community through their Trauma & Healing Network.The network brings together leaders includes survivors of violence; victims' family members; victim service providers; and those who have been involved in the justice system, including law enforcement and formerly incarcerated people.

EJUSA
EQUAL ★ JUSTICE USA

In March 2023 Baton Rouge became the second city to implement EJUSA's Trauma 2 Trust(T2T), two-day workshops that together community members and local police officers for guided conversations about the role of trauma and violence in their interactions. The goal of T2T is to illuminate the systems that everyone in the room has been subject to by creating a vulnerable space of sharing and truth to build empathy and reduce future harm.

EJUSA's work in support of Baton Rouge has spanned from advocacy, capacity building, training, programming, as well as both professional and personal development. Their consistent on the ground has contributed to trust and relationship building with the community and police department, as well as the beginning of years of work to come.

Redefining Public Safety in Baton Rouge
In the fight against gun violence and systemic inequities, The CBPS Collective has emerged as a trailblazer, empowering communities and transforming public safety frameworks across the nation. In Baton Rouge, their work is paving the way for safer, more resilient neighborhoods by partnering with grassroots organizations and public safety practitioners to forge peace, foster healing, and create systems of care.

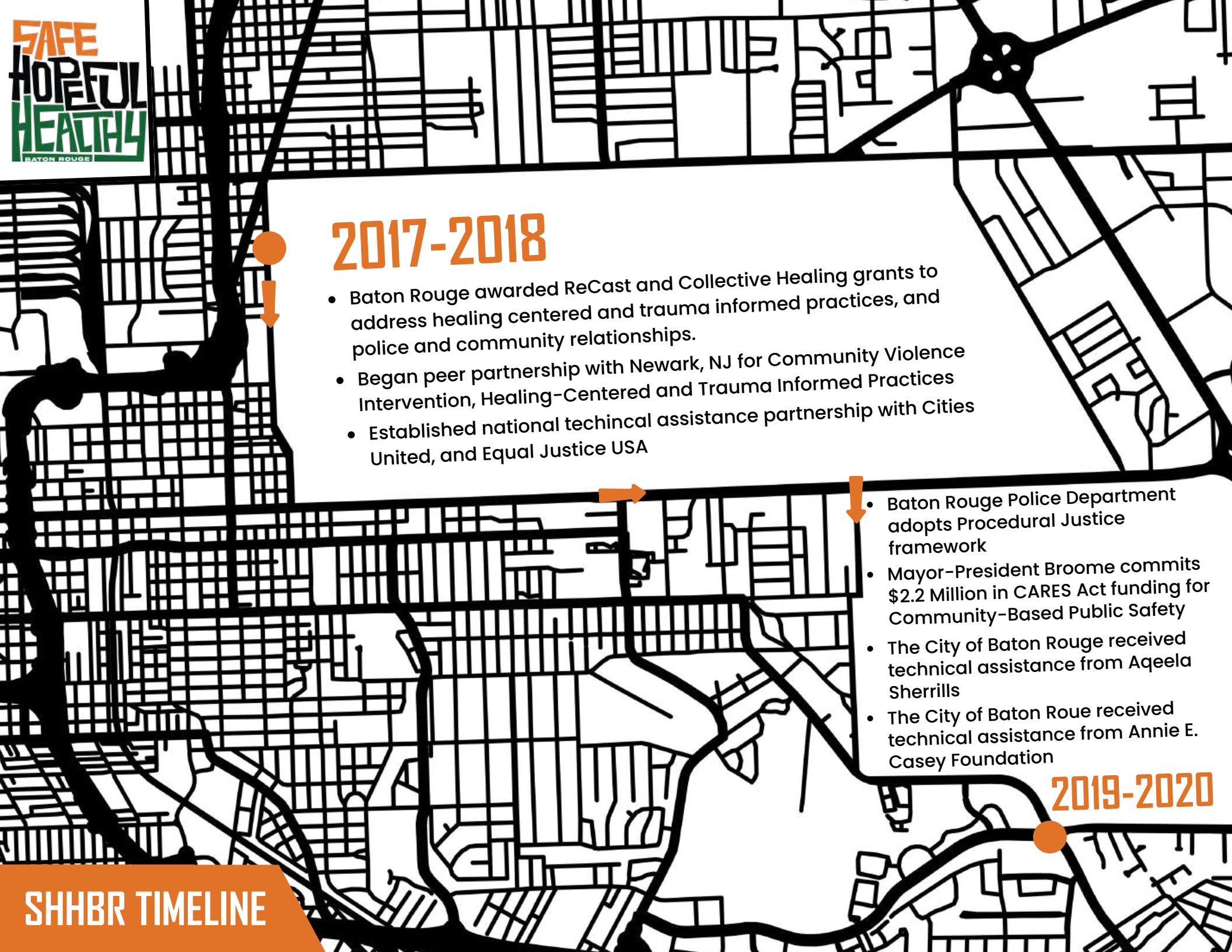
Who is The CBPS Collective?
The CBPS Collective is a coalition of national experts and advocates committed to advancing community-based public safety (CBPS). Its members represent and uplift the essential work of small, grassroots, nonprofit organizations that have spent decades mediating conflict, supporting people in crisis, and guiding youth toward stability—all with minimal recognition or resources from policymakers, elected officials, or funding agencies.

The Collective's mission is to **strengthen neighborhood leadership by investing in the education, advocacy, and training of community-based public safety practitioners.**

Under the leadership of Aqeela Sherrills, The Collective provided pro bono support to lay foundational groundwork for the Safe Hopeful Healthy Baton Rouge (SHHBR) initiative. This included:

- Establishing and training the Baton Rouge Community Street Team (BRCST) to mediate conflict and support violence prevention.
- Aligning priorities to address Baton Rouge's unique challenges in violence reduction.

Securing the CVIPI Grant: A Transformational Milestone
One of The Collective's most notable contributions to Baton Rouge was support they provided in facilitating the city's successful acquisition of the Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) grant from the Department of Justice. This 2-million-dollar grant proposal, meticulously crafted with the support of The Collective's grant-writing expert, demonstrated the city's commitment to comprehensive, community-led solutions, and ensured that community-based organizations were the main benefactors of the funding.



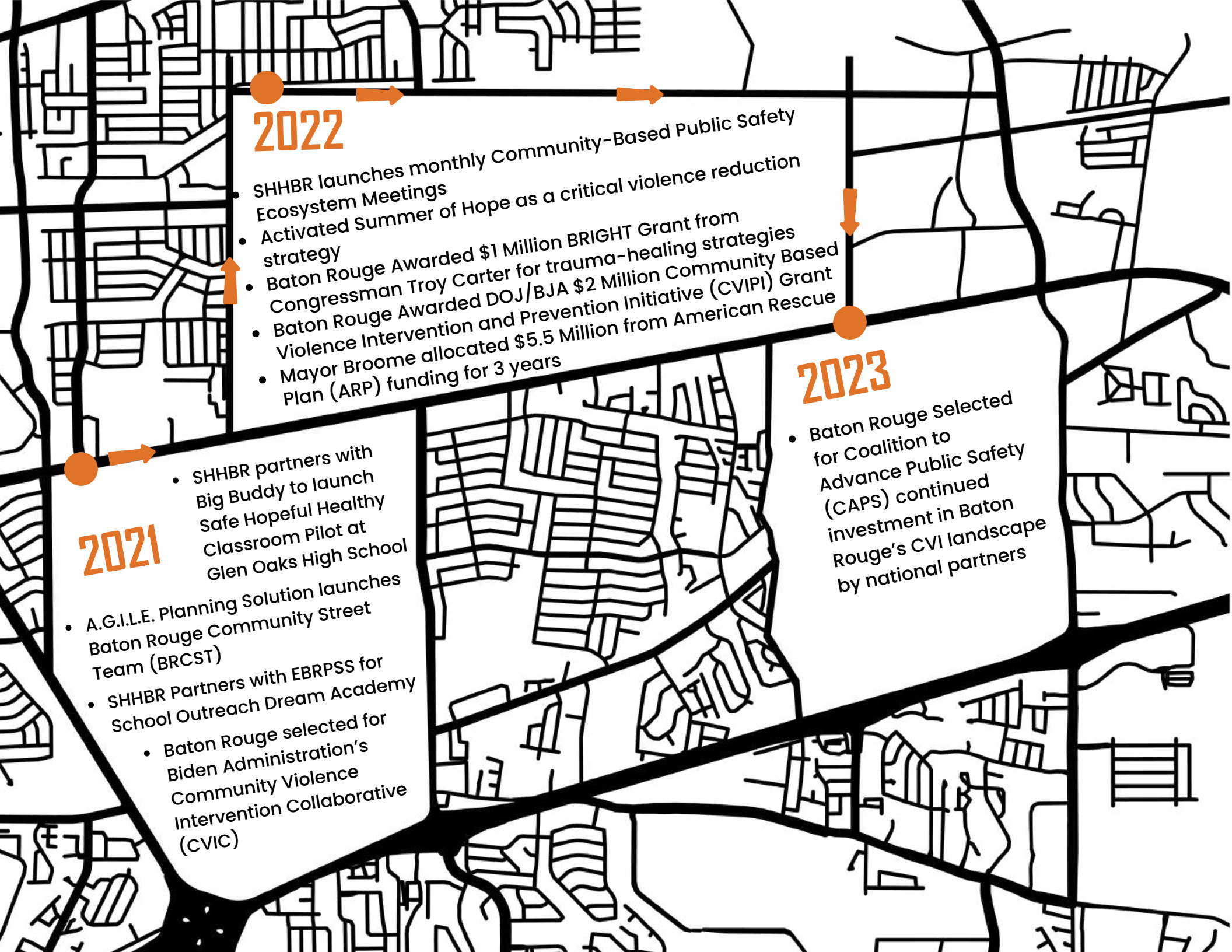
SHHBR TIMELINE

2017-2018

- Baton Rouge awarded ReCast and Collective Healing grants to address healing centered and trauma informed practices, and police and community relationships.
- Began peer partnership with Newark, NJ for Community Violence Intervention, Healing-Centered and Trauma Informed Practices
- Established national techincal assistance partnership with Cities United, and Equal Justice USA

2019-2020

- Baton Rouge Police Department adopts Procedural Justice framework
- Mayor-President Broome commits $2.2 Million in CARES Act funding for Community-Based Public Safety
- The City of Baton Rouge received technical assistance from Aqeela Sherrills
- The City of Baton Roue received technical assistance from Annie E. Casey Foundation


2022
SHHBR launches monthly Community-Based Public Safety Ecosystem Meetings
Activated Summer of Hope as a critical violence reduction strategy
Baton Rouge Awarded $1 Million BRIGHT Grant from Congressman Troy Carter for trauma-healing strategies
Baton Rouge Awarded DOJ/BJA $2 Million Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) Grant
Mayor Broome allocated $5.5 Million from American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding for 3 years
2021
SHHBR partners with Big Buddy to launch Safe Hopeful Healthy Classroom Pilot at Glen Oaks High School
A.G.I.L.E. Planning Solution launches Baton Rouge Community Street Team (BRCST)
SHHBR Partners with EBRPSS for School Outreach Dream Academy
Baton Rouge selected for Biden Administration's Community Violence Intervention Collaborative (CVIC)
2023
Baton Rouge Selected for Coalition to Advance Public Safety (CAPS) continued investment in Baton Rouge's CVI landscape by national partners

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The story of this work is one of hope, loss, resilience, creativity, and teamwork. And at the center of this story are the many residents of Baton Rouge who have been touched by violence and are determined to help their neighbors stay safe, alive, and free.

As the first comprehensive community-based public safety plan in the city's history, the "Blueprint for a Safe, Hopeful, Healthy BR" aims to lay out the structures and processes that a diverse group of stakeholders will use—and are using—to reduce gun violence among those most at risk.

The seeds for the plan sprouted in the difficult years after the Alton Sterling homicide and the Great Flood in 2016. Amidst widespread pain and trauma, Baton Rouge residents came together to begin to build a more peaceful and thriving future.

With the arrival of Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome and Chief Murphy Paul in 2017, the city began going after and securing millions of dollars in federal and private funding to support its public safety initiatives. The selection of Baton Rouge as a demonstration site for the federal Collective Healing Initiative in 2017 was particularly significant.

Collective Healing, which aimed to repair community-police relations, helped foster never-before-seen collaboration between government, law enforcement, community organizations, and residents. Through a series of listening sessions between the Baton Rouge Police Department and community members, the latter renewed their commitment to playing a central role in keeping their neighborhoods safe. The grant also facilitated much-needed capacity building for grassroots organizations.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN THE UNDER-RESOURCED, SEGREGATED NEIGHBORHOODS OF BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA HAVE WORKED FOR DECADES TO FIGHT SYSTEMIC RACISM AND IMPROVE THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE. INDEBTED TO THIS LONG LEGACY OF ACTIVISM AND ADVOCACY, THIS REPORT FOCUSES ON RECENT EFFORTS BY SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE IN THE CITY AND ADDRESS ITS ROOT CAUSES.

Safe Hopeful Healthy understands that building community trust and providing resources, as well as curating spaces to experience collective Joy and Hope contribute to imagining another world and offers victimized communities other ways of being, than just through violence.

Over the last four years, many partners have leaned in to not only work to respond to the urgent need on the ground, but also to build capacity for community-Based strategies and proven methodologies that complement law enforcement.



Cameron Sterling, son of Alton Sterling, is comforted at a vigil in Baton Rouge July 6. Alton Sterling was shot and killed by Baton Rouge police. (AP Photo/Gerald Herbert)

In September 2020, Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome established Safe Hopeful Healthy BR, within the Mayor's Healthy City Initiative, to develop a collective vision and strategy to strengthen coordination, capacity, and partnerships to address the root causes of violence, and to advance policies and practices that are grounded in a culture of health.

By developing a public safety ecosystem, a diverse coalition of stakeholders, including survivors, advocates, and community partners work collaboratively to prevent all forms of violence and promote healing through collaborative strategies.

"True healing begins when we come together—not as separate entities, but as a collective imagining and creating a world beyond violence. Safe Hopeful Healthy is the embodiment of that vision." Jazzika Matthews

At the heart of Safe Hopeful Healthy BR are individual residents, community organizations, business leaders, and stakeholders most impacted by violence that willingly connect with the Safe Hopeful Healthy BR staff and partners every 3rd Tuesday of the month to provide insight, ideate, and ultimately create solutions that will create progress on our 4 pillars.

It has taken an enormous amount of time and dedication from each of you to pen to paper the work that will encompass " The Blueprint to a Safe, Hopeful, Healthy BR", a community-based violence reduction plan that provides immediate peer support to individuals and families most directly affected, support healing across the impacted community, convey the message about the unacceptability of violence, and link to longer-term services to address mental health and well-being.

Law Enforcement cannot deliver public safety on their own.
Community plays a major role in our overall Public Safety.

At the conclusion of the Collective Healing grant in 2020, Mayor-President Broome spearheaded the launch of Safe Hopeful Healthy Baton Rouge (SHHBR), a collaborative, cross-sector violence reduction effort founded on the following pillars:

We use data as a foundation to understand how frequently violence occurs, where it occurs, and place-based trends in violence.

When the community has access to this information in a practical way, stakeholders can collaborate to create solutions to prevent violence, promote healing, and restore our neighborhoods.

THE PILLARS











SAFE HOPEFUL HEALTHY BR APPROACH

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Grass Roots level community engagement puts individuals and families directly in touch with services.



Engaging events spark joy, creativity and fun. These events cultivate a spirit of hope in the community.



Provide summer employment and personal, as well as professional development opportunities for youth.



Courageous conversations and discussions challenge our thinking around the issue of public safety.

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WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH ?

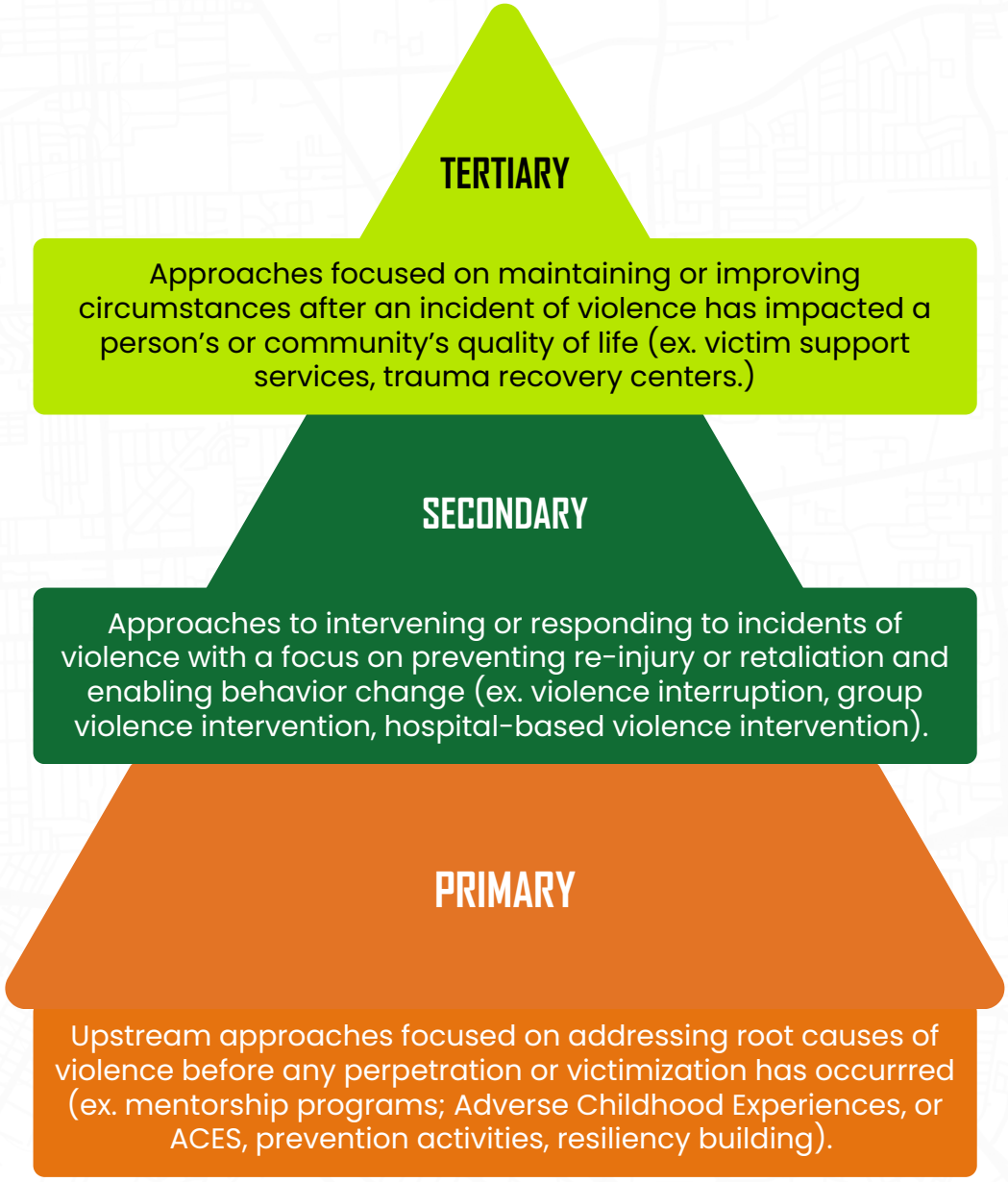
Using a public health approach can drive progress, and guide our strategy by using four basic steps.

- **STEP 1: Define and Monitor the Problem:** The first step in preventing violence is to understand it. Data from multiple sources can demonstrate how frequently violence occurs, where it occurs and other trends. It also tells us about the people who are victims and who commit violence.

- **STEP 2: Identify Protective and Risk Factors:** Certain factors protect people or put them at risk for experiencing or committing violence. These factors help identify where to focus prevention efforts. Risk factors do not cause violence. They mean that a person has a greater chance of being involved in it.

- **STEP 3: Develop and Test Prevention Strategies**: We can use data and research to show us which actions are likely to work. First, we identify existing strategies or develop new ones. Then we evaluate each strategy to determine if it is effective. We may find a way to improve the action.

- **STEP 4: Assure Widespread Adoption:** This same evidence can guide communities as they select programs and actions to prevent violence. Some techniques will rise to the top. Partners statewide can promote adoption of the most successful techniques. Training, networking and technical assistance can further bolster success.



Source: NC Community Violence Prevention Strategic Plan

ECOSYSTEM

Baton Rouge Public Safety Ecosystem meetings are the cornerstone of the city's coordinated Community Violence Intervention (CVI) strategy. These monthly gatherings unite a diverse group, including survivors, advocates, community-based organizations, public health experts, law enforcement, violence interrupters, city officials, and social service providers.

The creation of The Community-Based Public Safety Ecosystem creates a seat at the table for everyone working towards the common goal of reducing violence by:

- **Supporting communities in the development of their own safety strategies**
- **Ensuring that the community is at the center in conversations and acknowledging their voices as subject matter experts who have solutions for themselves, their families, and their neighborhoods.**
- **Leveraging a collective impact model to address the opportunities and challenges that communities face as they implement intervention strategies**

Stakeholders find value in the ecosystem partnerships because it sets the stage to work collaboratively to examine how investments are made to reduce gun violence. Attendees provide insight, ideate, and activate around the urgent public health crisis of gun violence.

Monthly public safety ecosystem meetings are designed to equip each individual or entity with the information to better understand how their work aligns with, and contributes to, the overall effort. This, in turn, positions ecosystem partners to more effectively and strategically leverage resources, thus creating collective impact.



Often times national partners have attended to provide interactive technical assistance that equipped participants to address the complex and interconnected issues underlying violence, such as housing instability, economic disparities, and educational gaps.

This holistic approach not only builds trust among participating entities but also strengthens Baton Rouge's capacity to respond to violence at both the community and individual levels.

ECOSYSTEM

Since 2022, SHHBR has held over 30 meetings, often featuring national partners who provide interactive technical assistance to equip participants in addressing the complex and interconnected issues underlying violence, including housing instability, economic disparities, and educational gaps.

This holistic approach not only builds trust among participating entities but also strengthens Baton Rouge's capacity to respond to violence at both the community and individual levels.

The CVI Ecosystem meetings was the first step to transforming Baton Rouge's approach to violence intervention and shifting the narrative that law enforcement was the only way to respond. Through these sessions, Baton Rouge has developed innovative programs such as:

- **Summer of Hope**
- **SHH Community Fund**
- **EBR Emergency Rental Assistance**
- **Roadmap Planning Lab**
- **SHH Classroom**
- **SHH Peace Pit**
- **Peace Over Everything Campaign**
- **Alumni Roundup**

As a part of the SHHBR Ecosystem, community shares an overarching vision and work collaboratively to align the key elements to reduce gun violence and bring about well-being.

Alongside these community leaders, institutional partners have also engaged deeply, diving in as active members of the ecosystem. Their collaboration strengthens the shared mission, bringing together grassroots insights and institutional resources to drive impactful violence intervention efforts across Baton Rouge.

Through these collaborations Baton Rouge has seen a growing network of committed individuals and organizations united, often resulting in ecosystem partners forming alliances beyond city-led initiatives to support one another's efforts in violence intervention and community strengthening.



SAFE HOPEFUL HEALTHY
BATON ROUGE

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Over the years, youth engagement and development have been key to the success and growth of Safe Hopeful Healthy BR. Not only have we reached thousands of youth through our efforts, but we have also included them in the process of building this initiative by serving as advisors, ambassadors, and staff within Safe Hopeful Healthy BR. By investing in these individuals, we expand our public safety workforce, enhancing the sustainability of this work for the future.

As we engage these young leaders in meaningful roles to carry out the work, they shape their view of it and envision where they see themselves within it. SHHBR has created a platform and pathway for many of the young leaders we have engaged to build full careers in public safety—from supporting grassroots community organizing efforts in Baton Rouge to serving as board members, staff, and consultants for national organizations such as EJUSA, Cities United, and the National League of Cities.













SHHBR

APPROACH TO VIOLENCE INTERVENTION



Purpose: To better understand how their work aligns with, and contributes to, the overall effort. This, in turn, positions ecosystem partners to more effectively and strategically leverage resources, shift the narrative of public safety, thus creating collective impact.

Increase Governmental Resources in Disinvested Areas	Invest in Community-Led Efforts	Prevent & Interrupt Violence	Community Collaboration in Priority Areas	Use Data and Evidence to Inform Strategies

PROGRAMS → POLICY → PRACTICE

When cities seek to make incremental changes in reducing gun violence, their initiatives typically fall into three main categories: Prevention, Intervention, and Community Transformation.

Prevention efforts, such as long-term violence reduction strategies like mentoring high-risk youth or cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) workshops, often take 5 to 10 years to show improvements in gun violence.

Intervention programs, including intensive case management, high-risk interventions, and harm reduction strategies, typically yield measurable improvements within 1 to 3 years.

On the other hand, Community Transformation initiatives, such as economic development and neighborhood revitalization, can take 15 to 20 years to lead to significant reductions in gun violence. This highlights the importance of investing in all three strategies, with a particular emphasis on intervention efforts, which can deliver more immediate and tangible reductions in gun violence within a shorter timeframe.

PREVENTION



5-10 YEARS

Long-term violence reduction strategies like mentoring high-risk middle and high school students or CBT workshops for youth.

INTERVENTION



1-3 YEARS

Gun violence reduction strategies in the near term such as intensive case management, high risk intervention, and group violence intervention.

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION



15-20 YEARS

Transforming communities so that they do not induce violence:

- Education reform and investment Economic development
- Neighborhood revitalization

HISTORICAL - BASELINE

The past and present of Baton Rouge tell a tale of two cities, divided by racism, poverty, and inequality. Though the precise geographic bounds of these two cities have shifted over time, the fates of the residents of the less prosperous, majority-Black Baton Rouge reveal the impacts of deeply entrenched patterns of disinvestment.

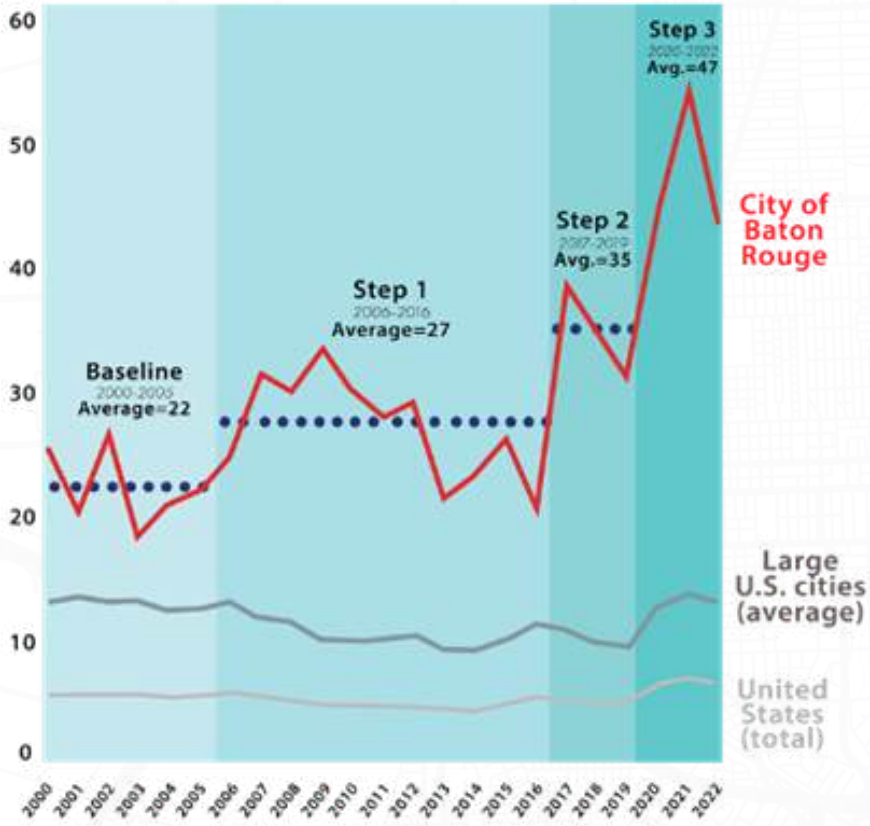
According to the Opportunity Data Project, in the high-poverty areas of the majority-Black northern neighborhoods of the city, the life expectancy for children is five to six years shorter than the national average. Even middle-class children suffer as a result of living in high-poverty neighborhoods: their average annual income as a young adult is $4,000 lower than the average income for children who grew up in middle- or upper-income neighborhoods in Baton Rouge. And these indicators of income and life opportunity correlate strongly with rates of community violence.

Based on the violent crime rate, Baton Rouge ranks among the most dangerous cities in the US. During the period 2016-2020, Baton Rouge experienced 80,163 violent crimes. Of this amount, 32,683 occurred between youth ages 10-24 and 47,480 occurred between adults 24 and over. ZIP codes 70805 and 70802 saw, respectively, 10% and 7% of all violent crimes. To focus on gun violence specifically, there were 112 non-fatal and 34 fatal incidents of violence involving a firearm in the 70802 and 70805 ZIP codes over this time period.

Consistent with existing crime research (Braga & Weisburd, 2012; Guin et al., 2018), most violent crime in Baton Rouge occurs in concentrated locations by a small percentage of the population, often loosely formed groups. A recent examination of crime data showed that the parish's largest proportions of violent crime and group activity from 2016 to 2018 occurred in one of 10 neighborhoods comprising 6% (31.5 square miles) of the parish. The maps below reveal the 10 neighborhoods identified as “hot spots” for the proposed project and show the distribution of violent crime from 2016 to 2018. Historical trauma and socioeconomic inequality correlate with high rates of violent crime perpetration and chronic victimization within minority communities in the US (Jaggi et al., 2016).

Source: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8356500/

Source: https://www.opportunitybtr.org/safety



Source: https://www.opportunitybtr.org/safety

Opportunity BTR outlined a chart that shows that the homicide rate in Baton Rouge "stepped up" at three historically significant points in time:

- **Step 1 (2006):** After Hurricane Katrina, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System reported a multi-year spike in dropouts. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that a large number of unemployed young men moved to Baton Rouge after being displaced from New Orleans.

- **Step 2 (2017):** The 2016 Great Flood displaced thousands of young people and led to another spike of local dropouts over the next several years in historically under-resourced neighborhoods.

- **Step 3 (2020):** The COVID-19 Pandemic led to another dramatic jump in dropouts, especially among teens in low-opportunity neighborhoods who often lacked Internet access at home and could not participate in virtual classes. Young workers in these neighborhoods were also among the most likely to work in service occupations that had large numbers of layoffs during the shutdown.

- The context surrounding these data emphasize the strong connection between gun violence and factors such as poverty, lack of educational and economic opportunity, social disruption, and community and personal trauma. These are the exact factors, among others, that SHHBR has examined in devising a comprehensive community-based violence reduction strategy.

An analysis of the violent crime incidents in city clearly showed the geographic area in the ZIP code 70805 as the center of a crime "hot spot." Left behind economically, **this area was among the most impoverished neighborhoods in the city, offering few opportunities for residents.** Thirty percent of all homicides in Baton Rouge occurred within the boundaries of the 70805 ZIP code, an area that comprises only 13.5% of the population and less than 12% of the city's geography. The offenders living in this area committed 25% of robberies, 38% of firearm assaults, and 40% of aggravated assaults in the whole city. The level of violent crime in 70805 among youthful offenders was also significant.

After experiencing its most violent year on record in 2021, Baton Rouge has seen a decrease in murders and non-fatal shootings over the last several years. Nevertheless, the amount of violence the city experiences is distressingly high and contributes to a range of negative health and wellness outcomes for those directly impacted and other residents of high-violence neighborhoods. A longitudinal look at violence data in Baton Rouge, shown in the table below, can provide further insights about the factors that help drive the persistence of this problem.

Addressing gun violence will ultimately make social service initiatives in other areas (e.g., education, workforce development, housing) more effective. As Annie E. Casey Foundation consultant and SHHBR partner Mo Barbosa puts it, "there is a shade that comes from the ominous clouds of gun violence and that impacts what is able to grow." In other words, the fear and instability that accompany gun violence disrupt efforts to create more opportunities and improve the quality of life in low-income neighborhoods. Community members must feel a basic sense of safety and security before they can imagine and realize a better future for themselves, their families, and their neighbors. Creating this sense of safety is the mission of SHHBR.



PUBLIC SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

In 2022 Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome and former Chief Murphy J. Paul convened all local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to establish East Baton Rouge Public Safety Partnership, an action plan with the Department of Justice to reduce gun violence throughout the parish.

The partnership includes all federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in EBR, the US Attorney's and District Attorney's Office, Safe, Hopeful, Healthy BR, and the mayor-president's office.
The partners began developing and implementing the plan in March 2022, meeting bi-weekly throughout the year to set goals and strengthen our collaboration and coordinated efforts.
The action plan is a more informed, collaborative, and intelligent approach to understanding and addressing the long-standing impacts of gun violence in East Baton Rouge Parish.

The partners have set four specific goals, summarized as follows:

- **Goal 1: increasing investments in community outreach, community engagement, and partnerships focusing on reducing gun violence.**
- **Goal 2: prioritize gun crimes and high-risk offenders when prosecuting criminal cases, both in district and federal court.**
- **Goal 3: address blight and infrastructure that contributes to gun violence in neighborhoods.**
- **Goal 4: Identify and focus law enforcement resources on violent individuals and locations. Utilize data, technology, intelligence sharing, and proactive policing.**









PUBLIC SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

City & Jurisdiction	2021 Homicide Rate (per 100k people)	2023 Homicide Rate (per 100k people)	% Change
Baton Rouge Police Department	4.20	2.21	**-47.48%** ↓
St. Louis Police Department	5.89	5.03	-14.68%
Atlanta Police Department	2.73	2.28	-16.49%
Baltimore Police Department	4.85	3.44	-29.24%
National Average	0.65	0.55	-14.71%

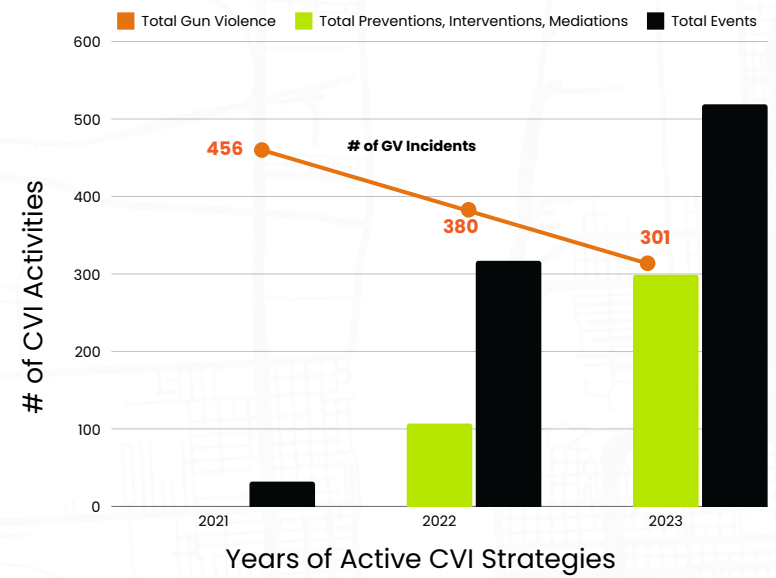
*Disclaimer. This is based on **FBI National Crime Numbers for Homicides** - following the UCR standards of homicides. Data was missing from Baltimore and Atlanta from 2020- 2021, but additional data was sourced annual totals from each City's PD websites and approximate missing months based on annual number of homicides for the year's missing data. Data pool reflects each City's PD departments – Each PD pooled is equivalent of BRPD (does not include parish county data.)*

Between 2021 and 2023, Baton Rouge achieved a significant 47% decrease in its homicide rate, leading the nation in reducing gun violence among comparable cities. This success stems from a robust interagency collaboration and significant investment in community-led initiatives, which together created a comprehensive framework for addressing violence.

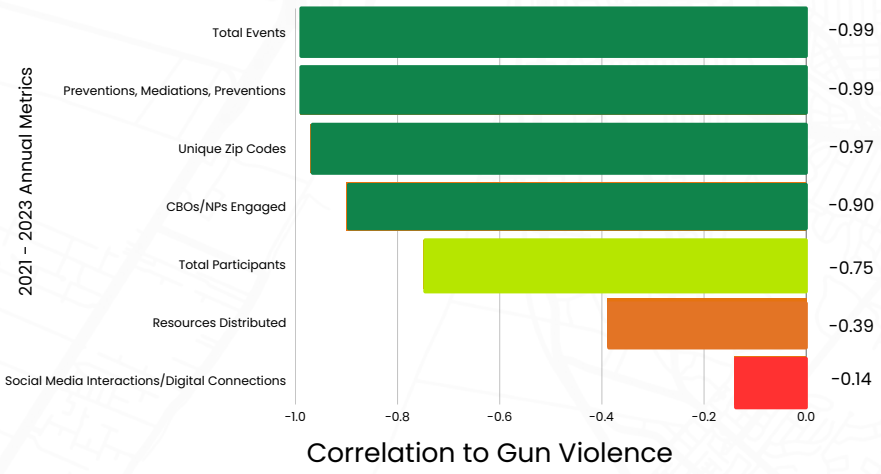
Following the peak in gun violence in 2021, Baton Rouge intensified efforts to build trust, foster community relationships, and tackle underlying conditions contributing to crime. Key elements of the East Baton Rouge's public safety strategy include both law enforcement **and** community organizations, prioritizing quality of life improvements, and establishing continuous feedback loops with residents to address emerging issues. This approach has allowed Baton Rouge not only to reduce violence but also to create a sustainable model for community safety and resilience.

IMPACT OF CVI IN ACTION

Interventions, Mediations, Preventions, & Events and Gun Violence by Year



Correlation to Gun Violence by 2021-2023 Annual Metrics



CHAMPIONING A MULTIFACETED COMMUNITY SAFETY APPROACH

Addressing gun violence is never a linear process. Approaching violence as a public health issue, we believe in a holistic perspective that addresses a potential incident before, during, and after. Although Baton Rouge Community Street Team launched in 2021, there were few to no community violence intervention strategies in place to engage with or support at-risk and high-risk individuals in Baton Rouge.

Since the inception of SHHBR, we've understood the need for boots-on-the-ground community relationships to interrupt cycles of violence. In 2022, we focused resources on proven multi-faceted CVI strategies that would allow us to connect directly to neighborhoods that needed the most support. By 2023, we planned, sponsored, and supported over 500 community events, showing a correlation between more community presence and a reduction in gun violence incidents in Baton Rouge.

INTENTIONAL SUPPORT IN UNIQUE ZIP CODES

After reviewing data, we see that the largest correlations to decreases in gun violence occur most with an increase in community events, on-the-grounds response, and an intentional focus in unique zip codes. The data highlights the need in funding and planning community engagement initiatives along with collective collaboration with our local organizations in each targeted zip code. The Baton Rouge Community Street Team, Peace Brokers, and Peace Ambassadors are all examples of building personal relationships at the neighborhood level to intervene and hopefully prevent an occurence of violence.

Summer of Hope Impact

What is Summer of Hope?

Summer of Hope was birthed from a desire to see a different, safer Baton Rouge during the summer. We saw a Baton Rouge filled with joy and laughter, personal moments of reflection, and a city buzzing with opportunity. Through community feedback and partner collaboration, we launched the Peace Over Everything initiative to invite every neighborhood to our desire for Baton Rouge,

Peace.



PEACE OVER EVERYTHING

At the Summer of Hope planning meeting, the theme and desire for Baton Rouge were clear: PEACE. Together, we created a vision for Baton Rouge where every citizen, every family, and every child championed peace over everything else.

- Peace Pics
- Peace Poems
- Peace Corner Store
- Community Voice

This wasn't just another community program - it represented a bold vision that emerged from passionate conversations during planning meetings where Baton Rouge residents, leaders, and stakeholders came together with a shared dream for our city. When we launched this initiative, we understood that lasting change requires more than programs—it needs to touch people's hearts and daily lives. They envisioned peace as something tangible that could transform neighborhoods one block at a time. This vision crystallized in creating the Peace Pit Stop, a welcoming space that brought the concept of "peace in person" directly into communities.

HIGH RISK FOCUS AREAS

BRPD

- BANKS- 1.1
- ZION CITY - 1.5
- BROOKSTOWN - 0.8
- MELROSE EAST - 1.0
- BELAIRE - 1.6
- THE BOTTOM - 1.5
- TIGERLAND - 0.8
- THE PARK - 1.0
- DIXIE - 1.1

EBRSO

- GARDERE- 2.4
- GLEN OAKS - 1.08

EBR Parish is 470 Sq Miles. The following areas of concern make up 13.88 SQMI of 470 SQMI. This is 2.95% of the Parish's total area.

EBR Parish Areas Most Impacted by Violence

*** Source: Baton Rouge PD and EBR Parish Sheriff's Office**



SUMMER INTERVENTION

Baton Rouge COMMUNITY STREET TEAM

BRCST trains and deploys Outreach Workers and High Risk Interventionists in 70802 and 70805 zip codes. Through their community walks in these areas that are often impacted by violence, they also provide Case Management services to those at greatest risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Their Heal the Block Summer Bash Series aimed to reclaim hope in our streets and neighborhoods by connecting residents directly to resources and opportunities to celebrate.

"We want our communities to understand that everyone, on all levels, plays a major role in mitigating the violence that's happening in our city. We are super excited that the Mayor's Office partnered, supported and included us in the "Summer of Hope" efforts. We brought resources and services to at risk neighborhoods where individuals were less likely to obtain them."

-Josie Alexander, Baton Rouge Community Street Team



2024 HEAL THE BLOCK OUTCOMES

28 COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROVIDED RESOURCES TO ATTENDEES

7 EVENTS HELD FEATURING A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES AND VENDORS

1000+ PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER

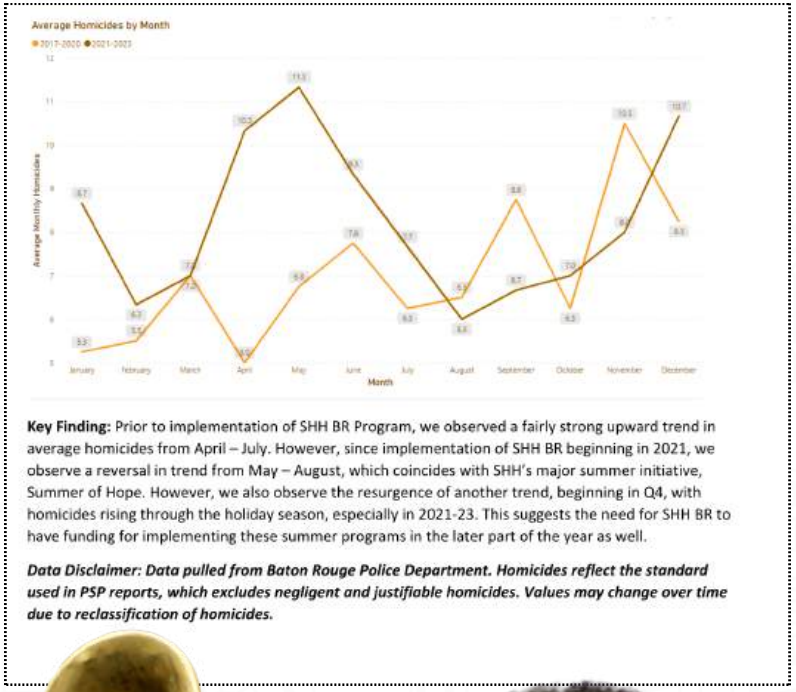
120 SURVEY RESPONSES RECORDING CONCERNS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

7 NEIGHBORHOODS ENGAGED: EDEN PARK, DIXIE, NORTHDALE, FAIRFIELDS, BROOKSTOWN, SOUTH BR, GHOST TOWN



From Summer of Hope to Year-Round Impact: Strengthening Baton Rouge's Future

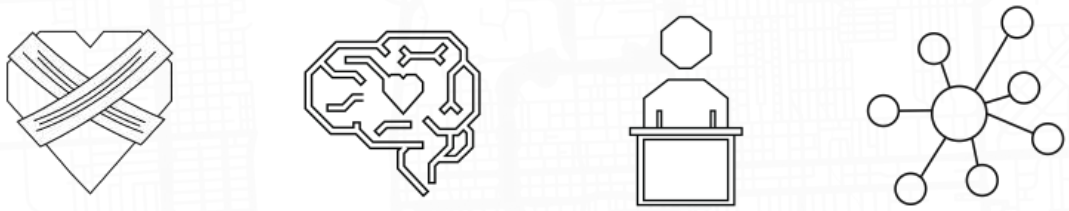
Summer of Hope, launched in 2021 under Safe Hopeful Healthy Baton Rouge (SHHBR), began as an initiative to reduce violence and promote community well-being, especially in neighborhoods affected by violence during the summer months. However, elements of this program have become integral to our work even outside of traditional peak seasons of violence. We continue to push peace, joy, and positive growth by engaging youth and families through mentoring, workforce development, wellness programs, and community events.



Key Finding: Prior to implementation of SHH BR Program, we observed a fairly strong upward trend in average homicides from April – July. However, since implementation of SHH BR beginning in 2021, we observe a reversal in trend from May – August, which coincides with SHH's major summer initiative, Summer of Hope. However, we also observe the resurgence of another trend, beginning in Q4, with homicides rising through the holiday season, especially in 2021-23. This suggests the need for SHH BR to have funding for implementing these summer programs in the later part of the year as well.

Data Disclaimer: Data pulled from Baton Rouge Police Department. Homicides reflect the standard used in PSP reports, which excludes negligent and justifiable homicides. Values may change over time due to reclassification of homicides.

Key Components



Impact on Homicide Trends

Before Summer of Hope, Baton Rouge saw an increase in homicides from April to July. Since the program's inception, however, there has been a noticeable reversal in this trend from May to August, suggesting that Summer of Hope significantly contributes to violence reduction during the summer months.

Need for Year-round Support

While Summer of Hope has shown a positive impact, a rise in homicides during the fourth quarter of each year indicates the need for continued support beyond the summer months. Building on the success of Summer of Hope, SHHBR strives to secure investments that will sustain year-round programming with the same focused, increased intensity. This would ensure that violence prevention efforts, at the scale of Summer of Hope, continue year-round.



QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS & SHHBR INFRASTRUCTURE

THE SAFE, HOPEFUL, HEALTHY BATON ROUGE (SHHBR) INITIATIVE IS GROUNDED IN A COMPREHENSIVE, MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO REDUCING GUN VIOLENCE AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL.

Over the years, it has been supported by critical funding sources, including the CARES Act, Bureau of Justice Assistance "Innovations in Community-Based Crime Reduction" (CBCR), ReCAST, SAMHSA, American Rescue Plan Act, HUD CDBG funding, and philanthropic support. These resources have allowed SHHBR to implement a data-driven, community-oriented strategy focused on addressing crime and spurring revitalization in Baton Rouge's most affected areas. Through this funding, SHHBR has been able to support violence reduction programs, foster community engagement, and create sustainable change, emphasizing the need for a collaborative, holistic approach to public safety.

Given the complexity of addressing violence and its root causes, SHHBR's infrastructure is designed to be both responsive and adaptable. However, understanding the effectiveness of these programs and the impact on the community is crucial to ensuring that the initiative continues to evolve and achieve its goals. Qualitative assessment plays a central role in this process, offering deep insights into how the intervention is being perceived and experienced by participants, and whether it is truly addressing the community's needs.

While best practices in program evaluation suggest that initiatives like SHHBR should operate for 3-5 years before formalizing evaluation, SHHBR partnered with Southern University's Center for Social Research to assess the intervention's effectiveness earlier in its implementation. This partnership aimed to evaluate how the community violence intervention program is being perceived by those it serves, focusing on key areas such as the relevance of the program, its accessibility, and its impact on the lives of participants. This qualitative data serves as a vital tool in understanding the real-world effects of SHHBR, allowing for adjustments that enhance its reach and effectiveness.

Additionally, the assessment explores underlying social issues contributing to violence through focus groups and key informant interviews. These conversations aim to uncover critical factors like poverty, lack of opportunity, gang affiliation, and historical trauma, all of which can perpetuate cycles of violence in the community. By analyzing these social dynamics, SHHBR can better tailor its approach to address the root causes of violence and create a more comprehensive solution that not only focuses on immediate crime reduction but also on long-term community healing and revitalization.

The purpose of the qualitative assessment is not only to measure the impact of SHHBR but to ensure that its strategies remain aligned with the evolving needs of Baton Rouge's communities. It provides a vital feedback loop for continuous improvement, helping to strengthen the initiative's foundation as it moves toward long-term success. Through this process, SHHBR will continue to prioritize the voices of the community, ensuring that its efforts remain relevant, effective, and capable of making lasting change.

The Safe, Hopeful, Healthy Baton Rouge initiative has made significant strides yet faces challenges that underscore the need for continued collaboration and growth. Key findings highlight strengths in partnership formation, community engagement, program evolution, and training, while also addressing areas for improvement and systemic barriers.

By gathering firsthand feedback from residents, community leaders, and program participants, the qualitative assessment provides valuable data that supports ongoing improvements to the initiative's strategies and interventions.

Key Findings and Areas for Improvement:

Partnership Formation:

The success of the initiative was largely due to strong partnerships with well-established and trusted community agencies. These collaborations were vital for building credibility, aligning goals, and leveraging existing networks to address gun violence. The deep connections that partner agencies had within the community helped establish immediate trust, and their personal experiences with violence strengthened their investment in the initiative's success.

Community Engagement:

Before SHH, many community resources were fragmented, leaving critical needs unmet. Under SHH, aligning resources with community priorities and increasing the visible presence of initiatives boosted resident confidence and engagement. Centralized coordination of services made them more accessible, and the physical presence of SHH programs encouraged more residents to get involved.

Program Evolution:

SHH revitalized existing programs by increasing their credibility and encouraging participation, particularly through "street teams" and community-driven services. These street teams, made up of trusted community members, focused on youth engagement and collective healing, which fostered a sense of unity and progress in the community.

Training and Capacity Building:

SHH prioritized the professional development of its staff by offering regular training sessions in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Community Violence Interruption (CVI) techniques. These sessions empowered staff to effectively intervene in conflict situations and also emphasized leadership development, restorative justice, and youth-focused skill-building, which helped create a cohesive and empowered team.

Recruitment and Participation:

Successful recruitment relied on building trust within the community, using referrals from trusted members and visible outreach efforts. However, logistical barriers, such as transportation and the need for greater parent engagement, posed challenges to long-term participation. Engaging parents was critical to creating a supportive environment for participants, especially youth.

Areas for Improvement:

Stakeholders identified a need for increased funding and investment to sustain and scale the initiative. Parent engagement was seen as essential for the long-term success of the program, particularly in supporting youth participants. Legislative support to address systemic barriers, such as food insecurity and housing instability, was also necessary. Additionally, improving the initiative's branding and aligning it more strategically with broader social issues could enhance its reach and effectiveness.

Systemic Challenges:

Systemic challenges related to schools, housing, transportation, and negative media portrayals presented obstacles to success. While schools were valuable partners, better integration with the initiative's goals was needed to avoid bottlenecks. Broader issues like community revitalization, including improved transportation and housing access, were essential for sustained progress. Negative media portrayals of the community further compounded these challenges by perpetuating stereotypes and mistrust.

THE ROADMAP TO SAFETY IN BR



According to the Louisiana Department of Health, the foundations of community health influence the resources available in our communities. These resources in turn influence our behaviors and exposures.

Factors like income, education, and health insurance contribute to the choices we have. When the healthiest choice is the easiest choice, our behaviors fall into that pattern. Exposures can include risk factors or protective factors. Environmental toxins, unhealthy relationships, and

Crime are examples of risk factors. Protective factors include supportive relationships, active community groups, and nutritious food. Unstable foundations of health mean residents are more likely to experience health risks and encounter barriers to making healthy choices.



THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PLANNING LAB IS A PLATFORM FOR INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDERS TO CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND EXPAND THE COMMUNITY-LED ASPECT OF THE EBR GUN VIOLENCE COLLABORATIVE.

Determine where relationship-based disputes are centralized.

What was the goal?

Through interactive sessions, panel discussions, and collaborative exercises, the Community Safety Planning Lab sought to encourage participants to share their experiences, perspectives, and existing public safety plans and resources in Baton Rouge. This inclusive environment fostered mutual learning and cultivated a collective understanding of effective community-driven solutions to violence.

100 ORGANIZATIONS

500+ INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS

6+ MONTHS OF COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

6 FOCUSED WORK GROUPS

THE PLANNING LAB PROCESS

In Baton Rouge, efforts to develop a comprehensive community safety plan have been deeply rooted in collaboration and engagement with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including community organizations, institutional representatives, residents of high-need neighborhoods, and government entities.

From July to October 2023, MetroMorphosis facilitated a series of planning labs and focus groups to gather insights, refine strategies, and ensure that the violence reduction efforts align with the real, on-the-ground experiences of residents most affected by gun violence. These sessions have been crucial in shaping a holistic and community-driven approach to violence reduction, focused on addressing the root causes of violence, building stronger community ties, and fostering long-term sustainability.

Planning Lab participants broke into groups based on their interest in one of the following six focus areas

- **Prioritizing community-led strategies for violence prevention and intervention**
- **Reshaping criminal and juvenile justice systems**
- **Crime prevention through environmental design**
- **Transforming and healing communities**
- **Boosting education and workforce**
- **Bolstering individual and family support**









OVERARCHING THEMES FROM PLANNING LAB

The planning labs highlighted several key themes that will serve as the foundation for ongoing work in Baton Rouge:

1. Community-Driven Violence Reduction Strategy: Residents and stakeholders overwhelmingly expressed the need for a strategy led by the community, grounded in the understanding that those closest to the problem often hold the best solutions.

2. Building Stronger Community Relationships: Trust, communication, and collaboration between residents, local organizations, and institutions emerged as a top priority. The focus was on creating a system of mutual care, where communities support each other, and institutional partners are responsive to their needs.

3. Investing in Neighborhoods A shared desire for increased investment in neighborhoods suffering from violence and poverty was evident across focus groups. Participants emphasized the importance of addressing systemic disinvestment and the need for enhanced infrastructure, economic opportunities, and community-led revitalization.

This blueprint is unique because it integrates feedback from community organizations, institutional stakeholders, residents in focus neighborhoods, individuals with lived experienes, and government officials. It provides a detailed, on-the-ground perspective of the issues that contribute to violence in Baton Rouge, while also offering actionable insights and recommendations for creating lasting change.

As we continue this work, it is essential to maintain open, transparent dialogue, prioritize community voice, and ensure that all stakeholders are working collaboratively toward shared goals of safety, opportunity, and healing for Baton Rouge's residents.

In addition to the larger planning labs, several targeted focus groups were conducted in the neighborhoods most impacted by gun violence: 70802, 70805, and 70806. These smaller, community-based discussions provided invaluable insight into the lived experiences of residents and allowed for a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face in relation to gun violence and safety.



Focus Group Results

70805: A Community in Crisis

The 70805-focus group shed light on several critical concerns within the community:

Perceived Causes of Violence: Residents believed that 85 to 90 percent of violent incidents in their neighborhood were committed by outsiders rather than residents themselves. The prevalence of daily gunfire and reports of exposure to violence were recurring themes. Many felt that an increase in rental housing and substance abuse contributed to the violence, as rental properties often attract transient individuals, leading to a lack of neighborhood cohesion and control.

Requests for Enhanced Surveillance: Residents expressed concern about the lack of surveillance cameras in the area and the reluctance of businesses to install them due to fears of retaliation. The idea of implementing gunfire detectors, which would allow automatic police dispatch, was a widely supported suggestion to improve response times without requiring residents to contact 911.

Infrastructure and Blight: There was significant concern about the lack of infrastructure, including sidewalks, and the impact of blighted properties on safety. Many participants indicated that addressing these issues would go a long way in improving the overall sense of security and well-being in their neighborhood.

70806: Addressing Youth and Blight

In 70806, residents shared similar concerns about crime, but with a greater focus on youth involvement and the condition of public spaces:

Youth and Crime: Residents noted the large homeless population and the illegal activities occurring at BREC facilities, including drug sales, prostitution, and violence. They expressed alarm at young people engaging in criminal activities, such as drug peddling, with the full knowledge of their parents.

Blight and Community Decay: Like in 70805, residents of 70806 felt that a lack of ownership and investment in the neighborhood led to blighted properties and a general sense of neglect. Many believed that the return of community organizations like the Mid-City Alliance and investment in BREC facilities would help restore a sense of pride and safety.

Calls for Increased Police Presence: Similar to 70805, residents of 70806 expressed a desire for increased police presence to deter criminal activity, although there was an understanding that more than just law enforcement was needed to address the underlying issues.

Cross-Neighborhood Insights: A Shared Sense of Vulnerability

Across all neighborhoods, there was a shared belief that young people are often introduced to criminal behavior at an early age, largely due to the normalization of violence in their environment. Many participants in both the 70805 and 70806 groups expressed that their children were exposed to criminality because they were not punished as severely as adults, fostering a sense of immunity to the consequences of their actions.

A recurring sentiment was that residents felt abandoned by institutions and had to rely on themselves to navigate safety concerns.



Inmate Focus Group: Understanding the Impact of Incarceration on Community Violence

A significant portion of the community violence issue is rooted in the broader social and criminal justice systems. The inmate focus group, consisting of 12 individuals ages 19 to 34, provided a powerful lens into how incarceration and exposure to violence impact individuals from a young age.

Intergenerational Incarceration: Many of the participants had at least one parent or sibling incarcerated, reflecting the widespread issue of intergenerational incarceration in Baton Rouge. This cycle of incarceration further compounds the challenges faced by individuals when they re-enter their communities.

Exposure to Gun Violence: All male participants in the group had used a gun at a young age, with several reporting instances of shooting someone. This group had become desensitized to gun violence, with participants expressing that it had become a normalized part of their lives. Female participants, although not involved in gun violence, had witnessed shootings and killings, contributing to their trauma.

Lack of Resources and Guidance: The group indicated a lack of resources and guidance, both during their incarceration and upon release. They expressed the need for more supportive services to help them reintegrate into society and avoid returning to violence.

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Alternative School Group: At-Risk Youth and the Path Forward

In addition to the inmate focus group, a separate focus group was held with students from an alternative school. These students, aged 13 to 17, were asked about the factors that led them to alternative education and their experiences with violence:

Environmental Influence: Like the residents of the focus neighborhoods, students felt that their environment played a major role in their behavioral challenges. Many had been introduced to drugs at a young age and lacked engagement in extracurricular activities or community programs.

Apathy Towards the Future: Many participants did not feel they had a clear path forward or a vision for their future. This sense of hopelessness is compounded by the criminality they are exposed to in their communities.



RECOMMENDATIONS

SAFE
HOPEFUL
HEALTHY
BATON ROUGE

SAFE HOPEFUL HEALTHY
BATON ROUGE

PRIORITIZING COMMUNITY-LED STRATEGIES FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION



COMMUNITY-LED PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGIES MARSHAL COMMUNITY ASSETS—INCLUDING THE TALENTS AND STRENGTHS OF RESIDENTS THEMSELVES—TO PREVENT AND INTERVENE WITH VIOLENCE AND OTHER CONCERNS.

Further, rather than relying solely on the enforcement and punishment powers of the justice system, these strategies consider the root causes of violence and the holistic supports that help interrupt intergenerational cycles of pain and suffering. Grounded in an understanding of violence as a public health issue, this workgroup recommends that the city draw from national best practices and build on past and existing efforts such as the Community Street Team and the Group Violence Intervention. Further, the workgroup supports SHHBR's continued collaboration with national partners such as Cities United and encourages further participation in local, state, and federal advocacy.



RECOMMENDATION #1

Improving and creating sustainable implementation practices and strategies that contribute to a reduction in homicides and nonfatal shootings.

Implement/expand violence reduction programming across EBR parish

Identify and define “high-risk” vs. “at-risk” individuals to create targeted strategies

- Identify additional credible messengers/ violence interrupters
- Determine where relationship-based disputes are centralized

RECOMMENDATION #2

Establish and nurture relationships with national partners, driven by the objective of offering technical assistance (TA) support to grassroots and community-based organizations.



RECOMMENDATION #3

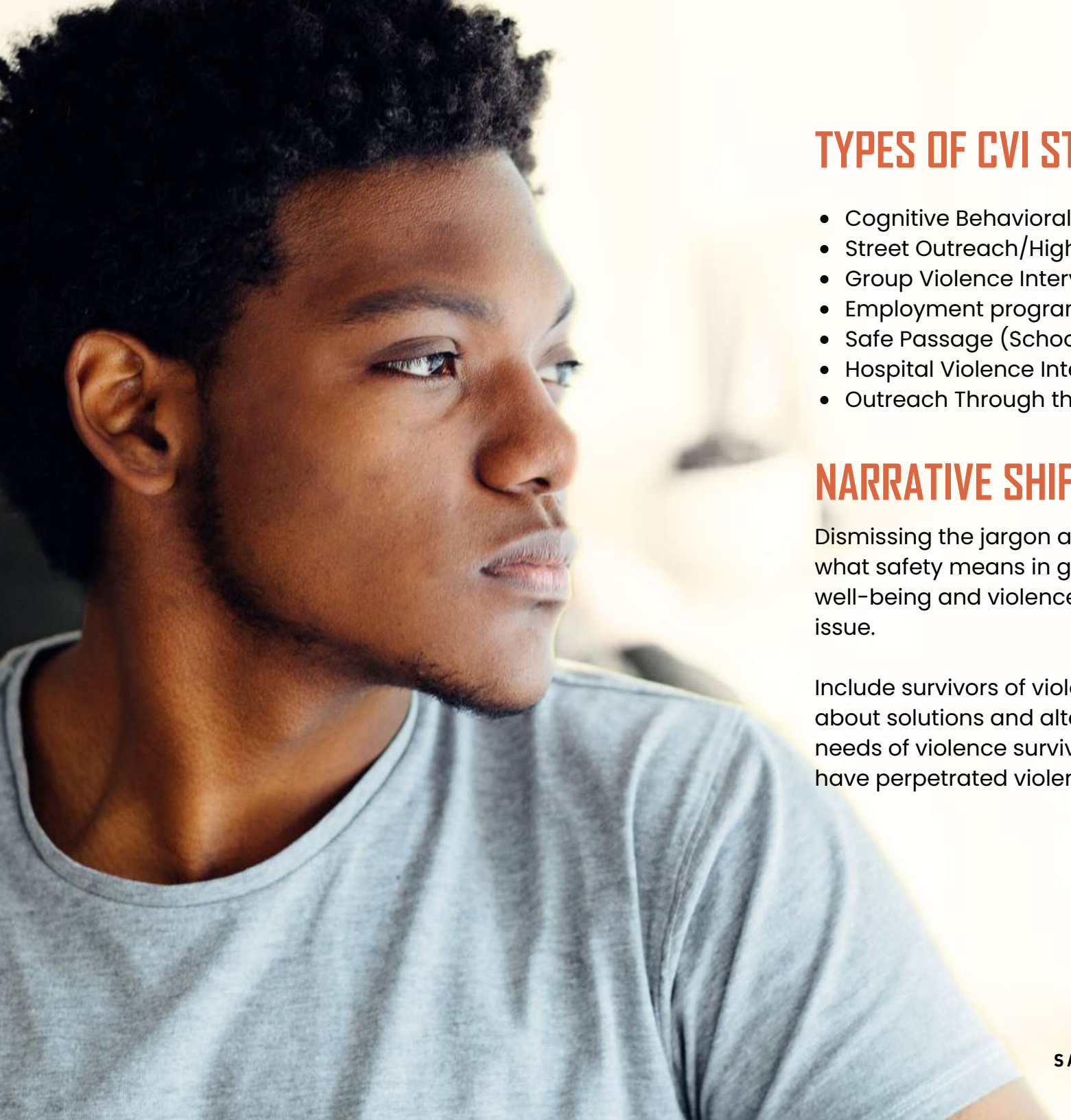
Increase collaboration amongst all community violence intervention programs

- Data sharing utilizing KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)
- Regularly convened shooting reviews amongst CVI organizations
- Community Based Public Safety Coalition meetings.
- Attendance of all CVI organizations at the Public Safety Ecosystem Meetings

RECOMMENDATION #4

Engage in local, state and federal advocacy efforts

- Advocating for a coordinating body (local or statewide) around Community Violence as a Public Health Initiative.
- Build strong relationships and build a network among the city leaders, legislative directors, state council members, etc. throughout Louisiana.



TYPES OF CVI STRATEGIES

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Street Outreach/High Risk Intervention
- Group Violence Intervention
- Employment program
- Safe Passage (School-Outreach)
- Hospital Violence Intervention Prevention
- Outreach Through the Arts

NARRATIVE SHIFTING

Dismissing the jargon around public safety and what safety means in general. Uplifting the state of well-being and violence seen as a public health issue.

Include survivors of violence in the narrative to talk about solutions and alternatives that meets the needs of violence survivors and those who have perpetrated violence.



WORK IN PROGRESS

BACKGROUND

Gun violence continues to devastate communities, often leaving young men isolated and disconnected from support systems that can guide them toward positive change. A major gap exists in opportunities for interventionists to connect meaningfully with men who are currently or have previously been involved in gun violence. For many, there is a lack of safe spaces where they can freely express their experiences and connect with peers who have walked a similar path and successfully shifted their lives away from violence.

The Brotherhood Circle is designed as a supportive healing circle, providing a consistent and safe environment for men of all ages impacted by gun violence. Here, participants are encouraged to connect, share, and receive mentorship from others with lived experience who understand their challenges and offer perspectives on transformation. This unique approach fosters trust, builds community, and opens the door for men to receive the emotional support and resources they need to pursue positive, long-term change.

ACTION

The Brotherhood Circle conducts bi-weekly gatherings in neighborhood-based settings, led by a clinician who brings both professional expertise and personal, lived experience in navigating the impact of gun violence.
By meeting in familiar community environments, participants feel more comfortable and secure, making it easier to build trust and create meaningful bonds.

BROTHERHOOD CIRCLE: A HEALING CIRCLE MODEL FOR INTERGENERATIONAL MEN INVOLVED IN GUN VIOLENCE



The sessions focus on:

- **Bringing together young men who have been directly affected by gun violence, whether as victims, perpetrators, or both, and fostering a supportive brotherhood among them.**

- **Offering direct referrals to mental health support, job training, education, and other services that can assist participants in building stability and resilience.**

- **Creating an outlet for men to openly share their struggles, fears, and hopes, helping them find their voice and recognize their potential to break the cycle of violence.**





Each session is designed to be therapeutic, reflective, and action-oriented, allowing participants to share insights and encourage each other toward a more peaceful, productive life.

IMPACT

Brotherhood Circle aims to create measurable change in both individual lives and the community as a whole. Preliminary data shows that intervention programs providing mentorship, peer support, and a sense of belonging can decrease violence involvement among participants. **To date there have been 16 Brotherhood Circles with 15-20 attendees per session.** The feedback from our Peace Brokers is that the men and boys who have participated in the circles have been more actively engaged in positive community activities, education, and job training programs.

With a focus on continuous improvement, Brotherhood Circle is setting the stage to track the following metrics:

- **Decrease in Recidivism Rates:** Reducing repeat involvement in gun-related incidents among program participants.

- **Increased Engagement in Community Resources:** Number of participants accessing mental health services, job training, and educational programs.

- **Improvement in Emotional Well-Being:** Self-reported increases in emotional resilience, sense of belonging, and reductions in anger and isolation among participants.

Through these key indicators, *Brotherhood Circle* will demonstrate how a simple, consistent space for connection and healing can serve as a powerful catalyst for change, creating a ripple effect that touches individuals, families, and the broader community.

SAFE HOPEFUL HEALTHY
BATON ROUGE

TRANSFORMING AND HEALING COMMUNITIES



ACCORDING TO THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH INFLUENCE THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES. THESE RESOURCES IN TURN INFLUENCE OUR BEHAVIORS AND EXPOSURES.

Factors like income, education, and health insurance contribute to the choices we have. When the healthiest choice is the easiest choice, our behaviors fall into that pattern. Exposures can include risk factors or protective factors. Environmental toxins, unhealthy relationships, and crime are examples of risk factors. Protective factors include supportive relationships, active community groups, and nutritious food. Unstable foundations of health mean residents are more likely to experience health risks and encounter barriers to making healthy choices.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Create Trauma Recovery Centers

- Establish dedicated trauma recovery centers within the community to cater to individuals at the highest risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. These centers will offer specialized support and therapeutic services to address the psychological and emotional impacts of violence.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Conduct quarterly community outreaches

- These outreaches will allow resource vendors to interact with the community, promoting a sense of healing and education.
- Convene spaces, for collective input and action.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Foster trust by partnering with individuals and organizations that have the ear of the community to co-produce high quality place-based events to provide outlets for community to experience joy and hope.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Enhance Public Transportation with Transformative Approaches

- Support initiatives aimed at transforming public transportation systems to make them safer, more efficient, and accessible to all members of the community. These efforts contribute to creating a more secure and connected community.

RECOMMENDATION #5

Establish Neighborhood-Based Violence Prevention strategies in focused neighborhoods that have been identified with high risk of violence to build inclusive spaces where community stakeholders work together to advance important practice, policy, and systems change.





BACKGROUND

In many communities, residents lack opportunities to directly participate in crime prevention and safety efforts, particularly through input on environmental factors that impact their quality of life. Often, residents have valuable insights into local issues—such as poor lighting, abandoned buildings, and lack of green spaces—that contribute to crime or unease within their neighborhood. However, traditional approaches to public safety frequently overlook this crucial community perspective, limiting the effectiveness of implemented solutions.

Neighborhood-based Community Safety Meetings create a safe and open forum where residents can gather, share their experiences, and provide input on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies. This approach recognizes the community as a key stakeholder in shaping a safer, more livable environment, emphasizing that when neighbors are empowered to voice their needs, they become active partners in the solution.

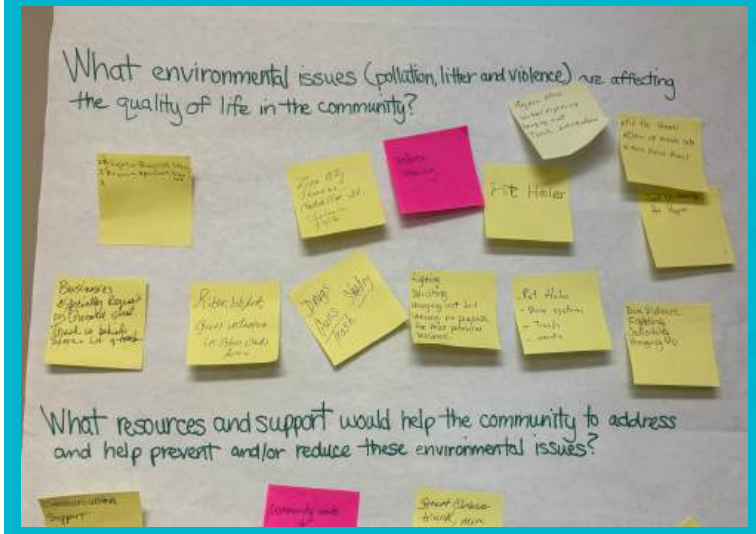
ACTION

The Community Safety Meetings are held bi-weekly in neighborhood locations to ensure accessibility and encourage diverse participation.
Using CPTED principles, community facilitators worked with residents in 6 identified high-risk/at-risk areas (South Baton Rouge; Brookstown; Zion City; Glen Oaks; Melrose East; Scotland/Banks) to identify strategies like improved lighting, the addition of green spaces, removal of graffiti, and securing abandoned properties.

City representatives provide information on available resources, such as grants or neighborhood improvement programs, that residents can leverage to support community-led solutions.

WORK IN PROGRESS:

COMMUNITY SAFE SPACES







Through these sessions, there was documented feedback that showed each neighborhood has unique challenges and strengths, making resident involvement essential in designing impactful environmental improvements to contribute to increasing safety in the areas.

IMPACT

When communities are actively involved in the design and decision-making process for safety and environmental improvements, the resulting strategies are not only more effective but also more sustainable. By centering resident input, these meetings foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among neighbors, leading to greater engagement in community well-being and upkeep.

Key anticipated impacts include:

- **Enhanced Community Cohesion:** Residents report feeling more connected to their neighbors and invested in collective solutions, building a sense of unity and shared responsibility for safety.

- **Effective and Relevant Safety Measures:** Community-informed CPTED strategies are directly responsive to the issues that residents identify, leading to targeted solutions that improve residents' daily lives and sense of security.

- **Empowered, Engaged Residents:** When residents see their ideas implemented, they become more likely to continue participating in local governance, advocating for improvements, and taking pride in their neighborhood.

The power of community-informed solutions lies in their ability to create environments where residents feel safe and valued, encouraging neighborhoods to thrive through a shared vision of safety, beautification, and resilience.

SAFE HOPEFUL HEALTHY
BATON ROUGE

BOOSTING EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE



HIGH-RISK YOUTH ARE FOCUSED ON SURVIVAL, WHICH HAMPERS THEIR ABILITY TO LEARN, SOCIALIZE, AND DEVELOP THE SKILLS NEEDED TO THRIVE. THERE IS A CIRITICAL NEED FOR SYSTEMS THAT COLLABORATE TO COMPLEMENT EXISTING SUPPORTS FOR YOUTH WHO ARE UNIQUELY CHALLENGED BY THE EFFECTS OF GUN VIOLENCE.

The Boosting Education and Workforce workgroup conducted a survey to identify providers targeting high-need, at-risk young people (ages 16-30) and gather input on strategies to support this population.

Access Point Youth refers to young individuals who are encountered at High-Risk Youth Access Points, where intervention and support services can be offered to address risky behaviors and guide them toward positive life outcomes.

Potential access points for engaging at-risk or high-risk young people include Discipline Centers, school settings, and social media. Currently, inadequate public transportation and a lack of knowledge of resources present barriers to access for young people in need.



High-Risk Youth Access Points are critical moments or locations where there is an opportunity to positively influence a young person's life path. These access points serve as touchpoints for intervention, where risky behaviors can be addressed and redirected through targeted services and support.

They provide a strategic opportunity to engage with youth at a pivotal time, offering resources that promote healthier outcomes and reduce the likelihood of future involvement in violence or crime.

HIGH-RISK YOUTH ACCESS POINTS

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Programs
- Street Outreach/High Risk Intervention Programs
- Group Violence Intervention Programs
- Employment Programs
- Safe Passage (School-Outreach)
- Hospital Violence Intervention Prevention Programs
- Outreach Through the Arts
- Juvenile Detention Centers
- Neighborhood and Community Centers
- Alternative Education Programs
- Recreational and Youth Clubs
- Social Service Agencies
- Faith-Based Organizations and Churches
- Public Housing Communities



RECOMMENDATION #1

Championing the reintroduction of vocational education into the EBRPSS

- Reintroduce vocational education in EBRPSS to equip students with valuable skills for employment after graduation.
- Offer trade opportunities alongside mentoring programs to support students' social and emotional development.
- Enable students to earn certificates and income, improving their self-sufficiency and mental well-being.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Host Quarterly Community Fairs for Access Point Youth

- Host quarterly community fairs for Access Point Youth, with participating organizations committing to provide a direct pipeline for youth engagement and follow-up.
- Require organizations to report on a shared data system to track youth connections to resources and maximize the effectiveness of their time at the fair.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Effectively connect Access Point Youth to services and resources through targeted mentoring facilitated by CVI organizations

- Data sharing using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will help track youth engagement and progress, ensuring that mentoring efforts are aligned with desired outcomes.
- Regularly convened shooting reviews among CVI organizations will allow for ongoing assessment and adaptation of strategies to ensure that mentoring services are meeting the needs of at-risk youth.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Create Access Points through Schools and Social Media

- Use Discipline Centers and schools as key access points to engage high-risk youth with workforce development, mentoring, and support services.
- Utilize social media to promote job opportunities, community events, and support services that resonate with youth interests.

RECOMMENDATION #5

Address Barriers to Access

- Improve public transportation for youth to access programs, jobs, and services.
- Increase resource awareness through targeted outreach in schools, social media, and community centers.

BACKGROUND

School-Based Outreach (SBO), led by Safe Hopeful Healthy Baton Rouge (SHH BR), is a collaborative initiative with the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, Big Buddy, and local community partners. The program supports students and families in high-risk areas, equipping young people with the tools they need for personal and professional growth. SBO targets high school students, helping them develop essential life skills, explore career opportunities, and connect with critical community resources.

Through the **Safe Hopeful Healthy Classroom** initiative, in partnership with Big Buddy, students are introduced to various career fields. Weekly wellness modules focus on anger management, conflict resolution, self-esteem, communication, decision-making, and more. Additionally, students gain access to the **Mayor's Youth Workforce Experience (MWYE)**, offering them hands-on professional experience in the summer. SBO also connects high-risk youth and their families to **Wellness Coaches** who provide mental health support and access to essential resources, fostering positive relationships and helping youth overcome the impacts of gun violence.

ACTION

SBO's comprehensive support model bridges schools, families, and communities to remove barriers and ensure continuous care. Key components include:

- **Classroom-Based Wellness and Prevention Modules:** In-school sessions designed to enhance emotional wellness, build life skills, and empower students to manage challenges constructively.
- **Individual Support through Wellness Coaches:** High-risk students and their families are referred to wellness coaches, providing tailored mental health support and resources to guide youth toward thriving.

Through these efforts, SBO helps students build resilience and a path to success in their academic, personal, and professional lives.

WORK IN PROGRESS: SCHOOL-BASED OUTREACH







Community Partnerships for Long-Term Support

- **Local Behavioral Health Collaboration:** SBO partners with local behavioral health organizations to ensure students and families have access to continuous support and resources as they progress.
- **Government Resource Alignment:** SBO aligns with city-wide initiatives like MWYE, Summer of Hope, and community violence prevention efforts, optimizing resource allocation.
- **Data Collection for Insight:** Data is collected to assess needs and outcomes, guiding future interventions and program expansion.

SBO operates in high-need schools across the parish, including Glen Oaks, Capitol High, McKinley Senior High, Istrouma Middle and High, and Scotlandville Magnet High.

IMPACT

Through a comprehensive, multi-tiered approach, SBO prepares students to face life's challenges with resilience. Expected outcomes include:

- Enhanced Student Well-Being: Students acquire critical skills to manage emotions, build healthy relationships, and make informed decisions.
- Improved Family and Community Engagement: Families are more involved in their children's growth, strengthening support systems both at home and in the community.
- Expanded Access to Resources: Students and families access essential behavioral health services and workforce opportunities, overcoming barriers to support.
- Data-Driven Framework for Growth: Data analysis helps demonstrate immediate impacts and identify ongoing needs, setting the stage for future program growth and resource allocation.

SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Our school-based outreach programming offers comprehensive youth development building blocks encompassing in-school, out-of-school, and summer opportunities. Its diverse components provide essential social and emotional learning, career exploration, and health and wellness support, ensuring holistic service for youth at every stage of their development.

IN SCHOOL

SHH CLASSROOM
SHH WELLNESS
TEAM SUPPORTS



OUT OF SCHOOL

SHH WELLNESS TEAM
SUPPORTS SUPPORT GROUPS
ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES



SUMMER

YOUTH WORKFORCE
SHH WELLNESS TEAM
SUPPORTS SUPPORT GROUPS
ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES



CRITERIA UTILIZED TO IDENTIFY STUDENTS FOR SERVICE

- History of gun violence involvement
- History of violent victimization
- Truancy/Attendance
- Grade Level/Academics
- In School Suspension/ Expulsion /Suspension

HEALTH & WELLNESS

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

CAREER EXPLORATION & READINESS

PERSON CENTERED CASE MANAGEMENT

SAFE HOPEFUL HEALTHY
BATON ROUGE

RESHAPING CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS



In participants' view, the local courts prioritize punishment over restoration and healing, missing a vital opportunity to collaborate with community partners in reducing violence.

The workgroup recommends that the City-Parish support the East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court and the 19th Judicial District Court in establishing a "gun court" serving young people charged with first-time, nonviolent gun offenses. The goals of this initiative are to intervene early in the process of justice involvement, prevent future gun offenses, reduce recidivism, and facilitate connections to community-based service offerings. The workgroup also recommends that the juvenile court system launch an intensive electronic monitoring program that will hold accountable youth charged with gun offenses while also allowing them to maintain positive social connections in the community, with both loved ones and service providers.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Assist East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court and the 19th Judicial District Court in establishing a "Gun Court"

Gun court will serve as an early intervention program that will focus on preventing future gun offenses, reducing recidivism, and increasing a youth's involvement in community-based programming.

"Gun Court" will have four elements:

1. Early Intervention;
2. Short-term Intensive Programs;
3. Intensive emphasis on the harm gun violence does to a person, family and community;
4. Inclusion of court personnel, law enforcement, and anti-violence community organizations

RECOMMENDATION #2

City-Parish should assist East Baton Rouge Juvenile Court with an intensive electronic monitoring program that will require state of the art monitoring equipment along with trained personnel and to operate said system.

An intensive electronic monitoring program will allow the accused youth to be monitored 24/7 with the addition of services provided to help the youth steer away from violence.

Youth supervised in the community with the combination of court personnel and community organization representatives is ideal.

RECOMMENDATION #3

District Attorney's Office should consider making it a policy to funnel all first-time offenders into Gun Court where GVI Strategy will have a major presence.

- GVI Strategy should have more involvement at the 19th JDC as well as its continued involvement in Juvenile Court.
- Truce can help connect youth offenders to social services and recreational activities which can turn the tide on gun violence in any particular community.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Begin construction on a state-of-the-art Youth Justice Center that will provide professional, team-oriented youth correctional and educational services to troubled adolescents within a safe and secure environment with the addition of new courtrooms and facilities for judges, staff, and attorneys.

The term "group" refers to any social network whose members commit violent crimes together. This include loose neighborhood crews with no hierarchy or business. All "gangs," "posses," "sets," "crews," "blocs," and other associations are names for groups.


SACF
15

BACKGROUND

Someone Always Cares Foundation (SACF) works to break the cycle of generational delinquency and prevent youth from entering the adult justice system. By partnering with youth and their families at the highest risk of system involvement, SACF guides them from a path of harm to becoming positive contributors in their homes, schools, and communities. Their mission is centered around promoting youth-centered equity, bridging the gap between youth and system structures, and diverting more youth from the justice system.

ACTION

SACF provides critical programs like the Evening Reporting Center (ERC), offering an Alternative to Detention (ATD) and Pre-Trial Diversion Program for youth ages 13-17. Through supervision, monitoring, and tailored delinquency prevention services, SACF empowers youth to make positive changes while supporting their families. SACF's Community-Based Diversion services engage youth and parents in interactive workshops, promoting positive communication, goal setting, and informed decision-making. SACF also collaborates with organizations such as the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Equal Justice USA to bring innovative prevention strategies to the community.

IMPACT

SACF's efforts are transforming the lives of youth at risk, helping to prevent system involvement and providing pathways to success. Through its youth-focused, community-based approach, SACF is making a significant impact in strengthening families, fostering positive relationships, and promoting healthier, safer communities. For more information on services and events, visit the SACF website.

WORK IN PROGRESS:

SOMEONE ALWAYS CARES FOUNDATION





SAFE HOPEFUL HEALTHY
BATON ROUGE

BOLSTERING INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY SUPPORT



The workgroup envisions that young people and families impacted by violence and poverty will have knowledge of the community-based resources available to them and feel empowered to engage with these resources.

Two proposed methods to achieve this vision are to develop a centralized digital platform serving as an access point to resources and launching an after-hours Community Resource Center that funnels at-risk or high-risk people to services such as trauma counseling, assistance with enrollment in government benefits, legal counsel, and more.



RECOMMENDATION #1

Improving and creating sustainable implementation practices and strategies that contribute to a reduction in homicides and nonfatal shootings.

IImplement/expand violence reduction programming across EBR parish

Identify and define “high-risk” vs. “at-risk” individuals to create targeted strategies

- Identify additional credible messengers/ violence interrupters
- Determine where relationship-based disputes are centralized

RECOMMENDATION #2

Establish and nurture relationships with national partners, driven by the objective of offering technical assistance (TA) support to grassroots and community-based organizations.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Increase collaboration amongst all community violence intervention programs

- Data sharing utilizing KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)
- Regularly convened shooting reviews amongst CVI organizations
- Community Based Public Safety Coalition meetings.
- Attendance of all CVI organizations at the Public Safety Ecosystem Meetings

RECOMMENDATION #4

Engage in local, state and federal advocacy efforts

- Advocating for a coordinating body (local or statewide) around Community Violence as a Public Health Initiative.
- Build strong relationships and build a network among the city leaders, legislative directors, state council members, etc. throughout Louisiana.

WORK IN PROGRESS:

C.H.A.N.G.E.: FAMILIES ON THE FRONT LINE OF PEACE

BACKGROUND

C.H.A.N.G.E. (Community Healing and Nurturing for Growth and Empowerment) was established to support families affected by violence.Their mission is "Collaborating with community stakeholders (local residents, parents/legal guardian(s), local businesses faith-based organization, educational-leaders, law enforcement elected government-officials vocational institutions etc.) in creating strategic, creative ways of supporting and rebuilding its community through engaging healthy relationships among each other that foster a thriving community with dignity.

In collaboration with AGILE Planning Solutions and the Office of Mayor-President Broome, **C.H.A.N.G.E.** launched the Families on the Front Line of Peace (FOTFOP) initiative, a peer-to-peer response program aimed at reducing community violence. The program provides support services for families in crisis, helping them navigate trauma and loss while fostering community resilience.

ACTION

C.H.A.N.G.E takes a case management approach to family support, beginning with post-funeral connection and continuing with healing packages and aftercare. Services include peer to peer support, connecting families to grief counseling, and other critical resources. As part of their commitment to healing, **C.H.A.N.G.E.** hosts monthly grief sessions, providing families with a consistent space for support and reflection.

Beyond direct support, **C.H.A.N.G.E.** also engages in broader community advocacy by actively participating in healing circles. They work to amplify the voices of those impacted through public speaking, shedding light on the lasting effects of gun violence on families and advocating for change. By hosting dedicated days of healing, they foster moments of solidarity and reflection for families and community members.







IMPACT

Since launching Families on the Front Line of Peace, C.H.A.N.G.E. has reached over 180 families, with 160 directly affected by gun violence.

They connect these families to essential resources, including behavioral health services, victim support, grief counseling, and victim services, helping them understand they are not alone and that support is available.

Additionally, **C.H.A.N.G.E.** has hosted monthly grief sessions and provided free counseling services to these families, offering consistent emotional support. They also assist families in obtaining information about their loved one's case, providing clarity and answers that are essential to the healing journey. Through their compassionate approach, **C.H.A.N.G.E.** reassures families that their loved one is not forgotten, offering a lifeline of care and remembrance during their most difficult times.



CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN



CRIME, PARTIULARLY GUN VIOLENCE, CAN BE REDUCED IF A NEIGHBORHOOD OR COMMUNITY IS PHYSICALLY DESIGNED TO PROVIDE PROTECTION FOR ITS RESIDENTS.

PHYSICAL CHANGES OR IMPROVEMENTS CAN INCLUDE ERECTING AND MAINTAINING BETTER OUTDOOR LIGHTING, INSTALLING AND ENFORCING TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNS AND LIGHTS, CLOSING OR LIMITING ACCESS TO STREETS TO AVOID THROUGH TRAFFIC, CLEANING UP BUSHES AND SHRUBBERY IN PARKS AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES, INSTALLING OR REPAIRING SIDEWALKS, AND REMOVING ABANDONED VEHICLES.

The Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design workgroup identified targeted solutions to improve public safety in Baton Rouge high risk areas, particularly blighted housing, inadequate street lighting in high-crime areas, and public recreation facilities. To achieve the recommendations outlined within the blueprint, the workgroup will empower community residents with the knowledge and resources to advocate for their needs and make demands of government.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

RECOMMENDATION #1

Increase Visibility In High Risk Neighborhoods

- Replace or repair lighting and utility poles
- Create a sustainable process to ensure lights are replaced quickly when damaged
- Build on and support current efforts to increase security cameras in commercial areas

RECOMMENDATION #2

Cleaning Up Blighted Spaces

- Blight Redevelopment Pilot – title clearing to replace lots with housing, businesses
- Wills and Succession Planning resources to create wealth, prevent blight
- Better fund targeted blight cleanup efforts within the city

RECOMMENDATION #3

Creating the Infrastructure for Safer Spaces

- Make it safer for people to be out in their community (sidewalks, traffic calming, parks with amenities targeted to identified population)
- Make it more joyful for people to be out in their community (creative placemaking, shade, community events)
- Reclaim and rehabilitate spaces that have been negatively affected by acts of violence

RECOMMENDATION #4

Develop Infrastructure for Landlords/ Rental Communities

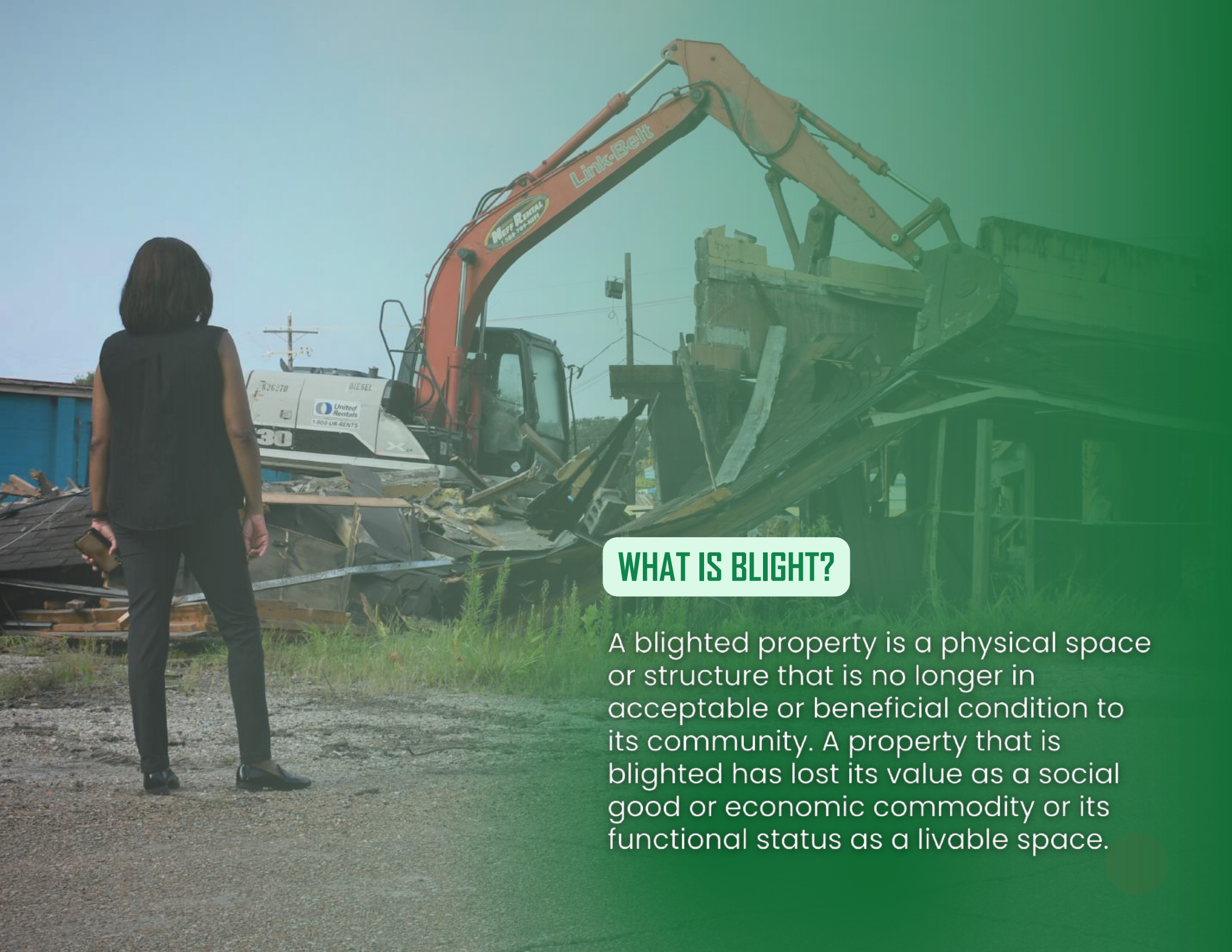
- Implement stricter rental guidelines to hold landlords and property owners accountable, thereby reducing blight in the community.

RECOMMENDATION #5

Empowering Residents and Local Businesses

- Increase understanding of systems/resources and how they operate (Example: Resident Leader Academy, Blight Bootcamp)
- Enable residents to ensure accountability, demand policy change and resources for their neighborhood





WHAT IS BLIGHT?

A blighted property is a physical space or structure that is no longer in acceptable or beneficial condition to its community. A property that is blighted has lost its value as a social good or economic commodity or its functional status as a livable space.


SPEEDHIDE

WORK IN PROGRESS:
LATE NIGHT HYPE

BACKGROUND

Late Night Hype was developed by BREC in collaboration with Empower 225 as a Community Violence Intervention program under the Safe Hopeful Healthy BR Initiative. Inspired by a successful program from the Washington D.C. Parks & Rec department, Late Night Hype aimed to create a safe and vibrant community space during unconventional hours. The series took place at BREC Gus Young Avenue Park, offering an array of activities designed to nurture the mind, body, and spirit.

ACTION

The event series featured a variety of activities including 5-on-5 basketball games, art installations, food trucks, live music, and resources from community partners. Each event encouraged community interaction, providing a safe environment for individuals and families to gather, socialize, and engage in recreational activities. Effective marketing strategies and collaborative efforts with local partners played a crucial role in promoting the series and ensuring its accessibility to the entire community.

2,615 PARTICIPANTS

374 ATTENDEES PER EVENT (AVG)

7 EVENTS

IMPACT

Late Night Hype made a significant impact on the community by fostering connections across diverse groups, creating a lively, inviting, and safe atmosphere. With strong attendance and many returning participants, the program strengthened community ties and successfully provided a safe social space, supported by the involvement of police officers and volunteers. This positive engagement reflects the program's potential for long-term success and its ability to serve as a model for similar initiatives in other communities. Additionally, the program contributed to improved public safety. Overall crime rates decreased by 6.32% in June and 15.51% in July 2024 in the Gus Young community, highlighting the positive impact of the program on reducing crime and fostering a safer community.











LATE NIGHT HYPE







SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH INSTITUTIONALIZATION

A KEY STRATEGY FOR ENSURING THE LONG-TERM SUCCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF CVI INITIATIVES IS THE CREATION OF AN OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION.

SUCH OFFICES ARE ESSENTIAL IN INSTITUTIONALIZING VIOLENCE PREVENTION EFFORTS, ENSURING THAT THESE VITAL SERVICES ARE EMBEDDED WITHIN THE GOVERNMENTAL FRAMEWORK AND THAT RESOURCES ARE CONTINUALLY ALLOCATED TO ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

These offices serve as pivotal hubs for collaboration, guiding policy, coordinating resources, and amplifying community voices in decision-making processes. By investing in institutionalizing these efforts, we create a framework that aligns local government and community resources, secures ongoing funding, and solidifies the commitment to long-term violence reduction in Baton Rouge.



RECOMMENDATION #1

City of Baton Rouge Stands up an Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)

- Create a formal office within local government that is dedicated to violence prevention, providing a centralized, coordinated approach to gun violence and community safety.
- Assign a full-time director and support staff with experience in public health, law enforcement, or community organizing to lead the office, ensuring consistent leadership and vision.
- Integrate this office into local government to ensure continuity, funding, and long-term political support for violence prevention initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Institutionalize the OVP as a Core Component of Public Safety

- Align the Office of Violence Prevention with broader public safety strategies, ensuring that its work complements and enhances law enforcement efforts.
- Ensure that violence prevention is a priority at the highest levels of local government and public policy, signaling a commitment to long-term, systemic change.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Allocate Sufficient and Sustainable Funding

- Secure dedicated funding streams through local, state, and federal sources to ensure the office's financial sustainability over time.
- Ensure that the office is fully funded to carry out its mission, including personnel, programmatic needs, and capacity-building efforts.
- Leverage partnerships with philanthropic organizations and community stakeholders to augment government funding and support innovative approaches.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Ensure Long-Term Sustainability

- Advocate for policy changes supporting long-term violence prevention at all levels.
- Develop a multi-year strategic plan for the OVP with clear goals and measurable milestones.

RECOMMENDATION #5

Facilitate Collaborative Partnerships

- Use MOUs to formalize partnerships, ensuring mutual commitment and shared resources for violence prevention.
- Establish a community advisory council to guide the office and ensure community input in policy decisions.

APPENDIX

SAFE
HOPEFUL
HEALTHY
BATON ROUGE

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GLOSSARY

Collective Impact Model - a network of community members, organizations, and institutions who advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems level change. It has five conditions: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organization.

Ecosystem - represents a series of community-centered initiatives and strategies aimed at reducing community violence. These efforts include a variety of interfacing strategies and resources that complement law enforcement tactics, all organized cohesively to create a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and intervention.

High Risk Individuals - are at the highest risk of being a victim, or perpetrator of gun violence. These individuals often have limited educational status, have displayed involvement in documented group activity, have a history of violent victimization, have been a perpetrator of violence, have experienced high levels of trauma, face multiple barriers to stability, and often have a great distrust for services and systems.

At Risk Individuals – Often display early involvement w/drugs, alcohol, or tobacco; have low parental involvement; poor academic performance; association w/delinquent peers; are economically disadvantaged; have low self-esteem; and often resides in disinvested communities/ neighborhoods that possess high risk factors.

Prevention Universal Continuum - Prevent violence before it occurs, targets whole populations and address the social determinants of violence

Early Prevention - Prevent violence before it occurs, target the whole population, and address risk and protective factors at the community, family, and personal levels

Intervention - Target individuals who are at most risk of committing violence and/or those who exhibit early signs of violent behavior
Treatment- Redirect individuals already engaged in violent behavior, deal with existing violence and mitigate its consequences, and prevent escalation and reoccurrence



GLOSSARY

Community Violence Intervention (CVI) - programs focus on reducing homicides and shootings by establishing relationships with people at the center of gun violence in our communities. These programs support people at the highest risk of being victims or perpetrators—or both—of violence

Group Violence Intervention (GVI) - collaborations among community leaders, social service providers, and law enforcement. With community input, law enforcement identifies those at the highest risk of violence, and partners intervene and provide support.

Public Health Approach to Reducing Violence - involves defining and measuring the problem, identifying the cause or risk factors associated with violence, determining how to prevent violence, implementing effective strategies on a larger scale, and evaluating their impact.

Violence Interrupters/Credible Messengers - professionals have credibility in the communities where they work. They reach out to those at the center of gun violence in their communities, build relationships, and work to support healing and address conflict through nonviolent means, including de-escalation and mediation.

Street Outreach: This program model employs a public health approach to fight violence. The program has street outreach workers who actively work to mediate conflicts and prevent retaliatory violence between those who are at-risk to commit or become the victims of gun violence.

Hospital-Based Violence Intervention programs (HVIPs): These programs are located in trauma centers and emergency departments. They engage patients while they are still in the hospital, often just hours after a violent injury, to reduce the chance of retaliation and violent injury recurrence and offer subsequent case work and services in areas such as mental health counseling, financial and educational support, and more. They are based on the premise that there is a unique window of opportunity to engage victims of violence in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic injury.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a psycho-social intervention that aims to reduce symptoms of various mental health conditions, primarily depression and anxiety disorders.



GLOSSARY

Restorative Justice - an approach to addressing harm and conflict that focuses on repairing the harm caused by an offense rather than solely punishing the offender. It is a philosophy and set of practices aimed at bringing together those who have been affected by an offense, including victims, offenders, and the community, to actively participate in resolving the harm and finding meaningful solutions. Restorative justice is often seen as an alternative or complementary approach to the traditional punitive justice system, with a focus on healing, accountability, and community engagement.

Gun violence is violence committed with the use of firearms, for example pistols, shotguns, assault rifles or machine guns.

Community violence refers to deliberate acts of interpersonal violence in public spaces by a person or persons not intimately related to the victim.

Sexual violence includes a sexual act that is committed or attempted by another person without freely given consent of the victim or against someone who is unable to consent or refuse.

Intimate partner violence includes physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression (including coercive tactics) by a current or former intimate partner.

Structural violence refers to harm that individuals, families and communities experience from economic and social structures, social institutions, relations of power, privilege, and the inequality; and inequity that may harm people and communities by preventing them from meeting their basic needs.

Drug-related violence refers to incidents that had indicators of drug involvement (i.e. large amount of cash present, known drug house, presence of narcotics, etc.).

Self-directed violence refers to behavior directed at oneself that deliberately results in injury or the potential for injury. Self-directed violence may be suicidal or non-suicidal in nature.

Suicide is a death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with the intent to die as a result of the behavior.



GLOSSARY

Risk Factors - are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes**.**

Protective Factors or Resilience Factors - characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor's impact. Protective factors may be seen as positive countering events.

Assessing the risk and protective factors that contribute to violence helps practitioners select appropriate interventions. Many factors influence a person's chance of being victim and/or a perpetrator of violence. Effective prevention focuses on reducing those risk factors, and strengthening protective factors, that are most closely related to the problem being addressed. Applying the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) helps prevention professionals identify factors having the greatest impact on their target population.

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Some risk and protective factors are fixed: they don't change over time. Other risk and protective factors are considered variable and can change over time. **Variable risk factors** include income level, peer group, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and employment status.

Individual-level risk factors may include a person's genetic predisposition to trauma, addiction, or exposure to alcohol prenatally.

Individual-level protective factors might include positive self-image, self-control, or social competence.



GLOSSARY

Risk Factors by Category

Individual

- History of violent victimization
- Attention deficits, hyperactivity, or learning disorders
- History of early aggressive behavior
- Involvement with drugs, alcohol, or tobacco
- Low IQ
- Poor behavioral control
- Deficits in social cognitive or information-processing abilities
- High emotional distress
- History of treatment for emotional problems
- Antisocial beliefs and attitudes
- Exposure to violence and conflict in the family

Family

- Authoritarian childrearing attitudes
- Harsh, lax, or inconsistent disciplinary practices
- Low parental involvement
- Low emotional attachment to parents or caregivers
- Low parental education and income
- Parental substance abuse or criminality
- Poor family functioning
- Poor monitoring and supervision of children

Peer and Social

- Association with delinquent peers
- Involvement in gangs
- Social rejection by peers
- Lack of involvement in conventional activities
- Poor academic performance
- Low commitment to school and school failure

Community

- Diminished economic opportunities
- High concentrations of poor residents
- High level of transiency
- High level of family disruption
- Low levels of community participation
- Socially disorganized neighborhoods



GLOSSARY

Resilience Factors by Category

Individual

- Intolerant attitude toward deviance
- High IQ
- High grade point average (as an indicator of high academic achievement)
- High educational aspirations
- Positive social orientation
- Popularity acknowledged by peers
- Highly developed social skills/competencies
- Highly developed skills for realistic planning
- Religious beliefs

Family

- Connectedness to family or adults outside the family
- Ability to discuss problems with parents
- Perceived parental expectations about school performance are high
- Frequent shared activities with parents
- Consistent presence of parent during at least one of the following: when awakening, when arriving home from school, at evening mealtime, or when going to bed
- Involvement in social activities
- Parental/family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems (provision of models of constructive coping)

Peer and Social

- Possession of affective relationships with those at school that are strong, close, and pro-socialy oriented
- Commitment to school (an investment in school and in doing well at school)
- Close relationships with non-deviant peers
- Membership in peer groups that do not condone antisocial behavior
- Involvement in prosocial activities
- Exposure to school climates with the following characteristics:
- Intensive supervision
- Clear behavior rules
- Firm disciplinary methods
- Engagement of parents and teachers



GLOSSARY

Sources:

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