

How Six Cities Across America Are Addressing Police Transformation



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Since the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, the movement to transform policing and reimagine public safety has been invigorated around the country, with more than twenty million people participating in demonstrations and protests in every state in the nation.

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform has conducted this assessment of the efforts of six cities to get a picture of how different jurisdictions are approaching the work of police transformation and reimaging public safety. The following assessment is a snapshot in time and progress is being made on these initiatives every week, beyond what is captured in this report. The method, speed, intended outcomes, and other methods in which these cities are engaging in this effort can be instructive and helpful to other jurisdictions. The following report consists of brief summaries of how six cities have responded in this moment.



ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO



2020-2021
Budget:

\$1.1 billion
(\$640 million
General Fund)



City
Population:

560,000



Police
Budget:

\$205 million
(2019-2020)



Number of
Sworn Officers:

972
(2019)



Approved
Reduction:

None



Other Budget:

\$7.5 million in funding for new Albuquerque Community Safety Department generated through reallocation of funds from multiple departments including: Albuquerque Police Department, Albuquerque Fire Rescue, Family and Community Services, and the Department of Municipal Development.

Approach:

I. Albuquerque Community Safety Department

The Albuquerque Community Safety Department (ACS) was established in concept in June 2020. ACS will serve as an alternative response infrastructure for all calls related to inebriation, homelessness, addiction, and mental health. Instead of police, trained professionals, including social workers, housing, and homelessness specialists, violence prevention and diversion experts, will respond to these types of calls for service. The City will be working with community members, experts and council members through September 2020 to map out the details of the new department; the mayor's recent budget submission to the City Council includes \$7.5 million in funding for ACS.

An overview of ACS can be found here: <https://www.cabq.gov/acs/documents/acs-graphic.pdf>

II. Previous City Efforts of Note

While in the immediate term the City of Albuquerque's primary focus is the establishment of the ACS, of note is the fact that the City has implemented a number of police reform initiatives in recent years, including the redirection of thousands of "down and out" (someone in public who appears to be unconscious) service calls, to other City agencies.

› III. State Efforts of Note

In July 2020, the Governor signed legislation requiring New Mexico police officers to wear body cameras as a deterrent against unlawful use of force and establishing strengthened accountability measures in instances of inappropriate excessive force.

The camera requirement applies to city police, county sheriff's agencies as well as state police and the Department of Public Safety.

Law enforcement agencies must maintain the body camera footage for at least 120 days. Police who interfere with the devices or otherwise flout the camera requirement could face penalties for withholding evidence.

In addition, Senate Bill 8 establishes that the Law Enforcement Academy Board will now permanently revoke the certification of any police officer who is found guilty, pleads guilty or pleads no contest to a crime involving unlawful use or threatened use of force in the line of duty, or if he or she failed to intervene in a police action involving unlawful use of force.

Senate Bill 8 also **established a State Civil Rights Commission to advise about a proposal to abolish qualified immunity. The Commission's report is due in November 2020.**



AUSTIN, TEXAS



2020-2021
Budget:

\$4.2 billion
(\$1.1 billion
General Fund)



City
Population:

964,254



Police
Budget:

\$290 million



Number of
Sworn Officers:

1900



Approved
Reduction:

\$160 million
(36.8 percent)

Approach:

I. Immediate Cuts, \$21.4 million

The Austin City Council (ACC) approved a three-pronged approach to public safety reform at its August 2020 meeting. The first phase resulted in immediate cuts to the police budgeted totaling \$21.4 million and a commensurate reallocation of these dollars to other services. These reductions were generated through elimination of three planned police cadet classes¹; elimination of 100 vacant police officer positions; delaying the scheduled replacement of duty weapons; transfer of Austin Center of Events staff from Austin Police Department (APD) to another city department; and reductions to the overtime budget. The ACC reallocated reduced APD funds to violence prevention, food and abortion access programs, permanent supportive housing and services, EMS for COVID-19 response, family violence shelter and protection, violence prevention, workforce development, mental health first response, records management in APD, and a range of other programs.

II. Reimagining Public Safety Taskforce

The Reimagining Public Safety Taskforce (RPST) was formally established by the August action of the ACC. It is expected to conclude its work in time for the ACC to act on its recommendations for the 2021-2022 budget year. The ACC is funding both a consultant for the Task Force and for APD to facilitate alignment between the two entities. The Task Force's initial charge is to develop recommendations regarding:

- Use of force/de-escalation
- Alternatives to traditional policing
- Governance models
- Reducing enforcement of minor crimes

¹ However, the council said it may allow one or two cadet classes to begin in fiscal year 2021 if a revised curriculum is completed and a "more appropriate recruitment program" is implemented. It will also consider attrition rates, pension impacts and additional funding as factors influencing its decision on cadet classes.

- Training, including the police academy and police officer continuing education/training requirements
- Addressing culture change in the workplace to transform the way officers show up in the community
- Data and research, including best practices in the collection and analysis of crime statistics and exploring the bias in data collection and evaluation

Task Force recommendations will be used to guide the reallocation of an additional \$80 million in ACC identified police funding to other areas of city government. While the specific areas targeted for reduction: forensic sciences, the 911 call center, internal affairs, and victim services, have been identified, the Task Force is expected to recommend which city departments absorb these functions.

Task Force recommendations will also be used to direct the redistribution of \$50 million toward community-based, forms of public safety and community support. These funds will be distributed through a Reimagine Safety Fund that has been established.

› III. Mapping and Tracking Concurrent Work

The City of Austin has been explicit about the existence (and challenges) of concurrent parallel and potentially overlapping efforts, some of which have been underway for several years, and which are in some instances being spearheaded directly by the ACC, the APD, or the City Manager. These efforts include:

The City of Austin has been explicit about the existence (and challenges) of concurrent parallel and potentially overlapping efforts, some of which have been underway for several years, and which are in some instances being spearheaded directly by the ACC, the APD, or the City Manager. These efforts include:

- APD culture and environment initiatives;
- Review of 911 calls for service;
- Review of metrics benchmarks and baseline measures established to enhance articulated racial justice goals;
- Analysis of feasibility of shifting emergency call center/dispatch and forensics lab work from AD to other departments;
- Review of the legal and statutory barriers to transitioning areas such as internal affairs and policing at parks, lakes, and airport; and
- Review of how sexual assaults that are reported are investigated.

The Task Force consultant is expected to monitor and map the results of these concurrent efforts with Task Force recommendations.

› IV. Police Reform

The Austin City Council adopted resolutions strictly prohibiting police from using chokeholds or strangleholds, requiring de-escalation tactics in all circumstances, banning officers from shooting at moving vehicles, banning the use of tear gas and impact munitions on people exercising their First Amendment rights, limiting no-knock warrants, limiting the use of facial recognition technology by police, and restricting the use of deadly force.

The FY21 Immediate Investments and Long-Term Change Plan can be found in full here:

<https://nicjr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Austin-Immediate-Community-Investments-and-Reimagining-Plan-UPDATED-8-12-20.pdf>



BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



2020-2021
Budget:

\$6.61 billion
(\$3.6 billion
General Fund)



City
Population:

694,583



Police
Budget:

\$414 million



Number of
Sworn Officers:

2,000



Approved
Reduction:

\$12 million

Approximately 40 percent of which is for Boston Public Schools and charter school oversight)

Approach:

I. Reduction and Reallocation

In June 2020 the mayor declared racism a public health crisis. The recently adopted 2020-2021 budget reflects a \$12 million reduction in the police overtime budget with the reallocation of those funds being used to address the articulated public health crisis as follows:

- **\$3 million** to the Public Health Department.
- **\$1 million** to support trauma response and counseling at the Boston Public Health Commission.
- **\$2 million** for community investments through other city of Boston departments, including violence prevention, language access, food security, immigrant advancement, elder support and the Human Rights Commission.
- **\$2 million** for programs supporting minority and women-owned businesses.
- **\$2 million** for housing security and ending youth homelessness.
- **\$2 million** for emergency clinicians and mental health supports provided through Boston Police when they respond to residents in crisis.

II. Boston Police Reform Task Force

In June 2020 the Mayor convened the Boston Police Reform Task Force (Task Force). Task Force members are charged with reviewing the Boston Police Department's current policies and procedures within 60 days, and then presenting recommendations for reform. The main areas of their review included:

- › [Use of Force policies \(Rules 303-304\)](#)
- › [Implicit bias training](#)
- › [The Body-worn Camera program](#)
- › Strengthening the [existing Co-Op board](#)

The Task Force issued its recommendations in September, which are summarized below and can be found in full here:

<https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2020/09/Boston%20Police%20Reform%20Task%20Force%20Initial%20Report%20-%20English.pdf>

- 1 Create an independent Office of Police Accountability and Transparency (“OPAT”) with full investigatory and subpoena power, i.e. the ability to call witnesses and to compel the discovery of documents, to replace the Co-Op.
- 2 Formalize and expand the Boston Police Department’s (BPD) commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- 3 Expand the BPD’s use of the body-worn camera program where it increases police transparency and accountability, and continue to ban the use of biometrics and facial recognition software.
- 4 Enhance the BPD’s Use of Force policies (Rule 303, Rule 303A, Rule 303B, Rule 304) so that they articulate clear and enforceable disciplinary code of consequences for violations and infractions and hold the BPD publicly accountable for the violation of these policies.
- 5 Adopt data and record practices that maximize accountability, transparency and public access to BPD records and data.

In order to implement the Task Force’s recommendations, the city and BPD are urged to commit to broader institutional actions and reforms beyond the specific recommendations summarized above and described below. They must:

- 1 View these recommendations as the floor rather than the ceiling on police reform.
- 2 Commit to internalizing the Task Force’s recommendations through the adoption of corresponding accountability metrics, development of a clear set of disciplinary consequences, and issuance public status updates.
- 3 Critically analyze the capabilities and the expertise of the BPD and determine where responsibilities can be shifted. To avoid duplication, unnecessary expenses, and increased bureaucracy the City and the BPD must (1) assess the BPD’s expertise and ability to handle its current responsibilities beyond law enforcement; (2) analyze the existing and potential capabilities of City agencies to take on these responsibilities; and (3) develop partnerships among the BPD and other city agencies to accomplish these goals.
- 4 Develop a culture that prioritizes diversity, equity, and community engagement. Bringing about meaningful culture change in an institution requires that the institution itself change. Accordingly, the BPD and the city should reassess the civil service requirements pertaining to the BPD officer disciplinary policies and hiring and promotion policies.
- 5 Pledge to implement the Task Force’s recommendations without increasing the BPD’s budget.



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA



2020-2021
Budget:

\$1.652 billion
(\$644 million
General Fund)



City
Population:

429,082



Police
Budget:

\$330 million



Number of
Sworn Officers:

792



Approved
Reduction:

\$14.3 million

Approach:

› I. Reduction and Reallocation

The city's 2020-2021 adopted budget includes a \$14.3 million reduction to the police budget; savings were achieved in part by delaying the next scheduled police academy. Savings were reallocated to:

- Create the Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO) program in the Department of Violence Prevention which will serve as an alternative to the Oakland Police Department (OPD) for 911 mental health crisis calls (\$1.85 million);
- Augment Violence prevention and Life Coaching services (\$500,000);
- Increase funding for the Police Commission;
- Add staff to the Department of Race & Equity;
- Transfer crossing guards to the Department of Transportation; and
- Transfer Neighborhood Services from OPD to the City Administrator's Office.

In addition, a portion of the reduction was used to fund a task force and robust community engagement process for defining a "transformational vision for public safety that dramatically shifts resources from enforcement and punishment to prevention and wellness". This transformation is to be achieved by a 50 percent reduction in the OPD budget, as described below.

› II. Reimagining Public Safety Taskforce

The City Council created the Reimagining Public Safety Taskforce in July 2020 (Taskforce). The Purpose of the Taskforce is to rapidly reimagine and reconstruct the public safety system in Oakland by developing a recommendation for council consideration to increase community safety through alternative

responses to calls for assistance, and investments in programs that address the root causes of violence and crime (such as health services, housing, and jobs), with a goal of a 50 percent reduction in the OPD General Fund budget.

The Taskforce is comprised of 17 members representing city council districts, public safety-related commissions, the Budget Advisory Commission, the Youth Commission, and Taskforce chairs (2 council members). The Taskforce is supported by several Advisory Boards: Budget Data & Analysis; Alternate Responses; Legal Barriers; and OPD Organization & Culture. The Advisory Boards serve dual purposes – developing recommendations for the Taskforce to consider as well as serving as research, outreach, and analysis extensions of the Taskforce as related to their respective areas of expertise.

The Taskforce held its first meeting on September 16. Draft recommendations are due to the City Council at the end of December, and final recommendations in April 2021. These recommendations will inform the development of the city's 2021-2022 budget.

The National Institute of Criminal Justice Reform and Policy Link are co-facilitating the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force effort.

The Taskforce held its first meeting on September 16. Draft recommendations are due to the City Council at the end of December, and final recommendations in April 2021. These recommendations will inform the development of the city's 2021-2022 budget.

The National Institute of Criminal Justice Reform is a lead facilitator of the Reimagining Public Safety Taskforce effort.

› III. Police Oversight Commission Reform

The November ballot includes a measure endorsed unanimously by the city council which will strengthen Oakland's existing police reform commission in ways including:

- Adding a new civilian inspector general position that reports directly to the Commission
- Giving the commission the ability and budget to hire independent counsel
- Giving the commission the authority to issue subpoenas



PORTLAND, OREGON



2020-2021
Budget:

\$5.6 billion
(\$713 million
General Fund)



City
Population:

654,741



Police
Budget:

\$229 million
(2019-2020)



Number of
Sworn Officers:

1001
(2019)



Approved
Reduction:

\$15 million
(6.5 percent)

Approach:

› I. Reduce and Reinvest (June 2020)

In June 2020 Mayor Wheeler introduced police reduction and reinvestment measures as follows:

Reduce

- › Redirect over \$7 million from the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) and \$5 million from other City funds to communities of color.
- › Decline renewal of Intergovernmental Agreement with TriMet public transit agency, dissolving the PPB Transit Division and putting transit officers back on patrol.
- › Dissolve PPB's Gun Violence Reduction Team (GVRT) and fundamentally re-shape the approach to reduce gun violence in collaboration with the Office of Violence Prevention, District Attorney-elect, and other partners
- › Remove police officers from schools, dissolving the Youth Services Division and School Resource Officer program

Reinvest

- › **\$4.8 million** for Portland Street Response, a program which partners EMTs with mental health workers responding to 911 calls. Funded by reductions to the PPB GVRT.

- › **\$1 million** to fund a leadership program for Black residents age 35 years and younger. Funded by cuts to the school resource officer program.
- › **\$1 million** for programs to help the city's unhoused, with funding coming from elimination the Special Emergency Reaction (or SWAT) team.
- › **\$453,000** in social equity grants through the Office of Community and Civic Life, funded by a redirection of \$2.3 million in cannabis tax revenue. The balance of the revenue will stay in the cannabis tax fund, instead of going to the police bureau's traffic division.
- › **\$150,000** to a tribal outreach worker in the Office of Government Relations.
- › **\$124,000** will fund a position in the Office of Equity & Human Rights to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

› II. Reform

The Mayor's June 2020 proposals also included a call for a community-led review and re-envisioning of core patrol services, convened by the Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing (PCCEP). Mayor Wheeler convened the PCCEP in 2019 to act as an independent advisory committee to the Mayor and Chief of Police with a specific focus on police services and relationships with people living with mental illness and people of color. The PCCEP is also charged with independently overseeing the implementation of a DOJ settlement agreement. The Mayor's proposals also included legislation that would enshrine the PCCEP in the Portland City Code, making it a permanent community oversight body.

In addition, the Mayor has called for enhanced support of non-law enforcement responses like the Portland Street Response pilot and the Navigation Team. These resources serve as an alternative response network for homelessness related calls for service as well as provide proactive interventions and supports for the homeless population.

A measure has been approved for the November ballot by the Portland City Council that, if passed, will establish a police oversight board that will replace the existing Independent Police Review and the Citizen Review Committee. The board's duties would include investigating complaints against police, in-custody deaths and incidents in which police discriminated against a protected class, cases in which officers are accused of violating a person's constitutional rights or and incidents of deadly force.

Additional reform measures include:

- Immediately returning an Equity & Inclusion office to the Chief of Police's office, with a direct report to the Chief of Police;
- Requiring explicit City Council authorization for acquisition of military equipment, consistent with Executive Order 13688 issued by President Barack Obama in May 2015;
- Creating local legislation for reforms to the use of consent searches in traffic stops;
- Banning carotid constraints, including chokeholds, as methods of control, and directing the Chief of Police to revise the use of force policy to reflect this change; and
- Creating a local racial profiling ban with private right of action for intentional discrimination by law enforcement

› III. Additional Initiatives of Note

The City of Portland's response to the call for public safety reform has been expansive and extends well beyond the "four corners" of the police department. For example, the Mayor's June 2020 proposals included the following provisions:

- A call on criminal justice system partners to match the City commitment and reinvest in communities of color;
- A commitment to hire a third party to review recruitment and retention strategies to ensure that the City's entire workforce reflects the communities it serves;
- Advocacy for greater access to community-based behavioral health and harm-reduction services located in communities of color;
- Support for the Oregon Legislative People of Color Caucus' call for a special session to take up urgently needed reform legislation;
- Support for the Oregon Legislative People of Color Caucus in pursuit of legislation requiring the Oregon Attorney General to investigate officer-involved deaths or serious injuries of civilians;
- Support for the Oregon Legislative People of Color Caucus in pursuit of legislation ensuring integrity of local discipline actions by prohibiting arbitrators from overturning disciplinary decisions against officers if the law enforcement agency and arbitrator both agree that misconduct occurred; and
- Support reform of Federal qualified immunity doctrine



WASHINGTON, DC



\$16.7 billion

\$1.652 billion
(of which DC government
controls \$8.5 billion)



City
Population:

705,000t



Police
Budget:

\$560 million



Number of
Sworn Officers:

3,900



Approved
Reduction:

None



Other Budget:

\$15 million of a planned 2020-2021 \$19 million increase redirected to other DC government agencies

Approach:

I. Police Reform

In July 2020 the DC Council (Council) passed the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Act of 2020 which contained the following provisions for an initial 90-day implementation period:

- Removes the right of the DC Police Union to negotiate with management regarding discipline of its members (in August the Police Union sued the city over this provision);
- Increases penalties for chokeholds and neck restraints and expands definition of holds;
- Requires the release, within 5 days, of body-worn camera footage after any officer-involved death or serious use of force, requires release of footage from past shootings, and bans officers from reviewing it prior to drafting crime reports (Police Union has also sued over this provision);
- Prohibits use of tear gas, pepper spray, riot gear, rubber bullets and stun grenades by the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) (or federal police while on non-federal land) in response to First Amendment protests;
- Bars MPD from hiring officers who were forced out of earlier jobs for misconduct or found to have committed serious misconduct at other law enforcement agencies
- Modifies the composition of the Police Complaints Board, moving from a five-member board with one MPD representative, to a nine-member board with one member from each Ward, plus an at-large member, and no police representatives;

- Creates a use of force review board
- Repeals the District's mask ban statute that has been used to prosecute teenagers in hoodies;
- Repeals a law that criminalized failure to arrest;
- Places limits on consent searches;
- Requires that all MPD personnel working at a First Amendment protest wear identification indicating they are with local (as opposed to federal) law enforcement
- Ensures the right to a jury trial in cases where assaulting a police officer is alleged;
- Bans MPD from purchasing military equipment from the federal government;
- Requires the Department of Corrections to provide voter registration forms, voter guides, and absentee ballots to everyone in the Department's care; and
- Requires additional training of officers on topics including racism and white supremacy.

The Council will revisit these measures in October.

› II. Formation of a District of Columbia Police Reform Commission (July 2020)

The Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Act also included a provision that established the District of Columbia Police Reform Commission (Commission). The Commission is charged with examining policing practices in the District and providing recommendations for reforming and re-visioning policing including:

- Looking at the role of sworn and special police officers in public schools;
- Developing alternatives to police responses such as community-based, behavioral health or social service co-responders;
- Reviewing police discipline; and
- Integration of conflict resolution strategies and restorative justice practices into policing.

The Commission held its first meeting on August 26. It also held an emergency meeting on September 4, specifically in response to the police killing of 18 year-old Deon Kay.



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TRANSFORMATION**