

JACKSON

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

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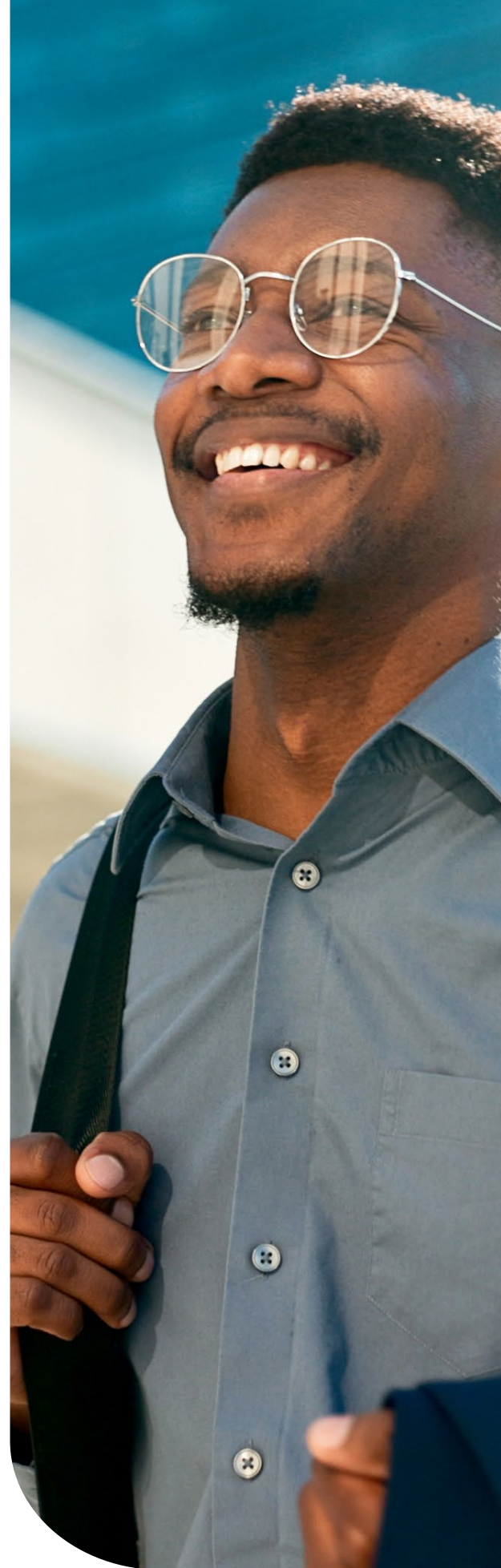
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With support from the Public Welfare Foundation, the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) conducted an analysis of violence reduction, reentry, and youth development services, in Jackson, Mississippi. This analysis led to the identification of 19 relevant programs, which are profiled at the end of this report.

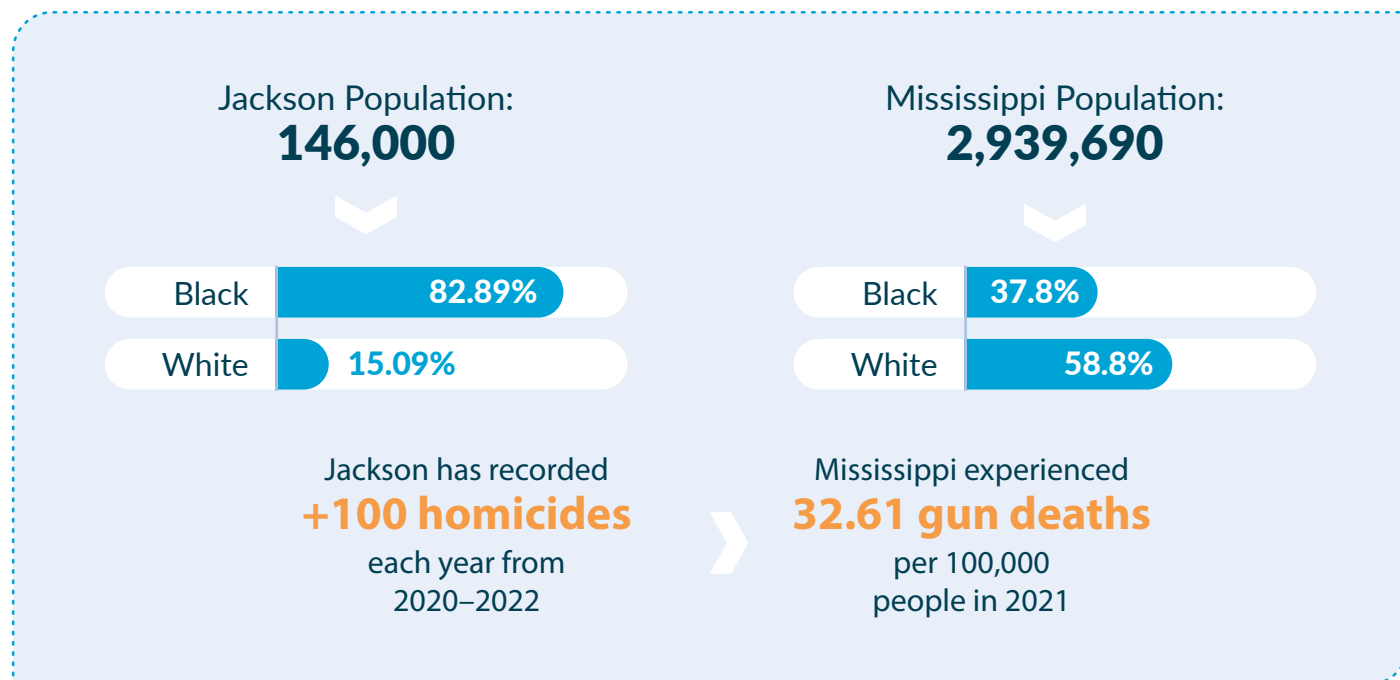
There are an array of programs and services in Jackson that focus on youth development and community transformation. Many of these are effective grassroots efforts that are deeply anchored in some of Jackson's most under-resourced communities. However, there are very few programs specifically focused on violence intervention, reentry, and serving high-risk adults – noteworthy gaps given the high rates of violence that continue to impact Jackson residents.

The City has recently taken important steps toward addressing violence, particularly in securing funding to establish an Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery (OVPTR) and to support community-based violence reduction initiatives. Creating a comprehensive gun violence reduction strategy (GVRS) is an essential next step, as a centralized approach will allow various departments and organizations to effectively work toward a common vision of safety and community wellbeing.

To facilitate the implementation of a GVRS, Jackson should continue to develop and appropriately resource the Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery. This office should serve as a centralized coordinating body that also provides funding, training, support, and accountability to local community-based organizations. The OVPTR should also support the establishment of new organizations and initiatives focused on providing violence prevention, intervention, reentry, and services targeting high-risk young adults.



INTRODUCTION



Approximately 146,000 people reside in Jackson, Mississippi, where the racial composition is 82.89% Black and 15.09% White.¹ In contrast, the State of Mississippi has a population of approximately 2,939,690, with 58.8% of residents being White and 37.8% Black.² Despite a lack of government programs and initiatives specifically focusing on gun violence, a number of community-led organizations have been created to serve Black youth and families with the goal of curbing the rise in violent crime.

Gun violence continues to be a major issue in Jackson, and in Mississippi at large. In 2021, Mississippi was the state with the highest gun death rate, and it remains among the highest. Mississippi experienced 32.61 gun deaths per 100,000 people in 2021, for a homicide rate that was approximately 14 times the national average.^{3,4} Jackson specifically demonstrates this extreme gun violence, as it has recorded more than 100 homicides each year from 2020–2022, with at least 130 homicides being reported in 2022.⁵

¹ U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Jackson city, Mississippi

² U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Mississippi

³ States with Strong Gun Laws and Lower Gun Ownership Have Lowest Gun Death Rates in the Nation, New Data for 2021 Confirms

⁴ State-run Police Expand Into Jackson

⁵ Jackson Homicide Rates

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

I. Violence Reduction

The NICJR violence reduction framework includes the three categories of violence prevention, violence intervention, and community transformation. Each of the violence reduction organizations identified in Jackson fit within one or more of these categories.

Violence prevention refers to the elimination or reduction of the underlying causes and risk factors that lead to violence.⁶ Violence prevention efforts are thus designed to prevent violence occurring in the first place. **Violence intervention** efforts, on the other hand, are designed to prevent the recurrence of violence or intervene and prevent the imminent act of violence.

Both violence prevention and intervention hinge on deploying services that identify and address age- and context-appropriate risk and protective factors. Violence prevention efforts are most often targeted toward children and youth, as well as reentry populations, whereas violence intervention efforts are focused on the people who are at the greatest immediate risk of violence—typically young adults. While violence prevention is a broad field encompassing various types of programs, effective violence intervention is more narrowly defined and focused.

Prevention



5 - 10 years

Long-term violence reduction strategies like mentoring high-risk middle and high school students or cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) workshops.

Intervention



1 - 3 years

Violence reduction in the near term, like harm reduction strategies and gun violence reduction strategies such as intensive case management.

Community Transformation



15 - 20 years

Transforming communities so that they do not induce violence:

- Education reform and investment
- Economic development
- Neighborhood revitalization

⁶ The VPA Approach

Community transformation refers to the elimination of system-level factors that give rise to violence in a neighborhood, such as poverty, blight, low performing schools, disinvestment, and chronic unemployment. While community transformation is a long-term strategy that can take 15–20 years to achieve, if successfully implemented, it can also be most effective at permanently reducing violence. Typically, there are several neighborhoods in cities with high rates of violence that do not need violence intervention programs because there is little violence in those particular communities. All neighborhoods should have a goal of not needing violence intervention programs.

Two additional, interconnected categories intersect with violence prevention, violence intervention, and community transformation: **youth development** and **reentry support**.

II. Youth Development

Youth development is a program model designed to leverage the strengths and assets of young people while addressing their specific needs. This approach involves fostering attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills that contribute to the youth's successful transition into adulthood. Notably, youth development experiences correlate with positive outcomes, encompassing pro-social attitudes, self-efficacy, academic achievement, and readiness for employment. This complex strategy can be viewed as a form of violence prevention, as the positive outcomes serve as protective factors against the root causes of violence.



III. Reentry Support

Reentry services support formerly incarcerated individuals in successfully “reentering” their communities at the conclusion of their in-custody period, thereby reducing recidivism, increasing public safety, and improving individual outcomes. Key reentry services include the “Big Six”: housing, employment, education, mental health services, drug treatment if needed, and a connection to a supportive adult (mentor, life coach, etc.).

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

This Landscape Analysis provides an overview of 19 organizations, programs, and services currently operating in Jackson, Mississippi. While all organizations are listed in the Organizational Profiles at the end of this report, the summary below includes examples of some of the most prominent organizations within each category.

Violence Reduction

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

In Jackson, several organizations fall under the category of violence prevention. Many of these programs bridge the violence prevention and youth development categories and focus on steering youth and young adults away from violence and crime through mentorship and skills development services. Two prominent examples are provided below.

Better Men Society



Better Men Society is a community-based organization founded in 2021 that aims to steer young men away from crime by connecting them with positive role models.⁷ While this work includes some youth development, the organization's focus is primarily centered on preventing young people from becoming involved in criminal or delinquent conduct. Better Men Society also works to positively impact the community. Their youth mentorship program offers a range of services, including counseling, field trips, and classes focusing on interactions with law enforcement. Additionally, the program provides emergency support services, such as care packages, specifically designed for individuals who are being released from prison. These initiatives aim to address the needs of the community and contribute to the well-being and successful

reintegration of individuals. In 2022, the founder of Better Men Society was a victim of gun violence and tragically murdered.⁸ However, the organization continues to carry on the important work he began.

⁷ Better Men Society

⁸ Better Men Society honor founder/former leader remembered

Strong Arms of Mississippi

Strong Arms of Mississippi is a credible messenger program that serves youth involved in the juvenile justice system.⁹ Credible messengers are often individuals with personal experiences related to violence, gang involvement, or criminal activities, but who have successfully transformed their lives. These individuals are trusted by members of the community due to their authenticity and shared backgrounds. Strong Arms of Mississippi offers activities such as group basketball as well as a safe space for youth to connect with positive role models who can guide them away from lifestyles that lead to negative outcomes such as prison. Although there are elements of youth development in their work, Strong Arms of Mississippi's primary goal is diverting young people from a life of crime and violence.



VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

Violence intervention programs work to intervene and prevent further acts of violence. Despite the importance of such programs, Jackson falls short in the amount of services provided, given that the city is still experiencing gun violence at a high rate. Although Jackson has seen a decrease in the number of shootings, the city still averaged 109 fatal shootings and 112 nonfatal shootings between 2020 and 2023.¹⁰ NICJR only identified two violence intervention organizations in Jackson, one of which is highlighted below.

People's Advocacy Institute

The People's Advocacy Institute (PAI) is dedicated to challenging economic inequality and oppressive community systems, such as the criminal legal system, and establishing transformative and liberating systems rooted in human justice, re-education, restitution, restoration, and individual and collective healing.¹¹ The Institute offers a diverse range of programs and services centered around education, training, coaching, investigation, research, advocacy, and legal support. Notable programs include the Mississippi Bail Fund Collective and Participatory Legal Defense program. PAI also partners with Operation Good for violence interruption initiatives and actively engages in the City's Public Safety Taskforce. Through initiatives like the Strong Arms of JXN Credible Messenger Initiative, the Institute is committed to equipping, mentoring, and providing resources to individuals most affected by mass incarceration, with the goal of revitalizing frontline communities, addressing trauma, creating opportunities for safety, fostering hope, and promoting self-determination within families and beyond.

⁹ [Strong Arms of Mississippi: About](#)

¹⁰ [Jackson sees fewer homicides in 2023](#)

¹¹ [People's Advocacy Institute](#)

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

With community members taking the initiative to create many of the organizations currently operating in Jackson, it is no surprise that community transformation programs are prominent. Two examples of such organizations and programs are featured below.

Foundation for the Mid South

Foundation for the Mid South believes that communities have the power to transform their lives when given the proper resources and support to grow. They work to improve social and economic opportunity for their communities by focusing their efforts on education, wealth building, health, and community development.¹² Some of their programs include career development, tutoring, financial competency and asset-building, mental health resources, and community enrichment services.



One Voice

One Voice focuses on uplifting the voices of marginalized communities and working to improve community awareness and capacity for change. Their services, which include research, advocacy, and advocacy training for system-impacted individuals, address an array of issues such as educational equity, criminal justice reform, and civic engagement.¹³

Youth Development



Youth Development programs focus on addressing youths' needs as well as building on their strengths and assets to prepare them for a successful adulthood. Many of Jackson's programs and services target youth and different aspects of their lives. Examples of some of these are listed below.

Youth Improvement Services Inc.

Youth Improvement Services Inc. is a community-based organization focused on empowering at-risk and homeless youth by providing resources and services to help them develop the necessary skills and resilience to live independently.¹⁴ Examples of their services include access to stable housing, life skills and career readiness training, and general mentorship.

¹² [Foundation for the Mid South - About](#)

¹³ [One Voice Mississippi](#)

¹⁴ [Youth Improvement Services Inc.](#)

The Youth Outreach Company LLC

The Youth Outreach Company LLC focuses its efforts on addressing poverty, drug, crime, and hopelessness among at-risk youth.¹⁵ They work to guide these youth toward higher education and leadership development through community service projects such as food and essentials delivery to the elderly, field trips, and back-to-school and toy drives.



Reentry Services

Reentry services focus on supporting previously incarcerated individuals during their transition back into their communities, as a means to reduce recidivism rates and improve individual outcomes. These services are particularly important in places with high rates of incarceration, such as Mississippi. Between 2021 and 2022, Mississippi's incarceration rate grew at seven times the rate of the US,¹⁶ yet this analysis only identified two organizations providing reentry services in Jackson. One of those organizations is highlighted below.

New Way Mississippi Inc.

New Way Mississippi Inc. serves disenfranchised individuals and at-risk youth to ensure successful reentry. Their main objectives are restoration, prevention, and empowerment.¹⁷ To address these objectives, they help individuals combat addiction and self-destructive behaviors, providing treatment and recovery services as well as education, training, and access to resources.

¹⁵ The Youth Outreach Company LLC

¹⁶ Prisoners in 2022 – Statistical Tables

¹⁷ New Way Mississippi Inc.

INITIATIVES AND POLICY

The City of Jackson has primarily focused on developing its community, and thus reducing violence, by addressing homelessness, increasing access to housing and education, promoting safe and livable communities, and creating self-sustaining opportunities for low and moderate-income households.¹⁸

Although the City has many projects underway that target the root causes of violence, it is in the early stages of planning to explicitly address gun violence in the community. Beginning in 2019, the City established a Public Safety Taskforce that developed a policy for officer-involved shootings and amended the use-of-force policy. In 2022, the City received \$700,000 from the National League of Cities and Wells Fargo Foundation to provide subgrants to community-based organizations already working on gun violence initiatives, such as Operation Good Cure Violence, and to establish a Mayor's Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery.¹⁹

That same year, Jackson partnered with Harvard University's William Monroe Trotter Collaborative for Social Justice to develop recommendations for reimagining public safety in Jackson.²⁰ The resulting report identified guiding principles for the development of the OVPTR. These include framing violence as a public health issue, rooting work in the community, centering young people, promoting evidence-based accountability, and ensuring accountability and transparency. More recently, in May 2023, the City gathered community leaders, law enforcement, advocates, and service providers to discuss strategies for reducing gun violence ahead of the launch of the new office.²¹

The City hopes that the new Office will address not only ongoing gun violence, but create professional opportunities to develop local students and employees to engage with their communities to create positive change for everyone involved.²²



¹⁸ Jackson Annual Action Plan 2023

¹⁹ City awarded violence prevention funding to aid organizations brokering peace

²⁰ Re-imagining Public Safety in Jackson, MS

²¹ Community gathers to discuss ways to curb violent crime in Jackson. See what they said.

²² The city of Jackson is awarded \$700,000 for a violence prevention and recovery office

CONCLUSION



In Jackson, several organizations are dedicated to providing services for violence prevention, youth development, and community transformation. However, it is worth noting that many of these entities primarily focus on youth, despite young adults being responsible for the majority of community violence. Further, a significant portion of these organizations operate at the grassroots level, which means they face challenges such as limited funding and restricted outreach within the city. Despite these challenges, the number of grassroots organizations in Jackson serves as an indication that members of the community care deeply about the city and are dedicated to reducing violence.

Notably, this analysis only found two violence intervention programs in Jackson, despite the city's high rate of gun violence. It is imperative that Jackson create more violence intervention programs to make meaningful progress toward reducing violence. In particular, it is crucial to implement programs and initiatives that prioritize community engagement, involve credible messengers, and incorporate violence interrupters for a more comprehensive and impactful approach. Typically, a small group of individuals drive most violence in a city, and there is strong evidence for the effectiveness of this kind of intensive engagement as a means to reduce violence.

As Jackson moves forward with launching the OVPTR, the City would be well served to increase the focus of services on high-risk young adults. In addition, developing and implementing a comprehensive gun violence reduction strategy (GVRS) would further ensure that all relevant city stakeholders share a common understanding of who is at greatest risk for involvement in gun violence and develop appropriate corresponding interventions.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES²³

Violence Reduction

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Better Men Society

Address: 3159 Edwards Avenue, Jackson, MS

Organization Overview:

The Better Men Society, founded by Robert Davis in 2001, is a dedicated organization with a clear mission: to enhance the community, beginning with the youth of Jackson.²⁴ The Better Men society strives to have a positive impact on marginalized areas in Mississippi by providing a wide range of services to those communities. At its core, the Society believes in the principle that to be a man, one must witness the example of a man. As a result, one of their main goals is to serve as positive role models to young men in Jackson to steer them away from crime. Recognizing the challenges and temptations that exist for young individuals, the organization emphasizes the importance of communication and guidance. Although youth development is incorporated into their work, their primary focus is to keep young people from engaging in criminal or delinquent behavior.

Programs/Services:

- Better Men Society provides mentorship for youth, including counseling, field trips, and classes on interactions with law enforcement
- The organization also provides emergency support services, including care packages for individuals being released from prison



Population Served: Low-income youth and families



Area Served: Statewide with a focus on Jackson



Website: <https://www.facebook.com/TheBetterMenSocietyIHQ>

²³ Each profile highlights a few of the programs and services offered by the organization that are most relevant to violence reduction, youth development, and/or reentry. Please note that these profiles do not constitute an exhaustive list. For the full list, please see the organization website linked in each profile.

²⁴ Local “Better Men Society” aims to better Jackson’s youth

Organized Gentlemen

Address: N/A

Organization Overview:

Organized Gentlemen is a youth mentorship program that aims to keep youth from a life of violence and crime. The core mission of Organized Gentlemen is to bring about positive change and reduce gun violence, particularly among youth. The organization is committed to assisting kids who may be less fortunate or without parents.²⁵ Their overarching objective is to provide young individuals throughout Jackson with exemplary role models—individuals who encourage youth to do the right thing and make positive choices.

Programs/Services:

- Organized Gentlemen aims to be a support system and provide opportunities for kids to contribute meaningfully to the community through various initiatives such as clean-up projects and community meals.
- The organization also offers one-on-one guidance and life tips.
- Overall, the organization focuses on building youth's leadership skills while strengthening the community.²⁶



Population Served: Low-income youth



Area Served: Citywide



Website: https://www.instagram.com/organized_gentlemen2021/

Police Athletic League (PAL)

Address: Jackson Police Department Training Academy - 3000 Saint Charles Street, Jackson, MS 39209

Organization Overview:

Founded in 2006, the Jackson Police Athletic League is a program within which local police serve as coaches for youth sports, with the goal of strengthening police/community relations and providing positive developmental experiences for young people in Jackson.²⁷ The PAL Youth basketball program is a summer-long program hosted by the Jackson Police Department PAL and the Tigers Youth Club.

Programs/Services:

- The PAL Youth basketball program is a crime prevention tool that seeks to help youth develop life skills while participating in a basketball team. Youth participate in two different leagues throughout the summer coached by the Jackson Police Department.
- Alongside learning basketball skills, youth are mentored by police officers who also serve as their coaches. They help youth learn about issues related to gangs, drugs, and bullying.



Population Served: Youth ages 6–12



City Area Served: Citywide



Website: N/A

²⁵ Local nonprofit organization seeks to aid gun violence through mentorship

²⁶ Organization calls on men to mentor youth to prevent future violence and crime

²⁷ "Stepping Up To Serve" – JPD Police Athletic League (PAL Program) Uses Basketball To Mentor Jackson Youth

Strong Arms of Mississippi

Address: 520 Sykes Road, Jackson, MS 39212

Organization Overview:

Strong Arms of Mississippi is a credible messenger program that works with Jackson and Rankin County youth who are involved with the juvenile justice system. Strong Arms was established by former gang members who use their influence to positively influence youth in and out of juvenile detention. While their work includes aspects of youth development, their main focus is to keep youth away from crime and violence. The organization was established in 2020 with support from community members and system stakeholders more broadly.

Programs/Services:

- Strong Arms Mississippi operates out of a Sykes Park Community Center to provide activities for youth in Jackson.
- The Center hosts group activities like basketball and dancing, as well as provides a safe space to connect youth to positive role models from Strong Arms.



Population Served: At-risk and justice system-involved youth



City Area Served: South Jackson, MS



Website: <https://strongarmsofms.com/about-strong-arms-of-ms>

Youth Citizens Police Academy

Address: Jackson Police Department Training Academy - 3000 Saint Charles Street, Jackson, MS 39209

Organization Overview:

The Youth Citizens Police Academy is a week-long summer camp started by Jackson Interim Police Chief Joseph Wade. It focuses on youth crime prevention and intervention through character building and social skills development. While the program touches upon youth development, it was created to address violence and is centered on violence prevention and steering youth away from delinquent behavior.

Programs/Services:

- The week-long Youth Citizens Police Academy program touches on a myriad of topics such as gang awareness, drug awareness, bullying awareness, and conflict resolution skills.
- Youth also participate in field trips throughout the City of Jackson that expose them to new things.



Population Served: Youth ages 5–17



Area Served: Citywide



Website: N/A

VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

Operation Good

Address: 1350 McDowell Road, Jackson, MS 39204

Organization Overview:

Operation Good is a community-based organization that utilizes the national Cure Violence model to promote anti-violence initiatives and unite the community. Operation Good utilizes a proactive approach to address acts of violence, as the organization firmly believes in the value of interruption and conflict mediation. The organization is also dedicated to mindful de-escalation. They ensure a collaborative approach that deeply engages members of the community to analyze the root cause of violent incidents, foster resolution, and prevent further violence. Recognizing the transformative power of offering productive opportunities, Operation Good initiates community programs such as Developmental Mentoring, Healthful Feeding, and Elderly Care. Operation Good is a contractor of PAI's Cure Violence initiative.

Programs/Services:

- The Operation Good Cure Violence program provides conflict resolution and de-escalation services to aid in their mission of violence interruption.
- Operation Good also provides developmental mentoring, healthful feeding, and elderly care to the community.



Population Served: High-crime neighborhoods, youth, and young adults



Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://operationgoodms.com/>

People's Advocacy Institute

Address: PO Box 16109, Jackson, MS 39236

Organization Overview:

The mission of the People's Advocacy Institute (PAI) is to disrupt oppressive community systems, such as the criminal legal system and economic inequality, and create transformational and liberating systems established in human justice, re-education, restitution, restoration, and individual and collective healing. Whether focusing on either ending mass incarceration, investing in communities, or community-led governance, across all of their work, the People's Advocacy Institute believes that community members, especially those most marginalized, are essential for creating transformational change.

Programs/Services:

People's Advocacy Institute provides a wide variety of services focused on education, training, coaching, investigation, research, advocacy, and legal services, with the end goal of developing new policies and practices focused on preventing harm, addressing oppression, and fostering self-determination and a more unbiased system. Specific relevant programs and services include:

- **Mississippi Bail Fund Collective:** This coalition of social workers, attorneys, and activists focuses on providing bail and compassionate help to those who have been incarcerated.
- **Participatory Legal Defense:** Developed and implemented in partnership with the National Council of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls and the Silicon Valley De-Bug, the goal of this program is to change the court system's landscape of power by giving people who are incarcerated, their families, and communities the ability to influence the outcome of cases.
- **Operation Good and Safe Streets Cure Violence Program:** PAI also partners with Operation Good Cure Violence to promote violence interruption initiatives.
- **We Keep Us Safe:** The People's Advocacy Institute is actively engaged in the Public Safety Taskforce initiated by the Office of the Mayor of the City of Jackson. This taskforce aims to advance community reinvestment and police accountability. The organization invites citizens to contribute to the decision-making process by participating in a Community Assessment of the Jackson Police Department.
- **Strong Arms of JXN Credible Messenger Initiative:** This initiative is committed to equipping, mentoring, and providing resources to individuals most affected by mass incarceration. The goal is to empower them with the necessary tools to revitalize frontline communities that have suffered from a lack of people and resource capital. The initiative aims to address trauma; create new opportunities for safety; foster hope; and promote self-determination in the streets, within families, and beyond.



Population Served: Youth, adults, and communities across Mississippi



Area Served: Statewide



Website: <https://www.peoplesadvocacyinstitute.com/>

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

Foundation for the Mid South

Address: 134 East Amite Street, Jackson, MS 39201

Organization Overview:

Foundation for the Mid South believes that when given the resources and support to build their skills and knowledge, communities have the power to develop solutions to improve and transform lives. Foundation for the Mid South aims to increase social and economic opportunity by bringing together the public and private sectors to focus their resources on increasing social and economic opportunity. The organization's four priorities are education, wealth building, health, and community development—deeply interconnected domains that they believe are the foundation of strong and prosperous communities.

Programs/Services:

The Foundation's work in each of their four focus areas includes:

- **Education:** To help students succeed academically, Foundation for the Mid South partners with organizations and individuals focused on improving educational achievement. Together they provide tutoring, coaching, career development, and learning and study strategies.
- **Wealth Building:** The Foundation's wealth-building services aim to break the cycle of generational poverty for hundreds of thousands of households by providing financial competency and asset-building programs.
- **Health:** The Foundation strives to improve the region's health status by increasing access to healthy food and use of physical activity, connecting individuals to mental health resources and services, and ensuring people have access to healthcare services and knowledge to make informed health decisions.
- **Community Development:** Key focus areas within community development are community enrichment, economic development, and leadership development. In particular, Foundation for the Mid South strives to increase safe, affordable housing; improve green spaces; and preserve the local environment and culture. They also provide workforce education and training as well as small business development, and they build the capacity of local organizations that strengthen leadership among youth and adult community members.

Mississippi Reentry Guide: Foundation for the Mid South also published the Mississippi Reentry Guide on behalf of the Mississippi Reentry Council. This guide provides a list of national and statewide services to help formerly incarcerated individuals rebuild and reenter their communities.



Population Served: Low-income communities



Area Served: Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi



Website: <https://www.fndmidsouth.org/>

Institute for Democratic Education in America (IDEA)

Address: 2008 West Ridgeway Street, Jackson, MS 39213

Organization Overview:

The Institute for Democratic Education in America is a nonprofit focused on partnering with students, educators, families, and communities to advocate and build capacity for education equity and racial justice. As a part of their work in Jackson, IDEA is working to promote restorative justice practices in schools, as a means to end the school-to-prison pipeline and punitive systems.

Programs/Services:

- IDEA provides restorative justice principles and practice in schools through the use of classroom circles as well as restorative justice circles with community leaders from Jackson and Hinds County. Participants, including students, parents, educators, and other community members, come together in these circles to foster a sense of community and raise awareness about restorative justice practices. The aim is to build stronger connections among participants, inform the ongoing efforts of restorative justice in the community, and promote a broader understanding of restorative justice principles for all involved.



Population Served: Youth in Jackson public schools



Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://democrateducation.org/>

Magnolia Lotus Foundation

Address: 324 Bim Bam Boulevard, Oxford, MS 38655

Organization Overview:

Magnolia Lotus Foundation focuses on building pathways to upward mobility within underserved communities in the south by encouraging advocacy, self-governance, creativity, and development. Through what the organization refers to as “practical resources,” the community has access to academic and professional development programming that ultimately endow beneficiaries with transferable skills that would allow them to succeed in the industries of their choice.

Programs/Services:

- Magnolia Lotus offers professional development, higher education, and advocacy programming. Their professional development services include resume writing and workshops, professional branding, interview prep, transferable marketing skills, and career counseling.
- Their education programs include essay construction and critique, ACT/SAT prep course counseling, and university search guidance.
- Their advocacy programs include oral presentation coaching, speech and debate coaching, civic engagement education, and community service opportunities.



Population Served: Youth, adults, and communities



Area Served: Citywide



Website: N/A

One Voice

Address: 1072 John R. Lynch Street, Jackson, MS 39203

Organization Overview:

One Voice aims to enhance civic engagement and ensure an equal voice for vulnerable and marginalized Southern communities that are habitually silenced. One Voice believes that improving community awareness and capacity can drive community members to engage in public policy efforts that create positive change. Through their work, One Voice seeks to build a Mississippi with thriving neighborhoods, schools, families, and economies.

Programs/Services:

- One Voice conducts research, trains advocates, and partners with like-minded organizations to improve education equity for all Mississippi children, develop community leaders, fight poverty, and work toward criminal justice reform.
- As part of their criminal justice reform work, One Voice has played an active role in advocating for the establishment of an office of public safety and violence prevention, which is now being realized through the Mayor's Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery (OVPTR).



Population Served: Youth, adults, and communities



Area Served: Statewide



Website: <https://onevoicems.org/>

Planting Seeds Church of Deliverance

Address: PO Box 10933, Jackson, MS 39289

Organization Overview:

Planting Seeds Church of Deliverance is a non-denominational ministry that puts its faith into action by working to address the needs of underserved communities through compassionate programs and services. Their overall goal is to uplift the community and help the individuals they serve to realize their full potential.

Programs/Services:

Planting Seeds Church of Deliverance has five outreach ministries dedicated to meeting the needs of underserved communities, including two ministries specifically focused on at-risk youth and formerly incarcerated individuals:

- **Inner City Youth Program:** Through afterschool and summer programs, this ministry provides homework help, talent showcases, field trips, and other positive alternatives to youth at risk of truancy or dropping out of school.
- **New Directions Ministry:** Planting Seeds provides reentry services to formerly incarcerated individuals. The church also strives to make places of worship more sensitive and welcoming for people impacted by crime and incarceration.
- **Food Pantry:** The Food Pantry delivers nutritional food and supplies to low-income families and senior citizens.
- **Education Ministry:** Through a licensed childcare facility, afterschool program, and adult learners program, Planting Seeds provides age-appropriate education for toddlers, teens, and adults that focuses on improving educational readiness, self-esteem, and leadership development.
- **Health and Wholeness Ministry:** This ministry provides services and activities that support physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and financial well-being.



Population Served: Underserved communities (youth, low-income families, senior citizens, formerly incarcerated individuals)



Area Served: Citywide



Website: <http://www.plantingseedschurch.com/ministries.htm>

SpringBoard to Opportunities

Address: 518 East Capitol Street Jackson, MS 39201

Organization Overview:

SpringBoard to Opportunities (STO) is a nonprofit organization that serves residents of affordable housing. With a resident-driven and focused approach, the organization caters to the needs of the community and brings resources that support and empower them to succeed. In collaboration with other organizations, they are committed to helping families reach their goals in school, work, and life.

Program/Services:

SpringBoard prioritizes improving the social-economic wellbeing of families. With a Holistic Prosperity vision, they aim to build on families' social capital, mental health, self-care, resident-center coaching, and opportunities for children.

- **Policy & Advocacy:** Informed by the residents' voices, the organization prioritizes the implementation of policies that will improve families' lives: child care assistance, child tax credit, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), guaranteed income, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- **Magnolia's Mother's Trust (MMT):** a guaranteed income program that supports over 100 black mothers living in affordable housing with a monthly stipend of \$1000. In addition, SpringBoard to Opportunities provided the children of the mothers who participated in the MMT with a 529 savings account with \$1000.
- **Springboard Fellowships (Education Advocacy, Workforce Systems, Policy & System's Change):** this fellowship is an opportunity for residents to engage in the public policy field by growing their advocacy and mobilization skills. Fellows engage in understanding the history of current local policies that have an impact on the lives of many.



Population Served: Black mothers, low-income individuals, affordable housing residents/families



Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://springboardto.org/>

Mississippi Center for Justice

Address: 210 East Capitol Street, Suite 1800, Jackson, MS 39201

Organization Overview:

The Mississippi Center for Justice (MCJ) is a nonprofit, public interest law firm established 2003 to eliminate policies and practices that have deprived low-income Black Mississippians from economically advancing. MCJ is committed to advancing racial and economic justice.

Programs/Services:

MCJ provides direct legal services and engages in policy advocacy with a focus on promoting educational opportunity, protecting civil rights, increasing access to healthcare, and increasing access to affordable housing.

- **Economic Justice:** MCJ provides supportive services and resources that help Mississippians advance their economic mobility, including self-help tools for individuals seeking to expunge their record in all 82 counties. With funding the Mississippi Bar Foundation Bank of America Foreclosure Prevention Grant Program, MJC has also provided direct legal assistance to those facing foreclosure. Additionally, through the Justice Court Navigator Project, the Center has been able to educate and inform Mississippians on court processes.
- **Educational Opportunities:** MCJ utilizes research and reports to advocate for an equitable educational system that meets the needs of all Mississippi students. For example, the COVID-19 & Education Impact Report investigates how lack of high-speed broadband access, learning loss, lack of social-emotional support impacted students during school closures. This report highlights an unequal distribution of resources in which English learners and students with disabilities are the most impacted and calls for policymakers and educators to provide additional support that all students deserve.
- **Health Law:** The Center is dedicated to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and challenging the discriminatory practices that hinder access to housing, employment, and privacy for people with HIV/AIDS. To address the latter, MCJ is collaborating with the Mississippi State Department of Health in a medical-legal partnership to provide free legal services to Ryan White patients via healthcare provider referrals.
- **Heirs' Property:** MCJ provides education and direct legal services to property inheritors from communities that have been historically underrepresented among landowners, to ensure they can keep their land and build family and community wealth.
- **Housing:** The pandemic raised concerns around housing accessibility and affordability. As such, MCJ promotes housing policy that focuses on rental support; reform of landlord-tenant laws; and accountability for the State's administration of the CARES Act, which provides emergency assistance and relief to individuals and families affected by the pandemic.
- **George Riley Initiative:** This 10-year initiative named after an MCJ member is focused on advocating for racial and economic justice.



Population Served: Low-income individuals, communities of color



Areas Served: Biloxi, Indianola, and Jackson



Website: <https://mscenterforjustice.org/>

Reentry Services

New Way Mississippi Inc.

Address: PO Box 24404, Jackson, MS, 39225

Organization Overview:

New Way Mississippi is a nonprofit dedicated to serving individuals who are returning from incarceration. With a focus on addressing issues such as alcohol and drug abuse and connecting returning citizens to the resources needed for success, New Way works toward restoring families, preventing negative and self-destructive behaviors, and empowering individuals to break cycles of abuse.

Programs/Services:

New Way Mississippi helps individuals returning from incarceration to transition to a better life through three main divisions:

- **Youth Enrichment Division:** This division provides at-risk youth with prevention counseling, including training and reeducation, as well as enriching activities such as creative dance and country life immersion.
- **Advanced Recovery Division:** This division connects formerly incarcerated individuals to transitional housing as well as employment and economic development opportunities to address common barriers to successful reentry.
- **Family Services Division:** Through this division, New Way provides various family reunification services, including marriage and family counseling.



Population Served: Formerly incarcerated individuals and their families, at-risk youth



Area Served: Statewide



Website: <https://www.newwaymississippi.org/>

Reaching and Educating for Community Hope (RECH) Foundation

Address: 933 Cooper Road, Jackson, MS 39212

Organization Overview:

The RECH Foundation strives to build a community that is thriving and inclusive of system-impacted individuals. They work toward this vision by providing support inside prisons, reentry services, and services for children and families of system-impacted individuals.

Programs/Services:

The RECH Foundation provides three main services to system-impacted individuals and families:

- **Prison Ministry:** RECH provides spiritual guidance and emotional support for individuals who are currently incarcerated.
- **Wendy Hatcher Transitional Home:** Named after the first female chaplain in the Mississippi Department of Corrections, the Wendy Hatcher Transitional Home provides transitional housing for women reentering the community. The Transitional Home also provides services such as summer camps; enrichment programs; and year-round mentoring, education, and support services to children and families of incarcerated individuals.
- **Mississippi Offender Reentry Establishment (MORE):** MORE is a statewide initiative providing formerly incarcerated individuals with life, social, and leadership skills training; coaching and mentoring; and workforce development and training.



Population Served: Currently and formerly incarcerated individuals and their children and families



Area Served: Statewide



Website: <https://rechfoundationms.org>

Youth Development

100 Black Men of Jackson, Inc.

Address: 5360 Highland Drive, Jackson, MS 39206

Organization Overview:

100 Black Men of Jackson's mission is to improve the quality of life in their community. They seek to achieve this by serving as a beacon of leadership and creating an environment where youth are motivated to achieve and individuals are uplifted and empowered to be self-sufficient community shareholders. Their services focus on the core values of education excellence, health and wellness, economic development, and leadership development.

Programs/Services:

The main program offered by 100 Black Men of Jackson is called Four for the Future, which focuses on traditional values they believe necessary to improve the lives of at-risk Black youth. The program is organized around the four core values noted above, with leadership development embedded all program components:

- **Mentorship:** Every participating youth is connected to a long-term mentor who demonstrates a strong leadership model for their mentee to emulate in the future.
- **Education:** Mentors provide mentees with tips and information to help them succeed in school. The 100 Black Men of America, Inc. also works with corporate sponsors to provide educational support services and learning opportunities to help youth achieve their educational goals.
- **Health and Wellness:** The organization works with partners to promote preventive health strategies, delivering health screening, and educating the community on prevalent diseases. Mentors also engage their mentees in healthy physical activities such as swimming and basketball.
- **Economic Development:** Through 100 Black Men of America, Inc., mentees have access to education around banking and personal finances. Mentors also serve as a source of information on economic development.



Population Served: Black youth



Area Served: Metro Jackson



Website: <https://www.100bmoj.org/>

Operation Shoestring

Address: 1711 Bailey Avenue, Jackson, MS 39203

Organization Overview:

Founded in response to community needs during the Civil Rights Movement, Operation Shoestring is a community-guided organization that seeks to uplift children and their families and lead them toward a brighter future. Operation Shoestring provides services and supports related to education, health, and economic self-sufficiency, with a primary focus on serving children and their families in central Jackson neighborhoods. This work is founded on the belief that we must invest in children's schools, families, and communities to truly impact their future.

Programs/Services:

Operation Shoestring programs and services include but are not limited to:

- **Project Rise:** This afterschool and summer program provides educational, artistic, and social-emotional development activities led by certified teachers, volunteers, and community partners. Project Rise strives to support the educational success and personal development of children.
- **Shoestring Parent Program:** This program offers support to parents and other family members that is both responsive to their immediate needs and designed to help them plan for the future. Parent Program workshops are co-created based on parent input and have included topics such as parenting, education, stress management, health and wellness, basic finance, and advocacy.
- **Community Mobilization:** Operation Shoestring collaborates with dozens of organizations and several hundred volunteers annually to provide support to the children and families it serves. The Operation establishes strategic partnerships with community stakeholders, enabling the delivery of an ever-expanding array of services, including financial counseling, parent retreats, social services, and more. The Operation actively engages individual families in co-developing plans of action to address their needs. Through surveys, assessments, and frequent phone calls, Operation Shoestring maintains close contact with families in its neighborhoods to ensure that programming remains responsive to their needs, dreams, and desires.
- **Conversations About Community:** Each year, Operation Shoestring brings together people from across the metropolitan Jackson area to discuss issues currently affecting the community and state.



Population Served: Children from pre-k to 7th grade and their families



City Area Served: Georgetown, Virden Addition, Mid-City and Midtown neighborhoods in the heart of central Jackson



Website: <https://operationshoestring.org/>

Wealth Health Youth (WHY) Initiative, Inc.

Address: 2659 Livingston Road, Jackson, MS 39213

Organization Overview:

The mission of the WHY Initiative is to improve the Jackson community through a focus on wealth, health, and youth. Founded in response to a lack of meaningful academic and career guidance for many youth, the WHY Initiative is dedicated to improving the quality of life for low-income, underserved, disadvantaged, and at-risk children, youth, and families in the Jackson metropolitan area.

Programs/Services:

- The WHY Initiative provides a number of workforce and training programs focused on educating youth and equipping them to have an impact on their communities. This includes financial and wealth management workshops, school-based educational consulting, tutoring services, employment training and vocational opportunities, program management, and community and economic development.
- Equally important, the mentoring program provides positive and committed adult role models for children between the ages of 8 and 18.



Population Served: Low-income youth and families



Area Served: Jackson metropolitan area



Website: <https://www.whyinitiative.com/>

Youth Improvement Services Inc.

Address: 4780 I-55 North, Suite 100, Jackson, MS 39211

Organization Overview:

Youth Improvement Services is a community-based organization that works to empower at-risk and homeless youth to develop the skills, resources, and resilience required to live independently.

Programs/Services:

- **Bridge Housing:** The Bridge Housing Program offers secure accommodation and comprehensive training in life skills and career readiness. This initiative empowers young people, enabling them to enhance their well-being and achieve greater economic mobility.
- **Earn While You Learn:** Youth Improvement Services provides activities that improve youths' independent living and career development/readiness skills.



Population Served: Young adults ages 18–24



City Area Served: Mississippi and Florida



Website: <https://www.youthimprovement.org/>

The Youth Outreach Company LLC

Address: 975 Northside Drive, Jackson, MS 39213

Organization Overview:

The Youth Outreach Company LLC works to address poverty, drug use, crime, and hopelessness among youth in Mississippi by providing at-risk youth with opportunities and resources that allow them to learn and encourage them to pursue higher education.

Programs/Services:

- The Youth Outreach Company LLC encourages leadership among youth through many community service efforts such as senior citizen food and essentials delivery, drinking water delivery, toy and back-to-school drives.
- The organization also takes young people on fields trips to provide positive social engagement.



Population Served: At-risk youth



Area Served: Citywide



Website: <https://www.theyouthoutreachcompany.org/>

The Lighthouse I Black Girl Projects

Address: PO Box 607, Jackson, MS 39205

Organization Overview:

The Lighthouse I Black Girl Projects seeks to empower Black women and girls through leadership development, taking a holistic approach that integrates physical, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being. The organization invests in the leadership development of young Black and brown girls through elementary educational programs, camps, and funding clinical research. These leadership opportunities are designed to uplift the voices and build the skills and confidence of young Black women.

Programs & Services:

- **Reese Brooks Gilbert Collegiate Leadership Initiative:** This two-year fellowship is designed to enhance the professional, personal, and interpersonal development of Black college-aged women through sisterhood and cohort support, access to external opportunities, and academic stipends.
- **Septima Clark Academy:** This independent school provides academic curriculum and enrichment programs to help scholars exercise their agency, grow academically, and develop trusting relationships.
- **Black Girl Projects on Campus:** This program provides a safe space for Black women on college campuses. Membership is opened to any students, faculty, and staff at Millsaps College and Tougaloo College.
- **The Unita Blackwell Legacy Project:** This program funded by the Mississippi Humanities Council offers mentoring, storytelling workshops, social-emotional learning, cultural education, and research opportunities.



Population Served: Young Black women



Areas Served: Statewide



Website: <https://www.loveblackgirls.org/>



JACKSON

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

August 2024