

Monday

Wilcox, part of an unit that includes the NAACP, other civil-right advocates, was the commission's endorsement. City Council panel takes reforms next Tuesday.

Her pitch was heard but erred. Only seven of the 17 members showed up, not a quorum, which is needed for a vote.

The group will hold a special session to decide on an endorsement Thursday at an as-yet-undetermined time.

We've Been Here Before

PHOENIX POLICE

Dissecting 'lawful' but awful shootings

Phoenix police renew

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Phoenix Has a Decision To Make

Following the viral exposure of Phoenix police violence at the national level, thousands of Phoenicians are demanding change. Our city is hurting. We are angry, betrayed, and heartbroken. But we've been here before.

We were here in 1994, when Black, double amputee, Edward Mallet died from a police chokehold. And in 1996, when 16 year old Julio Valerio was fatally shot.^{1,2} We were here in 2014, when Michelle Cusseaux, Balantine Mbegbu, and Romain Brisbon were killed.^{3,4,5} And now, in 2019, a year after leading the nation in officer involved shootings, the country watched as Phoenix police officers assaulted a young Black father and turned their guns on his pregnant fiance and two toddlers.⁶

Following the viral video, Mayor Gallego called for a community forum where she, Chief Williams, and other city leaders listened to community concerns about the Phoenix police. The 2,600 residents that showed up for the forum were told there would be a community report back in 30 days with a series of recommendations for change. This response sounds familiar because it is. Whether in 1994 or 2019, the City's solution has been the same--to commission some form of committee tasked with making recommendations for change. It has become clear that recommendations are not enough. In fact, there have been four different sets of recommendations over the past 10 years, many of which have not been implemented effectively and several of which have not been implemented at all.

On July 2, 2019, the Phoenix Police Department (PD) proposed a five step action plan: (1) Communicate Expectations, (2) Modernize Technology, (3) Assess Best Practices, (4) Improve Training, and (5) Collect Community Feedback. While this appears to be a meaningful step in the right direction, history has told us that recommendations are meaningless without their full implementation and ongoing evaluation. The steps of this action plan, in addition to the recommendation for a civilian review board, were actually proposed previously (See Appendix A) in 2015. Time has shown us that city leaders make many promises and calls for change, but when the spotlight leaves, there is no evidence of real reform.

This issue brief is meant to provide a historical context of Phoenix Police reform efforts. It highlights the gaps in the past approaches and defines lessons learned from a continuing pattern of failed reform. In doing so, we hope to expose the repetition of the City's past promises, their failure to truly change Phoenix PD, and Phoenix PD's focus on public relations as a guised attempt to build trust with the community.

We cannot not let history repeat itself. We propose a new path forward. A path where things are done differently and a path that leads to a new future free from police violence.

Poder in Action's Fight Against Police Violence

Poder In Action's mission is to build power, disrupt, and dismantle systems of oppression, and determine a liberated future as people of color in Arizona. Poder in Action has long recognized the culture of violence in the Phoenix Police Department and the trauma it inflicts on our community. With the recent viral video displaying an officers abuse of a black family, this pattern has been broadcast to the world. We have prioritized this issue and made consistent efforts to addressing police violence for the past two years.

Poder in Action has organized vigils, maintained a database of shootings, developed awareness campaigns, held know your rights trainings, and provided support for families and communities most impacted by police violence. Part of our work is ongoing research into the Phoenix PD, including the history of community demands for change and failed reform promises. This research serves as the basis for this report.

Don't Let History Repeat Itself

Pattern of Talks, but Failure to Address the Issue

A pattern of talks, often called listening sessions, followed by a series of recommendations has shown to produce little, if any, tangible results to policy or behavior in Phoenix Police Department.

In the past ten years, the three separate commissions, along with an OIS assessment, we reviewed have produced over 80 recommendations collectively.⁷ In an effort to understand how Phoenix got here, we reviewed recommendations from the 2019 National Police Foundation Report (NPF), the 2015 Community Police Trust Initiative (CPTI), and the 2010 Community Engagement

and Outreach Task Force (CEOTF). We also reviewed the OIS assessment published in 2014. At a cost of \$150,000 for the most recent report, and \$30 million in lawsuits filed in June 2019 alone,⁸ taxpayers have a vested interest in the effectiveness of these investments.

Despite the impetus for these commissions being high profile use of force incidents, only a few of the over 80 recommendations actively address use of force. For example, the CPTI and NPF reports recommend documenting when weapons are drawn and reporting on these incidents. If the reforms have been implemented, it is hard to find evidence that they are working. A slew of unabashedly violent and racist Facebook posts by officers, multiple reports of violent police behavior,⁹ and a police chief who has repeatedly blamed the residents of Phoenix for being more aggressive than residents of other cities¹⁰ creates feelings of mistrust and a sense of a deeper culture of violence within the department. As Phoenix gains a reputation nationally for record rates of officer involved shootings (OIS), it is evident that this approach is flawed.¹¹

Neglecting to create and implement true reforms that reduce OIS costs taxpayers millions — and that is a conservative estimate. A financial impact report from the city auditor revealed significant costs of not addressing police violence:¹²

- From 2009-2013, 23% (3.8 million dollars) of total liability claims were negligent shootings —the most expensive type of the 58 liability claims against Phx PD
- Personnel costs for the 31 OIS in 2013 were \$ 956,877 - \$1,435,330
- Cost of review boards for the 31 OIS in 2013 was \$83,337.00
- Initial scene response for a single OIS costs \$30,867.00 to \$46,300.00
- All these costs increase when overtime labor is used

Negligent Shooting Claims

23%

of total liability claims were negligent shootings

\$3.8 million in claims

for negligent shootings - the most expensive type of 58 liability claims for Phoenix Police Department

Source: Review of Officer Involved Shootings, 2009-2014. Appendix A, P. 85-88. https://www.phoenix.gov/policesite/Documents/shooting_review.pdf

Sets of Police Recommendations Since 2010

2010 - Community Engagement and Outreach Task

Force (CEOTF): Established in April 2010 and consisted of 32 members. The task force developed 34 recommendations that were presented to City Council.

2014 - OIS Five Year Assessment: Phoenix PD worked with Arizona State University and the City of Phoenix Auditor's Office to conduct an assessment of officer involved shootings over the past 5 years. There was no community group or task force created to oversee the process or implementation of recommendations.

2015 - Community and Police Trust Initiative (CPTI): The team was comprised of sixteen community members and city staff, all appointed by City Manager Ed Zuercher's office. Members were challenged to develop high priority, data driven recommendations.

2019 - National Police Foundation Report (NPF): The City of Phoenix contracted the NPF to conduct a six-month study on the potential relationships and factors responsible for the increased OIS incidents. Through the review, they provided several recommendations in their report.

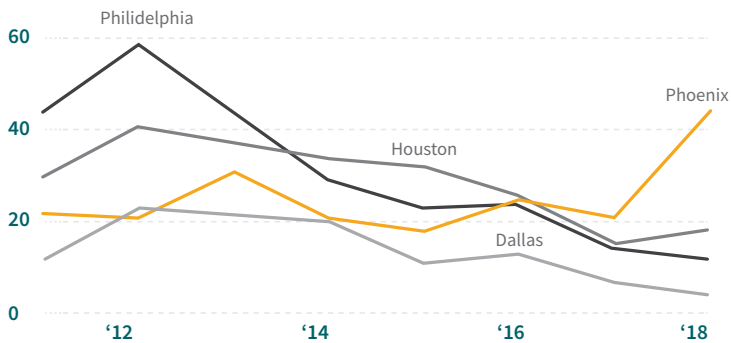
Reform as an Empty Gesture

Reform is an empty gesture unless a critical approach guides decision making and there is accountability for those changes. Policy changes must be meaningful to the community, evidence-based, and proactive in addressing the root causes. While past reforms have looked promising on paper, they have not been reliably assessed for effectiveness, outcomes have not changed, and recommendations admittedly lacked community perspectives.¹³ Without any reliable data to judge past reforms, some points remain clear: **Phoenix PD has been killing people at alarming and record setting rates, it is an outlier from other departments in the nation, and police violence is a public health crisis that is disproportionately impacting certain communities.**

General Lack of Accountability for Implementation

A key issue with the recommendations provided in the past has been a lack of accountability to their implementation. The CPTI

Officer Involved Shooting by City



Source: AZ Central, 2019. "Police Shot at More People Than NYPD Did in 2018. Will that Change?"

recommendations were highlighted by members of the committee at the council meeting on July 2, citing that many have not been implemented. For example, the second CPTI recommendation proposed that Phoenix PD track and report information about traffic stop data, summonses, arrests, reported crime, and other law enforcement data aggregated by demographics, geographics, and precincts. The proposed change specifically said reports should be posted annually and on PPD's website including information like incident type, date/time, suspicious vehicles, traffic, pedestrians, location, ethnicity, gender, and bicyclist. If this data is being collected, the quality of the data is unknown and it is unavailable for citizens to review.¹⁴

Another CPTI recommendation required documentation/report and aggregate data any time any officer draws a weapon. It stated that Phoenix PD had to provide quarterly and annual reports to the City Council, PPD Advisory Boards, Human Relations Commission and post data to the Phoenix Police Department (PPD) website on the following areas: situation or circumstances surrounding incident, demographics of subject(s) age, race, gender, ethnicity, mental or physical disability (if present), demographics of officer(s) age, race, gender, ethnicity, and other tactics that could have been used if the weapon was discharged (i.e. de escalation or non-lethal tactics employed in the situation). Phoenix PD actually rejected this recommendation, refusing to complete it on the basis that it had potential to significantly affect officers' decision making processes during critical incidents. Additionally, it would require changes to documentation and reporting procedures necessary to capture the information. Phoenix PD was unwilling to change and actively refused this recommendation.¹⁵ This recommendation appeared again in the 2019 National Police Foundation report.

With recent media attention, this has been promised again, in vague terms and without tangible steps outlined to ensure it is collected in an accurate way.

By refusing to make meaningful internal changes in the departmental culture, the Phoenix Police Department has undermined any trust that they attempt to build with the community. Recommendations are empty unless acted upon.

Gaps in Tracking Effectiveness

Another example of failure at reform is the department's gaps in documentation and evaluation, making it impossible to know if internal practices before or after an OIS are consistent or effective. Basic indicators of training effectiveness — a pre/post evaluation, objectives applicable to the field, and a sign-in sheet to track attendance — were notably missing in 2014 as outlined in a 5-year audit of OIS,¹⁶ and the trainings described do not include any measurable outcomes (such as reductions in arrests or use of force) internally or in independent reports. The importance of tracking OIS trends in relation to training is reiterated multiple times in the 5-year report:

"The report provides factual OIS data, but is limited in identifying trends...Interviews revealed there has been very little training and no formal AOT [advanced officer training] for department employees."¹⁷

"...There is no formal documentation that could be used to obtain information regarding post shooting tactical training or trends."¹⁸

Instead of implementing measurements for effectiveness of training, as recommended in the 5-year report published in 2014, the NPF report simply states "while our assessments are limited to process, it would be important for PPD to evaluate the effectiveness of the training once it has been established."¹⁹ The implementation plan in 2019 tells us "further discussion needs to occur in order to determine the best way to formally evaluate current and future advanced training."²⁰ However, PPD had years to discuss evaluation—it had been established as an issue in the 2014 report.

The 2019 NPF report acknowledges the importance of "knowing the 'universe' of incidents in which officers point their guns is necessary in order to make sense of observed racial disparities in OIS"²¹, a statement which is remarkably similar to one in the 5-year 2014 report that also cost thousands of dollars, which stated, "the enhanced analysis should assist in identifying and explaining the "how" and "why" of officer-involved shooting incidents."²² **So, why did taxpayers wait four years, witness more shootings, and spend an additional \$150,000, only to be told these past recommendations were important, but haven't happened?**

In 2014, it was recommended that Phoenix PD change their use of force policy to include more context for officers when drugs/alcohol or the mental capacity of a person is a factor. This included a target date of December 2015.²³ The National Police Foundation report discusses general changes to the policy, and “sanctity of life” was added per a separate recommendation along with de-escalation language, but there is no mention of mental capacity, mental health, or the influence of drugs/alcohol during a potential OIS. Again, it is difficult for the public to discern key policy changes have happened without more transparency and oversight. Even more concerning is the fact that there was a high level of awareness around these problems in 2000 and then again in 2014, with little action outside increased PPD training to address community mental health.²⁴

Public Relations Instead of Community Safety

Perception of Change

Nearly ten years of recommendations have done little, if anything, to impact OIS rates for the City of Phoenix Police Department. This may be because nearly half of the recommendations focused on “building trust” rather than structural changes. Clearly, Phoenix PD focuses more on public relations instead of the safety of Phoenixians.

Out of 81 recommendations put forth over the past decade, twenty-nine address “community relations and engagement.” By putting forward recommendations that focus on police-community relations, the City absolves Phoenix police of the responsibility to address departmental culture, shortcomings, and failures to implement reforms, while simultaneously putting the responsibility for safer interactions with police on community members. These community relations recommendations haven’t reduced police violence or created the necessary internal change, but rather focused on “building trust” in a very shallow way by creating the perception that the police department is changing.

Perhaps the most shallow attempt by police to “build trust” and “improve relationships” is the unveiling of a Phoenix PD ice cream truck at Lindo Park. This activity was not recommended in any reports, and no research is available that indicates this publicity stunt will impact the rate of OIS in Phoenix. As one community member said at the event, “we want justice for the people — not dessert.”²⁵ Trust from the community must first be gained through changed behavior, relationships, and evidence of integrity over time.

Symbolic Community Involvement

Past reforms that have been implemented primarily center the needs of the police and have not included community oversight of their implementation. If we look at the desired goal of reducing police violence, it’s fair to say these reforms have made no meaningful difference to the people who asked for them in the first place: families whose loved ones have been killed by Phoenix PD and community members. **Research shows successful police reform requires community involvement at every level.²⁶ A continued failure to do so has resulted in a pattern of recycled, empty reforms, a worsening crisis, low morale, and more unnecessary deaths.**

When the community is involved at all, members are often appointed by the City of Phoenix, decision making happens without transparency, and proposed actions are followed through sparingly. When reviewing three distinct sets of recommendations developed between 2010 and 2019, there is a noticeable lack of community voice, influence, and ability to make changes.

The 2010 effort established the Community Engagement and Outreach Task Force with thirty-two members, including City staff and community representatives. There was a feedback process that included six community meetings at senior and community centers, three teen and young adult summits, and nine focus groups with different perspectives such as interfaith, defense bar, LGBTQ, Hispanic and African American Clergy. Despite this effort to engage a range of community members, there is no publicly available documentation of how these groups influenced the recommendations. There also was no way for community members to ensure that their recommendations were implemented, thus limiting public ownership and oversight of reforms. Following these talks, only ten out of thirty-two recommendations have documented evidence they were implemented. The 2014 effort was led by Phoenix PD who worked with Arizona State University and the City of Phoenix Auditor’s Office to conduct an assessment of officer involved shootings over the past 5 years. There was no community group or task force created to oversee the process or implementation of recommendations.

The 2015 effort established the Community and Police Trust Initiative (CPTI). The CPTI team was comprised of sixteen community members and city staff, all appointed by City Manager Ed Zuercher’s office. Due to the closed door process used when developing recommendations, community members had to fight to give public feedback, which was not granted until after the recommendations had already been determined. The promised

public report back on the community input was scheduled for Fall 2016, and was pushed back repeatedly and ultimately never happened.

The 2018 effort only utilized data from eight community members.²⁷ This represents a significant gap in community perception about police and police encounters that would influence the number of OIS. There was not a series of community conversations, resident outreach, nor focus groups to better understand the community perspective and ensure that the community was able to recommend specific changes to PPD. In addition, a community engagement plan was developed with a stakeholder group with an unspecified number of community members and PPD staff. There was no community outreach or approval from the community for the strategic goals outlined in the plan at any point in the process.

One often utilized method for centering community needs and perspectives is a civilian review board. Civilian review boards are a tool for the civilian oversight of the police department and are nothing new. That said, even civilian review boards are at risk of falling into a tired old pattern: they are used to ameliorate community concerns, but lack true power to change fundamental issues leading to an officer's use of force. Without a careful, community-driven process in developing this review board, the way it is formed, how members are chosen, and the scope of its work, we cannot trust it will meet the intention of reducing violence. Significant funding, with the power to subpoena, hear witness/officer testimony, influence internal disciplinary actions, and publish reports are bare minimums if it will be successful.

Reform at the Roots

Reforms focused solely on police are not enough. There are proven, preventative measures our city can take to reduce crime, increase public safety, and prevent police from undertaking

behavioral health roles outside their professional scope. Police violence is a problem that must be resolved with an approach to community safety that includes addressing the root issues facing Phoenixians.

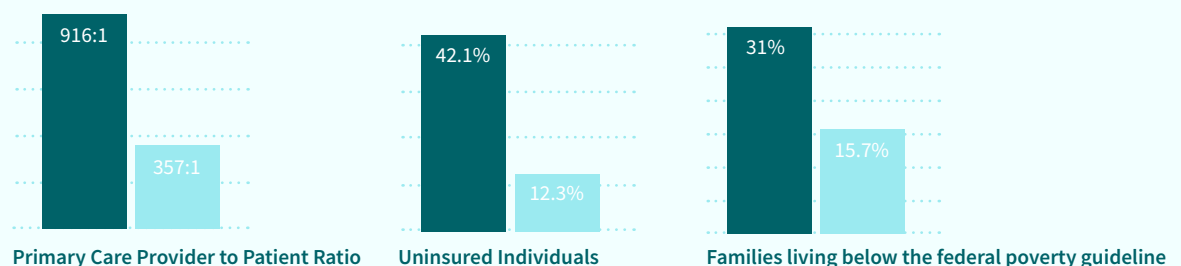
Redefine Safety

In order to address police violence holistically, we have to begin by addressing how our city defines safety. **Safety begins by taking proactive steps to support people as they navigate life's challenges. Safety is rooted in healthy and stable neighborhoods.** Safety is access to the resources and opportunities community members need to thrive. For Arizonans, the freedom to thrive is highly dependent on one's zip code. In Maryvale, nearly twice as many children live in poverty, and twice as many people are uninsured (42.1%) than the general population in Maricopa County (12.3%).²⁸ The primary care provider to patient ratio is 916:1 (a ratio which is 357:1 in Maricopa county).²⁹

Prioritizing policing and incarceration over community needs fuels the cycle of poverty. In Maryvale, 31% of families live 100% below federal poverty guidelines (\$25,750 yearly for a family of four) compared to 15.7% in the general population of Maricopa County.³⁰ Families with an incarcerated father are 38% more likely to fall into poverty, and 1 in 13 Arizonans have a felony conviction, blocking them from participating in the economy while creating lifelong barriers to employment, housing, and voting.³¹ Arizona is also an outlier nationwide in incarceration rates. With a corrections budget of over a billion dollars, our incarcerated population grew by 12X since the 1980s (Nationally, this has increased 4X in other states).³² According to decades of ACES research, children of parents who are incarcerated face adverse health outcomes in adulthood, including almost all major diseases, nicotine use, and substance use disorders.³³ Policing and incarceration have public health implications, in addition to the emotional and economic trauma that ripple through families and neighborhoods as a result.³⁴ In fact, in November 2018, the American Public Health Association

Living in Maryvale

- Maryvale
- Maricopa County



Source: P. 2-3, Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), (2019). Maryvale Village Primary Care Area (PCA) Statistical Profile. Retrieved from <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/prevention/health-systems-development/data-reports-maps/primary-care/maricopa/36.pdf>

recognized *law enforcement violence* as a public health issue, consistent with the World Health Organization’s violence domains.³⁵

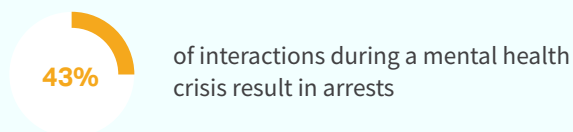
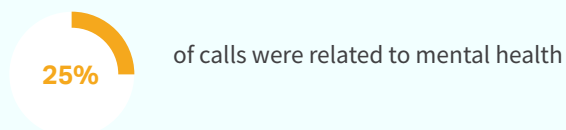
True safety will not be found in criminalization, incarceration, and heavily policed neighborhoods. True safety is the freedom to live, work, and exist without fear of being stopped by police based on skin color. True safety is addressing disparities, like access to healthcare, as a means of reducing crime rates. Redefining safety is more than a shift in perception, redefining how we create safety works.³⁶

Police are Not Social Workers

By centering safety and funding around police, the City of Phoenix has neglected the health needs of the community. In Phoenix, police have become under-qualified social workers in the absence of comprehensive services for people with mental illness, housing programs, and crisis response teams. Relying on police to fill the gaps of a social safety net is ultimately paid for in dollars by taxpayers, but the true cost is unnecessary death, trauma, and the criminalization of people with mental illness.³⁷ Police cannot continue to treat the symptoms of divestment in social services, and safety is only possible if root causes of economic instability are addressed.

In 2016, Phoenix PD reported that 25% of their calls were related to mental health,³⁸ and 43% of PPD interactions during a mental health crisis result in arrests.³⁹ It is likely this number is higher, since it only accounts for calls initially coded by dispatchers as mental health related; for example, if a suspicious activity call is later determined to be a mental health crisis, the call is only sometimes re-categorized. In focus groups, officers report shootings involve mental health or substance use disorder nearly 100% of the time.⁴⁰

Phoenix PD and Mental Health 2016



Source: P. 3 & 5, Phoenix Mayor’s Commission on Disability Issues [MCDI]. (2016). Phoenix Community Needs Assessment on Crisis Response for People with Mental Illness. <https://www.phoenix.gov/eodsite/Documents/Phx%20Comm%20Needs%20Assess%20on%20Crisis%20Response.pdf>

The City of Phoenix and Phoenix police have known mental health and substance use to be central factors in OIS for years.⁴¹ In fact, an article in the Arizona Republic in 2003 frames the issue as, “Across the country, police have become default social workers, as changes in law, policy, and philosophy have pushed more and more people with mental illnesses out of hospitals.”⁴²

The report in 2016 — from the Mayor’s Commission on Disability Issues — validated this strongly as still an issue, with 33% of people transported solely for a mental health petition reporting police used force with no provocation.⁴³ Phoenix PD responds to at least 4,000 calls for mental health orders a year⁴⁴ (the same type of call that led to the killing of Michelle Cusseaux in 2014). National surveys estimate mental health transport is at least 10% of police departments’ budget⁴⁵ and 21% of officer and staff time.⁴⁶

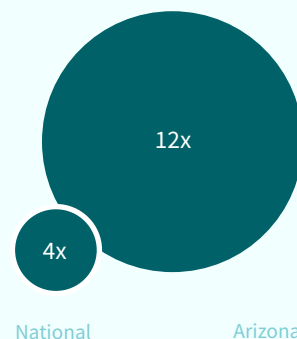
When reviewing the reports commissioned by the city, the stigmatization of people with mental illness being labeled as a violent threat is a recurring theme.⁴⁷ This is refuted in research as a common, stigma based misconception,^{48 49} yet no recommendations specifically address stigma or perceptions of threat based on bias, despite this being a factor in shootings. With so much evidence pointing to a department that is historically disorganized, heavily reliant on overtime workers, and failing to reduce police violence, anything less than transparent, outcome-oriented, community-desired reforms will continue to erode trust and legitimacy.

Investments Outside Policing

Redefining safety requires investments outside of police. Investing in community health and well-being will reduce police interactions and police violence. For example, there is clear evidence of a new path and need for alternatives when considering the relationship between mental health and the police.

Recommendations connected to the root causes of police interactions and mental illness have been put forth in vague terms without tangible investments outside of the police department.⁵⁰ Even methods that have been adopted, such as Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT), are designed to coincide with increased investments and coordination with effective community health programs⁵¹—

Incarcerated population growth



Source: Arizona’s Imprisonment Crisis, Part I. (2018). Retrieved from [FWD.us](https://www.fwd.us/news/arizona-imprisonment-crisis-part-1/) website: <https://www.fwd.us/news/arizona-imprisonment-crisis-part-1/>

simply put, these trainings will not reduce interactions unless alternative resources supported by the community are prioritized.

Investing in social services reduces long term costs to taxpayers, reliance on law enforcement for jobs outside their professional scope, and the likelihood of trauma, death, or incarceration for people they interact with. **While almost no data exists to show policing reduces crime or saves money,^{52 53} there is data to validate the effectiveness and cost savings of investments that center needs of communities.⁵⁴** Community-based mental health treatment is nearly one third of what it costs to spend a day incarcerated.⁵⁵ One of the most widely researched cost savings models in social services is Housing First.⁵⁶ Because housing is a social determinant of health,⁵⁷ hospitals are working directly with cities to create housing first programs through grant funding.⁵⁸ These investments meet tangible outcomes, address the root causes of safety concerns, and are cost effective.

Looking to Other Cities

In the face of a crisis, the city has an opportunity to be a leader in national efforts to reduce officer involved shootings and promote positive health outcomes in communities. The following case studies are examples of investments in the community that save money, reduce racial disparities, and address safety in a wider context of community health.

Minnesota - Mental Health Transport

One need in the community is low-barrier transport services specializing in mental health, separate from law enforcement. Minnesota uses protected vehicles certified through the department of transportation for behavioral health transports, rather than unmarked police cars or ambulances. In 2015, the state approved Medicaid funding for transport, making it an accessible alternative to alleviate the workload on law enforcement and reduce costs to taxpayers.⁵⁹

Cincinnati - Less Arrests and Crime Rate Reduction

Due to a budgetary jail closure in 2008, Cincinnati was forced to review police practices to make them as efficient as possible. This provided an opportunity for researchers to evaluate the impact of closing a jail and deterrence (rather than arrest) based policing. With limited jail space, officers stopped arresting people for petty crime, built partnerships, and only used arrests after discussing wider strategies in reducing crime. By focusing on crime trends (rather than arrests) as outputs, root causes of crime were

prioritized. Researchers found these tactics improved relationships with residents, reduced incarceration, and correlated with a reduction in crime.⁶⁰

Maine & Denver - Housing to Reduce Recidivism, Social Impact Bonds

Addressing poverty, housing, unemployment, and other factors exacerbating a cycle of incarceration through evidence-based programs have been shown to reduce costs and recidivism. In a study of 263 homeless people with mental illness in Maine, data was gathered from 104 service providers (ie. hospitals, social services, police, jails, and Medicaid) for two years before and after Housing First. Even with housing costs factored in, the program yielded an average savings of \$2,182 per participant; housing reduced costs by 57% in expenditures for mental health services, 95% in incarceration, 32% in ambulance transportation costs, 99% in shelter services, and 14% in emergency room use.⁶¹

Denver funded a similar initiative utilizing Social Impact Bonds (SIB), which rely on private investors who the city pays back only if outcomes are delivered.⁶² Denver's program focuses on people who were frequently incarcerated and utilizing behavioral health systems. Of 285 participants who secured housing, 85% remained housed for a year. Of this group, 91% remained housed for another year.⁶³

San Francisco - Peer Support in Libraries

In 2009, The San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) experienced an increase of arrests. In response to the needs of patrons, they hired the nation's first public library peer support worker, reducing security concerns through engagement. In 2015, a program staffed with five Health and Safety Associates was created, connecting 3,500 individuals to services in 2018 alone. At least 130 patrons have secured housing through the program and SFPL was named Library of the Year in 2018.⁶⁴

Poder In Action Is Determining a New Future

This report furthers Poder in Action's work to determine a new future free of police violence and safe for all. The power of people will always be the driving force in creating true progress, and our community has shown that change is possible. The following actions were guided by centering community needs, and are tangible first steps on a path to true safety we envision.

Community Perceptions of Police Survey

In 2018, Poder in Action began a community-driven study about police and safety and has collected survey data from over 9,000 Phoenix residents. Residents were asked about their previous encounters with the police, their attitudes and beliefs about the Phoenix Police Department and their perception of safety. The survey focused on collecting information that was important to community members to better understand community perception of police and police encounters. The community survey results will be published in the coming months, but preliminary data indicates an overall lack of trust in PPD, issues with police attitudes during encounters, perceptions of being racially profiled, and doubt that police are truly addressing community safety.

City Budget Determined by Community

Poder continues to actively advocate for community ownership over the Phoenix budget. This includes increased investment in community needs and ensuring that the City provides support for those who are victims of police violence.

Trauma Fund for Victims of Police Violence

Since early 2018, Poder in Action has advocated for the City of Phoenix to take responsibility and an active role in addressing the trauma created in a community after instances of police violence by creating a Trauma Fund. The result of this advocacy was a \$550,000 addition to the Phoenix Fire Department budget to expand the crisis team to connect victims, families, and witnesses impacted by police violence to the necessary support and resources for navigating trauma care. This is the first time a city has taken an active role in addressing trauma and wellness as a direct response to police violence.

This is an initial step but there continues to be a need for an expanded Trauma Fund that funds the crisis families face after an OIS or other cases of police brutality. The expansion of this Trauma Fund would support families to pay for funeral expenses, lost wages, grief support, and family/community therapy.

Participatory Budgeting Process

In an effort to have more community ownership over the budget process every year and hear from the community about their budget priorities, Poder in Action advocated for the City of Phoenix to adopt a Participatory Budgeting Process. Initial steps were made during the FY 20 budget process. The City allocated \$25,000 for each district and \$50,000 for the Mayor's office to disburse based on input and ideas gathered through a process that actively seeks community participation.

A Future Free of Police Violence

The failure and misguidedness of the recommendations over the past decade becomes more apparent with every viral bystander video, lawsuit, and officer involved shooting. Shootings have continued to increase since 2010, multi-million dollar lawsuits are piling up, and video evidence of an out-of-control department continues to be exposed. The Phoenix police leadership and past Phoenix elected officials have seemingly lacked the moral will to address the internal issues plaguing the department: a pervasive culture of violence, weak policies lacking consequences, and a complete rejection of public transparency and accountability.

If the city of Phoenix truly wants to build trust between community members and the department, the recommendations must go beyond "creating dialogue" and instead make policy shifts that are proven to reduce the number of people killed by law enforcement. The city needs to decriminalize and deprioritize ordinances that criminalize homeless people, poor people, and people in the sex worker industry. Building trust will happen through civilian oversight structures, ending practices that result in racial profiling, and transparency with data and public records.

As a city and community, we are at a critical crossroads. Will our legacy be a city that did the hard work to take an innovative, people-first approach to public safety and community health, or will we be another city that missed the opportunity to face our failing social infrastructure head-on? History will continue to repeat itself until it is rectified. Our communities cannot afford another cycle of false promises, weak effort, and more police violence.

What will the Mayor and City Council choose?

Poder in Action's choice is to continue to build a future free of police violence. ■

Appendix A:

July 2nd Action Plan from Chief Williams Comparison to Past Reforms

Communicate Expectations

This action item is vague and does not clarify whether it is connected with officers following recommended policy changes from previous commissions.

Modernize Technology

Documentation and tracking recommendations were made throughout reports, and a matrix to analyze OIS over time was developed in 2014.⁶⁵

Assess Best Practices

Addressed through Collaborative Reform Model, which compared all of PPD policies to Department of Justice standards,

producing an over 150 page report with details of PPD processes, documentation, and operations.⁶⁶This was also put forth by the 2015 Community Police Trust Initiative (CPTI) in recommendation #3, which addressed best practices regarding mental health, disabilities, cultural competence, and leadership for all levels of officers.⁶⁷

Improve Training (specific to implicit bias)

CPTI Recommendation #4 requested PPD adopt all best practices from the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, including education about the historical context of racism, implicit bias, and procedural justice.⁶⁸

Community Feedback

CPTI Recommendation #11 requested “formal feedback tools including community surveys using best practices indicators.” Reports on the level of “trust, respect, transparency, and accountability” were already supposed to be made monthly, quarterly and annually to the Phoenix City Council, PPD Advisory Boards, Human Relations Commission and posted on the PPD Website.⁶⁹

Endnotes

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