

PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO GUN VIOLENCE

**Regional Law Safety & Justice Committee
Derrick Wheeler-Smith, Director - Zero Youth Detention
March 28, 2020**

Road Map to Zero Youth Detention (ZYP)

*A strategic plan to improve community safety and achieve **better outcomes** for youth and families at risk of juvenile legal system involvement*

- Uses a **public health approach**, focusing on:
 - leading with racial equity
 - well-being of all youth
 - science of adolescent brain development
 - engaging families and communities in solutions

The Road Map: 5 objectives



Lead with racial equity



Prevent youth from entering the juvenile legal system by focusing upstream and on systems to have the greatest impact



Divert youth from further law enforcement, formal legal processes, and secure detention into community-based options



Support youth and families to reduce recurrence of legal system involvement and increase healthy outcomes



Align and optimize connections between systems to increase effectiveness

Racism as a System: Implications

- Disparities in one societal domain are not independent of those in other domains
- Racism is a set of dynamically related components of subsystems.
- Disparities in one domain are a product of causal processes across multiple subsystems
- “It is impossible” to come up with remedies for disparities if we fail to acknowledge and address the interdependence across domains

Context Setting

- Gun violence is a source of collective trauma for many young people, particularly Black and Brown young people in King County and surrounding areas
- Data tells us:
 - Youth who have experienced one form of violence are at higher risk to experience more violence
 - People who have been shot are at higher risk of being involved in firearm violence again.
- This trauma not only makes it harder for young people to lead safe, happy, healthy lives, but it can also perpetuate more violence

Who is at the table?



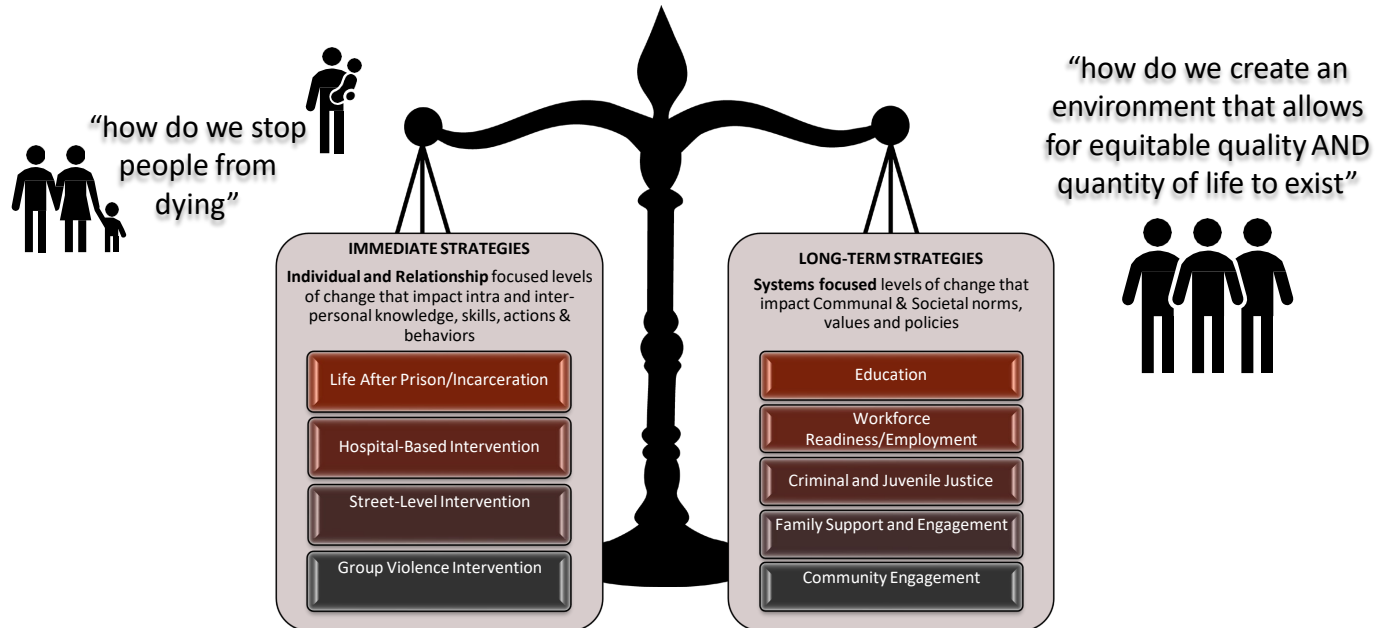
What is the goal of the group?

- **Our main objective is to create alignment and optimize connections between systems to increase effectiveness using a Public Health approach.**
- **Community violence implicates both public health and public safety which require multi-disciplinary and multi-sector responses.**

What is Cities United Role?

- Cities United helps City and County leadership in communities across the country to assess their current situations, increase opportunities for awareness, action, advocacy, and accountability.
- The organization provides assistance with planning and implementing solutions by sharing best practices, instituting innovative approaches, and understanding how and where to reconfigure resources.

CITIES UNITED APPROACH



ities
united

Overview of the Call-in Strategy

- in-person communications with high-risk individuals to warn about the risks of ongoing violence and provide a genuine offer of assistance.
- these communications strategies primarily take the form of call-ins, interventions in which stakeholders communicate with small groups of those most at risk of serious violence, and custom notifications, a personalized method of heading off imminent violence. The 5 things to mention here are;
 - Analysis of violent incidents and trends
 - Respectful In-person communications
 - Relationship based social services
 - Narrowly focused law enforcement actions
 - An intentional management structure i.e, Regional Approach to GV/
Office of GV

Towards a Comprehensive Public Safety Plan

A supplemental tool to Cities United's "Roadmap to Safe, Healthy & Hopeful Communities". This tool assists mayors and city leads to expeditiously develop and/or review a comprehensive public safety action plan.

1

Gather & review city based historical data to tell the story of community violence, community assets as well as risk & protective factors

2

Engage leaders from multiple sectors:

- Build political will
- Develop Leadership Team
- Identify community needs

3

Collaboratively, identify common agenda i.e. mission, vision, goals and core activities

4

Draft oversight & accountability measures i.e. governance structure(s), evaluation & communication plan

5

Identify & secure necessary resources to implement the plan by leveraging partnerships & strategic relationships.

6

Edit, review & prepare plan for public dissemination.

Community Recommendations from The Youth Gun Violence Report.

“It’s easier to get a gun than a job”



Increase **education about gun violence** for youth, families, and community members



Increase range and scope of **community centers**



Increase youth access to **mental health services**



Provide social and emotional **skills training** to youth



Increase youth **employment and educational opportunities**

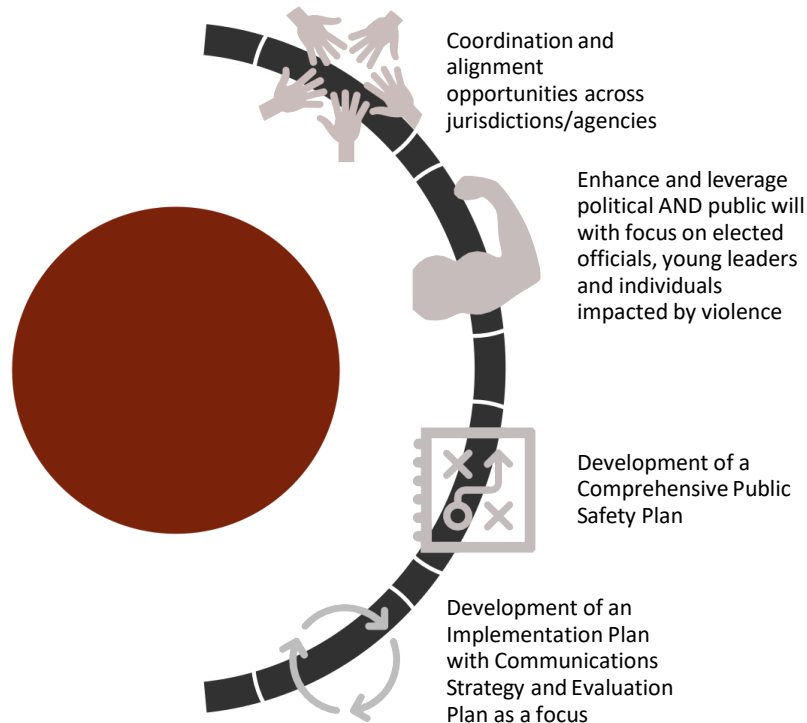


Examine and address youth’s ability to **easily access guns**



Develop and increase **system’s alignment** between government and community supports

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS



ities
united

Opportunity for Engagement

We want your sector,
department, jurisdiction at the
table!!!



Questions?

Derrick Wheeler-Smith, Zero Youth Detention Director

Public Health – Seattle & King County

Dwheelersmith@kingcounty.gov

Web: kingcounty.gov/zero-youth-detention

Blog: Zeroyouthdetention.com

Email: ZYDinfo@kingcounty.gov

Twitter: @KingCountyZYD

Social media: #ZeroYouthDetention