

Mayor's Task Force on Community Violence

Staff Update

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Task Force Background

Established by Council Resolution 149-13 on August 5, 2013

Charge: Evaluate available resources and recommend ways that City government and citizens, themselves, can cooperate to decrease violent crime in the community

Co-Chairs: Ward 2 Councilman Michael Trapp and Ward 5 Councilwoman Laura Nauser

Task Force Members: Tyree Byndom, Steve Calloway, Chris Campbell, Cindy Garrett, Dan Hanneken, Pam Hardin, Mike Hayes, Christopher Haynes, Lorenzo Lawson, Paul Prevo, Glenn Robertson, Jerry Taylor, David Thomas

Methods

Council direction to submit findings and recommendations to City Council by November 15, 2014

- Researched evidence-based approaches to reducing violence
- Presentations and public testimony at regular meetings
- Three public forums captured concerns of parents, youth and community
- As provided by Council Resolution, Task Force dissolved when it submitted its report

Local Conditions: 12 Consensus Points

1. Drugs and alcohol are major contributing factors
2. There is a negative perception of the police by community members
3. Lack of economic opportunity contributes to a lack of hope
4. There is a need for adult basic education

Local Conditions: 12 Consensus Points

- 5. Almost all perpetrators have no job skills
- 6. There is a lack of early childhood education
- 7. Gangs exist in Columbia but it is difficult to tell how much of a factor they are
- 8. Most perpetrators are men in their 20s

Local Conditions: 12 Consensus Points

9. Most homicides are conflicts between people who know each other
10. Anti-social attitudes around “respect” and “justice” are a major factor
11. We are not instilling in all of our children pro-social attitudes and values as well as an ability to obtain basic educational skills
12. A majority of violent offenders have a previous and often extensive criminal history

Four Pillars That Could Reduce Violence

Prevention: Heading off violent behavior before it sets in

Intervention: Coming in when the risk for violence becomes apparent

Enforcement: Law enforcement response when violence occurs

Re-entry: Helping people successfully transition from the corrections system to the community

Recommendations in Brief: Prevention

“Columbia is fortunate to have many programs that address parenting skills, early childhood education, and job training. The task force sees a need for greater **COORDINATION** and **AWARENESS** of these programs. Coordination between programs can greatly increase everyone’s impact on reducing violence. Many organizations that presented to the task force noted that one of the greatest challenges they face is making people who would benefit from their programs aware that they exist.”

Prevention Progress Since 2014

Housing, parenting and job skills programs for families

- CARE program hires 100 trainees annually
- Healthy Families America home visitation program
- Brighter Beginnings grant for home visiting collaboration
- More housing vouchers for chronically homeless individuals
- Municipal Court community support docket for veterans and persons experiencing homelessness
- Upward Mobility Grant

Prevention Progress Since 2014

Positive youth engagement

- CPD Explorers and career path development
- Boone County Community Services hosted a Youth Violence Prevention Summit
- The City participates in Community Scholars program, hosts summer interns, promotes sports and recreation opportunities offered by Parks and Recreation

Community engagement

- Inclusive Impact Institute
- Source Summit - November 11-13, 2021

Recommendations in Brief: Intervention

“Throughout the task force’s meetings and especially during the public forums there was a clear need to **CREATE YOUTH FACILITIES** and to **TRAIN PEOPLE** by providing safe places, trusted people to turn to, and engaging community-building programs that are appealing to youth. These facilities and people need to be reflective of our community’s diversity so that everyone who uses them feels comfortable and welcomed.”

Intervention Progress Since 2014

Places

- Family Access Center for Excellence (FACE)
- Boys & Girls Club expansion, with a teen center, recording studio and gym
- City sports facilities

People

- New School Resource Officer agreement, pending approval
- Mental health screening for all children in Boone County schools 2X/year

Intervention Progress Since 2014

Community

- African-American Heritage Trail
- Success Grants for higher education and community caretaking
- Boone County Children's Services funding
 - Family Access Center for Excellence (FACE)
 - Mental health screening in all Boone County Schools 2X/year
 - Expanded funding for programs for infants/early childhood, in schools, youth and family support, and treatment

Recommendations in Brief: Enforcement

“**TRUST** between the community and local law enforcement agencies was a very clear theme throughout the task force’s process. While the task force agrees the Columbia Police Department is headed in the right direction, there is still work to do to build trust-especially with the African American community. The task force agrees with CPD’s push for more officers to pursue community policing, but emphasizes that greater cultural competency training will be needed to make community policing an effective tool to reduce violence.”

Enforcement Progress Since 2014

Trust and cultural competence

- City Manager, Chief of Police and NAACP consult on policing issues
- Vehicle Stops Committee addressing disparities
- Independent disparity analysis by MU research team
- CPD staff member certified in inclusion and diversity
- Cultural competence training
- CPD – community member trip to National Civil Rights Museum
- Protecting right to assemble during 2020 demonstrations
- Public participates in CPD policy development

Enforcement Progress Since 2014

Community policing

- CPD leadership and organizational change
- Performance and promotions based on community policing goals
- Officers assigned and accountable to beats, as resources allow
- Officers and leaders engage with residents, businesses and groups
- Boone County Stepping Up initiative
- Addressing behavioral health issues through co-response model and 24-hour crisis center, in progress. Anticipate five-year plan from the Justice Reinvestment Initiative soon.

Enforcement Progress Since 2014

CPD staffing

- Sworn staff increased from 163 in 2014 to 187 in 2022
- CPD also staffs airport security, park rangers and metered parking
- Community policing a factor in promotions and succession planning
- Columbia Police Foundation sponsors annual employee awards
- The profession is experiencing recruitment and retention challenges

Recommendations in Brief: Re-entry

“There are about 40 ex-offenders returning to Boone County each month and about 20% of those are violent offenders. Those offenders returning to Columbia with a violent history are considered at high risk for future violent behaviors. **A HIGHER LEVEL OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR OUR HIGHEST RISK OFFENDERS** in combination with greater access to supports and resources can be expected to reduce the likelihood they will reoffend.”

Re-entry Progress Since 2014

- City partners with The ROC (Re-entry Opportunity Center), a one-stop shop for people recently released from jail or prison and those under supervision in the criminal justice system
- City partners with Central Missouri Recovery Coalition, a coordinated network of community-based services and supports

The City does not have express authority for a mandated re-entry supervision program

“The task force recognizes that violence reduction is not a one-time fix and that the pursuit of the recommendations given in this report will require accountability from government leaders, educational institutions, local non-profits, local businesses, and the citizens.”

~Mayor’s Task Force on Community Violence Recommendations, 2014

Considerations for ARPA and Community Violence

- Dedicated person to coordinate across City departments, Boone County government, educational institutions and non-profits
- Equity focus
- Meaningful community engagement
- Continued emphasis on employment, affordable housing and basic needs - focus on poverty reduction
- Capacity building for our newer grassroots organizations
- Safe places/spaces/activities for youth
- Policy development to address the continued systems issues
- Continue local resource coordination

Discussion

- How do we want to define violence going forward?
- Community violence prevention is an allowable expenditure for ARPA. Does Council have any specific program area(s) that they would like to see greater focus on?
- There are many grassroots organizations that are doing this important work. It is essential that their work is recognized and we find meaningful ways to partner. How can these funds be used to increase their capacity while meeting the strict accountability requirements contained in ARPA?
- How do we leverage available resources to have transformational change?
- Sustainability post-ARPA?