Greater Louisville Project

SAFER CITY BY DESIGN

2023 REPORT
INTRODUCTION

In 2021, cities across the United States received federal funding to address the broad impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic through the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Metro-Government received $388 million, and it allocated $67 million of the funds to address Public Safety. These one-time funds were invested in three areas:

1. $39.5m Policing And Police Technology
2. $19.1m Violence Intervention and Response
3. $8.5m Youth Development

This report examines historic funding and the importance of investment in violence prevention by Metro Government, the state of youth homicide and the alarming increase of youth who are neither working nor in school since the start of the pandemic, and the upcoming "funding cliff" that violence intervention programs will face when ARP funds run out at the end of 2024.

Addressing violence has always been urgent, though ARP funds have provided Louisville a unique opportunity to provide new resources to evidence-based solutions. It is critical that Louisville builds on its momentum to design an ongoing solution worthy of our city's children.
For 20 years the Greater Louisville Project has been reporting on Louisville's standing in educating and employing the people who live here while offering them places and opportunities to live safe and healthy lives. We share data with the hope of catalyzing progress, and we have learned that it is a lot easier to do the former than the latter. Our humility on that front continues with this report, as we reflect on a sad continuity in over a decade of data.

In 2008 we issued our “Education Pipeline,” which showed that only 68% of our kindergarteners graduate from high school and only 25% receive any postsecondary degree. Poor educational outcomes (with a lifelong impact on income and health) are more common for those who experience childhood poverty, who are disproportionately Black.

In 2015 we issued a “Focus on Poverty” that revealed the burden to Louisvillians who live in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty: low household income, unemployment, lack of health insurance, low education outcomes, and low neighborhood income overall. We deny children who grow up in such neighborhoods (who are disproportionately Black) a realistic opportunity to fulfill their potential, in health, education, income, or life expectancy.

Two years later we continued our focus on young Louisvillians. In a report called “Poverty Beyond Income” we called our city to focus on childhood poverty, an essential step in reducing the generational poverty that plagues neighborhoods with concentrated poverty.

This year we issue a report that presents a tragic, but logical, extension of those earlier reports.

Concentrated poverty, it turns out, produces not just generational poverty for children who grow up among it; it also dramatically increases the likelihood they will be killed by guns or die by suicide.

With these data in hand, we proceed with sadness, as well as humility about the limits of data itself, which cannot end the cycles of violence that multiply, and will continue multiplying, where hope is denied. We have data, but we do not have answers, and for that we look to our neighbors – including those who survive these threats every day – to show us the way.

Stephen Reily, Chair
The Greater Louisville Project
Of the $388 million Louisville received through the American Rescue Plan (ARP), Metro Council allocated $300 million to investments in:

- Affordable Housing
- Healthy Neighborhoods
- Public Safety
- Workforce Development

$67 million was allocated toward projects focused entirely on Public Safety.

While many ARP projects are one-time capital projects that fund affordable housing, parks, and libraries, most funding to violence intervention programs will be spent on programs and staff—and those funds must be spent by December 31st, 2024. That means that beginning in 2025, violence intervention and prevention programs will need to find nearly $10 million in new annual funding or close their doors.
Homicide in Louisville has spiked in the past three years.

Source: CDC WONDER Mortality Data and LMPD Open Crime Data, 2022

Homicide Is City-Wide

While concentrated in neighborhoods that have been historically marginalized Louisville’s 163 homicides in 2022 were not limited to any one neighborhood.

Investing to address rising violence will create a safer city for everyone.

Source: LMPD Open Crime Data, 2022
**DATA ON VIOLENCE AND YOUTH**

60 young people died due to homicide in Louisville in 2021, a sharp increase from 20 in 2018 and 32 in 2019.

### Youth Homicide Deaths, 2021 - Ages 15-24; Adjusted for Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number Of Deaths</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grand Rapids</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Greenville</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tulsa</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>Greensboro</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oklahoma City</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Memphis</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number Of Deaths

Source: CDC WONDER Mortality Data, 2022

While violence increased across the county during the pandemic, Louisville’s youth violence challenge is far greater than our peers'. Louisville has seen the second-largest increase in youth homicide since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (2019 to 2021), demonstrating the urgency of implementing and sustaining evidence-based solutions.
DATA ON VIOLENCE AND YOUTH

Homicide disproportionately impacts youth.

Youth ages **15 to 24** make up **12%** of Louisville’s population.

Are **30%** of the individuals **who lose their lives** to homicide.

And are **50%** of the individuals **who commit** homicide.

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**Youth Homicide Deaths - Ages 15-24; Adjusted for Population**

Of the 60 young people who died due to homicide in 2021, **55** were Black, and **48** were young Black men.

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Source: CDC WONDER Mortality Data, 2022; LMPD Open Crime Data, 2022; LMPD UCR Data, 2020
VIOLENCE IS A **PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE**

"Violence occurs in the context of a broad range of human relationships and complex interaction that encompasses social, cultural, and economic risk factors. For these reasons, the most effective violence reduction initiatives address violence through a Public Health Lens, looking at the systemic factors that affect young people." (American Association of Family Physicians, AAFP)

**Risk Factors**
- Chronic Stress
- Residential Instability
- Poverty
- Lack Of Access To Experienced Teachers
- Limited Economic Opportunities

**Protective Factors**
- High Educational Aspirations
- Positive Relationships With Adults
- Positive Influence From Peers
- Neighborhood That Is Well Maintained

Communities living without adequate resources and those facing unfair treatment are more susceptible to all health issues, including violence. The factors that enhance or inhibit health also impact violence, while violence in turn affects determinants such as housing, education, transportation, and economic conditions. Thus, violence itself should be seen as a social determinant in that violence begets violence and exposure to violence is the greatest predictor of future violence. (American Public Health Association)

Violence disproportionately affects vulnerable populations such as women, children, and people living in poverty. (AAFP)
What does violence intervention and prevention look like?

Violence intervention provides evidence-based and community-informed, comprehensive support to individuals who are at greatest risk of involvement in violence. Examples include:

**Street outreach** - outreach workers with deep and sustained relationships in community mediate conflicts, change norms around violence, and connect individuals with resources.

**Hospital-based violence intervention** - intervention specialists follow up with people impacted by violence as soon as possible to connect them to trauma-informed services, mentoring, home visits and follow-up needed for both mental and physical recovery.

**Group violence intervention** - targeted outreach toward members of groups accompanied with plans and resources to assist in behavior change.

Violence prevention addresses problems in the larger systems that surround the individual.

According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), addressing the intersection of systems of power, policy, and protective and risk factors is critical for reducing violence.
INVESTING TO ADDRESS DISCONNECTION

The CDC’s term for young people neither working nor in school is disconnected youth. Louisville’s rise in disconnected youth since 2019 is concentrated among Black youth, and Louisville now ranks worst among its peers in disconnection for Black youth.

Disconnected Youth - Ages 16-24 not working or in school, 3 year rolling average

![Graph showing the percentage of disconnected youth over years for White Louisvillians, White Peer Mean, Black Louisvillians, and Black Peer Mean.]

Source: GLP Analysis of Census Bureau Microdata

Black Disconnected Youth, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knoxville</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinncati</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greensboro</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Nashville</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulsa</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenville</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma City</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memphis</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Rapids</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. LOUISVILLE 31.4%

Source: GLP Analysis of Census Bureau Microdata
**YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION FUNDING CLIFF**

Funding to youth-focused departments of Metro Government that provide key support for disconnected youth and violence prevention shrunk from the Recession through 2021.

- These charts show funding to four youth-focused departments since 2003 adjusted for inflation. The highlighted portions of the charts show the impact of ARP dollars to be spent through December 31st, 2024, assuming departments continue to receive the same funding from all other sources.

**The Office of Youth Development** budget was reduced to nearly $0 following the Recession, and only in recent years has the office begun to receive more funding.

2005: $6.4m  
2003: $0.1m  
2024: $6m  
2026: $0.1m

**KentuckianaWorks** received its largest budget allocations thanks to federal support for workforce programs following the Recession, but saw declining resources to work with young adults for over a decade.

2011: $10.3m  
2019: $4.4m  
2024: $7.6m  
2026: $6.1m

**The Youth Detention Center** closed due to budget cuts during the pension crisis in 2019, and Youth Detention Services became Youth Transitional Services.

2019: $10.7m  
2024: $3.2m  
2026: $2.3m

**Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods** was created in 2014 and saw its budget expand until cuts due to the pension crisis. Its work is rapidly expanding using ARP funds, which makes

2014: $0.1m  
2024: $16.8m  
2026: $8.7m

Total funding to youth-focused departments fell by 38% from a peak in 2011 to a low in 2021 as violence surged. ARP-funded programs can help the city recover, but funds will expire and present a new fiscal cliff after December 31st, 2024.

Successful initiatives are designed by and invest directly into the people who have been most impacted by violence. Louisville must look beyond the one-time ARP funding to design an ongoing solution worthy of our city’s children.

Source: Louisville Metro Government Budgets and Expense Documents
Greater Louisville Project


This report was prepared by The Greater Louisville Project team: Lopa Mehrotra, Harrison Kirby, and Keionna Baker with special assistance provided by Anthony Smith, Cities United, and Jenn Callahan, liveFire Media.

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