

# A Roadmap for Exploring New Models of Funding Public Safety



**1** What services might replace law enforcement to reduce their footprint on communities?

- 1.1** Conduct a rigorous analysis of public safety service demand.
- 1.2** Evaluate officer-initiated activity.



**2** How can departments reduce their footprint on communities?

- 2.1** Map inefficiencies in police activity



**3** What communities need more resources and what mechanisms can deliver them?

- 3.1** Locate and create “Public Safety Opportunity Zones”



**4** How can we measure the response to change?

- 4.1** Gauge community opinion



**5** But what about violent crime? How can we respond to community violence with a lighter law enforcement footprint?

- 5.1** Implement focused deterrence
- 5.2** Use community resources where possible



With the help of AH Datalytics, a consulting firm focused on bringing 21st century analytics to the organizations serving the public good, CPE has identified the following steps to structure the conversation on reallocating public safety resources.

Nationwide demonstrations against police violence have created unprecedented conversations around the allocation of public safety resources in American cities. As communities chart paths towards new models of public safety, many communities and government decision-makers are asking questions about how to do so without risking violence, aggravating racial disparities, or producing other unintended consequences that do not serve communities calling for change.

This document is intended as an easy to digest first step for those interested in exploring what investing in vulnerable communities might look like. It will not be a perfect fit in every city. It is not exhaustive. But the principles outlined here can be a jumping-off point for conversations about how to reimagine public safety. These steps allow communities to assess what resources—police or otherwise—are required to fill community needs while identifying neighborhoods most in need of additional investment. While the document suggests steps to map current public safety spending, it must be communities that decide what path forward to take.

Importantly, it will require time to expand existing community-based services and identify the need for new ones. These assessments and rollout processes will also require a diverse skill set to implement successfully. Still, budgets are moral documents and these steps can be taken to structure the conversation on allocating public safety resources. Each step can be undertaken serially or simultaneously and responds to a specific question about how a new allocation might proceed.

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## **1. What services might replace law enforcement to reduce their footprint on communities?**

### **1.1 Conduct a rigorous analysis of public safety service demand.**

In order to reduce police responsibilities, it will be helpful to catalog them. Cities collect enormous amounts of data on public safety services rendered to the community. The most prominent data source is 911 Calls for Service, but public safety services are also delivered through 211, 311, and 411 programs. Analyzing these data with sufficient technical and subject matter expertise can provide an initial understanding of the service demand from communities. These analyses can be combined with an assessment of public safety agency budgets to enhance planning for allocating resources to other organizations that may be able to fulfill the required services.

### **1.2 Evaluate officer-initiated activity.**

In addition to calls for service, officers make self-initiated contacts. Analyzing the location, time, and type of these interactions is crucial to understanding how police act proactively. Completing these two steps can provide a map of what services police are asked to perform by the community, what services they perform proactively. With this information, communities can make more informed decisions on where they want to invest their resources to maximize public safety.



## **2. How can departments reduce their footprint on communities?**

### **2.1 Map inefficiencies in police activity**

The first step in fixing a problem is measuring its scope. Mapping officer activity to reports of crime will provide insight into where crime and enforcement geographically diverge. These analyses can identify the types of police contacts that are least aligned with public safety needs and the areas that receive the heaviest dose of those contacts—a first step towards reducing them.



## **3. What communities need more resources and what mechanisms can deliver them?**

### **3.1 Locate and create “Public Safety Opportunity Zones”**

Identifying which communities are burdened by crime—or policing—provides a first look at which communities may require greater investment. Neighborhoods with either high crime rates or high rates of police contact that are untethered to

crime might be considered ripe for an influx of resources. The mapping performed to identify inefficiencies would also identify neighborhoods ripe for investment. Using the same mechanisms as standard “Opportunity Zones,” these “Public Safety Opportunity Zones” could be created to deliver more social services to residents—including cash subsidies—and provide credit to local businesses, providing a stronger social safety net. Importantly, zoning a neighborhood in this way need not restrict aid to businesses. These same neighborhoods would be ripe for investments in other social services (e.g., hospitals, grocery stores, substance abuse facilities, etc.) as well.



#### **4. How can we measure the response to change?**

##### **4.1 Gauge community opinion**

The best way to tell how people feel is to ask them. Surveys of community members can help quantify what services they want, trust, and need.



#### **5. But what about violent crime? How can we respond to community violence with a lighter law enforcement footprint?**

##### **5.1 Implement focused deterrence**

Focused deterrence is a research-validated method for reducing violence committed by a small number of chronic offenders. When done correctly, it reduces law enforcement’s footprint and empowers communities to produce their own public safety.

##### **5.2. Use community resources where possible**

Community-led violence interrupters like [LIFE Camp](#) in New York and community-led crisis intervention teams like the Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets ([CAHOOTS](#)) program started in Eugene, Oregon show promise as low-cost, community-centered, and non-violent alternatives to police responses to violence. Similarly, a [Community Navigator](#) model like the one in Minneapolis allows trained city employees (instead of police) to respond to victims of crime, homelessness, or other concerns where there is not an immediate threat of violence. Similar community-centered response models exist across the country and the globe. While there are not deep literatures on each of these programs individually, there is evidence that combinations of these programs are underappreciated [causes of reduced crime](#) over the past several decades.

## **What skills will be needed to undertake these assessments?**

Communities that want to consider new resource allocations to public safety need to be able to combine data analytics, community organizing, and strategic alignment of resources. Local leadership may possess all of these skills as well as the ability to translate quantitative results between communities and city officials. It will not be uncommon, however, for local leaders to rely at least partially on outside experts. When using outside experts, two conditions must be met for success: They must be responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable communities and they must enjoy wide public legitimacy. What follows are the list of skills we estimate are necessary to be successful with any of the above assessments.

### **Data capturing and cleaning**

Those charting a new path towards investing in public safety must identify and capture relevant data in a machine-readable format. Data must be of sufficient quality to support rigorous data cleaning. Investment in IT systems or data analytic support may be needed to bring disparate data systems together.

### **Advanced data analysis**

Rigorous analytic capabilities must be brought to bear to compare services needed by the community with services provided by the police.

### **Local political knowledge**

An awareness of local political context is essential for implementing any change. Relevant government and community stakeholders must engage, current resource allocation must be clear, and the impact of reallocating resources must be considered. For efforts at something so new in the U.S. to succeed, close coordination between stakeholders is required.

### **Strong translation skills are fundamental**

All of the correct analyses and recommendations will fail if they cannot be translated effectively to stakeholders. This means coordinating efforts must be led by a core team that can speak the cultural languages of city government, public safety, vulnerable communities, and science. Attempting this lift without a central coordinator that both holds legitimacy with these communities and has the power to translate between them is a recipe for inefficiency at best. Failure at worst.

Thanks to AH Datalytics for help in preparing this roadmap. If you would like to learn more about AH Datalytics, [click here](#).