

A young girl with a white flower in her hair is looking towards a memorial. The memorial features a large mural of a person's face and a vase of yellow flowers. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY

Local Budget and Policy Solutions to
Address Police Violence and
Racial Health Equity



Issue Brief
October 2022



The Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII)

BARHII is the coalition of the eleven Bay Area public health departments, founded to address the preventable decade-long differences in life expectancy that exist by race, income, and neighborhood. With our member health departments and 250 community partner organizations, we drive innovations in the field and secure public policies for healthier communities, racial justice, and economic prosperity for all.

BARHII is a leader in developing health equity resources and trainings. Our health equity framework, which calls for upstream interventions to reduce differences in life expectancy, has shaped the work of state and local health departments and now regularly appears in public health textbooks. The framework is supported by several implementation guidebooks, including the BARHII Toolkit, which assesses public health department readiness for health equity, and the Social Determinants of Health Indicator Guide. Additional BARHII publications provide research and solutions on a wide range of issues affecting health equity, including housing affordability, economic opportunity, land use, and climate change. BARHII has delivered trainings to thousands of Bay Area public health department staff and their allies. Learn more at www.barhii.org.

Police violence is an urgent public health crisis, which disproportionately impacts the well-being of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. To address this issue, we need a public health approach that targets structural inequities and institutional racism—including actions to improve the social determinants of health.

Today, we are witnessing a once-in-a-generation moment of expanded federal and state government investment. This expansion of funding is a powerful reminder of what is necessary to achieve a positive transformation in police violence and public safety: wise government investment decisions, coupled with smart public policy reforms, to bring to scale the solutions that foster long-term health and safety, rather than harm.

This brief discusses the community health consequences of police violence and why it is paramount to explore this subject from a health equity perspective. We also look at solutions—including actions to counteract systemic racism, which is at the root of police violence.¹

This brief is organized into two parts. Part I, *Understanding the Issues*, examines the connection between police violence and public health and provides context around recent calls to “defund the police.” Part II, *Addressing the Issues*, identifies the most problematic police practices connected to violence against BIPOC communities and others, and proposes solutions for structural change.

Our analysis is informed by research conducted by major news publications, scholarly journals, public policy organizations, and other institutions. In addition, over the last two years, BARHII held numerous conversations with community leaders across the San Francisco Bay Area who are working to advance health-affirming approaches to public safety and police violence. These individuals contributed invaluable insights to this report and we are indebted to their generosity in sharing their experiences and perspectives with us.

A note on terminology: Throughout this report, we use the term “police” to refer generally to law enforcement agency staff that interact directly with community members. In California, there are over 500 law enforcement agencies, including municipal police departments, county sheriff departments, K-12 school police departments, college and university police departments, special district agencies, and state and federal agencies with sworn peace officers.

A NATIONAL RECKONING: GEORGE FLOYD, COVID-19, AND THE ORIGINS OF “DEFUND THE POLICE”



The year 2020 will be forever remembered for the convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. The death of Mr. Floyd shook our nation and sparked months of protest across the country. Mr. Floyd’s final words—“I can’t breathe”—became a refrain echoed by people of all races and backgrounds, in communities large and small, by elected officials, public agency leaders, and community members alike.

While shocking, this was not the first time Americans had witnessed the killing of an unarmed, handcuffed African American by police officers through the lens of a cell

phone camera. The deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown, both killed by police in 2014, also ignited fierce demonstrations calling for an end to police violence and a renewed demand for social and racial justice.² The deaths of twelve African Americans captured on cell phone videos since that time³ have galvanized millions of Americans to take to the streets to join anti-police-brutality protests, making this potentially the largest protest movement in American history.⁴

At the time of George Floyd’s murder, concern was also growing nationally at the disproportionate health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people of color. For example, data showed that counties with disproportionately high percentages of Black residents accounted for nearly half of all coronavirus cases and more than 60% of deaths.⁵ In a Pew poll, 44% of Black Americans reported that someone in their household had lost a job or taken a pay cut because of the pandemic.⁶ Many recognized that these disparities were driven by current inequitable policies and practices and a legacy of historic discrimination. For example, during the pandemic, the lack of government action to ensure adequate protective measures for many “essential workers”—a population that is disproportionately people of color—fostered a racial divide between those who were able to limit their exposure to the novel coronavirus by “sheltering in place” and those who could not.

National frustration grew further with the killings of Breonna Taylor, shot in her own home by police officers executing a no-knock warrant, and Ahmaud Arbery, gunned down by white vigilantes.



In this context of compounded political, economic, social, and racial inequities and historic trauma, the cry of “defund the police” emerged. In the face of countless investigatory commissions, legislative reforms, and government oversight bodies that were unable to end police violence against African Americans, the protesters demanded the end of an institution they experienced as targeting their health and well-being daily.⁷

Initially coined by groups asking for the abolition of police, “defund the police” quickly became an umbrella concept, covering a wide spectrum of perspectives and demands.⁸ Some researchers and advocates described defunding as a means to shift government resources away from law enforcement institutions that harm BIPOC communities to housing, education, mental health, homelessness, domestic violence, and similar services and programs that serve these communities. Others indicated that defunding could catalyze incremental changes that would eventually phase out traditional police systems. They envisioned the need for such institutions receding as society learns to function in more equitable ways by addressing systemic problems through a reimagined public safety system.⁹

Advocates have noted that policing typically comprises a substantial portion of local government budgets, which raises questions about how to best allocate limited public resources more pressing. It is estimated that nationally \$100 billion is spent on policing each year, and that, on average, 20 to 45 percent of police budgets are comprised of discretionary funds.¹⁰

Local Spotlight

An analysis of 16 Bay Area cities by the *San Francisco Chronicle* found that many local governments dedicate a substantial percentage of their general funds to police, including 56 percent in **Concord**, 44 percent in **Fairfield**, and 31 percent in **Napa**.¹¹

These concerns about policing and government budget priorities have taken on greater urgency as California experiences a moment of historic government investment. Substantial expansions of federal and state spending—driven by federal COVID-19 recovery funds, an unprecedented state budget surplus, and federal investment proposals for infrastructure and social programs—have brought debates about how to best allocate government dollars to center stage across the state. Now, the many local, regional, state, and federal government bodies that are involved in public safety must decide which investment approaches to take.

BARHII believes that this is a crucial moment for communities across the Bay Area to examine police violence and the related issues motivating the “defund the police” movement, exploring how past and current government actions result in inequitable health and well-being outcomes for BIPOC populations. With this in mind, we should reimagine what true “public safety” entails—identifying the conditions that are necessary to create safe and healthy communities for everyone, regardless of race, economic status, or other factors. This includes reconsidering our public investment priorities, allocation of roles and responsibilities across government and community, and measures to ensure accountability. This reimagining process should be carried out in ways that center those most impacted by inequities, especially those who have been disproportionately impacted by our policing, judicial, and carceral systems. Together, we must then enact the structural changes necessary to bring a new vision of public safety to life.

We hope that this brief helps to inspire such a transition across our region and we look forward to partnering with government and community leaders on a common journey toward a health-focused public safety system for everyone.



A CASCADE OF IMPACTS: WHY POLICE VIOLENCE IS A PRESSING HEALTH EQUITY ISSUE

The American Public Health Association has declared police violence to be a national public health crisis that disproportionately impacts BIPOC communities.¹² This section examines two key types of health equity impacts of police violence: 1) physical injury and death and 2) repeated community trauma and chronic stress.

Police Violence as a Cause of Injury and Death Disproportionately Experienced by BIPOC Communities

Acts of violence carried out by police and other law enforcement agency employees is a significant public health issue—with substantial racial inequities. *The Washington Post* found that between 2015 and 2020, police shot and killed at least 5,400 people in the United States.¹³ Data suggest that African Americans are more impacted by police violence than other groups.¹⁴ Data compiled by the U.K. newspaper *The Guardian* showed that in 2015, young Black men were nine times more likely than other Americans to be killed by police officers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that police violence is a leading cause of death for Black men between the age of 25 and 29, trailing only behind homicide, accidents, suicide, heart disease, HIV, and cancer.¹⁵

Data shows other disturbing disparities. A 2019 study published by the National Academy of Sciences found that between 2013 and 2018, Black women were 1.4 times more likely to be killed by police than white women, while Latino men were 1.3 to 1.4 times more likely to be killed by police than white men.¹⁶

Local Spotlight

- According to the Bay Area Equity Atlas, police violence affects the entire **Bay Area region**—from wealthy suburbs to core cities—and Black residents are disproportionately the targets of police violence. In the two-year period of 2016 and 2017, “Black residents made up six percent of the region’s population, yet accounted for 20 percent of reported police use-of-force incidents.”¹⁷
- A 2020 study from researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that Black people in the **Bay Area** are more likely to be killed by police than in any other metro area in America except Oklahoma City.¹⁸

Police Violence as a Cause of Repeated Trauma among Communities of Color

While public attention often focuses on individuals who are killed or injured by police officers, the effects of police violence extend far beyond those who experience acts of physical harm.

When people experience or witness police brutality, the traumatic experience often stays with them for long periods of time. They will suffer nightmares and flashbacks, attempt to avoid interface with police officers, run from police, and “remain in a psychological state of high vigilance, on guard against the possibility of abuse at the hands of the police.”¹⁹ Public health research has found that this chronic stress increases the risk for numerous health problems—including coronary vascular disease, obesity, diabetes, depression, cognitive impairment, and both inflammatory and autoimmune disorders.²⁰ Children face additional physical and behavior health impacts.²¹



Because Black communities and other people of color are more likely to experience police violence, they are at higher risk for these health effects. A 2014 study of urban men found that “participants who reported more police contact also reported more trauma and anxiety symptoms, associations tied to how many stops they reported, the intrusiveness of the encounters, and their perceptions of police fairness,” and that overall, the burden of police contact in each city they studied “falls predominantly on young Black and Latino males.”²²

These effects can permeate entire BIPOC communities. One does not need to directly experience or witness an act of violence to experience negative health consequences; simply knowing that an encounter with the police is more likely to result in physical harm because of your race or neighborhood can contribute to chronic stress and its deleterious impacts.²³ Exposure to chronic stress due to discrimination has been identified as one of the key factors driving health disparities among racial and ethnic groups.²⁴

Communities experiencing the health impacts of police violence are often heavily burdened by other factors that negatively affect health. Researchers using 2015-2016 data from *The Guardian*, found that police-related death rates were highest in neighborhoods with the greatest concentrations of low-income residents and residents of color.²⁵ These neighborhoods often have substantial deficits in public investment, employment opportunities, school quality, and access to health care, as well as elevated exposure to environmental hazards and crime—all stressors that contribute to poor health outcomes.

Negative health impacts can also extend beyond the specific geographies where police violence is most likely to occur. For example, recent research has found that “police killings of unarmed Black Americans have adverse effects on mental health among Black adults in the general population.”²⁶

Exposure to chronic stress due to discrimination has been identified as one of the key factors driving health disparities among racial and ethnic groups



Local Spotlight

In 2009, a **BART** police officer shot and killed the Reverend Wanda Johnson’s son, Oscar Grant III.

Reverend Johnson explains that for the families whose loved ones have been killed by police, the mourning never stops. “Their families are never going to be the same again. There’s always going to be a chair empty at Christmas, Thanksgiving. There are no more celebrations...We spent my last birthday together, then (my son) was murdered. I never get that celebration back. These families never get that back. They have to pick up and go forward without them. All you have is a memory.”

The persistence of police violence against Black people adds to her trauma. “As soon as I saw (the murder of George Floyd), it took me back to Oscar. I couldn’t sleep for two days. It’s very hard to relive the death of your child each and every time. It opens up the very heart that has been broken, that’s been hurt so badly and unnecessarily. I’m still processing.”²⁷

IDENTIFYING STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES THAT FOSTER POLICE VIOLENCE

This section examines three key drivers of police violence against BIPOC communities: 1) racial disparities in police activities, 2) militarization and an orientation toward use-of-force in policing, and 3) inadequate mechanisms for police accountability.

Over-Policed and Under-Protected: Differential Treatment of BIPOC Communities

There are substantial inequities in how police operate in communities of color—particularly for African Americans. As Daanika Gordon, Associate Professor of Sociology at Tufts University, explains, “predominantly Black neighborhoods are simultaneously over-policed when it comes to surveillance and social control, and under-policed when it comes to emergency services.”²⁸



There are many well-known examples of over-policing of BIPOC communities. For example, the Racial Identity and Profiling Advisory Board of the California Office of the Attorney General recently analyzed data on traffic stops conducted by eight California law enforcement agencies and concluded that police officers stopped Black people at a higher rate and were more likely to use force against African Americans.²⁹

Recent research also shows that law enforcement agencies systemically under-protect BIPOC communities.³⁰ Under-protection takes a variety of forms, including racial inequities in police response times, unsolved crimes, and response to victims' needs. For example, a *Washington Post* investigation found that murders of white people are more likely to be solved than murders of black people.³¹

These structural disparities in treatment affect how BIPOC communities approach public safety systems. Some African American residents who live in distressed, high-crime urban neighborhoods have concluded that "police are either incapable of keeping them safe or unwilling to do so"³² and fear calling them when there is a real need for help.³³ As journalist Rick Jervis notes in *USA Today*, "police have a long history of violence and aggression toward many minority communities in the U.S., including Latinx, Muslim, and members of the LGBTQ community, creating a deep mistrust of police that has resulted in many minority communities under-using police departments because they are reluctant to call them for help."³⁴

Some African American residents who live in distressed, high-crime urban neighborhoods have concluded that "police are either incapable of keeping them safe or unwilling to do so"

Awareness of racial bias in policing is widespread among BIPOC communities. A 2020 survey by the Public Policy Institute of California found that while 53% of Californians believe that police in their community treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly "almost always" or "most of the time," just 19% of African Americans hold this view.³⁵

Local Spotlight

- The **Vallejo** Police Department has the second highest rate of killings by police officers among America's hundred largest police forces. According to data collected by the anti-police-brutality group Campaign Zero, Vallejo's police officers use more force per arrest than any other department in California.³⁶ The City's policing practices are being investigated by the State Attorney General.³⁷
- In 2021, the **Alameda County** Grand Jury found major racial disparities in compensation awards granted to crime victims.³⁸

An Orientation Toward Conflict: Militarization and Use-Of-Force Training

The way that police are trained has resulted in dire consequences for people of color who encounter them, especially African Americans. Police are often asked to respond to calls that are more fit for social workers, conflict mediators, and mental health counselors. Yet, according to researcher Roge Karma, “police are trained to be warriors.”³⁹

Police typically receive their training in military-style academies and the majority of training hours are given to the deployment of force and law.⁴⁰ According to a 2016 survey, police departments spend an average of 58 hours on gun training, 49 hours on defensive tactics, and eight hours on de-escalation, crisis intervention, and electronic control weapons like stun guns.⁴¹ There is currently no national system of police training standards and great variation among approaches.

According to Dr. Rashawn Ray, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, there is almost no uniformity in police training programs, particularly when it comes to their focus on their training in implicit biases.⁴²

The militarization of police departments extends beyond on-the-job training. Police are disproportionately hired from the military, creating a workforce with an orientation toward conflict with enemy forces.⁴³ Police departments have also increasingly turned to military equipment—accepting transfers of surplus military equipment or purchasing materials to outfit officers with firepower that is far beyond what is necessary for their jobs as protectors of their communities.⁴⁴

These dynamics lead to violent confrontations when de-escalation and crisis intervention is needed, such as encounters with mentally ill individuals. *The Washington Post* found that between 2012 and 2020, 23% of people killed by police in the U.S. had a mental illness.⁴⁵ A 2017 study found a direct correlation between the transfer of surplus military equipment to police departments and fatalities from officer-involved shootings.⁴⁶

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Local Spotlight

In 2014, **Redwood City** received a 30-ton mine-resistant military vehicle. The \$750,000 armored truck came through a federal program that provides surplus military equipment to local police agencies.⁴⁷ The **Napa** Police Department and **South San Francisco** received similar vehicles. The **San Jose** Police Department returned a 15-ton armored military vehicle after community members raised concerns.⁴⁸

Shielded from Oversight: Protections against Police Accountability

Criminal acts committed by police—such as assault, aggravated assault, murder, and manslaughter are crimes under federal and state law. Yet charges and convictions are rare.⁴⁹ Many other acts of misconduct that do not rise to the level of a crime are subject to internal discipline, but those investigations are often toothless.⁵⁰ For example, Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin faced 17 complaints for misconduct before he murdered George Floyd.⁵¹

According to *New York Times* reporter Shaila Dewan, there are five major systems that shield police from accountability:



- **Internal police department accountability systems.**

Departments typically have internal affairs divisions that investigate complaints against officers. These entities tend to be charitable towards their own members.

- **Civil service protection.** Public employees can appeal firings or other disciplinary actions to an independent body. Often, police officers are given a lesser punishment when they appeal or are reinstated if they have been fired.

- **Civilian review boards.** These important entities often have circumscribed powers and can only make recommendations regarding officer discipline that the police department may choose not to institute.

- **Police unions.** Many police unions have opposed increased accountability measures to protect their membership from perceived legal, professional, and financial exposure.

- **Legal concept of “reasonable fear.”** If an officer can make an argument that a reasonable officer would have been afraid for their own life or for the life of a fellow officer, then a jury is not supposed to convict them.⁵²

One often-overlooked reason that police evade accountability for criminal acts of violence is that they are granted legal protection under the doctrine of “qualified immunity.”⁵³ This 50-year-old concept has been increasingly used by the Supreme Court to limit victims from holding officers accountable when they violate a person’s constitutional rights in cases of excessive force.⁵⁴ California law also outlines a “procedural bill of rights” for public safety officers, addressing investigations of officer misconduct and disciplinary actions, among other things.⁵⁵

Local Spotlight

According to a 2020 analysis by the *Bay Area News Group*, between 2015 and 2020, not a single officer who killed someone in the **Bay Area** had been prosecuted. An officer was disciplined in only eight of those cases. A majority of those killed were reported to be experiencing a mental-health crisis.⁵⁶

FROM ANALYSIS TO ACTION: SOLUTIONS FOR A MULTI-FACETED CHALLENGE

To forge equitable solutions to police violence, we need to address the underlying factors that influence inequities in access to public safety. We recommend that Bay Area communities explore three types of actions: 1) changes within our policing systems, 2) use of non-police responses to non-violent incidents, and 3) investment in upstream approaches to community health and resilience. Community members, especially those who have been disproportionately impacted by policing, should be central to the identification, prioritization, and implementation of solutions.



Police Accountability and Internal Systems Change

Police officers should be accountable public servants who work collaboratively, transparently, and fairly with all communities they serve. To accomplish this vision, our communities should increase accountability for police conduct. This includes strengthening consequences for individual officers who violate laws and policies regarding violence and bias. Increasing accountability across police departments is also important, such as increasing the financial repercussions of systemic violations by shifting civil payout structures for police misconduct.⁵⁷ We also need improved systems of tracking and reporting police violence.⁵⁸

In addition, we should end policing practices that negatively impact BIPOC communities. This includes replacing saturation-policing methods, such as pretext stops and “stop and frisk” policies,⁵⁹ and “demilitarizing” local police departments, by eliminating use of military equipment and dangerous crowd dispersal weapons, and prioritizing new training approaches that emphasize community health.⁶⁰

Local Spotlight

- Voters in **Oakland** adopted one of the strongest civilian police commissions in the country and approved the creation of the Community Police Review Agency to investigate complaints of police misconduct and recommend disciplinary actions.⁶¹
- In November 2020, Measure P in **Sonoma County** passed with 64.74% voter support. The measure substantially strengthened the Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach.⁶²

Non-Police Responses to Non-Violent Calls and Incidents

For many years, the lack of adequate community-based crisis services has put police departments in the difficult position of responding to incidents for which they are not well trained, such as helping people experiencing a mental health crisis.⁶³ Moreover, a significant number of 9-1-1 emergency calls are related to quality-of-life concerns and other incidents that may require a time-sensitive response but are better suited to civilian responders than armed police officers. COVID-19 has heightened these challenges, increasing rates of substance use, untreated mental illness, housing instability, and other issues.

We recommend establishing systems for non-police responses to many of these incidents. Several approaches are particularly worth consideration.

Communities can implement a “community responder” model to handle calls related to homelessness, behavioral health crises, and substance use. These responders can also address calls related to quality-of-life concerns and low-level community conflicts.⁶⁴ Behavioral health crises can also be assigned to community-based social workers or professionals from the fire department or public health department.^{65,66}

An Office of Neighborhood Safety, situated outside of the police department, can provide non-punitive public safety solutions, such as violence interruption, job readiness programs, civilian first responders, and transformative mentoring.

In educational settings, school resource officers can be replaced with peacekeepers, councilors, mental health professionals, health services, and youth enrichment programs.⁶⁷

These actions can free up capacity for police departments to address pressing public safety issues—such as responding to acts of violence and theft—while also reducing strain on our criminal justice system.

Local Spotlight

- In 2020, **San Francisco** launched the Street Crisis Response Team (SCRT) pilot program to provide non-law enforcement responses to behavioral health emergencies.⁶⁸ The move is part of the city's effort to develop alternatives to police responses to non-violent calls and overhaul its mental health system.
- In 2020, the West **Contra Costa** Unified School District Board of Education voted unanimously to end contract services with local police agencies and transfer the money to efforts supporting African American students as part of a resolution that condemns police brutality.⁶⁹
- A 2021 analysis of the **Berkeley** Police Department conducted by the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform indicated that over 81 percent of calls for service were for non-criminal events and that 50 percent of calls could be addressed without a law enforcement response.⁷⁰

California's CRISES Act, signed into law in 2021, strengthens community-based alternatives to law enforcement in response to crisis situations for communities impacted by injustice. The new law requires the state Office of Emergency Services to establish a three-year pilot grant program to expand participation of community organizations in emergency issues such as mental health crises, substance abuse, public health emergencies, and natural disasters.⁷¹

Upstream Investments in Community Health and Resilience

Systemic racism against African Americans and other BIPOC communities has resulted in substantial disparities in key social determinants of health, including access to housing, health care, education, and economic opportunities. These factors contribute to the concentration of substandard neighborhood conditions, which, in turn, influences the criminalization and over-policing of BIPOC communities.



To reduce the saturation of police in communities that have been impacted by systemic racism, we suggest directing resources to “upstream” interventions that foster healthy, vibrant neighborhoods for all. Investments that warrant consideration include the following:

- ① Violence prevention and violence interrupter programs^{72,73}
- ② Trauma-informed healing and restorative justice^{74,75}
- ③ Fair chance and re-entry programs^{76,77}
- ④ Housing affordability solutions that reduce residential segregation⁷⁸
- ⑤ Expanded health care, education, public health, and other social services⁷⁹
- ⑥ Economic catalysts (e.g. employment strategies, small business support, guaranteed income, and reparations)⁸⁰

Funding should be directed to community and grassroots organizations that can implement innovative solutions in nuanced, culturally appropriate ways.

Local Spotlight

- One of the best examples of a non-punitive violence interruption program is the **City of Richmond’s** Office of Neighborhood Safety. Among its many innovative features, the program includes monthly stipends for participating community members.⁸¹
- Free At Last in **East Palo Alto** provides community-based treatment, intervention, and prevention services to reduce substance abuse and HIV infection, provide alternatives to incarceration, and foster economic self-sufficiency.⁸² The organization receives funding from San Mateo County, among other sources.
- In 2015, the **Alameda County** Board of Supervisors voted to dedicate at least 50% of public safety funds received through the state prison “realignment” process to community-based re-entry services, managed by the county’s health agency.⁸³
- In 2021, **San Francisco** launched the Dream Keeper Initiative, a citywide effort to reinvest \$120 million over two years from law enforcement into the city’s Black and African American community. The initiative includes investments in youth development, economic opportunity, arts and culture, workforce development, health and well-being, and housing and homeownership.⁸⁴

HOW PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS CAN HELP

BARHII recommends seven approaches that public health departments can take to support the work of reimagining public safety and addressing police violence:

- ① Declare police violence a public health threat.
- ② Research public health literature and analyze local data trends on police violence, racial equity, and public health outcomes.
- ③ Help convene, connect, and fund community-serving organizations that can advance alternatives to policing.
- ④ Support community engagement to ensure impacted communities are driving strategy and solutions.
- ⑤ Reduce or eliminate the use of law enforcement in health-related settings, such as hospitals and health care facilities.
- ⑥ Serve on reimagining public safety committees.
- ⑦ Support communications efforts to address police violence and systemic racism through a health equity lens.

Local Spotlight

The East San Jose PEACE (Prevention Efforts Advance Community Equity) Partnership is a comprehensive violence prevention strategy working to build a healthy, peaceful, and empowered community in three zip codes in **San Jose**.⁸⁵

With backbone support from the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health Violence Prevention Program, the partnership unites residents, grassroots organizations, businesses, healthcare organizations, youth leaders, and many county and city agencies. Together, members work to transform policies and practices to improve community well-being, including advocating for affordable housing, promoting safe relationships and youth leadership, building capacity in the local promotora workforce, enhancing clinic-to-community linkages on domestic violence, creating community gathering spaces, and beautifying the neighborhood. The partnership is one of 13 funded by the California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative (CACHI).

The PEACE Partnership established a local Wellness Fund in 2018. The fund serves as a vehicle to attract, braid, and blend resources from a variety of organizations and sectors to support the partnership's goals, priorities, and strategies. The partnership is working to build a community governance structure for the fund to ensure it can be deployed in a flexible and robust way to meet the emerging needs of partners and residents and drive long-term system change efforts.

THE PATH AHEAD

As this brief makes clear, police violence is a crisis for health and racial equity. The crisis is not limited to some distant region of the country—it's right here in our own communities, in our own backyards, affecting our own families. It's a region-wide issue that demands regional attention.

Fortunately, the Bay Area is full of community members and government leaders who are dedicated to finding solutions, advancing a wide variety of health-affirming approaches to end police violence and catalyze true public safety for all. Now is the moment to harness the policy and budgetary powers of our government bodies to bring these solutions to scale—to reform our policing systems for accountability and racial equity, reorient our approach to serving people in crisis and conflict, and refocus our governmental investments toward the upstream interventions that create safer, healthier communities. All of this is possible—when we place health and equity at the center of the discussion.

We stand ready to support Bay Area communities in this transition. To get help or to learn more, please contact us at info@barhii.org.



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Acknowledgements

Thank you to Ady Olvera, Analilia Garcia, Anne Janks, Annie Wu, Beth Altshuler Muñoz, Calvin Williams, Charles Eddy, Darris Young, David Muhammad, Debra Ballinger, Jessica Black, June Higginbotham, Katherine Schaff, Kiara Holmes, Martiza Rodriguez, Matt Vander Sluis, Melissa Jones, Monet Boyd, Prima Hernandez, Rashidah Grinage, Rhonda Renfro, Rodney Brooks, Sam Vaughn, Sybil Grant, Tram Nguyen, Will Dominie, and Wylie Liu for your many contributions to this report.

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