

Creating Safe and Vibrant Communities for All New Yorkers



June 2022

**COMMUNITIES
UNITED FOR
POLICE REFORM**

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I. Creating Safe and Vibrant Communities for All New Yorkers

What does it mean to live in a safe and vibrant community? How do we reduce violence and increase well-being? How do we do that for a city of millions of people? Those are questions ordinary New Yorkers, politicians, organizers, academics and public health professionals have been asking for many years, but as New Yorkers emerge from a three-year public health catastrophe that has wreaked havoc on people's ability to secure their basic necessities, there is a renewed urgency to answering them correctly.

New Yorkers are emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic more fearful of violence in their communities and in the city at large, less secure in their ability to keep or secure housing and employment, and increasingly weighed down by mental health challenges. The last 2 1/2 years New Yorkers have seen an alarming increase in overdose deaths, students who missed out on crucial educational benchmarks and services, and families who are grieving the loss of a loved one and struggling to stay afloat.

The city's financial outlook for the next three years remains tenuous, and it is unclear how deep and lasting the economic and emotional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will be.¹ It is a time that requires courageous and bold action, a time to implement evidence-based strategies to address the varying impacts of this public health crisis.

One crucial concern on the minds of all New Yorkers, especially Black, Latinx and other communities of color, is the need for a sound approach to increasing public safety. New Yorkers want to feel safe in their daily lives and safe in their homes and schools and on their streets.

Mayor Eric Adams ran on a campaign that claimed to have a new and fresh approach to public safety, above all promising to decrease police violence. Adams has often used language indicating that he would invest in the public institutions and programs that have track records for making our communities safer, such as the crisis management system.

However, in the first five months of his tenure, it has become clear that Adams' dominant strategy to address public safety is boosting policing and criminalization of Black, Latinx and other communities of color. He has flooded communities with more police officers, increased arrests for low-level offenses, expanded plainclothes units with abusive histories and added more monies for jails. Instead of investing in new evidence-based approaches to making communities safer, Adams has taken

1. *NYS Budget Basics, Fiscal Future*, Citizens Budget Commission, May 24, 2022

the city back in time to the discredited broken-windows policing of decades ago and brought back the criminalizing practices that have been so detrimental to Black, Latinx and other communities of color over the last 40 years.

Increasing peoples contact with police officers and sweeping people into the criminal legal system wreaks havoc on people's lives and in the long term creates the conditions for extremely poor public health outcomes.² People who have regular contact with the police or who are incarcerated suffer long-lasting impacts to their mental health and well-being, their ability to secure employment and housing, and achieve their educational goals. We've seen the impacts of what decades of over-policing can do to Black, Latinx and other communities of color in New York City, and we cannot allow our elected officials to continue to invest in destructive and failed policing tactics – especially when we know that there are other strategies that are proven to do much more for community safety.

As was recently cited in “Black Futures Report” by the Brooklyn Movement Center, there is ample research that points to clear public health strategies on how to reduce violence and make communities safer, and it is not an increase in policing. Violence is a preventable crisis, and the research shows that reducing violence is a combination of investing in core community needs such as housing, employment, health care and education **and** reducing people's contact with police and the criminal legal system.³

Adams is doing the opposite by pushing for the omnipresence of the New York Police Department (NYPD), a strategy that is tone deaf given the fear and anxiety that so many Black, Latinx and other communities of color experience when inundated with police presence. No city should have to feel the omnipresence of a militarized, armed police force to truly feel safe. In addition, he is making scant investments in programs and services that address people's basic needs and instead has mobilized massive city resources toward his goal of increasing police presence in NYC communities to new heights. Instead of expanding public safety, he is putting New Yorkers increasingly at risk of the NYPD's abusive policing tactics.

For example, Adams promised that his rebranded Anti-Crime Plain Clothes Unit, the so called “Neighborhood Safety Teams,” would be nothing like the plainclothes teams of the past who had a notorious history of violence and abuse against Black, Latinx and other New Yorkers of color. He claimed that he was only placing the best and most reputable officers on those teams and ignored communities' concern with more plainclothes officers in their neighborhoods. Those plainclothes anti-crime units of the past, despite being only 6% of the force, were responsible for 31% of deaths at the NYPD's hands, including Amadou Diallo, Carlos Lopez Jr., Sean Bell,

2. *Invest in Black Futures: A Public Health Roadmap for Safe NYC Neighborhoods*, Brooklyn Movement Center, May 2022

3. *Invest in Black Futures: A Public Health Roadmap for Safe NYC Neighborhoods*, Brooklyn Movement Center, May 2022

Ramarley Graham, Shantel Davis, Kimani Gray, Eric Garner, Saheed Vassell, Antonio Williams and too many others.⁴ Black, Latinx and other communities of color are apprehensive about increasing the size and scope of plainclothes units without any empirical evidence that they are effective at preventing and reducing violence.

Furthermore, a recent report by New York Focus has uncovered that a significant number of the officers on the Neighborhood Safety Teams have documented histories of abuse and violence, including accusations of excessive force.⁵ Contrary to the mayor's claim, these units – set to number 500 officers in FY23⁶ – are all in predominantly Black, Latinx and other communities of color.

Adams has also brought back regressive and discredited policing strategies that target New Yorkers for small, nonviolent infringements, also known as “crimes of poverty,” instead of addressing the socioeconomic conditions that the city finds itself in. Those kinds of broken-windows policing will send more Black, Latinx and other New Yorkers of color into the criminal legal system, and as the research makes clear, they won't have an impact on violence and safety in communities.⁷

During his announcement of the FY23 budget, Adams took offense at suggestions that he was increasing the NYPD budget without investing in nonpolice safety solutions, claiming that he was uplifting violence prevention strategies that advocates have sought more investments for. But the city budget numbers tell quite a different story.

In Adams' fiscal oversight of the NYPD for FY22, he has followed in his predecessors' footsteps, allowing the NYPD to go over budget by \$403 million dollars.⁸ For FY23, he is proposing a \$180 million increase to the NYPD budget, bringing the total city spending to \$11.2 billion.⁹ In contrast, the crisis management system, a program we know to have significantly reduced violence, received no increases from FY22 to FY23 despite advocates calling for over \$1 billion in investments to run violence interruption programs at full capacity and increase their scope.¹⁰ Similarly, Adams has been silent on increasing funding for restorative justice programs in schools and hate violence prevention programs. Those are violence interruption and prevention programs that have proven to make positive impact on the lives of individuals, families and communities. It is those kinds of investments that we need more of as we tackle the daunting task of increasing public safety in the wake of this global pandemic.

4. <https://theintercept.com/2018/05/09/saheed-vassell-nypd-plain-clothes/>

5. <https://www.nysfocus.com/2022/05/23/eric-adams-nypd-neighborhood-safety-team-roster/>

6. New York City Council Executive Budget Hearing, Public Safety Committee, May 11, 2022

7. *Invest in Black Futures: A Public Health Roadmap for Safe NYC Neighborhoods*, Brooklyn Movement Center, May 2022

8. *Expense, Revenue Contract Budget, City of New York FY22 June 2021 and FY22 April 2022*

9. *Expense, Revenue Contract Budget, City of New York FY22 June 2021 and FY22 April 2022*

10. New York City Council Executive Budget Hearing, Public Safety Committee, May 11, 2022

II. The Fight for Budget Justice

2020

In spring 2020, Communities United for Police Reform (CPR) members and partners led a historic #NYCBudgetJustice coalition of over 200 local and national organizations that demanded that the city transfer \$1 billion from the NYPD budget into core service programs and infrastructure for Black, Latinx and other communities of color.

The backdrop was the start of the COVID-19 pandemic that had starkly revealed and exacerbated every measure of inequality in NYC and the police murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, which brought massive uprisings against anti-Black police violence. But the underlying reality was that **basic infrastructures and programs have been defunded in low-income Black, Latinx and other communities of color for decades** – while the NYPD and the budget, size, scope and power of policing continued to grow.

New Yorkers, like millions across the country, took to the streets in the spring and summer in defense of Black lives and against police violence. CPR’s campaign to divest from policing and criminalization and invest in evidence-based nonpolice safety solutions was launched in the context of the Movement for Black Lives’ ecosystem lifting up demands to #DefundThePolice across the country.

The #NYCBudgetJustice campaign was a turning point for NYC. There were daily protests, marches, actions and lobbying of elected officials, demanding cuts to bloated police budgets. While we didn’t win the cut of at least \$1 billion from the NYPD that we were demanding, we collectively created the conditions that made the demand irresistible and irrefutable and contributed to increasing numbers of New Yorkers who want to see the city take a drastically different approach to public safety. The administration felt such intense pressure that it spun a false narrative that it had met New Yorkers’ demand to cut \$1 billion from the NYPD budget, even though the actual cut was no more than \$337 million.¹¹

2021

We saw the fruits of community education and organizing in the local 2021 races for city council, borough and citywide elected positions, in which many candidates who had pledged to move money away from policing and into public services for communities won their local elections.

However, we also saw a strong backlash by centrist and conservative politicians, both at the local and national level, trying to discredit and undermine the

11. *Message of the Mayor, City of New York, Executive Budget FY23*

#DEFUND movement and distract from community demands to divest from policing and invest in public services.

New Yorkers were clear about wanting to be free from fear of abusive, unlawful and violent policing and that safety for Black, Latinx and other communities of color looks more like quality and accessible housing, health care and education. Rather than dismissing those investments as long-term solutions, the pandemic laid bare how quickly communities felt the impact to their well-being when those core services were lacking.

If the city were to make bold investments in housing, employment, health care and education, it would have a significant and long-lasting impact on the well-being of New Yorkers most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Investing in communities will have both a short- and long-term effect.

And consequently, we are once again asking the city council for these bold and courageous investments in public services and for it to hold firm and not allow Adams to take us backward into discredited policing tactics that are sure to sweep more Black, Latinx and other communities of color into the criminal legal system. New York City cannot once again expand NYPD funding at the expense of investments in Black, Latinx and other communities of color. We need NYC's budget to prioritize our communities so that all New Yorkers can live safe and vibrant lives. That is achievable in our lifetimes, but as a city we need to prioritize it – not just in words but in dollars and deeds.

What New Yorkers Need in the FY23 Budget

#NYCBudgetJustice demand is simply that NYC must organize its financial resources so that it invests in public health-based approaches to community safety instead of failed policing strategies and tactics. As the pandemic moves into its third year, the city has a moral obligation to move money from a police department that has shown itself to be deeply troubled and invest in housing, employment, education, health and mental health care, and youth programming.

The #NYCBudgetJustice's FY23 demands include:

1. Move money away from policing and invest in community safety solutions.

- Cut at least \$1 billion from the NYPD FY23 expense budget.
- Redirect all savings to nonpolice health and safety solutions.

2. Cancel regressive policing tactics, and block any increases to the NYPD FY23 budget.

- Cancel Anti-Crime Plain Clothes Units rebranded as Neighborhood Safety Teams.
- Cancel NYPD Mental Health Co-Response Teams and NYPD homeless encampment sweeps.
- Cancel abusive units like the Strategic Response Group and Public Morals Division: VICE Enforcement.

3. Require NYPD transparency in the budget by including transparency-related terms and conditions in the adopted FY23 budget. The NYPD's lack of transparency serves as structural protection from any meaningful fiscal oversight. That allows the NYPD's budget to continue to balloon and the NYPD's impunity and power to grow unchecked. There are four terms and conditions that should be included when the FY23 budget is adopted:

- The NYPD should be required to make public a full accounting of the millions that the NYC Police Foundation spends on NYPD programs and initiatives each year. That should include a full description and accounting of NYPD programs, initiatives and projects, and miscellaneous items that the Police Foundation funds. The NYPD should not be permitted to continue to use the NYC Police Foundation as a private slush fund and piggy bank for unregulated policing operations and programs in NYC and around the world.
- The NYPD should continue to be required to publicly report on all private sources of income that equal \$5,000 or more in a fiscal year – with details of the specific purposes of those funds and a full description and accounting of budget lines those funds cover.
- The NYPD should be required to have more specific units of appropriation in all public-facing budgets and fiscal reports.
- The NYPD should be required to publish annual reports of all officers with pending and closed misconduct incidents, with details including when, whether and what disciplinary action was taken, if any.

III. Overview of the NYPD Budget

THE REAL NYPD BUDGET:



APPROX **\$5.6 BILLION** APPROX **\$5.6 BILLION**

= \$11.2 BILLION
SPENT ON NYPD DIRECT

Budgets are evidence of a city’s priorities and how a city strives to meet its inhabitants’ needs. Examining the various ways the city spends money on policing in comparison to other city agencies can also uncover the values, strategies and underlying assumptions about how to solve city problems.

Adams has proposed the highest NYPD budget ever, totaling \$11.2 billion – \$5.58 billion in the NYPD expense budget, \$2.62 billion in the fringe budget, \$2.79 billion in the pension budget and \$214 million in debt service.¹² For the first time, the amount city is spending on fringe, pension and debt service costs for the NYPD is larger than the NYPD expense budget. The soaring costs of fringe costs and pension payouts for the NYPD’s incredibly large headcount means that New Yorkers should expect this pattern to continue in the coming years.

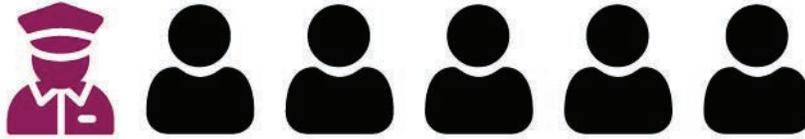
NYPD Size

The NYPD is the largest police department in the country, with over 50,000 personnel. NYPD employees include approximately 35,000 officers and 16,900 civilian staff.¹³

12. *Message of the Mayor, City of New York, Executive Budget FY23*

13. *Budget Function Analysis, New York City Executive Budget FY23*

ONE OUT OF SIX NYC GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WORK FOR THE NYPD.



OVER 50,000 PEOPLE WORK FOR THE NYPD.

16.8% OF ALL NYC EMPLOYEES WORK FOR THE NYPD.



THE NYPD HEADCOUNT IS MORE THAN DOUBLE THE EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES, YOUTH & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HOMELESS SERVICES COMBINED.

The NYPD's staff is so outsized that the NYPD employs 1 out of 6 NYC municipal government employees. Over 90% of the NYPD's budget goes to personnel.¹⁴

NYPD Spending

NYC spends over \$11 billion per year on the NYPD,¹⁵ but spending is spread out in several different places in the city budget including:

- NYPD expense budget of \$5.6 billion.¹⁶
- NYPD fringe, pension and debt service costs of \$5.6 billion.¹⁷
- The NYPD capital budget of \$275 million.¹⁸

14. [The Financial Plan of the City of New York](#), full-time and full-time-equivalent staffing levels for FY23

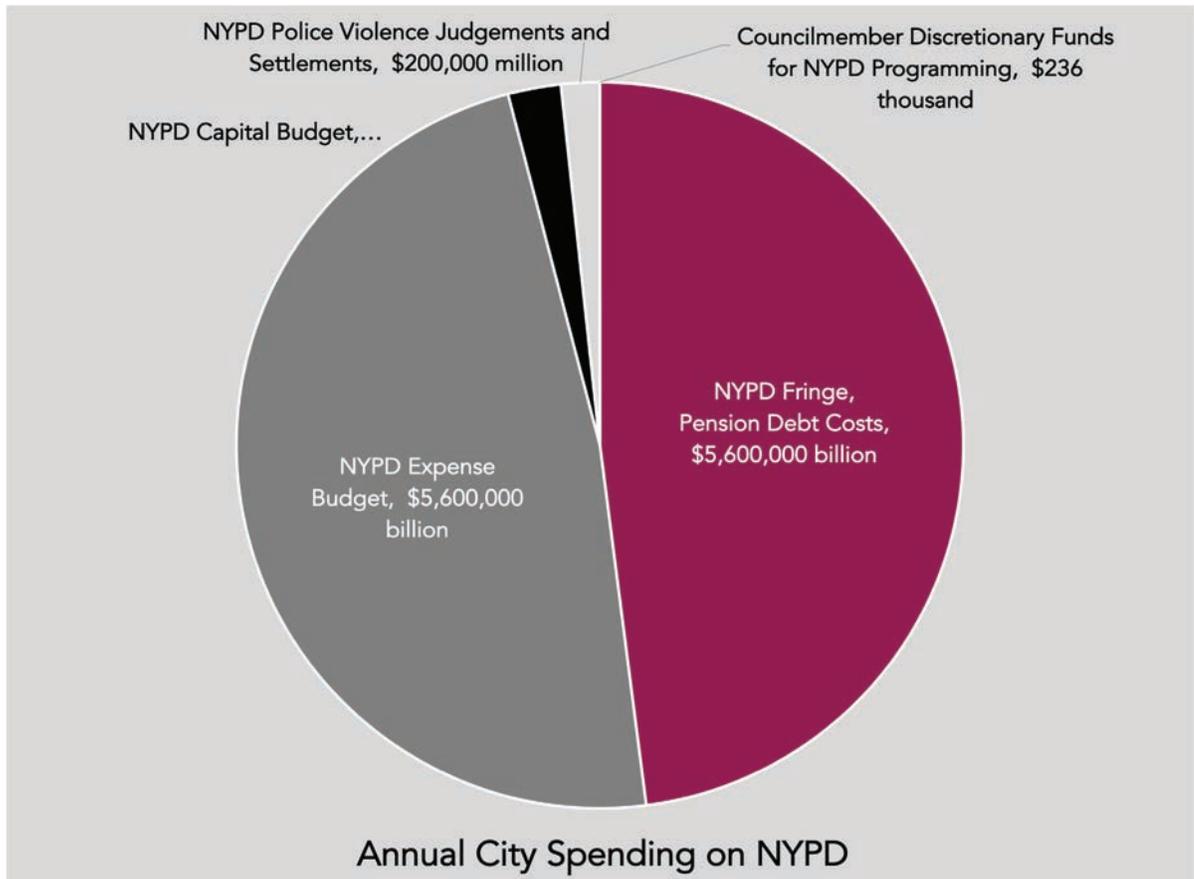
15. Message of the Mayor, City of New York, Executive Budget for FY23

16. *Expense, Revenue Contract Budget, City of New York, FY22 June 2021 and FY22 April 2022*

17. Message of the Mayor, City of New York, Executive Budget for FY23

18. [Report to the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Public Safety of the Fiscal 2023 Executive Plan and the Fiscal 2023 Executive Capital Commitment Plan, Police Department, May 11, 2022](#)

- Settlements and other litigation-related costs for police violence that average \$200 million per year.¹⁹
- Councilmember discretionary funds awarded to the NYPD and NYPD-related programs at \$236,000.²⁰



However, while NYC spends over \$11 billion annually on NYPD direct expenses, it is hard to have a true assessment of the costs of policing in NYC. **The NYPD budget is notoriously opaque and secretive**, making it difficult to know how much the NYPD spends on surveillance technologies, public relations and propaganda.

In addition, there are expenses that the NYC Police Foundation pays directly. It is a private-public charity whose sole purpose is to fundraise and provide resources for the NYPD.²¹ Sometimes referred to as the NYPD’s slush fund, the police foundation spent almost \$7.8 million on NYPD projects in 2021.²²

19. NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, Annual Claims Report, FY14–FY21

20. *The New York City Council’s Fiscal Year 2022 Adopted Expense Budget Adjustment Summary / Schedule C*

21. <https://www.nycpolicefoundation.org>

22. The NYC Police Foundation spent \$7,849,178 in support of NYPD programs, according to its 2021 annual report, p. 19.

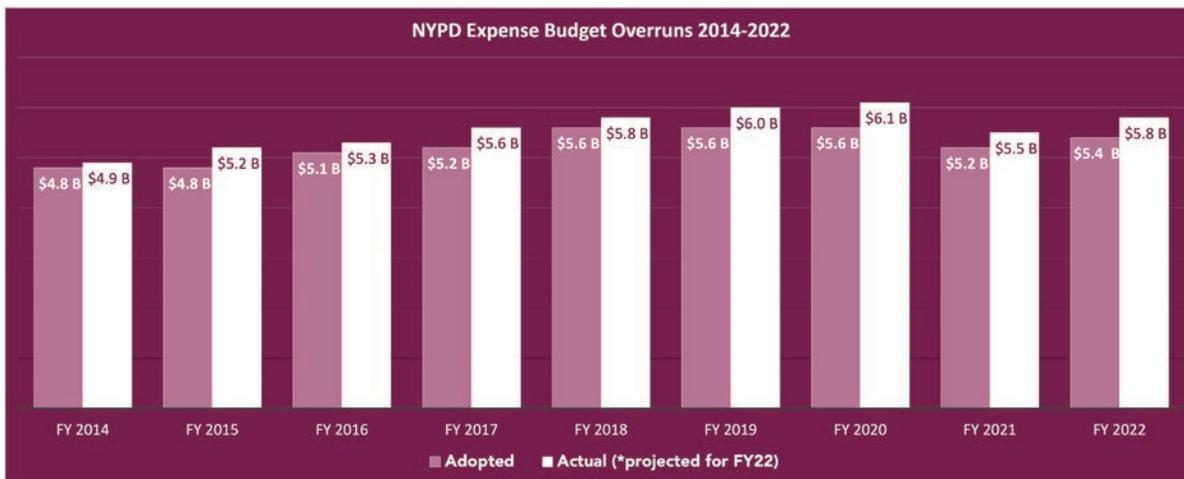
The NYPD in NYC's Budget Process

While the bloated size and excessive growth of the NYPD's budget compared to other important agencies is cause for concern, the NYPD's approach to its adopted budget reflects other problems. Two of the most concerning issues related to the NYPD's budget are that the:

- NYPD routinely overspends its approved budget, with no consequences.
- NYPD is allowed to keep much of its budget opaque and secret.

The above two issues reflect and reinforce the outsized power the NYPD exerts in NYC, including overspending city tax dollars.

The NYPD routinely exceeds its expense budget. Since 2013, the NYPD has gone over its budget by an average of \$332 million. In the current fiscal year (FY22), the NYPD is forecast to go \$403 million overbudget.²³ To put that in perspective, NYPD overspending in FY22 is more than triple the amount spent annually on the entire Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), which provides much-needed summer jobs for young people and has a proven track record of improving safety and well-being for communities.



The NYPD appears to experience no meaningful consequences for this regular over spending and is arguably NYC's most protected agency in budget negotiations. The NYPD seems to enjoy preferential treatment in the budget and

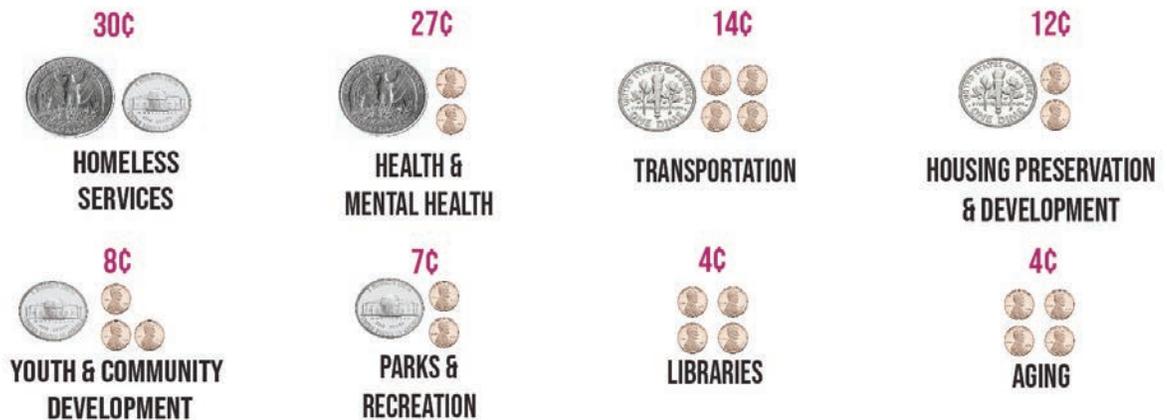
23. Calculations based on differences between NYPD adopted expense budgets and actual expense spending FY14- FY21. Adopted NYPD expense budget numbers from expense, revenue contract budget, city of New York for FY14, FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, FY20, FY21. Actual NYPD expense spending from agency analysis in Message of the Mayor, City of New York, Executive Budget from FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, FY20, FY21, and FY22.

budget monitoring process, where it is routinely permitted to disregard limits of democratically approved budgets.

FOR EVERY DOLLAR THAT WENT TO THE NYPD AND CORRECTIONS,



OTHER AGENCIES GOT:



It can be argued that despite regular overspending, the NYPD is not only protected but also regularly rewarded with additional monies from councilmember discretionary grants. In June of 2021, 23 councilmembers awarded 44 discretionary grants directly to the NYPD and/or to NYPD-related programming (e.g., Police Athletic League, Explorers Program). Those grants totaled \$236,000 from the city council’s FY22 discretionary grants.²⁴

Lack of NYPD Fiscal Transparency Obstructs Oversight

The NYPD budget is arguably the most secretive and opaque of any NYC agency. The lack of transparency functions as structural protection from meaningful fiscal oversight, which has facilitated the ballooning of the NYPD budget over the years.

24. The New York City Council’s Fiscal Year 2022 Adopted Expense Budget Adjustment Summary / Schedule C

The NYPD's lack of budget transparency – combined with its preferential treatment in the budget oversight process – contributes to (and is the natural result of) the NYPD's outsized power in city affairs.

In fact, **even when the city council has tried to reign in NYPD overspending or lack of budget transparency, the NYPD has simply ignored the council's requirements and/or exploited loopholes to defy being regulated.**

An example can be found in the FY21 terms and conditions for the NYPD budget. In response to CPR members and partners' demands, the city council included a requirement in the adopted FY21 budget for the NYPD to publicly report on private actors that fund the NYPD.²⁵ Part of the purpose of that was to create transparency related to the millions of dollars the NYC Police Foundation fundraises and spends on NYPD expenses each year.

In spite of knowing the intent of the council's requirement, the **NYPD exploited a loophole** in the written terms to continue to keep secret the details of the NYC Police Foundation's spending for NYPD. **The NYPD reported none of the police foundation's contributions** for NYPD programs and initiatives in the required report.²⁶ In spite of that clear undermining of budgetary terms and conditions, to date the NYPD has experienced no meaningful consequences.

Another example is the NYPD overtime budget. The NYPD regularly overspends its overtime budget, often as much as \$200 million a year, without ever once having any meaningful consequences from the mayor or city council.²⁷ The NYPD overtime budget of \$454 million is more than the entire budget for the city's Department of the Aging, which requires crucial mental health and meal services to seniors.²⁸

IV. NYPD Mission Creep and Role Expansion

Much of the infrastructure, programs and services crucial for healthy and safe communities have been defunded in NYC's Black, Latinx and other communities of color for decades. The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare and exacerbated many preexisting and systemic inequalities and crises in NYC, including lack of affordable housing, inadequate public health infrastructure (including mental health deserts in communities of color), lack of living wage employment opportunities, educational access inequalities, food insecurity and more. All of those are **core safety infrastructures for any community to be healthy and safe.**

25. [Fiscal Year 2021 Terms and Conditions, New York City Budget](#)

26. NYPD Private Budget Funding Report can be found in the "terms & conditions" section of this page: <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/fy2021/>

27. *Expense, Revenue Contract Budget*, City of New York for FY14, FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, FY20, FY21

28. *Report of the Finance Division on the Fiscal 2022 Executive Budget for the New York Police Department*, May 11, 2021

While core safety infrastructures has been largely defunded and under-resourced, the NYPD's budget has ballooned, and the role of policing has expanded. The expanded role of policing in social service strategies has been at the expense of adequately resourcing community-based infrastructure and services that could more effectively intervene in and prevent violence and create healthy and safe communities in the immediate and long term. With its massive budget, the NYPD plays a daily role in helping to hide visible signs of inequality in NYC.

Adams even further has expanded the NYPD's role in social services and public health problems in which police should have no role.

NYPD in homeless outreach and engagement: Adams has rolled back one of the small gains of the #BudgetJustice and #DefundNYPD campaigns and brought the NYPD back into the work of homeless "outreach and engagement." The NYPD has returned to intimidating homeless New Yorkers by aggressively destroying homeless encampments in the city, in addition to being violent toward homeless New Yorkers in city parks and subways. There is no role for the NYPD in homeless outreach and engagement, and the city should instead focus on getting all New Yorkers who need it into long-term, low-income housing.

NYPD-run community centers: In 2019, the NYPD unveiled a brand new, state-of-the-art community center in East New York that NYPD personnel run. The community center is aimed primarily at young people, with educational, recreational and social programming. Creating an NYPD-run community center does not build the community's power – it expands and legitimizes the NYPD's growing role, scope and power in communities of color. The East New York community center is an example of community infrastructure that the community, with you and family development experts, can and should run –not a law enforcement agency.

NYPD-led youth programming: There are many ways that the NYPD has expanded its youth engagement strategies, including the creation of youth coordination officers (YCOs). Monies spent towards NYPD-led youth programming would be better invested in community organizations that young people and youth development organizations run. The NYPD's ability to unilaterally expand its youth programming while youth-serving organizations face annual budget strains is a clear demonstration of investing in policing and criminalization instead of communities.

NYPD role in mental health response: There is a growing national consensus that police should not have a role in mental health response. Strengthening and supporting community mental health, especially coming out of the pandemic, requires major investments in culturally competent, community-based mental health infrastructure and services. Instead, the NYPD's budget and role have grown to respond to mental health crisis calls, sometimes with deadly consequences.

Despite having no successful track record for this role, the city continues to invest in NYPD-led and NYPD-involved mental health crisis response. That includes the NYPD-led Mental Health Co-Response Teams as well as the NYPD-involved BHEARD program.

NYPD Bee unit: The NYPD has a bee unit²⁹ with its own twitter account. NYC's Parks Department and Department of Health already play roles monitoring and addressing issues that may come up with bees. This is a ludicrous example of NYPD mission expansion that has more to do with manufacturing positive public relations opportunities for the NYPD than with public safety.

The NYPD's role expansion – which increases its budget, size and scope – is unnecessary and undermines building strong community-based infrastructure and programs. It also puts more and more New Yorkers in unnecessary contact with the criminal legal system. We cannot allow the city to continue to place police in roles that are clearly better suited for other professionals.

V. Investing in Community Safety Solutions

We are requesting the city council truly invest in a public health approach to community safety. Black, Latinx and other New Yorkers of color deserve investments in evidence-based violence prevention and violence intervention strategies that make short- and long-term impacts on individuals and communities. At the end of this report, we have compiled an extensive list of investments for the FY23 budget that will make communities safer not only in the next six months but for years to come. Here are some highlights of what we are proposing.

- *Invest in Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs:* Adams and many other city officials are quick to uplift the city's crisis management system (CMS) as a beacon of nonpolice community safety programs that have a proven track record of decreasing gun violence by up to 80% and repairing community relationships.³⁰ Organizations like Life Camp, Inc., for instance, are doing transformative work with young people and have been a leader in public health-based approaches to combat and eradicate community violence. These community violence intervention organizations are doing an enormous amount of work operating on budgets that .00003% of the NYPD budget. If Life Camp, Inc. were to run a 24/7 crisis management site at full capacity, it would cost the city \$20 million, a mere drop in the bucket compared to the \$11.2 billion the city spends on the NYPD. The total budget for the crisis management system, split between 23 organizations and many partner sites is \$138 million,³¹ but advocates of crisis management systems have long-been asking for \$1 Billion

29. <https://nypost.com/2019/05/30/meet-the-nypds-badass-bee-cops/>

30. LifeCamp, Inc.

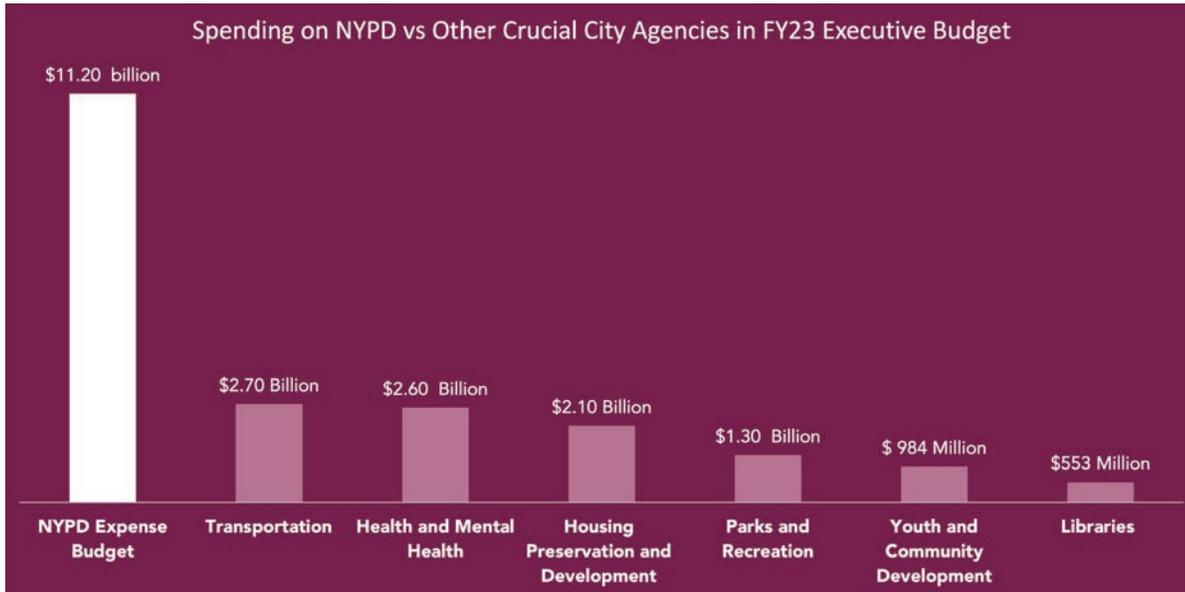
31. New York City Council Executive Budget Hearing, Public Safety Committee, May 11, 2022

dollars in investments to run programs all over the city at full capacity, increase the number of programs throughout the city, and provide the full-scope of wrap around support services that communities need. A \$1 Billion dollar investment is the kind of bold investments that New Yorkers deserve and that we know will have a meaningful impact on community safety. Similarly, the city has repeatedly cut hate violence prevention programs since FY20, despite the innovative and effective strategies these programs employ to address the rise in hate violence citywide. That includes the city council's Hate Violence Prevention Initiative, which funds community-based organizations to engage in culturally competent hate violence prevention and education. Advocates are calling for a \$5 million investment in these programs, which is approximately the cost of NYPD's public relations budget.

- *Invest in Mental Health and Well-being:* A public health approach to community safety means investing in the mental health and well-being of Black, Latinx and other communities of color. The inadequate state of NYC's health, mental health and drug use harm reduction programs was palpably evident during the pandemic. The last two years have seen the highest overdose death rate, long waiting lists for basic mental health care and hospitals that were stretched to the max running well above their capacity. Community well-being is an important preventative strategy in a public health approach to community safety and the city needs to be investing in community-based mental health programs, overdose prevention sites, school counselors and social workers, crisis stabilization centers, and mental health crisis response teams.

- *Invest in Housing and Employment:* The safest communities have the most resources, not the most police. When we ensure that all New Yorkers have safe, stable and affordable housing; workforce training; and good employment opportunities, we ensure that our neighborhoods and communities will be safer. NYC is a far cry from that, with the crisis of homelessness exacerbated by the pandemic and with employment opportunities forecast to take years to bounce back from without meaningful intervention from the city. The city needs to address the homelessness crisis by investing in low-income housing units, repairing and improving New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) public housing units and ensuring that the city addresses the impending eviction crisis. NYC also needs to make much bolder investments in workforce development, including fully funding SYEP, adult literacy programs, workforce training and development programs, and increased protections for low-wage workers.

VI. NYPD Proposed FY23 Budget Cuts



NYPD Hiring Freeze and Headcount Reduction

Reducing police violence requires reducing unnecessary contacts between police and the public. What is clear across NYC and the country is that when asking folks to think about safe neighborhoods and communities, the common denominator is not more policing but rather more investments in basic resources needed to survive.

As noted earlier, the NYPD is the largest police department in the country, with over 50,000 staff, including approximately 35,000 officers. The NYPD officer headcount is about triple the headcount of the Chicago Police Department, which is the next largest police force in the U.S. NYC has one of the highest rates of officers per capita, approximately 436 officers per 100,000 people.³²

In this transition period where NYC moves toward a healthy and safe recovery from a global pandemic, what is clear is that massive police presence has not kept communities safe. In fact, decades of increasing funding for police while defunding community infrastructure in low-income communities of color has made NYC less healthy and less safe.

To reduce police violence, we need to reduce the NYPD's massive staffing and redirect those monies to nonpolice community safety solutions that can prevent and reduce violence in NYC streets and homes.

32. Bloomberg City Lab, May 6, 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-06/new-york-city-s-police-budget-is-increasing-again>

Uniform Officer Hiring Freeze

Cut \$269.1 million from the NYPD expense budget

Additional savings of \$259.5 million from centrally allocated funds

Total of \$528.6 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions

There has been repeated evidence over the past year that the NYPD headcount is bloated, allowing for scores of officers to be deployed at whim, in militarized fashion, to assignments that don't increase safety (e.g., to brutally police protests and sweeping homeless encampments).

The NYPD is projected to hire roughly 2,300 officers in FY23 (to account for an annual attrition rate of about 2,300 officers). **A hiring freeze could reduce the NYPD expense budget by approximately \$269.1 million.** That would result in an additional baseline savings of at least \$259.5 million from the centrally allocated costs of fringe and pensions resulting in **a total of at least \$528.6 million that could be redirected to community-based safety solutions.**³³

Cancel New Gun Violence Positions

Cut \$2.3 million from the NYPD expense budget

Additional savings of \$2.2 million from centrally allocated funds

Total of \$4.5 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions

Adams has added 20 new NYPD positions to combat gun violence. That is an ill-conceived use of city dollars, and that money would be better spent in nonpolice programs with a proven history of reducing gun violence. Cutting those positions would reduce the NYPD expense budget by \$2.3 million and result in additional baselines savings of at least \$2.2 million from the centrally allocated costs of fringe and pensions, resulting in \$4.5 million that could be redirected to community-based safety solutions.³⁴

Address Failure to Fire NYPD Officers and Cancel New NYPD Positions

The NYPD has a documented history of protecting and refusing to fire officers who kill, brutalize, sexually assault/harass, unconstitutionally stop, lie in official statements, refuse to identify themselves, retaliate against complaints and otherwise engage in misconduct against members of the public.

33. This is a calculation based on average uniform NYPD officer salary from the *Report of the Finance Division on the Fiscal 2022 Preliminary Budget* for the New York Police Department, March 16, 2021. Throughout this report, we are using a 96.45% uniform fringe rate from the NYC Quadrennial Report 2015 (Appendix K). This is an extremely conservative estimate, given that for FY23 NYPD centrally allocated costs are higher than the NYPD expense budget. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/quadrennial/downloads/pdf/2015-Quadrennial-Commission-Report.pdf>

34. Ibid

In 2018, secret files revealed that the NYPD let hundreds of officers keep their jobs even though they had been guilty of egregious acts of misconduct, including brutality, sexual assault and lying to grand juries and district attorneys.³⁵

Families whose loved ones were killed by NYPD officers have faced extraordinary hurdles to try to fire those officers. It is incredibly rare and often only as a result of yearslong, high-visibility campaigns that officers are either forced out or fired. It took over five years to force the NYPD to finally convene a disciplinary trial that resulted in the firing of Daniel Pantaleo for his killing of Eric Garner. Eight years later, none of the officers who engaged in misconduct in the Garner case have been fired.

While the city council can't mandate discipline by the NYPD, the council can use its budgetary authority to ensure there are consequences for the NYPD's systemic refusal to fire officers who engage in misconduct against members of the public. Since the NYPD refuses to hold officers accountable for misconduct against New Yorkers and routinely keeps officers on payroll in spite of egregious acts, the city council and the mayor should deduct the following amounts from the NYPD expense budget:

Cancel Officers on Modified Duty

Cut \$28.8 million from the NYPD expense budget

Additional savings of \$27.8 million from centrally allocated funds

Total of \$56.6 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions

During a recent council budget hearing, it was revealed that there are currently 247 NYPD officers on modified duty.³⁶ Because the NYPD refuses to fire officers in a timely way for harming civilians, we demand that the NYPD expense budget be cut by the equivalent of this cost as a consequence for protecting abusive police officers.

Cutting those positions would reduce the NYPD expense budget by \$28.8 million and result in additional baseline savings of at least \$27.8 million from the centrally allocated costs of fringe and pensions, resulting in \$56.6 million that could be redirected to community safety solutions.

Cut Pay of NYPD Officers Who Killed New Yorkers

Cut \$23.3 million from the NYPD expense budget

Savings of \$22.5 million from centrally allocated expenses

Total of \$45.8 million redirected to community safety solutions

35. In 2019, BuzzFeed reported on hundreds of cases where NYPD refused to fire officers who had been found guilty of police brutality, perjury, sexual harassment and more. "Secret NYPD Files: Officers Who Lie and Brutally Beat People Can Keep Their Jobs," March 5, 2018, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/kendalltaggart/secret-nypd-files-hundreds-of-officers-committed-serious#.vtJoQdj2w9>

36. New York City Council Executive Budget Hearing, Public Safety Committee, May 11, 2022

Justice Committee and CPR staff researched and analyzed payrolls of NYPD officers in 12 cases where officers killed New Yorkers, and the NYPD is still paying at least one officer involved in the killing in the most recent year that payroll records are publicly available. Pay calculations totaled \$23.3 million,³⁷ and included in that small sample are the officers responsible for the killings and related misconduct or cover-up of the following NYPD killings: Amadou Diallo (1999), Ramarley Graham (2012), Shantel Davis (2012), Mohamed Bah (2012), Kimani Gray (2013), Eric Garner (2014), Delrawn Small (2016), Kadeem Torres (2017), Allan Feliz (2017), Saheed Vassell (2018), Kawaski Trawick (2019) and Antonio Williams (2019).

There are many other cases where NYPD officers have not been fired for killing New Yorkers and are still paid by the NYPD. **The payroll costs calculated here relate only to a dozen NYPD police killings. The above calculations represent only a small fraction** of the total paid to continue to employ officers who kill, brutalize and otherwise engage in misconduct against members of the public.

The NYPD refuses to fire officers in a timely way and too often does not fire or discipline officers at all for actions against the public. The mayor and city council should reduce the NYPD budget with the total costs that taxpayers have covered to keep those officers on the force and redirect these funds to nonpolice community safety solutions.³⁸

The cost of payroll for 247 modified officers is approximately \$23.3 million plus an additional \$22.5 million in costs from the centrally allocated budget, totaling \$45.8 million redirected to community safety solutions.

Cut Costs of Police Violence Judgments and Settlements
Cut \$200 million from the NYPD expense budget

Every year, NYC pays millions to settle lawsuits against the NYPD for violence and abuse against the public. That money comes out of a central fund, not the NYPD budget. When police and other agents of the state kill or injure New Yorkers, the city should compensate survivors of that violence and family members of those killed to the fullest extent. The NYPD should also face consequences for continuing to facilitate violence against members of the public. Last year, New Yorkers paid \$200 million for police misconduct lawsuits.³⁹

The NYPD's annual expense budget should be cut by the equivalent of the average of settlements for the prior seven years as a consequence for the NYPD's systemic refusal to fire officers and its routine support and protection of abusive officers.

37. Total pay of officers from New York City Open Data Website

38. Calculations based on average uniform NYPD officer salary and 96.45% fringe rate

39. New York City Comptroller Brad Lander, annual claims report, April 9, 2021

Remove Police From Mental Health and Homeless Services and Youth “Engagement”

One of the most important steps in moving away from criminalizing communities and toward supporting and uplifting them is to disentangle the NYPD from the city’s crucial social services. The NYPD should not be used as the enforcement muscle in addressing the homelessness crisis, nor should it be tasked with responding to mental health crises or school discipline. Those are tasks that the NYPD is ill-suited for and that put New Yorkers at greater risk for increased violence and criminalization.

#PoliceFreeSchools

Keep \$389.4 million in the Department of Education budget instead of transferring it to the NYPD

Cut \$24.4 million from the NYPD expense budget

Savings of \$23.5 million from centrally allocated expenses

Total of \$437.3 that can be redirected into community safety solutions

For years, students of color, youth organizations, teachers and parents have been fighting for #PoliceFreeSchools and the creation of school environments that are safe and healthy for students and staff. As noted by the Center for Popular Democracy, Make the Road NY, Urban Youth Collaborative and others in their [“Arrested Learning”](#) report, “New York City funnels hundreds of millions of dollars into the school-to-prison-and-deportation pipeline each year.” It floods schools in Black, Latinx and other communities of color with police officers instead of investing these monies in creating school environments where students feel safe and secure. #PoliceFreeSchools demands include removing NYPD and school safety officers (known as school safety agents or SSAs) from schools and investing in school counselors, social workers, support staff and restorative justice programs.

Monies for NYPD personnel in schools can be found in both the NYPD budget and the Department of Education budget. Removing NYPD and school safety agents from schools could result in \$437 million that could be reinvested in community safety solutions for students.⁴⁰

Youth Coordination Officers

Cut \$26.9 million from the NYPD expense budget

Additional savings of \$25.9 million from centrally allocated funds

Total of \$52.8 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions

In 2020, the NYPD unilaterally launched a new youth initiative that included more than 230 YCOs in each of the department’s 77 precincts.⁴¹ The officers conduct

40. *Supporting Schedules*, New York City FY23 Executive Budget

41. New York City Council Executive Budget Hearing, Public Safety Committee, May 11, 2022

home visits and make other contact with individual youth whom the NYPD has labeled “at risk” of criminal activity. This program is dangerous to young people in the city, giving license to the NYPD to surveil and track any young person it deems fit. The less contact that young people have with the NYPD, the better, and NYC cannot continue to fund the NYPD youth arm while youth organizations and programs – particularly those that engage in community organizing and political education with young people – are under-resourced across the city.

The monies used for the NYPD YCOs and other police-led youth programming would be better invested in community-based youth organizations and use to support community and youth-led youth programming without police. For youth of color whom the NYPD already targets, further interactions with police and criminalization are misguided.

The cost of NYPD YCOs is at least \$52.8 million. That includes approximately \$26.9 million in the NYPD FY22 expense budget, plus an estimated \$25.9 million in centrally allocated costs.⁴² That does not account for additional expenses that are not salary related.

NYPD Mental Health Co-Response Teams

Cut \$2.9 million from the NYPD expense budget

Additional savings of \$2.8 million from centrally allocated funds

Total of \$5.7 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions

New Yorkers who experience an emotional or psychiatric crisis need a response system that is based in public health principles and that can connect them to the services they need. The city’s plan to train police to respond to emotional distress calls and pair officers with mental health workers is a backward and failed approach.

People in emotional distress account for 25%-50% of all individuals killed by police across the country.⁴³ Regardless of training, the **NYPD should not have a role in mental health response.**

The NYPD co-response teams should be eliminated, and the money should be invested in increasing nonpolice, community-based mental health services and programs that can provide general mental health services (including crisis prevention), crisis response and post-crisis wraparound support.

42. Calculations based on average uniform NYPD officer salary and 96.45% fringe rate

43. *Overlooked in the Undercounted: The Role of Mental Illness in Fatal Law Enforcement Encounters*, December 2015

NYPD Homeless Outreach, Engagement and Subway Sweeps
Cut at least \$4.1 million from the NYPD expense budget
Additional savings of \$3.9 million from centrally allocated funds
Total of \$8 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions⁴⁴

In 2020, in response to #NYCBudgetJustice coalition demands, the NYPD Homeless Outreach Unit was disbanded, and the Memorandum of Understanding between the NYPD and the Department of Homeless Services dissolved, in the recognition that homelessness is a public health issue and requires a public health response. However, Adams has brought back the NYPD as the violent enforcement muscle in addressing homelessness in full force, resulting in aggressive policing of homeless New Yorkers all over the city, including the very destabilizing dismantling of homeless encampments.

The city should not use the NYPD to remove homeless people from the streets without actually meeting people's needs, and the aggressive policing of homeless New Yorkers must stop. The city must stop the continued deployment of NYPD to manage the city's homelessness crisis and instead address the root causes of the problem. Having the NYPD harass, detain and criminalize homeless people puts homeless New Yorkers at a greater risk of violence.

The two units most responsible for the harassment of homeless New Yorkers are the Business Improvement District and the Subway Safety Task Force. Those units should be eliminated and \$8 million should be redirected to addressing the crisis of housing and homelessness.

Eliminate Anti-Crime Units, SRG, VICE and Other Units

Rebranded Anti-Crime Units aka Neighborhood Safety Teams
Cut \$58.5 million from the NYPD expense budget
Additional savings of \$56.4 million from centrally allocated funds
Total of \$114.9 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions

The newly branded Neighborhood Safety Teams are reiterations of the Anti-Crime Plain Clothes Units that came before them, plainclothes units that were characterized by an overly aggressive mandate that proactively and aggressively targets Black, Latinx and other communities of color. Plainclothes units have a notorious history for racial profiling, violence, unconstitutional stops and the suppression of New Yorkers' rights.

In the early 2000s, groups led by the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights – known today as the Justice Committee – alongside Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, the Center for Constitutional Rights and other allies that later founded

44. True costs of NYPD management of the homeless crisis are unknown

CPR – successfully won the dismantling of the Street Crimes Units. Since then, mayors and the NYPD have attempted to rebrand and retrain the units; however, the abuses remain.

Adams claims his Neighborhood Safety Teams are different, but recent reporting on the teams by New York Focus has uncovered that a great number of the officers have documented complaints against them for excessive force and other abuses against New Yorkers.⁴⁵ More than 96% of the precincts that have these teams are in primarily Black or Latinx communities. By the end of FY23, there are slated to be over 500 officers⁴⁶ on the Neighborhood Safety Teams, costing \$58.5 million in salaries and another \$56.4 million in central expenses, totaling \$114.9 million.

Strategic Response Group

Cut \$68.1 million from the NYPD expense budget

Additional savings of \$65.6 million from centrally allocated funds

Total of \$133.7 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions

The Strategic Response Group (SRG) has elicited protests from New Yorkers since former NYPD Commissioner Bill Bratton first announced the idea of the unit. In fact, when the SRG's purpose was made public (for counterterrorism, policing protests and disorder), the public outcry forced the de Blasio administration to say that it would not move forward. In spite of that, the SRG was created in 2015 as a hyper-militarized unit of a few hundred officers and has expanded significantly since.

Since its creation, the SRG has proven to be especially brutal. It led the violent police response to the 2020 spring and summer racial justice protests against police violence, which has resulted in a slew of lawsuits for human rights violations, including one by the New York state attorney general. SRG officers were also among the officers who killed Saheed Vassell in Crown Heights in 2016.

There are approximately 445 SRG officers, with a budget of \$68.1 million in FY23. Cutting that unit would also result in an additional \$65.6 million from centrally allocated expenses, resulting in \$133.7 million that can be reinvested into community safety solutions.⁴⁷

Public Morals Division: VICE Enforcement

Cut \$12.8 million from the NYPD expense budget

Additional savings of \$12.3 million from centrally allocated funds

Total of \$25.1 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions

45. "Exclusive: Here Are the New NYPD Gun Units' Trainees. Many Have Histories of Excessive Force Complaints," Chris Gelardi, May 23, 2022

46. New York City Council Public Safety Executive Budget Hearing, May 11, 2022; it was said that the plans were to New York City Council Executive Budget Hearing, Public Safety Committee, May 11, 2022

47. *Supporting Schedules*, New York City FY23 Executive Budget

The VICE unit is responsible for discriminatory policing and targeting of LGBTQ and other New Yorkers. VICE is notorious for harassment, sexual violence, abuse and false arrests of Black, Latinx and Asian trans and cis women, as well as sex workers and others who work in informal economies, including massage and escort services.

The VICE unit should be eliminated, and money should be used to support people in the sex trades before they are arrested, instead of being used to make arrests and mandate services post-arrest. The reallocated funds should go to health and wellness services, competent legal representation, educational opportunities and nonprofit organizations working with individuals involved in the sex trades.

There are 98 officers in the VICE Unit with an allotted \$12.8 million in the NYPD expense budget and another \$12.3 million in centrally allocated expenses, totaling \$25.1 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions.⁴⁸

Cancel Other NYPD Budget Bloat

NYPD Public Relations

Cut \$3.4 million from the NYPD expense budget

Additional savings of \$1.6 million from centrally allocated funds

Total of \$5 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions

At the Council Executive Budget Hearing on May 11, 2022, it was revealed that there are 36 positions within the NYPD's Deputy Commissioner for Public Information (DCPI) office that manages NYPD public relations. With a budget of \$3.4 million,⁴⁹ this PR arm of the NYPD dwarfs other agencies that have much smaller press departments, including some that combine intergovernmental and PR functions.

The DCPI budget is believed to be only a fraction of the full PR apparatus that is at the NYPD's discretion. Other PR and propaganda capacity that is not included in DCPI's budget includes contracts with private firms to aid with NYPD recruitment and PR costs that are paid for by private entities like the NYC Police Foundation. The NYC Police Foundation and other private sources have been known to cover strategic communications costs, including the creation and placement of propaganda advertising, videos, blogs and podcasts. The NYPD PR budget should be cut.

Cutting the NYPD public relations budget would mean cutting \$3.4 million from the NYPD Expense Budget, resulting in additional savings of \$1.6 million from

48. *Supporting Schedules*, New York City FY23 Executive Budget

49. *Supporting Schedules*, New York City FY23 Executive Budget

centrally allocated funds resulting in a total of \$5 million that can be redirected to community safety solutions.⁵⁰

NYPD Overtime

NYPD overtime is a prime example of NYPD budget bloat. Over the last decade, the NYPD has routinely overspent its overtime budget by upward of \$200 million with no consequence, resulting in the city spending \$4.6 billion in the last seven years on NYPD overtime.⁵¹

Instead of curbing NYPD overtime overspending, Adams has added \$94 million to NYPD overtime for FY22 and another \$18 million in overtime for FY23. That brings the total FY23 overtime budget to \$454 million, which is millions more than the cost of the summer youth employment program and many other city programs combined.⁵²

Overtime is widely known to be abused by individual officers who conduct baseless arrests at the end of their shifts to take advantage of additional overtime pay, which also benefits their retirement benefits. The NYPD has also been using overtime to pay NYPD officers to attend community events, as was revealed at the May 11 Executive Budget Public Safety Hearing. Basically, NYPD overtime is a racket, and it is an example of the waste and over-resourcing of the department.

Instead of repeatedly claiming that there is little to be done about the NYPD overtime budget, the council should exercise responsible fiscal oversight and cut the NYPD overtime budget to limit unnecessary spending, in addition to doing its due diligence and rejecting additions to overtime spending throughout the fiscal year.

NYPD Surveillance and Technology Increases

The total amount the NYPD is spending on surveillance technologies is unknown. Despite efforts to force transparency, the full spending on surveillance and technology and the personnel required to operate it are not known to the public. We know that the NYPD is in possession of powerful surveillance technology, including facial recognition tech, X-ray vans, stingrays, ShotSpotters, drones and other military equipment – powerful spying technology that the NYPD has full authority to deploy on New Yorkers without any oversight.⁵³

50. DCPI budget from supporting schedules, centrally allocated costs calculated based on NYC civilian fringe rate of 45.10% from the NYC Quadrennial Report 2015 (Appendix K)

51. *Supporting Schedules*, City of New York, FY14-FY23

52. Citizens Budget Commission, *What's Up With (in) the NYPD Fiscal Year 2023 Executive Budget*, May 9, 2022

53. <https://www.nyclu.org/en/news/nypd-published-its-arsenal-surveillance-tech-heres-what-we-learned>

Adams has included a \$47.2 million increase for NYPD technology in the FY23 budget, but that is really only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to NYPD spending on technology devices. NYC cannot continue to increase spending on surveillance technology; that money should be cut from the budget and diverted into much-needed community safety solutions.

VII. Community Safety Investments

Invest in Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs

Hate Violence Prevention Programs: \$28 Million

Hate violence prevention programs that are rooted in communities have strong track records of preventing and addressing hate violence. They are programs that ensure a comprehensive, community-driven approach to preventing bias incidents and hate crimes and that strengthen public safety. Despite that, many hate violence prevention programs lack the full funding needed to address New Yorkers' increasing needs. We're calling on the council to invest in at least \$28 million to fully fund P.A.T.H. Forward, Hate Crimes Prevention Initiative and Hope Against Hate.

Crisis Management Systems: \$1 Billion

As the city faces an increase in gun violence, Adams claims that his budget makes significant investments in the CMS that have a proven track record of intervening to prevent and significantly reduce gun violence. The CMS is a network that deploys teams of trained violence interrupters and credible messengers who mediate conflicts on the street and connect high-risk individuals to services that can reduce the long-term risk of violence. From 2010 to 2019, data shows the CMS has contributed to an average 40% reduction in shootings across program areas compared to a 31% decline in shootings in the 17 highest-violence precincts in NYC.⁵⁴ In spite of these programs' success in preventing and reducing gun violence in neighborhoods they are based in, Adams' proposal only allots a total of \$138 million for these essential violence reduction programs. That is nothing close to the \$1 billion that violence interruption groups, credible messengers and advocates are calling for to fully fund the NYC CMS.

Restorative Justice Programs in Schools: \$120 Million

Our students need culturally responsive and healing-centered programs and school staff with proven track records of being able to help students thrive in and out of school. Restorative justice programs in schools keep students safe and out

54. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/peacenyc/interventions/crisis-management.page>

of the criminal legal system, but Adams has remained silent about an increased investment in these innovative programs. Advocates are calling for \$120 million to fund restorative justice coordinators as well as expand current restorative justice programming.

Invest in Mental Health and Overdose Prevention

Overdose Prevention Programs

After two years of some of the highest rates of overdose deaths in decades, NYC needs an aggressive plan to make sure that there are plenty of safe injection sites and Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs) to ensure people won't die. Currently, there are two OPCs in NYC that recently opened and are already demonstrating success at both preventing overdose deaths and connecting people to crucial public health services such as housing, treatment services and mental health services. Within the first three months, the two sites in East Harlem and Washington Heights have received more than 10,000 visits and reversed nearly 200 overdoses, well surpassing the initial yearly estimate of reversing 100-130 overdoses. OPCs also are demonstrating a significant increase in people's engagement with treatment. That's why the two current OPCs should be funded to operate 24/7.⁵⁵

The city must also increase the capacity of harm reduction programs (including syringe service programs) as well as methadone delivery programs and peer support programs such as the Relay Program. Funding should also be allocated to broad-based community drug checking kits and broad-based public education on drug use and resources. Investing in those programs will help ensure that more New Yorkers who are in need of services get connected to appropriate care.

Mental Health Crisis Response & Investments in Core Mental Health Services

The city needs to invest in a mental health crisis response system that sends qualified mental health professional and peers, not the NYPD, out to help New Yorkers in crisis. However, the FY23 budget includes a misguided investment in the BHEARD mental health response program, which both relies heavily on the NYPD and is poorly designed to meet the needs of Black, Latinx and other communities of color.

The citywide expansion of BHEARD should be canceled and the monies should be reinvested instead into the new federal 988 mental health crisis hotline that is designed to work with peer-based mental health crisis teams and connect to new state crisis stabilization centers. That is a much sounder model of mental health crisis response. In addition, the city should invest in community-based mental

55. <https://www.gothamgazette.com/state/11167-new-york-city-expand-overdose-prevention-centers>

health clinics run for and by Black, Latinx and other communities of color.

- **Invest in the New Federal 988 Mental Health Crisis Number.**

New York state is about to roll out the federal 988 mental health crisis hotline that will be linked with the new crisis stabilization centers and mental health crisis teams. Currently there are slated to be two to four crisis stabilization centers in the city as well as an expansion of peer-based mental health crisis teams. NYC should invest to ensure that Black, Latinx and other communities of color are meaningfully involved in the rollout process as well as people with lived experience with mental health crisis. In addition, funds should be used to ensure that mental health crisis response teams are culturally competent and rooted in the communities that they serve.

- **Increase the capacity of Health Engagement and Assessment Teams (HEAT).**

HEAT provides a public health-focused approach to serving New Yorkers presenting with substance use and mental health concerns to reduce their involvement in the criminal legal system. These teams, which began in 2020, have a sound and impactful model that engages people with the most frequent 911 contact, connecting New Yorkers in need to care and other stabilizing support.

- **Invest in Core Community Based Mental Health Service in Black, Latinx and Other Communities of Color.**

New York City needs more community-based mental health services for Black, Latinx and other communities of color. There are large swaths of the city with scant mental health services, and many people stay on waitlists for months before being able to get care. We need to invest in those core community-based mental health services that play crucial roles in preventing mental health crisis. While investing in mental health crisis response is key, the strategy will fail if we do not invest in culturally and linguistically competent preventative mental health care as well as postcrisis care. We need to invest in programs that we know will work, such as clubhouse models, respite centers and behavioral health services in schools and community centers. We also need investments in building and expanding the mental health workforce, ensuring that there are enough social workers and mental health counselors to address New Yorkers' need and work to raise salaries of these crucial positions to aid in worker retention.

Invest in Young People

Young people need quality services to thrive and succeed. They need community support and a range of options from mental health care to employment to educational opportunities. While Adams claims to be investing in NYC's young people, the investments do not do anything to meet the need for services and support among NYC youth.

- **Restore Cuts to Community Schools: \$9 million**

As part of Mayor Adams FY23 Budget, the budgets of 52 Community Schools across the city have been cut. Community Schools have a proven success record and their relevance and necessity have only become magnified during the pandemic as they provide critical services to some of our City's most vulnerable youth. As immigrant youth and youth of color struggle to re-engage with school after the pandemic's disruptions, the Council must restore and baseline the \$9 million in funding for all 52 community schools facing cuts.

- **Fund School Social Workers and Counselors: \$150 Million**

It goes without saying that all children and families need access to social workers and counselors, and yet many NYC public schools still lack the adequate staff to provide all of their children with the supports they need. Especially now as the pandemic has impacted the mental health of so many children, NYC needs to ensure that they get the supports they need at this critical juncture.

- **Fund the Mental Health Continuum: \$5 Million**

This is a promising model to help students with significant mental health challenges access direct mental health services in schools and connect students to other services throughout the city. This funding, however, is temporary and therefore should be extended so that students do not lose these crucial services.

- **Expansion of Summer Youth Employment Programs: \$57 Million**

While Adams restored funding to the SYEP budget from FY22 to FY23, the current increase still does not meet the need, seeing as it will have to turn away approximately 33% of applicants. In addition, many undocumented young people are currently left out of the system. SYEP is a proven anti-violence program that invests in young people and communities. It has been shown to reduce the number of young people victimized by violence and also reduces the likelihood of youth involvement in the criminal legal system. The importance of this program cannot be underestimated, and its expansion is necessary to reach as many young people as possible.

Invest in Housing and Homelessness

The city must invest in a housing-first model that supports the creation of community land trusts, creates new stock of deeply affordable housing and recognizes that there needs to be low-threshold access to supportive housing units for individuals to move from the streets and shelters into permanent housing. The city's over-reliance on the shelter system and failure to invest deeply in truly affordable housing has contributed to the homelessness crisis. While we are glad to see Adams step in the right direction by increasing safe haven beds, it does not

come close to meeting the needs of homeless New Yorkers.

- **Provide More and Deeper Affordable Housing Citywide:** Mandatory inclusionary housing and Housing Preservation and Development term sheets are not providing affordable housing for the neediest New Yorkers. The city must develop new and innovative strategies to meet New Yorkers' affordability needs citywide.
- **Expand City FHEPS Eligibility to Households at Risk of Eviction:** With the end of the eviction moratorium, ERAP funding exhausted, unemployment high in NYC and an avalanche of eviction cases, low-income New Yorkers face increased risk of eviction and homelessness from apartments that are relatively affordable but currently beyond their means. Expansion of City FHEPS to households at risk of eviction would preserve these apartments for low-income New Yorkers and save the city the enormous amount it spends to keep people in shelters.
- **Invest in NYCHA:** We need to make larger investments in NYCHA repairs and maintenance as well as supportive services at NYCHA locations such as community centers, child care and programs for young people.

Workforce Development and Adult Literacy

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be overstated. New York City needs a massive investment in programs that support people's ability to secure well-paying jobs. Here are just some programs that the city should consider investing in to ensure that Black, Latinx and other communities of color fully recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Adult Literacy:** Adult literacy programs are poorly funded in NYC, despite being a lifeline to so many New Yorkers. The programs that do run barely meet the need that is currently present in the city. Investing at least \$24.1 million into both restoring cuts made to the adult literacy programs as well as increasing funding for adult literacy initiatives and pilot projects will ensure that more immigrant New Yorkers have access to these crucial services.
- **Protecting Low-Wage Workers:** Low-wage workers have borne the brunt of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and yet the city is cutting crucial funding that protects those workers. The city council should invest at least \$5 million into the Low Wage Worker Initiative and the Low Wage Worker Support Initiative, two programs that work in tandem to combat wage theft, support discrimination claims, and conduct worker outreach and education programs in multiple languages.
- **Workforce Development:** The city council must renew funding for the Job

Training and Placement Initiative. That funding includes \$5.25 million for the Consortium for Worker Education Jobs to Build On program and \$2.2 million for the Worker Service Centers. The funding supports classes that serve members of unions, community groups and providers that serve immigrants.

VIII. Conclusion

We are at a crucial moment of the pandemic recovery, a moment where we need to choose bold and innovative new approaches to building a safe and prospering city. Ensuring that New Yorkers emerge from this pandemic with more economic stability, better access to health and mental health care, and well-resourced communities will ensure a safer and more just city. New York City must finally put an end to the continued investment in policing over communities' needs.

New Yorkers deserve real, long-term and significant investments in their communities, particularly Black, Latinx and other communities of color in NYC that have suffered so much during the pandemic due largely to decades of divestment and criminalization.

All New Yorkers deserve to live in safe and healthy neighborhoods that are well taken care of and have strong community organizations and social services and quality, accessible health care. That is very possible for NYC and is not an out-of-reach, lofty goal. What it will take is a fundamentally different approach to city budgeting that prioritizes creating safe, healthy and thriving neighborhoods through investing in violence prevention and intervention; health and well-being; and robust community infrastructure, programs and organizations.

NYC is still far from being out of the woods. The city needs to reprioritize and realign the budget so that Black, Latinx and other communities of color emerge from the pandemic stronger, healthier, safer and more well-resourced. This report is the reflection of the collective work of many contributors – all New Yorkers fighting for a healthy and safe NYC where everyone can thrive.

IX. Acknowledgements

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