

## **POLICY MEMORANDUM**

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To: Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor of Baltimore  
Through: Jacquelyn Duval-Harvey, Director, Mayor's Office of Human Services  
Through: Neal M. Janey, Director, Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice  
From: Student 1, MIT Conflict Consultant

Subject: Reducing Violent Crime Through Better Reentry Services in Baltimore

### **Executive Summary**

This memo reports on strategies for reducing homicides and non-fatal shootings in Baltimore. Specifically this memo recommends a comprehensive policy to reduce violence by improving individuals' interactions with the criminal justice system, particularly reentry. It is well-established that the majority of homicide perpetrators in Baltimore have a prior criminal record and that a significantly high number of victims also have previous records. Improving reentry services will have positive impacts at the individual, neighborhood, and city level. Moreover, improving how Baltimore City residents enter the criminal justice system, if at all, is a necessary component of this policy. Research and analysis suggests the follow actionable recommendations:

#### *At the system entryway:*

- The Office of Mayor and Baltimore City Police Department (BPD) should strengthen its commitment to abandon "Broken Windows" policing policies and dismantle the War Room

#### *At the system exit:*

- The Office of Mayor and its Human Services division should partner with community groups to establish reentry service centers in the identified high-risk East and West Baltimore clusters

### **Introduction**

Baltimore witnessed a record-breaking high level of violence in 2015. As of December 8, there have been 322 reported homicides, at an approximate rate of 51 per 100,000 city residents. The City is not unfamiliar with such violence and has worked persistently toward reducing the level of shootings and homicides since the 1980s. In the 2000s, the City adopted a strategy of zero-tolerance policing based on Broken Windows Theory. As a result, the percent of the City population under correctional supervision swelled. However, violence has remained a marked feature in the City. This aggressive policing strategy did not produce the desired results. Meanwhile, the significant effort toward heavy policing has not been matched with efforts to ensure individuals who enter the criminal justice system are prepared for reentry into their communities.

The proposed policy is motivated by the following environmental conditions in the Baltimore context:

- High rates of homicide perpetrators - and victims - have criminal records (Kennedy, 2011).
- The majority of people in jail are under the age of 35, with the largest percentage between 18 and 25 (Justice Policy Institute, 2010).
- Incarceration has negative consequences on individuals' ability to reenter their communities, particularly for African Americans, who make up 9 out of 10 of Baltimore City's jail population (Alexander, 2010).
- The Office of the Mayor showed interest in the issue of reentry in 2013 when it commissioned Charter Research Associates to produce and Baltimore City jailing reentry strategies report. Now is the time for action.

### The Cost of Incarceration

According to the 2015 Justice Policy Institute and Prison Policy Initiative report on Baltimore City corrections spending, taxpayers in Maryland spend \$288 million annually to incarcerate people from Baltimore City. In contrast, the City budget only includes \$2.4 million toward reentry, a workforce services program in fiscal year 2016. Incarceration costs approximately \$37,000 per person annually. By comparison, Jericho Reentry, a community program aimed at assisting formerly incarcerated Baltimore residents, quote that its services cost \$5,000 per person (Fenton, N. 2015).

Jericho Reentry has worked with approximately 1,500 ex-offenders since 2006, with an employment rate of 72 percent and a recidivism rate of less than 6 percent. (Fenton, N., 2015). That means Jericho Reentry's services has saved \$18,870,000 compared to a typical recidivism rate of 40 percent. This effort must be scaled to provide for the thousands of individuals reentering Baltimore's communities annually.

### Actions

#### *1. Continue to Disengage from Broken Windows Policing*

The Office of the Mayor should advise the BPD to continue disengaging from the aggressive, zero-tolerance, broken windows approach to policing. As evidence has shown in other U.S. cities, the approach does not produce desired reductions in violent crime. Furthermore, it has been carried out with a racial bias and has created an antagonist relationship between police and community, reducing the legitimacy of the BPD. This includes, dismantling the War Room, which contributes to the antagonistic relationship between the BPD and community.

2. *Establish Reentry Service Centers in High-Need Neighborhoods*

Baltimore City should fund and build one reentry service center in each identified high-risk, high-need neighborhood cluster. The centers’ services, although available to all formerly incarcerated, are primarily aimed at attracting formerly incarcerated from the local neighborhoods. Service provision will begin during incarceration in the form of educational opportunities that lead toward a high school diploma, university degree, or professional certificate following reentry. The reentry service center will provide services in the primary areas identified below, which in coordination are geared toward empowering individuals and improving socioeconomic conditions in the local neighborhoods.

Services:

- **Education:** GED programs, community college and university counseling and assistance, along with study spaces
- **Skill Building:** Trade skills, job skills, computer competency, and personal financial literacy
- **Mental Health & Addiction Support:** 24-hour counseling line, mental health providers, recovery and addiction support
- **Health:** 24-hour advice line, referral and nurse consultation services, and assistance with enrolling in health care insurance
- **Housing:** Assistance with housing searches, including for public housing
- **Family Mediation:** Support for mediating family conflict and facilitating family reintegration
- **Gang Demobilization:** Support for divorcing gang affiliations
- **Transportation:** Direct shuttles available from detention centers, jails, prisons

High Risk/Need Neighborhoods

Utilizing neighborhood-level incarceration rate and cost data from the JPI-PPI 2015 report, along with shooting and homicide data from 2015, the following neighborhoods have been identified as high-risk and in-need of a reentry service center:

<i>West Baltimore Cluster</i>	<i>East Baltimore Cluster:</i>
Sandtown Winchester - Harlem Park Upton/Druid Heights Greater Rosemont Southwestern Baltimore	Greenmount East Madison/East End Clifton-Berea Midway/Coldstream

These neighborhoods are also among the most underserved in the City, with some of the highest rates of unemployment, reliance on public assistance, vacant and abandoned housing, emergency calls for service related to narcotics, and high school incompleteness, as well as lowest median incomes. (Justice Policy Institute and Prison Policy Initiative, 2015)

## **Funding and Partnerships**

There are a number of local organizations and federal programs geared toward assisting reentry and improving the socioeconomic condition of neighborhoods. The Mayor's Office should engage in an exhaustive search to gain external funding for the reentry service centers, as well as to find local partnerships. The following have been pre-identified as likely candidates:

### *Funding:*

- Open Society Institute-Baltimore
- National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice
- Corrections savings

### *Partnerships*

- Jericho Reentry
- Living Classrooms Foundation
- Homeboy Industries Global Network

## **Measures of Success**

Measuring success will require a baseline assessment followed up by yearly assessments to track changes. Data points will be collected from corrections department population data, BPD arrest data, reentry service center usage data, and surveys of formerly incarcerated individuals. Specific indicators of success will include:

<b>Reductions in:</b>	<b>Increases in:</b>
False arrest rates (community wide)	Employment attainment
Shootings and homicides	Educational attainment
Recidivism rates	Mental health
Homelessness	Usage rate of reentry service centers
Substance abuse	Perception of BPD (community-wide)

\* Indicators apply specifically to formerly incarcerated population unless noted

## **Conclusion**

Incarceration can have devastating effects on an individual when they return to the community, especially on employability, ability to secure housing, and emotional/social relationships. The policy shifts and actions recommended here are intended to improve life after incarceration: for individuals, for communities, and for the city. At the heart of this framework is the dire need to break the correlation between incarceration and violent crime. Baltimore desperately needs to reduce violence and that can start by ensuring that the institutions and systems designed to *prevent* violence are not actually *encouraging* it.

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