



**Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction**  
May 6, 2019

**PRELIMINARY STATUS REPORT**

**TO:** Council President Aaron Bowman  
**FROM:** Task Force Chairman Mark Griffin  
**RE:** Preliminary Report of Task Force

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On June 20, 2018, the Jacksonville City Council engaged in a strategic planning session to address pertinent issues regarding the priorities of the City. One of the main topics of that conversation was the importance of reducing crime and increasing safety for the residents of Jacksonville. From that conversation, the City Council enacted bill 2018-0846-E, which established the Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction. After the final version of the legislation was enacted on January 8, 2019, the forty-seven member task force immediately went to work by holding its first meeting on January 25, 2019, and has met regularly as a full task force or as subcommittees from that time until now. The dedicated members of this taskforce have invested over 725 hours in meetings to determine the best way forward in reducing crime and increasing safety for all residents of Jacksonville. This time does not include the countless hours spent by individual task force members meeting with other stakeholders, reviewing various reports and analyses, or performing other functions related to the mission of this task force.

According to the legislation, the establishment of the task force included the provision that four subcommittees would be established: Workforce Training, Community Engagement, Mentoring, and Business Partnerships. The legislation also gave the Chairperson the authority to establish additional subcommittees as deemed necessary. Therefore, the Chairperson created the following additional subcommittees: Education & Youth Development, Family Engagement, Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Neighborhoods, and Re-Entry & Juvenile Justice. The purpose of each of these nine subcommittees and a synopsis of their work is presented later in this report.

**CONTINUATION**

Based on the work done by this task force thus far, and based on the need to continue the work charged to this group, the task force recommends that the life of this group and its efforts be continued in the form of a task force or a commission, and that the group be given a more

permanent, long term life. Even though it was clearly established from inception that the May 1, 2019 reporting deadline was simply an interim report, many task force members expressed concerns about trying to reconcile the long-term nature of our charge against an impending close deadline. The assurance that the task force has a long-term life will enhance our work, and will give this team the ability to work deliberately and comprehensively to address the crime reduction and safety needs of our community.

## **LONG TERM VISION**

The long-term vision of the task force or commission is to develop a strategic plan for how the entire city, including the public and private sector, will work to ensure that crime reduction and safety is a top priority for all stakeholders in the present and distant future. In order to accomplish this goal, the task force strongly believes that a consistent and dedicated funding stream is required. It is also important to recognize that programs and initiatives designed to reduce crime and violence must have continuity, so that we do not begin to de-fund programs when crime reduction results begin to manifest. Our recent history as a city suggests that we have prematurely ended successful crime reduction efforts in the past when violent crime declined. However, we did not successfully confront the underlying factors that eventually led to the violence. We must go beyond treating symptoms, and be bold enough to deal with root causes of crime and violence in our city.

The task force envisions making recommendations for how the City of Jacksonville can better coordinate programs and funding for safety and crime reduction. The primary method we would utilize to provide information will be an asset/liability mapping model, which would track violent crime committed in Jacksonville, and compare those crimes with various asset/liability factors that may have impacted those crimes. Through the work of the subcommittees, the task force is in the process of developing a comprehensive list of factors (both assets and liabilities) that may be relevant to criminal activity. Those factors would include, but not be limited to rates of unemployment, levels of education, involvement in youth enrichment activities, family makeup, levels of poverty, mental health and substance abuse issues, neighborhood characteristics, community involvement, juvenile and adult legal history, illegal guns, mentoring history, and numerous other contributors to crime and violence.

As crimes are committed, the task force or commission would rely on data experts to compile the necessary reports to determine how many of the contributing factors were present for each case. Similar to the way law enforcement agencies utilize data to deploy its enforcement resources, we believe that the utilization of societal data as an overlay to our crime data will help us to better deploy the city's limited intervention and prevention resources. We believe this will greatly improve the city of Jacksonville's return on investment for each dollar spent in our effort to reduce crime and increase safety in our city.

## COMMON THEMES

As we continue to do our work as an entire task force as well as individual subcommittees, there were a number of common themes that continued to surface within our ranks. Some of them are enumerated below.

### Quality & Quantity

The task force feels that it is very important that we attempt to expand the reach of quality organizations and programs that are working directly as well as indirectly to reduce crime and violence in our city. Metrics and measurements will be established to track the work of these and all programs. The task force also recognized the need for more programs and more organizations to be involved in this fight to reduce crime and violence. Grass root programs that are innovative and that are reaching the segments of our population that we need to reach the most should be given consideration as well. Therefore we need to focus both on improving the quality of existing programming, as well as increasing the number of programs and organizations that are involved in doing the much needed work.

### Illegal Guns

A component of our overall strategy for reducing crime and violence must include a plan to reduce the prevalence of illegal guns in our community. Guns stolen from unlocked cars, homes and other places, and guns in the hands of those who should not possess them is a community concern. Although not addressed in detail at this point by the task force, future improvement in our crime statistics will be related to our efforts in reducing the number of illegal guns on our streets.

### Jobs

A critical component to reducing crime and violence is providing jobs and job skills to a segment of our population that is currently unemployed. Although the overall unemployment rate for our city, state, and nation are approaching all time lows, certain segments of our population continue to experience high rates of unemployment. The task force believes the city as well as the private sector needs to work to intentionally to reduce the unemployment rate of these individuals.

### Economics

During this period of economic prosperity, we find that certain areas of our city are not enjoying such growth. In addition to lack of employment, there are segments of our community that have limited businesses, limited transportation, low property values, few banks and legitimate financial institutions, and an overall bleak micro economy. Not surprisingly, these are the same areas where we see high crime and violence. We need to do more to expand economic opportunities in these areas.

## **RELIANCE ON PREVIOUS STUDIES**

At the inception of this task force, it was emphasized that we would not be a study group, but an action group. Consequently, much of the information used by the task force and the subcommittees in doing its work was based on previous studies conducted by various groups and organizations. Some of the studies were local, such as the Jacksonville Journey study conducted in 2008 and the JCCI Reducing Murder Study, which was conducted in 2006. Task force members, who performed most of their review and research outside of their time meeting as subcommittees and as a full task force, also consulted numerous regional and national studies. Although some of the previous studies contained crime data and statistics that is now dated, it is remarkable to note that the underlying reasons, factors and contributors to crime and violence have basically remained unchanged over the years.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

The nine subcommittees have been meeting regularly since the creation of the task force. Each subcommittee works both independently as well as in coordination with the other subcommittees. While most subcommittee meetings are stand-alone, there have been some instances of multiple subcommittees meeting together, as well as periodic meetings with the task force chairman and the subcommittee chairpersons. As to be expected, some areas of concern have overlapped between the subcommittees. However, we have worked to ensure that there is not too much overlap, as well as ensuring that important topics have not fallen through the cracks by not being addressed by any subcommittee.

There will be a need to re-evaluate the purpose and need of some of the subcommittees going forward. Some of the subcommittees have basically fulfilled their mandated purpose, and may be discontinued in the near future. Other subcommittees have ongoing work, and will continue into the distant future. As needs arise, subcommittees may be disbanded, merged, or newly created, based on the needs of the entire task force. Below, we have provided a brief synopsis of the focus and work of each subcommittee. Please know that this brief narrative cannot adequately capture the volume of work done by the subcommittees, but is merely is a sampling of the tremendous commitment and dedication shown by the members of the task force.

### **Workforce Training**

The Workforce Training Subcommittee was created to address areas of our city that have high rates unemployment. This subcommittee is responsible for exploring barriers to lowering the high unemployment rate, making recommendations to reduce those barriers, and developing metrics to measure the results. The subcommittee is also responsible for developing an inventory of existing workforce training programs.

Based on the above, the subcommittee's vision is to develop a workforce-training ecosystem that is available to and accessible by all residents of Jacksonville and leads to employment that provides options to fill employment gaps. The subcommittee's mission is to identify areas with high unemployment; identify gaps in 21<sup>st</sup> century work skills; inventory

existing workforce training resources; make recommendations to the Task Force to ensure access to training and employment for all residents; define barriers to employment, particularly in the areas with high unemployment rates; make recommendations to overcome those barriers; define a method to measure impact; and coordinate with other subcommittees to reduce crime and violence in Jacksonville.

The subcommittee has identified the zip codes where unemployment is the highest, reviewed many of the opportunities for workforce training available in Jacksonville, and has identified common barriers to employment, including but not limited to transportation, child care, lack of skills, lack of trust, lack of awareness, criminal backgrounds, and access to technology.

The subcommittee also believes that a comprehensive awareness campaign should be implemented to inform residents about the opportunities available for employment and training.

### Community Engagement

The Community Engagement Subcommittee was created to a) identify community action groups, b) develop ways to organize and empower communities and neighborhood groups, c) provide avenues for education and advocacy, and d) to help neighborhood groups to understand that they are the first line of defense to reducing crime and increasing community safety. The subcommittee is also responsible for developing an inventory of existing programs that are designed to promote and support community engagement.

The subcommittee strongly believes that the principles stated within the Neighborhood Bill of Rights (“the Rights”) should be renewed, revised and reaffirmed to improve community engagement with its local government. Consideration should be given to better implement and publicize the Rights so that all citizens will be fully aware of their ability to access government, thereby increasing trust between our citizenry and our government. The subcommittee has started the process of preparing an inventory of neighborhood associations and groups, as well as assessing how our various communities interact with city government to ensure proper services are provided.

### Mentoring

The Mentoring Subcommittee was created to focus on mentoring programs involving businesses and community volunteers, with a particular emphasis on programs that focus on our most needed populations. The subcommittee is also responsible for developing an inventory of existing mentoring programs.

Based on the above, the subcommittee established a vision of creating a comprehensive, coordinated mentoring program for the entire city. The subcommittee set goals of recruiting 1,000 new mentors, ensuring that at least 10,000 youth are mentored, and creating a permanent mentoring focus in the city that is properly funded perpetually. The subcommittee also envisions strong partnerships between the Kids Hope Alliance, the Duval County Public School system, the non-profit community and the business community in order to provide a sustained mentoring program.

## Business Partnerships

The Business Partnerships Subcommittee was created to increase business partnerships in our efforts to reduce crime and increase safety. The subcommittee is also tasked with seeking additional resources from the business community, which includes financial resources and volunteer or in-kind services. The subcommittee is also focused on looking for opportunities for the business community to assist in job creation and placement to benefit those persons in most need for employment. The subcommittee is also responsible for developing an inventory of such businesses and programs.

The Subcommittee believes that one of the best ways to engage the private sector is through the Mayor's Trust Fund. Established in 2012, this fund provides corporate and private donors with the ability to contribute to the City of Jacksonville and its important initiatives, such as public safety and crime reduction. The subcommittee also recommends that a communications and outreach strategy be developed and implemented so that the private sector will become more aware of opportunities to contribute and participate in the program.

## Education & Youth Development

The Education and Youth Development Subcommittee was created to focus on services to youth designed to prevent criminal activity and association, to foster youth engagement, and to focus on youth and educational issues. The subcommittee is also responsible for developing an inventory of existing programs that support education and youth development.

The subcommittee focused on the limited programming and opportunities for teenagers in our city. The subcommittee strongly believes that effective programs for teenagers should be a priority for our city. While recognizing that teens would not be attracted to traditional afterschool programming, as are younger students, the subcommittee stressed the importance of innovative programming, and programming that includes jobs for teenagers. The subcommittee is also focused on establishing a list of programs and/or organizations that serve youth. The importance of metrics and outcomes for established programs and the development of the same for new and innovative programs were also discussed. The committee believes that all city-funded programs should include a high quality, evidence based literacy and character development component with adequate staff training and oversight to assure fidelity of implementation.

## Family Engagement

The Family Engagement Subcommittee was created to address family issues such as single parent homes, poverty, parenting skills, and mobility. The subcommittee is also responsible for developing an inventory of programs and services designed to support the family structure.

The subcommittee envisions our city with vibrant, productive neighborhoods that are filled with functional families whose members mutually support each other and their neighbors for a safer Jacksonville. To that end the subcommittee's vision is to support all individuals and families for a safer Jacksonville. The mission statement is to acknowledge and eliminate barriers to trusting relationships, recognize individuals in Jacksonville with the greatest need in terms of public safety, engage single parents and family units who can offer support to them, and to create connections to effective services that include but are not limited to education/skills, employment, health/nutrition, housing and transportation.

The subcommittee is charged with developing an inventory of organizations and programs that support the family. The subcommittee also reviewed the impact that mass incarceration has had on the family, particularly with the elimination of positive male role models in the home. The subcommittee sees the need to create a broader awareness of available services and programs to the family. The number of single parent families was also a topic of review for the subcommittee.

### Mental Health & Substance Abuse

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Subcommittee was created to address issues of mental health and substance abuse along with some of the lead causes of mental illness. The subcommittee is also responsible for developing an inventory of programs that provide mental health and substance abuse services.

The vision of this subcommittee is to explore ways to reduce crime and increase safety in Jacksonville by improving access to and utilization of substance abuse and mental health services. The mission is to improve the social health and well-being of the citizens of Jacksonville by increasing the early assessment, accessibility, utilization and affordability of mental health and substance abuse services through education and collaboration efforts aimed at reducing stigma and criminalization of substance abusers and the mentally ill.

The goals of this committee include the development of a method to address the stigma and criminalization of mental disorders and substance abuse, create a Trauma Response Plan, and to find ways to provide more community-based trauma informed training for first responders to traumatic occurrences in our city. The subcommittee also finds that there is a need for a 24-hour mental health crisis center as an alternative to arrest or Baker act for law enforcement and families. The subcommittee is also developing an inventory of programs and/or organizations that provide mental health or substance abuse services.

### Neighborhoods

The Neighborhoods Subcommittee was created to identify neighborhood assets, poverty, social capital, organizations, traditions, and essential services. The subcommittee is also responsible for developing an inventory of existing programs.

The vision of this subcommittee is to develop an inventory of neighborhood assets and liabilities, such as parks, libraries, community centers, lighting, sidewalks, services and social capital. While the Community Engagement Subcommittee is primarily focused on community programming, this subcommittee is focused more on the physical characteristics of a neighborhood to determine the attributes of a healthy neighborhood.

The subcommittee has explored issues surrounding blight, municipal code enforcement, food deserts, the number of condemned properties, the ratio of owner vs. rental units, public transportation, and many other neighborhood factors.

The members reviewed some requested documents supplied by council research, which included homicide statistics by zip code for 2017-2019 and community assets by council district (libraries, community centers, and parks). One member asked for more information on areas with high concentrations of traffic citations and vehicle accidents to assess neighborhood road safety.

### Re-Entry & Juvenile Justice

The Re-Entry and Juvenile Justice Subcommittee was created to explore issues preventing total re-entry by those who have committed or been impacted by crime. The subcommittee is looking at factors such as education, employment, housing, access to capital, and other social services. The committee is also focusing on matters of juvenile justice, and is responsible for developing an inventory of existing programs.

The vision of this subcommittee is to give adults and juveniles returning to the community from the justice system the best opportunities for building successful lives. The subcommittee reviewed previous studies and research in order to make appropriate recommendations for successful re-entry.

Some of the work of this subcommittee includes an examination of what is known about adult and juvenile incarceration and recidivism, programs for rehabilitation within the state and federal corrections systems, developing an inventory of programs and/or organizations that provide adult and juvenile re-entry services, understanding variables to juvenile crime, such as Adverse Childhood Experiences, and examination of civil citation and other diversion programs.

### **FUNDING**

In 2008, the Jacksonville Journey recommended annual funding of \$36 million in 2009, which would increase to \$61 million by 2013. For various reasons, the amount of funding recommended to reduce crime and violence never achieved those levels. Eleven years later, we find ourselves approaching the same high murder and homicide numbers that we experienced during that time. It is imperative that we revisit our funding priorities to ensure that crime reduction is important, and is reflected in our city budget. The task force feels very strongly about the need to develop a consistent funding source for long term crime prevention needs.



Many of the subcommittees are still researching the needs and costs of programs and initiatives that will reduce our crime and violence rates over the long term. Therefore, most of those recommendations will be provided in future reports to the City Council. However, as we strive to identify and quantify resource needs over the next few years, there are some areas that are in need of immediate, emergency funding.

### Mentoring

The Subcommittee has established a goal of recruiting and training 1,000 new mentors, and recruiting 10,000 new youth as mentees. The Kids Hope Alliance's current budget has less than \$500,000 allocated for mentoring, which funds three programs. We recommend that a minimum of \$500,000 additional dollars be allocated for mentoring. While we know that this amount will not get us to the aforementioned goal, it will move us in the right direction. Also, we recommend that the business community provide mentors as well as additional private funding to assist in moving toward the goals.

### Teen Programming

Through the Kids Hope Alliance, the City of Jacksonville currently funds approximately \$3.8 million for early learning programs, and \$16 million for programs that primarily target elementary and middle school students. However, only \$1.6 million (excluding mentoring programs mentioned above) is allocated for pre-teen and teen programming. According to the CEO of the Kids Hope Alliance, only 3% of our high school students are being served through this programming. In order to provide continued programming to the youth who were involved in effective program during their earlier years, we recommend adding at least \$1 million additional dollars for teen programming specifically.

At least \$100,000 of this additional funding should be used for a mental illness stigma reduction initiative. A reduction in the stigma surrounding mental health would allow the Kids Hope Alliance and other programs to increase their ability to serve youth in areas where mental health disorders have traditionally been stigmatized and services underutilized. If stigma is reduced and trust increased, more children's needs in the area of mental health could be addressed earlier and more effectively, thereby reducing their likelihood of criminal involvement and/or victimization.

We recommend that another \$100,000 of this additional funding be used for a Trauma Response Plan for our highest crime neighborhoods. This would allow for early intervention for children and families experiencing and witnessing traumatic incidents resulting from crime. The additional dollars would be used to pay for training and staffing. This intervention would also increase trust and increase the utilization of existing services in the area of mental health.

### Re-Entry & Juvenile Justice

The Kids Hope Alliance currently funds \$1.2 million in Juvenile Justice & Intervention Programs. According to the CEO of the organization, this funding impacts only approximately

19% of the juvenile justice population. We recommend that an additional \$1 million be added for new programming to serve addition youth who are in the Juvenile Justice system.

### Other

The above recommendations only represent a small portion of anticipated funding needs in the future. Much of the work being done by the task force and the various sub committees is not at the place where reasonable cost estimates can be made at this time. However, future reports to the City Council will provide such recommendations when available.

### Return on Investment

According to a report published in the Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology in August 2010, entitled “Murder by numbers: Monetary Costs imposed by a sample of homicide offenders,” each murder costs society \$5.2 million. This amount excludes an additional \$12.1 million of costs described as what citizens are willing to pay to prevent murder. Therefore, the study suggests that it costs an average of \$5.2 million to our society each time a murder is committed. Included in this cost estimate is the cost to the victim and victim’s family; cost of investigation, adjudication, and incarceration; and the cost of offender lost productivity. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics consumer price index, prices in 2018 were 15.16% higher than average prices throughout 2010. Therefore, it now costs our society approximately \$6 million each time a murder is committed.

Based on the above study, one hundred murders committed each year add \$600 million of costs to our city, our state, and our society.

In it’s 2017-2018 Annual Report, the Florida Department of Corrections estimates that it costs \$59.57 per day to house an inmate. Based on this estimate, one inmate serving a 30 year sentence will cost state taxpayers at least \$652,292 before factoring in cost increases. Florida’s per day cost is significantly lower than the national average, which suggests that perhaps rehabilitation and other services designed to reduce recidivism are minimal.

From the above information and many studies and statistics similar to it, it becomes obvious that allocating financial resources to prevention and intervention services provides a very good return on investment. It is the task force’s hope that our city leaders would adequately fund initiatives designed to reduce crime and violence in both the near and long term future.

### CONCLUSION

The members of the task force would like to thank Council President Aaron Bowman, the members of the Jacksonville City Council, the Mayor’s Office, the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, the various departments and employees of our city government, and the citizens of Jacksonville for granting us this opportunity to serve in this capacity. As we continue to do the work that has

been assigned to our hands, we pledge to continue to work in good faith in the development of a sustainable strategy to reduce crime and increase safety for all residents of our great city.

### **The Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction**

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