

### **Community Violence Initiative**

Presented by

Aisha Shepherd, Community Development Specialist

Justice Services Department





# **Community Safety Initiative**

**Background:** In October 2018, the County received \$1.75 million from <u>The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur</u> <u>Foundation</u> to implement strategies to reduce jail numbers by addressing the main drivers of the County's jail population, address racial disparities, and increase community engagement.



Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation





## Background

Both violence and the justice system have disparate impacts on Black people living in Buncombe County.

In the first seven months of 2020, there were **9** homicides, **7** of the victims were Black men.

In 2019, Black people represented 6.3 % of Buncombe County's population, yet comprised 25 % of the jail population and 69 % of gun violence victims.

COVID-19 jail reduction efforts led to dramatically reducing the average daily population by nearly 40%, or 158 people. While both Black and White people were released, the rate of disparity within the population increased, resulting in Blacks representing 33% of the average daily population in July of 2020.



### **Community Perspective: SJC Community Engagement Workgroup**

Community members have a desire for community-led approaches to support safety in their neighborhoods. Based on a series of Safety Justice Challenge "Let's Talk" listening sessions, common problems that were identified include the following:

- Violence, shootings
- Systemic Poverty, lack of jobs and resources as a root cause of criminal activity
- Different treatment based on race or wealth

JNCOMBE COUNTY

- Fear of retaliation of reporting criminal activity
- The need to provide a bigger platform and connection to positive role models within communities most impacted by violence
- Lack of trust in the educational system related to the opportunity gap and the school to prison pipeline
- Confusion on how the criminal justice system works
- Roadblocks to restoring life based on having a criminal record

### ET'S TALK JUSTICE

### EVENT BACKGROUND

### **EVENT SUMMARY**



MPROVEMENT AREAS

### ET'S TALK JUSTICE"



TOP 3 PRIORITIES

### SOLUTIONS







## Safety and Justice Challenge: Racial Equity Workgroup

- Cross collaborative group
- Conducted deep analysis on jail racial disparities
- Learned and acknowledged institutional and structural racism in housing, education, economic, health, and criminal justice policies and practices have lead to disparate outcomes





# A Call to Action

SJC Racial Equity Workgroup

Tuesday, March 5, 2020



- JRAC Racial Equity Workgroup attending the Racial Equity Institute Groundwater Training -

The JRAC's Racial Equity Workgroup working to engage the justice community in a thoughtful process of educating stakeholders about structural racism and racial equity, listening openly to citizens in our community mostly directly impacted by the justice system, and gathering data that demonstrates significant inequitable outcomes for this in our jail. **B.C. Child Fatality Review Team** Tuesday , June 21, 2020

Identified gun violence as a growing threat to the health of youth and adults in our community with the recommendation to include:

Law enforcement agencies and municipalities in Buncombe County should lead or promote community work relating to gun violence, pulling together representatives from all sectors, including affected communities, to work on understanding & addressing the causes of gun violence in our community. **Justice Resource Advisory Council** Friday, July 10, 2020

Passed a proclamation <u>Declaring Racism as a</u> <u>Public Safety Emergency</u> and outlining action steps the JRAC will take to advance racial equity and justice in Buncombe County. One of the action steps included:

 implement courageous, innovative, and holistic solutions that enhance community safety and reduce racial disparities across our criminal justice system, from point of incident to re-entry.





## Deliverables

Justice Services will seek proposals for a community organization (or organizations) to holistically promote community safety and reduce gun violence in the amount of \$225,000.

**Development of a comprehensive plan** (\$50,000)

• Community organization to lead governmental officials and community partners through a strategic planning process to develop a comprehensive plan that addresses community safety and reduces gun violence

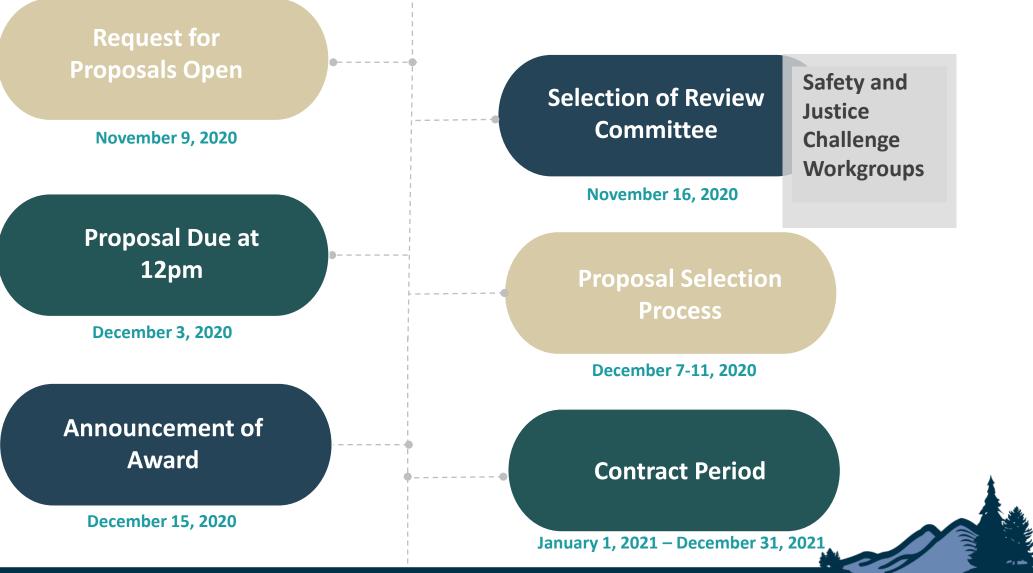
**Program/initiative working with communities most impacted by gun violence** (\$175,000)

- Create intergenerational spaces that empower safety, trust and healing
- Promising practices across the nation





## Next Steps





## Questions



