

15 POINT PLAN

A FRAMEWORK PRESENTED BY LEADERS OF COLOR TO ADDRESS RACIAL DISPARITIES, VIOLENCE PREVENTION, & RECIDIVISM IN THE CITY OF MADISON

The Issue

When the Race to Equity Report was published, we saw the “all too real” look at the racial disparities surrounding education, employment, and health in the City of Madison. Additionally, the City of Madison has been suffering an increase in gun violence and violence in general this year. When you look at the disparities that exist in this community – disparities in education and mass incarceration – Madison has a concrete chance of turning these issues around if we make it a priority and stop announcing isolated initiatives that give false hope with limited to no resources aligned to these announcements. Madison is better than this and our hope is that our city does not become numb to these kinds of incidents. This plan targets these issues and aims to grow cooperation with the City and the police in mitigating these issues. These proposed strategies might save someone’s life, including yours.

A Quick Snapshot of Dane County’s African American Population Numbers

The total population of Dane County, as reported in the 2010 Census, was just over 488,000. Of that total, African Americans numbered 31,300, or about 6.5%. The African American population, as calculated from the 2010 Census, is made up of 25,347 individuals identifying themselves as “black-only” and 5,953 as “black with another race.” The African American child population (under 18) in 2010 was 8,804 or almost 8.5% of county’s total child population. In that same year, African American students accounted for about 20% of the total enrollment in Madison’s public schools, and about 17% of all students enrolled in public schools countywide. African American adults (over 18) made up just over 5% of the county’s total number of adults.

Between 2000 and 2010, the county’s total African American population increased by almost 50%, from 20,241 to 31,300. Over the past 40 years, the number of African Americans living in the county grew almost ten-fold. In 2010, African Americans constituted the most populous community of color in the county, followed closely by even faster growing populations of Hispanics (28,925 in 2010) and Asians (26,698 in 2010). More than half of Dane County’s black population lives within the City of Madison, while the rest reside elsewhere in the county.

In 2011, for example, the official unemployment rate for blacks in Dane County was 25.2%, compared to 4.8% for whites. Dane County African Americans, in other words, were almost 5.5 times more likely to be jobless than their white neighbors. By contrast, in the same year, the national African American unemployment rate averaged only a little more than twice that of whites.

The black/white poverty rate gap in the county is even wider than our local employment disparities. In 2011, the Census’ American Community Survey reported that over 54% of African American Dane County residents lived below the federal poverty line, compared to 8.7% of whites, meaning Dane County blacks were over six times more likely to be poor than whites. Compare this with the fact that in the country as a whole African Americans were about 2.5 times as likely as whites to be in poverty.

Even starker and more consequential are the disparities evident in Dane County’s rates of child poverty. In 2011, the American Community Survey estimated that more than 74% of Dane County’s black children were poor, compared to 5.5% of white children. In other words, Dane County black kids were estimated to be over 13 times more likely to be growing up in poverty than white children. Our research suggests that this 13 to 1 disparity ratio may constitute one of the widest black/white child poverty gaps that the Census Surveys reported for any jurisdiction in the nation.

On a typical day in 2011, there were 124 black children in the county’s foster care system, compared to 58 white children. Calculated as a disparity ratio, this means that Dane County black children faced a 15 times greater risk of being separated from their families and living in residential or foster care than did white children.

Dane County's juvenile justice numbers also show disparities that are wider than those found elsewhere in the state or nation. In 2010, the county's black youth arrest rate was 469 per 1,000, compared to 77 per 1,000 for whites, yielding a disparity ratio of 6.1 to 1. To put this into context, black teens in Dane County in 2010 were six times more likely to be arrested than whites living here, while black youth in the rest of the state were just three times as likely to be arrested as whites, and nationally black youths were only a little more than twice as likely to be arrested than their white peers.

The racial disparities in juvenile justice sanctions and dispositions are large as well. In 2011, a Dane County African American youth was 15 times more likely to spend time in the county's secure detention program than a white youth. Statistics from the same year suggest that Dane County black youths were 25 times more likely to be sent to the state's secure facility at Lincoln Hills than whites. The striking result of these disparities is that African American adolescents, while constituting less than 9% of the county's youth population, made up almost 80% of all the local kids sentenced to the state's juvenile correctional facility in 2011.

Finally, and not surprisingly, these black-white disparities carry over from the juvenile justice to the adult systems. In 2012, African American adults were arrested in Dane County at a rate more than eight times that of whites. That compares to a black-white arrest disparity of about 4 to 1 for the rest of Wisconsin and 2.5 to 1 for the nation as a whole. The racial imbalances in Dane County's 2012 incarceration numbers were remarkable as well. While black men made up only 4.8% of the county's total adult male population, they accounted for more than 43% of all new adult prison placements during the year.

(Source: Race to Equity Report)

The Plan

Dozens of grassroots community leaders, faith leaders, and elected officials decided to combine proposed plans presented by Alders Maurice Cheeks, Matt Phair, and Boys & Girls Club CEO Michael Johnson to rally the City around a vision that would result in addressing gun violence and safety in the City of Madison. The collective group has revised a 15-point framework that has been vetted by grassroots community leaders, activists in the criminal justice system, city officials, established nonprofit leaders, and members of the community affected by these issues. The plan calls for investment in key programs to prevent and address violence in 2017 and the creation of a violence prevention office, independent of the Madison Police Department (MPD), to oversee the funding distribution needs for carrying out the actions of the 15 Point Plan call the Madison Alternative Policing Strategy (MAPS).

1. Recruit and Train Peer Support Coaches for Violence Prevention
2. Recruit and Train Peer Support Coaches for Recidivism Reduction
3. Madison Peace Project
4. Awards and Protection for Witnesses
5. Youth Employment
6. Mentoring
7. Create a Restoration Center
8. Expansion of Community Center Hours
9. Alternative Sentencing
10. Mental Health Therapy
11. Lobby for Policies that Address Social Determinants of Violence
12. Remove Offenses on CCAP
13. Court Advocacy
14. Collaboration with MOST and the Madison Metropolitan School District
15. Functional Family Therapy and Parent Management Training

ACTIVITIES FOR THE FIRST YEAR (2017)

We understand the process to establish MAPS can take some time; however, violence in this community needs to be addressed immediately. Therefore, we have done research and recommend that the following items be addressed immediately in order to ensure a safer community today.

1) Peer Support Coaches for Violence Prevention and Hotline (RFP) (\$240,000)

The Peer Support Coaches will provide low-income persons between the ages of 18-35 with coping mechanisms, soft skills, and other resources necessary to meet the basic needs of individuals who are at-risk of becoming involved in criminal activity, involved in non-violent criminal behavior, or immediately after they are released from a signature bond for a non-violent criminal offense. The Peer Support Coaches will assist these individuals with securing quality jobs, developing appreciation of family and its role in achieving successful living, understanding community and collective responsibility, problem solving and decision making skills, money management and financial stability, housing assistance, and other coaching that may be needed. The team of Peer Support Coaches could be hired by non-profit providers and will become a bridge between law enforcement officials and individuals who are considering a life of criminal activity or involved in non-violent criminal behavior. These coaches will assist individuals with applied behavior analysis and life skills training, peer support, employment, skilled trades, entrepreneurship, housing, education, financial literacy, and be a liaison for other resources within the community.

2) Peer Support Coaches for Recidivism Reduction (RFP) (\$240,000)

The number of individuals returning to the community from prison, and the need for support for those individuals is anticipated to increase in 2016 and future years. In addition to the individuals reentering the community from the Wisconsin Prison System, in 2014 Congress passed the "Drugs Minus Two" law for federal inmates to address the inequities in sentencing of drug laws; specifically, the sentencing of offenders for possession and distribution of crack. Under this amendment, offenders charged with crack offenses received a two level reduction of their sentences (for some, this means more than two years reduced from their sentence). Eligible offenders started being released November 2015; however, many will start being released November 2016. It is estimated that there will be thousands reentering the community in the next couple of years. Therefore, more reentry support is necessary. Additionally, about 75% of inmates need substance abuse treatment, but only 17% are currently receiving it. Research shows that correctional substance abuse treatment reduces recidivism.

Peer Support Coaches who have street credibility will serve as life skills coaches for the purpose of reducing recidivism. The team of Peer Support Coaches could be hired by non-profit providers and will become a bridge between law enforcement officials and individuals emerging from the criminal justice system. These coaches will assist individuals with activities such as applied behavior analysis and life skills training, peer support, employment, entrepreneurship, housing, education, financial literacy, and be a liaison for other resources within the community such as skilled trades, anger management, and substance abuse.

3) Madison Peace Project (\$50,000)

Based off of a similar project in Milwaukee, this proposed program would invite individuals between the ages of 8 and 18 to develop ideas that would reduce gun violence. City officials and officials of other community partners would review each proposal and the City would fund and implement the winning proposals. The project's objectives are to raise awareness of youth gun violence, engage young people in the solutions-making process, and develop leadership skills among youth affected by gun violence in their community.

4) Awards and Protection for Witnesses (\$20,000)

The City of Madison will create a fund for the reporting of and information leading to the arrest and conviction of any offender(s) of a homicide. The fund administrators will offer immediate assistance, protection, and support to any person and their family who is willing to cooperate with police to help bring intelligence that can solve violent crime(s) in our community.

5) Youth Employment (\$200,000)

The City of Madison will increase the number of paid youth interns with an additional 115 interns in 2017. Leaders of Color is recommending the creation of a collaborative network of youth employment service providers to connect every low-income teenager in Dane County with employment every summer. Providing additional efforts to implement this increases independence and self-reliance for high school age youth facing barriers to employment or higher education due to economic or racial inequities.

6) Mentoring (Policy Changes)

Connecting youth with positive adult role models increases resiliency against violence. The City of Madison shall allow City workers paid time off to support mentoring, up to three (3) days per year. We recommend that the City ask the Community Development Division to consider mentoring as one of its priority funding areas, and to partner with MOST to provide training and tools for youth programs with embedded mentoring. We also recommend the City ask employers within the City of Madison to partner with the City in providing employees who serve as mentors.

7) Task Force to Establish Restoration Center (Policy Changes)

The Community and the City will establish a task force to explore the concept of a Restoration Center. The goal of a Restoration Center will be to establish a positive alternative for individuals who would otherwise be arrested or taken to the hospital because of behavior, intoxication, and/or mental health issues. This opportunity would divert mentally ill people from being booked into hospitals or jail and focus on treatment. Funding for the facility could be split between local governments, Medicaid, health insurers, private sponsors, and other grant and tax-credit funding sources.

8) Expansion of Community Center Hours (Cost Estimates Needed)

The City will work with community center operators to determine the costs needed to extend hours and will consult with the community about this idea.

ACTIVITIES IN YEAR 2 (2018)

Madison Alternative Policing Strategy (MAPS)

In 2018, with the support of local organizations and the community, the City and County will develop an independent office called Madison Alternative Policing Strategy (MAPS). MAPS would become an independent civilian division working in conjunction with the Madison Police Department and led by a full-time executive director governed by an independent board of community representatives from each police district and grass root community groups. The Executive Director would have the civilian title of Executive Director of Community Engagement and would be charged with carrying out the violence prevention plan. The goal of the MAPS division will be to help the community work with the police and the philanthropic and business communities to develop violence prevention strategies in order for the City of Madison to remain one of the safest cities in the United States.

MAPS, once established, may begin to take on responsibility for the above projects, on a case by case basis, as determined by the community and participants in those programs. MAPS will lead the following initiatives directly:

9) Alternative Sentencing

MAPS would work with the courts to lobby the criminal justice system in support of offering inmates charged with nonviolent offenses an opportunity to trade their sentences (or portions of their sentences) for a chance at completing a two-year college degree program at a technical school with the guarantee to transfer to a UW State school with 60 credits of a 3.0 GPA or an automatic paid internship upon completion of the two-year technical degree and offer a tax write off to businesses that support the program.

10) Mental Health Therapy

While gun ownership has been rising, mental health services across our region have been woefully underfunded. Therefore, MAPS will work with community partners and subcontractors to ensure high quality, culturally competent mental health services are widely accessible in an effort to decrease gun violence due to mental health issues.

11) Lobby for Policies that Address Social Determinants of Violence

Interpersonal violence is strongly associated with macro-level social factors such as unemployment, income inequality, rapid social change, and access to education. A comprehensive violence prevention strategy must be directed at the aforementioned factors to reduce the inequities which fuel interpersonal violence. Leaders of color in Madison is encouraging local elected officials to lobby state legislators and the Governor to introduce a bill to cover the cost of these programs by offering a sugar tax, tobacco tax, or some other referendum to cover the cost to make our communities safer. This has been done under republican law makers in Indiana and Missouri and we have fallen short on a funding plan to address all the studies that have occurred over the years.

12) Remove Offenses on CCAP

We recommend that all offenses that aren't violent crimes for anyone 25 and under be removed. This is a major barrier for people trying to seek employment, especially for nonviolent offenses they committed at an early age like traffic violations and small misdemeanors.

13) Court Advocacy

MAPS would ensure low income individuals ages 25 and under who are in danger of entering into the criminal justice system have a Court Advocate to work with judges for alternative sentencing for nonviolent offenders that prove to have changed or have made committed efforts to changing their lives.

14) Collaboration with MOST and the Madison Metropolitan School District

MOST is currently a program funded by the City of Madison and Madison Metropolitan School District with more than 100 partner organizations. A strong working relationship with MOST partnership will be a critical element in preventing youth violence. Part of the collaboration will include supports for all community centers to stay open until 10:00 pm during the week and midnight on Saturdays with some programming on Sunday for at risk teens and young adults. MAPS will work with MOST to ensure the continuation of this program and that all community centers are included. MAPS will partner with community based groups and schools to offer universal school-based programs to reduce or prevent violent behavior in a given school and develop supportive strategies to reduce school suspensions across the board.

15) Pilot Programs of Functional Family Therapy and Parent Management Training

Strong families are essential for preventing and reducing youth violence. MAPS will work with community organizations to provide participants with the resources and skills necessary to develop an appreciation of family and an understanding of the role family structure has in achieving successful living. MAPS will work to accomplish this through Functional Family Therapy programs. Teach young children (and their parents) effective conflict resolution skills. If children only see unhealthy conflict resolution in the home, at school, on social media, on the streets, and in the community...they will be more inclined to use violence to solve issues in their young lives.