

MOCJ

CITY OF BALTIMORE

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Mayor



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

100 Holliday Street, Rm 250
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

May 22, 2014

The Honorable President and
Members of the Baltimore City Council
City Hall, Room 400
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: 14-0367 Supplementary General Fund Operating Appropriation – Mayor’s Office
on Criminal Justice - \$950,800

Dear President and Members:

Per your request that the Mayor’s Office on Criminal Justice review and respond to *14-0367 Supplementary General Fund Operating Appropriation – Mayor’s Office on Criminal Justice - \$950,800*, we provide the following:

The Mayor’s Office on Criminal Justice (MOCJ) was established to provide the residents of Baltimore City a safer, healthier and stronger community. We operate from a belief that efforts to reduce crime and delinquency, eradicate gang involvement, diminish the drug trade, and address the collateral consequence of system involvement for young people and adults will work only if they address the root causes of crime, and are coordinated throughout city government and in collaboration with state and federal officials, faith and community-based partners, and impacted persons.

Under Mayor Rawlings-Blake’s leadership, we aim to foster greater collaboration, and to work with other agencies, elected officials, and community members, both youth and adults, to improve safety and well-being across the city. To that end, over the past year, MOCJ has convened stakeholders to discuss strategies that have proven effective at reducing crime and violence and providing opportunities for youth, families, and communities to thrive. Through this work, we have identified and prioritized the following five efforts:

- Youth Connections Center
- UNITY – Urban Networks to Increase Thriving Youth
- Comprehensive Homicide Review
- Operation Ceasefire
- Metro Crime Stoppers Gun Reward Program

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Youth Connections Center

The Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice has been working with local and state agencies and community partners to launch a citywide Youth Connections Center. Stakeholders envision a 24-hour a day resource and referral center that will work with children who are brought to the Center because of daytime or nighttime curfew violations. Additionally, the Center will be designed and staffed to receive young people who walk in seeking positive youth development opportunities and/or other supports and services. The Center will assess youth's needs and develop a plan involving the young persons and their families. We are working to have a variety of services on site, including educational support, recreational opportunities, healthy living and nutrition, and counseling.

The request for \$195,000 will support a portion of a Senior Program Director's salary, contractual weekday and weekend Community Coordinators / Connectors / Resource Specialists, and other operational costs such as rent, IT equipment, creation and maintenance of a database, and staff training.

UNITY – Urban Networks to Increase Thriving Youth

UNITY's mission is to build support for effective, sustainable efforts to prevent violence before it occurs, so that urban youth can thrive in safe environments with ample opportunities and supportive relationships. UNITY utilizes a public health, or prevention, approach to violence that includes intervention and enforcement or suppression.

The prevention approach incorporates data collection and analysis to pinpoint the populations and locations at greatest risk, to identify risk and resilience factors, to develop and utilize effective strategies to prevent violence before it occurs, and to reduce the impact of risk factors and the reoccurrence of violence.

Additionally, this approach engages multiple sectors working in coordination with each other and with community members. UNITY's efforts are two-fold- they support cities in developing, implementing and evaluating effective and sustainable prevention efforts, and they increase awareness of what is needed to prevent violence in the first place and to build momentum for such approaches so that urban communities can have peaceful streets and thriving youth.

UNITY works with cities around the country that are committed to preventing violence. They collaborate with mayors' offices, departments of health and public health, and other municipal leaders through the UNITY City Network. The City Network includes nearly 20 cities - Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Kansas City, Louisville, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Newark, Oakland, Portland, Salinas, San Diego, Seattle, St. Louis, and Tucson. For cities in the UNITY City Network, UNITY provides training and consultation services (written, verbal and on-site) on strategic planning, implementation and evaluation for preventing violence, and assists cities to develop, implement and evaluate plans for preventing violence.

The funding request of \$85,000 will support technical assistance, training, and travel.

Comprehensive Homicide Review

Using a multi-discipline, multi-agency strategy that builds on a public health model and uses data driven approaches to understand and respond to homicides, Baltimore is developing a Comprehensive Homicide Review. The Review will be conducted by a partnership of the Baltimore City Health Department, Baltimore Police Department, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, and others who will come together as a working group designed to improve investigations and information sharing, and to better understand the circumstances that lead to homicides.

The success of this approach in other cities such as Milwaukee, New Orleans, and Chicago is related to the work of stakeholders to support the implementation of the group's recommendations. For example, Milwaukee stakeholders report their success is due in part to the ability to leverage the collective efforts of almost 100 federal, state, local, non-profit, business and religious partners. Additionally, the success of the homicide review commission led to the development of non-fatal shooting and domestic violence reviews.

Since their inception, these reviews have helped the commission and its stakeholders collect data, make recommendations and create alliances that have worked to address issues related to chronic offenders, retaliatory violence, unmet community/social service needs, and reducing future victimization.

Reviews begin with a law enforcement and forensic review of the circumstances that surrounded the non-fatal shooting or homicide. After local law enforcement presents the basic facts of the case, other partners share what they know about the victim or the perpetrator and any other relevant information like gang affiliation, involvement with social service providers, issues with substance abuse, and criminal history. The extensive amounts of data collected during these reviews allow staff to identify homicide and crime trends and create data driven recommendations for resource deployment. Also, these reviews are conducted in order to coordinate and leverage the efforts of the non-profit, social service, religious and educational institutions. Involving these stakeholders helps service providers stay apprised of current trends while helping to highlight areas where there may be unmet needs for services or educational outreach.

The funding request of \$195,000 will support staff within the Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Health Department, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, a site visit, technical assistance, office supplies, telephones, and other administrative support.

Operation Ceasefire

Operation Ceasefire, a program of David Kennedy and the National Network for Safe Communities, brings group and gang members into meetings with community members they respect, social services representatives who can help them, and law enforcement officials who tell them they will aggressively police them if they are connected to continued violence and homicides. Cities, including Chicago, New Orleans, Oakland, and Philadelphia have instituted Operation Ceasefire and experienced remarkable reductions in homicides in recent years.

The National Network will work with key Baltimore stakeholders to implement and support each prong of the Ceasefire strategy, which includes core group violence intervention as well as cutting edge innovations in project governance, intelligence analysis, media and communications, support and outreach to violent offenders, police legitimacy training, and race and reconciliation work between law enforcement and communities.

The funding request of \$415,800 will support contractual services between the City of Baltimore and the National Network for Safe Communities, the City of Baltimore Operation Ceasefire Project Director, and administrative costs to support community meetings, outreach, and call-ins.

Metro Crime Stoppers Gun Reward Program

The Metro Crime Stoppers Gun Reward Program is another prong of Baltimore City's efforts to reduce gun violence. Modeled after similar programs in New York, Newark, and Washington, DC, the program offers cash to residents who provide information leading to the arrest of anyone with an illegal gun. The program is to be distinguished from a gun-buyback program; legal firearms will not be traded in for cash incentives. The Gun Reward Program encourages residents to work with Metro Crime Stoppers and Baltimore Police Department to get illegal firearms off of Baltimore's streets.

The funding request of \$60,000 will support cash awards and communications such as billboards, TV, radio, and print advertisements.

We are confident that this multi-prong approach to violence prevention will move Baltimore towards become a safer, stronger, and healthier city.

If there are questions or additional information needed, please contact Angela Johnese at angela.johnese@baltimorecity.gov or 410-396-9520.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "pp Shannon Cogrove". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angela Johnese
Director, Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice