



# Welcome to SYNC Safety Learning Lab 3

May 28, 2024

A decorative graphic located in the upper right quadrant of the slide. It consists of two overlapping triangles: a yellow one in the foreground and a blue one slightly behind it, both pointing towards the right.

## **Multi-Generational Approach**





# About the Speaker

Andre manages Cities United's portfolio of national initiatives.

He is a past president of 100 Black Men of Greater Knoxville and co-founder of several social justice organizations.

He is also a widely published writer and a former Cities United young leader and youth advocate



**Andre Canty**  
Sr. Associate of National  
Initiatives





**“City budgets  
should reflect  
the needs of the  
community. Young  
people should  
be a part of the  
development and  
decision making of  
public funds”- CU Young Leader**



# History of Cities United

Launched in 2011 under the leadership of Michael Nutter (former mayor of Philadelphia, PA) and Dr. William C. Bell, President and CEO of Casey Family Programs. Supported by Mitch Landrieu (former mayor of New Orleans, LA), Shawn Dove (Campaign for Black Male Achievement) and the National League of Cities.



## Mission

Cities United supports a national network of mayors who are committed to reducing the epidemic of homicides & shootings among Black men and boys ages 14-24 by 50% by 2025.

## Core Values

Social Justice, Equity, Youth Voice,  
Collaboration, Innovative

# The Cities United Network

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# Our Core Audiences

## Mayors

Elected officials that have signed the Cities United Pledge.

## City Leads

An individual designated by a mayor and/or city manager to lead violence reduction efforts and serve as the point of contact between Cities United and the locality.

## Community Partners

Representatives of non-profit organizations, faith leaders, philanthropic partners, activists, grassroots organizations, educators, and more.

## Young Leaders

Young people between 18-24 years old, that are passionate about creating safe, healthy, and hopeful communities for Black men and boys and their families.



# The Solution

**Interrupt** the cycle of community violence.

**Dismantle** systems of inequity

**Invest** in the sustainability of new administrative and operational activities.





# WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN?

A comprehensive public safety plan is a written document, that includes the long-term vision for those most impacted by community violence, along with goals and action steps to achieve that vision.

It has publicly identified goal owners, timelines to achieve each goal and an accountability structures.

It is the developed in partnership with key partners from community, government, philanthropy, business, and most importantly those who have been most impacted.





## Youth Voice

The term **“youth voice”** describes a strategy in which young people are authentically engaged in working toward changing the systems that directly affect their lives.

**RESPECT** — You give it, you receive it! Ask challenging questions, listen, avoid age stereotypes.

**COMMUNICATION** — Young people are best heard when adults step back...adults are best heard when they are straightforward and explain where they are coming from.

**INVESTMENT**— It takes time! Investing in the future is accepting young people as leaders today.

**MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT** — Count us in! Involving young people from the beginning — of an activity, session, program — builds ownership.



## Principle 1

Young people should be conceptualized in relationship to specific economic, political and social conditions.

## Principle 2

The youth development process should be conceptualized as a collective response to the social marginalization of young people.

## Principle 3

Young people are agents of change, not simple subjects to change.

## Principle 4

Young people have basic rights.

Critical Consciousness

Collective Action

Social Change

Ginwright and Cammarota (2006) outlined four basic principles related to **Social Justice Youth Development**

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## Young Leader Fellowship

An intensive eight-month fellowship for young leaders from partner cities, who engage with mentors, experts, and leaders across the country to build knowledge, skills, and networks.

“Over the last 8 months I’ve learned a lot about myself and grown as a leader. Thanks to the Young Leader Fellowship program with my cohort, I was able to be a voice and hear the voices of my community as a Black man and for that I will forever be thankful. Thankful to be a voice and to have and amazing group of people to stand with me.”



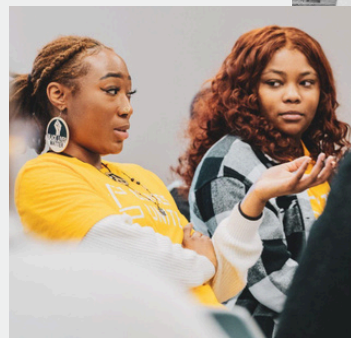
# Young Leader Fellows by the numbers

5

Cohorts of Fellows

66

Program  
Graduates



22 Working with  
CVIP related CBOs



3 in MPH Programs



1 Elected Official



3 CU Staff



4 Partner City Staff



3 CU Advisory  
Board Members

## STRATEGIES THAT WORK

# BUFFALO. DENVER. KNOXVILLE.



## engage youth directly

Engaging youth directly means violence prevention efforts are youth informed, incorporating their voice, insights and perceptions.

This strategy calls for embracing youths' "nothing for us, without us" mantra and maintaining the idea "safety starts with me" across all practice areas. But also to ensure that the plan remains community led, youth informed and city supported.



**DESIRED OUTCOME**  
Youth actively participate in community development and design their own successful futures.

DENVER

## TACTICS & OPPORTUNITIES

**Expand youth engagement centers** - Fully realize the vision for creating a network of youth empowerment centers where youth are fully supported with safe spaces, supportive services and unconditional belonging.

**Collaborate with youth on program design** - Develop youth led, youth designed programming and curriculum where youth can provide input on what safety means to them. Allow youth to be part of the decision making process and where engagements are proactive and positive.

**Encourage leadership opportunities** - Continue providing opportunities for youth to engage in the real practice areas with programs such as the Denver Department of Safety Youth Services Leadership Program inclusive of the Youth Advisory Council.

**Convene youth for input and action** - Continue hosting the annual Youth Summit and Youth Survey to gain valuable perceptions from youth and gather input on how to address youth violence.

**Deliver wrap around services** - Integrate additional services into all five practice areas, for example, Denver Public Schools Secondary Schools pilot where mental health services, substance use intervention, and therapeutic supports are offered in an after-school setting.

**Provide positive alternatives** - Ensure youth have safe spaces and activities to keep them engaged, particularly during peak times for potential violence, for example the Parks & Recreation program Night Bounce to open rec centers for basketball and other activities in the evenings.

**Invest in arts, music and cultural programming** - Convene an array of programming partners to engage youth in artistic expression and culturally relevant activities to encourage creativity as a violence prevention effort.

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"Youth violence prevention work is about connection more than anything else. Youth need to feel included and connected. We need to change the narrative that these are "bad" kids - kids have many challenges. Our job is to help them navigate those challenges."

- Kim Williams, Executive Director  
San Valley Youth Center



2023 DENVER YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLAN | PART II: MEASURES

## BUFFALO, NY

### Breaking Barriers

An initiative of the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable's Boys & Men of Color

Aimed at accelerating positive outcomes for boys and young men of color across the cradle-to-career continuum.

## DENVER, CO

### Youth Violence Prevention Action Table

A large, multi-sector coalition called the Youth Violence Prevention Action Table (YVPAT) The YVPAT began in 2019, when the City and County of Denver implemented a public health approach to youth violence.

## KNOXVILLE, TN

### CHANGE Center

A center-city space where teens and young adults are valued, safe, and their hope is nurtured.

A strategically-located partnership facility that makes recreation, leadership development, and job opportunities available.

## ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

### How can you tap in in your city?

- Summer youth employment programs
- Town halls
- Commissions
- Work Groups
- Committees





## Young Leaders' Call to Action

To promote more youth voice on a systemic level, communities should allow space for youth town halls to have open dialogue among leaders on policy, programs, and practice. Accountability measures should be put in place to ensure youth voices are heard and action takes place.





# Benefits of Youth-Adult Partnerships

**Youth-Adult Partnerships in**

**Public Action: Principles, Organizational Culture & Outcomes-**

**Shepherd Zeldin, Julie Petrokubi, Linda Camino  
University of Wisconsin – Madison**

**01**

Safety & Belonging: Youth feel accepted, supported, respected within the organization.

**02**

Confidence & Competence: Adults develop the skills and attitudes they need to effectively share power and responsibility with youth on an on-going basis.

**03**

Advocates for Youth Participation: Adults commit to making youth-adult partnership part of their own practice

**04**

Institutionalized Expectations of Youth Participation: Norms and traditions change as youth become a standard part of community decision making.

# Youth Voice in CBOs

**01**

Build an organizational infrastructure that incorporates youth input in all aspects of its work and operations.

**02**

Use or create staff positions for youth to become permanent employees.

**03**

Talk to youth affiliated with the organization to evaluate how they feel about their work and what they think needs to change.

**04**

Integrate regular feedback from youth when implementing a strategy and be open to shifting plans if youth voice leads the organization to reevaluate its goals.