

MESSAGING GUIDANCE

OUR MESSAGE BY AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE: Federal policymakers (Biden, CBC)

More policing does not automatically lead to less violent crime, but it does lead to a greater threat of police violence. Federal legislation must a) reject any proposed expansion of police budgets and refuse to spend one more cent on excessive, brutal, and discriminatory policing ; b) reject piecemeal reform efforts that have proven ineffective and insufficient; and c) understand that it's not enough to reduce the scope and size of policing —legislation should increase spending on education, housing, and health and human services that meet widely and deeply felt community needs.

AUDIENCE: City and state policymakers

Right now, cities across the country are rethinking municipal budgets and reevaluating whether the police are doing jobs they were never intended to do. We have a unique opportunity to cut the spending of police forces that consume ever larger shares of city budgets, producing billions in savings that can be reinvested in a shared vision of community safety, infrastructure, and recovery that does not rely on the police.

AUDIENCE: Grassroots organizers (local, state, and national)

We will no longer be told that what we deserve is not possible. We reject the funding of practices, policies, or personnel that create danger for Black people and deprive our communities of what the privileged have long enjoyed in this country: basic rights, safety, and freedom. Through participatory governance and budgeting processes that engage and invest in underserved communities, we can work together to design a future that does not rely on police and punishment.

AUDIENCE: Black folks across age groups

For much of U.S. history, law enforcement meant implementing laws that were explicitly designed to subjugate Black people —that's why we, along with hundreds of thousands of others are pushing toward a vision of safety that works for everyone , not just an elite few. Your energy and commitment are the engine that will pivot this nation from the endemic and racist violence of American policing toward a vision of community safety, infrastructure, and recovery.

AUDIENCE: Newly-woke whites

We know the safest communities in America are places that don't center the police. We need look no further than neighborhoods where the wealthy, well-connected, and well-off live, or anywhere there is easy access to living wages, healthcare, quality public education, and freedom from police terror.

OVERARCHING MESSAGING GUIDANCE:

Explain what defunding the police means in the place where you live: Defunding and divesting from the police is a strategy that looks different in every city and requires participatory engagement from the community, as well as a long-term approach to systemic change.

- We need to start by making the premise clear: Police do not keep us safe. By talking about defunding the police, we are talking about building a future where safety actually exists.
- A lot of people are talking about defunding the police—but they're not all talking about the same thing. Be clear about why, how, and what divestment looks like in your home.
- Give examples: Since we have only ever known a country with the existing policing infrastructure, it is hard to imagine anything else. We have to paint a picture for people of what alternatives to violent policing look like. We are building the world we need, and this is our opportunity—our moral imperative—to stimulate people's imaginations and help them envision what they may not yet be able to see.

GOALS:

Using media as a tool, encourage and consolidate local support for defunding police departments and articulate a clear, values-based vision for what that future could look like. This will create public pressure for local decision makers to commit to defunding the police and taking specific, measurable, concrete actions.

MEDIA PLATFORM(S)
LOCAL TV AFFILIATES, RADIO,
NPR, EDITORIAL BOARDS

AUDIENCE(S)
LOCAL TV AUDIENCES, RADIO
LISTENERS, DAILY READERS

TARGET(S)
CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS,
STATE-LEVEL DECISION
MAKERS