



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MEMORANDUM**

To: Members of the Gun Violence Reduction Task Force
From: Joshua Cox
CC: John Pourciau
Date: August 13, 2018
Re: FOR REVIEW: Gun Violence Reduction Task Force – Introductory Memo

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to introduce members of the Mayor’s Gun Violence Reduction Task Force to each other, and to the work we are about to embark on before our first meeting on August 22nd.

Mission: The mission of the Mayor’s Gun Violence Reduction Task Force is to present a data-backed plan to measurably and sustainably reduce gun violence in New Orleans.

The Team:

- **Melissa Sawyer** – Co-founder and Executive Director of the Youth Empowerment Project.
- **Jeff Asher** – Crime Data Analyst and Public Safety Consultant for New Orleans City Council.
- **Tamara Jackson** – The Executive Director of Silence is Violence, a nonprofit devoted to advocacy and delivering direct service to victims.
- **John White** – Superintendent of the Louisiana Department of Education
- **Flozell Daniels** – Executive Director of Foundation For Louisiana
- **Nathalie Simon** – Special Counsel to the CEO & President of Laitram, LLC
- **Josh Cox** – Director of Strategic Initiatives to Mayor LaToya Cantrell
- **Russ Herman** – Lawyer at Herman, Herman Katz.

Consultant: Erich Caulfield of the Caulfield Consulting Group will facilitate and coordinate Task Force meetings.

The Approach - Guiding Principles:

Research has shown that gun violence is incredibly concentrated in American cities with only a small fraction of a city's population involved in that violence. Previous efforts in New Orleans and elsewhere have shown that focusing on that small concentration can be effective though these efforts have largely relied on law enforcement levers to effect change. The new strategy laid out below will approach this concept differently from any other American city in several ways:

1. **We are taking a public health approach to gun violence reduction.** By providing a wide array of well-funded social programs to the small percent of our cities population most impacted by endemic gun violence, we believe we can reduce our City's epidemic. Additionally, law enforcement officers will not be delivering gun violence interventions, leaving them freer to perform police work and hopefully allowing service providers of this initiative to develop trust and rapport with the target population.
2. **This program will be data-driven.** We have secured the services of Dr. Andrew Papachristos, a professor at Northwestern University, and the country's leading nation expert on the concentration of gun violence in American cities. His work aims to apply a rigorous methodology to understanding networks of gun violence in New Orleans.

After reviewing historical past gun violence data in New Orleans, Mr. Papachristos will develop a scientifically backed program to identify individuals to whom we should deliver be targeted for interventions. This program, and the method for actually implementing and tracking our target population, will be defined and must also be defined and systematized so that it can be evaluated and re-produced.

The task force has also engaged an academic to perform an independent evaluation of the violence reduction program. Dr. Jennifer Doleac is an Associate Professor of Economics at Texas A&M University and the Director of the Justice Tech Lab, which studies crime and discrimination. Dr. Doleac will help us not only create the metrics for the effectiveness of every intervention, but will also help us connect those metrics to cost savings that can be captured by the City and reinvested.

3. **We will pivot and iterate quickly.** As mentioned earlier, no other city has tried a public health approach to tackling gun violence. The task force must review interventions and programs from across the country to decide the right strategies for our landscape. As we move into the implementation phase, the task force will also rely heavily on data to determine whether the strategies we are using are actually effective at reducing gun violence in the target population. If not, we will shift course quickly and try other strategies until we settle on strategies that demonstrate the results.

4. **This initiative will be sustainably funded for decades to come.** Philanthropy is fickle; government funding can change with the winds of politics or changing administrations. Sustainably funding this project will require several revenue streams:
 - a. Philanthropic dollars will help pilot and build the initial infrastructure of NOLA Invested.
 - b. Federal organizations interested in a public health approach to gun violence reduction like the National Institute of Health.
 - c. The City of New Orleans would also be counted on to financially support this project long term.
 - d. Revenue generation through a “social impact bond” approach. The general idea is that gun violence has a financial cost to society. If our program reduces gun violence, it will also be saving the City money that it would have otherwise spent. Those saved dollars could be earmarked and reallocated to fund this program sustainably for decades to come.

Based on national estimates, the Emergency Department and initial hospitalization costs for our 600+ shooting victims in 2017 likely costs about \$35 million dollars, mostly in Medicaid and uncompensated care funds. That dollar figure does not even include the long term costs of physical therapy and medical recovery. Many victims of gun violence are unable to pay the costs of these medical expenses, and if the hospital cannot bill Medicaid, those expenses become a financial loss. If NOLA Invested measurably reduces the number of gun violence patients over a year, we could set up an agreement for UMC to pay the City a percentage of those savings, which would be re-invested into the program. We believe this approach can be taken across other systems – police, courts, the jail, EMS, etc. – as well.

The Sequence:

We plan for the work of this committee to take place in 5 distinct phases:

Phase 1: Identifying the Target Population

Before implementing a gun violence reduction strategy, it's imperative to identify not only the individuals most likely to shoot or be shot, but the specific individuals for whom an investment can drive the most impact/reduction in gun violence. To that end, as mentioned above, we have secured the services of Dr. Andrew Papachristos, a professor at Northwestern University, and the country's leading nation expert on the concentration of gun violence in American cities.

After reviewing historical gun violence data in New Orleans, Mr. Papachristos will develop a scientifically backed program to identify individuals to whom we should deliver interventions. This program, and the method for actually implementing and tracking our target population, will be defined and systematized so that it can be evaluated and re-produced.

Phase 2: Building the Core of the Program

No American city has yet created a gun violence reduction program delivered primarily through social program interventions rather than by law enforcement professionals. The task force must review various interventions and programs, both locally and nationally, and decide which strategies are right for our landscape. The task force will rely heavily on data and rigorous evaluation to determine whether programs are having the intended effect. If not, we must be willing to shift course quickly and try other strategies until we settle on approaches that demonstrate the desired results.

Phase 3: Building an Organization

Concurrently with identifying potentially effective strategies and social interventions, the task force will build an organization to house the overall strategy. Leadership for the organization will remain in City Hall though creation of a public-private partnership could be needed.

Phase 4: Sustainable Funding

Sustainably funding this project at a high level will undoubtedly require several revenue streams. Philanthropic dollars will help pilot and build the program's initial infrastructure. Because this approach is new and innovative, we believe we can buttress philanthropic dollars with grant dollars from National Institute of Health or other federal organizations interested in a public health approach to gun violence reduction. The City of New Orleans would also be counted on to financially support the program over the long term.

However, what's most innovative is our "social impact bond" approach to funding this project. The general idea is that gun violence has a substantial financial cost that is borne by society. When this program reduces gun violence, it will also be saving the City money that it would have otherwise spent. Those saved dollars could be earmarked and reallocated to sustainably fund violence reduction efforts for decades to come.

This project cannot be solely dependent upon philanthropy because that funding is fickle and does not scale. It cannot be solely dependent upon government because politics and changing administrations alter priorities and funding decisions. Violence reduction efforts must be dependent on a diverse mix of funding streams with an emphasis on driving

revenue from the costs that it is saving entities in both the public and private sectors by reducing incidences of gun violence.

Phase 5: Measure, Measure, Measure

The task force has engaged an academic to perform independent evaluation of the violence reduction program. Jennifer Doleac is an Associate Professor of Economics at Texas A&M University and the Director of the Justice Tech Lab which studies crime and discrimination, with particular emphasis on prisoner reentry (and reinvestment) and effects of technology on public safety. Dr. Doleac will help us not only create the metrics for the effectiveness of every initiative, but will also help us connect those metrics to cost savings that can be captured by the City and reinvested.

Time Horizon: This Task Force has a goal of producing an actionable by May 2019, which is a 9 month window.