



# REDESIGNING PUBLIC SAFETY IN ST. LOUIS

*Community Newsletter*



May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and here at CPE, we recognize that building and sustaining comprehensive systems of mental health care and emergency response is a crucial component of achieving safe, healthy, and equitable communities.

In this second edition of CPE's **Redesigning Public Safety in St. Louis Community Newsletter**, you'll find resources, information, and updates to help your community address disparities in mental health care and emergency response.

## **Redesigning Public Safety: Mental Health Emergency Response**

Last month CPE hosted its [Care Not Punishment: Equitable Responses to Mental Health Emergencies](#) webinar, which brought together experts, advocates, and practitioners to discuss how communities can address mental health emergencies through public health, legal, and community-based alternatives geared toward a more equitable vision of safety for all. If you missed it, [you can watch it here](#). Be sure to also check out CPE's [Mental Health Emergency Response](#) white paper and [companion brief](#), which outline a holistic set of short and long-term solutions—that can be readily adopted—to improve responses to mental health emergencies.

## Unlocking Democracy: Learning Communities

CPE has partnered with the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center on a suite of programming called [Unlocking Democracy](#), which includes [Learning Communities](#) to assist interdisciplinary teams seeking to implement, sustain, and evaluate policing alternatives. Our Crisis Systems Learning Community saw six teams in localities throughout the U.S. and one in Canada come together to discuss enhancing crisis system alternatives and mental health emergency response through public health and community-centered approaches.

## CPE's Partnership with St. Louis

CPE continues to support the implementation of recommendations listed in our [Reimagining Public Safety in the City of St. Louis: A Vision for Change](#) report. We also look for new opportunities to support local efforts related to creating and maintaining equitable systems of public safety in St. Louis.

### Behavioral & Mental Health Response Policy Update

In our 2022 report, CPE identified the need for the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD) to update its Behavioral & Mental Health Response Policy. A local Working Group was created to identify ways the SLMPD could improve its policies and systems for interactions with people experiencing behavioral and mental health crises. The Working Group recommended updates to the existing policy that clearly define behavioral health crisis calls, establish principles to guide responses to these calls and detail what specific steps should be taken by dispatch operators, responders, and supervisors. The Working Group shared its policy recommendations with the St. Louis Metropolitan Director of Public Safety in January 2023, and the city will consider implementation in August 2023.

### State Takeover of the SLMPD

Joining the effort to oppose the state takeover of the SLMPD, Matthew Graham, a Data Analyst Manager at CPE and St. Louis resident, [delivered testimony](#) on behalf of CPE at the Missouri Senate hearing; Chris Burbank, CPE Law Enforcement Strategy Consultant, [submitted a letter](#) to Senate leadership urging them to vote against the bill; and Hans Menos, Vice President of CPE's Triage Response Team, recently [wrote an op-ed](#) published in the Missouri Independent regarding the need to keep public safety decisions in the hands of St. Louis residents—rather than having them taken over by the state.

## Community Engagement

Community is the foundation of CPE's public safety redesign recommendations for the city. We uplift community members' voices, lived experience, and wisdom to help redesign public safety in ways that are holistic, just, and equitable.

### Public Safety Collaborative Meet & Greet and DICE Workshop

On April 13–14, members of our team attended a Meet & Greet and Workshop hosted by the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis on [Data-Informed Community Engagement](#) (DICE). [The meetings](#) focused on how DICE can be used to reduce opportunities for crime by focusing on places and not people. Find more information about the Public Safety Collaborative and DICE in St. Louis [here](#).



## Community Spotlight

In the spirit of Mental Health Awareness Month, we are pleased to uplift these upcoming events of local organizations working in St. Louis to expand the mental health services and resources available to its community members.

### Saint Louis Mental Health Board (MHB)

[Saint Louis MHB](#) is an independent taxing district that administers public funds for behavioral health and children's services for the benefit of city residents. The MHB is helping to organize a variety of events for Mental Health Awareness Month:

- **Friday, May 5–Saturday, May 6:** [Vision for Children at Risk](#) is hosting a [2-day Children's Mental Health Celebration](#) in honor of Children's Mental Health Day. Friday's virtual event is a day of learning, connecting, and reducing the negative stigmas associated with mental health, and will feature National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Behavioral Health Response, and a guest speaker from the Department of Mental Health. Saturday's free outdoor event is a family fun day at the Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being, featuring activities, games, music, food trucks, entertainment, giveaways, and mental health resources.
- **Friday, May 12:** Join the [St. Louis Regional Suicide Prevention Coalition](#) for their [Spring 2023 Speaker Series](#) which will discuss the implications of legislation on suicide safety for LGBTQ+ Youth. To register for this event, please [click here](#).
- **Saturday, May 20:** Join [Episcopal City Mission](#), which provides hope and healing for children in the juvenile justice system, for their [Walk A Mile in My Shoes Walk-A-Thon](#) at St. Louis University High School and enjoy

fun activities, games, giveaways, food, and prizes. For more information and to register for this event, please [click here](#).

### **Behavioral Health Response (BHR) St. Louis**

[BHR](#) is an organization dedicated to ensuring immediate, barrier-free access to behavioral health care for residents of St. Louis. It provides 24/7 911 call diversion services to connect community members with crisis services and link them to long-term support services.

- **Saturday, May 13:** BHR is joining NAMI for a NAMIWalks St. Louis event at the Tremayne Shelter at Creve Coeur Lake Park. For more information and to register for this event, please [click here](#).

### **Saint Louis Story Stitchers**

[Saint Louis Story Stitchers](#) is a nationally recognized Artists Collective known for high-quality art and innovative youth violence prevention programs that provide youth with opportunities to heal and work through trauma through artistic expression.

- **Saturday, May 20:** Saint Louis Story Stitchers is hosting a celebratory opening of The Center with performances, food trucks, remarks, and a ribbon cutting with St. Louis Mayor Tishaura O. Jones. For more information, email [susanc@storystitchers.org](mailto:susanc@storystitchers.org).

## **Funding Opportunities**

The [St. Louis Office of Violence Prevention](#) is committed to programs that intervene directly with individuals experiencing violence and provide evidence-based programming to disrupt cycles of violence and is currently seeking [Community Violence Intervention and Prevention](#) requests for proposal (RFP). The purpose of this RFP is to appropriate \$16 million of the funding allocated to community violence intervention and prevention over the next several years.

- \$10 million is designated for Community Violence Intervention and Prevention
- \$6 million is designated for Youth Diversion Programs
- Award amounts of varying sizes will be considered, with potential awards of up to \$750,000 annually
- This RFP will close once funds are exhausted

St. Louis resident and Senior Campaign Strategist at Equal Justice USA, Colleen Cunningham, is offering help to those interested in applying for this RFP but unsure if their organization or program is a good fit. Please reach out to Colleen at [colleenc@ejusa.org](mailto:colleenc@ejusa.org) for additional information and access to an Application Checklist and Program Narrative Document she developed to help applicants with the RFP process.

[Invest STL](#) is offering small grants up to \$2,000 through their [Small Dollar Action Fund](#) to support community members looking to connect with and engage their neighbors and take action together. The fund supports neighborhood groups like neighborhood associations, block units, and informal neighbor collectives in eligible areas. To apply and for more information, please click [here](#). Applications are due on May 25, 2023.

## **Community Resources**

At CPE, we use science to create levers for social, cultural, and legislative change. Here's some relevant tools, resources, and publications for you to check out:

- [Reimagining Public Safety in the City of St. Louis: A Vision for Change Report](#)
- [St. Louis Redesigns Public Safety Blog Post](#)
- [Redesigning Public Safety: Mental Health Emergency Response](#)
- [Redesigning Public Safety: Traffic Safety](#)
- [CPE Data Brief: Putting Policing Data to Work](#)
- [CPE #JusticeNerds GoodReads Group](#)

[Click here](#) for CPE's full resource library, and [sign up here](#) to receive all of CPE's latest announcements, insights, policy briefs, blog posts, and more.

## We'd Love to Hear from You

We look forward to returning to St. Louis soon! In the meantime, if you are interested in meeting with us virtually or want to share an announcement, an upcoming event, or other local public safety redesign resources, please fill out [this form](#) or email us at [STLcommunity@policingequity.org](mailto:STLcommunity@policingequity.org).

In community,

The Center for Policing Equity



### Center for Policing Equity

8605 Santa Monica Blvd. PMB 54596 | West Hollywood, California 90069

347-948-9953 | [giving@policingequity.org](mailto:giving@policingequity.org)

If you received this newsletter as a forwarded email and would like to join our mailing list, [please sign up here](#).