UNLOCKING BOLD ACTION TOWARD JUSTICE
ANNUAL REPORT 2022
The critical importance of the work we do at the Center for Policing Equity (CPE) was reaffirmed by many of 2022’s biggest news events. Our unique blend of field-leading expertise, time spent in communities across the country, and commitment to the pursuit of racial justice has never been more important, at the local, state, and national levels: brutal killings by law enforcement and public safety failures, the decision by Florida’s governor to dispatch armed officers to implement heavy-handed voter suppression, a Supreme Court ruling effectively gutting the Miranda Warning—confirms why CPE continues to be in this space. Not even two years after the uprisings in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, as the nation appeared to be returning to “tough on crime” rhetoric, CPE’s network of supporters enabled the organization to grow to meet the moment. We continue to forge ahead with hope, resilience, and an unwavering dedication to the work of building public safety systems that are more just, fair, and equitable.

Our belief, along with resilience, and dedication are far more than hazy words of encouragement—they are tools necessary to CPE’s mission. We advance the cause of racial justice by reducing harm and redesigning public safety systems. We acknowledge the reality before us; collaborate closely with those most impacted, and take bold steps to effect change that is genuine, meaningful, and makes a difference in the lives of Black and Brown communities.

At CPE, we know that racism is best understood not as the expression of individual hearts and minds, but as behaviors that can be measured—and anything that can be measured can be changed. We produce field-leading science, led by the experience of community members, use law enforcement’s own data, develop redesign tools, and develop recommendations that answer communities’ needs. CPE remains engaged through implementation phases and beyond. Simply put: We do science to promote justice.

We’ve done this vital work since 2008, in the face of recurrent political backlash, ongoing police violence, and the very real frustration that comes from living with continuing injustice, abuse, and trauma. Critics may insist that public demand for transformative answers to law enforcement’s harms has passed, but the Black and Brown communities who live with those harms know what too many in this country choose to ignore: The struggle for public safety systems that unlock bold action toward justice will not end until that goal is reached.

I co-founded CPE with Dr. Phillip Atiba Goff because, as a Black woman and 25-year veteran of the Denver Police Department and former Deputy Commissioner for NYPD, I know the enormity of the challenge. This is not the work of a day, a month, or a year—it began in slave patrols, through decades of Jim Crow, to the civil rights movement, to the uprisings of 2020. We are part of the 400-year march toward racial liberation, and it is our responsibility to carry that work forward. Because of the passion and drive of our organization, I could not be more proud of the dedicated and talented individuals who choose to work at CPE.

The year 2022 was one of remarkable growth at CPE. Staff numbers more than doubled. We also developed and introduced cutting-edge webinars, white papers, justice navigator assessments, data gap analyses, and community engagement initiatives. We established a new hybrid matrix structure to achieve the mission of the organization. I moved into my new role as President and COO at year’s end with excitement to continue growing our reach, impact, and success. Yet, each victory on the path to racial liberation builds upon those that came before and illuminates a powerful truth: The country’s capacity to redesign public safety is growing, and each of CPE’s successes is fuel for the next.

We could not be more grateful for your engagement, support, and dedication as we continue, together, on that path.

Dr. Tracie L. Keesee
Co-founder, President and COO
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

CPE’s North Star is empowering Black, Brown, and vulnerable communities to redesign their public safety systems, reduce the harms caused by law enforcement today, and ultimately make policing less racist, deadly, and omnipresent. CPE gathers data on racially disparate policies, procedures, and outcomes within the country’s public safety systems; applies rigorous analytic tools to those data; and empowers communities, law enforcement agencies, and public officials to co-create solutions that meet communities’ needs.

OUR IMPACT

This past year, CPE demonstrated the transformative impact of data-driven interventions and served:

- CPE recognizes there is no one solution to redesigning public safety. CPE addresses the unique needs of each community we partner with.
- CPE provided nearly 50 products and services to facilitate lasting change, including our signature Justice Navigator Assessment.
- CPE’s thought leadership shaped the narrative around what public safety could look like, reaching more than two billion people worldwide through earned and social media over the last year alone.
- In 2022, CPE was on the ground in more than a dozen locations, working with communities, facilitating collaboration, and building new partnerships.

18 Law Enforcement Agencies
9 States
20.6M+ People in the United States
Science drives CPE’s innovation engine, and pioneering research underpins all of our work.

Our Science and Technology team conducts cutting-edge research to discover the highest-potential opportunities for transforming public safety, identifying, documenting, and helping to reduce the harms caused by existing public safety systems; serving as a field leader in refining interventions; and mapping the broader social determinants of public safety. In producing this work, the team collaborates with experts across the organization to ensure that our products and services are informed by the full range of expertise represented at CPE, regardless of team, position, or title.

In 2022, the team attended the American Society of Criminology’s annual conference, presenting eight papers at two different panels: Advancing Theory and Empirical Research on Police Use of Force and Centering Community Needs and Goals in the Science of Public Safety Redesign. The conference is attended every year by law enforcement, policymakers, academics, and community organizers, allowing CPE to disseminate findings to experts, decision-makers, and change agents within each of these disciplines.

Science and Technology also gained approval for a $2.8 million research partnership with the team at American Institutes for Research. The relationship will formalize much of the work the teams are doing, allowing CPE to publish best and promising practices, as well as lessons learned.
SPOTLIGHT
JUSTICE INITIATIVES

At CPE, we use data to drive solutions.

This past year, we provided close to 50 products and services to help our community partners utilize the data that we gather and analyze in creating public safety solutions that they can successfully implement. We don’t prescribe, we provide support to the people who know best what their communities need.

These products and services function interconnectedly: in many cities we begin, for instance, by gathering law enforcement’s own data, subjecting it to a rigorous analytic model, and then providing information back to the agency in the form of a Justice Navigator Assessment (JNA). The assessment is then publicly shared on our Justice Navigator.

The Justice Navigator is an interactive tool, highlighting the assessments of different agencies, which lets communities and law enforcement agencies learn about trends in other cities. Two new JNAs were added to the Justice Navigator in 2022, and five new JNAs will be added in Q2 of 2023 as we complete work begun in years past and build new partnerships for future assessments.

Law enforcement agencies choosing to go deeper, are committed to close collaboration with their community, and agree to full transparency may choose to engage in COMPSTAT for Justice (C4J). A C4J partnership can be launched following the delivery of a JNA or start from the ground up. In either case, the data are then used to drive improved decision-making within the agency, frame the development of community-led recommendations for system redesign, and inform the implementation of those recommendations.

Each of these examples is in turn informed by CPE’s policy papers, our engagement with elected representatives, and our ongoing research into the social determinants of public safety.

We often work in jurisdictions marked by community frustration over slow response times. Analyses often reveal that much of the pressure stems from inefficiency in staff assignment, which can be improved with simple procedural changes, rather than increasing budgets. Community members’ needs receive attention, agencies improve capacity, and both are positioned to begin establishing the mutual trust necessary to continue working with CPE toward lasting change.

Without context, individual stories of police abuse, dehumanization, or violence can serve to obscure the systemic causes of police violence.

CPE uses a field-leading approach to uplift people’s lived experiences, correctly place them in the broader context of systemic racism, and give agency to communities so they can drive change. The C4J team works with police departments that are ready to reduce racial disparities in their work, are willing to engage with community, and are committed to public transparency.

In 2022, CPE completed its ground-breaking report on public safety in the City of St. Louis, bringing to fruition five years of engagement with city officials, local nonprofits, activists, and organizers. Our April 2022 report, Reimagining Public Safety in St. Louis: A Vision for Change, offers community-led, evidence-informed recommendations and initiates the implementation, monitoring, and follow-up phase.

In Virginia, 2022 saw our C4J partnership with the Norfolk Police Department (NPD) continue. To date, CPE has gathered and analyzed law enforcement data, policies, and practices to identify racial disparities in NPD’s policing and is now using those data analyses to build strategies to address the root causes and drivers of those disparities.

Through C4J, CPE also facilitates community focus groups to help understand collective views, perceptions, and concerns about community-police relations. In Norfolk, focus groups with community members, police officers, and government officials have been completed. In 2023, CPE will analyze these interviews to better understand the context of public safety in Norfolk.
When Norfolk native Karen Rose retired after 20 years with the Norfolk Police Department (NPD), she moved directly into her role as Security Manager at Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Association (NRHA), where she must consistently meet public safety needs that are complex, multi-directional, and often multi-generational.

"We may have a 16-year-old who's been convicted of drug trafficking," she says, "and we don't want to have to evict him [from public housing] and uproot an entire family. So we've got a 16-year-old we have to save, a mom who needs answers, maybe she has four other kids, and they all need housing. Sometimes we have to move families around if there's gang activity, because once you're in a gang, it's hard to get out."

Such holistic problem-solving is central to the work that CPE has been doing in Norfolk with organizations like NRHA, community members, and NPD. Public safety solutions can't only consider the existence of crime, they must also incorporate the broader needs of families, neighborhoods, and whole communities—and acknowledge that criminals themselves are often engaged in crime in an attempt to resolve a crisis that has been ignored by the institutions on which communities should be able to depend.

"My interaction with CPE has been great," Rose continues, "because I can have a conversation with them and I can be very transparent with what I see, what my experiences have been, and speak honestly."

Rose has been especially grateful that partnering with CPE has given her access to best practices.

"I've learned a lot from them as they talk about other cities that they've worked with about transparency and also to know that Norfolk isn't the only one with these types of issues. I think that's a real plus, to be able to see that."
Spotlight

Policy

Much of the change communities want to see hinges on public policy and the laws that support that policy. As in years past, 2022 saw the introduction of legislation meant to address systemic issues in law enforcement, alongside laws intended to roll-back any efforts to redesign public safety. President Biden’s Executive Order on public safety and his later Safer America Plan were a long time in coming and provided openings for new approaches to these issues, but Congress’ failure to pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act was a disappointing counterbalance. As CPE’s work demonstrates, federal laws are essential, but not determinative to uprooting systemic White supremacy in policing. That work is best done at the state and local levels, where our Policy and Community Engagement (PCE) teams spent much of 2022 building and expanding relationships.

Our desire to scale early successes built by the Triage Response Team (TRT) and C4J team in individualized community partnerships led to two new major initiatives: A partnership with the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center and our Redesigning Public Safety Resource Series. Both are the result of years-long investments in research, data collection, writing, and on the ground work, positioning us to help communities implement, evaluate, and sustain policing alternatives.

Policy Advancements

- CPE provided thought leadership and collaborated with civic organizations, advocacy nonprofits, and elected representatives to advance legislative efforts towards significant redesign in traffic enforcement across the country.
- Bills intended to introduce meaningful reform in traffic enforcement were introduced in California, Connecticut, Illinois, New York, Tennessee, and Washington.
- CPE partnered with the CSG Justice Center to facilitate stakeholder development of local public safety redesign plans. We ideated, developed, and launched learning communities in which stakeholders are able to learn best practices, access tools and resources, and receive technical assistance.
- President Biden issued an Executive Order on Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices to Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety and released his Safer America Plan, both of which provided opportunities to advance some elements of public safety redesign efforts.

Built in partnership with the CSG Justice Center, Unlocking Democracy is a series of learning communities facilitating the implementation of emerging best practices, documentation of outcomes, and building local non-police answers to public safety challenges. Participants come from 21 different jurisdictions in the U.S. and Canada and have completed the first of five modules focused traffic safety (e.g., minor traffic stops), school safety (e.g., student discipline, truancy, school safety officers), crisis systems (e.g., community responders, crisis stabilization centers, crisis call centers), and violence interruption (e.g., de-escalation, credible messengers, trauma counseling).

PCE’s Redesigning Public Safety Resource Series comprises policy papers, webinars, and roundtable discussions. The Traffic Safety White Paper, released in September 2022, was followed by an enthusiastically received webinar. Both underpin our Policy team’s work across the country to advance legislation reforming low-level traffic stops.

Beyond their immediate legislative impact, these efforts also reaffirmed CPE’s standing as a thought leader for the work that lies ahead, not least, the question of mental health emergency response. We published our Mental Health Emergency Response White Paper in February 2023, and will be utilizing our findings to advance our work on the issue in the months to come.
Reducing the level of harm that current policing practices cause is a vital first step, but the country’s growing understanding of the need for truly transformative change has allowed CPE to accelerate innovative approaches—adaptable to localities’ specific needs—that go well beyond harm reduction.

We apply robust analytical models to data gathered from law enforcement, government, and community nonprofits to identify areas ripe for change; uplift pragmatic solutions; conduct cutting-edge research; and champion legislation designed to reduce the footprint of policing and foster more equitable public safety systems. This requires collaboration across CPE’s many teams, including but not limited to: Policy, Community Engagement, Science and Technology, Justice Initiatives Product Innovations, and Law Enforcement Initiatives. This cross-team collaboration is evident in the work we did in more than a dozen localities in 2022, including Newington, CT, Watertown, CT, Norfolk, VA, St. Louis, MO, and others.

In St. Louis, for instance, we completed the public safety redesign work that was started in 2018, delivering an in-depth report with community-led, evidence-informed recommendations, and initiated the implementation phase. We facilitated coalition-building across stakeholder groups, a fact that has proven crucial to early successes; facilitated the adoption of state-of-the-art technology essential to several of the report’s recommendations; and identified a Trusted Broker from within the community to liaise between stakeholders. It’s this kind of layered work that makes the change CPE facilitates so durable—we don’t offer one-size-fits-all solutions, we meet communities where they are, listen closely, and address all sides of the issues they face.
Much of CPE’s 2022 work in St. Louis was fully realized in April 2023, when a public workshop was held to announce the launch of a Public Safety Collaborative (PSC) comprised of individuals from the community who will be working together in a Data-Informed Community Engagement (DICE) framework to co-produce comprehensive, dynamic, transparent, and effective crime prevention strategies, tailored to their community.

DICE is powered by Risk Terrain Modeling (RTM) and delivered via RTMDx software that diagnoses crime patterns, identifies environmental conditions that contribute to crime problems, and guides decision-making for public safety. RTM seeks to reduce crime by focusing on places, not people.

In St. Louis, DICE powered by RTM will help coordinate multiple community stakeholders to maximize existing local resources for better public safety outcomes. Through DICE, community groups will be able to diagnose crime patterns, prioritize places in need, and coordinate programs that are pragmatic, impactful, and connected to lived experiences.

The PSC will work closely with a Trusted Broker to explore community-driven approaches to effectively addressing high-risk areas. The Trusted Broker, hosted by the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, is a full-time role entrusted with overseeing, organizing, and coordinating a community-engaged approach to crime prevention. Farrakhan Shegog was introduced as the Trusted Broker at the public workshop held in April 2022.

As deputy director of the Saint Louis Mental Health Board, Serena Muhammad encounters her fair share of organizations and activists who approach her city’s challenges from a place of heartfelt urgency without the luxury of time to research effective solutions.

Some experts use data “to label and ‘other’ people,” she says, coming into a community “and saying, ‘This is what we know about you.’ I think that’s harmful.”

CPE, she says, is different, learning about communities by listening and then presenting its findings “in a way that’s relatable and relevant. If you ask me who I am, that’s very different from telling me who I am.”

Another factor that sets CPE apart, Muhammad says, is the organization’s use of data to inform recommendations, strategizing, and implementation. “In the past, we’ve had all these wonderful plans, but lacked the capacity to execute them. Having a partner that can move into action is unusual.”

Muhammad is especially excited that CPE is helping the city employ risk-terrain modeling (RTM). RTM flags high-risk locations—such as dark stretches of a street—allowing grassroots activists to advance simple, evidence-informed solutions to make those locations safer for community members—something as straightforward as better lighting, for instance. CPE connected with stakeholders in St. Louis to explain the strategy’s benefits, “and now folks are ready to move forward with it.”

“

It’s one thing to have data, it’s another thing to know what to do with it.”

Serena Muhammad, Deputy Director, Saint Louis Mental Health Board
Starting in 2008 with just a handful of people working in a basement at UCLA, the CPE team now consists of close to 150 staff members, all working remotely, in nearly every state and time zone. This enormous growth is reflective of an increasing hunger for real, significant, and sustainable change in public safety. As we’ve grown, the CPE team has continued to work parallel tracks, with both harm reduction and public safety redesign at the center of everything we do. These two seemingly oppositional strategies are a large part of what sets CPE apart. The ability to change systems from the inside (harm reduction) while also reducing the need for those systems (public safety redesign) has positioned CPE to withstand the tumult that those working in the spaces of racial justice and criminal legal system reform have experienced in recent years.

The broad range of life experiences, professional backgrounds, passions, and expertise that these numbers represent—only possible because of the ongoing commitment of CPE’s generous donors—is an invaluable asset to everything CPE does.

CPE’s Board of Directors played an instrumental role in kicking off 2023 by hosting the organization’s first in-person event since the COVID-19 pandemic. CPE Interim Board Chair Ed Zimmerman hosted The Key to Unlocking Justice, during which Board Member Adam Savage facilitated a deep and rich conversation with CPE Co-founder and CEO Dr. Phillip Atiba Goff. Attendees at the event learned about the origins of CPE, how the events of 2020 influenced the direction of CPE, and how the resurgent tough-on-crime narrative will influence politics and economics, reaffirming the importance of CPE’s mission to redesign public safety.

Ed Zimmerman, J.D., Interim Chair
Meredith Smiedt, MSW, Ph.D., Secretary
Tianhui Michael Li, Ph.D., Treasurer
Kimberly Bryant
Alicia Garza
Jack Glaser, Ph.D.
Kathleen O’Toole, J.D., Ph.D.
Adam Savage
Dr. Phillip Atiba Goff, Ex-officio
Andrew Casteel and Lexi Baugher have supported CPE since 2020; both engineers, they approach problems with that perspective. Today Lexi is a software engineer at Google, and Andrew, previously at the Bay Area Bike Coalition, is the founder of San Francisco’s Laughing Monk Brewery. CPE is deeply grateful to them both for their collaboration on this vital work, so we sat down with Andrew to learn more about his and Lexi’s commitment to racial justice and their support of CPE.

Can you tell us about your decision to support CPE?

The first step to solving any problem is understanding its scope—this is how engineers think. And then, just seeing and acknowledging issues is not enough—financial support is necessary, too. I’ve used crowdfunding campaigns and donation matches to boost our support of CPE’s work.

What stands out to you about CPE’s work?

I’m primarily focused on getting data, like the National Justice Database. We can’t truly acknowledge a problem unless we measure it. Solving problems requires a systematic approach.

What do you consider to be the most important issue CPE is tackling?

Measuring the frequency of incidents and tracking use of force incidents instead of solely relying on anecdotal stories; sharing data on who is getting stopped and when; describing problems and staying focused on our area of expertise.

Your gift to CPE is so meaningful in accelerating our work. What do you hope your gift will help accomplish?

We hope it will help CPE gather data from police departments and challenge them to stand up and acknowledge the scale of, and the need to address, those issues. “Sunlight is the best disinfectant!”

What do you wish more people understood about CPE’s work?

I want people to understand that CPE’s work is vital, because the issue is systemic, not a one-off. The whole system that creates these injustices is the problem, not just individuals.

What would you tell someone who is considering making a gift to CPE?

I feel the way CPE works has a much more measurable impact. The engineer in me sees measurable outcomes—CPE is showing results and generating real support for its recommendations to improve public safety.

The Justice and Mobility Fund is a philanthropic collaboration launched by Blue Meridian Partners, the Ford Foundation, and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, that invests in boosting economic mobility and improving the life trajectories of people impacted by the criminal justice system. Leveraging Blue Meridian’s pooled funding and performance-based investing model and the Ford Foundation’s expertise in social justice grantmaking, the Justice and Mobility Fund invests in nationally scalable solutions as well as strategic place-based initiatives working across the spectrum of justice system engagement.

The operating arm of the collaboration, Blue Meridian Partners, has pioneered a philanthropic model for identifying and funding scalable solutions to challenges that limit economic and social mobility for young people and families living in poverty; inequity in public safety outcomes is at the heart of that struggle. In acknowledgment that even the most promising strategies cannot reach far enough, fast enough without significant resources, Blue Meridian brings philanthropists together to pool capital and scale solutions.

Beyond dollars, though, the Justice and MobilityFund provides critical capacity- and evidence-building support along with strategic advice. Understanding that social circumstances, economic mobility, and racial equity are inextricably linked, the collaboration invests in strategies, such as those pursued by CPE, that serve to dismantle structural inequities that have long excluded Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other historically disadvantaged people from power, opportunity, and growth.

The science CPE does was key to the Justice and MobilityFund’s decision to support our work—from data collection, to rigorous analysis, to utilizing those findings to develop informed recommendations for meaningful change. The collaboration’s gift has had far-reaching impact, supporting CPE’s science work, as well as the organization’s service capacity, public safety redesign work, and organizational development.

“...the work that CPE is doing, the depth and breadth of where you are across the country, I thought that was really valuable and a place where we could lean in,” Simpson says. “In order to make change, you need to have good information to go by. The quantitative data and qualitative data gathering that you’re doing is really, really valuable.”

Partnerships like the one CPE built with the Justice and Mobility Fund and its collaborating partners are crucial to our capacity to grow the organization, expand our reach, and ensure that the community-led change we facilitate is lasting. This is work that requires the participation of many willing hands. We couldn’t be more grateful for what Blue Meridian Partners, the Ford Foundation, and Schusterman Family Philanthropies have allowed us to do.
The NFL and the Players Coalition generously support CPE through its Inspire Change social justice initiative.

Players Coalition is proud to be a supporter and advocate of CPE’s work to end racist policing practices and redesign public safety solutions rooted in justice. Having a community-driven approach to public safety ensures community needs are actually being met.

CPE’s work is compelling because of its data-driven, evidence-based approach to public safety and police accountability. They stand out in their ability to effectively balance the interrelated efforts of reducing harm within law enforcement systems, while also redesigning and implementing public safety models that empower communities.”

We are so grateful for the community of supporters who gave $16.8 million in philanthropic support to further CPE’s mission.

Contributions from corporations, foundations, and individuals power all of our work. Your support makes it possible for more communities to forge the path to justice.

*These financial statements represent unaudited revenue and expenses for January through December 2022 in alignment with our fiscal year. Annual Reports prior to April 2021 reflected a May through April funding cycle in accordance with the requirements of major funders.
“Optimism, in the face of reality, is a revolutionary act. Aspire to be a bit of a revolutionary every day.”

Dr. Phillip Atiba Geff, Co-founder and CEO