



DEFUND POLICE REBUILD OUR COMMUNITIES



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What if **Ayana Stanley** and **Tamir Rice** got to just be kids? What if **Trayvon Martin** was offered a ride home instead? What if someone had checked on **Rayshard Brooks** when he was asleep in his car? What if **Breonna Taylor** got to wake up in the morning? What if **Laval Hall** was seen by a mental health Professional? What if **Nina Pop** was safe from harm and protected?

What if people had enough to feed their families and quality food was a guarantee? What if schools taught us to love and respect each other? What if the houseless were well cared for and given adequate resources? What if money wasn't a concern? What is everyone deserved to live?

Everyone deserves to be safe from violence in their homes, communities, schools, their trips to the store, on their daily runs, in their parks, on their blocks and everywhere else.



The safest communities have the least amount of police and the most amount of resources.

Police in most American cities get more resources than our schools, public housing, transportation and health services. Police departments have money for brand new facilities, fancy new cars, horses, surveillance, new weapons to test on protestors, military equipment, like tanks, drones, guns and riot gear, like shields and teargas.

We are on the brink of the greatest economic depression of our lifetime and our politicians tell us they don't have resources for healthcare, housing, paid sick leave or unemployment. Yet when it comes to the police budget, or money to build a new jail or bail out a corporation – the resources always flow.

Having everyone's basic needs met, like they are for the wealthy, is what makes safe communities. We need resources for the things that keep our communities safe – guaranteed housing, free public education, universal healthcare, guaranteed jobs programs, mental health and addiction services and youth programming. Instead of arresting someone for being addicted to drugs, or selling drugs because they don't have any other way to make money, imagine if we could give that person a job or send them to rehab. We have all the resources we need to do this but currently, they are going towards policing, surveillance and incarceration instead. Police can never solve what capitalism creates, like poverty. Police were created to police the poor.

Police were never meant to protect and serve me and you, they were never meant to provide safety for us.

Before we were in the streets, police were called to put their knees on the neck of George Floyd over a 20 dollar counterfeit bill and now they are being called into the streets to keep change from happening.

They're here to protect the interests of the people who run this country, protect property, keep prison cells full, to use us as their outlet for rage and to keep change from happening. **This is why the police do not need to be fixed. The system must be abolished and our communities must be invested in.** The time for simple reforms is over.

We must defund the police and rebuild our communities.



There's a shift happening right now. The call to defund police is louder than we've ever heard it. We can all answer the call and reshape what our communities look like.

How Did We Get Here?



It's June 2020 and the rallying cry across the country is to Defund the Police. The last four months, coupled with the last four decades, coupled with the last four centuries of crisis laid the groundwork for this moment.

For the last four centuries, this country has been built up through racialized capitalism and exploitation which has been maintained through policing and prisons. In the 1700s, slave patrols in the south served to chase down runaway slaves and prevent slave revolts. Police have always existed to keep a compliant workforce. In its earliest conception the very rich used police to break up labor strikes, where people were demanding better pay and working conditions. The first American prisons started as work camps for newly freed slaves. Today, prison labor is a multibillion dollar industry, where imprisoned workers make as little as \$0.23/hour so corporations can maximize their profits. Since their founding, police and prisons have always been about protecting profit for the haves while wreaking havoc for the have-nots.

For the last four decades, we have seen and felt the consistent chipping away of our limited social safety net and an extreme rise in wealth inequality. We've seen welfare, education, healthcare, social security all be cut and purposely underfunded while military, surveillance and police budgets grew without question. While corporations like Walmart and Amazon were making the most unprecedented wealth in history by policing and exploiting our communities in the US, they were doing it all over the world too.

For the last four months, we have been dealing with a pandemic, COVID19, aka The Rona. This pandemic kept a lot of us inside, many newly unemployed and the most vulnerable at work. And for the last four months we've watched elected leaders abandon our communities yet again all while enriching and **bailing out** corporations to the tune of **500 billion dollars**. Once again we saw profit trump the needs of people and communities. Essential workers were asked to risk their lives for meager pay and little protection, while amazon's Jeff Bezos became a trillionaire. Capitalism's failings have been laid bare for all to see and feel.

Racial Capitalism is the system that we live under, that is built around race and class. In this system, wealthy people, who are overwhelmingly white, gain wealth, profit and power from the exploitation and oppression of working class and poor people of all colors. People of color and women tend to be exploited and oppressed more intensely under racial capitalism. Racial and gender inequality are built into the structure of the economy. And race, class and gender work together to shape government policies and cultural norms."

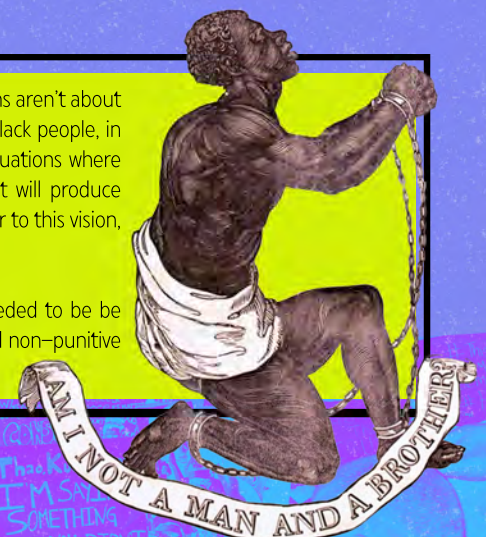
And during this global pandemic that has left the US with the highest unemployment rate since the great depression we couldn't sleep, or go for a run, or buy groceries without losing our lives to the police.

This moment didn't come out of the blue, it didn't happen in a vacuum. It's a build up exacerbated by exploitation, crippling debt, and an unreachable american dream, and the killings of our people just simply trying to do more than survive. So what we're seeing in the streets across the globe right now is a finely honed righteous rage that tells us we're not cooperating anymore while the american burden continues to bury us.

What Is Abolition?

We are fighting for a world without violence, prisons, policing, surveillance and punishment. We know that prisons aren't about safety or accountability but about control and domination over large segments of the population, especially Black people, in order to make a profit. We are different from police and prison reformers because reforms often create situations where these institutions become even more entrenched in our society. Instead, we are fighting for solutions that will produce decarceration, fewer people behind bars and a future world without police and prisons. In order to get us closer to this vision, we must begin to build community alternatives to dealing with harm and violence.

Historically, abolition takes root in the movement to end chattel slavery. Slavery couldn't be reformed, it needed to be ended. In that lineage, we believe police and prisons cannot be reformed because they don't keep us safe and non-punitive justice is not only possible, but imperative.



What We Are Demanding

In the wake of COVID-19, it's more apparent than ever that our communities need our basic needs met to survive this crisis. We don't need more police who will arrest us, beat us and kill us while we are just trying to survive, we need real resources that keep us safe.

Defund the Police

Divert billions of dollars away from policing in our schools and communities and put these towards what we really need to...

Rebuild our Communities

Universal Basic Income

Guaranteed Jobs program

Paid sick leave & hazard pay

Guaranteed Housing

Universal Healthcare

Mental Health & Addiction Support

Free Public Education

Social Workers, Nurses, and Counselors who can intervene during crises, instead of cops

Eugene, Oregon

Alternative to 911 and Police as First Responders

City launches CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets), an alternative 911 line that dispatches social workers instead of police.

Stockton, California

Universal Basic Income

Mayor Michael Tubbs, the youngest mayor in Stockton history and the first Black mayor ever elected, launched a universal basic income program in the city.

Houston, Texas

Sobering Centers: Helping people, instead of locking them up

Instead of arresting people for public intoxication, people are taken to the Houston Recovery Center where they can rest and sober up before returning to the road.

EXAMPLES
TO LEARN
FROM

How Do We Defund the Police? We Need Power

"This country does not function by morality, love, and nonviolence, but by power. Thus we are determined to win Political power... With Power, the masses could make or participate in making the decisions which govern their destinies, and thus create basic change in their day-to-day lives." – Stokely Carmichael, 1966

Our fundamental problem as Black people and poor people in this country is that we do not have power – the power to make the laws that govern our lives, the power to determine how our tax payer dollars are spent and the power to decide how our schools, workplaces and communities are run.

In our society, corporations and the 1 percent run our political system. The only way to change this is by building power -- organizing mass amounts of people to join our fight.

If we want to defund the police, we must build strong local movements that engage thousands of people to build real political power to force decision makers to create budgets that move money towards the things we need and away from police and prisons. The fight to defund is a local fight. Police budgets are determined at the city and county level. This is not a demand for congress or the President, but a demand for your mayor, your city council people and county commissioners. These people live in your city and ultimately, they only stay in power if you continue to elect them. You can also un-elect them if they don't meet your community's demands and you can organize your community to join you. That's political power.

How We Build Power to Defund the Police

Take to the streets and push our demands on the people who can give us what we want.

Build political power by impacting local budgets and by forcing candidates to take a stance on our agenda this election and voting them out, if they don't

Keep our communities safe without the police – build alternatives to address harm, conflict and violence in our communities

CHOOSE YOUR FIGHTER



Key Dates

Summer / Early Fall / Budget Season

Look up your county and city budget cycle here. This is a public process meaning they must discuss and build the budget in a series of public meetings. It's our job to crash these meetings, and organize our community around OUR priorities and make sure the budget reflects this. These are OUR tax payer dollars after all.

November 7 / General Election

Dual Power in Action

Minneapolis Disbands the Police

Days after George Floyd was killed, the Minneapolis Police Department voted to disband their local police department. Mainstream conversation has said that this is because of protests. Yes, this is true but it's not the whole story and this movement was not built overnight. Minneapolis is home to some of the strongest abolitionist organizing in our country. Organizations like Take Action and Black Visions Alliance have been working for decades to build political power for Black people, immigrants and working class communities. For the last decade, they've been working to get people from the movement elected to local city council. Now, they have a majority of seats. So when protestors began demanding we defund the police, they had people on the inside aligned with this agenda and ready to move their demands. Change does not always come overnight. It comes from developing and moving a long term strategy for building power in our communities.

August 18 / Florida Primary Election

In 2018, Florida voted to give people with felonies their right to vote back. This means 1.4 million Floridians who have been directly impacted by the racist prison and policing system will have the opportunity to vote for the first time. Also, all of Florida's State Attorneys, Sheriffs and Judges are up for re-election. Also across the state – mayors, city council people and county commissioners are also up for reelection. These people have the MOST power to get our people out of prison and defund the police. We can organize around these elections to make sure candidates take a stance on our demands to defund police and prisons and rebuild our communities.



STEP 1: Find Your Local Decision Makers and Choose a Target



STEP 2: Be Clear About What Your Target Has the Power to Do

School Boards

School districts in Florida have massive budgets for school security/surveillance and contracts with local police departments, especially after the tragic Parkland shooting. School boards in Florida even have the power to create their own police departments, which a few school boards have done. **If you want to remove police from schools, your local school board is your target.**



The Demand

Defund the Police and Rebuild Our Communities

- Defund the school police and security budget **AND** cut ties with local police departments that employ police officers to patrol schools.
- Invest the money in wrap-around services, social workers, free health services, high quality food, free daycare, an increase in teachers' pay and support, and youth programming, including comprehensive sex education and transformative justice programming, and creating a curriculum that acknowledges and addresses students' material and cultural needs.
- **Participatory budgeting:** It's our money and we should have power over our school budgets. School districts should create meaningful mechanisms for students and parents to participate in the budget process and set reinvestment priorities.

Colleges & Universities

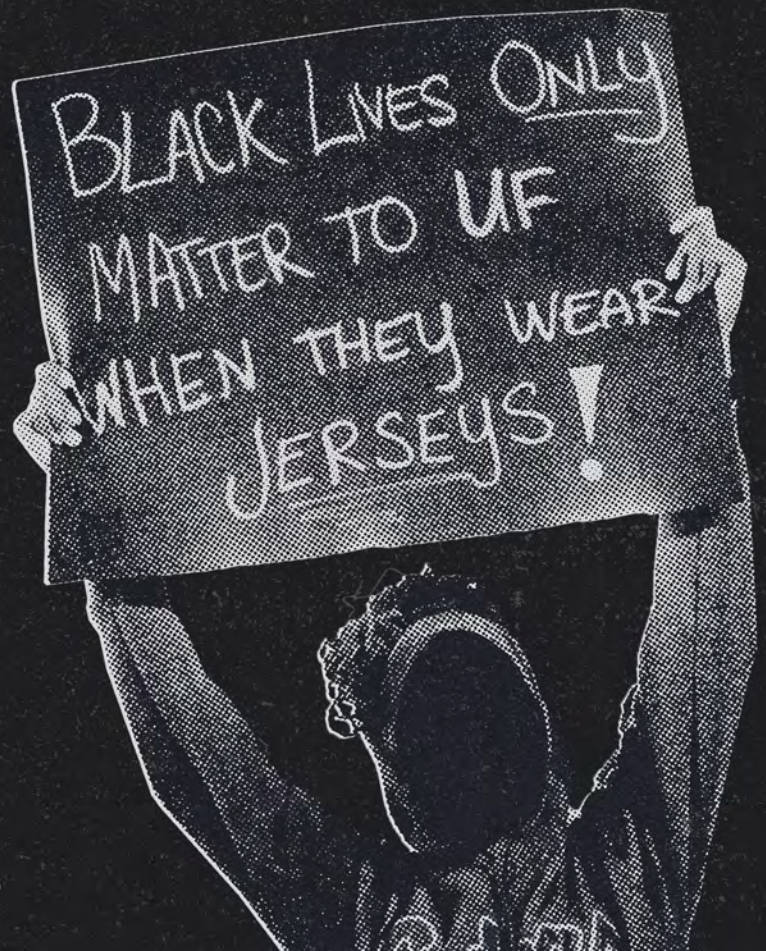
Colleges and universities usually employ their own police departments or security guards and also often have contracts with local police departments. They also have investment portfolios with holdings in all kinds of harmful private industries, like the fossil fuel industry and the private prison industry. Colleges and universities all over the country have invest/divest campaigns to defund from harmful industries and invest in the student body and the surrounding communities instead.

If you want to kick police off your campus or force your school to cut ties with private prisons, your target is your college president and board of trustees.

The Demand

Defund the Police and Rebuild Our Communities

- Defund college/university police departments, divest from holdings that benefit the prison-industrial complex [including holdings in private prison operators like CoreCivic and GEO Group] AND cut ties with local police departments.
- Invest the money in mental health resources, fully funded academic projects that include intentional curriculum around organizing, communications for movement organizations, and employment of scholars and organizers to teach and research creative approaches to eliminate structural social harms.
- **Participatory budgeting:** Create meaningful mechanisms for students to participate in the budget process and set reinvestment priorities.



County Commission

The County Board of Commissioners decides how much funding local jails and county police receive by allocating funding to the county sheriff's/corrections department and the county police department. **If you want defund local jails or to defund county police, the County Commission is your target.**

The Demand

Defund the Police and Rebuild Our Communities

- Invest money in **(1)** social goods including fully funded public education, access to affordable housing, dignified and livable wages, public transportation, paid parental leave, comprehensive quality child and elder care, **(2)** health services including universal physical, mental, and dental health care, and **(3)** violence prevention and treatment programs including local transformative justice services and community-led violence interruption programs.
- **Participatory budgeting:** Create meaningful mechanisms for residents to participate in the budget process and set reinvestment priorities.

City Commission

The City Commission decides how much funding the police districts within their jurisdiction receive. **If you want to defund city police departments, the City Commission is your target.**

The Demand

Defund the Police and Rebuild Our Communities

- Invest money in **(1)** social goods including fully funded public education, access to affordable housing, dignified and livable wages, public transportation, paid parental leave, comprehensive quality child and elder care, **(2)** health services including universal physical, mental, and dental health care, and **(3)** violence prevention and treatment programs including local transformative justice services and community-led violence interruption programs.
- **Participatory budgeting:** Create meaningful mechanisms for residents to participate in the budget process and set reinvestment priorities.

DEFUND POLICE
REBUILD OUR
COMMUNITIES



State or District Attorneys

State Attorneys control who goes to jails and prisons, and for what, meaning they have power over what police are arresting people for. If we lessen the scope of what they and the police do, then they need less money that could instead be invested in our communities. **If you want to decriminalize and decarcerate in your district, State or District Attorneys are your target.**

The Demands *Defund the P.I.C, Decriminalize and Decarcerate our Communities*

- **End the War on Poverty.** State or District Attorneys can decriminalize sex work, drug offenses and homelessness, which lessens the police's interaction with people every day. They can also end cash bail and stop putting poor people in the endless cycle of the criminal legal system.
- **Let Kids Be Kids.** State or District Attorneys can order the closing of youth jails, stop charging children and we can invest the money spent on youth criminalization and incarceration on police-free alternative programs, robust public education, afterschool programs and community mental health.
- **Defund, Decarcerate and Expand Alternatives.** Instead of driving mass incarceration by putting as many people behind bars as possible, prosecutors should push for community-based rehabilitation and divert people away from the prison system. Force your local prosecutors to lower the jail and prison population, refuse to support the development of new jails or prisons, end forced plea deals, end the prosecution of all low level offenses and instead build up police-free, community-based rehabilitation and alternatives.
- **Protect Immigrant communities.** State or District Attorneys should not be acting as arms of ICE. They need to appoint Padilla lawyers, create No ICE Zones a local courthouses, support post conviction release opportunities and consider the immigration penalties of a conviction.
- **Transparency and Police Accountability.** State or District Attorneys need to transparently and frequently report on the affairs of their office via a public online portal; meet regularly with a community accountability board to stay grounded on the impact that their work has on the communities they work in; develop a No Call List – a list of known bad actors, or police who have been found guilty of misconduct who cannot testify in court; advocate for investigations into law enforcement misconduct by an independent prosecutor without relying solely on evidence produced by and the accounts of the Chiefs of Police or Sheriff's internal investigations; and treat families of police brutality as survivors – Facilitate access to the Victim Compensation Board for families who have lost loved ones due to law enforcement use of lethal force and allocate financial support for surviving children.

STEP 3: Create Your Action Plan

"This country does not function by morality, love, and nonviolence, but by power. Thus we are determined to win Political power... With Power, the masses could make or participate in making the decisions which govern their destinies, and thus create basic change in their day-to-day lives." – Stokely Carmichael, 1966

How Do You Get Your People Organized?

Who is the local organization fighting for abolition? DD, BYP, SONG, Survived and Punished. No organization in your area? Start one. Wanna start a DD chapter? bit.ly/StartDDSquadd

What's Needed in Your Community?

What are the current fights in your community? What's not being funded enough? What will help your community? ASK PEOPLE!

What Resources Do You Have?

Who and what do you have access to? Printers? Know someone at the radio station that might let you speak? Got someone that's good at design? Go into this work knowing your abilities, your reach and what else you need.

Who's Your Target?

Who has the ability to give you what you want locally? Who is vulnerable (has an election coming up or has bad press)? Who is empathetic to the cause?

Who Has Influence Over Your Target?

Secondary targets are the people who have power to influence your primary target. What power do you have over them?

When's Your Opportunity?

When do they have meetings? What public events are they going to? Where can you create a confrontation?

Pressure Busts Pipes

Time to rally the people. Did you pick your city commission? Go to their meetings, bombard people on the public speaking list like our Miami Squadd did. Or if they're in person meetings, take their seats and demand to defund the police and rebuild your community.

Organize the People, Grow the Movement

Talk to your neighbors and friends, then talk to their neighbors and friends, then get them to talk to their friends and neighbors.—spread the work, ask people to get involved in the fight. You can't do this work alone and we're not going to defund the police with one action. Keep the momentum going, build with the people.



STEP 4: Get Creative and Choose Your Tactics

Actions are an opportunity to confront those in power and build public support so we can bring more people into our fight. Creativity is essential.

People's Budget Hearing

Bring the community together to debate our priorities. What would a people's budget look like? How would we reallocate the millions of dollars we spend on police? Hold this in a public square outside city hall so the people in power can't pretend they don't know what our priorities are.

Candidate Pledge

After you know what your communities needs are, create a pledge that your pressure local electeds to sign. It can include a commitment to defund the police and put city or county money into education, paid sick leave, a community center, or whatever your needs are. If they don't support the communities' priorities, they have no business representing you!

Crash City Council Meetings

Your city or county council work for its constituents. If they're not doing their job, remind them who their bosses are. Bombard their virtual meetings, if you're in person you can take over their seats before they get there, pack the meetings, make a ruckus that can't be ignored, you can even conduct the meeting yourselves. We will not be ignored.

Bail Outs

So many people in your city and county are in jails because they cannot afford to pay their bail. They're behind bars because they're poor. Raise some money or connect with the numerous local bail funds in your area and reunite some families.

Leafleting

We only win with more power. We build more power when we bring more people into the fight. Not everyone wants to come to an action. We must meet the people where they're at. Walking the community, sharing who we are and listening to the people and their concerns is how we pull more people into our movement.

Community Surveying

How would your community re-allocate them millions of dollars currently going to the police? Ask them! Show up in a public place or knock door to door and build a people's budget. Use this to pressure the county during their budget process to adopt community demands. Remember, it's OUR money!

Mass Meetings

So many people are looking for ways to plug into the movement, for what they can do to make this moment create lasting change. Put a call out to your community and bring them together online or in a park with social distancing, but give space to your community to plug into your plan to defund the police.

Autonomous Zones

All over the country, autonomous zones are popping up. These are spaces, that take up blocks, or buildings, that are community-run and police free. Resources like childcare, mental health assistance, medical care, healing, and food are being offered by members of the community. It's an exercise in world-building. What can you imagine for your community? Make it happen in an autonomous zone.



STEP 5: Beware of Pitfalls

Look Out for the Police

Don't kneel with them, don't take pictures with them. It's a publicity stunt and a tactic to make you look silly. The only way they can be helpful at all now is to quit their jobs and fight against police and prisons.

Privatizing Local Police Force

In our calls to defund police, we want to be careful that they aren't replaced with privatized security firms. We don't want police, period – especially ones that are for profit. With corporate-run police, we can only imagine how many more guns, officers and squad cars, we will see in our communities. When there's a profit to be made and corporations are in charge, it becomes even harder for us to stop the criminalization of our people. We have seen this all around the world, with the expansion of for profit security, weapons and war companies, like G4S, Boeing and Raytheon.

Expanding the Scope of What Police Do

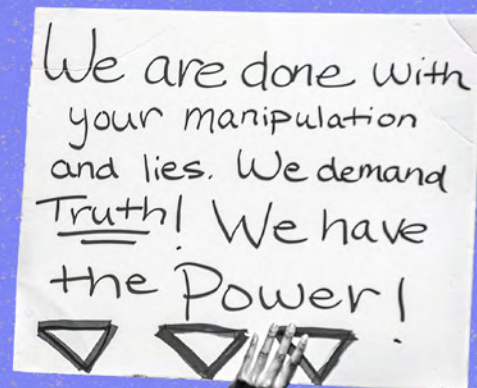
Police are not trained to be social workers or to deal with mental health concerns. Beware of police expanding their scope for work. We are looking to allocate money AWAY from police departments, not expand the scope of what they do.

White Savior Complex

We are not looking for white people to save us or to wallow in their guilt. We are looking for white people to be a fight for themselves and a fight for ALL working class people. You are being harmed by racial capitalism too. The police are not your friend either. Join our movement because you know WE ALL deserve better. This is solidarity, not charity.

Just Keep Pushing

Our freedom won't be won overnight. We are up against the most sophisticated empire in world history. The movement is not a trend and its not an overnight success story. It took 400 years to abolish slavery. We are committing ourselves to a lifetime of struggle, knowing that we might not see our freedom won in our lifetimes, but that we are setting up the next generation for the fight.



Imagine a world where...

No life is lost to a bullet or a jail cell, the grave or the cage.

A world where children feel free and safe when they walk to the store,
play at the park and go to school.

Imagine a world where every family, by blood or choice, has food on
their tables and full bellies, homes to sleep at night, and good paying
jobs.

A world where an education or a medical emergency doesn't leave us
in ruin.

Where people are able to heal and reach their full potential – mind,
body, and soul.

Where we have everything we need to fulfill our wildest dreams.

Where we know and care for our neighbors and no life is disposable.

A world where our kids are raised and live without fear of
abandonment or violence or each other.

Where all life on earth is valued over profit, and people are ruled by
love over fear.

Imagine a world where Trayvon Martin was offered a ride home
instead.

**This is safety. This is the world we need and the world we must fight
for because we deserve better than we've been given.**

By virtue of being born, each of us has the absolute right to an end
to the current prison and policing system and reinvestment of the
money spent on prisons and police into social services in our
community that address the root causes of poverty and violence.