A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark bow tie is dancing in a parade. He is wearing a dark fedora hat and a sash that says "TRU BLUE". He is holding a large, fluffy, light-colored object. In the background, other people are dancing and holding flags. The scene is set on a city street with buildings and street lamps. The entire image has a blue tint.

A ROADMAP FOR CHANGE

Building Community-Based Public Safety in Bogalusa

This report represents a collaborative effort between the Bogalusa, Louisiana community and Equal Justice USA. It is rooted in community-centered research and storytelling, capturing the diverse perspectives and experiences shared during the Pathways to Healing: Bogalusa Community Conversations. Through this qualitative assessment, we aim to illuminate the challenges, aspirations, and collective wisdom of the residents of Bogalusa fostering dialogue and action toward a more just and equitable public safety ecosystem.

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COMMUNITY FOREWORD

DEAR READERS,

When EJUSA first rolled into Bogalusa with their big ideas, I'll admit, I was skeptical. We've heard promises before, but I found that these people seemed different. They weren't just talking; they were walking right alongside us. I'm not a woman of many words. But I could fill a book with my gratitude for EJUSA.

Let me tell you, Bogalusa might be small, but we have heart. We've seen our fair share of struggles, especially when it comes to violence. Too many of our young folks have been lost to gun violence, and it breaks the community's heart every time.

But we're fighters here. So when EJUSA started organizing the listening session, people from all walks of life came together, sharing their stories and really listening to each other. Our young people opened up about their struggles, and their parents even started opening up about their trauma. I started to see light bulbs going off in our heads. We had normalized the violence here in Bogalusa. But we didn't have to accept it. We could create a safer, more healed city. That's when I knew we were onto something.

I started the organization Forever Takes A Village because I witnessed the murder of a 15-year-old at my niece's birthday party. I held him in my arms, I heard the screams, and I experienced the pain. I was tired of sitting back and watching young folks get caught up in the cycle of violence. As I searched for a solution, I was reminded of my grandmother's words: It takes a village to raise a child. We needed to involve the entire community in supporting our kids.

It wasn't easy, but EJUSA has consistently been there every step of the way. Now, as we unveil this report, I can't help but feel hopeful. These recommendations aren't just words on a page; they're a roadmap for change. As a community, we can make it happen.



“...WHEN EJUSA STARTED ORGANIZING THE LISTENING SESSION, PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE CAME TOGETHER, SHARING THEIR STORIES AND REALLY LISTENING TO EACH OTHER... I STARTED TO SEE LIGHT BULBS GOING OFF IN OUR HEADS... WE COULD CREATE A SAFER, MORE HEALED CITY.”

So here's to Bogalusa. Here's to our determination and our spirit. Let's keep fighting and moving towards community safety.



Sincerely,

Khililia Daniels
Founder & Executive Director
Forever Takes A Village



NO WEAPONS
NO DRUGS
NO ALCOHOL
NO GAMING
NO BILLS
NO RECORDS
NO SIGNAGE
NO POSTERS
NO ADVERTISING
NO OTHER
NO OTHER

WELCOME TO CITY HALL
CITY CLERK
CITY MANAGER
CITY COMMISSIONER
CITY ATTORNEY
CITY ENGINEER
CITY PLANNING
CITY PUBLIC WORKS
CITY UTILITIES
CITY POLICE
CITY FIRE
CITY PUBLIC SAFETY
CITY PUBLIC WORKS
CITY UTILITIES
CITY POLICE
CITY FIRE
CITY PUBLIC SAFETY

NO WEAPONS
NO DRUGS
NO ALCOHOL
NO GAMING
NO BILLS
NO RECORDS
NO SIGNAGE
NO POSTERS
NO ADVERTISING
NO OTHER
NO OTHER

By Order
of the Board
of Aldermen
Personnel

INSIDE CITY HALL, BOGALUSA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BUILDING COMMUNITY SAFETY IN A SMALL BUT MIGHTY CITY

I have been reflecting on what has been happening in our nation since the summer of 2020 when we witnessed the public murder of George Floyd and then the largest protests in our nation's history. We saw the community come together to call out the systemic racism, economic disinvestment, and violence that has plagued our Black and Brown communities. And we channeled that urgency into community-led solutions to create true safety and fight for a better future.

The moment accelerated a movement for community-centered public safety, and that movement is concentrated in the nation's larger cities. But those cities aren't alone in struggling with safety. That is why we are here in Bogalusa, Louisiana.

At Equal Justice USA (EJUSA), we believe that **safety is not just the absence of violence. It is the presence of well-being, possible when people have access to quality affordable housing, well-paying jobs, good schools, health care, and much more.** To achieve that, we need a justice system that invests in those things instead of the reactionary measures of our punishment system—policing, prosecution, prisons, and probation—which inflict more harm.

“WE BELIEVE THAT BOGALUSA’S HISTORY OF JOY, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND RESILIENCE HAS THE POWER TO DRIVE CHANGE.”

Through our work in Bogalusa and throughout Louisiana, we have seen the power of community-led initiatives to foster and support flourishing communities. We have listened to the voices of community members and leaders (including Khalilia’s powerful words on the preceding page), young people, elders, survivors, and elected officials. We have heard a clear call for change and a hunger for true safety.

The people of Bogalusa know what they need to be safe, and to thrive! And they have every right to demand those solutions as an approach to safety, one that addresses the root causes of harm. This report presents not only what we heard but also solutions developed by the community, along with recommendations for implementation. Why Bogalusa? We believe that Bogalusa’s history of joy, self-determination, and resilience has the power to drive change. The city’s civil rights legacy demonstrates its communal strength toward action. And the people’s initiative can serve as a model for rural community safety.

But that legacy was a necessity of a longer record of racism. The community’s relationships must be healed, and its expertise recognized. As a national organization, EJUSA commits to supporting the community’s efforts, while acknowledging that true leadership comes from those on the ground. **This report marks the beginning of a journey toward healing and transformation in Bogalusa.**



Please join us. Together, we can create and strengthen a culture that values safety, healing, equity, and justice for all. We can invest in community-led initiatives that support thriving communities. We can build the Bogalusa the people want and deserve.

Jamila Hodge
Chief Executive Officer
Equal Justice USA

INTRODUCTION

PATHWAYS TO HEALING: BOGALUSA COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

E JUSA is proud to present Pathways to Healing: Bogalusa Community Conversations, a transformative initiative fostering dialogue and understanding around violence, public safety, and community well-being in Bogalusa, Louisiana. This report serves as a testament to our commitment to amplifying community voices, promoting healing, and advancing equity in the pursuit of a more just society.

Pathways to Healing convened over 50 community members across six listening sessions from August 2023 to November 2023 as an opportunity for community members to share their experience, thoughts, and feelings about the impact of violence and public safety in Bogalusa. **The Pathways to Healing initiative emerges from our broader mission at EJUSA to transform the justice system by prioritizing healing over retribution and addressing the root causes of violence.** We recognize that true transformation requires engaging directly with communities, understanding their unique experiences, and co-creating solutions that honor their voices, needs, and desires.

Bogalusa, nestled in the heart of Washington Parish, Louisiana, holds a rich tapestry of history, resilience, and community spirit. From its origins as a bustling lumber town to its enduring civil rights legacy, Bogalusa embodies the complexities of American history and the ongoing struggle for justice. As stewards of this legacy, we are humbled to stand alongside the residents of Bogalusa as partners in this journey towards healing and renewal.

SNAPSHOT: FOSTERING COMMUNITY SAFETY

Drawing from insights gathered during listening sessions with Bogalusa community members, this report presents a set of recommendations aimed at fostering community safety. Organized into categories spanning one to three years, three to five years, and five to eight years (more details on pp. 25-28), these recommendations are tailored for the mayor, city council, and community. They reflect a collaborative effort to find solutions to the problem of violence.

FOR THE MAYOR

- ▶ Promote collaboration across city departments
- ▶ Work with young people to co-create solutions for young people and increase safety at school
- ▶ Take steps to increase trust and accountability with the police department
- ▶ Bring essential services closer to the city

FOR THE CITY COUNCIL

- ▶ Increase and prioritize community investment including a community center and public transportation
- ▶ Invest in community-based approaches to reducing violence
- ▶ Improve transparency and trust with the community

FOR THE COMMUNITY

- ▶ Build community power through organizing
- ▶ Create and sustain safe spaces for youth
- ▶ Develop community-based restorative justice practices (See Appendix A on p. 30 to learn more about restorative justice)
- ▶ Enhance sustainability of the public safety ecosystem by building infrastructure and increasing funding sources for organizations

BOGALUSA THEN



Bogalusa has a rich and nuanced history, reinforced with strength, struggle, and heritage. Long before European colonization, the land we now call Bogalusa belonged to Chahta Yakni and Acolapissa, peoples of the Choctaw nation, who nurtured deep connections to the land.¹

In the early 20th century, Bogalusa emerged as a bustling lumber town, founded by lumber barons Frank Henry Goodyear and Charles Waterhouse Goodyear.² The establishment of the Great Southern Lumber Company signaled a new chapter in the region's history, transforming Bogalusa into a vital hub of industry and commerce.

Yet, amid the economic prosperity, the shadow of racial violence loomed large. The lynching of Black veteran Lucius McCarty in 1919 underscored the deep-seated injustices that plagued the community, rooted in systemic racism and economic exploitation.³

Throughout the Civil Rights era, Bogalusa became a battleground for justice, as courageous activists like Bob Hicks, Charles Sims, and A.Z. Young of the Deacons for Defense and Justice stood firm against the forces of segregation and white supremacy.⁴

Their legacy of resistance and resilience continues to inspire, reminding us of the ongoing struggle for equality and dignity.

Today, Bogalusa stands at a critical juncture, grappling with a high crime rate that surpasses both national and state averages. This is compounded by recent incidents of gun violence involving youths, tragically impacting individuals as young as 14 years old.⁵ Against this backdrop of violence and the broader challenges of underfunded education and health services, Pathways to Healing seeks to engage residents in meaningful dialogue. By centering their voices and experiences, our initiative aims to develop community-driven solutions to violence and public safety challenges.

As we embark on this journey together, we honor and draw strength from this community and their stories. Together, we envision a future where healing, equity, and justice flourish, transforming Bogalusa into an example of success for communities across Louisiana and beyond.



CHARLES SIMS HOLDS UP MOCK KU KLUX KLAN ROBES

Charles Sims, president of the Bogalusa Deacons for Defense and Justice, defiantly holds up mock Klan robes at a rally on January 29, 1966, just two days after the Klan burned four crosses in front of Ebenezer Baptist Church. Robert Hicks stands behind him on left. (Bettman/Getty Images/hicksfoundation.org)

LOUISIANA TODAY

The root causes of violence in the United States are intricate, tangled, and deeply embedded in our society and our history. Our nation’s approach to violence and crime has always been ineffective and harmful: We placed public safety solely in the hands of law enforcement and its many levels, with a primary focus on punishing those who have caused harm.

Violent crime is expensive. A recent National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform report calculates that one murder costs society as much as \$1.2 million.⁶ Investing in evidence-based strategies to prevent and interrupt violence reduces violent crime and its telescoping impact on the families of those impacted and the greater community at large, who also experience levels of trauma when violence occurs.

In Louisiana, state budget and policy-making priorities reveal decades, if not centuries, of reliance on punishment and policing as the primary strategy to try to keep communities safe — strategies that only increase contact with law enforcement, the legal system, and violence in our communities. At the same time, state and local governments have deprioritized investing in resources that protect and build resilience in vulnerable communities. As a result, Louisiana incarcerates more people per capita⁷ than any democratic nation in the world and has one of the highest poverty rates in the country.⁸ Across every social impact metric — including poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, affordable housing, and others — Louisiana scores lower than most states.⁹

Most recently, the state legislature, following the lead of Gov. Jeff Landry, doubled down on a punitive approach to public safety. A special legislative session on crime in the spring of 2024 saw the passage of regressive policies focused on punishment, which are harmful to people and communities. This legislative focus exacerbates existing socioeconomic issues, limited access to vital resources, and injustices in the criminal justice system, particularly affecting Black and Brown communities. These intertwined forms of oppression contribute to social inequities.

“...IT’S CRITICAL FOR CITIES AND STATES TO CREATE A “COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM” TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT THAT VIOLENCE HAS ON INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING.¹⁴ THIS INVOLVES MOVING AWAY FROM TOTAL RELIANCE ON POLICING, PROSECUTION, PRISONS, AND PAROLE TO CREATE SAFETY FOR COMMUNITIES.”

Despite these challenges, organizations like the Promise of Justice Initiative (PJI) are creating a pathway for a safer Louisiana.¹⁰ PJI and Louisiana Survivors for Reform mobilized hundreds of people together across the state to advocate for legislation that supports survivors of violence and incarcerated individuals.

For example, during the 2024 legislative session, PJI supported House Bill 631, the Justice for Survivors Act., which aimed to allow judges to issue lower sentences for victims and survivors who could prove their offense resulted from abuse.¹¹ Unfortunately, this bill did not pass, signaling lawmakers’ disregard for equitable victim services, recompense, and support.

Another significant effort was Senate Bill 383, which sought to end the legacy of Jim Crow juries by providing post-conviction relief.¹² Although Amendment 2 passed in 2018, ending non-unanimous felony convictions, it wasn’t applied retroactively, leaving 1,500 individuals incarcerated on unjust charges.¹³

Lawmakers had and missed the opportunity to support safety through equitable legislation. Their inaction highlights the ongoing inequities within the system, particularly in failing to prioritize measures that would adequately protect the most vulnerable Louisianans.

What Louisiana and cities across the state are doing to prevent violence—policing, prosecution, prisons, and parole—doesn’t work. The American Public Health Association recognizes violence as a public health issue and explains why it’s critical for cities and states to create a “comprehensive system” to address the impact that violence has on individual and collective development and well-being.¹⁴ This involves moving away from total reliance on policing, prosecution, prisons, and parole to create safety for communities.

LOUISIANA TODAY

Treating symptoms of violence begins by identifying and addressing **risk factors** and implementing and strengthening **protective factors**.¹⁵

RISK FACTORS

Include limited access to resources such as:

- ▶ behavioral health and educational services,
- ▶ lack of economic opportunities,
- ▶ high levels of poverty,
- ▶ limited health care resources, and
- ▶ equitable housing.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Involve the presence of well-being in the community through:

- ▶ proper resource allocation,
- ▶ investments made in the community, and
- ▶ measures to address inequities within the systems that are designed to keep us “safe.”

When a city doesn't address the underlying causes of violence, it perpetuates the cycle of unaddressed trauma. Strategies using this evidence-based approach curate an environment that limits risk factors and fortifies well-being for the community.

Addressing the **root causes** of gun violence through community-led public health solutions is crucial, as it allows us to tackle the underlying issues that lead to violence, such as economic disparity and lack of access to quality education. By investing in strategies that limit risk factors and strengthen protective factors, we not only reduce gun violence but also foster healthier, more resilient communities.

ROOT CAUSES OF GUN VIOLENCE

- ▶ Racism and White Supremacy
- ▶ Poverty and Income Inequality
- ▶ Inequitable Systems (education, health, etc.)
- ▶ Historical and Complex Trauma
- ▶ Exposure to Violence

BOGALUSA TODAY

Bogalusa is home to more than 10,000 residents, many whose basic needs are not being met. Education statistics shine a light on this. Of the residents in Washington Parish who graduated from high school, just 8.1% have a bachelor's degree, highlighting the disparities in the education system, which is the foundation of higher education and prosperity.¹⁶ According to the 2021 Louisiana Census, Bogalusa offers limited job opportunities and a poverty rate climbing to 29.6%¹⁷, which is significantly higher than the state average of 19.6%.¹⁸

By building a public safety ecosystem, the city will create the infrastructure to address the root causes of violence and allow people to thrive.

The work to address what causes violence and to build safety in Bogalusa will require investments from the community; elected officials; and local, state, and national agencies.

The root causes of violence are consistent and known. Violence does not discriminate in where it shows up, and it isn't just a problem for big cities. Rural communities are often overlooked and underserved, creating conditions that increase violence. The difference in Bogalusa and other rural communities is that, unlike in many big cities, there is little to no infrastructure to identify and provide resources known to prevent and interrupt the cycles of violence.

A review of the data shows that Bogalusa's crime rate is comparatively higher than most metropolitan cities in Louisiana. Since 2020, Bogalusa has struggled with increasing violence. The staggering reality is that Bogalusa's violent crime average surpasses both the national and state averages, a particularly concerning fact given the city's small population of 10,400 residents.¹⁹ The FBI reported a total of 380.7 violent crimes per 100,000 people²⁰ nationally compared to the 628.6 violent crimes per 100,000 people in Louisiana in 2022.²¹ In the same year, Bogalusa's average was 646.1 violent crimes per 100,000 people.²²

Larger cities across the state are awarded with accessible resources and community-based programs to reduce violence. However, rural communities such as Bogalusa do not benefit from that same luxury of equitable resource distribution.

Bogalusa is tackling violence without the presence of a robust community public safety ecosystem. This indicates that initiatives, organizations, and programs that focus on violence prevention, intervention, and victims' services are often fractured, because these services and initiatives aren't properly funded. There is also no room for redemption once harm has been caused, which can be done through alternative to violence initiatives, such as restorative justice programs.

“BOGALUSA IS TACKLING VIOLENCE WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF A ROBUST COMMUNITY PUBLIC SAFETY ECOSYSTEM. THIS INDICATES THAT INITIATIVES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND PROGRAMS THAT FOCUS ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND VICTIMS' SERVICES ARE OFTEN FRACTURED, BECAUSE THESE SERVICES AND INITIATIVES AREN'T PROPERLY FUNDED.”

A FRAMEWORK FOR THRIVING

BUILDING THE PUBLIC SAFETY ECOSYSTEM THAT BOGALUSA NEEDS

At EJUSA, we work at the intersection of criminal justice, public health, and racial justice to elevate healing over retribution, meet the needs of survivors, and build community safety. We support communities to build public safety ecosystems, and they are taking shape across the nation.

An ecosystem, by definition, is a complex arrangement of interdependent parts. It is also constantly evolving, changing, and reacting to different conditions. An ecosystem does not just appear. Distinct roots find fertile ground and must be nurtured. A community-centered public safety ecosystem thrives when community members actively engage in nurturing efforts, while local elected leaders prioritize equitable investment.²³ The ecosystem takes ownership of safety and brings real solutions to the problems, because community members know what they need to build the holistic well-being that creates real safety. Those roots are nurtured by a deep love of community and a commitment to understanding safety not just as the absence of violence, but the presence of well-being and of thriving neighborhoods.

EJUSA'S FRAMEWORK FOR A THRIVING PUBLIC SAFETY ECOSYSTEM

EJUSA's framework for a **thriving public safety ecosystem** includes four key areas:

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS

Community identity, a spirit of innovation, and a deep love for the people.

POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BUY-IN

Political leadership and vision, responsiveness to community solutions.

SYSTEMS-LED STRATEGIES

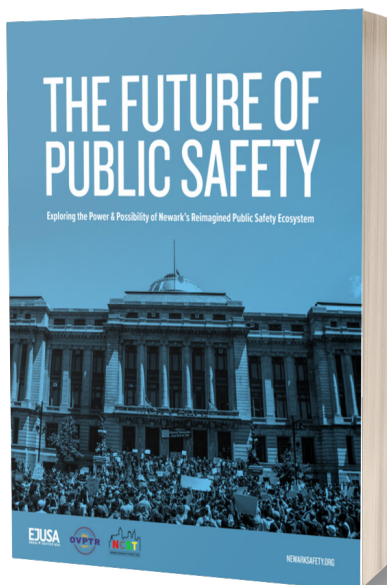
Budgetary support, city-level coordination, and city and state grant programs strengthen the infrastructure for an ecosystem to grow and thrive.

COMMUNITY-LED STRATEGIES:

Bridge building between community and police, healing-centered programs, and community-led coordination.

For example, high-risk street intervention programs, which use the approach of credible messengers and/or violence interrupters to prevent, mediate, and intervene in violent encounters in neighborhoods where violence is most prevalent. These violence interrupters bring lived experience and credibility and are professionally trained to de-escalate violence. (See Appendix B on p. 31 for more information on violence interrupters.)

One example of community-based approaches is the amazing work of the Sacramento Peace Program. As highlighted in their 2021 impact report, the program made significant achievements in preventing further firearm incidents and injuries and in reducing arrests for those previously engaged in gun violence activities.²⁴



NEWARK New Jersey

These approaches have flourished in cities like Newark, New Jersey. From 2016 through 2020, Newark saw a historic decline in homicides, hitting the lowest level in six decades, with community-based public safety approaches playing a huge role.²⁵

newarksafety.org



METHODS

THE PURPOSE

The Pathways to Healing: Bogalusa Community Conversations listening sessions were designed to create a safe and empowering space for members of the community in Bogalusa. These conversations were essential avenues for community members to share their stories and engage in deeply meaningful discussions about the profound impact of violence and public safety concerns that disproportionately affect their neighborhoods.

Bogalusa has shouldered the burden of systemic inequalities and injustices, grappling with the harsh realities of violence and insufficient public safety measures. These conversations provided a vital opportunity for us to amplify the voices of Bogalusa community members, shed light on their lived experiences, and collectively confront the root causes of these challenges.

Through these discussions, we aimed to cultivate a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between race, socioeconomic factors, and the prevalence of violence in Bogalusa. We recognized the importance of centering the community's experiences and perspectives in these conversations, as they hold invaluable insights into the systemic issues that continue to plague neighborhoods across the U.S.

This section outlines the progression and steps involved in fostering relationships and collaborations in Bogalusa. It begins with the Bogalusa and EJUSA Meet and Greet, moves on to insights collected during the gatherings, provides a summary of the Community Conversation Listening Sessions, and concludes with the findings obtained from the listening sessions.



METHODS

THE PROCESS

Meeting the Community, Breaking Bread, and Building Relationships

Relationship building is at the center of creating long-lasting partnerships with communities. It gives all parties involved the opportunity to determine whether a partnership can or even should be created. Before EJUSA sought to explore a potential partnership with community members in Bogalusa and the Bogalusa mayor's office, it was important to learn more about the city from community members directly and introduce EJUSA's work.

Bogalusa and EJUSA Meet and Greet

In August 2023, EJUSA, in collaboration with the City of Bogalusa, hosted a "Community and EJUSA: Meet and Greet." This became a key strategy in gaining community buy-in and trust. But more importantly, the event gave our team an opportunity to conduct initial information gathering to help us better understand the challenges of violence and crime in Bogalusa. Forty community members attended the meet and greet, including faith-based leaders, community leaders, local officials, and law enforcement. Attendees met EJUSA team members who work both nationally and on the ground in Louisiana. **The meet and greet allowed people to break bread by enjoying a meal together and to share their lived experiences, perspectives, and hopes for Bogalusa.**

THE PROCESS: BOGALUSA AND EJUSA MEET AND GREET



During the meet and greet, attendees broke into groups and tackled two questions collectively:



What have been your experiences in Bogalusa as it relates to violence in your community?

INEFFECTIVE PARENTING

Most attendees noted that parenting was the primary concern and issue that was impacting violence in Bogalusa. Conversations around poor parenting or lack of parental involvement were brought up throughout the discussion:

"Parenting was a little stricter a decade ago as opposed to now. There is no longer a village raising our children. A lot of them are lost."

LACK OF RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Attendees strongly felt that there was a lack of economic opportunities, resources, and government support, and few opportunities to talk with city officials on various issues in Bogalusa:

"There is little to no 'systems' support to help and no conversations with lawmakers or decision makers."

YOUTH-BASED VIOLENCE

Though there were no youth or young people present during the meet and greet, much of the conversation centered the need to provide young people with places they can go for support and resources when conflict arises:

"Lack of safe spaces for young people to congregate and work through their emotions."

LACK OF TRUST IN COMMUNITY, POLICE DEPARTMENT, AND CITY GOVERNMENT

Many attendees expressed a lack of trust in the community, particularly towards the police department and city government. This distrust has created barriers to collaboration and effective problem-solving.

"It's hard to work together when you don't trust the people who are supposed to protect and serve you."

NOT FEELING SAFE

The sense of safety, or lack thereof, was a recurring theme. Attendees frequently mentioned feeling unsafe in their neighborhoods, particularly at night.

"I DO NOT FEEL SAFE sitting outside on my porch"



What does *safety* look like to you?

SAFETY

- ▶ Safety looks like reduction of violence
- ▶ Safety looks like community
- ▶ Safety looks like police involvement
- ▶ Safety looks like environment justice
- ▶ *“Access to mental health resources and rehab.”*
- ▶ *“Kids can go anywhere without fearing gunshots.”*
- ▶ *“[Safety] looks like a personal commitment from every person to protect themselves and others.”*

“[Safety looks like] violence being rare in our city.”

Meet and Greet, **Participant**

“[Safety looks like] our environment being well maintained and blighted properties being eliminated.”

Meet and Greet, **Participant**



What does *healing* look like to you?

HEALING

- ▶ Healing looks like community leading & community responsibility
- ▶ Healing looks like resources and support
- ▶ Healing looks like equity
- ▶ Healing looks like individual and collective wellness
- ▶ Healing looks like faith-based outreach

“[Healing looks like] treating people how we want to be treated and caring for perspectives across generations.”

Meet and Greet, **Participant**

“Healing looks like equity in pay for both women and men in our city.”

Meet and Greet, **Participant**

“Healing looks like access to mental health resources and rehab.”

Meet and Greet, **Participant**

“[Healing looks like] peace and joy.”

Meet and Greet, **Participant**



METHODS

THE PROCESS

Need for Asset Mapping

Asset mapping consists of mapping services and/or resources that are provided to a given community, which ultimately identifies

potential gaps between services and determines the accessibility for community members to use these resources. Additionally, asset mapping also allows the visual representation of how far away resources are in a given mile radius, any associated fees, and requirements for applying for resources. **The goal of this mapping is to eliminate red tape and bureaucratic obstacles that don't allow seamless accessibility to those who most need them.**

Appendix C on p. 32 encompasses services provided by organizations for Bogalusa residents. This list was provided during our beginning phases of Pathways to Healing: Bogalusa Community Conversation from the city of Bogalusa. We understand that this is not an exhaustive list and does not capture every resource provided to Washington Parish residents. It offers a glimpse of services including community development, housing, youth delinquency programs, and more.

Participant Selection

Community members who indicated interest in participating were able to sign up for follow-up communication about the listening sessions during the meet and greet. The meet and greet enabled us to meet several credible messengers and community members who are well-known, trusted, and respected in Bogalusa. We were able to use their knowledge, expertise, and connections within the community to recruit participants.

The selection of listening session groups aimed to gather diverse perspectives on public safety and violence in Bogalusa, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the community's needs and concerns.

GROUP
1

CAREGIVERS (IN-PERSON)

This session provided caregivers, such as parents and guardians, with a platform to discuss their experiences and concerns regarding the safety of their families in the community.

GROUP
2

CREDIBLE MESSENGERS (IN-PERSON)

Composed of trusted advocates and influential community members, this session focused on gathering insights on strategies for addressing public safety issues effectively from individuals who hold credibility and influence within the community.

GROUP
3

YOUNG PEOPLE (IN-PERSON)

This session focused on amplifying the voices of young individuals, providing them with a space to share their perspectives on public safety concerns, as well as their ideas for creating safer environments for youth in Bogalusa.

GROUP
4

WHITE COMMUNITY MEMBERS (VIRTUAL)

In recognition of the importance of inclusivity, this virtual session specifically targeted white community members to gather their perspectives on public safety issues and their experiences living in Bogalusa.

GROUP
5

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND NONPROFITS (VIRTUAL)

This virtual session brought together representatives from various community-based organizations and nonprofits to discuss their efforts in addressing public safety concerns and their perspectives on effective strategies for community intervention and support.

GROUP
6

MEN AND BOYS (IN-PERSON)

Centered on the experiences and perspectives of men and boys, this session provided an opportunity to explore their unique insights into public safety issues and violence prevention efforts within the community.

A total of 43 participants attended listening sessions. Thirty-five participants identified as Black or African American, and seven participants identified as white. The majority of participants identified as female, at 67%, while those who identified as males made up 33%. The two largest groups were 17 years old and under, at 24% of participants, and 40 to 49 years, also comprising 24% of participants. (See Appendix D on p.36)



CITY HALL, BOGALUSA

Limitations

The findings in this report have potential limitations that should be considered. Notably, the absence of police officers in the listening sessions may have resulted in an incomplete perspective on community safety and violence. This exclusion potentially limits the scope of insights into law enforcement’s role and challenges in addressing violence. Additionally, other limitations include a potential response bias from participants who chose to attend the sessions, which might not represent the views of the broader community.

METHODS MAJOR THEMES

Six listening sessions were conducted in October and November of 2023. Four listening sessions took place in person and two sessions took place virtually. Group 1: Caregivers, Group 2: Credible Messengers, and Group 3: Young People, were held within the Bogalusa City Hall conference room. Group 6: Men and Boys took place during non-business hours at Juanita’s Party House and Eatery, located in central Bogalusa.

EJUSA staff created guiding questions for the six listening sessions. EJUSA staff enlisted help from social workers and behavioral health professionals to facilitate. In-person sessions were audio recorded and virtual sessions were recorded using video-conferencing platforms. Each session was then transcribed, using a web-based transcription service.

Community Conversations: Major Themes

Fear, hopelessness, and fatigue

Community accountability

Building a sense of belonging

Racial injustice and inequality

Lack of trust in police department and city government

Absence of leadership and role models

Need for safe spaces for youth

Demand for economic mobility

METHODS

ANALYSIS & INSIGHTS

Community-Engaged Analysis

Engaging the community in the data analysis process for the Bogalusa listening sessions was significant for several reasons. Firstly, it ensured that the insights and perspectives gathered authentically represented the needs and priorities of the community members, fostering a sense of ownership and trust in the outcomes. Moreover, involving the community in the analysis promoted transparency and accountability, facilitating open dialogue and validation of findings. **This collaborative approach not only enhanced the relevance and effectiveness of resulting actions or initiatives but also drew upon the lived experiences and collective wisdom of the community.**

The data analysis unfolded in three iterative phases following the conclusion of the listening sessions:

Phase 1 (December 2023 - February 2024): This involved an initial in-depth examination to identify major themes emerging from the discussions held during October and November 2023.

Phase 2 (February 2024): EJUSA organized a four-day Data Working Group (DWG) meeting in Washington, D.C., inviting two credible messengers as community representatives along with various staff members from different departments within EJUSA. Together, they underwent a comprehensive peer-review data analysis process, delving deeply into various community aspects. This included gathering and examining relevant information to understand participants’ perspectives on the root causes of violence, the local criminal legal system, public safety, and areas for improvement.

Phase 3 (March 2024): This phase involved a review of the DWG’s findings to finalize the results from the peer-review process and ensure accurate capture of data and major themes.

Community-Focused Insights by Theme

FEAR, HOPELESSNESS, AND FATIGUE

Participants expressed deep-seated emotions of fear, hopelessness, and exhaustion stemming from persistent challenges within the community:

"Without having to be scared or something. But I feel like it's never going to change from how it is now, I feel like it's never going to go back to how it used to be." - Group 3, **Young People**

"I've never seen safety, so I can't see how to be safe at school, at home, or anywhere just walking. I remember this week or so, I was in my house, and I heard gunshots down the street, and I was like, 'Oh, someone's shooting again.' I didn't move out of my bed or anything; I was like, 'It's no point of moving, this is normal.' I hear gunshots almost every week of every month, so I've gotten so used to hearing bang, bang, and gunshots down the street that I just didn't care at that point, so I'm tired of it." - Group 3, **Young People**

"Nothing came to my mind about community, because where I'm from, it ain't no community. Now it's like everybody for they self. If they can't help themselves, they're not going to try to help you. But I feel like sometimes if you know something that can help somebody then get it to them – that's not happening in my area." - Group 3, **Young People**

LACK OF TRUST IN POLICE DEPARTMENT AND CITY GOVERNMENT

There was widespread distrust in both the police department, city government, and the school system, with participants citing issues of transparency, accountability, and perceived bias.

"I understand [the police's] job too. But if they're doing it just to get paid, this ain't the right job." - Group 2, **Credible Messengers**

"But my biggest concern is, it ain't going to get no better until the police start having accountability too...if you tell them gray, he going to go look for a blue color. He don't want to run up and get shot. And I personally heard that they scared." - Group 1, **Parents and Caregivers**

"Some of the officers said, and I done heard it come out they mouth, the reason they would come late because they say the bullets would go through their bulletproof vests...These boys sitting out there with choppers and guns with drums on it. And you think the police took them? No. Police got back up in the car." - Group 2, **Credible Messengers**

"Start community policing, bringing the community and the policing together. That's the way you got to start. If you don't start there, you ain't going nowhere, because when the police and the community don't work together, you divided." - Group 2, **Credible Messengers**

UNATTAINABLE SAFETY

Participants expressed concerns about the seemingly unattainable nature of safety within the community, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address crime and violence and create a secure environment for all residents.

"[Police] don't care. They don't have time to solve a murder, they don't care who did it. You can go out, give them a tip and all that, but they still don't care." - Group 6, **Men and Boys**

"Like I said, certain people are drug dealers; just because I'm a drug dealer, that don't mean you not supposed to care about me, you know what I'm saying? So if I sell dope and he killed me, that mean you don't supposed to solve it, because I sell dope?" - Group 6, **Men and Boys**

BUILDING A SENSE OF BELONGING

Participants highlighted the need to foster a stronger sense of belonging and connection within the community, emphasizing the importance of unity and solidarity.

"So like, for instance, if he winning in rap and I know that's my partner, I'm a hang around him, but what can I learn from him to win too? Like, I don't want to be under you because you just my partner and you win. So if you my partner, show me the steps, show me the process in how you got there." - Group 6, **Men and Boys**

"Yeah, I feel like the only thing that brings the community together is school, like the sports, the band, stuff like that. Other than that, it's not really a community?" - Group 3, **Young People**

NEED FOR SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH

Participants stressed the importance of providing easily accessible, affordable, safe, and nurturing environments for youth to thrive, where they can feel protected and supported.

*"And that's another reason why kids be getting wrapped up in crime. We don't have nothing to do down here. And for that, it's like, 'Oh, I ain't got nothing else to do, so I might as well go slang gang.'" - Group 6, **Men and Boys***

"I feel like if there was more stuff to do here it wouldn't be so much. It probably would still be, but it would be less, because there's really nothing to keep people busy and stuff like that." - Group 3, **Young People**

"It's \$3 to play basketball at the Y. Three dollars per game, about \$5 a day. You got to get a membership though, their membership is like \$35." - Group 3, **Young People**

"I don't have nowhere to go; the only safe space is school." - Group 3, **Young People**

RACISM, RACE EQUITY, AND RACIAL INEQUALITY

Issues of racism and racial inequality were prevalent themes, with participants calling for greater recognition and action to address

“I’ve been in Bogalusa for like a year and a half. But the South, it’s always had like, some racists. Maybe they’re just scared of each other. I don’t know.” - Group 4, [White Community Members](#)

“So, now they have the Y over there by the high school. It’s always been segregated and we always had a Black Y and a white Y. But you got to look at the kids that have to travel and it’s just a different vibe because we are used to the Black and white. But I just feel the

LACK OF PARENTAL GUIDANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ROLE MODELS

Participants voiced concerns regarding the lack of effective leadership and positive role models within the community,

“Well, I’m from old school, we didn’t have all these problems that they have now, but I think it’s got a lot to do with the parents. A lot of parents are not like you, but they can do better than what they doing. It’s true. And the community, I don’t like the way the school board is [run] because they’re not doing what they’re supposed to do. And with this new superintendent, I think he’ll make a change.” - Group 1, [Parents and Caregivers](#)

“I just feel like [the young people] just try to really [get in] trouble... they need somebody to talk to. Like causing a crime and stuff, I feel like they’re doing it because either they ain’t got nothing to do or they ain’t have nobody to talk to, because I used to be a bad kid when I was in second grade all the way up to fifth grade. I used to be a bad kid because, you feel me, that’s how I grew up and all I knew was negativity everywhere I looked, so that’s all I knew.

COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY

There was a collective call for accountability within the community itself, emphasizing the importance of individuals taking responsibility for their actions and contributing positively to the collective well-being.

“Well, as a community, it’s supposed to start in community... this is Bogalusa. Okay, now Baton Rouge is a different thing. The numbers is different. Here at Bogalusa... We ain’t got but 10,000 people...everybody knows everybody. If you know who the killers is or the shooters, nobody want to say nothing.” - Group 2, [Credible Messengers](#)

“We can’t heal as a community. We can’t heal because it’s one thing you have to know and whether it’s your kid or your relative, it hurts regardless. And then with this recent killing that happened, what, two months ago? Well, back in August, they were family. So you got to look at, you got this child sitting in jail for murder.” - Group 2, [Credible Messengers](#)

I’m not going to lie, in Bogalusa I ain’t never seen safety to dream safety. - Group 3, [Young People](#)

ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Participants stressed the importance of increasing access to essential resources and services such as mental health support, funding for nonprofit organizations, and transportation. They recognized the pivotal role these play in addressing community needs and enhancing well-being.

“You know, right now mental illness is at an all-time high. And I feel like it’s just not here. It’s everywhere. That people could just snap and take people out, you know, so I’m constantly always aware of that and then we had a shoot out in the parking lot. It was young people with teenagers, you know, because we’ve been seeing a high rate of those under 18 and under with guns.” - Group 4, [White Community Members](#)

“In addition to that you have, you know, a lot of the things that we do here at Cassidy Park, and one of the things that I kept bringing up was that everybody doesn’t have transportation to get to the [park]. You know, so we have to go into other areas. So I’ve been asking...why haven’t any of the parks and rec stuff been at that park recently, because that is an area that the people off Sullivan can get to or something... where those kids can get to, so not everybody has transportation to be able to get to, you know, the event at Cassidy Park...we don’t have public transportation here. That’s another problem. We don’t have buses...and the taxi is usually in Covington...as organizations, we have to bring the events to all of those different neighborhoods.” - Group 5, [CBOs and Nonprofits](#)

“I would say as a business owner, and I’m sure they can agree, it’s the lack of resources. We need resources. I provide daily living activities service. However, within that I do encounter people who need meals, who need shelter. But guess what, that’s not what I don’t know, where to go with the food boxes. So if there was a resource that just provided resources that would be a break in between the gaps as well.” - Group 5, [CBOs and Nonprofits](#)

DEMAND FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY

There was a strong desire for increased economic opportunities and mobility within the community, with participants advocating for initiatives that promote financial stability and upward mobility.

“You know, if someone’s happy and they’re living a secure life, and so doing economically well, that usually relates to happiness in other ways. And if you’re happy, you’re less likely to commit violent crimes. So, it’s kind of, I guess, that Bogalusa and other parts of Louisiana, honestly should focus on economic development and prosperity for its citizens.” - Group 4, [White Community Members](#)

“I think the biggest thing is probably more money. Like more jobs, the creation of more jobs, the creation, more federal more money going to the government to be spent on things like this. So like it just that that’s definitely the root of the problem is, I think, with everything else, just not enough resources.” - Group 4, [White Community Members](#)

A ROADMAP FOR CHANGE

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the journey continues towards creating a safer, equitable, and thriving Bogalusa, it is vitally important to co-create a course of action that works to reduce risk factors that contribute to violence and grow protective factors that bloom safety and connection. This section offers recommendations for action over the next 3-8 years for the city, elected leadership, civil society, and the community at large. Violence is a symptom of the inequities in the community, and these recommendations are designed to tackle these inequities and work to take steps to create a more robust public safety ecosystem.

The recommendations below are offered as a roadmap, with a focus on community-based public safety, race equity, empowering partnerships, economic investment, increasing collaboration, and elevating the participation of young people to be part of the solutions. **The roadmap is a tangible offering to Bogalusa — a place to start to address violence and build a city where everyone is safe and thriving.**

FOR THE MAYOR

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MAYOR	1-3 YEARS	3-5 YEARS	5-8 YEARS
Promote collaboration across city departments	Create a Public Safety Work Group that brings together department leads and mental health professionals. This work group, in conjunction with the community, will create a plan to fill gaps in services that will close identified risk factors.	Review progress and establish a mechanism to report progress to the community once a quarter.	Invest in a robust data collection system and/or database to track and collaborate work across the city.
Collaborate with young people impacted by violence	Create a Mayor's Youth Advisory Council that will work with the Public Safety Work Group.	Develop and implement a youth-focused safety initiative, including the development of a new community/recreation center. Example: New York City established a Youth Advisory Council that advise the Civilian Complaint Review Board	Invest in a robust data collection system and/or database to track and collaborate work across the city.
Take steps to increase safety at school	Work with students and teachers to create school-based safety initiatives that focus on social-emotional learning. Example A: East Baton Rouge School System created a social-emotional learning strategy that seeks to improve students' grades and behavior by identifying and addressing barriers to learning instead of using disciplinary measures. Example B: Newark Community Street Team, in partnership with Newark Opportunity Youth Network started the Safe Passage program that deploys interventionists to support student mental health.	Review and evaluate the impact of school-based safety initiatives. Make changes as needed.	Invest in a robust data collection system and/or database to track and collaborate work across the city.
Take steps to increase civilian oversight and trust	Connect with experts adept at guiding law enforcement agencies to more transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the communities they serve. Examples: Denver Civilian Oversight Board • Chicago's Civilian Office of Police Accountability	Review progress and continue implementing.	Implement and incorporate a more enhanced incident management system.
Bring essential services closer to the community	Explore opportunities to collaborate with neighboring municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies. Collaborate with rural mayors to share strategies and resources.	Develop a plan to establish satellite offices or mobile units that provide access to housing assistance, mental health services, domestic violence support, healthy food, and other resources in the parish.	Connect with evaluators to review and evaluate the impact of this body of work. Assess what essential services are still missing or lacking.

FOR THE CITY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CITY COUNCIL	1-3 YEARS	3-5 YEARS	5-8 YEARS
<p>Increase and prioritize community investment</p>	<p>Increase access to free and affordable recreation for youth and all residents in Bogalusa. For example, waive fees for recreational facilities, sports leagues, and community events, or offer subsidies or scholarships.</p> <p>Take steps to fund a new community center.</p>	<p>Fund and expand access to public transportation.</p> <p>Establish steady funding to support the community center.</p>	<p>Increase resource distribution for youth, young adults, returning citizens, and those who have substance abuse disorders.</p>
<p>Invest in community-based approaches to reducing violence over sole reliance on police-based approaches</p>	<p>Learn about community-based strategies to reduce violence by inviting local and national experts to share available models and advise the city.</p> <p>Take input from the community about what strategies to prioritize.</p> <p>Example: The city of Newark created the Office of Violence Prevention using at least 5% of police budget.</p>	<p>Invest in community-based efforts to reduce violence.</p>	<p>Invest in a robust data collection system and/or database to track and collaborate work across the city.</p>
<p>Improve transparency and trust</p>	<p>Explore tools to increase transparency of the city council's work.</p> <p>Connect with experts adept at guiding law enforcement agencies to more transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the communities they serve.</p> <p>Example A: Participatory Budgeting Oakland gives Oakland residents of City Council Districts 1 and 2 the power to set priorities for how federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds should be spent.</p> <p>Example B: Mecklenburg County in North Carolina puts decision-making power into the hands of the community with participatory budgeting</p>		<p>Develop a robust data transparency system that allows community access to budgets, city council public disclosures, reports, etc., in a timely manner and in compliance with the Bogalusa city statute codes.</p>

FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY	1-3 YEARS	3-5 YEARS	5-8 YEARS
Build community power	<p>Create a Community Safety Coordinating Committee to collaborate with the community to advocate to and liaise with city government (including the Public Safety Work Group and Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council). This committee should consist of nonprofits, community members, organizers, advocates, etc.</p> <p>Develop a plan of action to implement the recommendations.</p> <p>Example: Newak’s Brick City Peace Collective led a city wide listening campaign that drives community policy engagement.</p>	<p>Work with young people to create and implement culturally responsive, community-based programming.</p>	<p>Review programs and assess their effectiveness.</p>
Create and sustain safe spaces for youth	<p>Work with the mayor to identify young people to be part of the Mayor’s Advisory Council</p>		
Develop community- based restorative justice practices in Bogalusa	<p>Explore and get connected to available resources and organizations in the restorative justice space.</p>	<p>Work with restorative justice practitioners to develop and implement a plan to increase community knowledge and capacity of restorative practices.</p>	
Enhance sustainability of organizations by building infrastructure and increasing funding sources	<p>Work with the Community Coordinating Committee to identify key gaps in local programming needed to meet unaddressed community needs.</p>	<p>Collaborate with capacity building experts to develop strategies to grow local nonprofits’ ability to meet community needs.</p>	<p>Enhance sustainability by increasing funding sources.</p>

CONCLUSIONS

PATHWAYS TO HEALING: A COLLECTIVE EFFORT

Bogalusa is at a critical point in the journey towards prioritizing community safety and well-being. It is apparent now more than ever that historical approaches to tackling violence, such as increasing policing efforts and investing in prisons and other punishment tactics, do not keep us safe. Furthermore, those approaches do not address the root causes of violence and racial disparities. Instead, there is a need to create a comprehensive plan to address the drivers of violence and develop alternative approaches to community safety. This is done through direct investment into evidence-based approaches.

City leadership, community leaders, grassroots organizations, and community members have a vital role to play in keeping Bogalusa safe. This includes economic investment, direct funding sources for violence prevention initiatives, shifting the narrative around the risk factors of violence, decreasing punitive measures, and developing a system to create transparency and accountability citywide. Utilizing this strategy, Bogalusa can begin to move away from a fractured system to a healing system. This report should be utilized as a tool to encourage and increase advocacy efforts. Together, as Bogalusa addresses root causes and builds community power, they can begin to create a more equitable, safe, and prosperous Bogalusa.

ABOUT EJUSA

EJUSA is a national organization that works to transform the justice system by promoting responses to violence that break cycles of trauma. We work at the intersection of criminal justice, public health, and racial justice to elevate healing over retribution, meet the needs of survivors, advance racial equity, and build community safety.

Founded in 2008, we are a fierce team of organizers and advocates, many of whom have been touched by violence. We bring a breadth of perspectives to our work, united by our common belief that everyone deserves healing, safety, equity, and well-being.

We envision a world where violence is rare and every community is safe and healthy. The path to that world demands that we as a nation change the way we think about violence and trauma, about how we meet the needs of survivors, and about how we hold accountable those who cause harm while honoring their dignity. Our core values — equity, partnership, centering healing, and transcending divides — steer our work to build community power, advocate for investment in community-centered approaches to safety, and amplify essential narratives.



GLOSSARY

Community safety: A thriving and equitable community. Community safety ensures that people have access to good jobs, quality housing, every facet of health care, excellent education, and more.

Carceral measures: Punitive or incarceration-focused approaches influenced by socioeconomic factors, often used in response to societal issues such as crime or social unrest.

Public safety ecosystem: A collaborative and coordinated effort between community, community organizations, stakeholders, and city and state leadership to in partnership to offer an array of resources and services to address root causes of violence and/or harm.

Community violence intervention (CVI): An evidence-based approach to reduce violence using the framework of violence as a public health issue. CVI centers community and treats the causes of violence, with an emphasis on those most at risk of and vulnerable to violence.

Hospital violence intervention programs: Programs focus on repeat victims of gun violence at the hospital. HVIP professionals work with victims while they are in the hospital and transitioning back home, all while providing comprehensive support to break the continuous cycles of violence.

Equity: In the context of community safety, equity refers to the fair distribution of resources, opportunities, and benefits to all community members, especially those who have been historically marginalized. It involves recognizing and addressing systemic barriers and disparities to ensure that everyone has access to essential services and opportunities for growth and well-being. Equity promotes inclusive practices that empower all individuals and communities to thrive.

Violence interrupters and community outreach workers: Individuals who have an ear to the ground, credibility in the community, and even past histories of violence and incarceration. They mediate conflicts before they escalate, work with families impacted by violence to prevent retaliation, and provide mentoring and other support to people most at risk of committing violence.

Risk factors: Conditions or circumstances that increase the likelihood of violence or harm within a community. These may include limited access to resources such as mental health and educational services, lack of economic opportunities, high levels of poverty, limited healthcare resources, and inequitable housing.

Protective factors: Factors within a community that promote resilience and reduce the likelihood of violence or harm. Protective factors include the presence of well-being through equitable resource allocation, investments in community development, and efforts to address systemic inequities in safety-related systems. These factors strengthen community resilience and support positive outcomes for individuals and neighborhoods.

APPENDIX A: WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Restorative justice is a transformative approach to resolving conflicts. The process focuses on repairing serious harm and rebuilding relationships. This directly counters what the current criminal justice system—policing, prosecutions, prison, and parole—delivers in the wake of harm.

Our current system asks two questions: Who caused harm? How should we punish them? There is little to no consideration for the person who has suffered harm or the community in which the harm took place.

Restorative justice is not a new practice; it has deep roots in indigenous cultures. Restorative justice turns the focus away from how we can punish the person who causes harm toward how we can restore the people who experience harm and interrupt cycles of violence. The restorative justice process asks:

- ▶ Who was harmed?
- ▶ What are their needs?
- ▶ Whose obligation is it to meet those needs?

There are many different types of restorative justice processes that allow families, schools, and communities to promote community building, respond to harm, create community-held plans for accountability and healing, and practice collective care.

Processes can vary but generally include facilitated conversation with all the affected people — including the person who caused harm, the person who was harmed, and both of their communities, including family members. These conversations are often called circles and they are a ceremonial and intentional way of gathering where everyone is respected. Folks get a chance to speak and listen from the heart, and stories are shared and valued.

Restorative justice circles produce amazing outcomes: 90% of survivors who participate are satisfied by the process and would recommend it. And successful processes usually divert people who have caused harm from the criminal legal system and all the harms that it brings.

APPENDIX B: WHAT ARE VIOLENCE INTERVENTIONISTS?

Violence interrupters, sometimes known as community outreach workers, are teams of community members that have an ear to the ground for potential conflict. They have credibility in the community through deep ties and may even have past histories of violence and incarceration that allow them to relate to those involved.

They mediate conflicts before they escalate, work with families impacted by violence to prevent retaliation, and provide mentoring and other support to people most at risk of committing violence.

This proactive approach is rooted in the understanding that many violent incidents stem from personal disputes exacerbated by rising levels of retaliation. By defusing the emotions, violence interrupters have great success in preventing violence.

The work of a violence interrupter involves several key activities:

Conflict mediation: Interrupters identify disputes in the community and work with the people involved to resolve the problems before more violence occurs. This might involve one-on-one discussions, group meetings, or other forms of negotiation.

Building relationships: Interrupters must build trust with community members to be successful. That trust gives them certain measures of influence that they can use to guide people to better decisions that avoid violence.

Crisis response: Interrupters are quick to respond when violence breaks out, because time is essential in preventing retaliation. They meet with the victims, their families, and their friends to de-escalate tensions and promote peace.

Community outreach: Interrupters work proactively in their community by organizing or participating in events and programs that build peace. They also advocate for support services such as job training, education, and counseling.

Violence interrupters are just one part of a community-based public safety ecosystem, but they have enormous impact, especially when aligned with other leaders and organizations in the ecosystem.

APPENDIX C: ASSET MAPPING CHART

Category	Name	Services	Associated Fees	Criteria	Located in Washington Parish (Y/N)	Services Washington Parish Residents
Educational services	Just Family Home Away from Home	Small group and one-on-one tutoring program. Assist with: 1) Homework 2) Tutoring 3) Youth mentoring	Free	Ages 5 - 12	Yes	Yes
Sexual abuse, sexual violence, human trafficking, & substance abuse	Adapt Inc.	1) Crisis hotline for rape or sexual assault victims 2) Child abuse prevention and direct services to victims 3) Provides prevention and educational services targeting substance abuse	Free	Children from elementary grades through college years	No	Yes
Sexual abuse, sexual violence, & human trafficking	The Sexual Assault Center	Free individual and group therapy	Free	n/a	Yes	Yes
Community development	United Way of Southeast Louisiana	1) Housing 2) Reentry 3) Job placement 4) Educational services 5) Healthcare accessibility	Free	All	Yes	Yes
Community development	Washington Parish Council on Aging	1) Outreach 2) Information and assistance 3) Medicare Part D counseling 4) Home- delivered meals 5) Energy assistance 6) Recreation 7) Nutrition education 8) Medical alert 9) Housekeeping 10) Transportation 11) Companionship 12) Caregiver support program *Most services provided to individuals 60 or older.	Public Transit: Service on demand One-way: Within city limits: \$6.00 Outside city limits: \$8.00 Trip tickets: Within city limits: 10 trips: \$36.00 20 trips: \$72.00 Trip tickets: Outside city limits: 10 trips: \$48.00 20 trips: \$96.00	Any person aged 60 years and older residing in Washington Parish. Some programs give priority to low-income, isolated, or homebound individuals.	n/a	n/a

APPENDIX C: ASSET MAPPING CHART

Category	Name	Services	Associated Fees	Criteria	Located in Washington Parish (Y/N)	Services Washington Parish Residents
Youth enrichment	YMCA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Aquatics 2) Arts and humanities 3) Camping and outdoor enrichment 4) Before school, After school, and early learning 5) Community development and resources 6) Family strengthening 7) Health and well-being 8) Sports and recreation 9) Youth and teen development 	n/a	n/a	Yes	Yes
Food services	Bogalus Help Center	Food bank	n/a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) ID/driver's license 2) Utility bill with your name on it 3) Date of birth 4) Telephone number 5) Food stamp card (if applicable) 6) SS or SSI letter showing the amount you draw 7) If you are working, you must provide pay statement 8) Name and birth date of all individuals in the household 	Yes	Yes
Financial services	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Youth/juvenile delinquency programs	Youth Services Bureau Cross Roads	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Case management 2) Community protection through supervision 3) Counseling (anger management) 4) Law education classes 	n/a	Most referrals are made through the district attorney's office or local judges. Some services may be available through self-referral.	Yes	Yes

APPENDIX C: ASSET MAPPING CHART

Category	Name	Services	Associated Fees	Criteria	Located in Washington Parish (Y/N)	Services Washington Parish Residents
Youth/juvenile delinquency programs	Youth Services Bureau Truancy assessment and service Center	<p>1) Access services targeted to properly address the underlying causes of what research has shown to be the primary indicator of juvenile delinquency: TRUANCY.</p> <p>2) Acts as a referral network, linking families to valuable resources within the community that address areas of risks within the family.</p> <p>3) Gives children and families the opportunity to informally and voluntarily resolve legal misconduct without formal court involvement.</p>	n/a	Most referrals are made through the district attorney's office or local judges. Some services may be available through self-referral.	Yes	Yes
Youth/juvenile delinquency programs	Youth Services Bureau Families In Need of Services	<p>Provides intervention and services for:</p> <p>1) Truancy</p> <p>2) Ungovernable behavior by juveniles</p> <p>3) Runaways</p> <p>4) Possession or consumption of intoxicating substances</p> <p>5) Failure of caretakers to attend meetings regarding their child's problematic behavior in school.</p>	n/a	Submission of concern or complaint. Anyone may do so, but usually done by law enforcement, school officials, or parents.	Yes	Yes
Substance abuse services	Youth Services Bureau Options	<p>1) Assessment</p> <p>2) Individual, family, and group therapy</p> <p>3) Parent groups and educational groups</p> <p>4) Drug screening/ relapse prevention</p> <p>5) Twelve-step work</p> <p>6) Information and referral</p> <p>A family-focused, licensed outpatient treatment program for adolescents experiencing problems with alcohol and/or other drugs.</p>	n/a	A referral and completed application for a teen/youth suffering from substance abuse.	Outpatient program	Yes

APPENDIX C: ASSET MAPPING CHART

Category	Name	Services	Associated Fees	Criteria	Located in Washington Parish (Y/N)	Services Washington Parish Residents
Mental health	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Housing	Bogalusa Re-birth	Community housing development organization. Develops affordable housing for low to moderate income families.	n/a	<p>1) Completed application</p> <p>2) Credit check</p> <p>3) Apply for one of the following loans:</p> <p>USDA loans: People applying for this program must have a stable income and a credit score above 640. Applicants with a lower score still have a chance but are subject to manual underwriting. It's possible to apply online at the USDA website.</p> <p>FHA Loans: People with a credit score of 580 or higher can apply for an FHA loan and a down payment of 3.5% is required. In the event that the credit score is lower, the applicant is still eligible for the loan, but the down payment increases to 10%.</p>	Yes	Yes

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Participant Demographic Charts (n= 43)

Race	
Black or African American	84% (36)
White	16% (7)

Gender	
Female	65% (28)
Male	35% (15)

Age	
17 and under	23% (10)
18-20	5% (2)
21-29	16% (7)
30-39	12% (5)
40-49	23% (10)
50-59	12% (5)
60 and over	9% (4)

Marital Status*	
Single	61% (20)
Married or domestic partnership	21% (7)
Separated	9% (3)
Divorced	3% (1)
Widowed	6% (2)

*Marital status does not include participants 17 and under (n=10) and calculated by adults 18 and over (n=33)

Income	
Less than \$10,000	19% (8)
\$10,000-\$50,000	60% (26)
\$50,000-\$100,000	5% (2)
\$100,000-\$150,000	—
More than \$150,000	—
Prefer not to say	—
Not applicable	16% (7)

System-Involved or Impacted	
Yes	19% (8)
No	81% (35)
Prefer not to say	—

Housing/Living Status	
Homeowner	35% (15)
Renter	39% (17)
Seeking housing	2% (1)
Prefer not to say	2% (1)
Not applicable	21% (9)

Education	
Some high school	7% (3)
High school	74% (32)
Bachelor degree	2% (1)
Master degree	5% (2)
PhD or doctorate	—
Trade/technical	7% (3)
Other	—

Employment Status	
Full-time	49% (21)
Part-time	23% (10)
Homemaker	—
Seeking opportunities or looking for work	5% (2)
Retired	7% (3)
Unable to work	—
Prefer not to say	—
Not applicable	14% (6)

Children	
None	23% (10)
1	12% (5)
2	19% (8)
3	19% (8)
4	12% (5)
More than 4	9% (4)
Not applicable	7% (3)

Know Someone System-Involved or Impacted	
Yes	86% (37)
No	14% (6)
Prefer not to say	—

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