

Alternative Community Security: Initiatives and Stories

Here are examples of existing and potential initiatives toward comprehensive, systemic transformation of community protection.

Agendas for Change

- The [Movement for Black Lives](#) coalition argues in [Defund the Police](#) that reform has failed to adequately change behavior, which thus requires significant systemic change and investing in affected communities; [First 3 steps](#); Congress: [Breathe Act](#)
- The Poor People's Campaign's [Open Letter to Our Nation's Lawmakers on Systemic Racism](#) proposes a sweeping agenda.
- Sample [Phase Approach](#) to Community Protection Transformation

Recent Policing Changes

- *Defunding Police*: [13 cities](#) are defunding their police departments. In addition, [municipalities and states](#) have implemented or proposed dismantling the police, new laws/restrictions, budget reallocation (defund), training, etc. since the George Floyd killing. Such examples include: banning chokeholds; banning or restricting use of teargas and other "non-lethal" munitions; annual retraining; banning hiring police officers fired for cause in other jurisdictions; reallocation of funds to other municipal services; having trained, non-armed personnel for mental health, domestic disputes, homelessness interventions; duty to intervene if another officer is using excessive force/violence; required de-escalation and bias training; cancelling school contracts with police; and ending qualified immunity. See [sample "Care First Budget" proposal](#) for Los Angeles.
- *Schools*: On June 24 the Oakland, CA [school board voted](#) unanimously to end police presence in public schools. [Oakland activists](#) have pursued this for years. [Minneapolis, Portland, OR, Denver and Seattle](#) have made similar moves. The [Alliance for Educational Justice](#) is [working with organizers](#) in some 20 cities to get police (School Resource Officers/SROs) out of schools. [Alternatives](#) include more counselors, health personnel, restorative justice programs, and unarmed protection professionals. Research shows that SROs feed the school to prison pipeline and [do not make schools safer](#).
- The Police Department of San Jose, CA (US 10th largest city) [releases current information](#) about all "use of force."
- Senators Warren and Merkley's [National Police Misconduct Database and Transparency in Hiring Act](#) would make it harder for abusive police to get police jobs.

Disarming and Demilitarizing Police

- Nations with unarmed, less armed, or less militarized police have far fewer police-caused deaths. The U.S., for example, has 25 times more police-caused deaths than Germany relative to population. Police are mostly unarmed in Britain, Norway, Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand, Iceland, and 12 Pacific Island nations. See the table right.

Community Safety Alternatives: Mental Health, Addiction, Traffic, etc.

- Brooklyn Center, MN has created a [Department of Community Safety and Violence Prevention](#) as well as unarmed units to deal

Killed by police numbers in 16 countries:		
Country	Average per year	Number of years
Australia	4.3	17
Austria	1	12
Denmark	1	11
Finland	.2	11
France	9	8
Germany	8	6
Iceland	1 since 1919	
Ireland	13	10
Jamaica	169	7
Netherlands	3	7
New Zealand	40 since 2016	
Norway	.15	13
South Africa	455	7
Sweden	0	11
England & Wales	2	13
USA	1140	6

- with a variety of situations, such as mental health, social need, and traffic enforcement.
- Ithaca, NY [created](#) a [Department of Community Solutions and Public Safety](#) to replace the police department, and it will include unarmed community solution workers.
- The Scottish Violence Prevention Unit ([SVPU](#)) has significantly reduced violent crime with a network meeting broad needs: [Street and Arrow](#) gives people employment, a chance to start over. Adverse Childhood Experiences ([ACEs](#)) aims to protect children from violence and thereby reduce future violence. Glasgow's [Medics Against Violence](#) has 250 health care providers who visit schools and talk about what happens to a body in violent assaults.
- Stockholm's [mental health ambulance](#), rather than police, responds to 5-6 calls daily.
- Eugene, OR police and partner [CAHOOTS](#) developed a team approach and extensive training for [interventions in mental health crises](#). In 2019 CAHOOTS responded to 18% of 133,000 911 calls, calling for police support only 150 times. This service on a \$2 million budget, if handled by police, would have cost closer to \$14 million. Denver CO has successfully completed a 6 month pilot project similar to CAHOOTS called [STAR](#).
- [San Francisco](#) has implemented a Cahoots type program called [Street Crisis Response Team](#) with unarmed professionals that respond on "noncriminal matters involving mental health, the homeless, school discipline and neighbor disputes."
- The City of [Albuquerque](#) responded (June 2020) to calls to defund the police by creating a new public safety department that will respond to calls on inebriation, addiction, homelessness and mental health issues. Albuquerque, a city often cited for overuse of force, will be watched.
- [Sunnyvale, CA](#) replaced the police department with a [Department of Public Safety](#), in 1950. "Public Service Officers" are cross-trained to perform police, fire, and emergency medical services.

How Not to Call the Police

- Showing up for Racial Justice's [Alternatives to Calling the Police](#) (DC version) is being used in part by more than a dozen cities.
- In [deconstructing racism](#) and white supremacy, Baratunde Thurston looks at racist, privileged, fear-based [911 calls](#), and strategies that may lead to less racist behaviors.
- [@conflictransformation](#) has designed posters to promote alternatives to policing - as well as many other themes. They are [getting attention](#).

Civilian Protection and Accompaniment Units

- [Nonviolent Peaceforce](#) is the largest Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) organization. UCP practices include accompaniment, patrolling, proactive presence, inter-positioning, rumor control, and Early Warning/Early Response. [[UCP Methods Chart](#)] All can only be undertaken after engagement with affected communities, incident mapping and communication with as many of the stakeholders as possible.
- [Cure Violence Global](#) hires violence interrupters who are credible messengers in their communities. They use a public health approach to stop the spread of violence by detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying and treating the highest risk individuals, and changing social norms — resulting in reductions in violence of up to 70 percent.
- [Meta Peace Team](#) (MPT), in addition to fielding hundreds of domestic peace teams at events across the U.S., has deployed international teams to Bosnia, Chiapas (Mexico),

Haiti, Iraq, Egypt, and El Salvador, as well as the sovereign nations of Indigenous Peoples in the U.S., Canada, and Panama. MPT offers bystander intervention, direct action, sanctuary training, and presentations on nonviolence/justice/social change issues.

- [DC Peace Team](#) trains people around the world and deploys unarmed civilian protection and accompaniment units to hostile conflict zones, as well as offers training in nonviolent communication, bystander intervention, restorative circles, and meditation.
- [Portland Peace Team](#) provides de-escalation and peacekeeping training with a focus on serving nonviolent campaigns by helping them avoid instances when they can be portrayed as violent; and helping everyone stay safe.

Stories of Unplanned Interventions

- [Bystander intervention on a Tokyo subway](#). An Aikido (martial art) master tells how he learned what the real nonviolent core of his art could and must be.
- [Antoinette Tuff](#) talked down a heavily armed gunman and [saved the lives of many children](#) in a Georgia school.
- In London, 5 people of color, in an impromptu third party intervention, [rescued a racist counter-protester](#) from injury.

Building Community Resilience

- [Restorative Justice](#) “repairs the harm done by a crime” with all relevant stakeholders. It can strengthen communities, and reduce bullying, violence, and prison recidivism.
- [Trauma-healing](#) programs and trauma-informed approaches to protection strategies save health and lives. [Trauma and post-traumatic stress syndrome](#) (PTSD) are factors in suicidal ideation, police violence, and intergenerational violence. Investment in community care reduces costs in policing.
- [Truth-Telling Projects](#) enable community members to share their experience of police violence, enabling us to better imagine alternative community protection approaches.
- Gun violence reduction efforts: abolition of categories of weapons, buybacks, registration, insurance, restrictions on ownership and use, safety training.
- [Metta Center for Nonviolence](#) provides educational materials on the theory and practice of nonviolence, including the forthcoming film, “The Third Harmony”.

Training and Networking

- Nonviolent Communication- interpersonal conflict skills, [convergent facilitation](#).
- Bystander Intervention and De-Escalation
- Restorative Circles
- Unarmed Civilian Protection and Accompaniment
- Violence Interrupters- public health approach
- Nonviolent Social Change and Resistance
- Security Planning for Communities
- Mediation Skills and program
- *Rethink Security: Unarmed Civilian Protection is 3 [new training programs](#)*: 1) Community Protection, Nonviolence and Protection of Homes and Businesses; 2) Bystander Intervention and UCP Teams: Political Demonstrations/Events; 3) Direct Intervention in Police Brutality.
- [Shanti Sena Network](#) of U.S. and Canada organizations trains professionals in unarmed civilian protection, accompaniment, and violence interruption.

- The [Nonviolence Training Hub](#)'s 50+ partners around the world provide training on one or more of these themes: Nonviolent Social Change, Communicating Nonviolently, Nonviolent Conflict Transformation, Spiritually-Based Nonviolence, Training for Trainers.
- The Nonviolence International [Training Archive](#) has training workshops, exercises, campaigns, history, and legal and direct action materials.

*Resource developed by members of Shanti Sena Network and Nonviolence International.

Please send additional alternative community security resources and stories that you know or propose.

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Resource found at: <https://mettacenter.org/shanti-sena/about-the-shanti-sena-network/>

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