

To City of Saskatoon elected officials:

I am writing to you today to express my absolute outrage regarding the Saskatoon Police Services 2020 Operating Budget of **\$109 million** or **20.6% of the total operating budget** for the City of Saskatoon. The increased capital budget—planned for more than \$4 million over just two years, and including \$700 000 for 100 in-cruiser laptops—only locks us into a future of further violence and criminalization. A city notorious for its police enforcing freezing deaths on Indigenous people must find ways to divest from policing altogether and massively shift resources toward life-fostering social services.

This astronomical police budget is **unacceptable** and requires serious, immediate action. I call upon our elected officials to **start divesting from the Saskatoon Police Services immediately**.

I am asking that you, as an elected official, pledge to do the following:

1. To **never again** vote to increase the Saskatoon Police Services budget.
2. To **propose and implement a revision to the pre-approved Saskatoon Police Services budget in order to cut, at the absolute minimum, \$43 million** in accordance with the City of Saskatoon's operating budget shortfall projections due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. To prioritize the expansion of **community-led health and safety initiatives** over future financial investment into the Saskatoon Police Services.

With police violence recurring across the continent right now, there is no better time to commit ourselves to change. We have seen that investing in body cameras, civilian reviews, or de-escalation and implicit bias training [*doesn't work*](#). What we need in Saskatoon is leadership that can initiate a reduction in the immense police violence that targets our most marginalized people, toward the eventual abolition of police and prisons, and true decolonization of relations in misâskwatôminihk (Saskatoon).

Increased police presence does not keep us safe, rather it directly threatens the lives of our most vulnerable community members (Black, Indigenous, people of colour, transgender, Two-Spirit, LGBTQIA+, unhoused people, street-based sex workers, people with disabilities, people experiencing poverty, etc). Police interventions and incarceration create chaos, disorder, trauma, and premature death in our communities.

Instead of investing in the police, our city must prioritize alternatives like education, increased mental health services, housing initiatives, family violence prevention, free transit, income security, harm-reduction services, accessible rehabilitation, arts and cultural programs, conflict-resolution services, transformative justice, and other vital community-based support systems. Reconciliation and decolonization begin here. These initiatives must support our most vulnerable communities and centre the interests Black and Indigenous peoples in Saskatoon.

I urge you all to reach out to **redistribute our tax dollars and effect actual change in keeping communities safe** by consulting directly with, funding, and otherwise supporting organizations and services that work with (and are comprised of) criminalized communities experiencing the brunt of policing.

I'm asking that our city join the movement to eradicate the notion that human beings are disposable and that organized violence is the only solution to the many issues we face as a community. We must create a better future for all.

Yours sincerely,

NAME HERE

Postal Code

Contact:

Enter the information into this form below to contact Mayor Charlie Clark and all 10 Ward Councillors:

<https://www.saskatoon.ca/write-letter-councilcommittees>

And to contact your Ward Councillor directly:

<https://www.saskatoon.ca/city-hall/mayor-city-councillors/contact-your-city-councillor>

To find your ward

Further resources:

- *Critical Resistance Chart: Reformist Reforms vs Abolitionist Steps in Policing*
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59ead8f9692ebee25b72f17f/t/5b65cd58758d46d34254f22c/1533398363539/CR_NoCops_reform_vs_abolition_CRside.pdf
- *Report: Freedom to Thrive: Reimagining Safety & Security in Our Communities*
<https://populardemocracy.org/news/publications/freedom-thrive-reimagining-safety-security-our-communities>
- *Edmonton Anti-Black Racism Toolkit*
<https://www.bashirmohamed.com/blog/2020/6/2/edmontontoolkit>
- *The New Republic: The Pandemic Is the Right Time to Defund the Police*
<https://newrepublic.com/article/157875/pandemic-right-time-defund-police>
- *Toronto Life: Toronto's billion-dollar problem: our cops*
<https://torontolife.com/city/crime/toronto-police-service-vs-everybody/>

This text is just a jumping-off point! Alter it however you'd like, and take your own initiatives!

Also remember: it'll take a lot of sustained organizing to build the kind of coalition and power we'll need to make this vision a reality. Start reaching out to people you know—in community organizations, unions, faith groups, anyone—to start building. We're stronger together. Fight to win!