



National
Urban League

21 Pillars
for Redefining
Public Safety
and Restoring
Community Trust

Preamble

The National Urban League's **21 PILLARS** is a comprehensive framework for advocacy that redefines public safety and restores community trust—paving a way beyond the status quo. Our forward-thinking plan centers on five key themes that are fundamental to the protection and preservation of life, dignity, and trust, while also building safer communities.

We recognize that, first and foremost, community trust must be restored for true change to occur through truth and reconciliation and empowerment (Theme I). Community trust goes hand-in-hand with accountability for those who have a duty and authority to protect and serve (Theme II). We must work from the inside out to redesign public safety by uprooting divisive policing policies (Theme III). Finally, though we recognize that change takes time, it also takes attention to detail and learning. Therefore, we advocate for transparency, reporting standards, and data collection (Theme IV). Standards for hiring, evaluation, and promotions in public safety must be refined and enhanced. (Theme V). Public safety must be transformed, structurally and fundamentally.

For too long the lives, safety, and freedom of communities around the nation, particularly Black communities, have been threatened by discriminatory and violent policing. Our communities deserve to feel safe in their homes, in their cars, and on their streets, including safe from police violence. The 21 Pillars is a vision of what is possible—a path forward. Public safety must be re-envisioned.

The effects of unjust policing often reverberate beyond the criminal justice system, undermining social progress. The 21 Pillars take a holistic approach to public safety, the restoration of trust between communities and law enforcement, and a path forward for meaningful change. We encourage you to utilize our framework as a tool for your advocacy work on the ground—from grassroots organizing, to the legislative halls of government in cities and states, to the U.S. Capitol.

Since 1910, the National Urban League has promoted economic empowerment and equity through education and job training, housing and community development, workforce development, entrepreneurship, health, and quality of life. Yet social parity, economic empowerment, and civil rights cannot be achieved in a world of unjust policing. Our 21 Pillars for Redefining Public Safety and Restoring Community Trust present solutions that will move us closer to a world where community safety is real, and not aspirational.

Key Themes

**01 COLLABORATE WITH
COMMUNITIES TO BUILD
A RESTORATIVE SYSTEM**

02 ACCOUNTABILITY

**03 CHANGE DIVISIVE
POLICING POLICIES**

**04 REQUIRE TRANSPARENCY,
REPORTING,
& DATA COLLECTION**

**05 IMPROVE HIRING STANDARDS
& TRAINING**

Collaborate with Communities to Build a Restorative System

PILLAR 01

EMPOWER COMMUNITIES TO RE-ENVISION PUBLIC SAFETY IN AN EQUITABLE AND JUST WAY ▶

Truth and Reconciliation: Find justice for over-policed communities by studying the complex and long history of racism and policing in the United States and leveraging findings to draw policy that reconciles the past with the present and future.

Reinvest in our communities by supporting and funding asset-based approaches such as cure violence model and restorative justice programs, and social services that build upon existing assets and that address fundamental needs, including stable and safe housing, food, and job insecurity, the expansion of, and equitable access to, an excellent education, and substance misuse and mental health and wellness services.

Change the culture of law enforcement response to crises by reorganizing response units.

Establish public safety innovation grants for community-based organizations to create local commissions and task forces to help communities to re-imagine and develop concrete, just and equitable public safety approaches.



PILLAR 02

◀ **END BROKEN WINDOWS POLICING AND IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY POLICING MODEL**

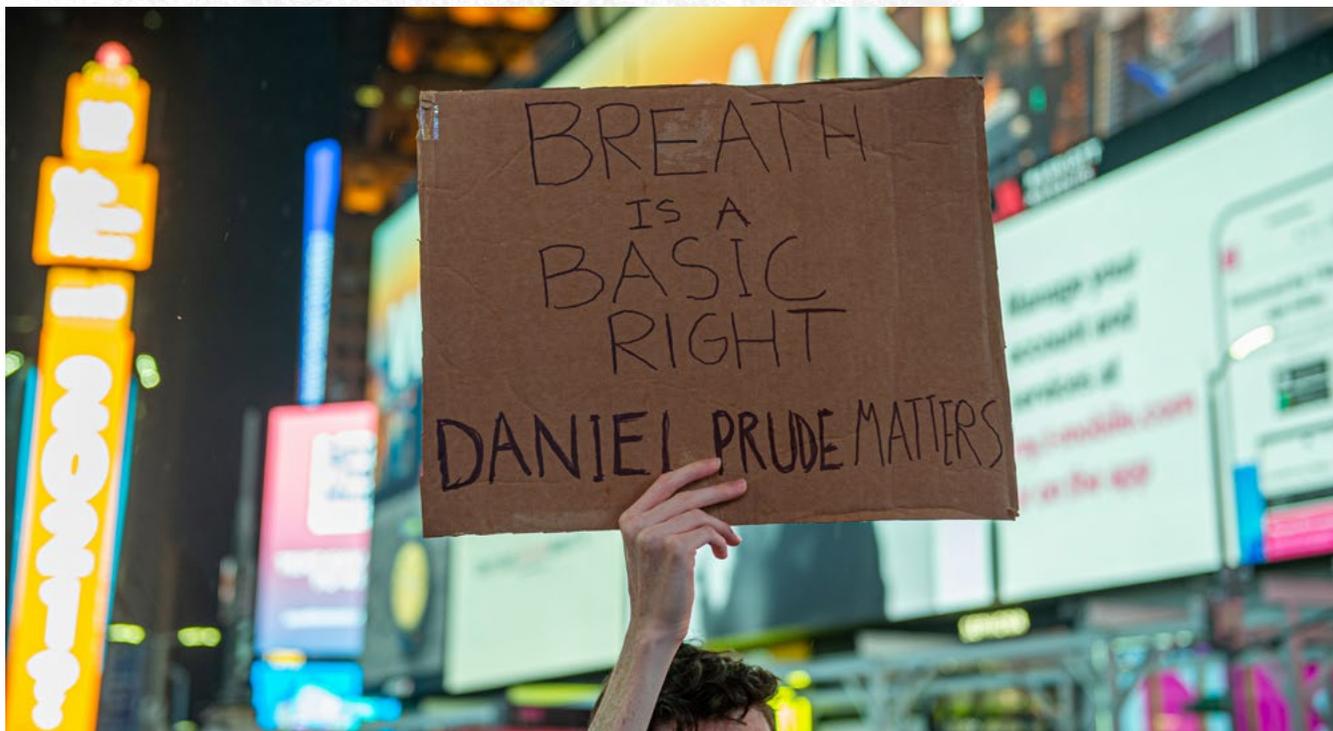
Decriminalize and/or establish diversionary programs for low-level offenses, including drug possession, public intoxication, loitering, jaywalking, disorderly conduct, and prostitution. Shift police time and public resources from these arrest-focused activities.

Emphasize prevention and problem-solving over ticket and arrest quotas and criminalization.

Reimagine evaluation metrics for officers to focus ratings on community engagement, community feedback, and social service referral, in addition to safety and case resolution metrics.

Require collaboration with community members on decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of recruitment and hiring, training and all departmental policies, practices, and priorities.

Condition federal funding to state and local law enforcement to establish community focused solutions.



PILLAR 03

PROHIBIT PROFILING BASED ON RACE, ETHNICITY, RELIGION, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, DISABILITY, OR IMMIGRATION STATUS

Codify antidiscrimination policies at the state local level.

Require the development of written bias-free policing policies with community input that provide guidance on bias-free policing, implicit bias, cultural competency, and procedural justice. The policies must include actual as well as perceived personal characteristics.

Condition federal funding to state and local law enforcement to adopt policies to combat and discourage racial, religious, and discriminatory profiling.

PILLAR 04

▲ ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Invest in comprehensive crisis response programs that are responsive to overlapping public health and safety concerns.

Establish state and local mental health and wellness advisory groups, staffed by safety personnel, social workers, and mental health providers.

Require crisis intervention and de-escalation training for all officers, first responders, and public-facing staff.



PILLAR 05

◀ **HOLD POLICE ACCOUNTABLE IN COURT**

End qualified immunity for law enforcement. Close the open legal questions that shield officers from accountability when they violate a civilian’s constitutional rights.

Amend the federal criminal statute to change the mens rea requirement in federal law—18 U.S.C. Section 242— from “willfulness” to a “recklessness” standard to allow appropriate prosecution of an officer.

Make it a crime for a federal law enforcement officer to engage in a sexual act with an individual who is under arrest, in detention, or in custody. Prohibit consent as a defense to prosecution for unlawful conduct. Incentivize states to set the same standards.

PILLAR 06

PREVENT POLICE UNION CONTRACTS FROM BLOCKING ACCOUNTABILITY

Remove all disciplinary matters from the scope of police union contract negotiations.

Require community representation at police union contract negotiations.

At the state level, repeal “Police Bill of Rights” laws.

Stop police union influence over politics by limiting political contributions from police unions.

PILLAR 07

INVESTIGATE POLICE MISCONDUCT

Appoint fair and impartial special prosecutors to investigate police misconduct.

Fully utilize the use of pattern and practice investigations of police departments. Grant the Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division subpoena power and enhance funding for such investigations.

Establish a DOJ task force to coordinate the investigation, prosecution, and enforcement efforts of federal, state, and local governments in cases related to law enforcement misconduct.

On the state level, create a grant program for state attorneys general to develop authority to conduct independent investigations into problematic police departments.

PILLAR 08

CREATE OR STRENGTHEN INDEPENDENT ALL-CIVILIAN COMMUNITY-BASED REVIEW BOARDS WITH FINAL AUTHORITY

Create diverse community-based review boards that receive, investigate, and resolve all civil complaints of police misconduct.

Require all review boards, police departments, and other law enforcement agencies to abide by a uniform discipline matrix with standardized penalties.

Ensure boards have adequate funding and subpoena and administrative prosecutorial powers that will enable them to investigate complaints, advise on needed policy changes, and serve as the final determinant on officer discipline thoroughly and independently.

OFFICERS FIRED FOR MISCONDUCT FROM 2006 TO 2017 THAT WERE REHIRED ON APPEAL

WASHINGTON D.C.



PHILADELPHIA



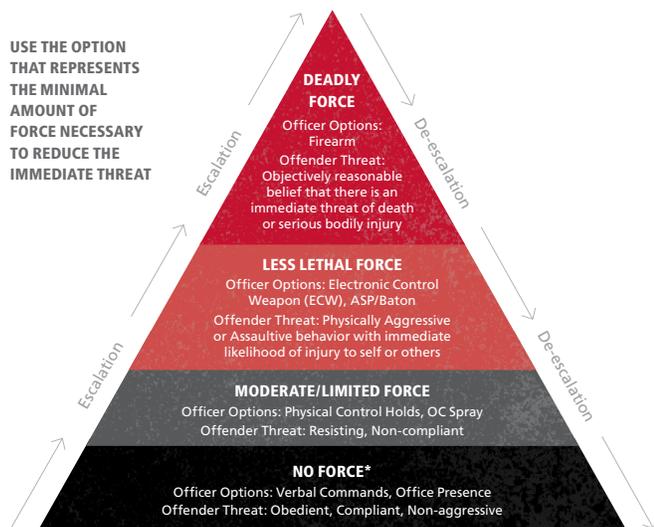
SAN ANTONIO



● officers fired ● officers rehiired

Source: *Washington Post* reporters requested the names of officers who were terminated and those who were reinstated after they contested their firings through arbitration or other appeals from 2006–2017.

Change Divisive Police Policies



Source: Philadelphia Police Department, Use of Force Policy, Directive 10.1

PILLAR 10

BAN CHOKEHOLDS, NO-KNOCK WARRANTS & SHOOTING AT MOVING VEHICLES

Ban the following uses of force: chokeholds and carotid holds, no-knock warrants, and shooting at moving vehicles.

Condition law enforcement funding for state and local governments banning chokeholds and carotid holds, no-knock warrants, and shooting at moving vehicles.

PILLAR 11

ELIMINATE POLICE FROM SCHOOLS

Break the school-to-prison pipeline by removing police officers from schools in deep and ongoing consultation with students, teachers, and families.

Train all building staff to be able to de-escalate and handle disruptive behavior in school, including administrative staff, custodial staff, and paraprofessionals.

Staff schools with appropriate human and social service professionals such as counselors, youth development specialists, social workers, mental health and wellness practitioners, community interventionists, and restorative justice coordinators.

PILLAR 09

REVISE USE OF FORCE POLICIES

Require that deadly force be used only as a last resort.

Require officers employ verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques in all circumstances with the goal of preventing or minimizing uses of force and only use force that is necessary under the circumstances and proportional to the treat.

Change the standard to evaluate whether law enforcement use of force was justified from whether the force was “reasonable” to whether the force was “necessary.”

Condition grants on state and local law enforcement agencies’ establishing the same use of force standard.



PILLAR 12

DEMILITARIZE THE POLICE FORCE

Limit the transfer of military-grade equipment to state and local law enforcement and encourage the return to the federal government military equipment already received.

Restrict local and state police departments from purchasing or utilizing military weapons.

PILLAR 13

BAN CIVIL ASSET FORFEITURE

Prohibit law enforcement from seizing property and cash from an individual unless the person is convicted of a crime and the state establishes by clear and convincing evidence that the property is subject to forfeiture.

Stop permitting and incentivizing local and state police to engage in civil asset forfeiture by ending the federal Equitable Sharing program.

Require Transparency, Reporting & Data Collection

PILLAR 14

COLLECT DATA ON POLICE MISCONDUCT AND USE-OF-FORCE

Create and audit a national citizen database of complaints against police, which examines patterns in complaint investigations including patterns in the quality of investigations, findings, and discipline rendered.

Develop a national police misconduct registry, that includes use of excessive force, racial profiling, sexual assault, assault, perjury, falsifying a police report, and planting or destroying evidence, to prevent problematic officers who are fired or leave one agency, from moving to another jurisdiction without any accountability.

Require the Attorney General to collect data on investigatory actions and detentions by federal law enforcement agencies; the racial distribution of drug charges; the use of deadly force by and against law enforcement officers; as well as traffic and pedestrian stops and detentions.

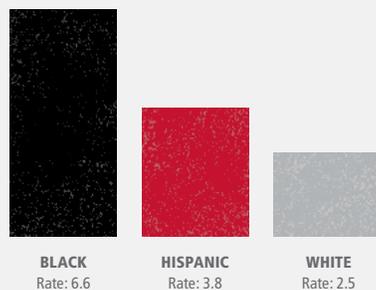
Mandate uniform FBI reporting and audit of lethal force incidents involving all of law enforcement.

Require state and local law enforcement agencies to report use of force data, disaggregated by race, sex, disability, religion, and age.



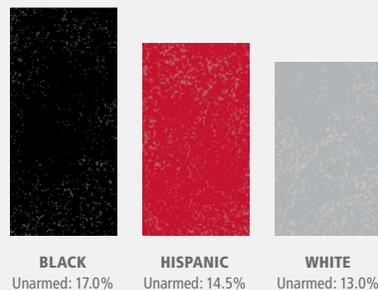
BLACK PEOPLE ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE KILLED BY POLICE

3x MORE LIKELY TO BE KILLED BY POLICE THAN WHITE PEOPLE



Police Killings Per 1 Million Population

1.3x MORE LIKELY TO BE UNARMED COMPARED TO WHITE PEOPLE



% Killed by Police Unarmed, 2013-2020

Source: mappingpoliceviolence.org



PILLAR 15

MANDATE USE OF DASHBOARD AND BODY-WORN CAMERAS AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO FOOTAGE

Require all federal police officers to wear functioning body-worn cameras and all federal law enforcement vehicles to have functioning dashboard cameras.

Create uniform and national standards for the use and activation of body-worn and dashboard cameras and direct access to footage for relevant prosecutorial and oversight bodies.

Prohibit footage tampering and unauthorized access to recorded footage.

Require state and local law enforcement to use existing federal funds to ensure the universal use of police body-worn and dashboard cameras.

PILLAR 16

CONDUCT FINANCIAL & OPERATIONAL AUDITS OF POLICE DEPARTMENTS

Require regular and publicly available audits covering operations, budget, management, staffing structures, and policies and procedures.

PILLAR 17

REQUIRE TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNITY INPUT WITH PREDICTIVE POLICING, FACIAL RECOGNITION AND ANY NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Mandate community input and independent assessment of potential biases before law enforcement deploy any predictive policing or facial recognition technology and require community input on the implementation of any policing technologies.

Ensure policing technologies' impact on privacy concerns is in accordance with constitutional safeguards.

Improve Hiring Standards & Training

PILLAR 18

ADOPT NATIONAL POLICE ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

Adopt and implement a national police accreditation system with evidence-based conditions of accreditation.

Condition law enforcement funding for local and state governments on jurisdictions meeting accreditation requirements.

PILLAR 19

EXPAND THE NATIONAL DECERTIFICATION INDEX

Track all decertified police officers and officers who have been fired or resigned due to police misconduct by expanding the National Decertification Index to cover all law enforcement agencies and include officers who have been fired or resigned due to police misconduct.

Require the use of the National Decertification Index in making hiring decisions to prevent officers who have been fired or resigned from being rehired in another jurisdiction.

Condition law enforcement funding for local and state governments on jurisdictions using and contributing to the Index.



PILLAR 20

STRENGTHEN POLICE HIRING STANDARDS AND IMPROVE TRAINING TO BUILD INTEGRITY AND TRUST

Develop police recruiting and hiring standard recommendations that include comprehensive work and criminal history and encourage other checks such as polygraph tests and psychologist interviews.

Invest in periodic and rigorous police training that emphasizes the preservation of life and includes training in peer intervention, crisis intervention or critical response training, de-escalation and use of force training, procedural justice, and implicit bias training.

PILLAR 21

INCREASE DIVERSITY & EQUITY IN BOTH THE LEADERSHIP AND RANKS OF LOCAL, STATE & FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Create a workforce that contains a broad range of diversity including race, gender, language, life experience, and cultural background to improve understanding and effectiveness in dealing with all communities.

Implement best practices for recruitment, training, and outreach to improve the diversity as well as the cultural and linguistic responsiveness of law enforcement agencies.



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