



MODEL GUIDELINES FOR A NEW SAFETY FRAMEWORK: INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be safe? And what would need to change to share responsibility for achieving safety in our communities?

For decades, policymakers and the general public assumed the best way to keep people safe was through incarceration after the crime has already occurred. This overreliance on incarceration has exacted enormous financial and human costs, not least for the people most harmed by crime and violence. What’s more, studies have shown that this approach has failed to make communities safer.

But increasingly, local governments have begun to look beyond the criminal justice system, enlisting other government agencies and community resources to help tackle the root causes of crime and prevent harm before it happens.

For the past three years, Californians for Safety and Justice has been working collaboratively with leaders in Stockton/ San Joaquin County, Santa Cruz County, Los Angeles County and elsewhere as they re-envision a new framework for achieving safety in their communities. We started with the same baseline questions: Why are the people most harmed also the least helped? How would our approach to breaking the cycle of harm and trauma change if we centered our efforts around what survivors—those most directly affected—say would make them feel safe?

In each of these communities, government leaders and others tasked with keeping communities safe invited Californians for Safety and Justice to share our expertise. The learning went both ways. And while each community is unique, a set of core lessons and best practices began to emerge organically from the work.

Core to our work is the concept of joint responsibility: When a commitment to safety is shared from the ground up—among law enforcement, survivors, public officials, community groups and others—the bonds of accountability and the chances of achieving safety grow stronger.

Over the years, we have heard from survivors, stakeholders and practitioners across many disciplines, including law enforcement, public health and violence prevention, each of whom helped us develop a bold yet pragmatic approach to re-envisioning safety. In 2017 we synthesized our findings in a [Blueprint for Shared Safety](#).

Over the next few months, we’ll be sharing these practices and insights in a new series of publications that mirror the iterative and dynamic process that went into building each community’s new safety framework. The series will include practical tips on setting operational priorities and making the cultural shifts necessary to realize the framework for Shared Safety at the systems level.

If you are a local government or community leader who has begun thinking about or starting a conversation that re-envisions safety in your community, this series is for you. These model guidelines reflect the on-ground realities, challenges and assets in the communities where we worked, and strategies for addressing issues related to smart investments, limited resources, and improving safety and well being outcomes.

In this series of publications, we’ll offer advice on activating our tools and guidelines depending on the initial level of



SHIFTING TO A
Public Health Frame



Well-Being
IS SAFETY



Crime Survivors
AT THE CENTER



Breaking the Cycle
OF HARM



MAKING THE
System Work

engagement with crime survivors in your area, as well as with public agencies that will likely be involved. We'll share some key lessons about how stakeholders are seeking to engage key community constituencies, assess the gaps in services, analyze and make recommendations on how resources are used, and measure success. We'll show how to address community needs in a way that aligns with the overall mission of government (not just one department), using the best thinking from places that have struggled through some tough questions.

Future installments of this series will cover:

- 1 LISTEN TO SURVIVORS**
For too long, public safety policy has failed to reflect the experiences and insights of crime survivors themselves. Yet listening and learning from the people most affected by crime is essential for reenvisioning a safety framework that protects the most vulnerable communities. We make the case for engaging survivors at every level and explain how to engage them on the ground floor. For communities that don't yet have an organized survivor network, we offer tips on building this network from scratch.
- 2 LISTEN TO THE COMMUNITY**
If your community is already home to a crime survivor network or you've recently taken steps to build one, you're ready for this next phase of the participatory process. These hands-on guidelines will help you go beyond traditional concepts of community engagement, with tips on leading facilitated discussions that bring together different community members to identify a shared vision of safety. What does shared safety feel like and how can we measure it beyond crime rates?
- 3 INTEGRATE THE PLANNING PROCESS**
Here we reset the decision-making table with a set of strategies to integrate community members who traditionally have been excluded from such discussions (including survivors, reentry advocates, and others most impacted by crime and the criminal justice system) with representatives from law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and government. We lay out the design for what an integrated session with those most harmed and least helped looks like, and how it can be structured for systems planning.
- 4 TAKE STOCK OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**
With your participatory planning group in place, we make recommendations for advancing the policy-setting discussion by taking inventory of community strengths and challenges with an eye to crafting tangible, systems-level recommendations that will break the cycle of harm.
- 5 CREATE SOLUTIONS AND SET PRIORITIES**
Leveraging the insights from the inventory process, it's time to analyze these findings to create a road map for change. For far too long, law enforcement has been saddled with being frontline responders to endemic community problems. Through our work with local partners, we've learned that safety is more than the absence of crime: it is the presence of well-being. This process will help set the course for solutions that are pragmatic, aligned, and accountable to your community's safety and well-being priorities.

In the Works

We are currently developing a tool that will help track a community's progress toward Shared Safety, including an assessment of how public investments are being made and whether they're consistent with achieving the priorities set by your community's new safety framework. Stay tuned.

If you're interested in learning more about re-envisioning safety in your community, please get in touch. We offer strategic and technical support as well as a network of professional peers.

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