Policing Policy

Centuries of over-policing and misconduct have created a fundamental distrust of police by people of color and indigenous (POCI) communities. Social movements and mass demonstrations continue to bring attention to the systemic problems in how we police. Public safety is the intersection of housing, education, employment, healthcare, criminal justice, and policing. Crime is not a product of individual morality—it is a consequence of scarcity in our society and an indicator of community health. Our long-term approach to public safety must be transformative, intervening before people enter the criminal justice system. The best deterrent to crime is providing people with affordable housing, healthy food, clean air and water, quality education, and accessible health care.

Background

- Nationally, 71% of black Americans do not have confidence in police, 42% of white Americans feel the same—67% of black Americans believe they are treated less fairly by police
- In 2016, nearly 1,000 civilians were shot and killed by police, nationwide
- 25% of the incidents in which civilians were killed by officers nationwide, were mental health related
- In 2017, Minneapolis Police Department will receive 36% of the city’s $438.4 million general fund budget; for every $1 Minneapolis spends on police, we spend 9¢ on affordable housing, 4¢ on adult workforce development, and 4¢ on youth development and violence prevention
- Black residents in Minneapolis are 8.7 times more likely to be arrested for low-level offenses than white residents—arrests of Native residents are 8.6 times more likely than white residents
- A 2016 study by the Minneapolis Police Conduct Oversight Commission found that in 13 out of 15 instances, civilians were refused the ability to file a complaint against an officer
- The MPD budget has increased 16% over four years—includes hiring 27 new officers
- The proposed 2018 city budget includes a 7.2% increase in funding for police

Priorities and Vision

Minneapolis needs to address the immediate problems facing the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) while also re-imagining the future of public safety in our city. This means completely reshaping the culture and structure of policing. Success will be grounded in the community voices who have been ignored for generations.

Fundamentally change the funding and operations of MPD
- Redirect a portion of the police budget toward affordable housing, education, homelessness prevention, mental health services, and job training programs
- Fund public safety without hiring more sworn officers
- Reduce interactions with police by decriminalizing low-level offenses

Full-scale demilitarization MPD
- Ban the acquisition and use of military-grade equipment
- Create a culture of policing that prioritizes de-escalation
- Examine when it is unnecessary for officers to carry a firearm
Reshape oversight and accountability of MPD
• Add effective civilian oversight mechanisms to current structure
• Review and reform the Department’s use of force policy
• Protect the right to protest and assemble

Policy

1. **Redirect police budget resources to invest in healthier communities**: Minneapolis spends 36% of its general fund on MPD, one of the highest percentages in the nation. We must involve Minneapolis residents, specifically those who have been harmed by biased policing, to decide how to reallocate resources and promote holistic safety measures like affordable housing, job training, environmental justice, education, homelessness prevention, and addiction treatment.

2. **Invest in community-level safety programs without adding more sworn-officers to MPD**: Increasing police presence does not guarantee community safety. I will prioritize public safety funds to increase the number of democratic, transparent, and community-based initiatives, such as the pilot programs funded in the 2017 budget in the Northside and Little Earth, and look to successful national models like the Cure Violence Model.

3. **Increase funding for mental health response**: We should treat mental illness as a health problem, not a safety problem when responding to emergency calls. The 2017 MPD budget includes funding for a pilot mental health co-responder program. The city must fully-fund this program and move towards a system where mental health professionals are the sole responder to such calls. Additionally, we must collaborate with and support other successful initiatives such as Hennepin County’s Community Outreach for Psychiatric Emergencies (COPE).

4. **Reform MPD’s use of force policy and uniformly enforce it in all police interactions**: Our Police Chief has the authority to discipline officers who act against standards of the department. As Mayor, I will ensure the Chief has a zero-tolerance policy for instances of excessive force and brutality. Additionally, we must update ambiguous language in our city’s use of force policy to prioritize de-escalation and preservation of life, and ban tactics such as neck holds and head strikes.

5. **Ensure all officers complete de-escalation and implicit bias training**: I’m proud to have passed permanent, ongoing funding to train officers in de-escalation, cultural competency and identifying mental-health crises. We must continue recent updates to MPD’s training program to ensure all officers trained to appropriately interact with specific communities—youth, POCI, immigrants and refugees, and LGBTQ.

6. **Begin the full-scale demilitarization of the Minneapolis Police Department**:
   a. Residents should know what military equipment MPD possesses so we can systematically end these practices.
   b. My administration will prohibit using funds for the acquisition of military-grade weapons. I will also work the City Council to pass a resolution making such a ban permanent.
   c. I support rethinking whether every officer needs to always carry a gun. To reduce the abuse and overuse of force, we need to reduce the number of weapons—military grade or not—in use by MPD. For example, officers do not need to carry firearms during community events like National Night Out and Open Streets.

7. **Decriminalize low-level offenses and ‘livability crimes’**: In addition to accountable policing, we must work to end mass incarceration. The city has already decriminalized marijuana possession and repealed discriminatory ordinances which outlawed spitting and lurking. We must continue to decriminalize other low-level drug offenses, and livability crimes like open bottle violations, biking on sidewalks, and loitering.

8. **Prefer hiring officers who live within the city of Minneapolis**: We need officers who are connected to the city of Minneapolis and feel connected to the communities they serve. While requiring officers to live in Minneapolis is prohibited by state law, we can use the hiring practices of the Minneapolis Fire Department as a model, and direct MPD to give preferred hiring to applicants who live in Minneapolis.
9. **Reform police oversight committee with powerful civilian accountability mechanisms:** State law prohibits any civilian review board from making any “findings of fact” regarding a complaint against an officer. To date, only 3% of over 1,100 complaints reviewed by the Office of Police Conduct Review resulted in a disciplinary action other than ‘coaching’. The last attempt at a civilian review authority was also unsuccessful at holding officers accountable. As Mayor, I will work with state legislators to repeal this law so Minneapolis can form a civilian commission with greater disciplinary authority over officers.

10. **Work with Minneapolis Public Schools to phase out the School Resource Officer (SRO) program:** All children in Minneapolis have a right to feel safe while receiving an education. An armed police presence propagates the school to prison pipeline by increasing the number arrests and potential to arrest students for minor offenses. We should instead invest in proper counseling, social work, and mental health services. All in-school staff should also be trained de-escalation and conflict resolution.

11. **Implement a transparent process while negotiating the city’s labor agreement with the Police Officer’s Federation:** While the labor agreement with the police union is not an inherent impediment to police reform, it is important that the agreement’s negotiation is an open, transparent process with opportunities for community feedback. Where possible, I will utilize the negotiation process to push for greater accountability from the union.

12. **Direct MPD to issue more summons rather than making arrests:** While MPD does not currently cooperate with Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE), anyone the city arrests is taken to Hennepin County Jail, and county officials often coordinate with ICE. We must better protect the city’s immigrant community by issuing a court summons instead of making an arrest. This will allow undocumented individuals to stay in Minneapolis.

13. **Prohibit MPD from cooperating and sharing information with federal agents:** Minneapolis must remain a sanctuary city, and protect our residents, regardless of immigration status. We must defend our Muslim neighbors from discriminatory, racist surveillance and criminalization by the federal government under the guise promoting Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).

14. **Fully protect the right to protest:** Protest and civil disobedience are essential tools for affecting change. There will always be times when communities mobilize either in reaction to discriminatory city, state, or national policies, or proactively assemble to further justice in our city. As Mayor, I will secure the right to demonstrate for all residents of Minneapolis. I will restrict the use of military equipment such as Stingray surveillance equipment, chemical agents, armored vehicles, and long range acoustic devices, during protests.

### Works Consulted

American Civil Liberties Union. “Picking up the Pieces: Policing in America, A Minneapolis Case Study.” [Link](https://www.aclu.org/issues/racial-justice/race-and-criminal-justice/picking-pieces)


