



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Joe DeVries
Deputy City Administrator

SUBJECT: MOU with UC Berkeley for
Community Engagement Team
Program

DATE: November 13, 2023

City Administrator Approval

Date:

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The Department Of Violence Prevention (DVP) To Enter Into A Memorandum Of Understanding With The University Of California, Berkeley's Possibility Lab Regarding The DVP's Community Engagement Team Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This proposed resolution will authorize the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) to enter a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the [Possibility Lab](#) from the School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, regarding the DVP's Community Engagement Team Program. Researchers from the Possibility Lab will provide training and support to community engagement team members, who are credible messengers with lived experience related to group violence, in identifying, designing, and implementing environmental solutions to group-driven violence in their communities. The MOU will outline the roles and responsibilities of Possibility Lab researchers and DVP staff in this partnership, which will have no financial cost to the City of Oakland.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

DVP CalVIP Grant. The City of Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) is tasked with reducing group and gun violence, gender-based violence, commercial sexual exploitation, and trauma associated with these forms of violence in Oakland. In service of this mission, the DVP secured a grant for \$5,999,948 from the Board of State and Community Corrections' California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Program to focus resources on individuals involved in group-driven violence and their families for the period of July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2025. This grant includes funding for up to 24 credible messengers with lived experience related to group violence to perform outreach to individuals currently involved in group violence to support conflict mediation and connection to resources. These individuals, known as community engagement team (CET) members, are employed by the City of Oakland to perform street outreach work for 15 hours per week for the duration of the grant period. In addition to performing street outreach, CET members are expected to engage residents of their

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communities in identifying environmental contributors to violence and prioritizing interventions that can be implemented by the City of Oakland as a condition of grant funding. This work, known as crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), is an approach to crime prevention that focuses on the design and management of built and natural environments.

Possibility Lab. The Possibility Lab within the School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, is a diverse team of policy researchers and practitioners who partner with government and community to design, pilot, and scale data-driven solutions for the public good, with a specific commitment to centering community voices and perspectives in public policy. The Possibility Lab has worked since 2022 with community partners across the City of Oakland, including three current grantees of the DVP (Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, Trybe, and Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency), to produce community-sourced data for public safety reform. These discussions have brought together hundreds of residents representing many of the city's diverse communities most directly affected by violence: Black, Latinx, and Asian-American, immigrant families and refugees, and youth affected by crime and the criminal justice system. The Possibility Lab is now focused on sourcing solutions from community members that directly contribute to making their holistic vision a reality.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The DVP desires to partner with the Possibility Lab to support CET members in identifying, designing, and implementing environmental solutions to group-driven violence in their communities, which is a requirement of the DVP's CalVIP grant. Possibility Lab researchers will guide CET members through a process of soliciting feedback from community members regarding environmental contributors to group violence, deriving actionable solutions from the community feedback, and then delivering recommendations to city stakeholders.

Through this partnership, Possibility Lab researchers will provide training to CET members on the following topics:

- Creating public safety interventions
- Indicators of safety that represent lived experience
- Eliciting authentic and diverse perspectives
- Group facilitation
- Ethics of field research
- Community-engaged discourse
- Solution feasibility and implementation
- Audience-centered presentation
- Public speaking to inform policy
- Persuasive media and communication approaches

Through a participatory design process, the Possibility Lab will assist CETs in producing the following deliverables:

- A collection of community-sourced solution ideas
- A presentation for the Mayor and City Administrator of potential actionable solutions sourced from affected communities

- An implementation plan for feasible, small-scale solution efforts to be supported by the Possibility Lab and the Department of Violence Prevention
- A proposal of final recommendations to the Mayor and City Administrator based on several rounds of community input

The DVP's partnership with researchers from the Possibility Lab addresses the citywide priority of **holistic community safety** by supporting community-led identification and implementing environmental deterrents of group violence.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no cost associated with this MOU and, therefore, no fiscal impact to the City of Oakland.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No public outreach was deemed necessary for this report beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures.

COORDINATION

This report was developed in coordination with the City Attorney's Office, Finance Department, and City Administrator's Office.

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION, AND FOLLOW-UP

The street outreach work performed by CET members is widely regarded as an effective approach to gun violence reduction. Multiple evaluations of the Cure Violence model of street outreach in Baltimore, Chicago, and New York have demonstrated significant reductions in shootings and homicides.¹ Crime prevention through environmental design also has a strong research base. Many research studies, including several randomized controlled trials in Philadelphia, have demonstrated the impact of blight remediation on reducing violent crime.² Increasing lighting in crime hot spots can also have a significant deterrence effect. A randomized controlled trial involving 40 public housing developments in New York City found

¹ Cure Violence Global. (2021). *The evidence of effectiveness*. Retrieved February 4, 2022, from <https://cvg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Cure-Violence-Evidence-Summary.pdf>

² Branas, C., South, E., Kondo, M., Hohl, B., Bourgois, P., Wiebe, D., & MacDonald, J. (2018) Citywide cluster randomized trial to restore blighted vacant land and its effects on violence, crime, and fear. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. 115(12), 2946-2951. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1718503115>

that additional lighting reduced serious felony crimes, including murder, robbery, and aggravated assault, by 36%, even when accounting for displacement of crime to nearby areas.³

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: There are no economic opportunities associated with this report.

Environmental: There are no environmental opportunities associated with this report.

Race and Equity: Group and gun violence in Oakland overwhelmingly impact people of color, and therefore, reductions to group and gun violence achieved through community-led CPTED strategies will reduce racial inequities in violent crime.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

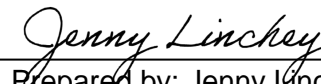
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For questions regarding this report, please contact Jenny Linchey Acting Deputy Chief of Grants, Programs, and Evaluation, Department of Violence Prevention, at 510-238-2374.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe DeVries, Deputy City Administrator
City Administrator's Office



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Evaluation
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³ UChicago Urban Labs. (n.d.). *Can street lighting reduce crime?* Retrieved February 4, 2022, from <https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/projects/crime-lights-study>

Attachment (1):

A: Roles and responsibilities for MOU between DVP and UC Berkeley