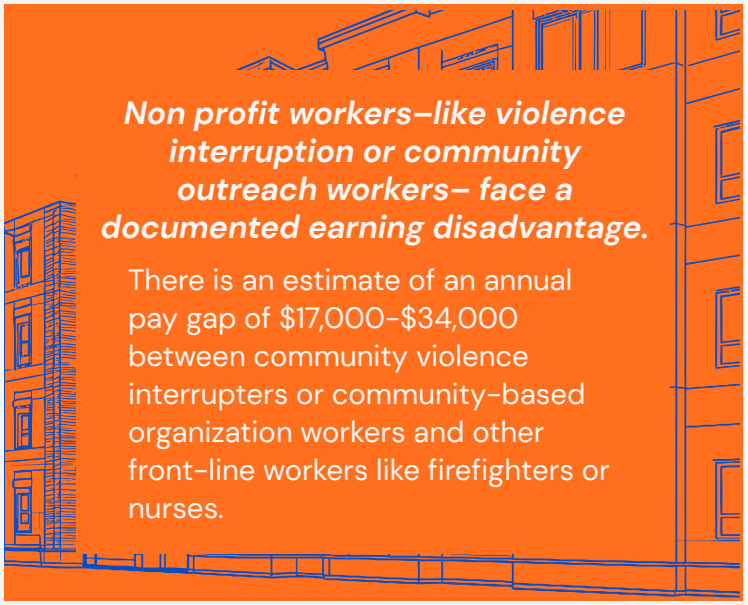
Prevention Workers: *protecting the community without housing security*



NONPROFIT WORKERS HELPING OTHERS NAVIGATE CRISES FACE THEIR OWN HOUSING CRISIS.

The District offers housing and other incentives to certain public employees but not to community-based frontline workers who help keep residents safe. Community-based organizations aren't seen as important organizations that require the same level of attention as others, like policing.



Non profit workers–like violence interruption or community outreach workers– face a documented earning disadvantage.

There is an estimate of an annual pay gap of $17,000-$34,000 between community violence interrupters or community-based organization workers and other front-line workers like firefighters or nurses.



Only 36% of DC's essential workers lived in the District in 2022.

WHEN WORKERS CANNOT AFFORD TO LIVE WHERE THEY WORK, COMMUNITIES RISK LOSING ACCESS TO THE PEOPLE WHO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES.

One in six DC households spends more than half its income on housing. This growing housing instability in the District shows the need for stronger housing protections and sustainable compensation for community-based frontline workers.

GOAL MAKE COMMUNITY SAFETY FUNDING SUSTAINABLE FOR BOTH THE ORGANIZATIONS DELIVERING SERVICES AND THE WORKERS DELIVERING THEM.

TWO-PRONGED APPROACH:

1. Establish affordable housing partnerships for community-based organizations' employees and create a DC community-based workforce housing initiative.
2. Improve funding for community-based organizations to increase compensation for frontline workers, so that the workers are earning enough to sustain their households. This must include multi-year funding for community violence intervention organizations to bring stability.

The relevant District agencies must revise grant and contract requirements to ensure community-based organizations can adequately compensate and retain frontline workers. The DC Council and Mayor must allocate funding for this.

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No School-To-Prison Pipeline

Schools sometimes respond to student misbehavior with suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement instead of addressing the underlying causes of the behavior. These practices can contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, which is when certain school discipline and justice-system practices can increase students' risk of becoming involved with the juvenile or criminal justice systems.

Students who are removed from school may experience academic setbacks, become disengaged from their education, or face increased contact with law enforcement and the juvenile justice system.

These outcomes can affect their opportunities to graduate, pursue higher education, and build successful futures.

Black students represented

61%

of D.C. public school students in 2024 but accounted for

90%

of suspensions

We need more full-time counselors, mental health service providers and restorative circles, and peer mediation to provide students with adequate support.

There are only 67 full-time counselors in the district, who are expected to accommodate the 49,896 students (US News).

Restorative justice offers an alternative by helping students understand the harm they caused, take responsibility, and repair relationships.



DC needs to close the gap among the 78 DC Public Schools that do not receive Restorative Justice services.

During the 2024–2025 school year, RestorativeDC provided technical assistance to **39 schools** across 21 local education agencies. Nine schools received intensive, schoolwide assistance, while 30 received targeted assistance. **D.C. has 117 public schools, meaning that most schools are not getting this kind of support.**

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THE REACH PROGRAM

Liberation through Higher Education

The barriers

People who come home from DC Jail and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) face **significant barriers with navigating the college application process** and other relevant resources.

Returning citizens are at **increasing odds of recidivism.**

DC spends **millions** on incarceration, but a **small investment** in higher education access for returning citizens could have a huge impact.

THE SOLUTION

Creating a program for returning citizens that assists them in the college application process to promote more returning citizens earning their degrees, reducing recidivism.

General recidivism is 50% or more, while adults who participate in collegiate-level programs are noticeably less likely to recidivate. Those who earned their associate's degree are roughly 14% likely to recidivate, whereas those who earn a master's degree is 0%.

DC should take a fraction of the millions we spend on DC Jail and dedicate to this program for better outcomes.

RETURNING CITIZENS ARE

8x

LESS LIKELY TO COMPLETE A COLLEGE DEGREE



free MINDS
Book Club & Writing Workshop

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Reach-In Services 4 All

How much is fixing nothing costing you?



Support and Rehabilitation are Missing

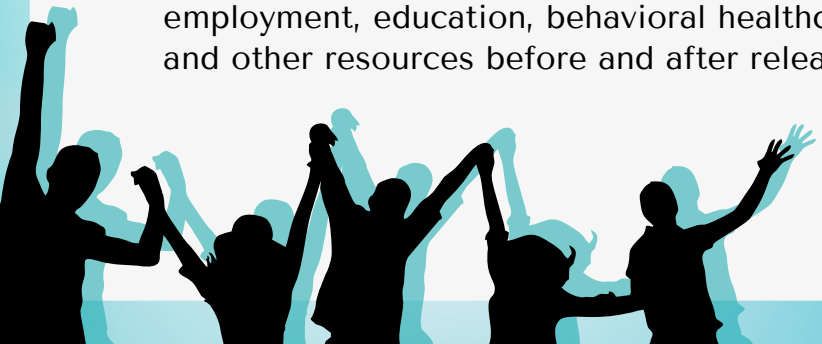
D.C. has existing rehabilitation and reentry programs that help incarcerated individuals prepare for successful reintegration into their communities.

However, not everyone has access to comprehensive pre-release support, which may depend on eligibility requirements, referrals, facility placement, available resources, and program capacity.

Every person incarcerated should receive wraparound services, including "reach-in" programming while incarcerated and continued for three years upon reentry.

This should include:

- An individualized needs assessment and information about available services.
- An opportunity to receive adequate pre-release case management and community support.
- Documented referrals and clear explanations of eligibility decisions.
- Regular opportunities for reassessment and access to newly available services.
- Coordinated connections to housing, employment, education, behavioral healthcare, and other resources before and after release.





This affects the people in jail, the community and families they return to, and taxpayers if they keep ending up in jail when reach-in could have stopped it.

Many people need "reach-in" support but are not receiving it. Based on national data, we can estimate that only 957 people of the 6,379 people returning to the DC community from jail or prison are receiving reach-in services. DC has full control over the Jail, where we can start.



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Safety for sex workers means safety for all.

Sex work is work

From 2023 to now there are hundreds fewer arrests in DC but no affirmative laws facilitate this or protect sex workers.

DC has decreased sex worker arrests, however without any actual laws to protect sex workers we miss out on the opportunity to include sex workers as legitimate workers protected by workers' rights and creating a safe space in the sex trade industry exposing links to sex trafficking. In 2019, DC legislation to decriminalize sex work did not advance further.

The Impact

The criminalization of sex work disproportionally affects black and brown folks. Yes, arrests are down but with no actual law that protects sex workers from negative treatment from officers and the community; we move further away from public safety ostracizing sex workers as subpar members of the same community.

In 2006 a report from the Alliance for a Safe & Diverse DC on sex worker interactions initiated by the police in D.C., reported **57.7% of sex workers having primarily negative experiences.**

Decriminalization Makes Sex Workers **Safer**

In New Zealand, the 2003 Prostitution Reform Act decriminalized adult sex work and established a legal framework to safeguard sex workers' human rights. Five years later the Prostitution Law Review Committee concluded that sex workers were **more likely to report violence to police and other agencies after decriminalization.**

We ask for the decriminalization of the consensual exchange of sex for money. When this is done it creates a safer environment for all by giving sex workers their voice allowing them to be free to report violence against themselves and others. Sex trafficking will be decreased if sex workers felt safe enough to report misconduct.

We need to establish a legal framework to safeguard sex workers. Which includes decriminalization and supportive services such as healthcare, amnesty and pathway to reintegrate back into society when sex work itself is no longer a viable option due to: person choice, mental heath, health issues, etc.

SEX WORKERS ADVOCACY COALITION
SWAC

Lazima Elizabeth Mills | support@swacdc.org

CLOSE THE POST-ARRAIGNMENT TRANSPORTATION GAP

When people are released after arraignment, they need to access their personal property, but simply can't get there.

DC can close that gap.

THE PROBLEM

There is a **lack of transportation available for arraigned individuals who have been released** and need to travel from Court to a police precinct in order to access their personal belongings.

Court actors are giving our loved ones misinformation, telling them that they are able to utilize public transportation after they are released, but no such agreement exists with WMATA.

DC has seen a

59% increase

in the average number of loved ones going through arraignment court each day since August 2025

This issue **impacts everyone released from arraignment court** who will need to retrieve their property, which is typically held at one of the seven police precincts around DC.

This is a racial justice issue because the lack of transportation to retrieve one's personal belongings primarily affects Black residents given that more than 90% of incarcerated DC residents are Black.

Research shows that the **lack of access to one's property is destabilizing,** particularly in the pretrial context.

This issue could be resolved by shifting the misinformation that has been given out by court actors into reality.

Funding has been allotted to bridge this gap in the past: In 2022, the Office of Victims Services and Justice Grants allotted $100,000 in funding to a company to transport individuals leaving the courthouse. That company was again awarded $250,000 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, though it appears the company is no longer in operation.

This solution could be implemented with a grant from the city, as has been done before, or by the court collaborating with WMATA.



HARRIET'S WILDEST DREAMS

COURTWATCH DC

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RETURNING CITIZENS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT ACT

An Unprotected Class

1 in 7 D.C. residents have a criminal record. The District's existing employment and housing laws provide important protections, but the current framework does not make returning-citizen status itself a protected characteristic or do enough for people with felony convictions.This legislation would build upon existing District policy rather than replacing it.

$200 - $500 Million

LOST TO JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT

$1.5 Billion

POTENTIAL BENEFIT LOST IN TAX REVENUE

THIS IS A DISCRIMINATION ISSUE THAT AFFECTS THE ECONOMY.

Exclusion

Returning citizens with felony convictions are not benefitting from the current legislation of 'Ban the Box' and '2nd Chance' hiring practices.

PREVIOUSLY INCARCERATED D.C. RESIDENTS





Council for Court Excellence

Amend the D.C. Human Rights Act to make returning citizens a protected class.

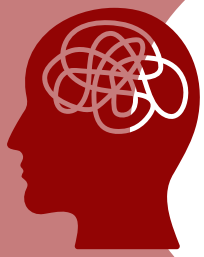
66% of D.C.'s returning citizens recidivate due to systemic barriers like lack of housing and jobs. They are much less likely to re-offend if they can get a job, afford adequate housing, and take care of their families.

THE RETURNING CITIZENS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT ACT NEEDS TO BE PASSED BY D.C. COUNCIL.

Leandra Jackson

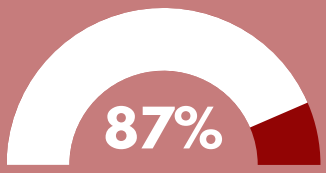
SUPPORT VIOLENCE INTERRUPTERS SO THEY CAN SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

We're asking Violence Interrupters to stand between warring groups without the needed resources to be effective.



The Problem

When violence interruption contracts lived at the Office of the Attorney General, there were contracted therapists who conducted 1:1 and group therapies. Group therapies acted as an organized collaborative space improving the efficacy of Violence Interruption. The same access should be baked into the contracts now that they live at the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement.



of violence interrupters are pushed into mandatory overwork.

MORE THAN HALF suffer from severe sleep deprivation and secondary trauma.

We are asking Violence Interrupters to manage severe street crises without protecting their own well-being.

By failing to bake clinical behavioral support into contracts, we guarantee high staff turnover and burnout. Integrating mandatory mental health care isn't a perk; it is a baseline operational necessity to keep these workers safe and effective.



Re-Implement Wellness Infrastructure

We are not asking the District to build a frontline wellness infrastructure from scratch. A clear administrative precedent exists and was successfully utilized.

The Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement needs to implement it, and the council needs to fund it.

PEACE FOR DC

Lisa Gordon Lisa@peacefordc.org

ART IS THERAPY

Young people are not simply problems to manage; they are people to invest in. Someone needs to be responsible for connecting young people with existing investments in arts therapy so all young people can access it.

50%

of middle school students have seen or heard people where they live be violent.

Childrens' Law Center

Despite a lot of money and many agencies offering programs, not enough young people are accessing creative opportunities and supportive resources that promote positive youth development.

DC youth, especially those experiencing violence, grief, loss, trauma, experience barriers to enrichment opportunities. To access art therapy programs, these young people have to navigate separate agencies, eligibility requirements, and referral systems, making it harder to connect them with consistent, individualized services. Despite all the money being spent by agencies, young people are not connecting to art therapy.

"ENGAGING IN VARIOUS ARTS ACTIVITIES (SUCH AS SINGING, DANCING, PLAY ACTING, AND DOING CRAFTS) AT A YOUNG AGE IS ASSOCIATED WITH POSITIVE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORS."

U.S. Department of Justice

YOUTH ARTS COORDINATOR

The Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement needs one point person who is responsible and accountable for coordinating arts therapy programming so that all young people can access it. They must use youth-informed research and strengthen community partnerships to address gaps in existing services.

DC already has multiple systems supporting young people, including ONSE, DCPS, Learn 24, DPR, and community-based organizations. A point person needs to be on top of all of these entities to coordinate referrals and access to creative opportunities.

The Mayor of the District of Columbia, through the budget, or the Council of the District of Columbia, through law, needs to designate the point person at ONSE.

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Community Control of the Police

The people should have the ability to hold law enforcement officers accountable for their actions.



Lack of Accountability

There's a lack of effective accountability measures for law enforcement within the District. **MPD had 38 killings by police between 2013 and 2025 – that's more police shootings per arrest than 81% of other police departments.** 87% of the people they killed were Black (Police Scorecard).

>1000 COMPLAINTS

received by the Office of Police Complaints in FY2025

16

resulted in disciplinary action

Of these, a mere 5 resulted in any amount of suspension without pay, and 7 consisted of only "Education-based Development," which MPD defines as "an alternative to discipline." there is no disciplinary action being taken against officers when complaints are made, how can we claim that we are holding law enforcement officers accountable for their actions?

According to the Office of Police Complaints (OPC) report, in 2025, 71% of officially filed complaints were from Black residents.

Civilian Police Accountability Council

A Civilian Police Accountability Council (CPAC) would give the people of DC the ability to hold officers who engage in misconduct accountable.

CPAC must have a multifaceted role: the ability to advise the OPC on accountability measures and misconduct investigations, power over the appointment of the Chief of Police, and authority over MPD policy, including those pertaining to police conduct, training, and standards of protection and care.

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