



cities united

a project of Tides Center

Cities United is a national nonprofit organization that supports a network of mayors committed to reducing the epidemic of homicides against Black men and boys by 50%.

[Learn more about Cities United](#)

Together we can Flatten the Curve

As an organization that is driven by the public health approach, [Cities United](#) examines the root causes of community violence to create Safe, Healthy and Hopeful communities. We aim to reduce the epidemic of homicides of Black men and boys by addressing those root causes of community violence on the individual, relationship, community and societal levels. At Cities United, we have coined this as our [Two-Pronged Approach](#) which addresses violence simultaneously on the immediate and long-term levels. **Many of the root causes of community violence create unwelcomed opportunities for Black men and boys, their families as well as their communities to be vulnerable to the current and anticipated impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.** This Resource List aims to provide the Cities United Network examples and tools we can use to slow the impact that COVID-19 has on Black men and boys and their communities. While identifying opportunities to highlight how these proven strategies and tools that can help us move closer to our mission.

RESOURCES TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Resources categorized by [Cities United's Solution Areas](#)



Bolster Family Support

Families require support to protect their loved ones and raise healthy and successful young people. They require connection to services, engagement by city leaders, educators, healthcare providers and other institutions who serve young people and tools and resources to be able to advocate for themselves.



Boost Education

Education is the cornerstone of ensuring health, success and well-being as young people grow into adulthood. As schools and universities are ending in-person classes, targeted programs and policies that uplift young Black men and boys are necessary. This includes focusing efforts on the unique barriers they face and talents they possess.



Expand Healing Centered Approaches

COVID-19 adds a layer of trauma onto communities already experiencing high levels of trauma. Addressing mental health is critical to building safe, healthy and hopeful communities. Healing centered and trauma informed approaches recognize that trauma informs each individual's life and behavior and thus holistic solutions that elevate individual and community assets are necessary.



Build Inclusive Economy

Majority of the neighborhoods where young Black men and boys live have experienced decades of disinvestment and displacement, shutting them out of opportunities. COVID-19 adds to this experience by reducing current income and crippling opportunity for small business and long-term economic development. Cities must make investments that respond to the immediate/critical financial constraints as well as create opportunities for economic innovation.



Prioritize the Voices & Experiences of Individuals & Families

People are the experts of their own experiences and stories. Individuals and families who are most vulnerable to the short and long-term impacts of COVID-19 must have their voices and stories prioritized and elevated. Their stories must be used to make decisions and develop solutions that impact their daily lives.

Interrupt the Cycle of Violence

We must interrupt the cycle of community violence at the neighborhood level, partnering with youth, family and community leaders who are directly impacted. Social distancing has caused disruptions to current methods of violence interruption and street outreach. There is an increased need for innovative interventions that utilize all forms of technology. Interventions must also consider the potential harm to individuals and/or organizations on the front lines reducing violence.



Engage Youth, Family & Community

A lack of trust between communities, law enforcement and city leaders due to the prevalence of shootings and homicides, as well as lack of political participation and engagement overall, may mean that community members choose not to engage in public forums where their participation is requested. During the current pandemic, this lack of trust may be escalated out of fear and/or anxiety. COVID-19 reduces the ability for face to face engagement and thus increases the need for innovative virtual engagement.

Re-Shape Criminal & Juvenile Justice Systems

COVID-19 has forced momentary reform that is resulting in little to no jail time for low level, non-violent offenses; reduced negative contact with law enforcement; and a reduction in overcrowding of jails and prisons. These and other reforms must be sought out in order to reduce the disproportionate number of Black men and boys who are negatively impacted by the criminal and juvenile justice systems.



Employ a Comprehensive Public Health Approach

A public health approach recognizes that health and well-being is rooted in multiple facets of a person's life, which means that efforts to reduce community violence must incorporate the many influences and institutions that contribute to or detract from a person's well-being. COVID-19 is a public health pandemic that has illustrated how we can collectively respond and address the short term and long term issues. We must learn from the COVID-19 public health response and adapt the strategies for reducing community violence.



We want to Hear from You!

What are you experiencing?

How is COVID-19 impacting our most vulnerable

populations? What innovative solutions are you witnessing or leading?

How is your city responding to violence during

the COVID-19 pandemic? Share your stories, lessons and innovative solutions.

Share COVID-19 Stories & Resources

