

OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR SOLUTIONS:

An Organizer's Toolkit for Developing Campaigns to Abolish Policing

By Critical Resistance



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1. Introduction:

Fighting for a World Free from Policing

Months into the COVID pandemic of 2020, uprisings set off around the world uplifting a range of calls to remedy state violence and racial capitalism. As was the case for previous rebellions, these were sparked by a police killing - this time of George Floyd - and the righteous rage over the state's inadequate response to the unending murders of Black and Brown people. At this juncture in 2020, **our communities are generating strong demands for structural change**, including strategies to defund police and cancel contracts or entire police programs and initiatives. Years ago holding a sign that read "Abolish Police" at a protest garnered blank stares or even hostility. **Now abolition is becoming a household term.**

This toolkit emerges from discussions within Critical Resistance's National Anti-Policing Workgroup in the summer of 2020 as we examine how communities across the globe are resisting policing in this moment: confronting city governments with calls to divest from policing and invest in radical, life-affirming infrastructure; taking to the streets through insurgency; mobilizing public health workers to pledge no compliance with police; occupying police stations and creating autonomous zones; and the building of countless collective resources of radical care, mutual aid, political education and agency.

Due to tireless movement work over the decades, it is finally becoming common sense that **policing, imprisonment and punishment do not keep us safe or secure.** Further, activist communities are recognizing that police executions are not isolated events but the tip of the iceberg of the violence caused and used by policing. Death by policing is not about "one bad cop," but rather a result of the system of policing itself. Our organizing throughout the years has popularized the understanding that **policing, imprisonment and racial capitalism work exactly as they are designed to**—*the system is not broken*. Our communities, not the prison industrial complex (PIC), have the solutions we need to resolve harm and end state and interpersonal violence. These points are many of **Critical Resistance's (CR) political interventions** made over the past two decades as we've been building an international movement to abolish the PIC since the late 1990's.

Since the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, organizers are also learning in this struggle that **reformist reforms** like body cameras, more training, local residency requirements for cops and recruitment of people of color **do not work** to stop policing from killing our people. Communities across the world are fighting for change with embodied knowledge that **radical, life-affirming infrastructure and support** along with a flowing stream of resources are what **creates safe, secure, healthy, sustainable and equitable communities**— conditions that allow us to not only survive but thrive. Policing drains our communities' capacity for self-determination. **The only solution to the epidemic of policing and its inherent violence is abolition.**

In this historic moment, as we are beginning to see more and more victories sprouting, we created and compiled this sampling of organizing and political education tools and resources in hopes of advancing more victories. **This toolkit is not a step-by-step manual** for how to respond to this moment and does not hold all the answers. It is not an ending-point, but a contribution to a collective conversation that is happening globally—**how do we abolish policing?**

In this toolkit, you will find **tools for talking about policing from a PIC abolitionist perspective**—including **definitions of policing** and **abolition**, along with **key terms** often referred to or needed in this moment, and **sample talking points** on defunding police. You will also find tools aimed at helping more communities **strengthen our organizing to meet this moment** and carry our movement beyond, specifically in the demands we work to win or challenge and the **campaign planning and development** we need to do in order to move more deliberately and collectively toward liberation. We have also included recommended **political education materials and resources** for further study, as well as **examples of past statements on policing**, a tactic our chapters have used throughout the years in building resistance to policing.

All of the pieces of this toolkit are organizing tools and key points of analysis that Critical Resistance has generated since our beginning in 1998, as well as tools created and lessons learned in our organizing through our local chapters and coalition campaigns throughout the years. Some tools, such as the Defunding Talking Points, list of Bold Demands and Campaign Assessment Tool are newly generated by CR's National Anti-Policing Workgroup in 2020, while other tools like our definitions, Abolish Policing workshop and timeline, Reformist Reforms vs Abolitionist Reforms of Policing Chart and anti-policing statements are all materials Critical Resistance created in different campaign and project efforts, namely out of Oakland chapter's anti-policing workgroup since 2009.

The ideas in this toolkit originate from the collective analysis and work of our organization and do not belong to us as individuals. The tools we have compiled and generated for you would not have been possible without the work and vital contributions of past Critical Resistance members and co-founders, as well as the brilliance and discipline of our movement elders and mentors, especially **Rachel Herzing** and **Rose Braz**.

We hope you find this toolkit useful in your work advancing our shared struggle to abolish the PIC. We hope to continue generating political education and organizing resources for organizers across our movement. **If you would like to help us improve this tool, please complete the survey at the end of the toolkit.**

Onward, toward liberation

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Mohamed Shehk, Shana Agid, Kamau Walton and Molly Porzig

2. Talking About Policing & Abolition

This section contains tools for *sharpening the ways we understand and talk about policing and abolition*. In this section you will find definitions of policing and abolition that Critical Resistance has developed throughout the years of our work since the organization's start in 1998. You will also find notes and reminders for prison industrial complex (PIC) abolitionists in a list of key words often referred to in our current moment of 2020. Lastly, we've included talking points we made for Critical Resistance members to use in talking about defunding policing in this section.



Definition of Policing

Policing is a social relationship made up of a set of practices that are empowered by the state to enforce law and social control through the use of force. Reinforcing the oppressive social and economic relationships that have been central to the US throughout its history, the roots of policing in the United States are closely linked to the capture of people escaping slavery, the enforcement of Black Codes, and administration of society's compliance with racial capitalism. Similarly, police forces have been used to keep new immigrants "in line" and to prevent the poor and working classes from making demands. As social conditions change, how policing is used to target poor people, people of color, immigrants, and others who do not conform on the street or in their homes also shifts. The choices policing requires about which people to target, what to target them for, and when to arrest and book them play a major role in who ultimately gets imprisoned.

***Note:** Policing is one part of the prison industrial complex (PIC). For Critical Resistance, abolition means abolishing the entire PIC, not just policing. Abolitionists must understand how different parts of the PIC function together and reflect this understanding in our organizing. For CR's definition of the PIC, visit our website: criticalresistance.org

Definition of Abolition

Prison industrial complex (PIC) abolition is a **political vision with the goal of eliminating imprisonment, policing, and surveillance and creating lasting alternatives** to punishment and imprisonment.

From where we are now, sometimes it is challenging to imagine what abolition is going to look like. **Abolition isn't just about getting rid of buildings full of cages.** It's also about **undoing the society we live in** because the PIC both feeds on and maintains oppression and inequalities through punishment, violence, and controls millions of people. Because the PIC is not an isolated system, **abolition is a broad strategy.** An abolitionist vision means that **we must build models today** that can represent **how we want to live in the future.** It means developing **practical strategies** for taking small steps that move us toward making our dreams real and that lead us all to believe that things really could be different. It means living this vision in our daily lives.

Abolition is both a practical organizing tool and a long-term goal.

Key Words

As PIC abolitionists, part of our work centers around **denaturalizing** the language and logic of the prison industrial complex (PIC) and **de-coupling** the essential meaning of many of the words we need to use from the PIC and the logic of punishment. Words are not neutral, and it's important that we break down and reshape their meanings in our own materials and conversations. We can use language to shift debates, make people see things differently, and challenge our own assumptions and fears.

This list of key words includes some of our notes, key points and reminders for PIC abolitionist understanding, analysis and communication. These definitions are not finite, rather they are working definitions we are building on, intervening with and fine tuning as we move forward in our work.

We've included notes on the following key words: *police violence & policing vs police brutality & law enforcement; white supremacist vigilantism; criminalization; crime vs harm; "gangs"; reform vs reformist; strategic; campaign; defund and divest; shrink & starve or "chip away"; accountability; collective self-determination.*



Police Violence and Policing vs Police Brutality & Law Enforcement

When possible, we recommend using the terms *policing*, *police violence* or *the violence of policing* as opposed to *police brutality* or *law enforcement*. CR chooses *policing* instead of *police* to refer to the institution vs the individuals as well as the practices involved in maintaining the power of policing. Policing is a system and a social relation, not just a group of people.

While policing often has brutalizing impacts on our communities, we do not use the term *police brutality* because **any and every act of policing is violent**, from stops and interrogations to patrols, arrests, surveillance and searches. Even acts of playing nice as “good cop” or cops playing with children and attending community events are strategies to overlook and legitimize the brutal harm policing causes.

Instances of severe harm like murder, sexual abuse and beatings are not exceptions to the norm of policing, but the “tip of the iceberg.” Severe instances are brutal, and they are not uncommon, irregular or exceptional.

Similarly, referring to police as “**law enforcement**” implies police primarily ensure that people are following the rules of society, also implying that a person who breaks the rules or law deserves to be policed. We need to uphold the understanding that the law and “crime” are socially constructed rather than a universal truth of right vs wrong.

The word “**officer**” also *legitimizes policing* by giving deference to cops and the role of cops as important, significant, in a role of civil service or of a status worthy of authority. Where possible, CR prefers to call police (or correctional officers in prisons) what they are: *cops, guards, agents* without implying earned respect.

White-supremacist vigilantism

Extra-legal actions taken by white people to **militantly protect white privilege** and maintain the power and control of white-supremacist interests of capital and **premature death of Black, Indigenous and Brown people**.

Examples: The murder of Ahmaud Arbery; the burning of the Highlander Center in 2019 and businesses of color in the George Floyd rebellions in 2020; racist attacks on and harassment of Asian people during the COVID pandemic.

White-supremacist vigilantism, though conducted by white people not always in police uniform or on department’s payroll, **is an act of policing**, because it serves the same function: to use force and violence to reinforce the oppressive social and economic relationships that have been central to the US throughout its history.

Criminalization

The *process* through which actions become illegal and people become labeled “criminal.” Entire groups of people and communities are criminalized when targeted by policing.

The process of criminalization is an important piece of the PIC. It is one of the tools that make it possible for police and courts to target specific actions as well as specific groups of people, by setting up the belief that everyone who breaks the law is a direct threat to us and to our families.



Criminalization adds to the myth that social, political and economic problems are really law enforcement problems—that safety of all kinds, including economic security, can be guaranteed by watching, controlling and caging the groups of people who suffer most because of poverty or racism.

Crime vs Harm

“**Crime**” is **constructed**; what is considered a crime changes across time and space, sometimes very quickly. Often those changes happen because of political forces that are manipulating public fears instead of responding to the issue at hand.

Ex: things like houselessness and drug use are deemed “criminal” in the US, yet are considered and treated as public health issues in other countries.

- Actions become crimes only *after* they have been legally and culturally defined as such.
- Many “crimes” are acts of survival that poor and oppressed communities rely on.

It is important for abolitionists to **be wary of using the word crime unintentionally.**

Critical Resistance prefers to not use the word crime, or to always complicate it and instead focus on criminalization and harm.

Harm is both something a person does to **hurt another person or a group** (like an organization), **AND the effect of oppression** or violence carried out by the state. Harm by an individual is called **interpersonal harm** and harm by the state is often referred to as **state violence.**

- **Interpersonal harm and state violence are linked.** When one person hurts someone else, that harm can often be linked to the harm the state and economic institutions do in communities of color, poor communities and other oppressed communities.
- Both interpersonal harm and state violence range in severity, from not following through on a responsibility, to yelling at someone, to killing another person, to punishment.

Serious harms like murder or rape come from a series of unchecked smaller harms. That is why it is important for us to strive to be accountable on all levels. We need to address harm in our communities without relying on the tools and logic of the prison industrial complex at every level.

“Gangs”

The term “gang” **literally means a group**, however this word has been used to criminalize groups of people who pose a threat to the status quo of racial capitalism. Communities rely on groups or “gangs” **in order to survive**; this has been clear throughout human history:

In the **early 1900’s** during the Prohibition, Great Depression and World War Eras, **racialized immigrants were criminalized** when forming their own family and neighborhood-based or “street” organizations in order to survive in US capitalism and imperialism;

Since the 1950’s, as movements against segregation and Jim Crow got stronger and more popular, **groups of Black and Brown people** banding together to survive US capitalism and white-supremacy were labelled “gangs”;

Since the 1970’s the term gang has been used to **politically repress revolutionary groups** including the Black Panther Party and the Young Lord’s Party, as well as **prisoners organizing against racism** and guard enforced “gladiator fights” inside prisons.

Watch the documentary “Bastards of the Party” to learn more about the history of gangs.

Similar to the term “**terrorist**,” the “**gang**” label has been **used as a tool of political repression** to delegitimize resistance. The criminalization of gangs has historically been and is currently used as **a strategy to weaken our communities’ power**.

Harm from street organizations known as “gangs” at times does happen and can worsen trauma and division in our communities. It is important to acknowledge that *anyone* can be harmful, especially in oppressive conditions, and violence is not synonymous with “gangs.” It is important to differentiate between needs to address harm in community, to the criminalization of community, and the **underlying causes to violence**.



Reform & Reformist

While “**reform**” simply means a **change**, **reformist** refers to a kind of **liberal political leaning** that maintains the current oppressive system by insisting the system is broken and just needs to be fixed. Claiming the PIC (or any of its tools) is broken supports it continuing to exist.

Reformist reforms, or **reformist change**, are about **improving institutions so that they can work better**. But when an institution is rooted in oppression historically and is designed in order to maintain powerlessness and inequity, making that system work better will increase its ability to inflict harm and violence. If the job of a system is racialized social control, then fixing it to do its job better will improve how it carries out racialized social control. **The system needs to be completely uprooted and dismantled** in order to end its oppressive power over our lives.

For specific explanations of what reformist reforms of policing in particular are and what abolitionist reforms can look like, **view our chart on page 19** of this toolkit.

Strategic

Inspired by the work of the organization **Vision Change Win**, “**strategy**” for us means: **A clear plan containing a series of goals in a defined & intentional order to move towards our vision.**

Being strategic is about having **fine-tuned approaches and concrete steps to achieve our vision of PIC abolition.**

In being strategic, we need to think both in the **short and long term**, and we need to be able to anticipate the different outcomes of our decisions and actions in various ways, while still moving urgently and earnestly.

For examples on how to develop strategic campaigns to abolish policing, **see our Campaign Assessment tool on page 24.**



Campaign

A **campaign** is an **organized, ongoing set of actions that seeks a specific goal**. Campaigns are a **key way to achieve material changes and shifts in power**, while building relationships across different communities and sectors toward strengthening our movement.

The key components of a campaign are clear and specific short- and long-term goals, a timeline, creative incremental demands, targets who can meet those demands and an organizing plan of actions that will build a constituency or internal capacity and win the demand.

- Some of the reasons you may want to take up a campaign now include: to set goals and make sure we are moving forward, rather than just doing work for the sake of doing work and not make progress; **to make a real change** – even a small one -- **in people’s lives today**; to spread the idea of PIC abolition and create practical ways to move incrementally toward our goals; to abolish the system that oppresses us today, and build resources that address the real cause of the problems we face.
- Another important reason to consider a campaign is as a way **to build membership and allies**. Ways in which you can link a campaign to building membership and allies include: providing people many meaningful ways to get involved, building people’s skills and leadership, giving people something concrete and shorter term to seek, and to give people a sense of their own power. We have found that people are much more likely to get involved when these things are in place.

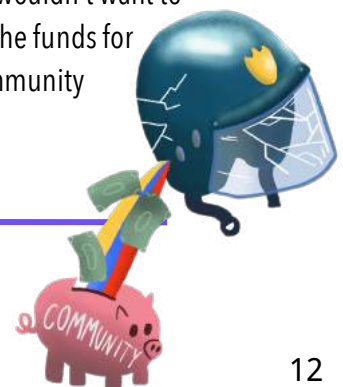


Defund & Divest

To shift the common sense that safety necessitates policing & punishment.

Increase life-affirming resources and practices that uplift our communities.
Remove money from police budgets and re-invest that money in support and services that actually keep our communities safe like access to affordable & safe housing, access to healthy food, quality and free education, living wage jobs, transportation.

The **ultimate goal of defunding is to end policing altogether**. It doesn't mean that we take money from one part of a police force, only to give it to another. For instance, we wouldn't want to end a gang task force only to have the funds for that task force go to creating a "community policing" arm of a department.



Shrink & Starve / “Chip Away”

Refers to Critical Resistance’s approach to abolition as an organizing strategy, specifically our **anti-expansion strategies** based in California fighting prison expansion.

In the **early 2000s**, Critical Resistance took on California’s world-leading prison expansion scheme by organizing to stop the prison construction boom in the state, especially in the Central Valley, as led by **California Prison Moratorium Coalition (CPMP)** and **Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB)**. Our organizing strategy focused on **stopping the growth of the PIC by shrinking and starving prison construction funding**, and **organizing for those funds to be reallocated to community-based responses to harm, need and conflict** that do not rely on surveillance, policing and punishment. Through our **“shrink and starve” strategy**, we were able to halt 20+ years of the world’s most aggressive prison construction project.

Critical Resistance has applied this strategy to other campaigns, including campaigns to cancel new jail construction contracts, close existing jails, end gang injunctions and **erode the power and legitimacy of policing.**

When we say **“shrink and starve”** or **“chip away”** at policing, we’re referring to the **strategic ways** we target the institutions of policing by identifying key issues to organize around and **opposing any reforms that extend the life, scope, or scale of policing.**



Accountability

For Critical Resistance, “**accountability**” isn’t just about what happens to a person after they have done harm to someone else. For CR, accountability means **making sure responsibilities between people or groups are met.**

The idea that if someone does something wrong, they should be “**held accountable**” is often a driving force behind popular support for the PIC.

Abolitionists need to **untangle the real need for accountability from punitive approaches.**

Accountability has many parts:

- Accountability of people to each other, or individuals acting from a sense of responsibility to other individuals
- There is also the accountability of groups of people to other groups and to individuals, or the group or society having a responsibility to those groups or individuals

In a broader model of accountability, society as a whole should be responsible to **see that the basic needs of individuals and groups are met**, and should not stand in the way of those needs being met.

With this model of accountability, responsibility for harm rests not only on a person who causes the harm, but also on the groups of people around them that respond to it, and, the **steps taken to address the harm that meet the needs of everyone involved** (not just the state). This model of accountability also seeks to provide support to both the person harmed and the person who caused harm.

Collective Self-Determination

Self-determination is the idea that **communities should be able to determine their own dealings without being controlled or restrained by outside or government forces.**

In capitalism, we have choices, but we do not get to select or determine the conditions of our choosing. Collective self-determination is about **radically transforming the conditions of power** and in which we live so that our communities can collectively make decisions fully on our own terms. Collective self-determination is about **building the conditions for our choices to be liberated and not controlled by capitalism.** While Critical Resistance strives to tear apart the cogs of the PIC, we simultaneously seek to **build the world we want to live in.**

We know our **communities need affordable housing, healthy food, quality education, jobs and programs for youth.** These are the things that **make us truly safe**, and these are the conditions our communities need in order to make fully collective, accountable and sustainable decisions. Being able to define what those things look like and to implement them on our terms builds community power towards full self-determination.

Collective self-determination is our ultimate goal.



Talking about Defunding & Abolishing Policing

What do we mean when we say defund?

Defunding police, at its core, must be a strategy toward abolishing policing.

- Our goal is to delegitimize policing institutions and policing practices, not simply move money from one to another. We work to defund policing as a way to abolish it.
- As abolitionists, when we say defund, we mean boldly taking chunks out of the policing apparatus, stopping policing's encroachment into schools, hospitals, transit systems, and other parts of civic and social life. We mean taking away weaponry, tanks, and other tools and training that further scale up police capacity.
- Defunding policing is also about reprioritizing and rerouting funding into life giving community structures.
- Defunding policing must happen alongside decriminalizing communities that are targeted by policing and imprisonment, and investing in solutions that actually prevent, interrupt, and transform harm. On the contrary, policing's function is to bring harm into the communities it targets with the goal of social control.
- Defunding policing is not just a numbers game of shifting money from the police budget to "community-police partnerships" or to programs that perpetuate policing like the foster system or coercive mental health or drug treatment programs.



Why not reform?

Violence and racism are inherent to policing itself. Because it is not a broken system, policing can't be reformed to be made less violent.

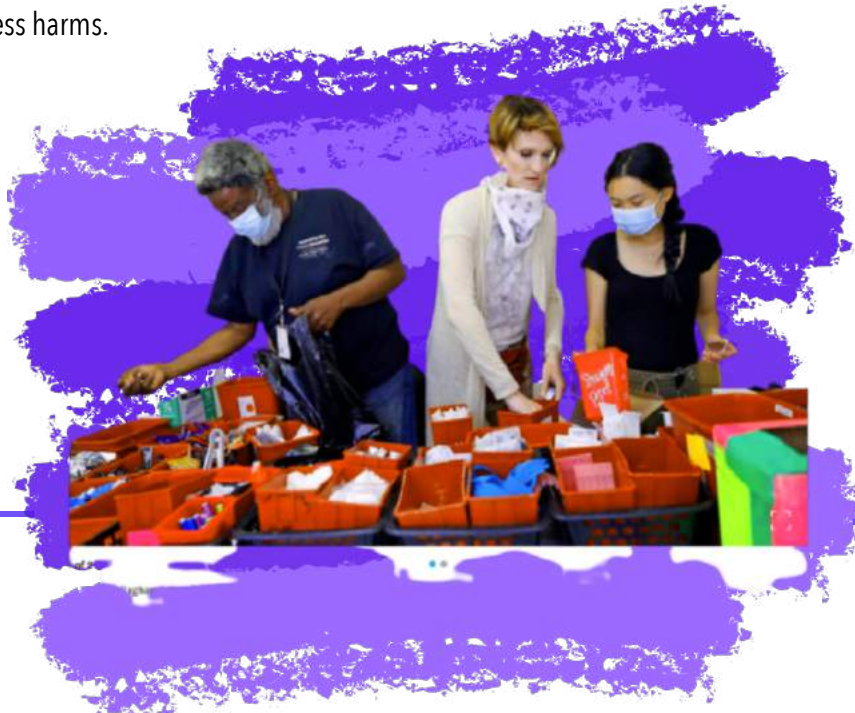
- Instances of police killing people are not examples of “bad apples” or “bad policing.” That’s actually what policing looks like. So it’s not a broken system, but a system working exactly as it was built to work – as a way to control, harm, repress, and kill people.
- Minor tweaks to the way police look or operate are not going to address the violence of policing. Reforms that entrust the police to be less violent and less racist are misguided at best and dangerous at worst because they result in an expansion of the system.
- Reforms have not stopped police from harming or killing people, especially Black people. For instance, the NYPD already had a policy against chokeholds when a cop choked Eric Garner to death. Many police departments – including the Minneapolis Police – actually ended up adopting reforms to improve policing after the last surge of protests against police violence in 2014. Those did not stop MPD from killing George Floyd, nor have they addressed the violence of policing.
- Reforms that continue to invest time and resources in policing and police departments only serve to legitimize and entrench policing as a solution to social, economic and political problems. These reforms have been enacted time and again without addressing the function of policing.
- What we need now are bold, transformational demands that will address how we got here, and offer a way out. Decades of pouring billions of dollars and resources into policing, of passing laws that criminalize whole communities, of divesting from the things that allow communities to thrive – all of this must be undone. We must defund and dismantle policing.



How will we keep our communities safe?

Our people are safe when their needs are met. We need guaranteed housing, quality healthcare including mental health services, jobs that pay a living wage, food, education, and childcare.

- Our communities have already worked hard to build systems to support and care for each other without the cops. By taking funds from cops and directing them to community identified priorities we are making moves towards making policing obsolete.
- On the one hand, having police does not mean less violence in our communities. The truth of the matter is that police do not stop immediate threats of harm or violence. On the other hand, for Black, indigenous, brown, trans, and poor people, policing is one of the primary sources of violence.
- Our ability to effectively address harm rests on our ability to transform the conditions in which harm can occur. We understand that the root causes of harm are societal inequalities, racism, sexism, transphobia, poverty, and lack of access to resources.
- Policing, criminalizing, and imprisoning people for harms done do nothing to address why harms occur in the first place, will not stop future harms from happening, and ultimately create more harm and violence in targeted communities.
- More and more, communities are using models of community accountability, including restorative and transformative justice, to address harm without policing or imprisonment. We believe that these models, and the relationships that they foster within communities, can be replicated and scaled up to more effectively address harms.



3. Organizing & Strategy Tools

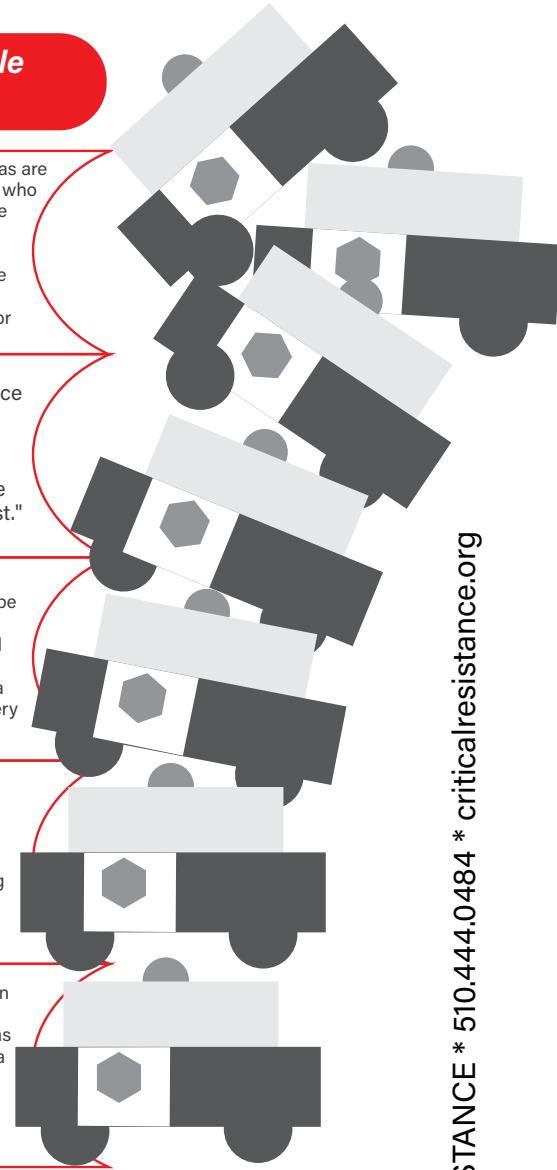
This section contains three tools for *strengthening our organizing against the institution of policing*. In this section you will find an updated version of our **Abolitionist Reforms vs Reformist Reforms of Policing chart**, originally made in the aftermath of the Ferguson Rebellion in 2014 to help organizers see whether the reforms they are fighting for will strengthen and expand policing or strengthen and deepen abolition. This section also includes two new tools—a **list of Bold Demands** to help organizers identify ways to strategically target a part of the institution of policing as well as a **Campaign Assessment Tool** with a **printable worksheet** for your own campaign development, followed by **five example campaign assessments** to help organizers develop abolitionist campaigns more strategically.



Reformist reforms vs. abolitionist steps in policing

These charts break down the difference between reformist reforms which continue or expand the reach of policing, and abolitionist steps that work to chip away and reduce its overall impact. As we struggle to decrease the power of policing there are also positive and pro-active investments we can make in community health and well-being.

DOES THIS...	reduce funding to police?	challenge the notion that police increase safety?	reduce tools / tactics / technology police have at their disposal?	reduce the scale of policing?
BODY CAMERAS	INCREASES. Equipping police officers with body cameras will require more money going toward police budgets.	NO. Body cameras are pitched as making police more accountable, increasing the idea that policing, done "right," makes people safe.	INCREASES. Body cameras provide the police with another tool, increasing surveillance and increasing police budgets to acquire more gadgets.	INCREASES. Body cameras are based on the idea that police who do not use "excessive force" are less threatening. But police can turn off body cameras and, when used, footage often doesn't have the impact that community members want, or is used for surveillance.
COMMUNITY POLICING	NO. Advocates of community policing argue that departments will have to hire more cops to be in neighborhoods and in the community.	NO. This is based on the belief that policing is focused on keeping people safe, and the violence of policing is caused by a "breakdown of trust" with the community.	INCREASES. Cops are trained in additional tactics and approaches.	NO. More community police means that the scale of policing will increase, particularly in Black, Brown, poor neighborhoods, where there is perceived "mistrust."
MORE TRAINING	NO. More training will require more funding and resources going to police to develop and run trainings.	NO. This furthers the belief that better training would ensure that we can rely on police for safety, and that instances of police harm and violence occur because of lack of training.	INCREASES all of these.	NO. This will increase the scope of policing, given the type of training. For instance, some advocate for police to be trained on how to respond to mental health crises, furthering the idea that police are the go to for every kind of problem.
CIVILIAN REVIEW / OVERSIGHT BOARDS	NO. In some cases, there would be an increase in funding, whereas in other cases, there would be no change.	NO. Overseeing the police through a board presumes that cases of excessive force, killing, lying, planting false information, etc. are exceptional occurrences rather than part of the daily violence of policing.	NO. Some argue for Civilian Review Boards "with teeth," the power to make decisions and take away policing tools and tactics. However, a board with that level of power has never existed despite 50+ years of organizing for them.	NO. This further entrenches policing as a legitimate, reformable system, with a "community" mandate. Some boards, tasked with overseeing them, become structurally invested in their existence.
"JAIL KILLER COPS": PROSECUTE POLICE WHO HAVE KILLED AND ABUSED CIVILIANS.	NO. Prosecuting police does not lead to changes in funding or resourcing police.	NO. Individualizing police violence creates a false distinction between "good police" (who keep us safe), and "bad police" (who are unusual cases), rather than challenging the assumption that policing creates safety or examining policing as systemic violence.	NO. Often, media attention in high profile cases leads to more resources and technology, including body cameras and "training."	NO. This reinforces the prison industrial complex by portraying killer/ corrupt cops as 'bad apples' rather than part of a regular system of violence, and reinforces the idea that prosecution and prison serve real justice.



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DOES THIS...	reduce funding to police?	challenge the notion that police increase safety?	reduce tools / tactics / technology police have at their disposal?	reduce the scale of policing?
SUSPEND THE USE OF PAID ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR COPS UNDER INVESTIGATION	YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets as municipalities no longer pay for policing's harm against community members.	YES. It challenges the notion that policing violence, and the administrative costs it incurs, are essential risks of creating "safety."	YES. Access to paid administrative leave lessens the consequences of use of force, and presumes the right of police to use violence at all.	YES. The less financial support for police undergoing investigation for killing and excessive use of force, the less support for policing.
WITHHOLD PENSIONS AND DON'T REHIRE COPS INVOLVED IN EXCESSIVE FORCE	YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets as municipalities no longer pay for policing's harm against community members.	YES. It challenges the notion that killings and excessive force are exceptions, rather than the rule.	YES. It reduces the ability of police forces to move around or re-engage cops known for their use of violence.	YES.
CAP OVERTIME ACCRUAL + OT PAY FOR MILITARY EXERCISES	YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets since we won't have to pay for cops learning how to better make war on our communities.	YES. It challenges the notion that we need police to be trained for "counterterrorism" and other military-style action and surveillance in the guise of increasing "safety."	YES. Weapons trainings and expos are used to scale up policing infrastructure and shape goals for future tools, tactics, technology.	YES. This stops police from increasing their legitimacy, capacity, and skills as "the blue line" in order to expand their reach over our daily lives and community spaces.
WITHDRAW PARTICIPATION IN POLICE MILITARIZATION PROGRAMS	YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets since we won't have to pay for cops learning how to better make war on our communities.	YES. It challenges the notion that we need police to be trained for "counterterrorism" and other military-style action and surveillance in the guise of increasing "safety."	YES. Weapons trainings and expos are used to scale up policing infrastructure and shape goals for future tools, tactics, technology.	YES. This stops police from increasing their legitimacy, capacity, and skills as "the blue line" in order to expand their reach over our daily lives and community spaces.
PRIORITIZE SPENDING ON COMMUNITY HEALTH, EDUCATION, AFFORDABLE HOUSING	YES. If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease its resources.	YES. Prioritizing funding resources also creates space to imagine, learn about, and make resources that actually create well-being.	YES. If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease the expansion of tools and technology.	YES. If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease the size, scope and capacity of systems of policing.
REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE POLICE FORCE	YES.	YES.	YES.	YES.



Bold Demands:

How to Target the Institution of Policing

One feature that makes the Summer 2020 uprisings unique from before is the people's demands are bold and daring. More people are calling for "abolition" and speaking to the whole prison industrial complex (PIC), not only the institution of policing.

But how do we abolish the police? How does that call for "Abolition Now!" turn into material and tangible gains for our communities? In addition to calling for bigger, bolder and more daring demands, we need to strategically identify parts of the system of policing that, if and when eliminated, seriously chip away at or *shrink and starve* the life, scope, and scale of policing.

Here are seven different parts of policing we can target right now in our current moment:

1. DEFUND THE POLICE

In virtually every major city across the country, police departments take up the vast majority of funding in cities' budgets. This comes at the expense of investments in the things communities need to thrive, including guaranteed and quality housing, food, education, and healthcare. *Rather than policing and criminalizing people for their lack of access to resources, we must defund policing and invest in building our communities.* **Attacking the local policing budget generally entails targeting your City Council during its budgeting process**, but can also include targeting officials on the **County, State, or even Federal** levels.

Examples:

- **Minneapolis, MN** - **Reclaim the Block** and **the Black Visions Collective** have created a pledge for decision makers to sign on to that would commit them to voting down any future increase to the Minneapolis Police Department's budget, as well as working to reduce the budget toward dismantling policing.
- **Portland, OR** - Since 2016, **the Care Not Cops Campaign** has been organizing every year to challenge the Portland Police Bureau's budget, successfully challenging proposed increases. Over the years, they have sought to redirect resources into community-determined mental health programs.

2. END MILITARIZED POLICING PROGRAMS

Police militarization efforts and programs seek to draw closer connections between municipal police departments and the military, with the ultimate goal of increasing the power, resources, and tools that policing has at its disposal. While there has never been a time that the police were not militarized, politicians and officials across the U.S. used 9/11 to give local, regional, and federal policing agencies unprecedented power under the guise of "national security." As a result, **military-to-police weapons transfers, training programs, and collaborations between local, state, federal, and international policing** skyrocketed.

Example:

- **Bay Area, CA - The Stop Urban Shield Coalition** organized a successful campaign from 2013 to 2019 to put an end to the world's largest militarized SWAT police training, known as Urban Shield. The program was started and run by the Alameda County Sheriff's Office, and was funded through a Department of Homeland Security grant that sought to equip police with training, weapons, and tools to fight terrorism. Stop Urban Shield built a broad-based, internationalist coalition that ultimately succeeded in defunding Urban Shield.



3. END GANG ENFORCEMENT POLICING UNITS & TACTICS

Anti-gang policing almost exclusively targets Black and Brown youth. This kind of policing happens either through specialized gang units, through city policies like "gang injunctions," or both. Through this kind of policing, whole communities are targeted and criminalized. In working to abolish gang policing, it is important to **research which decision-making body or office has the authority over the program or unit you are fighting**, as it can often be complicated when there are different entities enmeshed in the issue.

Examples:

- **Bay Area, CA - The Stop the Injunctions Coalition** was the first instance in the U.S. of grassroots resistance ending the use of gang injunctions. The End the Injunctions Coalition in Oakland forced San Francisco to follow suit a few years later.
- **Los Angeles, CA - Youth Justice Coalition** led a formation to win a class action lawsuit to stop the enforcement of gang injunctions in LA.
- **Chicago, IL - BYP100** is working on ending Chicago's gang database.
- **Portland, OR - Care Not Cops Campaign** dismantled the Portland Police Bureau's "Gang Enforcement Team" (later renamed to "Gun Violence Reduction Team"). They won a vote from the City Council to end the gang policing unit in 2020.





4. COPS OFF CAMPUS

Schools and educational institutions – from K-12 to community colleges and universities – should not have police forces. These institutions also must not collaborate with city or state police departments. Youth are increasingly criminalized instead of having access to supportive education and programming. **Demand an end to the presence of any police on campus, and institute transformative and restorative justice models to address harm or conflict.** Getting cops off K-12 campuses often entails targeting the **local Board of Education**, as it is typically the entity that has decision making power over policing in schools. However, in some cases, that power may rest with the City Council or higher-level decision-making body. For higher education institutions, the targets may be college or university’s **top administration**; for statewide college and university systems, that body may be the **board of directors**.

Examples:

- **Minneapolis, MN** - In response to the murder of George Floyd, **the Minneapolis Public School Board of Education** voted to end its contract with the Minneapolis Police Department.
- **Oakland, CA** - **The Black Organizing Project** succeeded in 2020 in their long-term organizing effort to remove police from Oakland Unified School District schools.
- **University of Michigan** - **Grad students went on strike** pushing a series of rights and abolitionist demands - including cutting ties with local police and ICE
- **University of CA** - **UC Cops Off Campus / UC FTP** to get police off of UC campuses

5. END “COMMUNITY POLICING” & REDUCE POLICE CONTACT WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

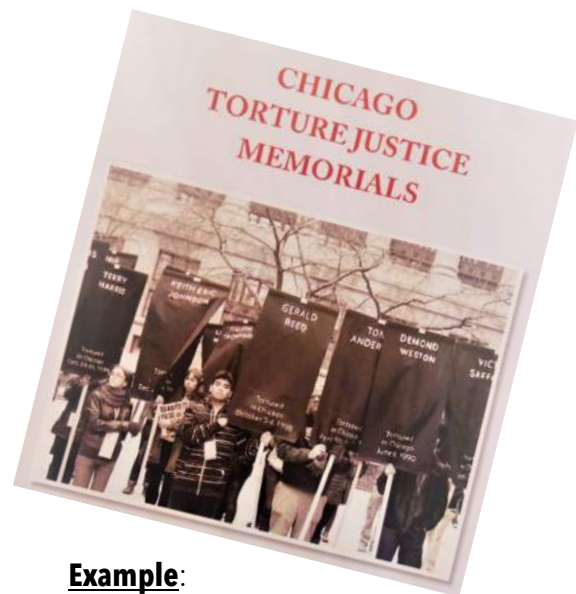
“Community policing” is a model that aims to put more police in the community in an attempt to “build community trust for police.” The outcome is that the police have more contact with the community, which results in more citations, arrests, and imprisonment, and more situations where community members are susceptible to violence and death by police. Organizing against policing models and reducing police contact generally target the local City Council. However, **there may be local, statewide or even federal decriminalization efforts that, if successful, would reduce police contact by removing police as responders to decriminalized activities in the first place.**

Examples:

- **New York, NY** - **The Coalition to End Broken Windows** fought against NYPD’s model of “broken windows policing” which vigilantly targets poor, Black, and Brown community members.
- **End Stop & Frisk efforts** and **Ceasefire Programs**

6. REPARATION FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE OF POLICING

Responding to instances of violence and death at the hands of police is difficult. Yet we must address these instances as part of the everyday, structural function of policing, rather than as isolated incidents. For that reason, **calls to rely on the deeply racist and violent criminal legal system to address the equally racist and violent system of policing will not structurally address the problem.** Rather than “jailing the cops,” let’s **work to disempower them**, along with the prisons, jails, and detention centers that cage millions of our community members. Depending on the policing agency that has committed violence, **seeking reparations for survivors or loved ones** would entail **targeting the decision makers** who have direct authority over the policing agency.

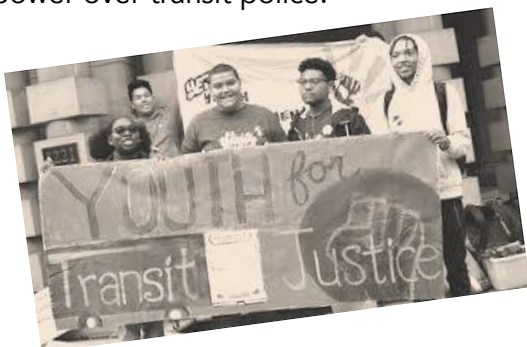


Example:

- **Chicago, IL - The Chicago Torture Justice Memorials** organizing effort

7. COPS OFF TRANSIT

Rather than providing free public transportation, cities across the country waste millions upon millions of dollars on police to target and criminalize people who can’t afford to pay transit fares. Demand that the **funding that goes to police gets diverted to public transportation for all.** In some cases, campaigns around transit policing may entail targeting the **City Council, County, or even State levels;** in other cases, there may be a **transit authority body** that has direct decision-making power over transit police.



Examples:

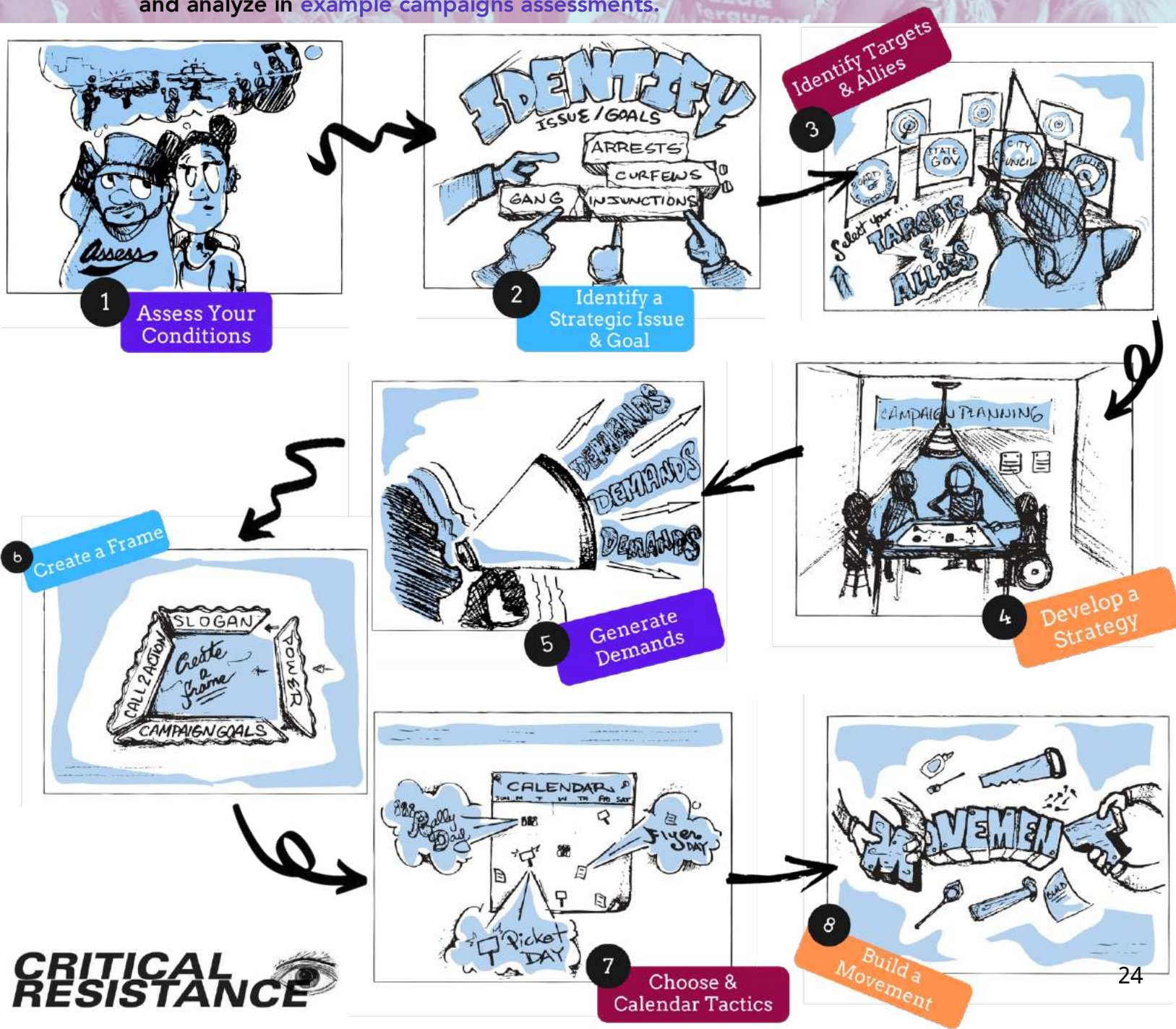
- **Portland, OR - Bus Riders Union** and **Youth Environmental Justice Alliance** had been working on challenging police harassment of youth on Portland’s transit system. Their work successfully compelled City Council to dismantle the transit policing unit of the Portland Police Bureau in June 2020.
- **New York, NY - The FTP Coalition** came together in 2019 to oppose increases to the NYPD’s budget, specifically opposing expanded police presence on the subway system.



Abolishing Policing Tool: 8 Steps to Develop a Campaign

One of the most inspiring aspects of the Summer 2020 uprisings has been shared strategies, tactics and even demands across geographies. However, some of our organizing is missing the first step to developing campaigns and grassroots efforts that are strategic and impactful—*assessing our particular conditions as specific to our different contexts and political landscapes.*

This Campaign Development Tool was created to demonstrate to organizers *8 main steps to developing strong abolitionist campaigns* that make serious gains against the prison industrial complex (PIC). Following these 8 Steps, we include a series of real-life campaigns by CR and other movement partners that we describe and analyze in *example campaigns assessments.*



1. Assess Your Conditions:

- What **aspects of policing** are most harmful in your community?
- How is your community or city experiencing policing and resisting policing? How have **allies or movement-partner organizations** already been organizing against policing in your community and what part of policing have they been targeting?
- What alternatives or **community-based solutions** already exist in your community?
- What **other organizations** are doing similar or shared work?
- Where are **the decision makers** on the political spectrum with regards to policing? What electoral transitions might be coming up that could impact your organizing and **how might decision-makers shift?**

2. Identify a Strategic Issue & a Goal:

What is a **high-impact** issue, aspect, or problem of policing happening in your community currently? **Using PIC abolition as a strategy is to shrink the systems of imprisonment, policing, and surveillance piece by piece.** A good issue has **clear political and organizational goals**; it speaks to the experiences of people, particularly those **most impacted by the PIC**, and it will **ignite people's hearts and minds.**

Questions to ask when assessing if an issue is high-impact and strategic:

- Does the issue lead to a real difference in people's lives, give people a sense of their own power and change the relations of power?
- Is the issue worthwhile, widely and deeply felt, and consistent with our long-term goal and vision of abolition?
- Is addressing this issue now timely? Will enough people find it important enough to take action? Are you able to develop a clear timeframe with a beginning, middle, and end to organize around your issue? Is your group or organization capable of intervening in that timeframe?
- Does the issue clearly lead to a specific demand? Does the issue have a clear target—a person or group of people that can make your demand(s) happen?
- Is the issue easy to understand and explain? You should be able to explain it in 4-5 sentences or less.
- Does the issue give your organization or group opportunities to build leadership, i.e., are there many roles for people to play? Does the issue set up your organization or group to tackle additional and related issues?

NOTE for Identifying an Issue:

Few issues perfectly meet all these criteria every time. The goal is to use these criteria to find the most promising ones for right now. You may want to prioritize the criteria based on the priorities and current evaluation of your organization and conditions. See the *Bold Demands to Dismantle Policing* document in this toolkit for specific ways to identify a strategic issue to target the institution of policing.

3. Identify Primary Targets, Secondary Targets & Allies:



- Who are you targeting? What decision-makers or stakeholders have power over your goal or objective? These are your **primary targets**.
- Who else might have power to impact your primary targets? These are your **secondary targets**.
- Who are you **building coalition** with? Who are your **allies**? Who else might care about this issue?
- What other city decision-makers could you **leverage** in organizing for your goal?

Once you have identified your target, it is important to **know some basics about your targets**. Here's series of questions, you may wish to try to answer:

- What power does the target have to meet our demands? By what authority?
- What is the target's background? Where are they from? What jobs have they held?
- Does the target already have a position on our issue?
- How would siding with us further the target's own self-interest?
- Who does the target represent? Who is the target's base of support? What are the target's constituency's self-interest?
- Who are the target's allies? Opponents?
- What are the avenues through which we can reach our targets?

4. Develop a Strategy:



Once you have an issue to tackle and know who your targets are...

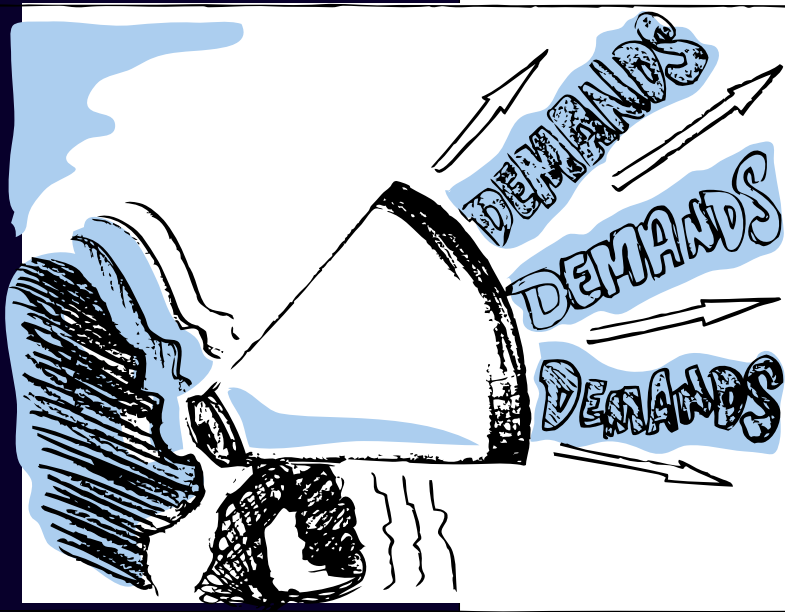
- How will you **achieve** this objective? What's the **plan of action** to get your targets to give you what you want? What will you do to achieve your goal?
- How will you **reduce and delegitimize** the social, economic or political power of **policing**?

When choosing strategies, it is important to keep in mind our **goals** and to make sure that the strategies we have identified will work well to further our goals.

Pre-Evaluate the strength of your strategy:

- What power does this strategy **show**?
- What energy does this strategy **take**?
- What power does this strategy **create**?
- What energy does this strategy **create** or **replenish**?

5. Generate Demands:



'Power concedes nothing without demand'
(Frederick Douglas)

Goals should be able to be rephrased as **demands**. Goals and demands should be **clear** and **specific**, and should **reflect your strategy**. Strong campaigns have multiple demands or goals so the group can **fight for incremental victories**. Incremental victories may **put a crack in the system**, eliminate a key part of the system of policing or energize your community to boldly resist and strategically challenge policing.

Your campaign should have both long-term and short-term goals.

The **Long-term Goals** of the campaign are the **ultimate goals** of the campaign. This could be a one or two or a multiple-year goal

We're not going to win everything nor abolish the PIC tomorrow. **What are we seeking to demand and win today, tomorrow, or next month, so that we can continue fighting next year, next five years, etc?**

Short Term Goals should be set for the next three to six months. Short-term goals help you **measure progress** toward your long-term goals and **give people hope** and a sense of accomplishment. Short-term goals can also be procedural, in that they don't make the change itself but may **enable the change you seek**.

In framing your demands, also include each part of this **framework for abolitionist strategy**—*dismantle, change, build*.

- Given your issue and your overall objective, what specifically are you trying to **dismantle** within the institution of policing, short term and long-term?
- What specifically, in the short and long term, are you trying to **change** in your community's conditions and relationships of power that sustain policing?
- What specifically do you need to **build** in your community to instead sustain collective health, life, equity and community self-determination?



6. Create a Frame:



that excites people and **conveys the layers of your demands and campaign goals.**

- What catchy slogans, calls to action or issues have people in your community or city been excited about recently or leading up to this moment?
- How can you merge what people have been buzzing about lately with making PIC abolition common sense?
- How can you make the abolition of policing irresistible to people and inspire within different communities a sense of their own power and desire for collective liberation?

7. Choose & Calendar Tactics:



Brainstorm and choose **what tactics will further your strategies.**

- What will your organizing group literally do to enact your strategies? What **events, mobilizations and actions** could help you **reach your target allies** and **sway your primary targets** towards **enacting your demands**?

Pre-Evaluate the strength of your tactics:

- What power do these tactics **show**?
- What power do these tactics **create**?
- What energy do these tactics **take**?
- What energy do these tactics **create** or **replenish**?

Create a calendar and schedule out your campaign workplan with your goals, strategies, tactics and core tasks for the first six months.

8. Build a Movement:



One single campaign cannot abolish the entire PIC. In order to fully liberate our communities, **we need to build an international movement.**

*How is your campaign **building up other campaigns** and efforts for abolition and **anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist change**?*

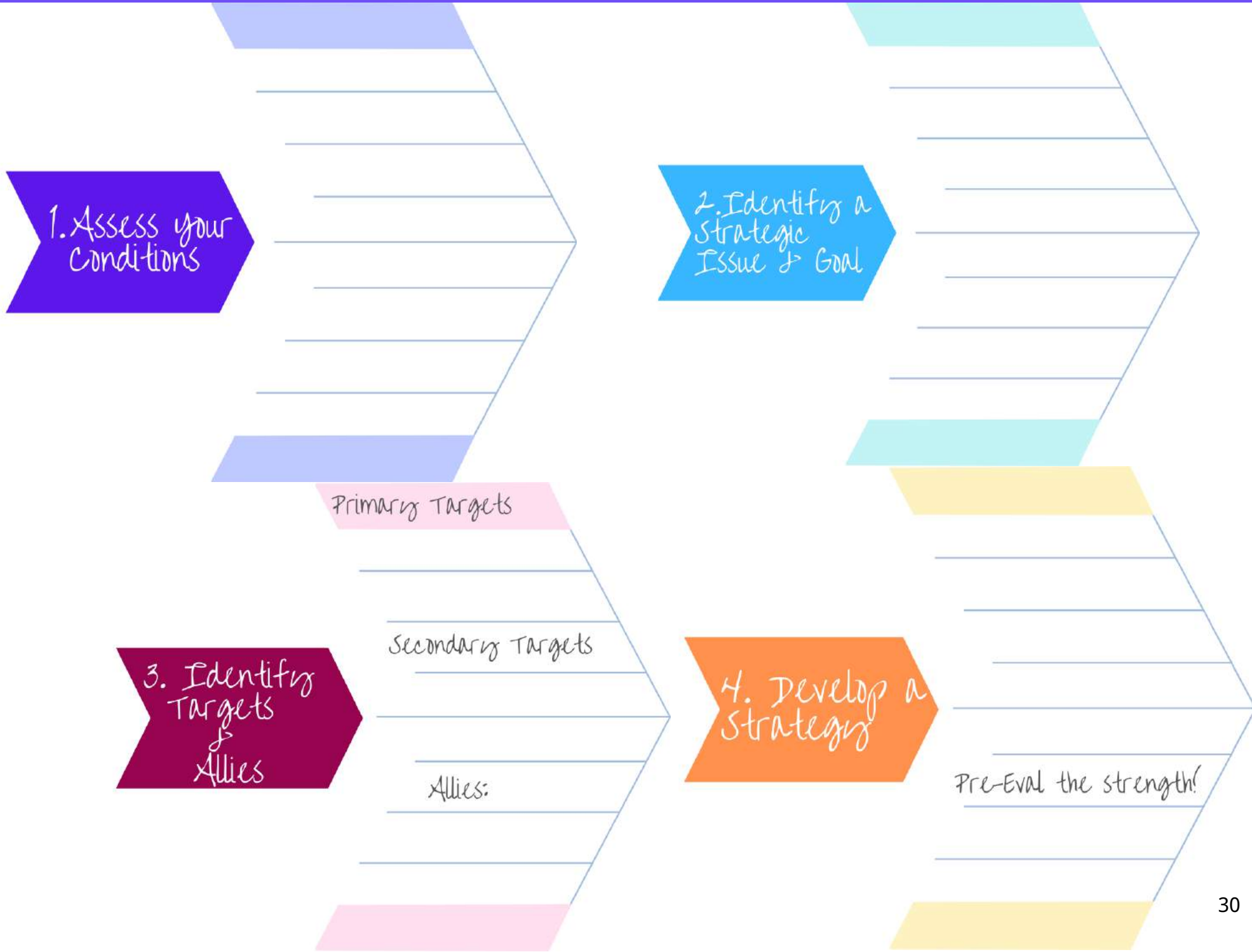
Additionally, how are you addressing the problems of the PIC and the need for abolition from **multiple different sectors**? Who can you connect with and mobilize in each of these different sectors? How are you **spreading abolition** in your campaigns?

Different sectors to consider building with:

- Health
- Education
- Labor
- Environmental
- Social and Service Work
- Faith Communities
- Local Businesses

What other communities or sectors in your local context should you be working with?

Printable Campaign Planning Worksheets:



5. Generate Demands

Long-term:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Short-term:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Balance Dismantle, change & Build!

- _____
- _____
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7. Choose & Calendar Tactics

Pre-Eval the strength!

- _____
- _____

6. Create a Frame

- _____
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check Multiple sectors!

8. Build a Movement

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- _____

Example Campaign Assessments

Example Campaign #1

Ending Gang Enforcement & Criminalization Stop the Injunctions Coalition in Oakland, CA.

Background: Gang Injunctions are a policing strategy equivalent to a civil lawsuit or restraining order filed against an entire neighborhood or geographic area. Creating and naming an area a "gang zone," the police can then create a list of people to target under the injunction for violations of the injunction that include curfews, not being able to associate with friends and family, restructuring one's movement & ability to be in public in their own neighborhood or place of work, etc.

1 Assess Your Conditions

- Resistance to policing embedded in the culture of Oakland from the **legacy of the Black Panthers** to sideshows and Scrapper Bikes.
- The city council is generally multiracial, mostly made up of middle-class representatives. The city council tends to be moderate-to-conservative regarding policing and criminalization. City council members of color had a history of **liberal approaches** to "improving relationships between the Oakland Police Department (OPD) and community" that focused on **recruitment of people of color & cultural competency or "sensitivity" trainings**.
- Before **Oscar Grant** (2009) most organizing focused on **lawsuits** after individual instances of police violence & **Civilian Review Boards** of the OPD. There hadn't yet been an Oakland-based campaign that targeted a specific strategy or part of the system of policing.

- **13 people killed by OPD from 2007-2008:**

- **Gary King Jr.** lived in & killed in the same neighborhood as the first gang injunction (Sept 2007)
- 8 people before Oscar in 2008 including **Andrew Moppin, Lesley Xavier Allen, Casper Banjo, Jose Luis Buenrostro Gonzalez, Mac "Jody" Woodfox, Anita Gay**



- Police had an **incentive for killing** people: OPD cops get 30-days paid-leave vacation with their families when they kill someone.
- In February 2010, City Attorney John Russo announced a plan to introduce **11 gang injunctions to Oakland**. The first was slated for North Oakland in a historically Black community bordering the aggressively gentrified shopping district known as "Temescal."

2 Identify a Strategic Issue & Goal

- When the North Oakland injunction was announced, political organizations, community members, lawyers, and some defendants came together to organize against it, with the understanding that **policing is never a solution to neighborhood issues**.
- We **researched the history of gang injunctions**, connecting with organizers in Los Angeles and San Francisco for lessons and tips for organizing against injunctions.
- Oct 2010: Fruitvale injunction is announced for predominately Latinx/immigrant community.
- **Issue Goal:** stop implementation of all injunctions. Taking on this issue **clearly met all of the guiding questions** of this step to developing a strong campaign: *high-impact, makes a difference in the lives of people most impacted by the PIC, changes relations of power, is timely, etc.*



3

Identify Targets & Allies

- **Primary Target:** City Council
- **Allies & Coalition members:** Justice for Oscar Grant, groups against gang injunction in SF, Oakland educators, and a mixture of advocacy, community and cultural organizations— Oakland Sin Fronteras, Eastside Arts Alliance, Bushrod Rec Center, Phat Beets, the Bikery, Xicana Moratorium Coalition, All of Us or None



4

Develop a Strategy

Goals:

- **Short-term:** To stop the North Oakland and Fruitvale Injunctions by connecting organizations and communities across the city in resistance
- **Long-term:** Building people power and shifting community energy to organize against policing as a system

We formed a coalition of organizations and community groups—**Stop the Injunctions Coalition (STIC)**

- Reached out to and **supported those named & directly targeted by the injunctions**, uplifting their experiences and agency
- Regular **political education & public awareness** (in schools & community spaces)
- Identified **non-police alternatives** to addressing violence and harm & uplifted our communities' own solutions to harm
- **Reclaimed neighborhood space** through political and cultural events (garden, block parties, walk-outs/sit-in)
- Shaped public discourse and **disrupted the City's narrative** on policing, gangs, violence & the injunction strategy
- Understood that **grassroots organizing & outreach had to drive the campaign**

Strategy (3-pronged):
 Legal advocacy + media
 + grassroots organizing (outreach)
 Leverage electoral & representative pressure to get City council to reject City Attorney & Chief's plans →
 drive wedge between City Council and City

5

Generate Demands

"Our Oakland, Our Solutions": Having **unified demands** that were *determined collectively* by the coalition was crucial to ensuring that we could focus our messaging and campaign strategy. Together, demands brought **specificity to what we were working to dismantle, to change and to build.**

1. **Stop the injunctions and all police violence:** End to the use of gang injunctions and removal of people from the gang database
2. **Community Self-determination:** we know what our communities need, we have our own solutions: Community participation in decision-making affecting Oakland residents
3. **End Gentrification:** Invest in Affordable housing and stable employment
4. **Accountability from Oakland Government and Increased Decision-Making Power for All Oakland residents**
5. **Defend immigrant communities:** Enforcement of Oakland's status as a sanctuary city including non-cooperation with ICE



6

Create a Frame

- **Our Oakland, Our Solutions!**
- Injunctions are a policing tool for gentrification & state violence
- **Stop Criminalizing Our Familias!**
- The OPD & criminalization are the problem, not "gangs."



7

Choose & Calendar Tactics

- Created outreach and **political education materials**, including a website, flyers, **Know Your Rights pocket guide**, info packets, talking points, petitions, videos
- Created a **hotline** for people in the injunction zones to call and **report experiences of policing**
- Put together a **People's Report on the Oakland Budget & Policing—Betraying the Model City**
- Drafted and circulated **Voter Guide** detailing where candidates stood on gang injunctions and policing for election season
- **Regular, intentional street outreach** (door knocking, phone banking & at outdoor markets)
- **Press releases and mainstream media work:** training **most-impacted community members** & folks named in injunctions as spokespeople to media
- Created **murals, posters** and other art and **cultural work**
- Created a **community garden** in the Fruitvale zone: **The STIC Garden**
- **Mobilize hundreds** to City Council meeting to show our power and give public comment, created talking points for participants, and supporting folks to stay on message, centralizing folks most impacted
- **Court Support** → Showing up to court hearings of gang injunction defendants
- Organized a **Week of Action**
- Held a **vigil** for those lost & survivors of police violence
- Organized events and actions, including **film screenings, block parties, school walk-outs, and people's town halls**
- Held **bike rides** in injunction zones → radical history of North Oakland bike ride



8

Build a Movement

Full victory was not achieved until **2015**, 5 years after the first injunction was announced. City **ended both injunctions** in the North & Fruitvale, and also committed to **no longer pursue future injunctions**.

The STIC campaign:

- Allowed us to **build long-term, strong, trusted political relationships** with different service-provision and cultural-nationalist orgs and to develop **trusting relationships with most-impacted communities** across the city;
- **Three-pronged strategy** served as a template for **other fights** that CR was involved in from the San Francisco jail fight to Stop Urban Shield and solidarity for the CA Hunger Strikes against Solitary Confinement through Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity;
- Created a **model** for how to target a specific part of **the system of policing** in our organizing;
- **Shifted the city narrative** around policing and resistance.



Example Campaign #2

Reparations

Chicago Torture Justice Memorials in Chicago, IL.

Background: Between 1971 and 1992, Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and detectives under his command tortured over 120 Black men and women during interrogations. Detectives used electric shock, suffocation, beatings, Russian Roulette, rape, and denial of food, water, and bathrooms to obtain confessions, which were then used to secure criminal convictions and severe sentences, up to and including the death penalty. For decades, torture survivors, community members, parents, families, attorneys, and activists worked to expose the racist torture practices of Burge and his "midnight crew." In 2004, Black People Against Police Torture (BPAPT) proposed these cases to be raised in international forums and later proposed the idea of Reparations in the Burge Torture cases.

1

Assess Your Conditions

- Chicago has a history of resistance to police.
- The Democratic establishment in Chicago is particularly resistant to change.
- Many decision makers wouldn't use the word "torture" to describe what happened.
- Chicago had many disbelievers of addressing policing more broadly.
- The Black Lives Matter movement began to unfold in 2015, which brought international attention to policing.



2

Identify a Strategic Issue & Goal



- **2008 - 2009:** BPAPT calls for "**Reparations**" for the Chicago Police torture survivors.
- **June 28, 2010:** Burge is convicted in federal court on all 3 counts of perjury and obstruction of justice. After, **the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials (CTJM)** came together to imagine how the cases of torture could be publicly memorialized, recognizing Burge's conviction did not address or provide redress for all the harm that occurred.
- **Jan 23, 2011:** A group of artists, activists, scholars and an attorney begin to meet to discuss the possibility of soliciting proposals for memorial projects dedicated to the Chicago Police torture cases that contend with this history of state sanctioned violence and its ongoing legacies of harm as a way of initiating a grassroots, community-based conversation about what would constitute adequate reparations for the harm done. The torture survivors saw the gallery projects represent them and their lives, as well as even what reparations could look like.
- CJTM didn't see themselves as driving a campaign initially. Their initial idea was to ask people to imagine one aspect of reparations. They put together a call for a speculative memorial, through an art exhibit of the 70 submissions they got. A reparations ordinance was drafted as a speculative document.



Issue: Win reparations for the survivors and compel city to put up a permanent public memorial in honor of the survivors.

3 Identify Targets & Allies

Primary Targets: Mayor Emanuel, Aldermen
Allies: Amnesty International, Project NIA and We Charge Genocide, BLM

4 Develop a Strategy

Goal: Pass an ordinance to win reparations for Burge Torture Survivors

- CJTM, We Charge Genocide, Project NIA and Amnesty International (AI) built an **inside/outside strategy** with CJTM and AI negotiating with the Mayor's office and We Charge Genocide and Project NIA protesting against the Mayor and for reparations.
- CJTM initially didn't think the reparations ordinance was going to be passed. They put together materials and organized community members to pressure the Aldermen of Chicago for the 51% support they needed.
- During Burge's release from prison, the campaign gained a second wind. The torture survivors felt that they deserved more for what they had endured. CJTM felt compelled to **meet the material conditions of the survivors.**
- Both CJTM and We Charge Genocide made presentations on police violence in Chicago. We Charge Genocide led direct action and had a strong **impact on the UN.**
- UN called for the US to support the Reparations Ordinance, gaining **international attention.**



5 Generate Demands

Reparations to survivors of police torture!

Demands as listed as part of the Reparations Ordinance:

- **A formal apology** from the Mayor and City Council for the torture committed by Burge and his men;
- A **history curriculum** on the Burge torture cases to be **taught to all Chicago Public School students** in the 8th and 10th grade;
- A **permanent public memorial** acknowledging the torture committed by Burge and his men and the struggle for justice;
- Provision of **counseling services** to police torture survivors and family members at a facility on the South Side of Chicago;
- **Free tuition** at Chicago's City Colleges for Burge torture survivors and their family members, including their grandchildren;
- **Job placement** for Burge torture survivors in programs for formerly incarcerated people;
- **Priority access to City of Chicago's re-entry support services**, including: job training and placement, counseling, food, & transportation assistance, senior care, health care, and small business support services;
- The creation of a **Reparations fund** of \$5.5 million to provide up to \$100,000 to the eligible Burge torture survivors who are still with us today.



Strategy: Target the City Council and the Mayor during the Aldermanic (City Council) and Mayoral Election. Use international attention to pressure Aldermen and Mayor to pass ordinance.



6 Create a Frame

Reparations Now!



7 Choose & Calendar Tactics

- **Spring of 2014:** a delegation of Black youth from We Charge Genocide made successful **call for justice in the Burge torture cases** before **the UN Committee Against Torture**
- **Weekly protests and actions**, including **train takeovers, sing-ins, light actions, banner drops, public rallies, art exhibits, petitions and demonstrations** at Chicago's City Hall over a six-month period leading up to a mayoral and city council election
- Week-long **Burge teach-in**
- CJTM also conducted a **"Rally for Reparations"** a week before elections and put together a **voter guide** on which candidates were for and against reparations. Tying the voter guide and the major press they received (as this was during national Black Lives Matter protests of 2015) put pressure on Mayor Emanuel.

8 Build a Movement

- In May 2015, organizers secured passage of reparations legislation and creation of a **\$5 million** compensation fund. **Reparations were won.** 57 men were given funds. This was the **first time reparations were won for police violence in the US.**
- This campaign built a movement within the context of BLM and shifted the conversation in Chicago dramatically. CJTM was able to **move a lot of the survivors politically toward abolition.**
- There was a dramatic sea change in the belief of what happened to the torture survivors. The fact that the Chicago police department tortured people is a given. Police violence is a given.
- The campaign generated **robust communities of care for the torture survivors.** The **Burge Torture case is taught in Chicago Public Schools.** They changed the dominant narrative about the Burge torture cases.
- We Charge Genocide was able to move **from reparations to engage with campaign against Stop and Frisk.** The campaign strengthened everyday people's strategic thinking in the community.

This victory became **one of the most inspiring examples** of how abolitionists can think creatively and transformatively about demands and campaigns involving police violence. It has shown what we can accomplish if we **move beyond the "Jail Bad Cops" demand**, a demand that seeks justice from the system we are fighting.



Example Campaign #3

Demilitarization Stop Urban Shield in Alameda County, CA.

Background: Stop Urban Shield was a broad coalition of grassroots community and social justice organizations that united against Urban Shield, a SWAT team training and weapons expo that brought together local, regional, and international police-military units – including those from the apartheid state of Israel – to collaborate on new forms of surveillance, state repression, and state violence. As part of the ongoing arc of the “War on Terror,” Urban Shield programs sought to militarize and bolster local police departments under the guise of counter-terrorism.



1

Assess Your Conditions

- Extremely violent and **militarized SWAT raids are routinely used** against Black and Brown neighborhoods to carry out search and drug warrants in working class neighborhood in the Bay Area.
- Police militarization has always been an issue that communities resisted in the Bay Area. However, it became much more visible following the 2014 uprisings in Ferguson. Many Bay Area police departments were **becoming increasingly militarized with weapons and technologies from the federal government.**
- Much of the increased militarization was being justified by policing agencies under the guise of “**emergency preparedness**” and “**disaster response.**”
- A number of community-based organizations were doing emergency preparedness and response work in a way that did not rely on militarization, policing, or fear-mongering.
- There was **widespread opposition** among progressive and movement groups against the Alameda County Sheriff on a wide range of issues. This meant that there was a strong potential for building solidarity across issues and movements.



2

Identify a Strategic Issue & Goal

- **Urban Shield** was created in the Bay Area in 2006 with federal funding from a **Department of Homeland Security counter-terrorism grant.** It quickly grew to become the **largest SWAT training in the world,** and brought together local, regional, state, federal, and international policing units.
- Urban Shield became both **a flagship symbol** and very real manifestation of the trend of increased policing and militarization.
- Since Urban Shield started in 2006, Alameda County had invested the lion’s share of its **disaster preparedness resources** in the highly militarized program.
- Urban Shield also **brought in non-policing first responders, including firefighters and EMTs, to train in their militarized exercises.** This expanded the logic of policing even further into different sectors.
- Urban Shield used **blatantly racist propaganda.**



Identify Targets & Allies

Primary Targets: Alameda County Board of Supervisors (had authority over Sheriff's budget)

Secondary Targets:

- City Council members and mayors of cities with departments participating in Urban Shield.
- Special-interest groups who supported Supervisors to win office.
- Emergency preparedness and disaster response experts

Allies: Organized labor, anti-war and anti-imperialist organizations, environmental organizations, health workers and professional emergency first responders, community-based emergency response groups, survivors of militarized police violence, survivors of emergencies and disasters, faith groups and communities.



4

Develop a Strategy

- **The Stop Urban Shield Coalition** was formed by the Arab Resource and Organizing Center, Critical Resistance, the War Resisters League, and the Xicana Moratorium Coalition.
- The Coalition focused on a **three-pronged strategy** that included 1) **Grassroots Organizing and Outreach**, 2) **Strategic Media and Communications**, and 3) **Defunding and Legislative**
- The Coalition had a **clear leadership structure with a steering committee** made up of organizations that represented people directly impacted by militarization, and organizations with deep experience working around policing.

Our main opponent was the Alameda County Sheriff, as he created and ran Urban Shield. We were not seeking to move the Sheriff, but rather wanted to **move the Supervisors to restrict him.**

Strategy:

Defund Urban Shield by pushing the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to reign in the power of the Sheriff financially by politically and socially weakening him

5

Generate Demands

- **"Stop Urban Shield!"** We want a complete end to Urban Shield, because reforming it isn't going to reduce the violence on our communities.
- **Reinvestment in community-led and driven emergency preparedness.**
- **Defund Urban Shield!**



Create a Frame

6

- **Militarization is the emergency!**
- **Our communities keep us safe.** We are the first responders when disasters happen.
- **Invest in community-based and -led disaster preparedness and disaster response** programs.



7

Choose & Calendar Tactics



- **2014:** Action and Petition Boycott against the Convention Center (where the Urban Shield weapons expo took place)
- **2015:** Deep coalition building, research, and drafting informational reports and materials
- **2016:** Direct Action to Shut Down Urban Shield military exercises and weapons expo
- **2017:** Participate in a county-convened task force on Urban Shield.

Built with survivors of SWAT raids to amplify their experience and testimony. Organized a "**Community Preparedness Fair**" to amplify alternatives to militarized responses to disasters.



Throughout:

- Mobilizing communities to **give public comment** at county hearings
- Community **forums** and **workshops** to increase public awareness and political education
- Organize **town halls** to press decision makers on the issue
- **Press conferences** to amplify our message

Develop relationships with Supervisors and meet with them throughout to pressure them

Build a Movement



- This **five-year fight** turned Urban Shield from something that was relatively unknown and obscure into a hot-button issue in the Bay Area that all progressive organizations were against. This was a hugely significant victory for the Bay Area that built on longstanding movement relationships, developed new ones, and demonstrated the power of our collective grassroots organizing. Campaign **brought in "unlikely" allies**, including public health professionals.
- In 2014, Stop Urban Shield and broader community organizations built upon Oakland's rich history of organizing against policing and for self-determination by forcing the City of Oakland to stop hosting Urban Shield. This laid a strong foundation for the coalition's fight.
- The victory had **local and international impacts**.



Example Campaign #4

Defund Policing

MPD150 Campaign in Minneapolis, MN.

Background: Minneapolis had a continually growing racial wealth divide in the city, one of the highest in the country. Minneapolis prides itself on being a liberal city. There is a long history of the elite of Minneapolis directly funding and supporting the development of the policing apparatus in Minneapolis via what was called the Citizens Alliance. MPD150 is a community-based initiative that came together during the BLM moment around 2014 to challenge the narrative that police protect and serve, with the ultimate goal of abolishing the Minneapolis Police Department. MPD150 is organized by a collaboration of various Minneapolis-based organizers, researchers, artists and activists and is not a project of any one particular organization.

1 Assess Your Conditions

- Minneapolis has a long history of the police department quashing labor uprisings.
- There have been historic uprisings against policing in Minneapolis - most notably in 1967, leading to a series of reforms.
- Minneapolis has implemented civilian review boards (the Civilian Review Authority and Police Community Relations Council) as a reform various times throughout the years, each serving to more deeply entrench policing.

2 Identify a Strategic Issue & Goal

- When Jamar Clark was killed in 2015, the subsequent uprising inspired work to refine Reclaim the Block and Black Visions Collective's analysis of policing.
- They decided to fight for defunding the Minneapolis Police Department that through a combination of electoral work and budget advocacy

3 Identify Targets & Allies

- Targets:** Mayor & City council
- Allies:** Reclaim the Block, Black Visions Collective, local organizers, artists and researchers coming together for MPD150, some city council members



4

Develop a Strategy



- **Reclaim the Block (RTB) and Black Visions Collective (BVC)** convened to do community education and shift the balance of power on the city council and continued a **partnership** for the MPD150 campaign.
- The campaign started with a **policy team** & a **communications** team. They then added a **direct action** team and a **community organizing** team.
- The initial work was to target the city council and build allies. After the police shooting of Jamar Clark, the mayor was ousted. Black Visions worked to **shift the makeup of the city council**.
- The coalition did lots of **community education**, supporting community to mobilize and engage effectively in pushing against city council, demystifying the process.
- In 2016, **MPD150 was launched as a narrative shifting project** around policing more broadly, using the upcoming 150th anniversary of the founding of the Minneapolis Police Department as the hook.
- When the new city council was elected and settled into office, ideas that they would immediately move on divesting from policing were quickly dismissed.
- Because of their **relationship with decision-makers**, RTB and BVC were able to move rapidly at crucial decision-making points during the budget cycle.
- After two more high profile police murders, BVC decided to **escalate their tactics** to put more pressure on the city council as the budget cycle moved forward.

Strategy: Stack the city council in the coalition's favor. Pressure Mayor and favorable city council via the budget process to reduce police budget.

5

Generate Demands



- **Defund MPD!** Initial demand was to cut 5% of the budget. The first year, they were able to win a reduction of \$1.1 M and stopped 8 positions from being added to the police department.
- After George Floyd's murder and the subsequent uprisings, the Black Visions/Reclaim the Block Coalition **called for the dismantling of the Minneapolis police department**.

6

Create a Frame

Defund MPD



7

Choose & Calendar Tactics

- The first work was to put together **the MPD150 Report**
- **Week of Action** during the Superbowl
- **Direct Action/Civil Disobedience** at the Mayor's office
- **1 on 1s with city council members**
- **Community education** on who were the representatives for community members and how to put pressure on those council members.
- Organizing community members to **submit statements** to city council
- **Phone banking**



8 Build a Movement

- The **uprisings in Minneapolis** and subsequent organizing to **disband the police department** sparked a **wave of international protests against policing**.
- The organizing strength of the coalition and the work that they've done to defund the city police department demonstrated to a national audience that **communities could win a campaign to defund the police and even disband the police**.
- The **clarity** of Black Visions and Reclaim the Block in their **abolitionist politics** helped to **usher police abolition into the mainstream** narrative and consciousness.
- With all eyes on Minneapolis after the murder of George Floyd, their work and the collective demand to Defund MPD helped amplify the **demand to Defund Police** all over the country.



Example Campaign #5

Targeting School Police

Black Organizing Project's campaign to end school police in Oakland, CA.

Background: The Black Organizing Project (BOP) is a Black grassroots community organization that started in 2009 as a project. The initial project was an opportunity to focus specifically on Black issues in Oakland, CA and create spaces for Black people to address systemic racism and systemic issues that affect our daily lives. BOP's Bettering Our School System (BOSS) campaign came from the community directly in 2011, in response to Raheim Browns murder by OUSD cops.

1 Assess Your Conditions

- Oakland's resistance to policing strengthened after the **Oscar Grant Movement** and **Stop the Injunctions Coalition**;
- **Criminalization** of Black men killed by police continued **to legitimize police killings** (Lovellette Mixon);
- City hall laid off 80 OPD cops in 2010 due to city wide budget cuts but instead of shrinking police force, started collaboration between OPD and OUSD to expand a school-based police force. Cole Middle school in West Oakland then closed and was turned into school police department;
- **Two Black Oakland youth killed** by school police outside Skyline High School: Raheim Brown killed in 2011, Alan Blueford killed in 2012.
- School police department existed in Oakland since 1957 as a response to Black people migrating to the city but became larger and completely independent from the city police department in 1999.
- Oakland youth are not only **policed** by OPD in their communities, but **in school**, leading to different instances of school cops and security guards brutalizing youth. In CA alone, **90%** of Black males without a high school diploma go to prison by the age of 35.
- Conditions after the murder of George Floyd significantly accelerated the campaign. Other school districts around the country and locally (e.g. Peralta Community College) were successfully winning.
- From the 2015-16 school year until now, school staff have made **over 6,000 calls to police on students**. Studies show that arrests, suspensions, and referrals to law enforcement, double the likelihood of the student dropout rate and increase the possibility of disengagement in school.
- **Black and Brown students are criminalized and targeted at higher rates than other students**. During the 2018-2019 school year, 57% of students suspended were Black, though they only comprised 24% of the student body.

2 Identify a Strategic Issue & Goal

- For BOP the fight effectively started with the murders of **Raheim Brown Jr.** (2011) and **Alan Blueford** (2012). BOP continued to **organize Black students, parents and educators** in the aftermath of these cases.
- As BLM movement emerged, and students across the US walked out of school and held actions in defense of Black Lives, **BOP connected Oakland youth to local issues** of criminalization and policing in schools.
- BOP began to tackle criminalization and policing of Black youth in schools, stopping the school-to-prison pipeline and developing Black leadership in Oakland.

Issue Goal: *Eliminate police from Oakland schools*



3

Identify Targets & Allies

Primary Targets: School board **Secondary Target:** Superintendent

Allies:

- CR Oakland, Anti Police-Terror Project, Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, and other abolitionist organizations;
- Teachers and school-based educators with organizing experience;
- District 5 Director Roseann Torres, an attorney, has been working with the Black Organizing Project to put de-funding the police back on the school district's agenda;
- **Organized labor:** teacher's union and union representing the unarmed School Service Officers – who were part of the Oakland School Police Department.



4

Develop a Strategy

Chipping away at policies:

- In 2012, BOP pushed the school board to **establish a formal process** for submitting **complaints about school police officers**. In 2015, they joined other community organizers to pressure district leaders to **remove "willful defiance"** as a reason **for suspensions and expulsions** after it was shown that **Black students** were **disproportionately punished** under the rule.
- In 2019, BOP released its plan outlining **how Oakland schools can eliminate police by 2020**, by emphasizing peace-keeping instead of security, and investing in mental health and special education services.
- BOP strategically used national issues to galvanize local work → **used 2018 federal call for teachers to arm themselves** after schools shootings & the **momentum from the George Floyd protests in 2020** locally by connecting the protests to their work for **police free schools**.



5

Generate Demands

People's Plan for Police Free Schools:

- **Divest from school policing by eliminating OUSD school police by 2020** and barring any future contracts with law enforcement.
- **Reorganize the campus safety** and security program under the Dept of Equity or Behavioral Health and restructure the role of security personnel to become mentors and peace/culture keepers.
- **Reinvest \$2.3 million** OSPD budget into hiring additional **school mental and behavioral health and special education staff**.
- **Establish a community oversight committee to review and redress all student and family complaints** regarding interactions with cops or school security personnel.



Strategy: Organize teachers, parents and broader community to move the Oakland School Board to break ties with Oakland Police Department and invest OUSD resources in supportive services for youth.



6

Create a Frame

- **Police Free Schools!**
- **Black Sanctuary:**

“We are deeply appalled and saddened by the current federal administration’s call to arm teachers and to add more police in schools and communities. We know that **the militarization of our schools and communities** is but a component of the **deep seeded issue of anti-Black racism and white supremacy** in this country. **We are fighting with community to ensure that the schools are sanctuaries for ALL students.** We know Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) considers itself a “sanctuary district”; So much so, that one of the pillars OUSD stands on states, ‘**all students have the right to attend school free of fear, bullying and discrimination,**’— however, Black and Brown students are left out of that equation. In fact, the racial disparities within OUSD are getting worse for Black students.”

- For the ordinance to disband OUSD police: **“The George Floyd Resolution”**



7

Choose & Calendar Tactics

- Supported **student walkouts** and **connected student solidarity with resistance against police killings** in other cities to policing locally and BOPs demands to remove police from OUSD (during Ferguson, BLM, etc);
- **Pledges:** Examples—**Black Sanctuary Pledge** and **Movement Building Pledge**;
- A **rally** dubbed **“Educators for Black Sanctuary”** on June 22, 2020 brought out hundreds of teachers, educators and school district workers who decorated the sidewalks in front of the school district building with **demands for “police-free schools”**;
- **Built strong connections with schools** with larger numbers of Black students;
- **Organized parents**;
- **Mobilizations** to school board meetings;
- Leading up to the vote, BOP conducted an ambitious **10-day campaign of actions**, including both virtual and in-person events. There were two **marches** in solidarity with Black and Brown youth led by BOP youth organizers in Oakland and a **rally** and **car caravan** by teachers and educators in front of the Oakland school district offices.



8

Build a Movement

- Created the **Movement Building Pledge** with 5 key movement building principles: blackorganizingproject.org/movement-building-in-solidarity-pledge/
- BOP’s **win to get the School Board to commit to disband Oakland school police is the first in the US** of community organizing to successfully end school police.
- BOP’s work also demonstrates the strength and necessity of **long-term sustained organizing** with **inter-generational leadership of most impacted communities**, particularly **Black families**.



4. Political Education & Resources

Critical Resistance believes that **ongoing political education is central to our work as abolitionist organizers**. In order **to develop strong campaigns that make material gains** in the dismantling of policing and building up of self-determined communities, **we have to study, and we need to study collectively**. We need to develop shared, sharp analysis of the system of policing and how it functions with the entire prison industrial complex (PIC), to untangle fully how it operates and impacts our lives, and also **fine-tune campaign goals, strategies and tactics to win**.

This section contains a series of additional political education and organizing resources we highly recommend abolitionist organizers become more familiar with. First you can **find a synopsis of our Abolition of Policing workshop**, which you can download in full on our website, along with one of the main activities in the curriculum—a timeline on the history of policing and resistance and scenarios for strategizing against policing. We've also included a **list of recommended toolkits, curricula, articles and books for reading**.

For a more extensive list of resources, check out our website: www.criticalresistance.org/abolish-policing/



Abolition of Policing Workshop: Overview

Duration: 2 hours, 5 parts

After the Justice for Oscar Grant movement in Oakland in 2009, Critical Resistance Oakland chapter members created **a workshop to incite and spread abolitionist resistance to policing**. Since, Critical Resistance has facilitated this workshop to hundreds of community members and organizations from Oakland to Atlanta, and even internationally through the International Conference on Penal Abolition (ICOPA). **Lessons from this workshop have inspired organizers to develop strong grassroots campaigns against policing**. We hope that people everywhere will take this workshop and present it to their communities – to their neighborhoods, classrooms, workplaces. **Help us spread abolition!**

This workshop has **two main goals**: to give participants **a critical understanding and historical overview of policing and resistance in the US**, and **to provide abolitionist ways to resist, organize community and not rely on cops in a range of situations**. To reach these goals, the workshop includes Critical Resistance's framing and definition of policing as well as two in-depth activities:

1. **an interactive timeline** for participants to analyze **the history and dialectical evolution of US-based policing and resistance**,
2. **small-group strategy discussions** for how to organize community in **response to different scenarios of policing**.

In the history of policing timeline, which can also be viewed digitally on our website, participants **identify the roots of US policing** in the enforcement of racial capitalism stemming back to feudal Europe and the colonization of the Americas. In the timeline, participants learn about **policies and practices of policing**, as well as specific events and **instances of rebellion and resistance**.

By examining this history and strategizing together to brainstorm how to respond to policing, participants clearly see the **four takeaways of the workshop**:

1. Policing is a system. It is not about individual cops.
2. The entire system is predicated on violence and control. The system of policing is not broken. It functions exactly as it was meant to.
3. Policing and imprisonment are firmly linked. Communities and individuals that are targeted by police are more likely to go to jail/prison.
4. Since its beginning, people have resisted policing. Our communities have the tools and histories of resistance that we need in order to abolish it.

The workshop is available for download on our website, and you can also contact Critical Resistance to facilitate a workshop for your organization. Download the workshop here: criticalresistance.org/abolition-of-policing-workshop/

Email us at: crnational@criticalresistance.org

Additional Suggested Resources

More Toolkits & Curricula:

- Critical Resistance's **Intro the Prison Industrial Complex** and **Intro to Abolition Workshops** (Contact us!)
- Critical Resistance's **Abolition 101 Toolkit** (available on our website)
- **Defund Police Toolkit** by **Interrupting Criminalization**
 - www.interruptingcriminalization.com/
- **Planting the Seeds of a Police-Free Future** by **MPD100:**
 - www.mpd150.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MPD150-EDUCATOR-TOOLKIT.pdf

Recommended Articles:

- **Yes, We Really Mean Abolish the Police** by **Mariame Kaba**, June 2020
 - Link to Article: www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html
- **Abolish the Police, Now!**: An interview with **Mohamed Shehk**, 2017
 - Link to Article: www.okayafrica.com/how-to-abolish-police-prisons/
- **Standing Up for Our Communities: Why We Need a Police-Free Future** by **Rachel Herzing**, 2017
 - Where to find article: Truthout.org
- **Big Dreams and Bold Steps Toward a Police-Free Future** by **Rachel Herzing**, 2015
 - Where to find article: Truthout.org
- **From BART to SWAT: Reflections on Anti-Policing Organizing in Oakland** by **Isaac Ontiveros** and **Rachel Herzing**, 2009
 - Link to Article: www.leftturn.org/BART-to-SWAT

Recommended Reports, Books & Excerpts:

- **"Our Oakland, Our Solutions: The Stop the Injunctions Coalition"** book chapter on the fight against gang injunctions in Oakland, in *Life During Wartime* (AK Press, 2013)
 - Link to chapter here: www.tinyurl.com/STICchapter
- **"Uprisings and Repression in L.A."** by Mike Davis from *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising*, Robert Gooding-Williams (ed.)
 - Link to Article: <https://politicaleducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Uprising-and-Repression-in-L.A..pdf>
- **Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Live Matter**, edited by Christina Heatherton and Jordan Camp, 2016.
- **Abolition Now!: 10 Years of Strategy & Struggle to Abolish the Prison Industrial Complex** by Critical Resistance, 2008 (Published by AK Press)
- **Arab Resource & Organizing Center: Developing Alternatives to Policing in the Arab and Muslim Communities** by Rachel Herzing and Build the Block, 2016
 - Download from CR's Abolish Policing Workshop Resource Section: criticalresistance.org/abolition-of-policing-workshop, along with **The Oakland Power Projects: Policing is Failing Oakland Report**.



5. Anti-Policing Statements

This final section of the toolkit includes **three example anti-policing statements written by Critical Resistance (CR)**. Anti-policing statements have been one of many tactics our chapters have **used to respond to instances of killings by police, rebellion and increased repression**.

Here you can find CR's **first statement on policing** from 2009, which **informed CR's definition of policing and our Abolition of Policing Workshop**. Our policing statement came from our **Oakland 100 campaign to drop the chargers of over 120 protestors** who were arrested in the streets during Oakland's Oscar Grant uprisings in 2009. In addition to our **Drop the Charges Statement**, more recently, Critical Resistance members wrote a statement against policing **during the summer 2020 in response to the surge in anti-policing protest** for the **No New SF Jail Coalition**.



CRITICAL RESISTANCE: ON POLICING

Published January 2009

Policing is the practice, empowered by the state, of enforcing law and social control through the use of force. The roots of policing in the United States are closely linked to slavery, the capture of escaped slaves, and the enforcement of Black Codes and Jim Crow. Police forces were also routinely used to keep new immigrants to the US “in line” and to prevent the working classes from making demands. Clearly, not much has changed. Policing is still set up to target poor people, people of color, immigrants, and people who do not conform to socially acceptable behavior on the street or in their homes. For example, police frequently target women, queer and gender non-conforming people, people of color, and young people just based on their appearance or behavior. The choices police make about which people to target, what to target them for, and when to arrest and book them play a major role in who ultimately gets locked up.

Some of us are comforted by the option of being able to call someone when we need help. Some of us are told from a very early age that the police are our friends who will help us when we’re in “trouble.” But the impact of policing on many of our communities—more people beaten and killed by cops and the growing number of our friends, family members and loved ones being locked away behind bars—shows us that the police hurt rather than help us.

Policing is, in its very nature, in opposition to self-determination. The practices of watching, questioning, intimidating and arresting people—through the use of force are violent practices. Not only do cops use threats of violence—the guns on their hips, the clubs on their belts—to control people, they often use force in making stops, inquiries, and arrests. Harassment of people on the street or “stop and frisk” practices—stopping people to frisk them for drugs or weapons—are tools often used to intimidate, monitor, and control poor people and people of color. While we’re told the police are on the street to stop or solve “crime”, their very presence is a way of enforcing social control, and actually creates more violence.

When people die at the hands of police, more often than not, the state concludes that the use of force was reasonable... Police review boards are completely useless. And even though some people argue that police abuse is an isolated problem that can be blamed on the actions of rogue officers, it is really a systemic problem that is fundamental to the way the policing system in the US is built and maintained.

In recent years, the militarization of the police has increased dramatically. Not only has US law enforcement come to resemble the US military more closely, but it has also begun to be equipped with the same technologies. From providing training in tactics and instruction in using certain types of equipment to the cooperation between the military and domestic law enforcement at the US/Mexico border, militarization of law enforcement has meant that the US has become another space within which the military can operate and has meant that residents of the US are potential military targets to be eliminated.

The same way that locking people in cages does not help us build the healthy, stable communities we want, relying on the state to force people into acting in ways that serve the state doesn’t encourage the kinds of cooperation, trust, and accountability we know are at the heart of building what we truly want.

Instead of relying on the violent establishments of police and prisons, what if we got together with members of our communities and created systems of support for each other? We are capable of looking after and caring for one another, providing each other with our basic human needs, creating community self-determination. Relying on and deploying policing denies our ability to do this, to create real safety in our communities.

Stand against further criminalization of members of our community! Amnesty for all people arrested during the Oscar Grant demonstrations!

Oscar Grant's execution is not an isolated event. Executions of people of color, particularly young people of color, are a brutal reality in our communities, and we are right to be angry.

More than 120 people, mostly young people of color were arrested on January 7th and January 14th; more than 120 people were not allowed to sleep in their homes those nights. Are we any safer without them?

Everyday the police terrorize our communities, and everyday we resist. January 7th and January 14th were a part of this resistance.

We need to rethink real safety in Oakland and in our communities, just as we need to rethink what we call violence. We know the police value private property over human life. And though we might not agree totally with all the targets of people's understandable rage, we cannot allow sensationalist media images to divide our communities and divert our attention. This is not about broken glass. This is about the police execution of an irreplaceable member of our community.

We need to build leadership as we stand face to face with cops in riot gear. We must collectively share our knowledge and experience so that we can make strong, more informed decisions. We need to stand together as we fight together for community self-determination.

We stand with our youth on the streets and we ask you to stand with us. Our youth cannot be left alone; we cannot leave them hanging or ostracize them for standing up. The police, the city, the state, want us to be divided, and they aim to separate us; that's why they arrest us, shoot us, and beat us in the streets.

Given what happens in this city, in our communities and neighborhoods everyday, we must stand in the street, express our anger and organize for just, healthy, and sustainable communities. This is not an issue of one "bad" cop. This is about the violence of policing. The trial of this killer cop does not mark the end of our struggle. We must struggle together for collective liberation, to be free from policing, surveillance and incarceration, and to decide for ourselves what being safe really means.

What is happening in Oakland is happening all over the world. On New Year's day, New Orleans police shot Adolph Grimes III, a 22-year old Black father, 14 times, including 12 times in the back. On this same day, police in Bellaire, Texas shot Robbie Tolan, another unarmed, young Black man, in the chest while in his driveway at home. Robbie Tolan is still in the hospital. While the police continue to terrorize our communities here, the Palestinian people fight for their lives in Gaza against genocide perpetrated by the US-backed state of Israel. We are united with our brothers and sisters in Gaza, with our indigenous relatives in North and South America, with a worldwide struggle for self-determination. We are strong because we know we are not alone.

*This statement was written by active members of Critical Resistance Oakland, who are committed to abolishing the prison industrial complex. (January 14th, 2009 .

For more information about Critical Resistance visit: www.criticalresistance.org or call 510-444-0484.



**Stop Criminalizing Our Communities!
DIVEST from Policing, Imprisonment & Surveillance
INVEST in COMMUNITY & Free Them ALL!
ABOLITION NOW!**

In the wake of the most recent killings of Black people by police in the US—George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Sean Reed and many others—No New SF Jail Coalition sees these deaths not as isolated events or exceptional instances of policing but rather the tip of the iceberg of the policing institution. Stops, arrests and interrogations by police are all harmful practices that lead to the systemic death and destruction of Black, Brown, Indigenous and poor communities. The exact technique that killed George Floyd is a standard of policing everywhere, including San Francisco. In January 2020, 19-year-old Kajon Busby, a Black youth in SF, was thrown to the ground by SFPD, as one cop knelt on Kajon's neck and back, pinning him face down on the sidewalk while her partners handcuffed him. Every policy that increases, maintains or legitimizes interactions with policing (such as curfews, gang injunctions, anti-loitering ordinances, or quality of life patrols) exacerbate the chances of people being harmed, killed or stripped away from community.

Policing also aggravates the coronavirus pandemic. While COVID-19 is associated with acute respiratory distress, the continued use of chemical weapons by police to repress protests severely impacts the respiratory system and is even more dangerous for those dealing with respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19 or asthma, both of which plague our remaining Black communities due to SF's long history of environmental and systemic racism. Physical responses to tear gas and pepper spray only intensify COVID-19 transmission. Mass arrests and kettling of protestors intentionally prevent social distancing, in turn worsening the pandemic. The state and media scrutinize protests as incubators for the virus, yet organizers continue to work to keep people safe while police continue to put people in vulnerable spaces before, during and after protests.

As San Francisco's diverse communities join together using different strategies and tactics of resistance and representing different parts of Frisco's diverse communities, it is essential to uplift the various experiences and traumas of policing in our city:

We must uplift the experience of Kajon Busby and police executions of Mario Woods, Alex Nieto, Luis Góngora Pat, Jessica Williams, Amilcar Perez-Lopez and now Sean Monterrosa—a Mission youth killed by Vallejo PD while his hands were in the air while protesting the violence of policing. Since 1985, Over 100 people have been killed by SFPD alone, 60% of whom were people of color, 40% of whom were Black people.

We must focus on the many ways SFPD is a driving force in the gentrification of our City, protecting the real estate and tech developers that have displaced our Black, Brown, Indigenous and poor/working-class families.

Just as we must protest police executions, we must also protest, resist, and organize against police raids of people living in street-based communities and encampments, and end quality of life policing that has targeted Black, Brown, Indigenous and poor San Franciscans for decades.

We must protest and organize against the ongoing harassment of youth of color in the Mission, Bay View, Filmore, Tenderloin, Haight, and Panhandle, as well as when Black, Brown, and mixed youth of color and houseless folks access more white, Asian, middle-class, and affluent neighborhoods.



In order to #ShutDown850, we must also ABOLISH the police!

With dismantling the jail system, No New SF Jail Coalition also calls to defund SFPD, and the immediate dismantling of policing programs *in order to free up funds for health care, mutual aid projects and PPE that will immediately help communities most vulnerable to the pandemic.*

In order to stop the violence of policing, San Francisco must:

- 1. Defund SFPD immediately, cutting SFPD's budget by at least 50% this summer.**
 - We call on every community program and institution in the City to cut ties and end all contracts with SFPD, to work towards dismantling all transit policing, policing in schools and gang task force initiatives, as well as militarization programs and Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- 2. Decarcerate all jails and cages in SF,** by continuing the fight to permanently shut down 850 Bryant, and to pressure the city to release prisoners throughout SF County jails.
 - We must especially push for release of prisoners with health conditions that make them more vulnerable to COVID, such as elders, LGBTQ folks, protestors arrested in the recent actions, and folks caged pretrial. As both health experts and jail administration have already noted, prisons, jails and detention centers are known incubators of infectious diseases.
 - *We call on all San Franciscans to support and generate grassroots efforts for prisoner release, like the participatory defense initiatives led by Young Women's Freedom Center and CA Coalition for Women Prisoners' Care Not Cages Clemency campaign and organizing to "Free Them All"!*
- 3. Redirect funding within the Probation Department to grassroots community programs and systems that provide life-affirming resources for all San Franciscans without criminalization and punishment,** like Hospitality House, CUAV, TGI Justice Project, Young Women's Freedom Center, HOMEY, Dolores Street Community Services, PODER and GLIDE.
 - SF was once home to robust community organizations and programs rooted in self-determination and collective liberation for decades, but gentrification has since pushed this life-saving work out of the City. It is time to rebuild, strengthen and expand the vibrant community programs and expertise we once had, and to fully support, follow, and protect our grassroots experts.

Together, our communities have the keys to true safety. Our communities and grassroots organizations have developed healing strategies to hold each other accountable in instances of minor to severe harm. **We do not need policing. We do not need cages. We keep each other safe; we keep each other alive. We demand abolition and healing for the generations of neglect and persecution that San Francisco has unleashed on communities of color,** from the poisoning of the Shipyard, to the rapid gentrification in the Mission, to the leveling of the Harlem of the West, to the destruction of Manila Town and the working-class communities of the SOMA. No more blue-ribbon panels; no more reformist investments into jailing, policing and criminalization. **We demand strategic, all-encompassing, abolitionist action now!**



6. Feedback Survey

Want to help make this toolkit the best possible? Please share some feedback on how to improve this resource. [Complete our survey here](https://bit.ly/CRtoolkitfeedback): bit.ly/CRtoolkitfeedback

You can also send us feedback to our national email account:
cnational@criticalresistance.org

7. Acknowledgements:



Like all of Critical Resistance's work, this toolkit is the result of lots of collective labor and collaboration.

A special **Thank You!** for the visions of the amazing artists whose artwork and photographs we featured throughout the toolkit. **Nate Tan aka Nate1** (www.nate1design.com) created the fresh illustrations of the Campaign Development Tool detailing each step of abolitionist campaigns. We also featured several photographs by **Brooke Anderson** (@movementphotographer) throughout the toolkit as well, and an image from a series by **Jeremiah Durian-Williams** originally made for our COVID-19 platform. We also included campaign art from our work, including campaign posters by **Melanie Cervantes** and photos taken by CR members and movement partners.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the ideas in this toolkit are not only ours, but a reflection of years of work and analysis from former and current Critical Resistance members and movement mentors, including **Rachel Herzing, Rose Braz, Isaac Ontiveros, Ruthie Wilson Gilmore, Craig Gilmore, Mariame Kaba, Kai Lumumba Barrow** and **Mimi Kim**. Thank you for all you've done in building our movement, vision, frameworks and strategy.