

The NOLA Coalition

60-DAY REPORT JULY 12 - SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

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 - PROGRESS
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Background

The NOLA Coalition is a diverse collection of over 430 local nonprofits, civic organizations, and businesses with an acute interest in helping to address public safety, for reasons of both life and livelihood. The mission of the NOLA Coalition is to harness our collective resources to create a safer and more prosperous New Orleans for all residents. The NOLA Coalition supports near-term actions to reduce violence, paired with investment in youth services to drive generational change. We stand ready to invest – our time, our people, our expertise, and our money – to help make a difference for New Orleans.

History

Compelled by a shared concern with the surge in violent crime, across all residents, the NOLA Coalition formed in July of 2022. At this time, the NOLA Coalition introduced its concurrent two-part platform:

- 2. Community Support for NOPD** - Near-term actions to reduce violence
- 3. Investment in Youth Support Services** – A \$15M commitment to youth social services

Since announcement, membership and momentum has rapidly grown. The two platforms, and full membership list, can be seen at www.NOLAc coalition.info.

The NOLA Coalition Difference

The strategies supported by the NOLA Coalition are not new; rather, they are ideas and tactics that have been long espoused by elected leaders, businesses, local civic groups, and national experts. What makes the NOLA Coalition different is:

- **Diverse Membership** – A geographic, racial, political, and organizational diversity that reflects the full breadth of New Orleans
- **Concurrent Strategies** – The NOLA Coalition rejects the trade-off between safety today, and systemic change for tomorrow. Rather, the Coalition believes that both must be pursued simultaneously, with equal vigor. While we cannot police our way out of this crisis, we also recognize that safety today generates the conditions for investment in generational change

Summary Assessment

Over the past sixty days, there has been a marked increase in the focus on and actions towards public safety in our community. Crime and quality-of-life are now the dominant topics of our elected leaders, the media, and the public. Moreover, this focus has been followed by action. In alignment with the Coalition’s platform, Mayor Cantrell has called for major support for NOPD. The City Council has taken a range of action, from funding for recruiting, to a revised technology ordinance, to raises for our officers. And the community has responded, with nearly \$3.5 million donated for support of youth services, to be provided by community-based organizations from within the City’s Youth Master Plan.

That said, New Orleans is still in a very serious situation, with homicides on track to be at their highest level since the 1990’s. There is no immediate fix for the challenges facing the City today. It will take the collective, coordinated, and sustained action of our elected officials, civic and business groups, and the public for New Orleans to stabilize and improve.

The following report summarizes progress, and outstanding needed actions, within the context of the NOLA Coalition’s two platforms.

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NOLA Coalition Plan – Two Concurrent Planks

Plank 1 - Community Support for NOPD

Immediate, actionable tactics to reduce violence and improve public safety and quality-of-life.

1. NOPD Recruiting & Retention

Improve recruiting outcomes via clear objectives, increased funding, and improved processes

Progress

- On July 21, the City Council unanimously approved an Administration-sponsored retention plan, which includes:
 - 5% retention bonus at end of 2022
 - Pay increase of 5% for 2023
 - Pay increase of 2.5% for 2024 and then 2025
 - \$5K retention bonus every 5 years
 - Rises to a \$20K bonus for officers with 20 years' experience
 - Additional bonuses for EMTs, paramedics, juvenile jail guards, and auto mechanics
- The NOPD and Administration has enlisted policing consultant John Linder, who previously worked with NOPD during the 1990's crime surge. Linder has brought with him Fausto Pichardo, the former #2 for the New York City police, to serve as "Consulting Chief of Operations" for the NOPD. The team conducted a "rapid 10-day assessment" of the NOPD, and will now stay on to roll out recommendations and train a permanent replacement.

On September 8 Cantrell announced a further plan to support the New Orleans Police Department and public safety, using one-time American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding. The \$88M proposal includes a number of elements (additional to above) to support recruitment and retention, including:

- \$30K per officer recruitment incentive package
- \$30K per officer lateral transfer incentive package
- \$20K retention incentive package
- \$10K retention bonus paid in 2025
- Plus, leadership changes at the Public Integrity Bureau (an officer morale issue)

Note: this plan will need to be approved and/or amended by the City Council to go into effect.

- The City Council unanimously approved three budgetary measures to address ongoing issues surrounding lack of capacity and manpower within the NOPD. The first two items from Councilmember Moreno (Ord 33,736 & Ord 33,737) appropriate \$900K from the city budget to support recruitment initiatives of the New Orleans Police & Justice Foundation, and the third

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(Ord 33,726 - by-request of the NOPD) grants NOPD the use of state Capital Outlay funds to purchase approved equipment and supplies

- A \$900K CEA has been signed with the New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation to provide additional recruiters, advertising, hardware, software, and national (virtual) testing
- The Council also passed Resolution R-22-236, authored by Councilmember JP Morrell, encouraging the Civil Service Department to expand civil service exam offerings and testing availability to include increased frequency and remote availability to reduce barriers and spur recruitment of NOPD officers
- A recruiting class of POST Certified lateral transfers is planned for late 2022 /early 2023
- Overall, supplies, technology and equipment now being provided to officers will allow existing force to be more productive

Outstanding Actions

- The Cantrell \$88M plan includes multiple elements of recruitment and retention enhancements. That said, questions remain, including how it will be paid for over time, and whether the proposed allocation of ARPA funds is optimal. The plan will now go to the City Council for discussion and potential amendment and approval in October
- Other outstanding items needing action include:
 - The NOPD still needs to develop a dedicated Human Resource division
 - Multiple process roadblocks still exist in the pipeline that cause drop-off of recruits
 - Additional NOPD morale issues have been identified, beyond Public Integrity Bureau
 - NOPD should improve communication to the public about successes and achievements

2. NOPD Pay & Benefits

Implement pay raises to help recruit and retain NOPD

Progress

- On July 21, the City Council unanimously approved an Administration-sponsored retention plan, which includes:
 - Pay increase of 5% for 2023
 - Pay increase of 2.5% for 2024 and then 2025
- The Mayor's proposed \$80M+ plan includes a number of pay and benefit enhancements, including:
 - Three guaranteed 5% pay raises

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- Fully funded health insurance
- Reinstating the take home vehicle program for all NOPD officers
- Improved equipment, including:
 - o Replacing all computers that are more than 5 years old
 - o Providing new computers for recruits
 - o New firing range and criminal evidence processing complex
 - o Eliminating upfront costs for uniforms and equipment for recruits
- Expanded education incentives for officers and recruits with post-secondary education or funding for those who wish to pursue additional post-secondary education
- Expanded relocation incentives for officers and recruits who relocate to Orleans Parish including moving expenses and down payment assistance
- Supporting recruits while they attend the NOPD training academy

Note: this plan will need to be approved and/or amended by the City Council to go into effect.

- The City is requesting to purchase \$1.2M of additional equipment for NOPD, per the Consent Decree. This request has been submitted to the City Council as part of the Mid-Year Budget Adjustment.
- City Council Ordinance 33,713, authored by Councilmember Lesli Harris, requires the Department of Civil Service to evaluate and provide recommendations to the Civil Service Commission and Council relative to amending the Classified Pay Plan to implement a 2% increase in salary for commissioned police employees with between three years and twenty-three years of continuous service with NOPD. The Civil Service recommendations are due to the Council, after which point the Council must adopt an ordinance for formal approval
- Another round of amendments to the Classified Pay Plan led by Councilmember Joseph I. Giarrusso III (M- 22-326, M-22-327, M-22-328, M-22-329 & M-22-330) was approved, impacting Emergency Medical Services Retention Pay, Juvenile Justice Intervention Center Retention Pay, Police Retention Pay, and Fire-Special Rates of Pay

Outstanding Actions

- Just as with the Recruitment & Retention elements of the Mayor's plan, the Pay & Benefits must now go to the City Council for negotiation and potential approval
- Other Council pay plans (e.g., Orc. 33,713) are paused while Mayor's plan is debated
- A plan should be articulated on how pay raises and benefits will be paid for beyond three-year ARPA funds
- Other issues of pay include:
 - Need to increase advanced degree pay (currently Assoc. \$1k, BA \$2k & MA \$3k)
 - Should allow officers to apply for Senior Police Officer (SPO) status upon reaching 3 years

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3. Technology

Facing prolonged manpower shortages, use technology as a force multiplier

Progress

- The Mayor is calling for opening the Real Time Crime Center, which provides video evidence to officers and detectives, allowing investigators to focus their investigations and more efficiently return to their patrol duties
- Following the vote on Ordinance 33,808 (Councilmember Green) in July to lift the ban on NOPD's use of facial recognition surveillance technology as a crime-fighting tool, the Council passed Ordinance 33,809 by Councilmembers Moreno, Harris, and Morrell with several amendments, providing new guardrails and required data collection to ensure greater transparency and oversight. To ensure compliance with Council legislation, NOPD is required to submit quarterly reports on the use of facial recognition technology that must be transmitted to the Council, and a public hearing shall occur one year from the date of adoption to review the effectiveness of this ordinance by the Criminal Justice Committee. Further, the Council:
 - Explicitly prohibits facial recognition technology use in investigations related to 1) abortion; 2) criminalization of same-sex partners
 - Requires approval of facial recognition use in accordance with current NOPD policy (as approved by the Department of Justice)
 - Use must be approved in writing by a supervisor, and vetted by NOPD's Central Intelligence Center
 - Cannot be used alone for an arrest warrant
 - Regulates use of cell-site simulator technology for locating missing persons and locating a known suspect of a crime
 - Mandates that NOPD, with the Louisiana State Analytical and Fusion Exchange (LA-SAFE), shall submit a quarterly report to the Council that includes the total number of requests, details of each request, and the result of each request
- In March, the Council passed Ordinance 33,527 (Councilmember Harris) approving new requirements for the NOPD Crime Lab. Per the ordinance, the lab must maintain accreditation for DNA testing and databasing, to allow the City to process its own sexual assault kits and other DNA evidence. Currently, NOPD relies on the state crime lab in Baton Rouge for DNA testing, where there is a backlog of over 2,500 cases. 33,527 also establishes a new mandate that NOPD test all kits with "probative value" - meaning where the perpetrator's identity is unknown
- New Orleans Police & Justice Foundation (NOPJF) invested in advanced training for Crime Analysts. 7 passed the recent Certified Law Enforcement Analyst Exam, and 3 are now at NOPD.
- The New Orleans Business Council, led by Chris Reade, a systems technology expert, has proposed a process to help integrate the flow of criminal justice information needed to reduce

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violent crime including the NOPD, DA, Sheriff, Clerk of Court, and Courts. Discussions are underway to include the NOPSS, RTA, Mental and Physical Health (LSU Department of Psychiatry and City Health Department) in the exchange of information needed to reduce violence

Outstanding Actions

- The technology integration projects are complex, and will require resources and cooperation to complete. On-going monitoring of progress is required
- Work is needed on implementing electronic monitoring for violent and repeat felony offenders as a condition of bail/pretrial release

4. Accountability for the Entire Criminal Justice System

Approach criminal justice as a system that must work together

Progress

- District Attorney Jason Williams held a convening with key criminal justice stakeholders, including the NOPD, Sheriff, Courts, School Superintendent, youth nonprofits, and business leaders, in order to drive the discussion on how to improve coordination amongst all criminal justice stakeholders
- As part of its ongoing efforts to address spikes in crime and improve public safety, City Councilmembers approved Ordinance 33,724, authored by Councilmember Helena Moreno in June 2022, requiring leadership from the New Orleans Police Department, Orleans Parish District Attorney, Orleans Parish Sheriff Office, Independent Police Monitor, Juvenile Justice Intervention Center, Criminal District Court, and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court to appear before the Council at least quarterly to provide updates on public safety programs and any legislative, financial, or operational issues their departments may be facing
- Councilmembers passed Ordinance 33,818, authored by Councilmember Morrell, amending the City Code to require public safety agencies – including the NOPD, Orleans Parish District Attorney, Criminal District Court, Juvenile Court, Municipal & Traffic Court, Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office, Juvenile Justice Intervention Center, and the Independent Police Monitor – to submit raw data in machine-readable format to the Council on a monthly basis to ensure the Council receives timely, public safety information and to encourage transparency and accountability
- The Rand Corporation is in discussions with LSU HSC criminologist Dr. Peter Scharf and other researchers to potentially conduct a rigorous evaluation of the entire violence reduction efforts to monitor outputs, outcomes, and efficiencies

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Outstanding Actions

- YTD 638 violent felonies were closed, but over half were dismissed or resolved with a misdemeanor plea deal, which suggests a disconnect between police and prosecutors
- YTD 83% of felony domestic violence cases were closed via dismissal or by misdemeanor plea deal
- Must ensure a fully staffed, fully operational juvenile detention and rehabilitation facility

5. Gang Activity and Violent Crime

Continue to invest in VCAT (Violent Crime Abatement Team) and similar special-purpose teams, and prioritize gang activity and concentrated violence

Progress

- Despite declining manpower the NOPD has YTD arrested 2,824 felony offenders, of which 56% (1,795) were for violent crimes or weapons felonies
- VCAIT unit and proactive policing initiatives will identify and develop evidence to arrest, prosecute and convict the most dangerous violent felony offenders city wide
- The New Orleans Business Council has retained the consulting services to support the technological integration of criminal justice information required for effective violence reduction. These services will help with the design of the system to help identify the relatively small number of individuals most responsible for violence
- Motion M-22-243 (Councilmember Giarrusso) authorized new hiring rates for the role of Crime Laboratory Director in order to attract a viable applicant pool for this high-demand position. This role is critical in providing oversight and direction when executing forensic science services to the NOPD and other criminal justice agencies
- The Council passed Ordinance 33,739 at the request of the New Orleans Health Department and carried by Councilmember Moreno, creating the New Orleans Abuse Fatality Review Team to conduct an annual review of all fatalities that occur in New Orleans as a result of domestic violence
- The FBI and federal agencies continue to assist with violent and organized crime

Outstanding Actions

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- The homicide rate in New Orleans remains on track to be the highest in the nation; the City has not yet “turned the corner” on violent crime

6. Optimization of Resources

Rethink resource strategy to adjust for lower NOPD numbers; implement “civilianization”

Progress

- On September 22, Chief Ferguson announced the NOPD will redeploy 75 cops to patrol shifts, and add 50-75 civilian jobs to address thinning force. The Chief also launched a new unit called the “District Assist Response Team,” to lower response times. Once a week, officers from units including the Investigation & Support Bureau, Public Integrity Bureau and Management Services Bureau will take on patrol shifts in the areas of greatest need.
- Based on recommendations from John Linder, the Mayor is calling for civilianization of Administrative functions at NOPD, including:
 - Deputization of Civilian Employees - Deputized civilian employees can issue citations for quality-of-life violations, freeing up NOP.D officers to focus on fighting violent crime
 - Alternative Dispatch Program - Allows for a mental health counselor to assist individuals having an acute behavioral health crisis, relieving the burden on NOPD officers
 - Civilian Traffic Accident Response Expansion - Allows non-NOPD officers to respond to minor car accidents so NOPD officers can focus on responding to higher priority calls for service
- The City of New Orleans is drafting an RFP for civilian response to auto accidents
- Motion M-22-352 (Councilmember Moreno) was approved in August 2022 and directs the Civil Service Department to conduct expeditious work studies on the new civilian positions determined necessary by the NOPD and to analyze current NOPD civilian positions to assess pay levels and the potential for pay increases
- Gulf Coast Bank, led by CEO Guy Williams, donated \$50,000 for On Scene Services, to allow non-NOPD personnel to respond to traffic accidents

Outstanding Actions

- Broad and effective use of civilianization needs to be implemented; 9/22 NOPD announcement was a first step
- Additional assistance from the Louisiana State Police may be needed

7. Community & Social Support

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Increase the number and availability of social and counseling programs

Progress

- The Office of Youth and Families has continued to carry out its mission of increasing investments in children and youth, improving coordination and quality of services and expanding initiatives that empower youth and parent voice. Examples include an announcement of \$184,000 to organizations to provide mental health and parenting support for families who have interacted with the juvenile justice system. The office has also completed a 5-week summer internship program that enrolled 100 system-involved and at-risk youth.
- Councilmember Joe Giarrusso announced a Mental Health Collaborative to coordinate nonprofit groups including the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Via Link, the Metropolitan Human Services District, and Crescent Care to work together in sharing strategies, resources, and crisis intervention methods to better serve the community. The NOLA Coalition pledged \$75,000 to the Mental Health Collaborative
- With its passage of Ordinance 33,807 authored by Councilmember Morrell, the Council took another step forward by establishing the New Orleans Recreation and Culture Fund to provide much-needed support to local non- profits, youth recreation organizations, and culture bearers
- In July, the Council passed Motion M-22-311 (Councilmember Moreno) reauthorizing its advisory Council Intervention Strategy Task Force (CISTF) consisting of membership from the New Orleans Health Department, New Orleans Police Department, New Orleans Fire Department, New Orleans Emergency Medical Services, the Metropolitan Human Services District, Orleans Parish Communications District, and Council stakeholder appointees with required expertise in policing alternatives, crisis response, diversion initiatives, mental and clinical support, disability advocacy, behavioral health and substance abuse treatment, or community engagement. A report is due to the Council in September 2022 that includes a policy framework and specific legislative recommendations to effectuate a health crisis intervention program here in New Orleans.
- Councilmember Moreno passed Act 337 - Section 46:1844(L) of the Louisiana Revised Statutes – that requires all judicial and law enforcement agencies in Louisiana to expeditiously return any stolen or other personal property to victims or victims' families when no longer needed as evidence, at no cost to victims or their families
- At the local-level, Councilmember Giarrusso authored legislation (Ordinance 33,616) waiving all towing, ticketing, and impound fees for future victims of these crimes. Councilmember Moreno separately authored legislative instruments establishing a Victim's Bill of Rights Fund, appropriating money (Ordinances 33,623 and 33,624) to fund an initiative aimed at returning monies owed to victims already charged to retrieve stolen property, and requiring the CAO to develop and execute a plan to reimburse individuals who have been assessed fees to recover

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their stolen property dating back to effective date of August 1, 2017 for Act 337. Additionally, Ordinance 33,764 requires all towing costs moving forward to be billed directly to the City of New Orleans to ensure residents can retrieve their vehicles when they arrive to towing sites without having to pay fees upfront

- The NOLA Coalition is interviewing Thomas Abt, a respected crime prevention expert. The goal is to enlist his services to support local nonprofits' efforts to intervene to effectively prevent violent crime. Abt's institute at the University of Maryland is expected to include the City of New Orleans as one of the three to five cities it supports with onsite training to help coordinate and improve the effectiveness of NOLA not-for-profit crime prevention services. The Institutes services are free.

Outstanding Issues

- A “one-stop” page is needed (digital and other) with all community, social, and mental health resources listed
- First responders like cops, teachers, and coaches need an “app” that allows them to make referrals to experts (social, mental, de-escalation) when they observe a situation *before* violence or harm occurs
- Significantly more resources and scaling needed, overall

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2. Investment in Youth Services

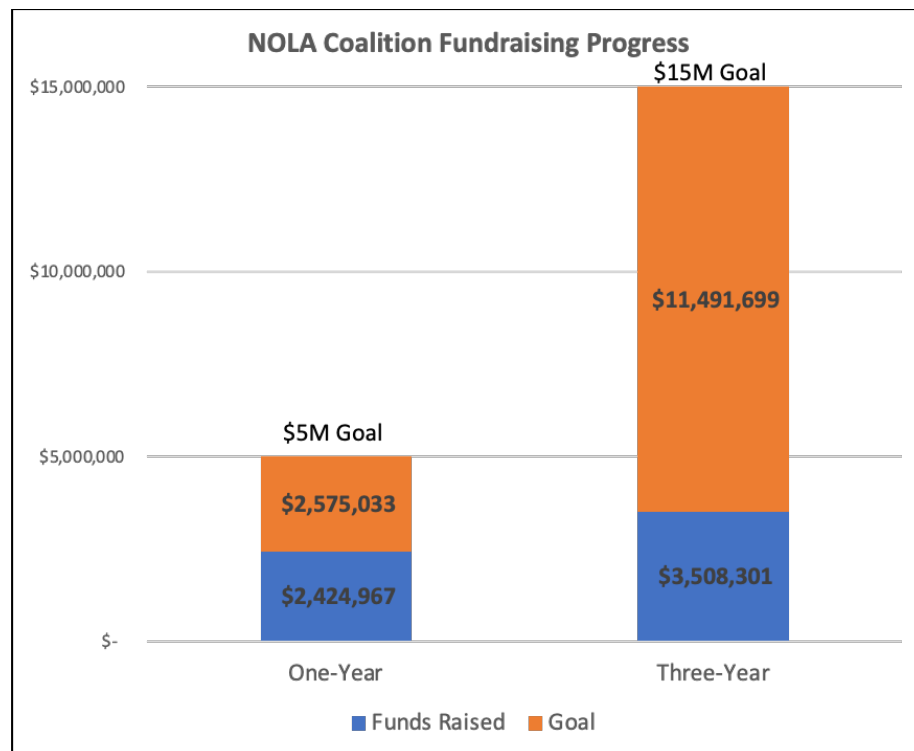
Significant and sustained business and philanthropic investment in proven community-based youth service organizations, to help them grow their impact and drive generational change.

A \$15M commitment (over three years) from the private and philanthropic sectors for youth support services, in line with the New Orleans Youth Master Plan.

Fundraising

Over two months, the NOLA Coalition made significant progress toward its one-year goal of \$5M and its three-year goal of \$15M for investment in youth services organizations.

- Over \$2.4M of the first-year goal of \$5M has been raised, nearly 50%
- Over \$3.5M of the three-year goal of \$15M has been raised



- Raised over \$2.4M of the first-year goal of \$5M, nearly 50%
- Raised over \$3.5M of the three-year goal of \$15M
- Of funds raised, approximately half are dedicated to the Youth Master Plan Grants, and the other half have been donated directly to youth service nonprofits
- All funds raised are new dollars; no double-counting of existing donations

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- Major donors include:
 - IMTT \$1,000,000
 - Latter & Blum \$500,000
 - Entergy NO \$700,000
 - T. Parker Host / Adam Anderson \$500,000
 - Baptist Community Ministries \$250,000
 - United Way of Southeast Louisiana \$250,000
 - Rusovich Foundation \$100,000
 - Jones Walker \$55,000
 - Pres Kabacoff \$50,000
 - Gibbs Construction \$30,000
 - Verizon \$25,000

Granting

United Way of Southeast Louisiana opened the first round of Youth Master Plan Grants on September 7, and applications are due September 22.

Grant criteria include:

- Must be youth services nonprofit in New Orleans
- Grant size of \$25,000 - \$75,000
- Proposals must align with the [New Orleans Youth Master Plan](#)
- Cycle 1 grant funds prioritize organizations serving youth of color from birth to 24 years old living at or below the [ALICE Threshold](#) and/or organizations with operating budgets below \$500,000
- The grants will be awarded three times a year based on an open rotating grant process:
 - November 1, 2022 – October 31, 2023
 - February 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024
 - June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024
- To ensure equity and inclusion in grant distribution, the process will prioritize organizations that have NOT received dedicated NOLA Coalition funding

More information and the application can be found at: UnitedWaySELA.org/YMPgrants

Awardees will be notified by October 17.