



**Community Activation Network: CAN
January 28, 2021 Meeting**

Meeting Notes

Members of the Community Activation Network (CAN) met via Zoom on January 28, 2021.

The agenda for the meeting was as follows:

- Gather and Welcome
- “The City’s Response to Public Safety”: Presentation, Q&A, and Discussion
- *CAN-DID* Breakout Discussions and Report Out
- Final Comments
- Closing

Welcome

Ed Cortas, Director of Consulting Services at CNPE, sat in for CNPE CEO and CAN host Ann Coffey, opening the meeting and extending a welcome to new members of the group as well as previous participants.

Ed requested participants to hold the space in silence to acknowledge the challenges our community continues to face: The COVID deaths, the homicides, our continued struggles with issues of racial injustice, the economic hardships for so many and the challenges and stress of working and going to school from home. And also to acknowledge with gratitude the good happening in our community and in our nonprofit / social impact sector: people are taking care of each other and loving each other in new and wonderful ways, starting the new year with a vaccine, and continuing to have real conversations on what needs to change.

Ed then reviewed the purpose of CAN and its seven Guiding Principles.

“The City’s Response to Public Safety”: Presentation, Q&A, and Discussion

Ed introduced Vincent James, Louisville Metro’s Chief of Community Building. Chief James shared a few observations on community public safety, including:

- Work in the areas of public safety needs to address many issues, in particular the effects of system racism in our community.
- To ensure public safety we need to take a broad approach when engaging the community. It is more than mere policing. Law enforcement, the nonprofit community, neighborhood organizations, etc. can all be a part of a system that makes people safer.

Chief James then introduced Monique Williams, Director, Metro Louisville’s Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods (OSHN). Monique made a brief presentation and then entertained questions from the participants. Main points addressed included:

- We need to think more broadly, beyond individual / interpersonal violence, and address the impact of structural violence – for example, the effects of redlining and the lack of access to quality food.

- We need to invest more in prevention – for example, increasing neighborhood efforts to engage individuals acting violently with assistance in making better choices; working with victims of violence to reduce acts of retaliation.
- We need to continue to address the root causes of violence: the prevalence of trauma among the members of our communities, the lack of equity, homelessness, and the like. We need to discontinue focusing merely on the deficits within our communities and take a more asset-based approach – and intentionally work to build on those assets.
- The pandemic has certainly exacerbated the challenges our communities face regarding violence. For example, many “safe” places like community centers have been forced to shut their doors.
- Challenges to violence reduction in our community include:
 - A lack of capacity due to a lack of funding – in particular, adequate funding to implement holistic approaches.
 - Policies that feed individuals into engaging in violence: zero-tolerance policies, insufficient wages, school-to-prison pipeline, etc.
- A lot of resources continue to be invested in policing. There is a history (and, as a result, a sort of inertia) to this approach. But there are things we can and must do to ensure violence does not happen that do not require the police.
- We must continue to encourage community members to raise their collective voice, share their concerns with Metro Council, and demand change.

CAN-DID Breakout Discussions and Report Out

CAN co-host Ashley Parrott introduced the CAN-DID breakout discussions, asking participants to consider what resonated from the previous presentations and discussions:

- What reflections do you have?
- What questions do you have? What more would you like to know?
- How can nonprofits bring the community along in this work?

Ashley reminded the group that the CAN-DID breakouts have a dual purpose. One is to intentionally make new connections and strengthen relationships; the other to learn and generate ideas with a bias toward action.

Participants broke into small groups, shared what resonated, and reconvened in the large group to share their discussions. CAN co-host Anthony Smith facilitated the report-out; comments and points of discussion included:

- While community members reach out to council members, the mayor, judges in district courts, and city leaders at every level, nothing is done. This has caused a loss of trust in our leaders, especially during 2020. The onus is on the city to demonstrate that we can trust them. To build back better the city needs to step up and demonstrate that they are listening to the feedback. You can't push civic engagement and then ignore what citizens share.
- Violence prevention is defined as a Black problem. It needs to include white people so that they don't step back from the issue. White people need to have skin in the game. It seems that white council members put the blocks up in this area. Get your white council members on board.

- There is an opportunity for CAN/CNPE to stand in solidarity with Black and brown nonprofits. Need to push for a process for nonprofits to have a seat at the table when it comes to budget negotiations. It builds anxiety in the community when budgeting is done in secret. Claim our seat at the table.
- As a city we want to address all violence, not just the interpersonal outcomes. People's ideas about violence are focused on homicide because OSHN was born from that. How can we broaden the conversation to include structural violence? How are we talking about this in its entirety? The onus must be on everyone because it is everyone's issue.

Closing

Ed thanked participants for their thoughtful and candid engagement and encouraged participants to invite others to be in this space. He also reminded participants that CAN will next meet on February 25. The topic will be *The Police Chief's Response to Public Safety* and will feature a presentation by and Q&A/discussion with new Chief of Police Erika Shields.