

# Policy Referral: Youth Crime

**HOUSING, SAFETY AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

MARCH 4, 2024

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## Key Considerations Framing the Referral Work

### ◀ Primary Objective of the Policy Referral

- Recommend strategies to support meaningful reductions in juvenile crime rates (as measured by CMPD) over a five-year period

### ◀ Scope Summary

Variable	Area of Focus
<b>Target age range</b>	Emphasis on age 17 and below
<b>Crime categories</b>	Property and violent crime
<b>Target populations</b>	At risk youth, first-time offenders, and repeat offenders
<b>Recommendation types</b>	Programming, investments, and policy (at state/local level)
<b>Implementation accountability</b>	Recommendations may include a mix of actions within the City of Charlotte's direct control, as well as advocacy for actions that could be taken by other local/state entities

### ◀ Key Assumption

- The City of Charlotte's strategic priorities – including Affordable Housing, Corridors of Opportunity, and Workforce Development – will have a beneficial impact on the social determinants of health in our community, and as such are of direct relevance to long-term efforts to reduce youth crime rates

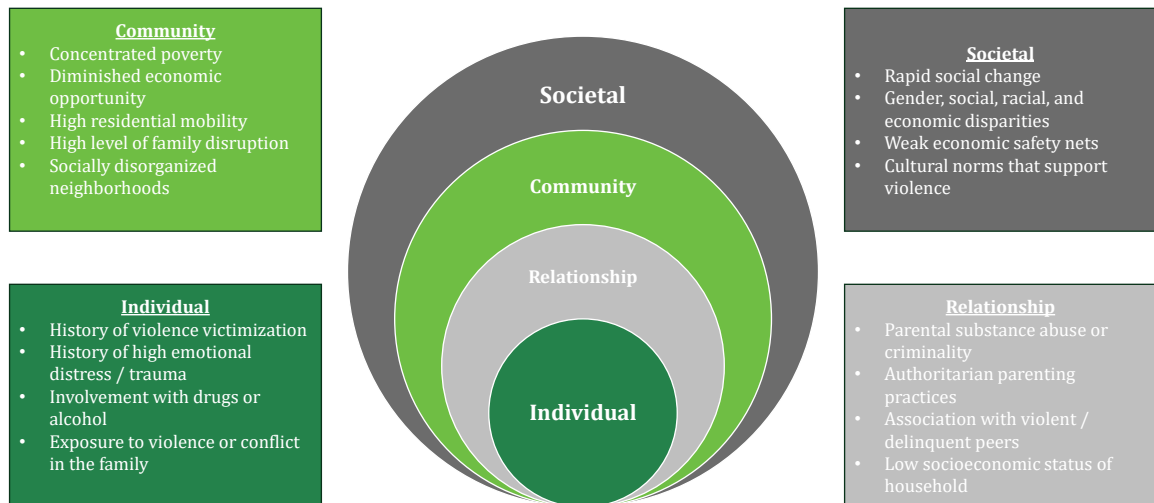
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# Social Determinants of Health



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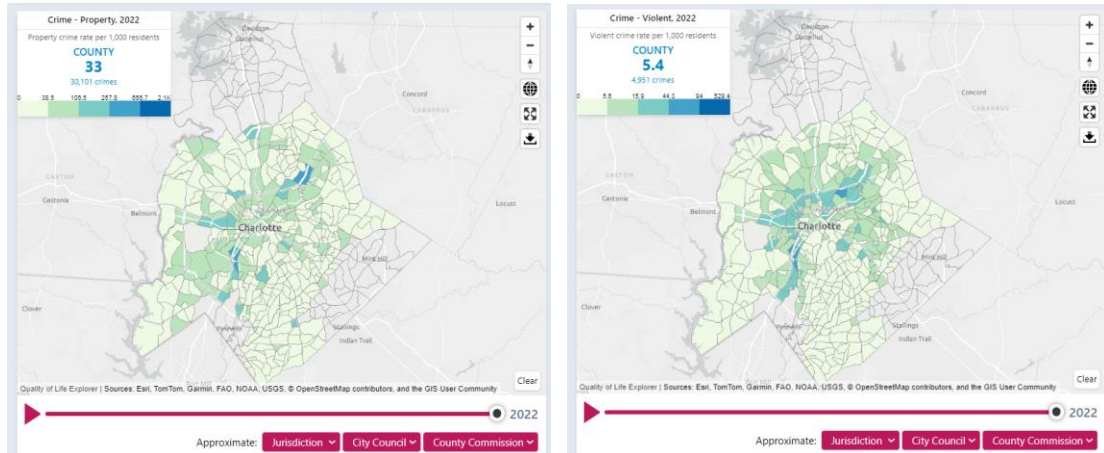
# Model of Multi-Level Risk Factors



Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory model. Adapted from the World Health Organization.

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# Insights from the Data: Quality of Life Explorer



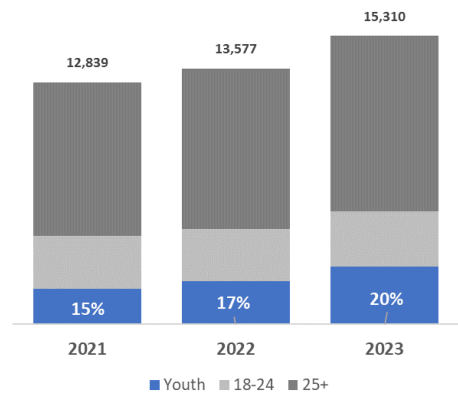
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# Insights from the Data

## Overall Crime

Index Offenses	2021	2022	2023
Total Part 1 Crime	38,225	39,970	45,408
Violent Crime	7,589	7,213	7,221
Property Crime	30,636	32,757	38,187
Vehicle Theft (Total)	3,020	3,648	8,032
Vehicle Theft of Kia/Hyundai	248	756	5,342

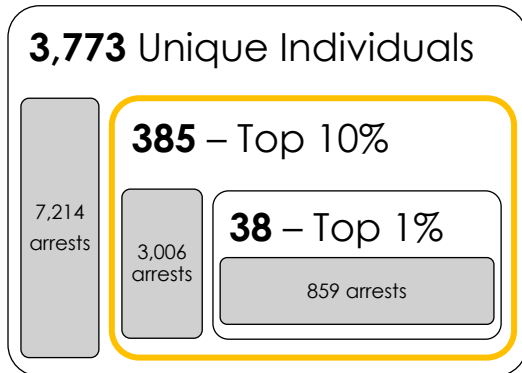
Arrests by Age



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## Insights from the Data

### Youth Offenders (2021-2023)



Part 1 Crime Cleared by Juvenile Arrest	2021	2022	2023
Total Part 1 Crimes	791	869	1,411
Violent Crimes	362	414	449
Property Crimes	429	455	962

- ◀ **Juvenile property crime suspects up 86%**
- ◀ **Juvenile suspects in gun incidents up 33%**
- ◀ **Juvenile auto thefts up 192%**

## Insights from the Data: Youth Risk Behaviors

- ◀ 18% of participants have **seen someone get physically attacked**, beaten, stabbed or shot in their neighborhood (YRBS)
- ◀ **20%** of participants reported it would take them **less than an hour to get and be ready to fire a loaded gun** without a parent or other adult's permission (YRBS)
- ◀ Approximately **43% of teens reported** not doing some regular activities during the past year because **they felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks** or more in a row, an increase from 29% in 2013 (YRBS)
- ◀ Mental health crisis started before the pandemic: Between 2016 and 2020, the state saw a **53% increase in the number of children ages 3 to 17 who were diagnosed with anxiety or depression** (NCChild)
- ◀ Youth mental health has become a growing concern in Mecklenburg County, and more children are dying of **suicide — the leading cause of death** among North Carolina children ages 10 to 14 (NCChild)

# Insights from the Data: Multi-System Involvement Analysis

## ◀ Violence Prevention Data Collaborative

- Analysis of integrated data, reporting on shared indicators, program evaluation, and data management platform

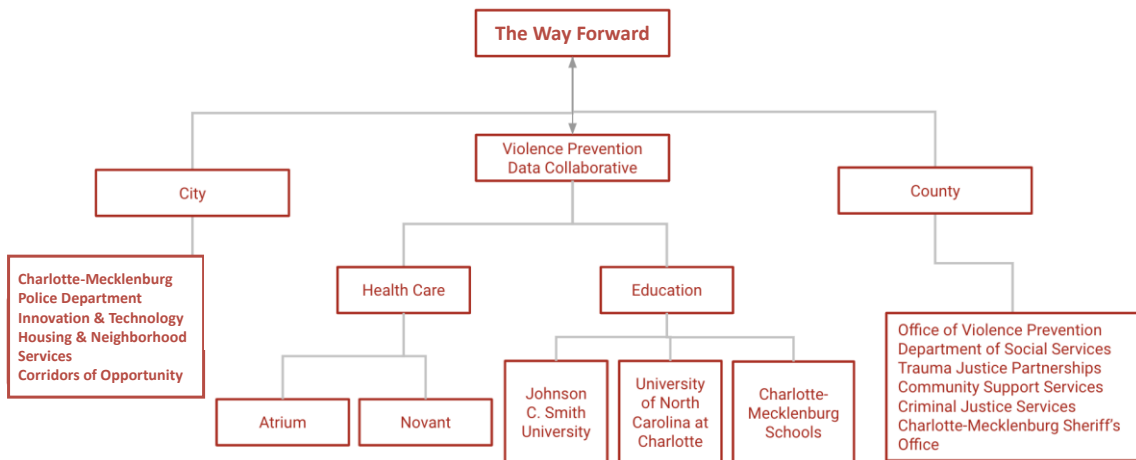
## ◀ Community Violence Data Dashboard

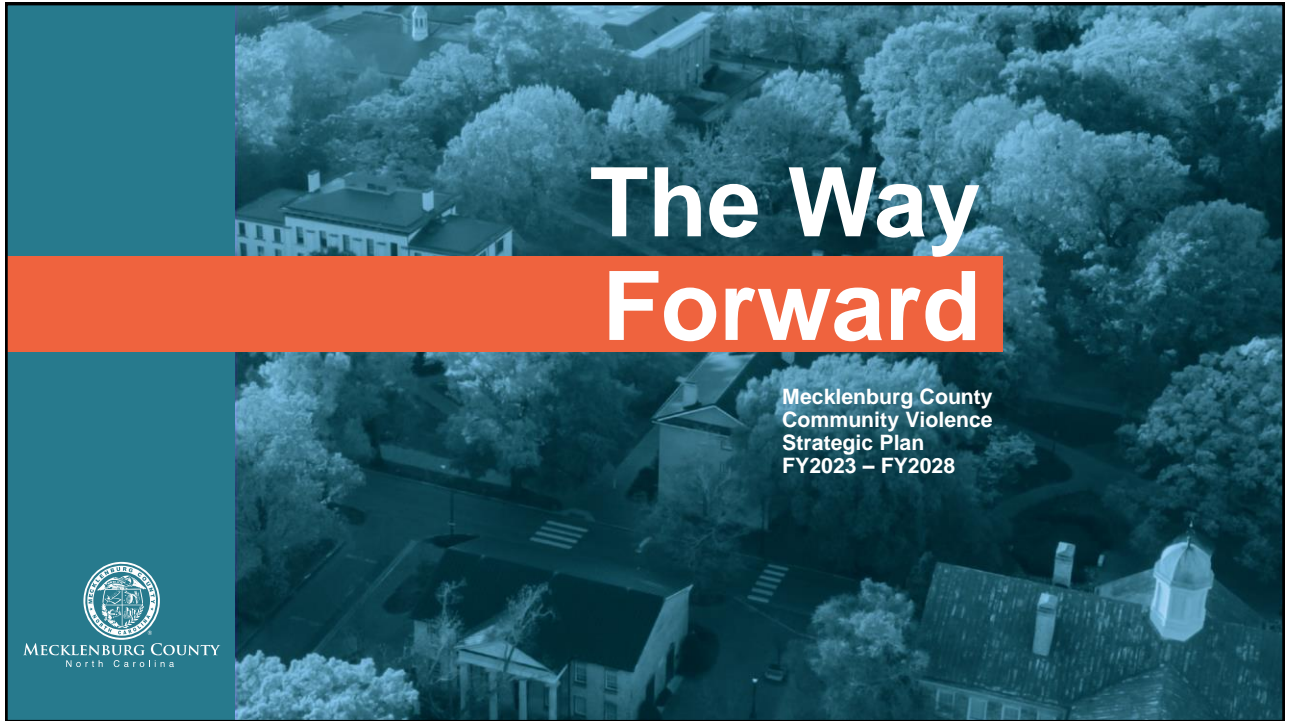
## ◀ Provide data-informed policy and program recommendations to organizations, executive leadership and other stakeholders

## ◀ Current research project, Phase 1:

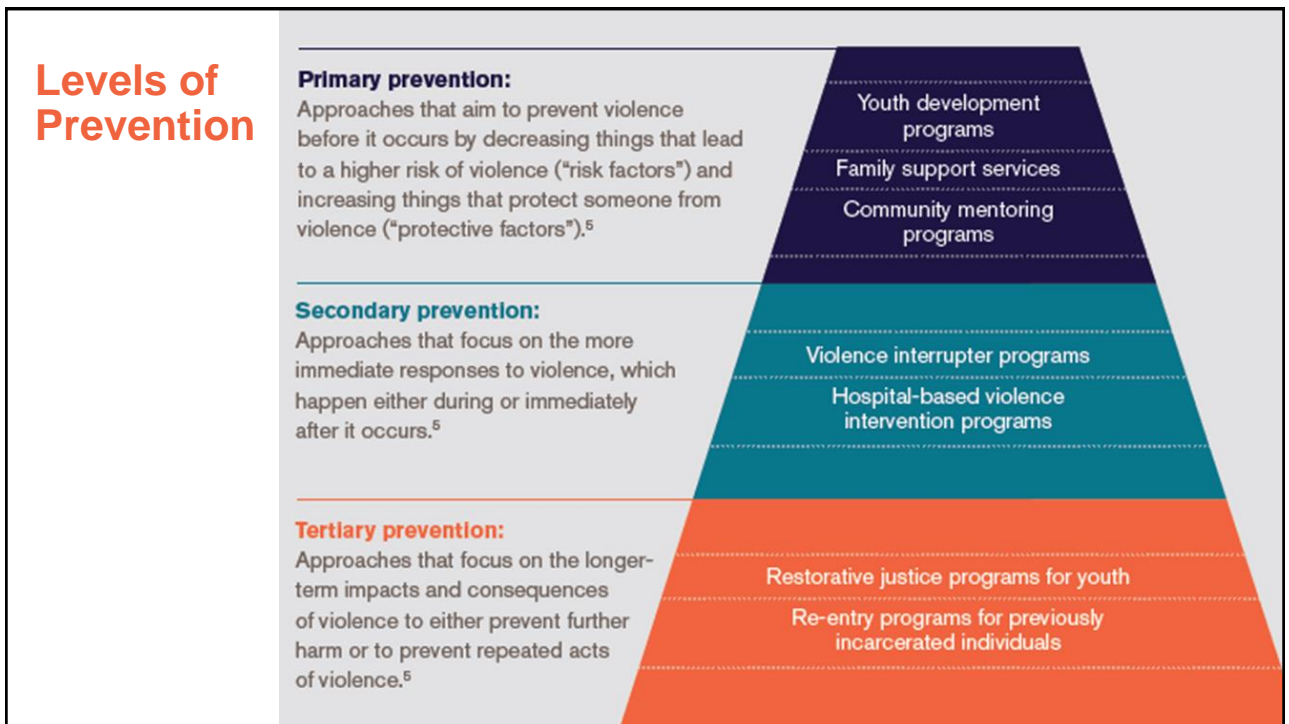
- Identifying frequency of system contact for young people involved in firearm-related violence
- System contact includes disciplinary action within schools, arrests/bookings with Sherriff's Office, and investigations by Youth & Family Services
- Individual, school and neighborhood-level characteristics will be examined

# Violence Prevention Data Collaborative







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## Areas of Focus

Community Engagement & Partnerships		Public and private stakeholders will work as equal partners with community members and organizations in planning, measuring, and carrying out policies, programs, and practices to address violence in their community.
Support for Youth & Families		Youth and families impacted by violence and those at higher risk of violence involvement will have easy access to services that address physical and mental health needs to enhance their ability to foster healthy relationships and ensure the healthy development of both child and caregiver.
Economic Opportunity		Mecklenburg County residents impacted by violence and those at a higher risk of violence involvement will have access to resources needed to secure and keep a job with opportunities for upward economic mobility.
Intergovernmental Collaboration		Community organizations and local government will work together to reduce violence through sharing data, resources, and staff to create policies, practices, and programs.
Safer & Healthier Neighborhoods		Individuals, families, and neighbors within all communities in Mecklenburg County will have enough access to the resources needed to lead lives free from violence despite location or zip code.

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FOCUS AREA

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### Support for Youth & Families

**Goal:** Youth and families impacted by violence and those at higher risk of violence involvement will have easy access to services that address physical and mental health needs to enhance their ability to foster healthy relationships and ensure the healthy development of both child and caregiver.

#### Strategies

- 2.1 Adopt universal screening and referral process for violence-related trauma in youth and family service initiatives.
- 2.2 Expand access to behavioral and mental health services for individuals exposed to violence.
- 2.3 Expand community-based youth mentorship and parenting education initiatives.

**“the violence that we have in our community is a result of so many factors: guns, mental health, drugs, poverty, hopelessness, racism, lack of discipline, lack of coping skills and education, teenagers don’t have enough positive activities to participate in outside of school, especially on the weekends or in the evenings.”** –Community engagement activity participant

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# Referral Next Steps: Community Engagement Approach

**Stakeholder  
Conversations**

**Youth  
Engagement**

**Youth-Serving  
Agencies**

**Input from  
Parents &  
Caregivers**

## Partners

### ◀ City of Charlotte:

- CMPD, Community Relations, Housing & Neighborhood Services

### ◀ Mecklenburg County

- Sherriff's Office, Criminal Justice Services, Office of Violence Prevention, Youth & Family Services

### ◀ NC District Court and District Attorney's Office

### ◀ NC Division of Juvenile Justice

### ◀ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

### ◀ Community-Based Organizations

### ◀ Youth-Serving Organizations





# Youth Engagement Plan

## ◀ Short Survey

- Designed with and piloted by youth
- Focus on protective factors
- Broad-based outreach through partners and social media

## ◀ Youth-Led Focus Groups by Corridor

## ◀ School-Based Outreach

## ◀ Focused outreach strategies for system-involved, undocumented and opportunity youth

# Early Observations and Themes

## 1. State funding

- Need for additional funding to address system demand created by 'Raise the Age' population (16 and 17-year olds)

## 2. Juvenile Detention Center

- Broad stakeholder desire to re-establish a juvenile detention center in Mecklenburg County

## 3. Scaling/targeting of existing programming

- Build on what exists – including prevention, diversion, rehabilitation and re-entry programming – rather than create new programming
- Specific areas of potential emphasis:
  - *At-risk youth within at-risk geographies*
  - *Youth mental health*
  - *Family focused programming*

## 4. Chronic youth offenders

- Desire for greater consistency regarding secure custody orders and disposition orders

## 5. Relevance of City Council's existing strategic initiatives

## Next Up in Committee

### ◀ April

- Benchmarks and Best Practices
- Overview of Existing Programs & Policies
- Analysis of Strengths and Gaps

### ◀ May

- Stakeholder Feedback
- Youth Engagement Results
- Staff Draft Recommendations

# JUVENILE CRIME

↑ **86%** Juvenile property crime suspects

↑ **34%** Juvenile arrests

↑ **192%** Juvenile auto theft suspects

↑ **62%** 1,700+ repeat juvenile offenders

↑ **45%** At least one firearm tied to a juvenile arrest from 2021-2023

↑ **33%** Juvenile suspects involved in gun incidents

↑ **24%** Violent crime cleared by juvenile arrest from 2021-2023

# AUTO THEFTS

↑ **62%** Juvenile suspects will have a previous arrest record

↑ **136%** Offenses cleared by a juvenile offender

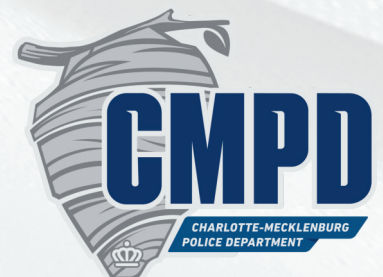
↑ **2x** The # of property crimes cleared by a juvenile arrest from 2021-2023

**933** Total auto thefts cleared by arrest in 2023

**70%** Total auto thefts cleared by juvenile arrest in 2023

**55%** Juvenile arrests were cleared by repeat offenders in 2023

*All statistics reflect 2022-2023 increases unless stated otherwise.*





# JAIL NORTH

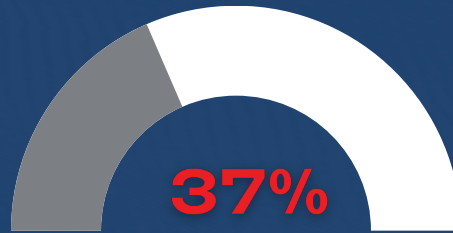
## JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY



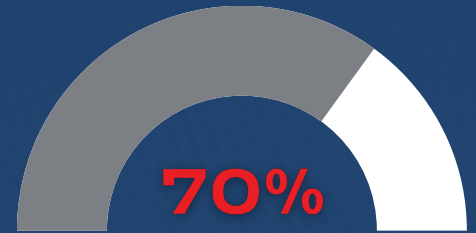
- Jail North is a 900-bed facility that currently sits empty.
- 70 juveniles were at the facility at the time it closed in 2019.
- The closing of Jail North distributed kids across the state to other facilities, causing hardship to the system.
- Three new facilities are opening this year across the state to help with capacity issues. (Rockingham Co., Richmond Co. and Perquimans Co.)
- The state is 20 juveniles over capacity at every facility.



of the total juvenile population for the state is from Mecklenburg County.



of juveniles placed in youth detention facilities recidivate.



of juveniles placed in adult prison recidivate.

## CHIEF JENNINGS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOLUTIONS:

- Re-open Jail North in Mecklenburg County.
- Establish more programming, such as rehabilitation and mental health efforts to support juveniles in Jail North and statewide.
- Increase resources, funding and salaries, including Jail North detention officer salaries.
- Issue more secure custody orders and consequences for juvenile offenders.



*For Chief Jennings recent Op-Ed on juvenile crime, scan the QR code.*