

The Blueprint to End Gun Violence



NYPD
POLICE

NYC

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THE BLUEPRINT TO END GUN VIOLENCE

New York City has been tested to its core in the first month of 2022. These weeks have been among the most violent in recent memory, most of it caused by a crisis of gun violence that continues to plague our communities. Every New Yorker has been reminded: Gun violence is an epidemic that does not discriminate. It has tragically reached our NYPD officers, our young people working late to support their families, and even a child not yet one year old.

Gun violence is a public health crisis that continues to threaten every corner of our city. But it has not emerged out of nowhere. Over the past several years, a small population of individuals has driven a massive increase in violence in our city. There is no single cause for the systemic gun violence that has taken far too many lives. But to move beyond this moment – to end this painful chapter – will take all of us.

This blueprint has been in the works since the earliest days of Mayor Adams' campaign. The Adams Administration has made public safety and justice its highest priorities – knowing these are prerequisites to prosperity in our city. Mayor Adams came into office determined to remove guns from our streets, protect our communities, and create a safe, prosperous city for all New Yorkers. This blueprint lays out immediate action towards that vision.

OUR CHALLENGE

The sea of gun violence in our city does not have one single point of origin. It flows from many rivers, each contributing to the problem. To address a challenge of this magnitude, we must block every river that has fed into this crisis: a pandemic that has severed fragile social bonds; schools and governments that have for too long failed our young people, especially young men of color; the laws in place across all levels of government; and the way those laws are interpreted and enforced across our city.

Truly ending this crisis will require both intervention and prevention. Over the longer term, it will require a transformation of our city: growing economic opportunities, improving the education of every child, providing more access to mental health support, and so much more. Yet immediately, as this blueprint lays out, we must address the crisis of guns on our streets.

HOW WE WILL SOLVE IT

CITY OF NEW YORK

We will do everything in our power as a city to end this crisis. The Adams Administration will enhance NYPD efforts to fight crime with targeted, precision policing that removes guns from our streets; expand the work of the successful anti-violence Crisis Management System (CMS) movement, which addresses the symptoms of gun violence; and bring all New Yorkers together in common cause to work together.

NYPD

In 2021 alone, the NYPD removed more than 6,000 guns off New York City streets. In the first weeks of 2022, officers have already removed 350 illegal guns. The Department will continue to build on this work with the actions outlined below. Yet as detailed later in this report, this challenge cannot be solved by this Department alone. It will require significant action from all levels of government to stop the flow of guns into our city.

The NYPD will deepen its work by:

- **Enhancing existing Public Safety Units with new Neighborhood Safety Teams.** Immediately, the NYPD will provide more resources and support to Public Safety teams in precincts across the five boroughs, which are already playing a significant role in the gun removals over the past year. This additional support includes the creation of Neighborhood Safety Teams, which will focus on gun violence. The City will hold listening tours in key neighborhoods, truly understanding the challenges of past Anti-Crime Units and providing additional training, supervision, analytics, and risk monitoring to ensure these enhanced teams work with communities.

The Department expects to launch these teams in the next three weeks with a special focus on the 30 precincts where 80% of violence occurs, and has already identified several hundred candidates for these teams.

- **Putting more officers on patrol.** After years of efforts to civilianize more roles at the NYPD, this Administration will get it right to better utilize existing resources and place more officers on patrol in key neighborhoods throughout the city. We will go unit by unit to find efficiencies, seek all federal funding available, and aim to have fewer officers on desk and staffing events where they are not needed.
- **Expanding the partnership between NYPD and State Police.** Already, the Adams Administration has launched an expanded partnership between the NYPD and New York State Police. The law enforcement agencies now share critical information, such as license plate records and trace data, as a matter of public policy. The agencies will also increase the public safety presence around public transportation facilities and create joint strategies to zero-in on illegal guns used in high-intensity drug trafficking areas – building on the newly-created gun intelligence task force.
- **Adding more detection efforts at City entry points for the “Iron Pipeline.”** There are no gun manufacturers in New York City. Yet even as the NYPD removed nearly 6,000 last year from our streets, new guns arrived by car, train, and bus every day. The NYPD will work with State law enforcement to implement spot checks at entry points like Port Authority and other bus and train stations.
- **Increasing resources for the Gun Violence Suppression Division.** This highly-specialized unit within the Detectives Bureau is tasked with seizing illegal guns and building cases against illegal carriers, traffickers, and sellers. The NYPD will strengthen resources to this Division, supporting more targeted campaigns against major gun crime.

- **Using new technology to identify suspects and those carrying guns.** The NYPD will explore the responsible use of new technologies and software to identify dangerous individuals and those carrying weapons. This technology will not be the sole means to make arrests, but as another tool as part of larger case-building efforts.
- **Expanding and supporting the Gun Violence Strategic Partnership.** Driven by the surge in gun violence, the NYPD has begun chairing a successful daily meeting that brings together local, state, and federal leaders to share intelligence and information on specific cases. We will look to further invest resources in this strategic partnership and expand to additional surrounding cities, further growing our intelligence network and targeting the known “trigger pullers,” the small number of people responsible for so many of our shootings.
- **Deepening coordination with the ATF and FBI.** The Adams Administration will look at every avenue to deepen our coordination and information-sharing with the ATF, FBI, and all federal partners. We will leave no stone unturned to find the dealers and traffickers of every illegal gun in our city, and hold them accountable through “impact jurisdiction” lawsuits, if necessary.

Crisis Management System (CMS)

- **Empowering CMS violence interrupters citywide.** We cannot wait until moments of crisis to protect our communities. We must also address the symptoms of these challenges, and help our young people on a better path long before they pick up a gun. Our CMS system is a credible network and extremely effective in reducing gun violence, but they have been hobbled by inefficient government bureaucracy. We will build on the already-successful work of CMS violence interrupters and ensure they have the resources needed to do their work.

Opportunity for Young People

- **Launching an unprecedented Summer Youth Employment program.** Just as we utilize precision policing, we must utilize precision prevention – reaching young people long before they turn to guns and violence. There are at least 250,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are out of school and out of work. The Adams Administration will launch an unprecedented Summer Youth Employment and Youth Engagement

Program for Summer 2022, as we know that gun violence and gun crimes spike in the summer months. Part of this effort will include partnership with large businesses and corporations across the city, with a goal of identifying a paid internship opportunity for every young person who wants one.

- **Expanding programs like the Fair Futures initiative.**

Almost 3,000 middle- and high-school-aged youth are entrusted to our city's care through the foster care system, and about 500-600 age out of the system each year without a consistent adult to rely on. Only 21% of these young people have a high school degree or equivalency when they age out of foster care at 21, and one out of every five enter a homeless shelter within three years of aging out. We will expand support for the Fair Futures initiative that provides life coaches for this vulnerable population through age 26, a proven strategy that helps youth get on the right path.

- **Expanding Community Hiring efforts.**

The Adams Administration will also use the City's enormous purchasing power to create job opportunities for New Yorkers because we know the best antidote to crime is a career. We will work with our partners in Albany, labor, and other trades to pass Community Hiring legislation that will allow the City to require those doing business with us to hire New Yorkers from targeted communities, ensuring residents have access to good jobs and apprentice opportunities.

Expanded Health Care

- **Expanding Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs).**

The Health Department will expand HVIP to 10 additional hospitals in the communities experiencing high rates of gun violence. All participating hospitals will receive trainings, technical assistance as well as data collection and analysis to monitor and respond to fatal and non-fatal trends in community violence.

Expanded Mental Health Care

- **Re-allocating mental health resources where they will matter most.**

Mental health and public safety go hand in hand. The mental health crisis in our city has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it contributes directly to the crisis of gun violence. The Adams Administration will refocus the City dollars spent on existing programming from the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, formerly known as ThriveNYC, into areas of direct

need, including support for those experiencing homelessness on our streets, and get New Yorkers in moments of crisis the help they deserve.

- **Revisiting laws to get people most impacted by mental illness, who are a danger to themselves and others, the care they need as one tool towards reshaping our mental health system.**

We have 300,000 people living with severe mental illness in our city, and all levels of government must work together to create a new system with comprehensive mental health support – especially through an infusion of federal support and funding. Yet this will not happen overnight. In the immediate future, we will revisit existing law so that if someone who can't take care of themselves refuses treatment, they can be hospitalized if that is what a doctor and judge recommend, and that we are using that in the most targeted way possible, especially for people with a documented history of violence.

We will also be appealing for aid from our federal and state partners for additional funding for hospital beds, so that those who can't take care of themselves have someplace to go. Kendra's law, like any court-ordered assisted outpatient treatment order, does not work unless there is a strong and functioning mental health system behind it, and our federal and state partners must work with us to expand access to mental health care, and to ensure that mental health providers in our city take care of low income people on Medicaid.

All City Agencies

- **Identifying a dedicated Anti-Gun Violence Liaison in every city agency.**

Each city agency will identify an Anti-Gun Violence Liaison who will be the dedicated point-of-contact for City Hall's Crisis Management Team, CMS providers, and the NYPD. When this individual is contacted with a gun violence challenge related to their department – for example, the Department of Sanitation liaison is contacted because a gang has been hiding guns under a pile of waste that has not yet been removed – the liaison will be responsible for taking immediate action to solve the problem.

- **Creating a Quality of Life Task Force.** This Task Force will include senior leaders of the NYPD, DSNY, and DHS, as well as mental health experts and additional city leaders as needed. The mission of this Task Force will be charged with providing a comprehensive, coordinated delivery of needed City services to areas that have seen a rise in crime and a deterioration of their neighborhoods.

City Judicial Appointments

- In future mayoral judicial appointments, a demonstrated commitment to keeping violent criminals who use guns off New York City streets will be a top priority and consideration under the Adams Administration.

Key NYC Constituencies

- **Business Leaders: Creating a Crime Stoppers Partnership.**

Currently, the New York City Police Foundation and NYPD's Crime Stoppers program offers cash rewards up to \$3,500 for anonymous information that leads to an arrest. In partnership with local business leaders, the Adams Administration will increase that reward for gun-related information that leads to an arrest – incentivizing even more New Yorkers to play a role in keeping our communities safe. The City will also run a massive campaign across digital and traditional media to alert New Yorkers of this offer.

- **Business Leaders: Expanding Operation Safe Shopper.**

We will utilize and look to grow the already-successful Operation Safe Shopper program – a partnership Mayor Adams initiated as Brooklyn Borough President with local businesses that provides funding for stores to expand camera technology for their stores, if the stores agree to place at least one camera facing the public sphere. In the event of crime, these store owners then work closely with local precincts to canvas footage.

- **Faith Leaders: Launching “Sermons for Safety.”**

In common cause with faith communities across the city, the Administration will launch “Sermons for Safety” – a coordinated effort across all faiths where, for one month, faith leaders will speak to their flocks about the importance of public safety during weekly sermons. They will stress community solutions, support for our young people, and connect them to CMS violence interrupters if needed.

Each of these steps will make a critical difference. But City government alone cannot solve a crisis that has reached across our nation. We will need support from New York State, Federal partners, District Attorneys, the U.S. Southern & Eastern District Courts, and the U.S. Congress.

NEW YORK STATE

BAIL REFORM

The bail reform legislation passed in 2019 was an attempt at addressing unfairness in our criminal justice system. Years later, our pretrial detention system is still not fixed and judges do not have the necessary tools they need to protect communities. New York's bail laws must be fairer, smarter, and more targeted. We must approach pretrial detention through the lens of public safety, something that is not done now. The Adams Administration will propose a common-sense, targeted set of reforms to strengthen our bail laws to change the law as soon as possible.

- **Allowing judges to take dangerousness into account.** New York is the only state in the country that does not allow a judge to detain a defendant who poses a threat to the community. 49 other states, as well as the federal government, allow judges to consider a defendant's dangerousness. New York must also meet this common-sense standard. Judges must be able to evaluate a defendant's criminal history and the circumstances of their alleged crime using reasonable criteria to detain those individuals who pose a threat to the safety of the community, especially regarding gun violence. The power to detain dangerous defendants is not unchecked. A judge must also state his or her reasons for detention on the record, and a defendant must be entitled to a speedy appeal.
- **Demanding accountability and transparency from our system.** Judges' decisions must be public, and their reasons must be stated on the record. There must be full transparency. The public is entitled to full data on how often a judge detains defendants and the race, gender, and age of those detained. Public, easily-accessible data is the check on judges who fail to take a targeted approach towards detention.

These two common-sense, targeted measures would help deliver a pretrial system that is fairer, smarter, and more targeted towards those who would harm our communities and our city.

“Raise The Age”

The Adams Administration fully supports the 2017 New York State legislation to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 18 years old, which amended outdated laws and delivered long-overdue criminal justice reform for our young people. Yet when it comes to guns, too many New Yorkers in their late teens and early twenties have abused this change, demanding young people under 18 take the fall for guns that are not truly theirs.

The Adams Administration advocates for an amended version for gun arrests:

- If a 16 or 17 year old is arrested on a gun charge, law enforcement should ask the individual where they got the gun. If the individual refuses to disclose that information, prosecutors should have the ability to charge the individual in Criminal Court, rather than Family Court.
- The public display of the gun should not be a factor as it is under current legislation; the carrying of a gun should be treated the same way whether the individual displays it or not.

Discovery

Similarly, the 2019 reforms to the discovery process represent a true step forward to make New York City and New York State fairer and more equitable. Yet in the fight against the gun violence, the Adams Administration will advocate for two additional reforms:

- **Allowing District Attorneys to move forward earlier with gun charges.** We urge the State to pass legislation empowering DAs, in the event of a gun charge, to proceed with Section 30.30 if they have enough evidence to bring to trial, even as they accumulate additional pieces. All evidence would be required to be handed over in discovery 30 days before the trial.
- **Removing overly burdensome disclosures.** The voluminous requirements of the new discovery bill have jammed up too many cases. We urge the State to distinguish what is truly necessary for discovery, especially in cases where a complainant directly brought law enforcement to the scene.

Raising the penalty for gun trafficking.

Currently, an individual receives a Class B felony for selling 10 or more guns in a single year. That number is far too generous to traffickers. We urge New York State legislation that lowers the number to 3 or more guns in a one-year period. We also urge State legislation to define the possession of 3 or more guns as presumptive evidence of gun trafficking, not merely gun possession.

Working with the Interstate Gun Tracing Consortium.

This week, the Adams Administration will join Governor Hochul's Public Safety team in the first of a series of meetings around gun violence and shared intelligence across all levels of government. We applaud the Governor's focus on these efforts, including the Interstate Gun Tracing Consortium, and will continue to support them in the coming months.

U.S. SOUTHERN & EASTERN U.S. ATTORNEYS' OFFICES

The NYPD will focus on bringing as many appropriate gun cases as possible to federal prosecutors to take full advantage of the higher penalties in the federal system for gun charges. We additionally urge the U.S. Attorneys' Offices to expand their barriers for prosecution of a gun charge, and enforce out-of-state charges for guns that have been carried over state lines.

DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

Our City's five District Attorneys are critical partners in public safety efforts. The Adams Administration asks them to consider the following steps, and looks forward to working with our DAs in the years ahead.

- **Triage gun charges to expedite the process.** If a District Attorney's office pursues a charge related to guns or gun violence, moving it to the front of the docket – much the same way hospitals triage patients with life-threatening conditions ahead of those less in need – that would serve as a crucial step towards getting guns off our streets much faster.
- **Meet weekly with local leaders.** The Adams Administration proposes a weekly meeting between all five District Attorneys, the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety, and the Police Commissioner to review issues and identify the best ways to support each other moving forward.

THE COURTS

In the wake of COVID-19, our courts have seen a significant slowdown. In the first half of 2019, New York City courts rendered 405 criminal verdicts. In the first half of 2021, these same courts rendered only 18. There is currently a backlog of 4,000 gun cases pending within the New York State court gun initiative announced in the summer of 2021. This slowdown has put our communities at risk, creating an absence of consequences for criminals. In addition to the need to allow judges to consider a defendant's dangerousness, we also need to equip our courts to push these cases toward suppression hearings and then resolution.

We need our stakeholders in the court system to get back into the courthouse in person, where the system works best. We strongly encourage our defense lawyers, public defenders, legal aids, and ADAs to be back into our courtrooms. There must be accountability in our system: for defendants, for victims, for all of us. Funding for some of these stakeholders flows from the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, and the Administration will conduct a detailed assessment of how that money is being spent.

We must also immediately examine:

- **Social Distancing Rules:** Reduce the social distancing requirement in our courtrooms from 6 feet to 3 feet so we can get juries back in court immediately to begin hearing cases safely and efficiently. Our public schools have already moved to a 3-foot rule, and our judicial system should not be different when lives are at stake.
- **DNA Testing Backlog:** Immediately work through the backlog in DNA testing for every gun case that are slowing the judicial process down. The Adams Administration will work with DAs and explore every option to devote more resources to this component of gun prosecutions, including the use of forfeiture funds obtained from past cases and federal stimulus money to receive outside help for testing. We must also examine whether DNA testing is necessary in every case, where other overwhelming evidence is present.
- **Judicial Support:** The Adams Administration will work with the courts and Chief Judge to examine whether it is possible to increase the number of judges who are part of the New York State gun violence initiative, and clear out the backlog as quickly as possible.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The gun violence crisis has hit New York City painfully, but we are far from alone. In the wake of COVID, major cities and localities nationwide have seen alarming rises in shootings, gun incidents, and violence. It is time for our federal leaders to rise to the occasion, and pass common-sense legislation that is supported by an overwhelming majority of Americans. In addition to enhancing partnerships with Federal law enforcement described above, we must see immediate action from Congress on guns:

- We must take the common-sense step of passing UNIVERSAL background checks for gun purchases

- We must pass the long-overdue national ban on assault weapons
- We must pass legislation to make gun trafficking a federal crime
- We must increase penalties for those directly involved in moving guns across state lines, and the organizers of gun trafficking rings
- We must increase penalties for those making straw purchases, or buying firearms from someone legally prohibited from doing so
- We must mobilize the DOJ against the proliferation of ghost guns
- We must repeal the Tiahrt Amendment, which has weakened law enforcement's efforts to prevent gun crimes and limited the public's ability to study gun violence and trafficking

CONCLUSION

This plan will not end our crisis of gun violence overnight. But it will represent the biggest action in years to protect New York City and our communities by marshalling the collective action of all New Yorkers and bringing unprecedented resources to bear. It will also represent a powerful foundation to continue to build on. The Adams Administration will fight for to implement this plan relentlessly in the coming weeks and months with its partners in Albany and Washington, D.C., and will never stop fighting to protect New Yorkers.