ILLINOIS BLUEPRINT FOR PEACE

Principles and Recommendations

The Illinois Blueprint for Peace coalition embraces policies and actions that will:

- Increase health and healing among residents impacted by gun violence and reduce gun violence by addressing the underlying trauma that shapes decisions to carry guns and the harm caused by gun violence.
- Decrease racist and carceral responses to gun violence, including by advocating for alternatives to prosecution for gun possession cases.
- Intervene in the institutional abandonment and divestment of communities of color that is at the root of intracommunal violence by increasing community resources and supporting community-led alternative conflict resolution initiatives.

Invest in Healing and Holistic Violence Prevention

- Fund new and existing community-led initiatives and include funding for grass-roots organizations, as well as seed funding
- Invest in focused and holistic youth development
- Conduct ongoing statewide community needs assessments or community surveys, ensuring such a strategy includes community input
- Increase availability and accessibility of conflict-resolution and social-emotional learning resources
- Increase mental health support for those directly and indirectly impacted by gun violence
- Increase promotion of, and services focused on, de-escalation practices and healthy methods to defuse conflict
- Build safe spaces where people going through conflict have an opportunity to build pro-social skills
- Increase and sustain investment in restorative justice practices
- Begin preparation prior to re-entry into the community
- Invest in community-based organizations focused on re-entry work
- Actively address misinformation and redefine narratives
- Develop a clear and shared understanding of social structures associated with gun violence
- Focus efforts on relationship and power building
- Support community and organizational capacity building efforts
- Utilize asset-mapping as a strengths-based approach when working with different communities

Redesign Criminal Processes

- Increase transparency around the charging process
- Create a mechanism for ensuring community voice in the charging and court processes
- Reverse the presumption that gun possession cases should be charged as harshly as possible; instead, begin with the presumption that gun possession cases that can be charged as misdemeanors should be
- Better analyze statewide data regarding who is arrested and charged, disaggregated by race, age, and arrest location for all gun offenses
- Expand successful diversion programs based on research-based best practices
- Encourage training and education on public safety data supporting diversion as well as specific local diversion programs
- Extend and expand the First Time Weapon Offender Program
- Implement mechanisms to review Fourth Amendment issues separate from pre-trial discovery process
- Create a mechanism for court practitioners to collect and identify patterns of police misconduct
- Issue real consequences for police witnesses' failures to appear–and other state delays
- Eliminate pretextual stops and consent searches in practice and in law

Improve Sentencing and Policy Integrity

- Develop robust gun safety education programs
- Communicate clearly about how to comply with gun laws and penalties for violation
- Safely reduce barriers to licensure
- Emphasize compliance-focused approaches to violations
- Distinguish between possession and violence
- Expand alternatives to prosecution and conviction
- Reduce penalty for first-time gun possession violations to a misdemeanor
- End mandatory minimum prison sentences
- Match probation length to length of effective programming
- Eliminate gun enhancements for violent crime
- End the transfer youth to adult court without a hearing, primarily for gun-related offenses
- Disband post-conviction registries and other surveillance practices that jeopardize secure housing and successful reentry without any proof of effectiveness in reducing future gun violence