**RECLAIM THE BUDGET!**

Our communities deserve to thrive! We know how best to solve the challenges facing our city, not big corporations or the politicians who serve them! **We demand:**

**No Raise for the Philadelphia Police Department!** We are already spending too much money on a violent, ineffective police force. The PPD should not get any more of our money. In fact, a majority of Philadelphians surveyed believe City Council should cut the police department budget so that we can reinvest in the community programs and services that have been underfunded for too long.

**Tax the Rich!** Philadelphia was already giving away more municipal property tax revenue than any city in the U.S., while remaining the country's poorest big city before the pandemic hit. Last year’s budget cuts further impoverished our communities while the gap between rich and poor exploded in growth. There’s only one solution: we must tax big business, real estate and the super rich to bring our city back to budget justice.

**Commit to 10 Years of Investment in Our Communities!** For too long, City Leadership has operated in a scarcity mindset, claiming that there is not enough money to invest in the programs and services that community members have been asking for. The money is there, but it’s being poured in the carceral system and hoarded by major corporations and nonprofits who don’t pay their share of taxes to the City they occupy. Our communities are in crisis because of decades of divestment—COVID-19 and increasing rates of gun violence have only sharpened this reality for more people. The only way out of crises is to commit to a 10-year plan, making annual investments in the following community programs:

- **$100 million for Housing for All:**
  - **Homes for all!** Among major cities Philadelphia is uniquely positioned to ensure every resident has a safe, accessible and permanently affordable home. We demand:
- $10 million for a program to acquire vacant, abandoned, blighted, and auctioned-off land to develop as permanently, deeply affordable housing
- $5 million to create a fund for technical assistance and investment for Community Land Trusts to acquire land and properties from the land bank
- $3 million/year for 10 years to preserve existing PHA housing without displacement
- $10 million for acquiring expiring LIHTC projects & Section 8 Site-Based Projects
- $2 million for technical assistance, investment and maintenance for these programs
- Bold investment and expansion of the Basic Systems Repair Program to support homeowners with essential repairs

  - **Fund tenant rights!** Evictions are violence and we can end them in Philadelphia. The Eviction Diversion program is a proven success for keeping us in our homes. If a legal eviction is filed every tenant deserves a lawyer.
    - $2 million to fund the Eviction Diversion Program
    - $3 million to fund Right to Counsel

  - **Fix city programs!** Everyone deserves safe, healthy, and accessible housing. The Office of Homeless Services is failing to provide this despite their stated mission to make homelessness “brief, non-recurring, and rare.” We demand:
    - Fully fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Land Bank, and Office of Homeless Services at their pre-COVID levels
    - $20 million for safe, stable, welcoming, long-term emergency shelter
    - $200K to invest in improving the OHS data dashboard with significant improvements and transparency

- **$100 million for Gun Violence Prevention:**
  - **Invest in our Rec Centers!** It’s especially important to prioritize the Rec Centers in the neighborhoods hardest hit by gun violence, so community members (young people in particular) have a space to go and engage in healthy activities. And it’s critical that this money be spent on increasing staffing levels and youth programming. We want to see:
- Equitable staffing: where Rec Centers in communities that have experienced the most divestment get more than 1 staff person since these communities rely more heavily on rec centers to stay active and build community.

- Young people on staff (year-round) that are trained in conflict mediation and de-escalation. Investing in young leaders and giving them the skills to prevent violence is an important part of building up a community capacity to prevent and respond to harm without relying on police intervention. And they can also do things like youth and elder outreach.

- Every rec center outfitted with a music studio space, with community organizations like YEAH Philly, Beyond the Bars, and Sankofa Healing Studio running music-centered youth programs.

  - **Invest in our Libraries!** As with Rec Centers, libraries are a critical resource for our communities, giving people of all ages a space to stay cool in the summer, to access the internet, and to learn. We want to see:

    - Regular programming that supports elders in understanding how to use technology and supports community members in getting IDs. These would address barriers folks have with accessing jobs and social services.

  - **Invest in Reentry Services!** Philadelphians who are newly released from prison, jails, and detention centers need support to give them room to find stability after being separated from their family and community. Support for returning citizens is a necessary part of reducing violence and recidivism. We want to see:

    - The Philadelphia Department of Prisons should be more transparent and report out regularly on the activities and impact of the portion of their budget dedicated to social services and reentry.

    - The programs and services that the City offers to folks who haven’t been involved with the carceral system should be fully accessible to folks who have been. To ensure that formerly incarcerated people and anyone with court involvement have access to the same resources as everyone else, departments should set aside specific funding for this purpose, as well as identify internal policy changes that can reduce barriers to access. Too often we see a sliver of funding/programs set aside for formerly incarcerated folks when they should have access to the same resources as everyone else.
Immediate housing and cash assistance available to returning citizens. The Office of Reentry Partnerships is offering direct financial assistance to folks released during the COVID pandemic, and that should continue beyond the pandemic. In order for that to happen, the Office of Reentry Partnerships should be funded at increased levels in order to invest much more directly in the thousands of people coming home and the organizations that support them.

- **Invest in Community Organizations Doing the Work!** While the Office of Violence Prevention tries to offer small grants to community organizations, $2 million split between a handful of groups is not enough for them to create sustainable programming that supports our communities. Instead of the city-run programs getting the bulk of resources, we need to invest in community-based organizations that are making important interventions that allow our community members to heal and feel more safe. We want to see:
  - CeaseFire receive enough funding expand to key districts in Germantown and West Philly, building on the success of their work in the 22nd and 29th Police Districts
  - Investing in community-based programs that are responsive to community needs. These programs should include: trauma-informed care; hospital-based gun violence intervention programs; healing justice centers; culturally competent and relevant programs that provide support for youth and families; victim and witness services; targeted violence reduction programs.
  - Youth empowerment programs in all public schools, rec centers, and libraries that don’t just focus on job training and education but rather programs that create space for them to show up authentically, talk about their experiences and what they need to feel safe, and give them tools to navigate the traumas of poverty and violence and tools for healthy communication, conflict mediation, and problem solving.

- **$50 million for Healthcare:**
  - **Invest in Community-Based Behavioral and Mental Health Services!** We need real mental health services and support that can both respond with care in a crisis and also provide long term healthcare that leads to real healing. The City should no longer expect community-based organizations to rely on private funding, because
that will never be enough to respond to the growing and urgent need across the City. We want to see:

- Fully fund Mobile Crisis Units operated by DBHIDS. This would increase the numbers of teams and vans they have ready and reduce the wait times, giving more community members the help they need when they need it.

- Subsidies for community behavioral health programs to offer better wages to their direct service workers. Too many workers are underpaid and cannot afford to stay in the field and build longer term relationships with community members, which is a key component to building trust and keeping clients coming back.

- Support the proven ability of Philadelphia’s drug users, and those working with them, to keep themselves and those around them healthy, while addressing the legacy of racism and community devastation created by the war on drugs:
  - Support and expedite the implementation and sustainability of Safehouse, a non-profit organization providing overdose prevention services to persons who use drugs. Explore decentralized instances of peer-run overdose prevention sites.
  - Lift the ban on methadone treatment clinics in District 1, 6 and 10 so that people all over the city can access treatment regardless of where they live.
  - Continue lowering barriers to access so that more individuals can engage in medication-assisted treatment on a consistent basis.
  - Support the creation of a community health worker program led by active drug users and sex workers.

- Funding for mobile overdose prevention sites. Similar to the current model of mobile needle exchange, to be staffed with both a nurse, trained in the administration of naloxone and to recognize emergency complications of intravenous drug use, as well as a social worker, who can help connect opioid users with substance abuse treatment resources.

- Funding for full-time positions for licensed mental health therapists at agencies that contract with Philadelphia’s Department of Behavioral Health. Some agencies hire therapists as contractors without benefits and not as salaried employees. The lesser desirability of a contract position is one reason that there is a shortage of mental health therapists at some agencies. This shortage results in some patients being put on waiting lists.
and having to wait weeks or even months before they can start needed mental health therapy.

- **$2 million to Support Caregivers**
  - Increase access to Childcare Voucher Programs! There are too many barriers for parents to get access to vouchers.

- **$250,000 to Implement Trauma Informed Practices**
  - Make every City agency work for the most vulnerable communities! It's not enough to have an Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. It's critical that all City offices and departments that fund, design, and/or deliver programs or services meant to serve at-risk communities are staffed by people who understand the intersecting harms that our cities most vulnerable communities have to navigate in order to ensure that they are culturally competent and trauma informed. This will require:
    - The training and hiring of folks from Philadelphia's most underfunded communities to design and implement programs for those same communities.
    - Regular evaluation of City-run departments programs related to housing and homelessness, mental health services, education, job training, violence prevention, and the criminal legal system (police, courts, and the prisons). And there should be direct community involvement in the evaluation of these programs and services.
    - With ongoing evaluation, programs that prove to be ineffective or outright harmful should be transformed or abolished, and programs that are successful at keeping people housed and safe should receive additional investment.
  - Trauma Informed curriculum and paraprofessionals in our schools!

- And we demand bold, visionary investments towards a fossil-fuel free future!
These are the values that guide us:

- **Police don't keep us safe.** Too many people in Philadelphia are living in poverty through a pandemic without the things they need to survive. But instead of investing in housing, education, jobs or healthcare all our communities have been offered is an expensive and violent police force. For Fiscal Year 2021, the police budget takes up over 16% of the city's total $4.89 billion budget. The city must stop investing our dollars into a system built to uphold slavery. By re-imagining public safety and investing in our communities, we can begin to heal.

- **The only way to fight violence is with community investment.** In a community with needs that have been neglected for decades, violence is often a response of desperation to meet those needs by any means necessary. The root causes of violence cannot be addressed by policing. We need real mental health services and support that can both respond with care in a crisis and also provide long term healthcare that leads to real healing. We need safe, permanently affordable housing and good union jobs so we can get out of poverty and thrive.

- **We can reduce gun violence with long-term community investment.** Our problems cannot be “solved” in 1 Fiscal Year. Our communities need City Leadership to commit to long-term investments so change can actually happen. We need to resource and build up community-led programs that are engaging in violence prevention and conflict resolution to help drive down the epidemic of gun violence. We need to decriminalize sex work and drug use and create systems of support for folks engage in both. And it's especially important to support young people by investing in our schools, recreation centers, and programs that give them healthy choices.

- **Corporations owe a debt to our communities and should pay their fair share.** Comcast, UPenn, Aramark as well as giant real estate and developer interests shape the decisions of our City Council rather than the needs of working people like us. If corporations paid their fair share, our communities would have the schools, housing and jobs we need to thrive.

- **We need to invest in both our future and in healing from the past.** After we invest in the basic resources our communities need to thrive we also need to ensure we invest in programs that support healing from the trauma of poverty and living in a racist world. The services that the city provides must comply with trauma informed practices and be regularly audited to ensure they continue to be. We need bold experiments in incorporating healing practices and accessibility into every city agency.