



# Community Advisory Committee Annual Report

## 2023



.....

## MISSION

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) continued its work in 2023 as part of the City of Philadelphia's MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) Initiative. The CAC's mission is to: 1) help the criminal justice partner agencies better understand what is important to those directly impacted by the criminal justice system, 2) provide advice to the criminal justice partners on concrete ways to further the criminal justice reform effort, 3) create pathways for the inclusion of knowledge and experience of community members of varying perspectives in the reform work, and 4) promote greater transparency and accountability of the criminal justice partner agencies with the broader community as it relates to criminal justice reform.

## THE CAC IN 2023

The second half of the year welcomed new members to the committee to continue advancing its mission and increase greater visibility of the CAC in the community. The CAC focused its efforts on accomplishing this by kicking off a series of community-based events with different areas of focus and engagement approaches. Additionally, CAC members continued ongoing engagement with justice system partners through various special meetings and participation in SJC committee and subcommittee meetings. The following describes the CAC; 1) events and activities in the community; 2) ongoing engagement with justice partners; 3) recommendations put forth to justice partners; and 4) what's ahead in 2024.

## CAC COMMUNITY-BASED EVENTS

### **The Embracing Philadelphia Resource Fair**

**Was** held on August 22, 2023, and was a huge success. The goal of the event was to increase the presence of the CAC, bring the community together for healing and learning, and showcase various community agencies and the supportive services that they offer. The

#### **Impact:**

- 403 people attended
- 37 organizations present
- 61 vaccinations administered
- 500 pairs of socks distributed
- 39 HIV tests administered
- 29 people received haircuts
- 96 bags of food items distributed
- 403 meals distributed
- 15 volunteers from Penn present

Commented [PJ1]: was held on August 22, 2023 and was a huge success.

event ran seamlessly and demonstrated the power of community collaboration. Vendors were present and brought their own tables, tents, and signage. Volunteers were on site all day to provide support. Community members came to enjoy the event throughout the day from start to finish. CAC members were in attendance to provide support and share information with the community. An impact summary of the event is attached in the appendix as Attachment A.



**Legal Representation Panel Discussion** was held on October 24, 2023. Community members were invited to an up close and personal conversation on legal representation. Specifically, the goal of the discussion was to help community members: learn how to navigate the criminal court system; be empowered to participate in their own defense; build a strong case; and receive support from the community through each



step. The event was held at the West Philadelphia YMCA and panelists included Steve Austin; Devonte Douglas; Defender Association of Philadelphia; and Martha Williams. Panelists shared their thoughts on how to work effectively with your attorney and how to successfully advocate for yourself. Panelist bios are attached in the appendix as Attachment B.

**Rolling Engagement Van (REV)** in partnership with Why Not Prosper and the CAC, went out for a soft-launch event on December 23, 2023. The REV parked at Kensington and Allegheny Avenue to provide food, clothing and resource referrals to members of the community. Over 200 people engaged with CAC members and other volunteers at the event. A formal ribbon-cutting and launch will be held in January 2024, and the REV will implement a weekly schedule to serve all parts of Philadelphia to engage with members of the community across the city. An impact summary of the event is attached in the appendix as Attachment C.

Commented [PJ2]: In partnership with Why Not Prosper and the CAC, went out...



## JUSTICE PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

CAC members continued engagement with justice partners throughout the year to elevate and advocate on behalf of the larger Philadelphia community by attending and participating in the following:

- Quarterly Implementation Team meetings
- Data Team meetings

- Microgrant subcommittee meetings
- Special meeting and tour with DC Bagby at Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility
- Special meeting with Dana Bazelon, Policy Director at the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office
- Special meeting with Dr. Lisa Colton, Director of Crisis Related Systems and Serge Levin to learn more about the 988 hotline and mental health services)

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO JUSTICE PARTNERS

In furtherance of the CAC's mission, the CAC put forth three recommendations to justice partners in 2023:

- **Recommendation to Philadelphia Prison Department** following CAC member participation in a tour of the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility hosted by DC Bagby; the recommendations focused on conditions of confinement, staffing, access to services for people being held in the jail, and consistency of supports for incarcerated people upon release, such as basic needs and job placement.
- **Recommendation on House Arrest** access and eligibility to eliminate discriminatory practices and allow more people to be safely released on house arrest.
- **Recommendation on 988/Mental Health Services** to improve practices and provide better and more efficient services to people experiencing a mental health crisis, with the goal of avoiding unnecessary incarceration for people in need of mental health support.

## BUDGET

The tables below reflect the CAC's FY 24 budget and specific costs for the Rolling Engagement Van:

ITEM	FY24
Budget for CAC, events, supplies, focus groups, etc.	\$40,000.00
CAC Stipends (\$250/per person/per month)	\$60,000.00
TOTAL	\$100,000.00

ITEM	Units/Costs	REV VAN COSTS
Rolling Engagement Van (Funded through the Racial Equity Grant)	\$107,000	
WNP Reimbursement for van deposit		\$3,000
State IDs and/or Driver's License	100 * 41.5 (plus fee \$2/money order)	\$4,350
Septa Rolling Passes	pack of 50 = \$1288. (5 packs) - total 250	\$6,440
Insurance annual cost		\$6,200
Wrapping of the van	TBD – this is an estimate	\$2,500
Annual gas cost for the van	\$140 a week for a year	\$6,720
Marketing budget		\$2,000
iPad	3 @ \$400 each	\$1,200
iPad case	3 @ \$50/each	\$150

Internet data plan/yr		\$2,160
Hygiene products		\$5,280
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$147,000</b>

## WHAT'S NEXT IN 2024?

Building on momentum in the second half of 2023, the CAC will develop a strategic plan for 2024 including hosting more events in the community. The strategic plan will outline our goals and priorities for the coming year, with a continued focus on visibility within the community, particularly with weekly REV events across the city. Additionally, the CAC will continue to meet regularly and actively recruit new members to elevate and represent diverse voices across Philadelphia. Finally, the CAC will put forth additional necessary recommendations for justice partners to ensure the successes achieved thus far as part of the MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge grant are sustained and expanded.

Commented [PJ3]: MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge grant

Commented [KG4R3]: Completed.

## CAC MEMBERS

Dr. Charlotte Brickhouse, Chair	Merletta Matthews
Reverend Michelle Simmons, Co-Chair	Andrea Rivera
Mary Archer	Margaret Robinson
Jerry Coleman	Michelle Sonsino
Chaka Fattah, Jr.	Stephanie Wilkins
Kris Henderson	Tessa Upin
Eileen Horgan	

Special thank you to Kea Greene from the Managing Director's Office for assisting the CAC!

Commented [PJ5]: Include the link to the website - maybe

READ MORE ABOUT OUR MEMBERS  
ON OUR WEBSITE



## APPENDIX

### Attachment A



### Overview

The Embracing Philadelphia Resource Fair was a huge success. The goal of the event was to increase the presence of the CAC, bring the community together for healing and learning, and showcase various community agencies and the supports that they offer. The event ran seamlessly and demonstrated the power of community collaboration. Vendors were present and brought their own tables, tents, and signage. Volunteers were on site all day to provide support. Community members came to enjoy the event throughout the day from start to finish. CAC members were in attendance to provide support and share information with the community.



### The numbers:

Impact:	Budget:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 403 people attended</li><li>● 37 organizations present</li><li>● 61 vaccinations administered</li><li>● 500 pairs of socks distributed</li><li>● 39 HIV tests administered</li><li>● 29 people received haircuts</li><li>● 96 bags of food items distributed</li><li>● 403 meals distributed</li><li>● 15 volunteers from Penn present</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Game truck: \$1400</li><li>● Photographer: \$200</li><li>● 360 Photo Booth: \$575</li><li>● Catering/Food: \$1200</li><li>● Donation to church: \$300</li><li>● DJ: \$400</li><li>■ TOTAL: \$4075</li></ul>

Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The community came out to enjoy the event, they were excited and appreciative</li> <li>● The kids loved the game truck</li> <li>● The resources and giveaways were meaningful to the community</li> <li>● The DJ created a positive, upbeat atmosphere</li> <li>● The event went well given the limited planning time</li> <li>● Vendors were able to bring all their own supplies</li> </ul>
Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Low representation from city agencies, next time be more persistent to confirm their presence</li> <li>● Some agencies were walking around or left early while the event was still taking place</li> <li>● More signage, water bottles, and trashcans would be helpful</li> <li>● Time constraints: CAC members were onboarded shortly before the event, therefore planning and member contributions were extremely limited</li> <li>● Better promotion of the event to increase attendance: an electronic flyer and hashtag that can easily be shared on social media, a hard copy of the flyer to distribute, more detail regarding the event and vendors</li> <li>● Two sign in sheets to better gauge attendance: one for vendors and one for community members</li> <li>● Men were turned away from HIV testing</li> </ul>
Shout outs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CAC member Jerry stayed all day and was a huge help</li> <li>● LaSalle University sponsored a second game truck with basketball hoops</li> <li>● Green Tree Community Health Foundation paid for the Caribbean food</li> <li>● Dr. Brickhouse and Rev. Michelle did an interview with WDAS after the event</li> <li>● A variety of community members were present, including residents from three recovery houses</li> </ul>



## **Attachment B**

### Panelist Bios from October 24, 2023 Event

#### **Steve Austin**

Throughout his incarceration he was a front line advocate for improved prison conditions. He authored the "Austin Litigation" which changed the face of Prisons in Pennsylvania. As a Peer Specialist he facilitated violence prevention, anger management, character development, thinking for A change, citizenship and batterers classes for over 30 years for youth and adults.

After 42 years in prison he was released on April 1st, 2017. He connected with Mothers In Charge where he immediately began volunteer work facilitating Participatory Defense; a community organizing model designed to help folks with cases, understand and navigate the criminal justice system. He quickly became the Director of the program. While doing this, at the tender age of 60 he was encouraged to go to Harcum College, whereupon, on May 15th he received an Associate of Art Degree in Human Services, Class of 2021. He is also the recipient of "Harcum College Human Services Leadership Award for 2021. The leadership award is presented to students who have demonstrated service to the college or community, have met academic excellence, and have exhibited strong leadership qualities".

With a National Institute of Corrections certification, he is also a CLE trainer for Philadelphia Attorney's, a dedicated ICAN member, a tenacious criminal justice reform advocate, a proponent of "NO CHILD IS BORN BAD" and committed to the abolishing of Life Without Parole sentencing for Juveniles in the United States.

#### **Devonte Douglas**

DeVonté Douglass was born and raised in North Philadelphia. He is a high school graduate of Thomas FitzSimons High and an alum of Peirce College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he graduated with his Associate of Science Degree in Criminal Justice and Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. He is currently studying to go to Law School.

DeVonté advocates for those incarcerated and fights for equal justice for Innocent or Guilty individuals. He is passionate about those wrongfully imprisoned and those who deserve a second chance at being free. He has been a Core Member of the North Philly Participatory Defense Hub, a Facilitator for the Best Outcomes Hub, a National Trainer for the National Participatory Defense Network, and an Official Visitor of the Pennsylvania Prison Society,

DeVonté has expertise in the Criminal Justice System that comes from real-life experiences within his family, whom he watched be wrongfully convicted by the Criminal Justice System. He is a former intern of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Zachary C. Shaffer. He is a former intern for the Criminal Defense Firm Montoya Shaffer, LLC. He is a former Peer Crisis Responder and Youth Aid Panel Member for the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office under the leadership of Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner. He is a former intern for prominent criminal defense and appeal attorney Norris E. Gelman. He is currently employed as a Judicial Secretary in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas.

### **Martha Williams**

When you've had a communal upbringing with neighbors who felt it was their duty to participate in your care and intervene when necessary, today is a different world. There was a time when the block was a tight-knit community. The schools had safety patrols, school orchestras, and student governments. One parent could support a family and still have time to visit the school and check homework.

The memory of these times propels her to uplift her community in this destructive and demoralizing period.

She came into this space by way of her son's arrest. The experience of her own lack of knowledge of the legal processes brought her into Participatory Defense, where she is a member of several Hubs. Most recently, she has become an Official Visitor with the Pennsylvania Prison Society.

Even after her son's conviction she stayed to help other families navigate the confusion that comes after arrest.

She has said that the impact of incarceration led her to work to preserve the dignity of people enduring such a traumatic process. The trauma expands beyond the person incarcerated into the lives of their loved ones and community where it might reverberate for generations.

### **Defender Association: Andrew Pappas and Kate Kinsley**

The Defender Association of Philadelphia provides high-quality, client-centered legal representation, connection to social services, and reentry support to adults and juveniles in Philadelphia, engaging in advocacy and community collaboration to improve the lives of vulnerable populations, protect the Constitution, and ensure a fair and equitable justice system.

Though they represent 70% of the people arrested in Philadelphia, their services go beyond the courtroom to help clients get the support they need to improve their lives. This includes adult representation, child & youth representation, social services, criminal justice reform, community partnerships and engagement, police accountability, and more.

Andrew Pappas currently serves as the Managing Director for the Pretrial Unit of the Defender Association. He has been at the Defender Association for 12 years. Immediately prior to taking on the Managing Director of Pretrial role, he served as Chief of the Municipal Court Pretrial Unit for two years. Prior to that he was the Assistant Chief of the Municipal Court Pretrial Unit for three years.

## Attachment C



<b>REV Outreach and Support</b>	Community members from the Community Advisory Committee, SWAG and Why Not Prosper came together for a pre-launch of the Rolling Engagement Van (REV) to provide support to community members at the intersection of Kensington Ave. and Allegheny Ave.
<b>What was accomplished?</b>	Community members received information specifically for substance use treatment and legal support. Clothing donations, food items, bags, toys and hot meals were distributed. Surveys were conducted by CAC members to better understand the population and needs within the area. Over 135 community members were supported.

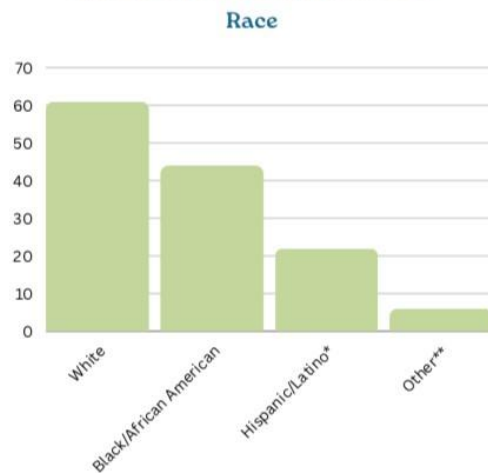
What went well	Feedback for next time
<input type="checkbox"/> Location was high-demand <input type="checkbox"/> Community showed up, spirits were high <input type="checkbox"/> Many clothing/winter items distributed <input type="checkbox"/> 135 surveys conducted <input type="checkbox"/> Good flow of people, including support staff to help with distribution <input type="checkbox"/> Van had a noticeable presence with the wrapping and parking location <input type="checkbox"/> Community members conveyed their gratitude for the support	<input type="checkbox"/> Adjust survey question wording and options to increase response detail (clarify race and ethnicity options, add option for past system involvement, indicate if Spanish-speaking only) <input type="checkbox"/> Have an awareness of resources within walking distance for immediate support <input type="checkbox"/> Provide an opportunity for community members to follow up about specific needs <input type="checkbox"/> Manage lines to avoid crowds <input type="checkbox"/> Offer Narcan <input type="checkbox"/> Check if other organizations are tabling in the area and what they offer
Primary needs reported	Specific requests from survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing (51%) <input type="checkbox"/> Food (43%) <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing (43%) <input type="checkbox"/> Employment (22%) <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Use Treatment (13%) <input type="checkbox"/> Education (11%) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Treatment (6%) <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Support (6%) <input type="checkbox"/> Family Services (4%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Wound kits <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Clothing (especially sneakers and undergarments) <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries <input type="checkbox"/> ESL classes <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits support <input type="checkbox"/> Court fines and fees <input type="checkbox"/> Recovery Housing/Detox <input type="checkbox"/> Children's items (diapers, clothing)

## What is Next?

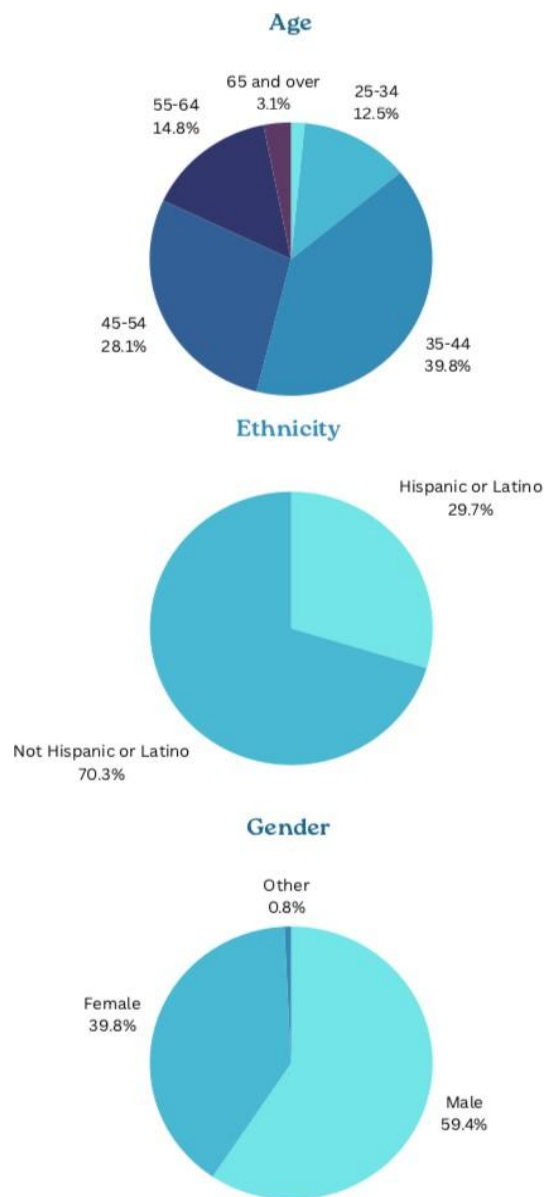
- Review survey data to inform future REV Events (ex: review zip codes to indicate possible location for next event, obtain additional requested supports to better equip outreach teams and improve services)
- Collect feedback from other participants (ex: SWAG team)
- CAC Strategic Planning Meeting, Saturday, January 20th
- Official REV launch and press release, Saturday, January 27th
- Map out future REV locations and events

## Demographics

Data is based on 128 surveys administered



(There was an option to include multiple race selections) \*The Hispanic/Latino includes individuals who specified: Ecuador, Dominican Republic, and Honduras. \*\*Other includes individuals who specified: Arabic, American, N/A, mixed, and other.



**Highest represented zip codes where participants reside**

<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>Number of People</b>
19134 (Zip code of area)	54
19140	12
19124	9
19133	4
Other zip codes	49