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## What can you do?

- Call your city council rep
- Email your city council rep
- **Testify at the budget public hearing, August 3, 6:30 PM at City Hall.** Tell City Council that you want to see police funds reallocated to non-police safety programs:
  - \$5 million to start an unarmed civilian traffic safety division.
  - \$3 million for a STAR emergency response program separate from OPD.
  - \$4 million to affordable housing programs.
  - \$2 million for parks, libraries, & youth programs.
  - \$1 million for workforce development / job-seeking services.



## What do I need to know to testify at the public hearing?

A public hearing (which is an open meeting between the public, city council, and the mayor) is scheduled before every new budget is voted in. Anyone may attend and testify ("testify" = speak in front of city council, on the record). **Testifying at the public hearing can be a powerful action--it is the public's only formal opportunity to comment on how city funds are spent.** Last year 71 people testified in opposition of the 2021 proposed budget, many in support of reallocating police funds to other social services. Council reps from districts where people testified voted to reallocate police funds.

You may email written testimony to [cityclerk@cityofomaha.org](mailto:cityclerk@cityofomaha.org) with your name and address. Or you can attend the Public Hearing on the city budget (currently scheduled for August 3 at City Hall) and speak to the City Council in person. When you attend a Public Hearing you will sign in to speak, wait for your turn, & then be given 3 minutes to address City Council.

## Know Your District Representative

### District 1:

Pete.Festersen@cityofomaha.org | 402-444-5527

### District 2:

Juanita.Johnson@cityofomaha.org | 402-444-5524

### District 3:

Danny.Begley@cityofomaha.org | 402-444-5525

### District 4:

Vinny.Palermo@cityofomaha.org | 402-444-5522

### District 5:

Don.Rowe@cityofomaha.org | 402-444-5528

### District 6:

Brinker.Harding@cityofomaha.org | 402-444-5523

### District 7:

Aimee.Melton@cityofomaha.org | 402-444-5526

### \*Sources Used:

- 1 Bump, P., Washington Post (2020) Over the Past 60 Years, More Spending on Police Hasn't Meant Less Crime.
- 2 Drazdys, D., Hicks, A., Makinejad, S., Roh, S., Parker, A.,... Leimer, T. City of Omaha (2020). Annual Budget For Calendar Year 2021.
3. City of Lincoln (2021) City and County Strengthen Mental Health Response.
- 4 Sachs, D., Denverite (2021) In the first six months of health care professionals replacing police officers, no one they encountered was arrested.
- 5 Srikanth, A., The Hill (2021) National Database on Police Killings Tracked 1,127 Deaths Last Year.
- 6 Thorn, D., KRON4 (2021) Berkeley Works to Reform Police Traffic Enforcement.



For more information, check us out here:  
[www.omahaabolitionresearch.org](http://www.omahaabolitionresearch.org)  
 Instagram, Twitter, FB: @omahaabolition

## The 2022 Omaha Police Budget

# HOW WE MAKE OMAHA SAFER & WHY MORE POLICE FUNDING ISN'T THE ANSWER



1

## Police don't make us safe.

The OPD police chief asserts that any police budget cuts would "hurt crime prevention." Unfortunately, **greater funding to police is not correlated with a reduction in crime or safer communities.**\* This false link between police & safety means that your tax dollars are being used for things like helicopters, tasers, & police overtime rather than services that actually improve everyone's safety & quality of life in Omaha.



2

## ...But Omaha spends more on police than almost anything else.

**More general fund budget tax dollars are spent on police than all other city departments combined,** excluding the fire department. The OPD budget accounted for **36.7%** of Omaha General Fund budget in 2021.



The police department budget has grown significantly in recent years as well, going from about \$99 million in 2010 to \$164 million in 2021.\* That is a **63% increase to the OPD budget** over 11 years while the population of Omaha only increased 17%. The General Fund is directly tax-funded and separate from other revenue sources, which means OPD gets more than \$164 million when we account for grants & endowments.

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## It doesn't have to be this way. There are other options for safety.

**Other cities are shifting priorities away from policing to initiatives that improve safety. Omaha can, too.** Research shows that economic insecurity is the biggest factor in decreasing crime & increasing community safety.\* Instead of continuing to expand the police budget, Omaha could invest those funds into job programs, affordable housing, free citywide internet, parks, libraries, & food security. They could also divert police funds to explore cost-saving non-police intervention & safety models like the ones below:

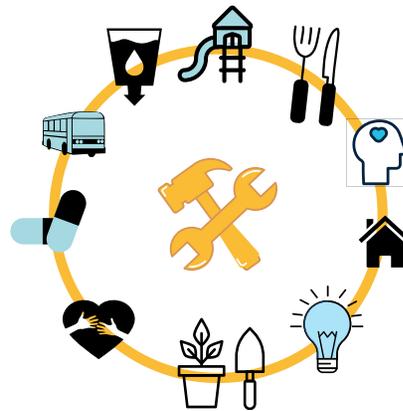
## 2021 Omaha General Fund Budget



Lincoln, NE just signed a contract to explore non-law enforcement crisis response modeled on Oregon's CAHOOTS program.\*

The STAR program in Denver, CO is a similar program that uses trained health workers to respond to low-level incidents. In 6 months they responded to 748 incidents without any arrests or jail time.\*

Last year 1,127 people were killed by police in the U.S.\* Berkeley, CA is creating an unarmed civilian traffic enforcement division to reduce the number of violent police interactions.\*



Some ways you can help make a change



We need to redefine public safety, break our cycles of harm and inequality, & build care into our future systems