February 2025

Conversations on Community Safety

WILSON
CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND JUSTICE
AT DUKE LAW

Duke
NORTH CAROLINA
LEADERSHIP FORUM

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The North Carolina Leadership Forum (NCLF) provides an opportunity for policy leaders across the state to come together, discuss the nature of issues central to the future of our state, and build the relationships and skills to continue those discussions long after NCLF programming has concluded. The 2024 NCLF Cohort consisted of 33 diverse civic, business, and political leaders from across North Carolina tasked with addressing the important topic of community safety. NCLF brought these participants together in a series of four multi-day facilitated sessions. For this series, NCLF partnered with the Wilson Center for Science and Justice at Duke Law both to provide research and policy expertise and to participate in the conversation as a way of better understanding community views. NCLF brought these participants together in a series of four multi-day facilitated sessions to address the question,

> ### "What should we do to keep North Carolina communities safe?

NCLF leaders chose the topic of community safety because safety, crime, and justice are frequently cited as some of the most critical issues to North Carolinians.

Addressing these issues presents unique challenges because various values and concerns inform people's beliefs and perspectives. This was immediately clear at the first meeting when forum participants shared their own concerns and values. Close to 100 concerns were listed, including school safety, violence against women, inadequate mental health support, traffic safety, and distrust of the justice system, to name just a few. Similarly, when participants were asked what they valued when thinking about keeping NC communities safe, a wide variety of ideas were shared, such as transparency, equity, personal responsibility, fairness, and respect.

The cohort selected five groups of values to guide their conversations —

1. Prevention / Equity
2. Accountability / Equality
3. Law and Order
4. Mercy / Compassion / Redemption
5. Evidence-Based Strategies

— and engaged in discussions and exercises that revealed how past experiences affected their interpretation and prioritization of these values.

Forum participants also narrowed the group's concerns to four for further, in-depth discussion. Notably, not all participants shared every concern or agreed that they should be addressed with policy actions, but all participants discussed each concern and ways to address it. The cohort then discussed a handful of actions related to each concern in more detail to better understand the benefits and downsides associated with those actions.

Four chosen concerns and proposed actions for discussion

1. **There is a lack of adequate and appropriate treatment for behavioral or mental health needs.**

   - The NC General Assembly should amend North Carolina's civil commitment laws to make inpatient/outpatient commitment easier (i.e., relax the current standard of permitting commitment only if the subject is "a danger to himself or others" such that those who are unable to look after themselves and stay safe can also be committed)

   - Expand the behavioral health workforce by increasing General Assembly funding for new initiatives and existing programs at state community colleges and universities

2. **Guns make communities less safe.**

   - Implement red flag laws to remove guns from people who are a danger to themselves or others.

   - Ban high-capacity magazines and other gun modifications and hold all sellers in the commerce chain accountable for the ban

   - Have more police on the streets with better training and pay

   - NC General Assembly should mandate that schools educate on conflict resolution and lethality of guns

3. **The collateral consequences of justice system involvement are harmful to individuals, families, and communities.**

   - North Carolina should eliminate all fees and reduce fines, and link them to the ability to pay

   - North Carolina should increase financial support for victims of violent crimes to support counseling and other support to recover from trauma and to compensate for pain and suffering losses

4. **There is a failure to address the root causes of crime.**

   - Increase the number of counties with drug treatment and mental health courts

   - Direct increased financial support to evidence-based parenting programs and child care for all NC families, such as North Carolina's Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), hosted by NC DHHS

For these ten actions, participants engaged in an exercise that revealed the level of agreement the group had around each action. For red flag laws, bans on high-capacity magazines, and reduced fines and fees, the cohort was very polarized about whether they valued the upsides and could tolerate its downsides. NCLF focused additional discussion on these actions to help uncover the sources of that disagreement and find where there was potential to move closer to agreement.

On making civil commitments easier, the group largely disagreed with the proposed action. The group largely agreed with having more police with better training and pay. There were a few dissenters from the group on both. On expanding the behavioral health workforce, mandating education on guns, and increasing financial support for victims, the cohort agreed with each other to varying degrees. The table below summarizes the varying levels of agreement on the proposed actions.

Areas of Strong Disagreement	Areas of Varying Degrees of Agreement	Areas of Broad Agreement
Implement red flag laws to remove guns from people who are a danger to themselves or others	Direct increased financial support to evidence-based parenting programs and child care for all NC families, such as North Carolina's Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), hosted by NC DHHS	Increase the number of counties that offer drug treatment and mental health courts
Ban high-capacity magazines and other gun modifications and hold all sellers in the commerce chain accountable for the ban	The NC General Assembly should amend North Carolina's civil commitment laws to make inpatient/outpatient commitment easier (i.e., relax the current standard of permitting commitment only if the subject is "a danger to himself or others" such that those who are unable to look after themselves and stay safe can also be committed)	Expand the behavioral health workforce by increasing General Assembly funding for new initiatives and existing programs at state community colleges and universities
North Carolina should eliminate all fees and reduce fines, and link them to the ability to pay	Have more police on the streets with better training and pay	NC General Assembly should mandate that schools educate on conflict resolution and lethality of guns
		North Carolina should increase financial support for victims of violent crimes to support counseling and other support to recover from trauma and to compensate for pain and suffering losses

The participants made time at the end of the forum to focus on action planning. In addition to the actions already discussed, the participants added rehabilitation and reentry services as a planning topic. At the outset of the program, the group ranked rehabilitation and reentry services as a concern that was relatively high in importance but low in controversy. For this reason, it was not selected as a concern for deliberation. NCLF wanted to give participants who agreed, however, time to talk about this issue of importance. Four proposed actions were discussed in this final session:

1. increase focus on rehabilitation and reentry,

2. have more police on the streets with better training and pay,

3. NC General Assembly should mandate that schools educate on conflict resolution and lethality of guns, and

4. North Carolina should increase financial support for victims of violent crimes to support counseling and other support to recover from trauma and to compensate for pain and suffering losses was one of four possible topics.

Overall, forum participants found that after the program concluded, they better understood fellow cohort members' perspectives on community safety. The discussion and exercises gave them insight into how and why people hold the perspectives they do. Participants were also able to identify unexpected areas of agreement on certain topics. Additionally, participants learned more about a range of responses to concerns about community safety and thought about new ideas of what might be possible. A post-program survey revealed support for NCLF to continue providing opportunities for leaders to come together and build the will, skills, and relationships that will allow them to shape North Carolina even in politically fractious times.
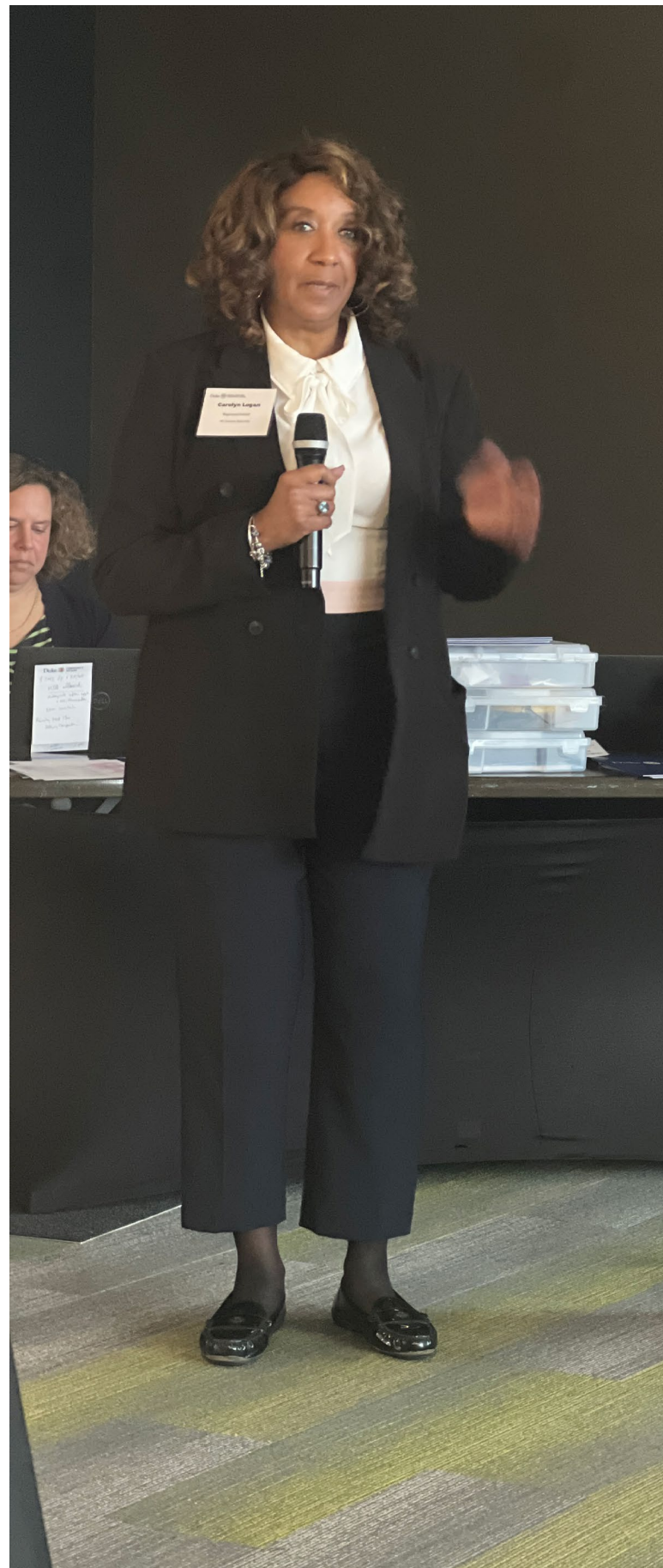
Introduction

The Challenge

Although North Carolinians have always had significant political differences, they have often exhibited a practical, problem-solving mindset to politics. However, the tenor of the times has become highly partisan, and like many other states, North Carolina finds itself sharply divided. Although some progress has been made in enabling constructive engagement across parties, progressive and conservative leaders often depend on different media and social media outlets, operate with different facts and beliefs, and often do not engage substantively with people with whom they disagree. Too often, leaders assume the worst about the motives of members of the other party. For these reasons, our leaders are less willing and able to work together to create widely embraced solutions and opportunities for our state and its people.

The North Carolina Leadership Forum (NCLF) aims to bridge this divide by fostering constructive engagement among North Carolina government, business, and non-profit policy leaders across party lines, ideologies, professional experiences, and regional perspectives. A program at Duke University, NCLF has been bringing together cohorts of North Carolina leaders since 2015 on topics such as Jobs, School Choice, and Health Policy. In 2024, NCLF brought together its eighth statewide cohort to discuss Community Safety.

The Cohort

The 2024 NCLF Cohort consisted of 33 participants from across North Carolina, the NCLF Steering Committee, and staff from NCLF and the Wilson Center for Science and Justice at Duke Law. The Wilson Center works to advance criminal justice and equity through science

and law. To this end, the Wilson Center seeks to engage with community stakeholders, academics, and policymakers to conduct and translate interdisciplinary research into effective and practical policy change. Its work is nonpartisan and evidence-informed. Given its mission and approach, the Wilson Center was able to complement NCLF's convening and facilitating expertise with its expertise in the criminal legal system.

Participants were intentionally balanced to represent diverse interests, experiences, communities, political ideologies, and types of leadership roles. Some participants were deeply engaged in criminal justice policy, whereas some were more generally engaged in public policy. For example, participants included members of the General Assembly and mayors working on community safety as one component of their roles. Attorneys, leaders of interest groups, law enforcement officials, and directors of nonprofit organizations whose work is centered on criminal justice and public safety topics also participated, along with business leaders and other stakeholders for whom community safety is an important consideration. The group was evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, with a handful of participants identifying as unaffiliated.

The NCLF Steering Committee similarly represents a diverse group of experienced leaders from across the state. This group provided overall oversight and direction on key programmatic elements. Two committee members, in particular, took a more involved role in the design and facilitation of the meetings. The Steering Committee was supported by two professional facilitators, NCLF staff, who facilitated meetings while also providing operational support, and Wilson Center staff, who provided expertise on the topic and helped to strategize how to maximize the value and impact of the forum. A complete list of the 2024 Cohort participants and leadership is provided in the Appendix.

The Process

To build authentic relationships between participants, deepen their understanding of the issue at hand, and model constructive discourse on underlying values and concerns, NCLF brought participants together in four multi-day face-to-face meetings over four months, from February to June 2024.

The first of the four sessions was held at Duke University and focused on identifying the broad array of concerns related to community safety and building a shared base of knowledge. During this session, participants also identified the core values they and others held on community safety. At the second session, hosted in Rocky Mount, participants returned to the values and concerns, discussing how they prioritize values and narrowing the list of concerns to four that would be further explored. The group then brainstormed actions to address the selected concerns and voted on which actions would benefit from further discussion. At the third session in Alamance County, participants discussed the benefits and downsides of selected actions. For each, they mapped the extent of agreement as well as tolerance for its downsides. Finally, at the fourth session in Durham, the group continued to evaluate the actions

All meetings operated under the Chatham House Rule:

When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

that produced the most polarized views. This activity allowed the group to better understand each other's convictions and practice constructive engagement skills. At each session, participants heard from local community leaders about community safety and had the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about specific programs. These "community features" are detailed separately.

Throughout the program, participants had opportunities to build relationships with people of different perspectives. During day one of the first session, they engaged in an intense exercise where they shared an event that had a transformative effect on the person they are today. As individuals shared significant experiences from their personal lives that had profoundly affected them, some of which were directly related to the topic of community safety, the separation between them as strangers who had just met began to break down and be replaced by a sense of connection, understanding, and respect for each other's backgrounds. This newfound appreciation fostered a greater openness to engage with one another, laying the foundation for forming personal connections and strengthening group cohesion.

Other examples of opportunities for building trust among the participants included pairing "buddies" of differing ideologies to meet outside of sessions, creating diverse "homeroom" groups, which were returned to periodically in each meeting, and assigning intentionally diverse groupings for small-group discussions, jigsaw sessions, and dyads. Each tool encouraged and enabled connections among individuals who may not have interacted meaningfully otherwise.

Community Features

During the first session in Durham, participants learned about the **HEART** program from its director, Ryan Smith, and Patrice Andrews, Durham Chief of Police. HEART stands for Holistic Empathetic Assistance Response Team. This nationally recognized, innovative program enhances public safety through community-centered approaches as alternatives to policing and the criminal legal system. NC Secretary of Revenue Ronald Penny joined the group for its inaugural dinner and reflected on his leadership and the opportunities and challenges of constructive cross-partisan engagement he has navigated in his various roles.

The second session, in Rocky Mount, included a dinner panel where participants met Vichi Jagannathan, co-founder of Rural Opportunity Institute, Captain Joseph Cofield from Edgecombe County Sheriff's office, and Sheriff Keith Stone from Nash County. Jagannathan and Cofield described a trauma-informed training program for school resource officers that aims to address what community members identified as a top issue for them: the school-to-prison pipeline. Sheriff Stone talked about his efforts to combat illegal activity involving drugs, weapons, and gangs in the area and also spoke about challenges with recruitment and people struggling with behavioral and mental health issues in jail.

For the third session, day one was held at Alamance Community College's Biotechnical Center of Excellence, where participants learned about the many ways ACC impacts the entire spectrum of criminal justice, including diversion programming, GED classes in jails, support for re-entry, and training law enforcement officers and EMS technicians. That evening at dinner, ACC President Ken Ingle addressed the group.

The final meeting in Durham began with a visit to the Durham Bulls ballpark and a guided bus tour of the city with a focus on housing and economic development.

Community Safety Background

In 2024, the NC Leadership Forum addressed the critically important topic of community safety, asking, *"What should we do to keep North Carolina communities safe?"* Community safety is an ideal topic for the NCLF model because it presents tensions between closely held values, involves many actors, and necessitates tradeoffs for related solutions. Notably, the question for consideration was intentionally left broad and undefined so that the group could narrow the issue and set priorities for discussion.

At the first session, the Wilson Center presented basic information on several topics related to community safety. The purpose of the presentation was to create a shared, unbiased foundation of data and information that would support an informed discussion going forward. The presentation covered the following topics: crime rates, demographics of victims of crimes and those that perpetrate crimes, perceptions of crime, sentencing, prison population, collateral consequences, reentry and recidivism, law enforcement workforce and activity, and costs. This section of the report covers some of that information, while data related to specific concerns has been embedded in the relevant sections. Importantly, participants began generating their list of concerns before receiving this information so they would not feel unduly influenced by the topics presented. **To view the full presentation, click this link.**

Crime Rates

According to the National Incident-Based Reporting System, in 2022, 407 law enforcement agencies reported 31,876 violent crime incidents in North Carolina.[1] This was slightly lower than the rate reported in 2020 and 2021 but is significantly higher than it was a decade ago. The subsequent graph illustrates how the rate has changed since 2020.
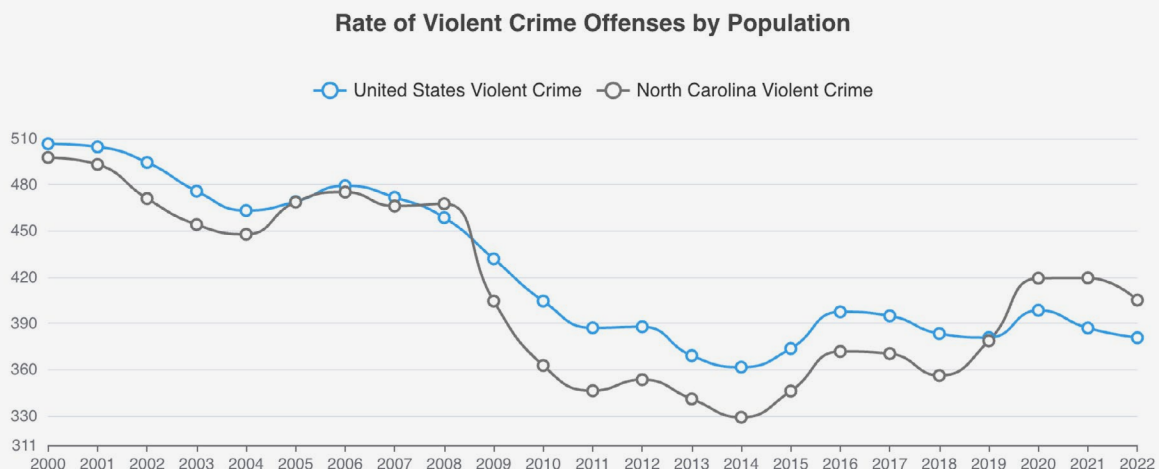
Rate of Violent Crime Offenses by Population

—○— United States Violent Crime   —○— North Carolina Violent Crime


Rate per 100,000 people, by year

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Crime in the United States Estimations, 2022
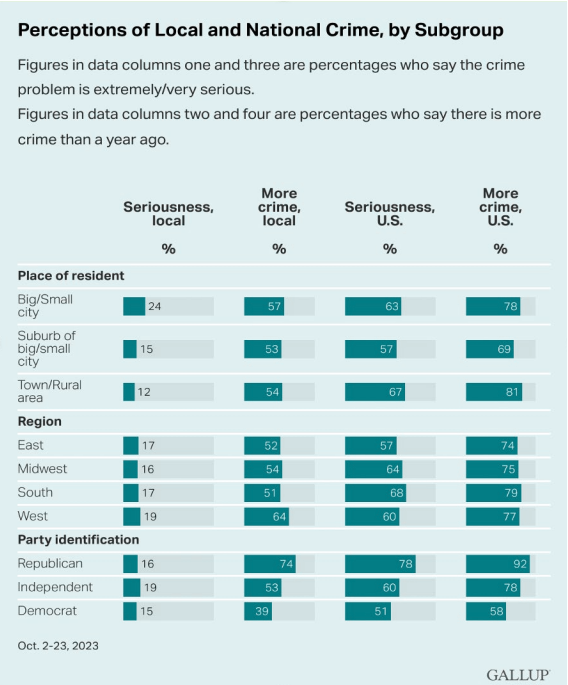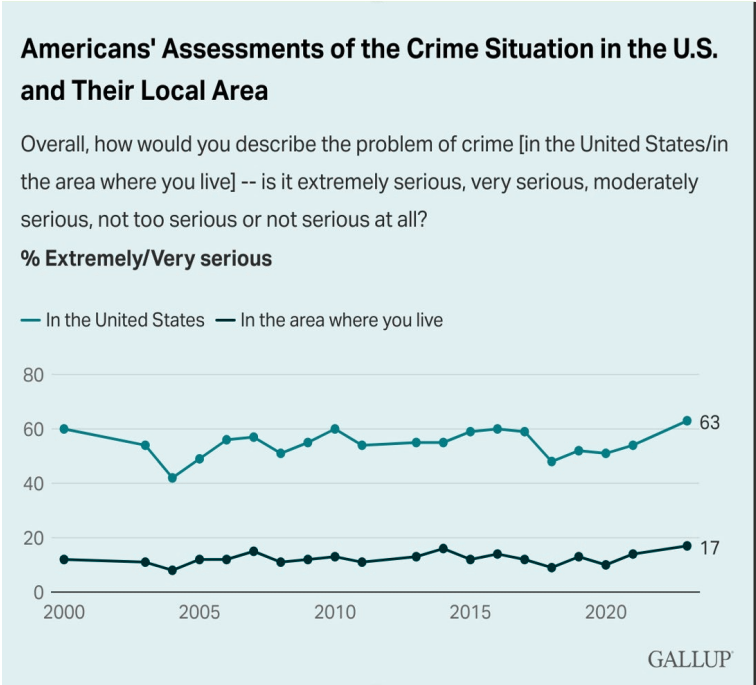
While the North Carolina data for 2023 is not yet available, data from the Council on Criminal Justice—which includes Charlotte and Raleigh in its 38-city national exploration—suggests that violent crime continues to decline.[2]

Similarly, property crime rates have steadily declined in North Carolina over the past few decades. In 2022, 218,556 property crimes were reported in North Carolina.[3]

Rate of Property Crime Offenses by Population

Rate per 100,000 people, by year

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Crime in the United States Estimations, 2022
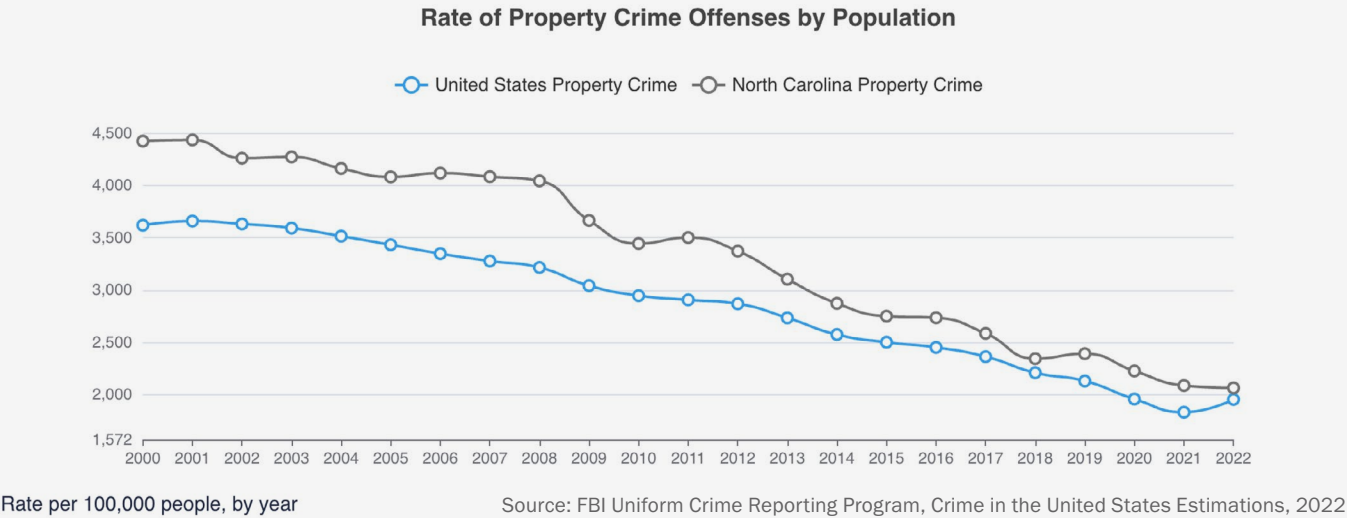
Perceptions of Crime

However, as indicated in the two figures below, perceptions of crime vary significantly depending on whether individuals are surveyed about national or local crime, their residential area (urban, suburban, or rural), and their political affiliation.[4]

Americans' Assessments of the Crime Situation in the U.S. and Their Local Area

Overall, how would you describe the problem of crime [in the United States/in the area where you live] -- is it extremely serious, very serious, moderately serious, not too serious or not serious at all?

% Extremely/Very serious

Perceptions of Local and National Crime, by Subgroup

Figures in data columns one and three are percentages who say the crime problem is extremely/very serious.
Figures in data columns two and four are percentages who say there is more crime than a year ago.

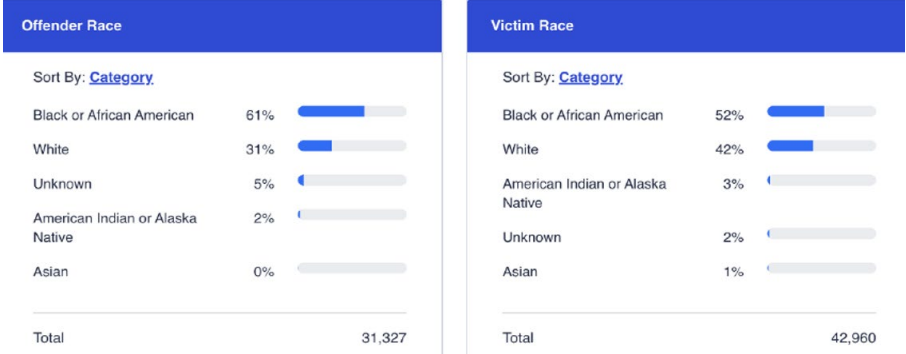|	Seriousness, local %	More crime, local %	Seriousness, U.S. %	More crime, U.S. %
Place of resident				
Big/Small city	24	57	63	78
Suburb of big/small city	15	53	57	69
Town/Rural area	12	54	67	81
Region				
East	17	52	57	74
Midwest	16	54	64	75
South	17	51	68	79
West	19	64	60	77
Party identification				
Republican	16	74	78	92
Independent	19	53	60	78
Democrat	15	39	51	58

Oct. 2-23, 2023

GALLUP

Source: Gallup

Demographics of Crime

Who are the people committing these crimes, and against whom are the crimes being committed? In 2022, according to the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program Report for North Carolina, the age ranges of victims of violent crimes were similar to those who committed violent crimes with 42% of the violent crimes committed by people under thirty years of age and 42% of the victims also being under thirty.[5] The race of people who committed violent crimes was as follows: 61% Black, 31% white, 5% unknown, and 2% American Indian or Alaska Native.[6] Victims of violent crime were 52% Black, 42% white, 3% American Indian or Alaska Native, 2% unknown, and 1% Asian.[7] Finally, three-fourths of all people who committed violent crimes were male, but the distribution of victims was split, with 53.7% male and 46.06% female.[8]
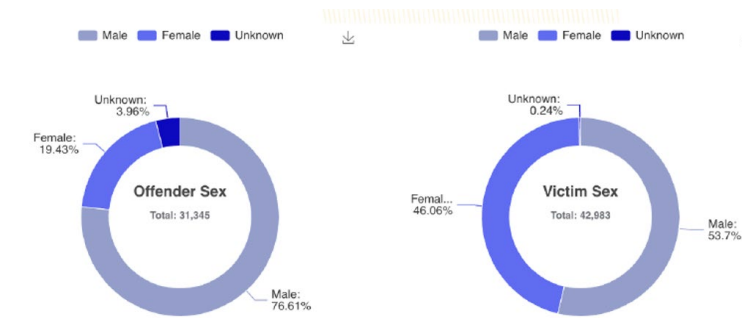
2022 N.C. All Violent Crime: Age

Offender Age		Victim Age	
Sort By: Category		Sort By: Category	
20-29	28%	20-29	26%
30-39	22%	30-39	21%
10-19	14%	10-19	16%
Unknown	14%	40-49	14%
40-49	12%	50-59	9%
Total	31,345	Total	42,983

2022 N.C. All Violent Crime: Race

Offender Race		Victim Race	
Sort By: Category		Sort By: Category	
Black or African American	61%	Black or African American	52%
White	31%	White	42%
Unknown	5%	American Indian or Alaska Native	3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2%	Unknown	2%
Asian	0%	Asian	1%
Total	31,327	Total	42,960

2022 N.C. All Violent Crime: Sex

Offender Sex — Total: 31,345 — Male: 76.61%, Female: 19.43%, Unknown: 3.96%

Victim Sex — Total: 42,983 — Male: 53.7%, Female: 46.06%, Unknown: 0.24%

Source: FBI Uniform Reporting Program, Crime in the United Stattes Estimations, 2022

Sentencing and Prison Population

In North Carolina, about 57,000 people are incarcerated on any given day, representing a rate of roughly 6 per 1,000 people.[9] About 29,000 of those people are in state prisons, about 18,000 are in local jails, about 8,800 are in federal prisons, and about 740 are in youth facilities.[10] Black people are incarcerated in North Carolina prisons at nearly 3.7 times the rate of white people and in jails at about three times the rate.[11] American Indians are also disproportionately incarcerated.[12]
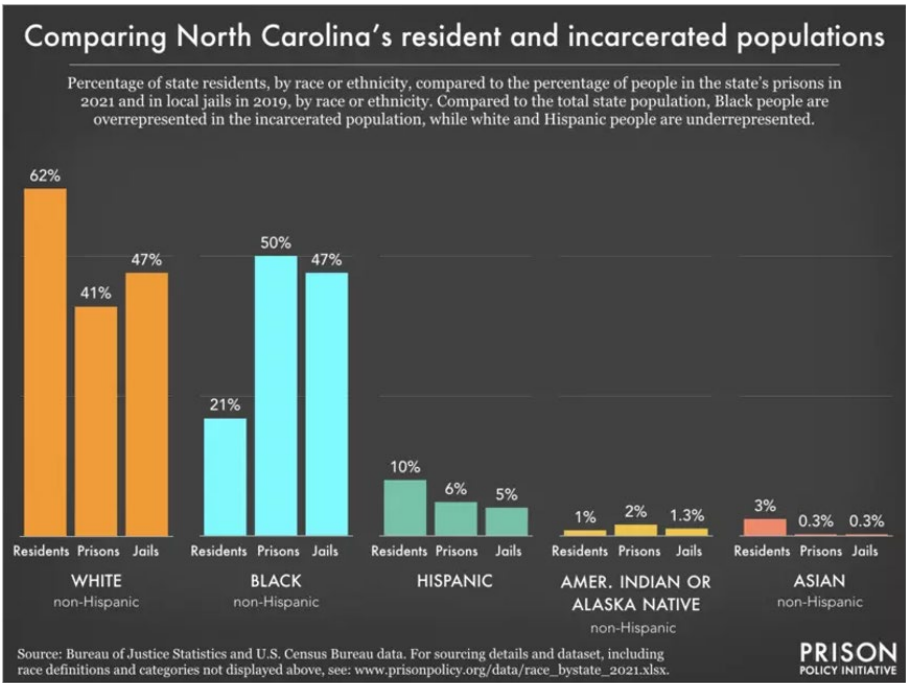
(Graph: Wendy Sawyer, September 2023)
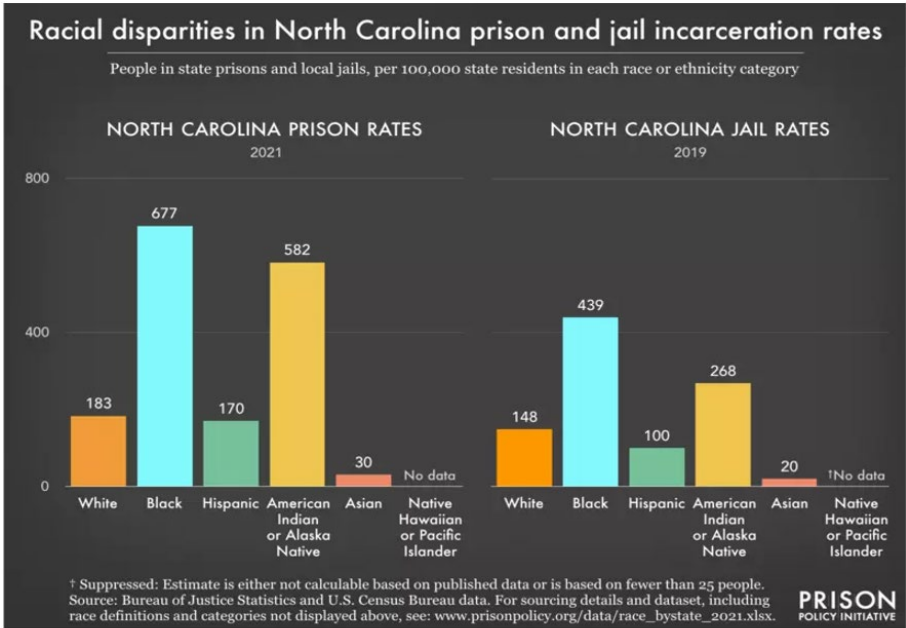
(Graph: Wendy Sawyer, September 2023)

People are also incarcerated at different rates across the state. For example, prison admissions differ dramatically by county. Examining the top 20 counties in North Carolina for overall admissions, Mecklenburg County sent a high number of people to prisons in 2023 but a much lower percentage of people than other counties on a per-capita basis. [13]

Rank	County of Conviction	# of Prison Admissions 2023	% of Prison Admissions	% of NC Population
	Total	20,436		
1	WAKE	1,271	6.20	10.94
2	GUILFORD	731	3.57	5.12
3	FORSYTH	705	3.44	3.65
4	MECKLENBURG	629	3.07	10.68
5	GASTON	618	3.02	2.22
6	NEW HANOVER	581	2.83	2.20
7	CUMBERLAND	554	2.70	3.18
8	CLEVELAND	546	2.66	0.93
9	PITT	508	2.48	1.62
10	ROWAN	490	2.39	1.41
11	IREDELL	477	2.33	1.85
12	DAVIDSON	469	2.29	1.63
13	BUNCOMBE	461	2.25	2.55
14	CABARRUS	461	2.25	2.23
15	JOHNSTON	451	2.20	2.18
16	ALAMANCE	408	1.99	1.66
17	CATAWBA	390	1.90	1.54
18	ROCKINGHAM	383	1.87	0.86
19	BRUNSWICK	360	1.76	1.42
20	SURRY	358	1.75	0.67

Key: Prison admissions percentage compared to share of NC population

0.5x	
1.5x	
2x	
2.5x	

Source: Offender Population Utilization System (OPUS) data & 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data.

Reentry and Recidivism

Most people who are incarcerated will eventually return to the community. Examining re-incarceration rates, younger people, those who had not graduated high school at the time of their incarceration, individuals who were unemployed at the time of their incarceration, and those who indicated some form of substance use were more likely to recidivate.[14] Also affecting reentry success are such factors as substance use, mental health, employment, and transportation. The majority of those released from prison in North Carolina identify having at least one of these needs.[15]

Areas of Need Identified

Areas of Need	Probation Entries n=27,539 %	Prison Releases n=13,684 %	Total n=41,223 %
Criminogenic Factors			
Anti-social Personality	20	30	24
Anti-social Values	18	18	18
Criminal Peers	41	45	42
Dysfunctional Family	54	51	53
Self-Control	25	25	25
Substance Use	75	77	76
Health Factors			
Mental Health	52	47	50
Physical	32	27	30
Additional Factors			
Academic/Vocational	41	43	42
Employment	44	58	49
Financial	34	31	33
Housing	30	28	29
Legal	59	67	62
Social Skills	42	48	44
Transportation	66	82	71

Note: Offenders who did not have an RNA completed and a supervision level assigned (n=5,867) were excluded from the table.
SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2019 Correctional Program Evaluation Data

Values and Concerns

Throughout the four sessions, the 2024 NCLF Cohort engaged in substantive conversations about community safety, prioritized critical concerns about community safety, and explored their values when considering community safety from a policy perspective.

Values

Participants shared their values relevant to keeping North Carolina communities safe. Once values had been shared, overlapping or similar ones were grouped into themes, which were then narrowed to the following five value clusters. However, not all participants held all these values or prioritized them in the same way.

- **Law and Order**
- **Mercy / Compassion / Redemption**
- **Prevention / Equity**
- **Accountability / Equality**
- **Evidence-Based Strategies**

Next, participants engaged in an exercise in which they were asked to take a position between two values that were in tension. Participants physically positioned themselves in a line where one value was on either side. The stronger a participant felt about a particular value, the closer they stood to that value along the line. Thus, the line became a physical representation of members' thinking along a continuum of positions between and at extremes. Once they were arrayed on the line, participants explained what led them to stand in that

spot, such as their upbringing, their faith beliefs, or a specific experience from their past.

First, participants stood on a line between "Law and Order" and "Mercy and Compassion." One participant who placed themselves firmly on the "Law and Order" side of the line spoke about their personal and professional experiences that led them to believe that consequences for actions are essential, that they wanted to focus on what victims want, and that they consider "law and order" to be synonymous with "truth and justice." A participant who placed themselves firmly on the "Mercy and Compassion" side responded that compassion did more for them personally than punishment ever did. They felt that compassion is missing in the current system, especially for Black people, and that the goal of the system should be to help individuals find redemption rather than to punish for punishment's sake. Those in the middle of the line expressed seeing roles for both accountability and forgiveness. One participant brought up that discipline can be a form of love, while another brought up an example of a teenager whose life was derailed by the criminal legal system for starting a fire, which seemed too harsh of a punishment.

Participants then positioned themselves on a line from "Government Responsibility" to "Family Responsibility" and discussed prevention. Some participants argued that family plays a crucial role in providing structure, stability, and a moral compass that the government cannot replicate. Others countered this by highlighting

the government's greater resources and its duty to the broader community to use those resources to ensure safety, even for those without strong family support. There was also a group of participants who saw value in both family and government responsibility, noting that while family support is beneficial, it may not always be available, necessitating a secondary level of support.

Overall, the exercise demonstrated how their fellow participants weighed values similarly and differently, which, in turn, informed some of their positions on community safety topics. Many participants in this exercise said they walked away having learned something new about a different perspective and with a greater appreciation for how prior experiences informed the various perspectives. However, participants also found the discussion of values difficult. Shortly after the formal discussion ended, some participants expressed that they felt uncomfortable speaking up or heard certain words or phrases that evoked strong emotions, making it difficult for them to fully hear what others were saying. This follow-up discussion was crucial in advancing the dialogue and assisting the group as

they discussed their concerns, as it brought to light the challenges of speaking about community safety in a setting where there may be strong disagreements and topics that can bring up difficult personal experiences.
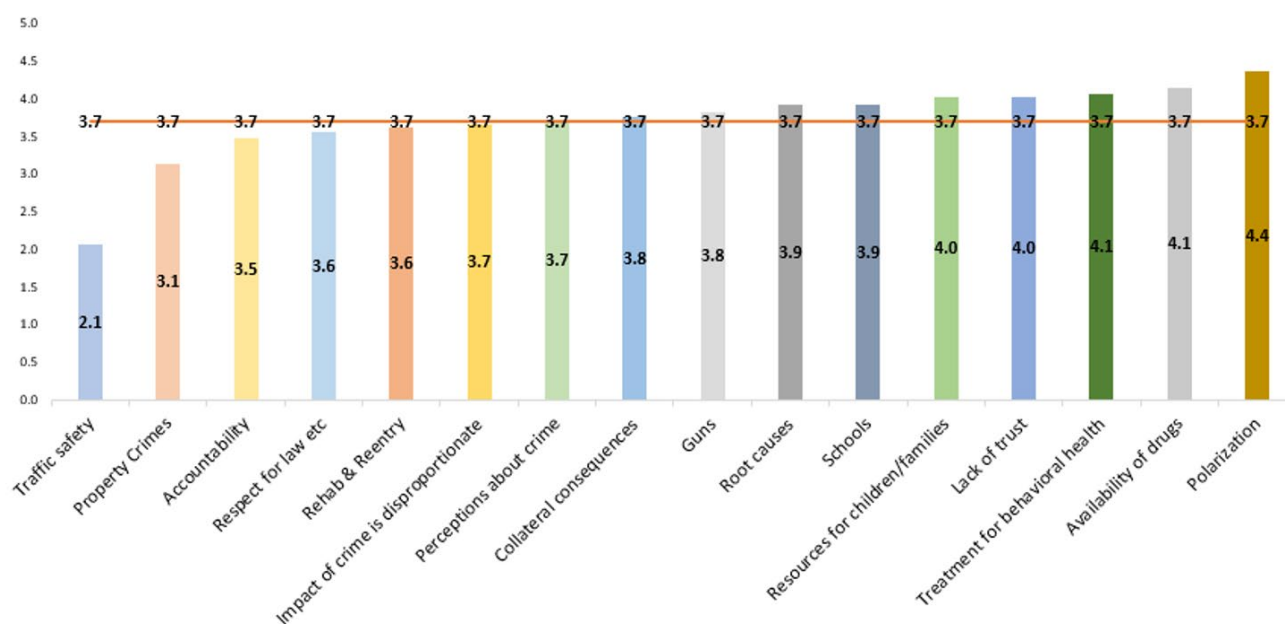
Concerns Overview

Before the first session, participants were asked to speak with five people in their community and ask them about their concerns and worries related to community safety. Through this exercise, the members generated an extensive list of concerns about different aspects of community safety, as shown in the **Appendix**.

In between meetings one and two, participants scored the 16 most frequently cited concerns via an online survey based on three criteria: importance, timeliness, and disagreement. This step was introduced for the first time with this cohort to assist in narrowing to the four or five concerns that would generate the most constructive engagement across differences as opposed to concerns that were considered important but not controversial or urgent.
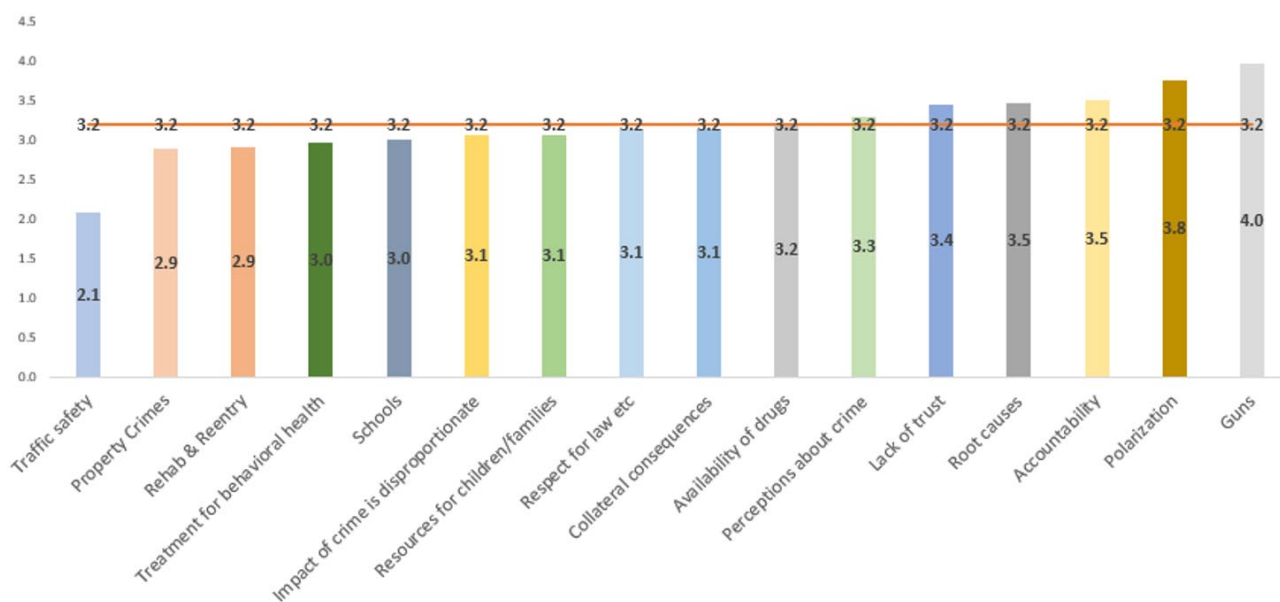
Averages for Importance

Averages for Timeliness

Bar chart — Averages for Timeliness (scale 0.0 to 5.0, reference line at 3.7):

Category	Value
Traffic safety	2.1
Property Crimes	3.1
Accountability	3.5
Respect for law etc	3.6
Rehab & Reentry	3.6
Impact of crime is disproportionate	3.7
Perceptions about crime	3.7
Collateral consequences	3.8
Guns	3.8
Root causes	3.9
Schools	3.9
Resources for children/families	4.0
Lack of trust	4.0
Treatment for behavioral health	4.1
Availability of drugs	4.1
Polarization	4.4

Averages for Disagreement

Bar chart — Averages for Disagreement (scale 0.0 to 4.5, reference line at 3.2):

Category	Value
Traffic safety	2.1
Property Crimes	2.9
Rehab & Reentry	2.9
Treatment for behavioral health	3.0
Schools	3.0
Impact of crime is disproportionate	3.1
Resources for children/families	3.1
Respect for law etc	3.1
Collateral consequences	3.1
Availability of drugs	3.2
Perceptions about crime	3.3
Lack of trust	3.4
Root causes	3.5
Accountability	3.5
Polarization	3.8
Guns	4.0

During the second meeting, facilitators shared the results of the survey and helped the group narrow the list to four for further discussion:

1. **There is a lack of adequate and appropriate treatment for behavioral or mental health needs.**

2. **Guns make communities less safe.**

3. **The collateral consequences of justice system involvement are harmful to individuals, families, and communities.**

4. **There is a failure to address the root causes of crime.**

The remainder of this section provides brief background information on each concern and the actions proposed to address it.

To develop potential actions, participants were asked to make a list of meaningful, implementable actions that would address the concern at hand. During this time, they were instructed not to engage in debate. Participants then voted on which proposed actions they would like to discuss further. Notably, these were not the actions they felt would be most effective but rather the ones they felt needed further deliberation to understand each other's differences better. The facilitators used these votes to choose ten actions for deliberation. The actions are discussed in depth in the following sections of this report.

CONCERN

There is a lack of adequate and appropriate treatment for behavioral or mental health needs.

North Carolina's behavioral health crisis refers to the recent increase in demand for behavioral health treatment and the simultaneous shortage of care professionals. The North Carolina state budget recently allocated $835 million to mental and behavioral health services. However, due to the timing, many participants were unaware of how forthcoming funds would be used. They were also interested in what might not be covered in this allocation and how to maximize the funds' impact.

More than two million North Carolinians have a mental illness, which is a diagnosable condition including depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, mood disorders, and personality disorders.[16] Additionally, more than one million North Carolinians have a substance use disorder, defined based on a pattern of alcohol or illicit drug use that leads to clinically significant impairment or distress.[17] In 2021, 1,412 people died by suicide in North Carolina, compared to 950 recorded homicides for that year.[18] Suicide has become the second leading cause of death for 10 to 17-year-olds in this state and has reached a two-decade high point.[19] Additionally, suicide rates were 1.3 times higher among rural North Carolinians than urban North Carolinians in 2021.[20] Furthermore, 4,041 North Carolinians died by drug overdose in 2021, representing 11 overdose deaths a day and the highest yearly number recorded in the state.[21] Almost 85 percent of those deaths came from opioid overdoses.[22]

Meanwhile, more than half of North Carolinians with a mental illness receive no treatment.[23] This lack of timely treatment is often attributed to provider shortages, especially in rural areas. The state's behavioral health system reports being "stretched thin and under-resourced."[24] In fact, two in five people in North Carolina live in a mental health professional shortage area as designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration; 22 counties have no practicing psychiatrists, and 68 counties have no child and adolescent psychiatrists.[25]

Overall, participants raised the prevalence of behavioral health needs, the lack of treatment options, and the impact of behavioral health on community safety and the justice system. For example, participants and presenters frequently highlighted the amount of time police and other first responders spend on calls to address behavioral health needs. In particular, participants highlighted how a single person with a behavioral health need may require frequent and significant community and public safety resources and services.

Not all participants shared this concern, but everyone participated in discussing ways to increase treatment for behavioral or mental health needs. The group narrowed their ideas to two potential actions that would benefit from further discussion:

1. The NC General Assembly should amend North Carolina's civil commitment laws to make inpatient/outpatient commitment easier (i.e., relax the current standard of permitting commitment only if the subject is "a danger to himself or others" such that those who are unable to look after themselves and stay safe can also be committed)

2. Expand the behavioral health workforce by increasing General Assembly funding for new initiatives and existing programs at state community colleges and universities

CONCERN

Guns make communities less safe.

More than 1.5 million North Carolina adults have a firearm in or around their homes.[26] Almost one-quarter of those North Carolinians store their firearms both loaded and unlocked.[27] Open carry of handguns is legal for anyone 18 or older in North Carolina. A permit is required for concealed carry, and North Carolinians must be 21 or older to obtain one. Before 2023, North Carolinians also had to obtain a permit from their local sheriff's office to purchase a handgun; however, beginning in 2023, this is no longer a requirement. Under existing law, private sellers are not required to conduct background checks when selling handguns. However, federally licensed sellers are still required to do background checks based on the Brady Background Check System, which prohibits various categories of individuals (e.g., individuals with felonies or dishonorable discharges from the military) from purchasing guns.

In the United States, North Carolina had the 14th highest rate of gun violence and the 23rd highest rate of gun-related deaths. An average of 1,636 people die in gun-related incidents each year in North Carolina.[28] Additionally, for every firearm death, there were two emergency department visits for firearm injuries.[29] From 2018 to 2021, an average of 676 North Carolinians died by gun homicide, and 862 died by gun suicide each year, representing yearly rates of 6.7 homicides and 7.7 suicides per 100,000 people.[30] There was an average of 12.8 gun assaults and 0.7 suicide attempts by gun per 100,000 people each year as well.[31]

Guns have also become the leading cause of death among North Carolina youth, outpacing even motor vehicle accidents.[32] North Carolina averaged 156 yearly gun deaths among children and teens from 2018 to 2021, 32 percent of which were suicides, 62 percent of which were homicides, and the remainder of which were unintentional firearm deaths, legal intervention, or undetermined.[33]

Not all participants shared the concern about guns—in fact, there was disagreement about the framing of this concern and whether it is guns that decrease safety or if guns in the wrong hands decrease safety—but everyone

agreed the subject was timely and controversial. In discussing ways to make communities safer from guns, the group narrowed their ideas to four potential actions for more discussion:

1. Implement red flag laws to remove guns from people who are a danger to themselves or others

2. Ban high-capacity magazines and other gun modifications and hold all sellers in the commerce chain accountable for the ban

3. Have more police on the streets with better training and pay

4. NC General Assembly should mandate that schools educate on conflict resolution and lethality of guns

---

CONCERN

The collateral consequences of justice system involvement are harmful to individuals, families, and communities.

More than 1.6 million North Carolinians have a criminal record for either a misdemeanor or felony conviction.[34] The criminal consequences for these convictions include incarceration, fines, and other punishments. The collateral consequences refer to the effects separate from these criminal consequences imposed at sentencing but result from interacting with the justice system, nonetheless. Examples may include ineligibility for a professional license, difficulty finding housing or employment, losing the right to vote, limits to federally subsidized supports, or mounting court debt.[35]

More than 650,000 people in North Carolina currently have unpaid criminal court debt, representing about 1 in 12 adults.[36] Additionally, more than 800,000 people in North Carolina have had their driver's licenses revoked for failing to pay debt or showing up to court solely for traffic offenses.[37] Fines and fees for the lowest-level traffic offenses resolved in District Court amount to roughly $191 and can quickly surpass $500 for a felony involving a one-week detention in jail and community service.[38]

In 2019, 17,106 people were released from state and federal prisons in North Carolina. Additionally, at least 128,000 people are booked into local jails in North Carolina each year, most of whom are released within the year.[39] These thousands of individuals must navigate reentering their communities while dealing with collateral consequences.

Participants in the cohort described how they observed interactions with the criminal justice system affecting victims, family members, and the broader community. Court experiences can be traumatizing, transportation to courts and carceral facilities can be costly, households may suffer without the wages or support of family members, and whole communities may shift their views about their safety and their trust in the system if experiencing high rates of justice involvement.

Not all participants shared this concern, but everyone was tasked with discussing ways to reduce collateral consequences. The group narrowed their ideas to two potential actions that required additional dialogue:

1. North Carolina should eliminate all fees and reduce fines, and link them to the ability to pay

2. North Carolina should increase financial support for victims of violent crimes to support counseling and other support to recover from trauma and to compensate for pain and suffering losses

There is a failure to address root causes of crime.

While there are many different views on the root causes of crime, the phrase is often used to refer to adverse economic and social factors that are correlated with higher crime rates. For example, poverty, food, housing, and family insecurity, unaddressed behavioral health needs, and exposure to violence were regarded as "root causes" by some in the group. Although these factors do not directly cause crime or absolve individuals of personal accountability, systemically addressing these factors may help reduce crime rates. Overall, the cohort thought about root causes from this perspective.

Not all participants wanted to prioritize this concern, but everyone was tasked with discussing ways to address the root causes of crime. The group focused further discussion on two potential actions:

1. Increase the number of counties that offer drug treatment and mental health courts

2. Direct increased financial support to evidence-based parenting programs and childcare for all NC families, such as North Carolina's Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), hosted by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS)

Exploring the Actions as a Cohort

With guidance from the facilitators, the group narrowed their ideas to the ten actions most likely to invoke rich discussion. The cohort discussed each action one at a time, designed to elicit the potential benefits and downsides the action might produce. After each discussion, participants were asked to plot how they felt about those benefits and downsides on a graph. This plotting resulted in a "polarity chart" for each action that visually demonstrates the degree of support the cohort had for each action after their discussions.

The "polarity chart" exercise begins by having each participant indicate whether they value the benefits of that action and to what extent they do so by placing a sticker representing their "vote" on the chart. The upper half of the chart holds these votes, with the x axis representing the spectrum of "agree" to "don't agree" and the top half of the y axis representing the intensity of that viewpoint. Participants then place a second "vote" in the bottom half of the chart to indicate how much they can tolerate the downsides of that action and the intensity of that viewpoint. Each chart, therefore, holds two votes per participant that in aggregate provide a visual representation for the level of agreement on particular options.

Areas of Strong Disagreement	Areas of Varying Degrees of Agreement	Areas of Broad Agreement
Implement red flag laws to remove guns from people who are a danger to themselves or others	Direct increased financial support to evidence-based parenting programs and child care for all NC families, such as North Carolina's Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), hosted by NC DHHS	Increase the number of counties that offer drug treatment and mental health courts
Ban high-capacity magazines and other gun modifications and hold all sellers in the commerce chain accountable for the ban	The NC General Assembly should amend North Carolina's civil commitment laws to make inpatient/outpatient commitment easier (i.e., relax the current standard of permitting commitment only if the subject is "a danger to himself or others" such that those who are unable to look after themselves and stay safe can also be committed)	Expand the behavioral health workforce by increasing General Assembly funding for new initiatives and existing programs at state community colleges and universities
North Carolina should eliminate all fees and reduce fines, and link them to the ability to pay	Have more police on the streets with better training and pay	NC General Assembly should mandate that schools educate on conflict resolution and lethality of guns
		North Carolina should increase financial support for victims of violent crimes to support counseling and other support to recover from trauma and to compensate for pain and suffering losses

The table above summarizes the group's degree of agreement on the proposed actions. The three actions for which the votes were highly divergent represent the actions for which there was more disagreement or polarization. Because the NCLF program seeks to build understanding and communication in polarized areas, the cohort spent additional time during the final session on these three actions. There were also three actions for which most participants agreed with each other—although not necessarily in favor of the action—but a few votes were outside of this group. Finally, there were four actions for which most participants agreed with each other, as indicated by the general grouping of votes on the charts. Below is a detailed account of how each of the discussions progressed, leading to the creation of these polarity charts and the chart itself.

Overall, their discussions revealed that while participants share the desire to address these concerns, they often have different ideas about the best approaches and solutions. These differences arise from their different personal and professional experiences and how they view the benefits and downsides of an action.

ACTION — Implement red flag laws to remove guns from people who are a danger to themselves or others.

Some of the benefits listed by participants:

- Prevents gun violence, especially as it relates to suicide
- Encourages people to prioritize their mental health
- Should be able to implement well because can learn from other states

Some of the drawbacks listed by participants:

- Violates 2nd amendment rights
- Can be applied inconsistently and/or abused
- Punishes people for something that hasn't happened yet
- Could create distrust with families, friends, and police

Implement Red Flag Laws
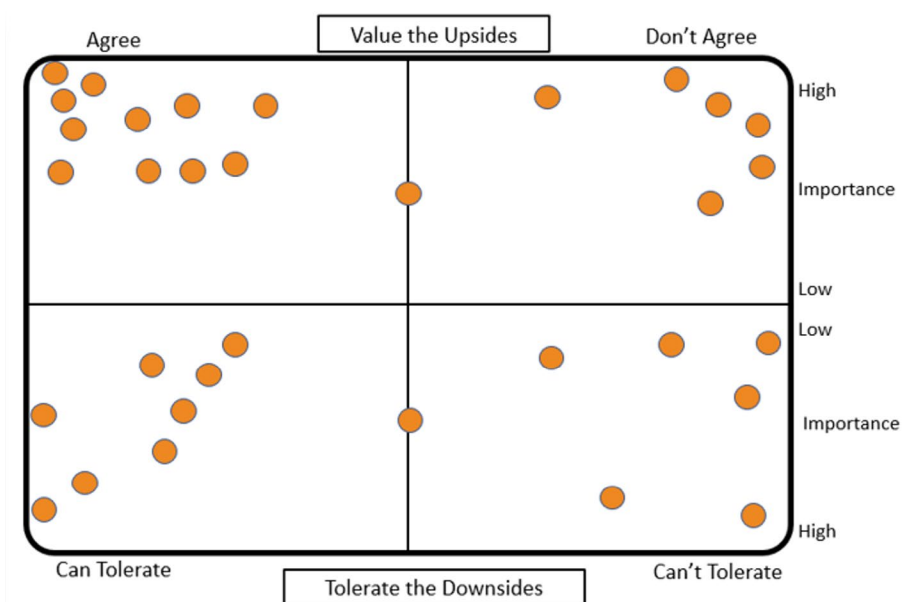
Red flag laws establish a civil process that allows law enforcement and/or family members to petition a court for an extreme risk protection order (ERPO). If granted, an ERPO prohibits a person who poses a risk of harm to self or others from possessing or purchasing firearms. The order typically lasts for one year or less but can be subject to renewal or early termination. As of 2024, 21 states and Washington, D.C. have enacted some version of a red flag law, 16 of which were implemented in the last five years.[40] North Carolina does not currently have a red flag law.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 provides federal grant funding for implementing red flag laws, making the question of whether North Carolina should consider some form of red flag law even more timely.

Discussion on this action revealed that some participants felt strongly about potential benefits, while others were more concerned about risks. For example, a few participants continuously highlighted the benefits associated with reduced suicides, homicides, and mass shootings. These supporters emphasized the temporary nature of the order and considered the time-limited infringement on a person's Second Amendment rights to be justified by the potential lives saved. However, other participants thought the benefits might never materialize and noted the potential risks of red flag laws. For example, people raised concerns about the potential for abuse by targeting certain individuals or communities, which could increase racial disparities and even tear families apart unnecessarily.

In detailed discussions, the group discovered that most opposition came from misgivings about whether red flag laws could truly address the concern around gun violence. One participant commented that those who use guns to harm others are often already banned from owning firearms, so red flag laws are superfluous. Meanwhile, even some supporters had misgivings about the potential for abuse in a red flag system. They questioned whether local magistrates should be making these decisions and whether reporting individuals might cause unintended consequences like triggering violent behavior in retaliation. However, supporters also called out that many states have already implemented red flag laws and that studying effects in these states could help assuage these concerns while providing a blueprint for how to implement the law in North Carolina. Overall, the group agreed that gun violence should be deterred but remained divided on whether red flag laws were the most effective and fair way to do so.

At the third forum, participants were asked to divide themselves into two groups: one supporting red flag laws and one opposing red flag laws. After dividing themselves, the supporters were tasked with concentrating on the downsides of the action, and the opposers were tasked with concentrating on the upsides of the action. Each group was then asked to advocate for the position they did not take. The results of this exercise helped inform the discussion [above]. Overall, participants valued this exercise since it forced them to think differently and put themselves in the shoes of those with whom they disagreed.

Ban high-capacity magazines and other gun modifications and hold all sellers in the commerce chain accountable for the ban.

Some of the benefits listed by participants:

- Reduces risk to law enforcement and bystanders

- Creates incentive for sellers to "act better"

- Lowers items in circulation and decreases arms race between police and civilians

Some of the drawbacks listed by participants:

- Expands the black market which would put more high-capacity guns in the hands of people with ill intent rather than those interested in self-defense

- Starts a slippery slope to infringing on 2nd amendment rights

- Difficult to define "high-capacity

Ban High-Capacity Magazines
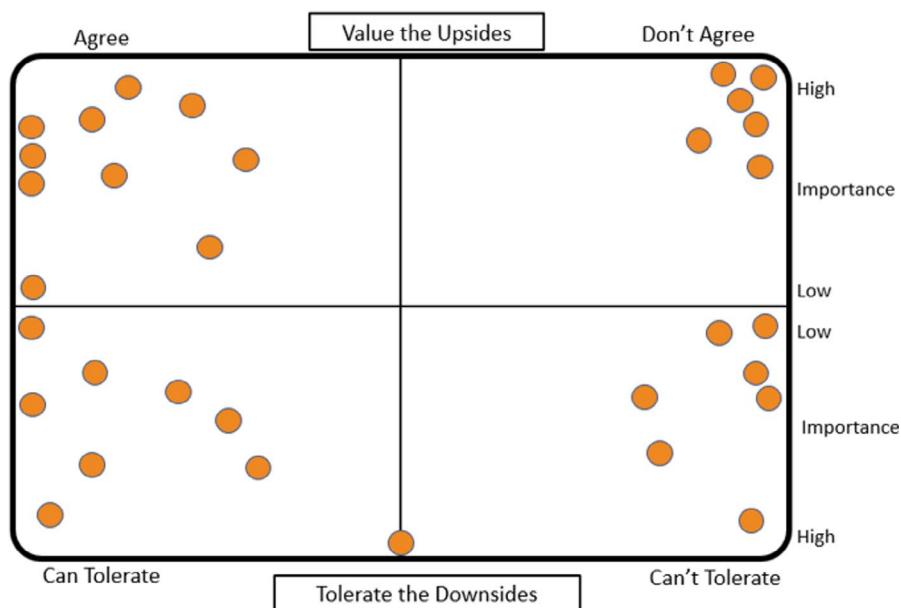
High-capacity magazines are ammunition-feeding devices that allow a user to fire more rounds before pausing to reload than a lower-capacity magazine allows. States typically define this threshold at ten rounds. While no state limits the number of magazines an individual may carry, some states restrict the possession of high-capacity magazines or the types of firearms that can be used with high-capacity magazines.[41] North Carolina currently allows an individual to buy and possess high-capacity magazines without restriction, providing they meet all other state requirements regarding firearms.

Discussions on this action helped the cohort uncover different viewpoints, which frequently reflect the participants' social backgrounds. For example, some participants referenced gun clubs at their high schools, talked about the number of community members involved in hunting, and shared that they currently own a high-capacity firearm. These participants explained that they were primarily concerned with firearms falling

into the wrong hands, so, in their opinion, this action did not address the problem at its root. One participant pointed out that a ban would not remove the existing high-capacity magazines in the market and felt that they should be allowed to own a high-capacity magazine if someone with ill intent could access one illegally. A different participant who opposed the action had qualms about the lack of specificity in the phrase "high capacity." They stated that while they might be willing to ban extremely high-capacity magazines, the frequent definition of high capacity as ten rounds would make too many standard-issue magazines illegal. Another participant suggested that high-capacity magazine bans may be unconstitutional given the Supreme Court ruling in *District of Columbia v. Heller* and other cases.

In contrast, other participants felt significant discomfort and fear knowing that their fellow North Carolinians could carry high-capacity magazines and questioned the case for allowing them. Some of these participants came from states with more firearm restrictions, and others had visceral memories of mass shootings in nearby communities. One such participant thought possible downsides were outweighed by the potential to reduce the loss of lives in mass shootings. Another pointed out that a ban could reduce the number of high-capacity magazines in circulation while holding sellers more accountable. Overall, the cohort appreciated learning about different viewpoints and recognized that specificity might be helpful in discussions around guns and gun safety.

ACTION   North Carolina should eliminate all fees and reduce fines, and link them to the ability to pay.

Some of the benefits listed by participants:

- Wouldn't adversely impact state budget since currently represent less than 3% of budget and most cost more to collect than what is collected

- Would improve chances of successful re-entry given consequences of lost license

- Deterrence effect of fines and fees currently seems negligible

- Targets a regressive system that disproportionately affects poorer people

Some of the drawbacks listed by participants:

- Reduces accountability and deterrence

- Need to raise the money somehow to be able to pay for government services

Eliminate All Fees and Reduce Fines
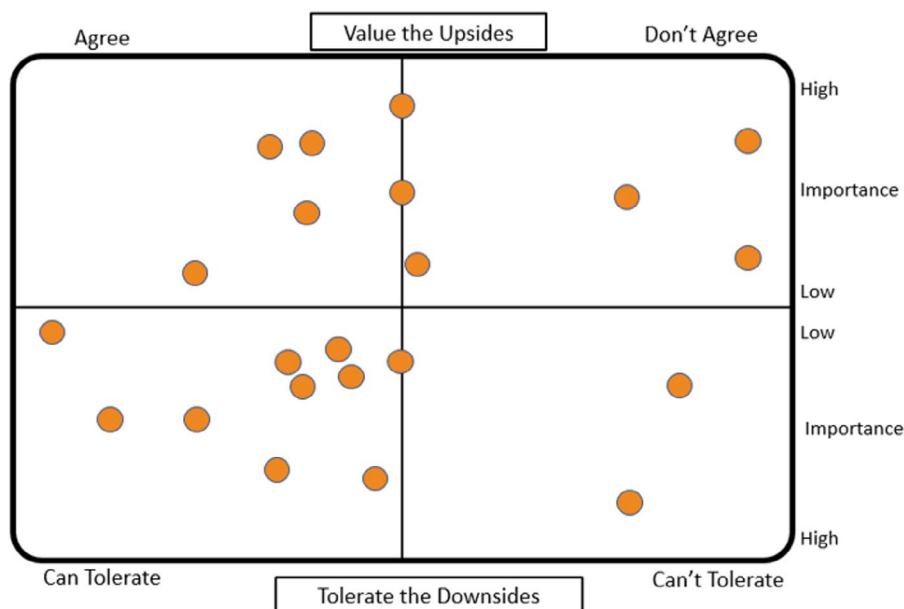
Fines are a form of punishment by which people pay money for committing offenses (e.g., speeding, littering). On the other hand, fees are money that must be paid by those who commit offenses to support governmental services (e.g., a fee for each night in jail or for using a court-appointed lawyer). If a person in North Carolina does not pay a traffic fine or fee within 40 days of its due date, the court sends notice to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), which will revoke the person's driver's license after 60 days for failing to comply (FTC).[42] Over the last 20 years, North Carolina's legislature has created more than 20 new court fees and increased many existing fines and fees.[43]

Participants reacted most strongly to the idea that people could lose their driver's license for failing to pay court debt. Supporters of this action wanted to enable people to keep their jobs, support their families, and continue to contribute to the community rather than face steep consequences for what could be a minor infraction. A few participants pointed out that the current system has a disproportional impact on poorer North

Carolinians and their families and that if we are willing to waive consequences for well-connected individuals, we should be willing to waive them for all people.

On the other hand, participants who opposed this action felt it was important for people who commit offenses to have consequences. They also brought up the deterrent effect of fines and wondered whether speeding, for instance, would increase if North Carolinians knew fines were linked to their ability to pay. Finally, one participant raised that money currently collected from fines and fees to fund state services would need to come from somewhere else if they are eliminated. However, a responding participant stated that fines and fees currently account for less than two percent of state revenue.

At the last meeting, the cohort tried to tease out which parts of this action were most tolerable and how it could be amended to gain broader support. Most participants agreed that North Carolina should stop revoking driver's licenses for FTCs (Failure to Comply)—but not for FTAs (Failure to Appear), which represent a failure to appear

for a scheduled court appearance. Most participants also moved towards an option that further linked fees to an ability to pay but were concerned about reducing fines so much that they no longer serve as punishment. Overall, the cohort found more room for agreement once they broke down the components of this action.

ACTION NC direct increased financial support to evidence-based parenting programs and child care for all NC families, such as North Carolina's Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), hosted by NC DHHS.

Some of the benefits listed by participants:

- Effectively teaching parents skills
- Early intervention
- Disrupting cycles

Some of the drawbacks mentioned by participants:

- Funding
- Proper oversight and administration of the program
- Equity concerns in terms of who has access
- Question whether current contents of program is best fit for general community safety needs

Direct Increased Financial Support to Evidence-Based Parenting Programs and Child Care
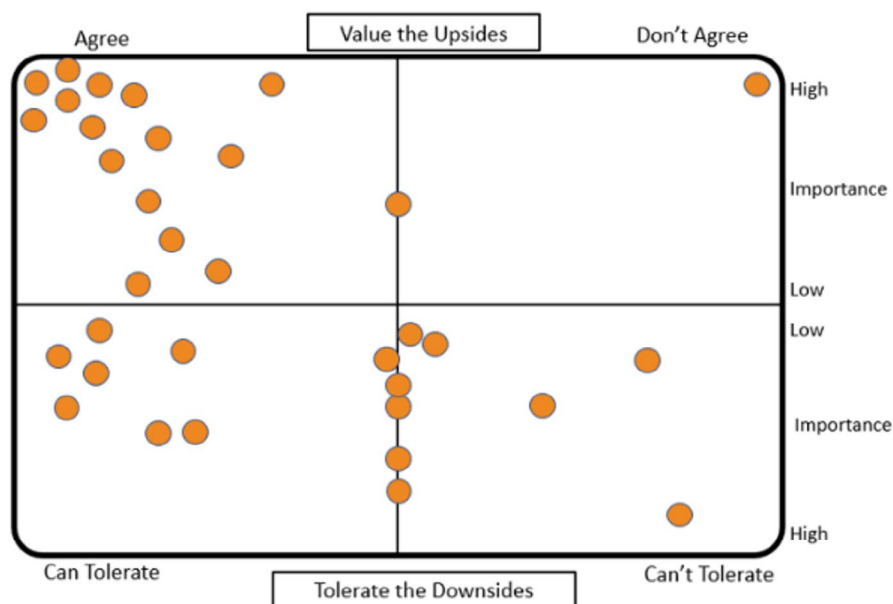
Parenting education programs help parents develop skills, increase their knowledge of child development, and improve family functioning. In 2019, seven such programs were funded through public and private means in North Carolina. However, not all of these programs are offered in every county, and access is

limited in rural and under-resourced areas. The Triple P system is currently being scaled up in numerous NC counties.[44]

North Carolina is currently experiencing a shortage of childcare, with a net loss of care sites and increasing parent fees.[45] Furthermore, childcare was identified as a critical factor in workforce challenges across the state.[46]

When voting, most participants indicated that they supported this option, although many questioned where the additional money would come from. Similarly, most participants were willing to tolerate any perceived downsides to this option. Some participants felt the classes should be more proactively promoted to all parents and were worried the program was just being used for cases of neglect and abuse.

ACTION The NC General Assembly should amend North Carolina's civil commitment laws to make inpatient/outpatient commitment easier (i.e., relax the current standard of permitting commitment only if the subject is "a danger to himself or others" such that those who are unable to look after themselves and stay safe can also be committed)

Some of the benefits listed by participants:

- Would help people who cannot help themselves

- More people might qualify, which would allow earlier intervention and service

- May prevent things from spiraling and getting worse

Some of the downsides listed by participants:

- Infringement on people's civil liberties

- Already inadequate beds and service, so space should be reserved for people who need it most

- Could be abused by family members who have other motives than what is best for an individual

---

GA Amend NC's Civil Commitment Laws to Make In/Out Commitment Easier
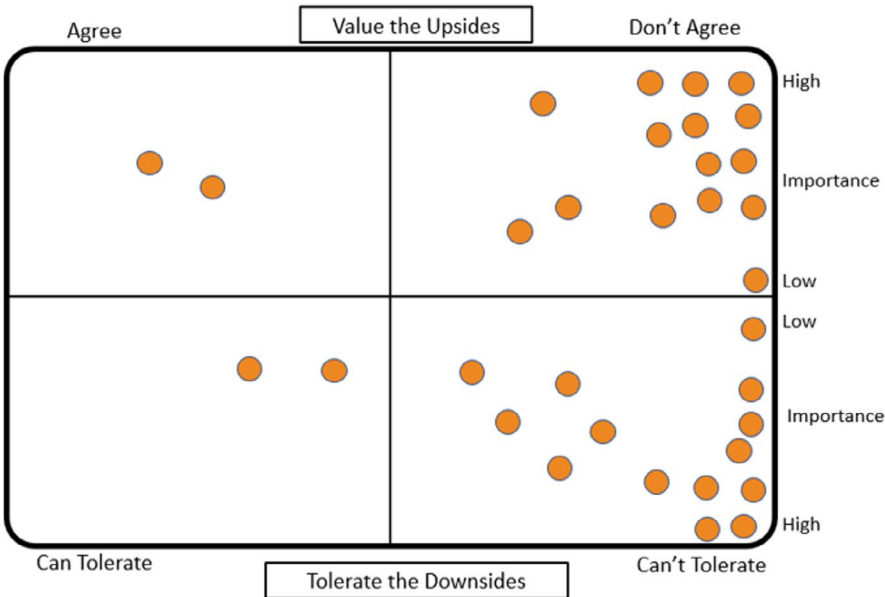
Involuntary commitment (IVC) is a civil legal process by which a person may be confined to an inpatient mental health facility or ordered to a supervised outpatient mental health treatment program for some period without their consent. The inpatient standard requires that an individual must be mentally ill and dangerous to themselves or others. The outpatient standard requires that the individual has a mental illness and needs treatment to prevent further deterioration that will lead to dangerous behavior. Anyone with knowledge of a person who meets these standards can petition a clerk or magistrate for a custody order, which prompts an evaluation, after which a district court judge decides whether to order the involuntary treatment.

Most participants agreed that they opposed this action, emphasizing that it has the potential for abuse, it would be hard to apply equitably, and further expansion would overburden the already limited resources (e.g., facilities, beds, and staff). However, a few dissenters pointed out that it could help save lives and provide much-needed help to those who cannot help themselves.

ACTION   Have more police on the streets with better training and pay.

Some of the benefits listed by participants:

- Increased response time, more police presence, and more de-escalation which could all reduce crime and help people feel safer

- More diversity in the workforce

- Better morale, less stress, and higher retention for a more experienced, high-functioning workforce

- Ability for police to serve as community leaders with better training and pay

Some of the drawbacks listed by participants:

- Investing in police instead of non-law enforcement response options

- Overpolicing of minority communities would further reduce trust and continue to harm families

- More training could lead to more aggressive tactics and unintended consequences

More Police on the Streets
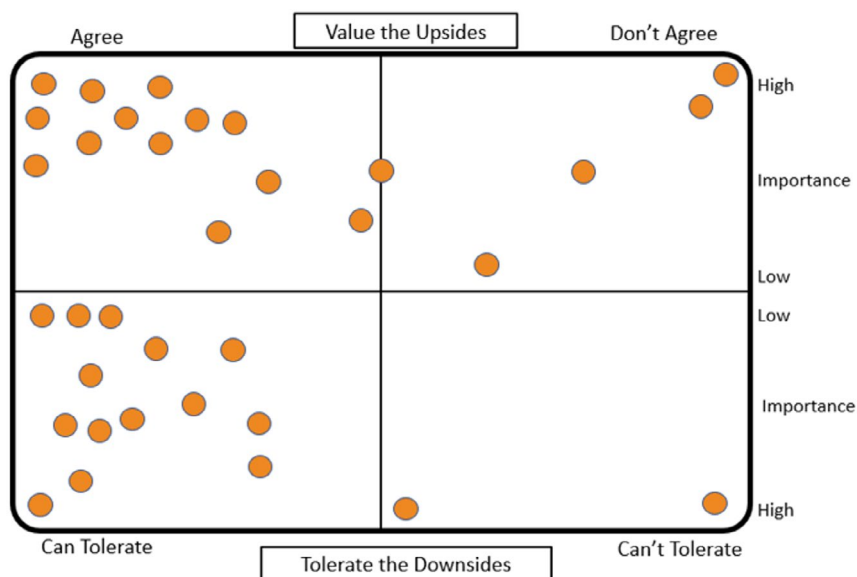
North Carolina had a criminal justice workforce of more than 60,000 employees in 2019, ranking 16th for the number of police employees, 19th for the number of corrections employees, and 51st for the number of judicial employees, all on a per-capita basis.[47] The ratio of police officers to the general population has declined since 2019. From 2020 to 2021, there were almost 500 more law enforcement separations than new appointments in North Carolina.[48]

Most participants agreed that more, better-trained police would have community benefits. For example, participants indicated that this action would help people feel safer with a larger police presence and improved response time, encourage more diverse and qualified officers, decrease burnout among officers while improving their ability to handle crises, and ultimately save lives. One participant emphasized that more police would help deter crime, lowering incarceration rates and collateral consequences. Another felt this action would allow police to be seen as community leaders rather than people out to get their fellow community members. Most participants could also tolerate potential downsides, although with varying degrees of intensity.

However, some participants agreed with the "better training" aspect of the action but disagreed with the "more" component. Those participants noted that more police would make some people feel less safe, that it could result in increased incarceration rates, and that there might be a more significant need for non-law enforcement responses to truly address the concern about gun violence. Throughout several discussions of the role of law enforcement, there was broad support for other mental health and social service providers to work with law enforcement to address specific community needs. The handful of dissenters preferred building out alternatives to police rather than increasing the resources dedicated to police. Those favoring this action thought that non-police options should be done in conjunction with investing more in police.

ACTION Increase the number of counties that offer drug treatment and mental health courts.

Some of the benefits listed by participants:

- Could start by piloting and expand only if successful
- There might be additional funding opportunities to ensure more North Carolinians have access

Some of the drawbacks listed by participants:

- Smaller or rural counties wouldn't have the resources to be successful
- Hard to standardize eligibility and access

Increase Number of Counties That Offer Drug Treatment and Mental Health Courts
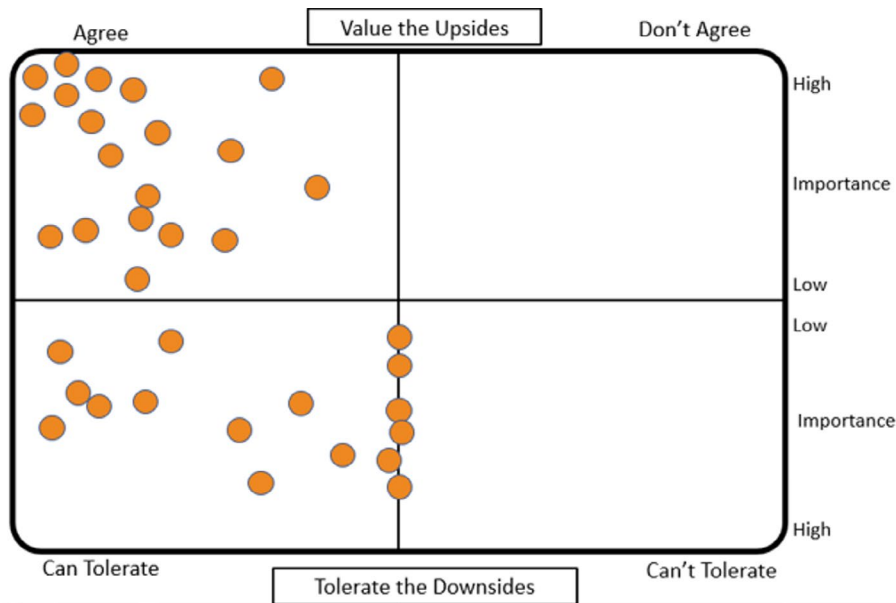
Recovery courts are specialty courts in North Carolina that provide tailored programming to chemically dependent individuals, people with mental health issues, and veterans. There are 59 such courts across 32 of North Carolina's 100 counties, although they are permissible in all counties under state law.[49] For drug courts, local committees have discretion over eligibility and other guidelines.[50] For mental health courts, the local district attorney also screens all eligible defendants.[51]

The cohort generally supported the benefits of these types of courts, but tolerance for the downsides was more moderate. Some participants cautioned that it would be difficult for some counties to support these courts successfully, especially given the shortage of behavioral health professionals. Participants brainstormed potential solutions to the resourcing issue, proposing regional models, rotating courts, remote options, and other ideas. Some participants also raised concerns about the difficulty of standardizing eligibility and discussed how that would work.

ACTION   Expand the behavioral health workforce by increasing General Assembly funding for new initiatives and existing programs at state community colleges and universities.

Some of the benefits listed by participants:

- Would help people who cannot help themselves

- More proactively trying to save lives instead of waiting for someone to try to harm themselves or another

Some of the drawbacks listed by participants:

- There are not enough good facilities and would be further burdening limited resources

- Hard to determine who is a risk; could be abused by family members with bad motives

- Abuses due process and individual rights

Expand the Behavioral Workforce
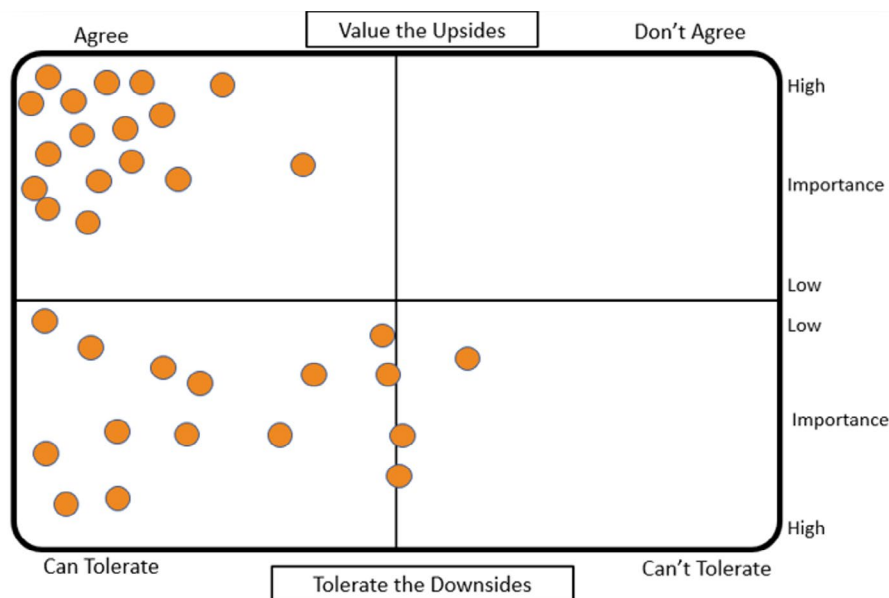
North Carolina's behavioral health workforce faces many challenges, from low reimbursement rates and high administrative burdens to limited career advancement opportunities and staffing shortages.[52] The latest North Carolina budget included $835 million for mental and behavioral health services, including increased reimbursement rates for specific positions for the first time since 2012, one-time funding of $40 million in recruiting and retention bonuses for state mental health facility employees, an $18 million designation for the establishment of a behavioral health workforce training center and for the administration of grants to community colleges for behavioral health training programs, and an expansion of the NC Loan Repayment program for behavioral health providers in rural and underserved areas.[53]

The cohort strongly supported the benefits of this action, with most participants also tolerating the downsides. Some participants questioned whether there were better actions to address this need, such as offering higher pay to the current workforce. Some new initiatives discussed included upskilling efforts, targeting rural community members who might be more likely to stay in their locales, and partnering with community organizations to bring training to rural areas rather than bringing students to educational institutions.

ACTION | NC General Assembly should mandate that schools educate on conflict resolution and lethality of guns.

Some of the benefits listed by participants:

- Reaching kids through schools helps ensure that message reaches everyone

- Reduces gun violence and accidental discharges

- Normalizes the conversation and reinforces other conflict resolution lessons

- Teaches a needed skill

Some of the drawbacks listed by participants:

- Unfunded mandates are problematic and it's not the school's job to educate on guns

- The education could differ dramatically based on where you live

- Wouldn't reach all kids because not all are in public or charter schools

- Could end up with a bias against weapons

Schools Educate on Conflict Resolution and Lethality of Guns
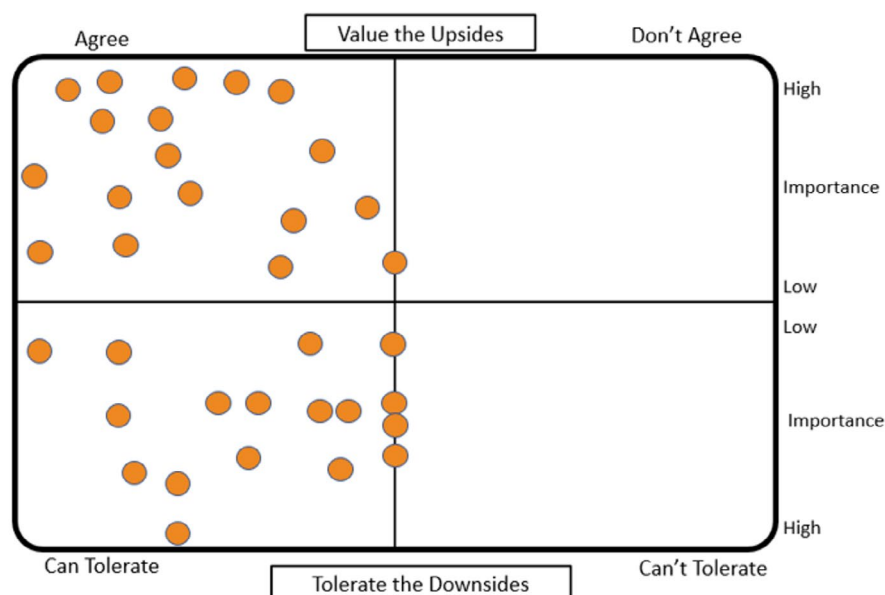
Most current gun education efforts in North Carolina focus on safe firearm storage. For example, in 2023, NC DHHS launched a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of safe storage, and the NC Task Force for Safer Schools endorsed a five-year action plan in 2021 that included safe storage education.[54] The task force also recommended that schools adopt intensive social and emotional learning (SEL), which teaches students how to resolve conflicts, handle stress, and manage their emotions.[55]

While all participants supported this action and could tolerate its downsides, the degree of their support and tolerance differed widely. Conflict resolution education received more support than education on the lethality of guns, in part because many participants lacked clarity on how to educate about the lethality of guns.

For example, some participants supported gun safety education given the dangerousness of accidental discharge but would not feel comfortable with blanket statements that guns should be avoided or inherently cause harm. Overall, this action gained even more support after discussing other firearm-related actions as participants shared their adolescent experiences with firearms and firearm safety.

<div style="background:#1d2d5c; color:#fff; padding:1em;">

ACTION   NC should increase financial support for victims of violent crimes to support counseling and other support to recover from trauma and to compensate for pain and suffering losses..

</div>

Some of the benefits listed by participants:

- Victims need more resources; already hard for them to collect from civil claims
- Current system doesn't make people whole or fully address the need
- Creates less stigma around care for trauma

Some of the drawbacks listed by participants:

- Money might not be available and it's unclear who should be responsible for paying for this
- Could get astronomically expensive to compensate for pain and suffering

Increase Financial Support for Victims
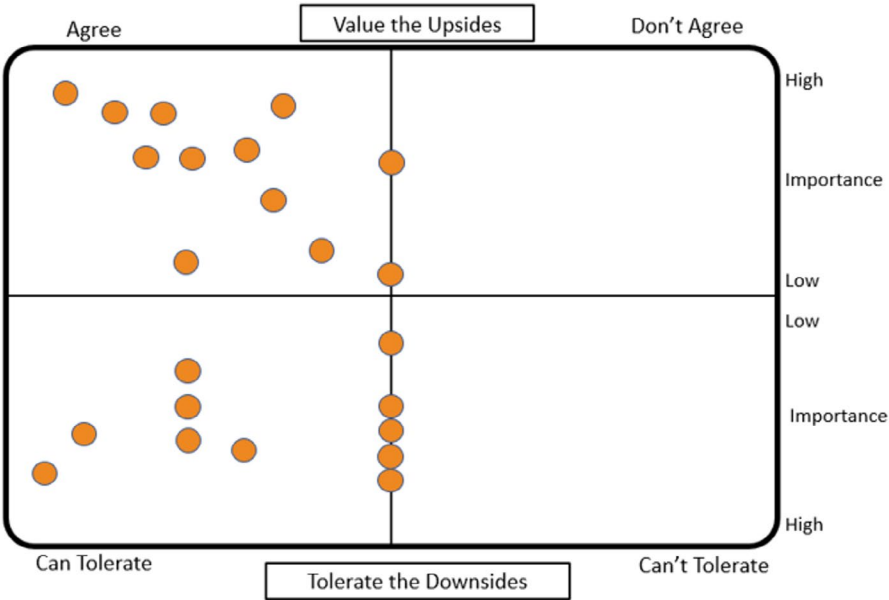
In North Carolina, innocent victims of assault, sexual abuse, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, and drunk driving can apply for financial help to be reimbursed for medical care, counseling, lost wages, and funeral expenses. Family members of homicide victims are also eligible to apply. The program does not currently compensate for pain and suffering or for damaged or stolen property.[56] Revenue for these funds—dispersed by Crime Victim Compensation Services—comes primarily from fines, fees, assessments, and

forfeitures levied against those convicted of crimes, along with gifts and donations from private parties.[57] Notably, the program operates as a payer of last resort, only offsetting costs not covered through other sources such as insurance, workers' compensation, or direct restitution paid by the offender.[58]

Participants generally felt neither strong support nor strong opposition to this action. They affirmed that victims should be considered more often, and there are currently gaps and stigma around care for trauma. However, they felt that taxpayers could not be responsible for paying for every situation and that the person who committed the crime might be better suited to covering expenditures. The group would have wanted more information to discuss this action in more depth but focused on actions with higher disagreement during the final session.

After discussing the actions in more depth, participants expressed an interest in continuing the dialogue to better understand how they could move some of them forward. At small tables, participants began action planning the following four actions:

- State mandate schools educate on conflict resolution and lethality of guns

- NC increase financial support for victims of violent crimes to support counseling, and other support to recover from trauma and to compensate for pain and suffering losses

- More police on the streets with better training and pay

- Increase focus on rehabilitation and reentry (this topic was not discussed during the other meetings because there was substantial agreement, but it was on the agenda at the final meeting)

The group briefly discussed the required stakeholders, metrics, tasks, resources, and people to move each action forward. Given the brevity of the discussion, those details are not shared in this report. However, participants had the opportunity to sign up for continued discussion outside the scope of the forum.

Conclusions

NCLF's primary goal is to enable North Carolina's policy leaders to build the will, skills, and relationships they need to engage effectively with each other across ideological and other divisions. While much of this report is about the substance of the community safety discussion, it is important to focus on the program's impact on its participants and how NCLF can continue to deepen that impact.

Participant Learnings

To help assess the impact of its programming, NCLF ends each program with a facilitated in-person reflection activity and an online survey asking for feedback.

During the conversation, participants said the process taught them how to listen more intently, be more resourceful, and be open to different ideas and solutions. One participant said they realized there was "more space for agreement than the two sides would have you believe." And another added that they were more hopeful that change was possible. After initial misgivings about the program's approach, one participant said that by the last day, the program had come full circle for them, teaching them patience and emotional management, noting that NCLF had created a safe space for them to be vulnerable. In fact, one participant shared that they had begun to integrate some of NCLF's principles into other spaces because such spaces are so rare.

About 60 percent of the NCLF cohort participants took the post-program survey. All respondents agreed that

they learned more about community safety in North Carolina through NCLF programming.

- 80% strongly agreed with the statement, "I better understand my own values, opinions, or priorities concerning keeping NC communities safe."

- 85% strongly agreed with the statement, "I better understand the values, opinions, or priorities concerning keeping NC communities safe held by people with different perspectives than mine."

Not only did respondents learn more, but the majority also modified their views around community safety; 85% agree (with 45% strongly agreeing and 40% somewhat agreeing) that they view some issues about keeping NC communities safe differently than they did before participating.

- When asked for ways in which their views had been modified, a few respondents mentioned being more "open-minded" to other viewpoints or on specific issues. A few others mentioned being better able to see how others' perspectives have been informed by their personal experiences and environments. One respondent mentioned no longer "thinking that because someone looks like me or has a similar background that we hold the same views."

- When asked which aspects of the program allowed them to modify their views, multiple respondents highlighted the time spent "listening." Small group conversations, real-life examples from other participants, and exercises that encouraged difficult conversations were also mentioned by respondents.

Respondent feedback also indicates that NCLF was successful in its goals of building bridges and skills for constructive dialogue.

- 95% of respondents agreed that they "formed relationships with one or more people of differing views that I likely would not have otherwise formed."

- All respondents said they "gained skills that will help me engage constructively with people of different views," with 75% strongly agreeing.

- 85% said they have made or are making efforts to encourage conversations between people of different ideologies in their community. Some mentioned making this effort at work, and others are doing so within their family. One respondent indicated that they are doing so by "going out of my way to ask questions of those who I don't agree with and questioning those I normally agree with." Another stated that they are "prioritizing this interaction and seeking it out deliberately."

Overall, participants seemed to value the opportunity to participate in the NCLF program, with 95% of respondents stating that they would definitely recommend that a friend or colleague accept an invitation to participate in NCLF in the future.

NCLF Learnings

NCLF continued emphasizing small groups, personal stories, and careful facilitation as part of this eighth cohort. Participants valued the rich discussion resulting from bringing together such an interesting, diverse cross-section of people and appreciated the way facilitators engaged the group, ensuring everyone had the opportunity to talk and be heard. They named the small group discussions and intentional mixing of those small groups as particularly effective tools. Several participants cited an activity where they were asked to take the opposite position and articulate the benefits of that position as most valuable. Suggestions for program improvements included adding more sessions, integrating alumni, providing support for the buddy component, and spending more time on concrete proposals for action. Many participants expressed a commitment to participating in similar dialogues in the future and were eager for additional opportunities to engage after the program.

We found that this topic of community safety had many layers that brought to the surface deeply personal experiences and strongly felt emotions that were different from other forums. While some participants leaned into that discomfort, others maintained a certain distance. Holding space so that both groups felt included and could stay in constructive conversation with each other was new for NCLF.

For this cohort, we implemented a new process to select concerns. Previously, concerns were chosen by majority vote, which may have moved participants

towards consensus too early. Additionally, some prior participants indicated that this voting process felt arbitrary yet were disappointed if the facilitators stepped in and chose concerns that did not reflect the group's vote. At the suggestion of students taking NCLF's Bass Connections course, "Strengthening Cross-Partisan Collaboration in NC Policymaking," we implemented a new process to select concerns for this eighth cohort. We emailed participants a survey asking them to rank each concern on three scales: importance, timeliness, and disagreement or controversy. At the second meeting, we shared the survey results and discussed the nine concerns that scored highly on all three scales. Facilitators then used the results of these discussions to create a final list of four concerns informed by participant feedback. This process allowed us to quickly filter out concerns that had broad agreement so that we could focus on issues that required more discussion. It also allowed us to use time wisely, as the survey took place outside the sessions. Participants also found the survey results informative in illustrating differing views. Given these benefits, we will likely continue to select concerns this way.

This cohort was also our first time partnering with another organization. We joined forces with the Wilson Center for Science and Justice to leverage their topical expertise. The Wilson Center was delighted to join NCLF in this program and has gained a wealth of knowledge from the experience. Most importantly, participating in NCLF allowed the Center's Policy Director to build relationships with key stakeholders and engage them in meaningful conversations to learn about their perspectives, priorities, and values. The insight and knowledge gained from these conversations will buttress the Wilson Center's work going forward. Moreover, partnering with NCLF was a testament to the value of both building relationships within Duke and breaking down institutional silos to expand potential impact. Finally, while the Wilson Center was able to provide topical expertise, it benefited from learning the NCLF model and will apply some of the skills, exercises, and approaches that NCLF deploys in its work in the future.

For NCLF, partnering with the Wilson Center was a great opportunity to address an ongoing challenge of how to engage a policy expert in the model. As a thought partner, the Wilson Center's knowledge of the criminal justice landscape was invaluable. At the outset, they offered insight into what we should anticipate going into the topic and who should be in the room. In addition to presenting the basic data on the topic to the cohort, they

continued to provide policy expertise throughout the Forum, and the Center's Policy Director functioned as a knowledgeable participant during meetings. This freed NCLF to focus on the process and other programmatic elements. In addition, they offered helpful feedback on how the sessions were going and contributed to designing the sessions. Finally, the Wilson Center may be a potential avenue for continuing the work with the group, especially around shared areas of agreement.

Takeaways

For our democracy to succeed, policy leaders must be able to work together to create broadly acceptable solutions to our state's greatest challenges. This year's group of NC leaders addressed important concerns related to community safety in North Carolina. They found some solutions they agreed on, some that were negotiable, and some about which they had very significant disagreements. In the process, participants came to understand what values, experiences, and perceptions lay under their disagreements, and they came to trust, respect, and perhaps even like each other.

Even in these politically fractious times, it is possible to bring together a widely diverse group of policy leaders and provide them with the opportunity to gain the will, skills, and relationships that will enable them to

engage constructively with each other in the future. The enthusiasm and praise for the program, both on the survey and anecdotally, reinforced for NCLF that it should continue to provide this opportunity to North Carolina's leaders.

Acknowledgments

Six months after the conclusion of this forum, participant Mayor Karen Alexander passed away. Mayor Alexander was an active participant, sharing her perspective respectfully and listening to others with curiosity. Her experience as a long-time public servant and thoughtful contributions enriched our discussions. We are deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to know her.

Appendix

Participants

Karen Alexander
Mayor, City of Salisbury

Timothy Blackmon
Director, Establishing Safe Cultures

Kristen Brabble
Chief Operating Officer, First
Carolina Bank

Maggie Brewer
Chief Deputy Secretary,
Rehabilitative and Correctional
Services, NC Department of Adult
Correction

Brandy Bynum Dawson
Senior Director of Rural Prosperity
and Investment, MDC

Tarrah Callahan
Executive Director, Conservatives
for Criminal Justice Reform

Darren Campbell
Sheriff, Iredell County Sheriff's
Office

Rebecca Ceartas
Executive Director, North
Carolinians Against Gun Violence
(NCGV)

Warren Daniel
Senator, NC Senate

Ted Davis
Representative, NC House of
Representatives

James Dean
CEO, JD Financial Group and
Associates, Inc

Angie Weis Gammell
Policy Director, Wilson Center for
Science and Justice

James Gore
Sr. Program Officer, The Just Trust

Jonathan Guze
Senior Fellow, Legal Studies, John
Locke Foundation

Andrew Heath
Partner, Nelson Mullins Riley &
Scarborough LLP

David Levine
Vice President, Assistant General
Counsel, Red Hat, Inc. (retired)

Carolyn Logan -
Representative, North Carolina
General Assembly

Mary Martin
Chief Operating Officer, Duke
University Hospital

Frankie Roberts
Executive Director, Leading into New
Communities Inc (LINC Inc)

Brian Scott
Executive Director, OurJourney

Matthew Scott
District Attorney, Robeson County

Elizabeth Tilson
State Health Director/Chief Medical
Officer, NC Department of Health
and Human Services

William Vasquez
Attorney & Founder, Vasquez Law
Firm, PLLC

Thomas Walker
Attorney, former United States
Attorney, Alston & Bird

Zach Wallace
Vice President, Asheville Area
Chamber of Commerce

Stephanie Watkins-Cruz
Director of Housing Policy, North
Carolina Housing Coalition

Leonardo Williams
Mayor, City of Durham

NCLF Steering Committee

Abdullah Antepli
Professor of the Practice, Duke University and Director of Polis, Center for Politics

Tamara Barringer
Associate Justice, NC Supreme Court, Clinical Professor of Business Law & Ethics, UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School

Anita Brown Graham
Gladys Hall Coates Distinguished Professor of Public Law and Government; Assoc. Dean for Strategic Initiatives; Director, ncIMPACT Initiative

John Hood
Co-Founder, NCLF & President, John William Pope Foundation

Ricky Hurtado
Co-Founder and Senior Advisor, LatinxEd

Chuck Neely
Retired Partner, Williams Mullen

Leslie Winner
Co-Founder, NCLF & former Executive Director, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

NCLF Staff

Debbie Goldstein
Executive Director

Minda Brooks
Program Director

Amber Rogers
Senior Program Coordinator

David Hood
Facilitator

Tracey Greene-Washington
Facilitator

List of Concerns

The notes below summarize the concerns and values that were shared by participants. Of note, these are not shared or consensus concerns/values, but represent specific concerns or values shared by someone in the group.

Concerns Discussion Day 1:

"What should we do to keep North Carolina communities safe?"

Prior to the meeting, participants were asked to talk to five people about their concerns on this topic and share the results with the group.

LIST OF CONCERNS NAMED IN DISCUSSION GROUPED WITH HEADERS ():

1. Schools are not safe.

    a. Drugs in schools

    b. Increase in juvenile crime

    c. Gangs in schools

    d. Gun violence on school campuses

    e. People perceive a safety issue for their own and others' kids at schools

    f. Violence in schools

    g. School resource officers often lack proper training

2. The increased availability of drugs and drug use is a problem in our communities.

    a. Drugs coming across the border and into our communities

    b. Drugs in schools

    c. Fentanyl epidemic

    d. Opioid/fentanyl epidemic – overdoses

3. The impact of crime on individuals and certain populations is disproportionate.

    a. Impact on victims

        i. Victims of crime becoming perpetrators – "today's victim is tomorrow's perpetrator"

    b. Disproportionate impact on African-American/ Black communities

        i. Race appears to be at the root of not being safe

    c. Violence against women; domestic violence

    d. Human trafficking

    e. Sex trafficking

4. Guns make community less safe.

    a. Firearm owners do not know how or are unable to secure their weapons

    b. Concerned that the state legislature does not do enough to address gun violence

    c. Drive by shootings & stray bullets

    d. Increase in guns on streets

    e. Gun violence

    f. Lack of firearm educators

5. Property crimes cause real economic loss in the community.

    a. Black communities are victims too (in relation to property crime)

    b. Property crimes - impact on businesses; anti-business

    c. Impact of crime on communities – businesses leave community due to crime, leading to loss of jobs and investment

    d. Concern about home invasions

6. The perceptions about crime don't match the reality of crime.

    a. News media is biased in covering and reporting on crime

    b. People have wrong perception of who is responsible

    c. Narrative has overwhelmed actual crime data

    d. People perceive problems where they are not as serious

    e. People worried about their own safety, safety of parents, safety of their children, where to live

f. Public spaces - greenways, parks, movie theaters, workplaces, hospitals, etc. are not as safe as they once were

g. Community safety requires nuance; we can have justice, accountability, and safety; it's not an either/or, it's a both/and

h. Issue of safety not being addressed until it directly impacts individuals

7. **Increase in road and traffic violations makes driving unsafe.**

a. Reckless drivers

b. Red light cameras (bring back)

c. Red light runners

d. Speeding drivers

e. Tractor trailer parking on shoulders

f. fTraffic safety and unsafe driving, bad driving

8. **Children and families do not have the resources and support they need to thrive, which can lead to criminal activities.**

a. Lack of resources and support for vulnerable youth

b. School to prison pipeline

c. Early childhood engagement

d. Lack of safe spaces in communities—parks, green space, etc.

9. **There is a failure to address root causes of crime.**

a. Lack of access to economic mobility

b. Unemployment

c. Dissolution of family

d. Lack of access to healthcare

e. Homelessness

f. Lack of access to housing

g. Material conditions in neighborhoods are unequal

h. Community safety requires more than police & prisons; it requires jobs, education, housing to produce safe communities

i. Cycle of victim to perpetrator, often same people involved in both

10. **There is a lack of adequate and appropriate treatment for behavioral or mental health needs.**

a. Prisons have become de facto mental health institutions

b. Lack of access to mental health services

11. **There is a need for accountability for people that commit crimes.**

a. No real punishment for criminals IF they are caught (in and out of the system)

b. Low clearance rates for gun crime

c. Need for personal responsibility

d. Family values have been lost

12. **Community leaders, law enforcement, teachers, and others, need respect and support to be able to be effective.**

a. Teachers talk about real support

b. There's a lack of respect for law enforcement

c. Difficulty recruiting law enforcement officers - "need to lower recruiting standards" so we can hire

d. Fair and competitive pay for police

e. Inadequate police staffing

f. Law enforcement officer shortage

g. Lack of civility in discussion

h. Lack of respect for government in general

i. Leaders feel unsafe or feel they will be punished in the ballot box, so stay silent about how to best address community needs

j. Political activists are hijacking the conversation to the detriment of impacted people

k. Ills of society now in the hospital - health personnel fear for safety daily. (hit, punched, bit, lewd acts, screaming, threatening) Lack of respect

l. Need to get at the real community leaders, not just people with titles

13. **Individuals/communities lack trust in our justice system.**

   a. Lack of community engagement because they don't believe the system is legitimate

   b. Distrust of justice system

   c. Legitimacy issue in the court system - system is stacked against them to such an extent that they distrust its legitimacy

   d. Immigrant communities lack trust in law enforcement

   e. In communities of color there is a radicalizing that is happening - they feel overpoliced and under protected and this undermines the legitimacy of law enforcement

   f. Fear of police killing black youth

   g. Hypervigilance and hyper responsiveness lead to violence/lack of trust

   h. Lack of community policing; engagement in community

14. **The collateral consequences of justice system involvement are harmful to individuals, families, and communities.**

   a. Fines and fees are difficult for low-income families to pay

   b. License revocations impact the local economy (on economy)

   c. Having a criminal record hurts one's ability to obtain housing and secure a job

   d. Criminalization of poverty

15. **There is not enough focus on rehabilitation and reentry for people returning to communities after completing their prison sentence.**

   a. Need adequate programming in jails and prisons

   b. Addressing a person's needs can help disrupt crime cycle

   c. Lack of reentry resources in many parts of the state

16. **Polarization limits our ability to have meaningful discussion about how to address community safety and crime issues**

   a. Addressing crime has become politicized; different groups see responses as a political tool rather than trying to address the problem

   b. There is too much political unrest, communities are really polarized

   c. People with different political or policy perspectives don't respect each other

FULL LIST OF CONCERNS MENTIONED:

1. Increase in juvenile crime

2. Early childhood engagement

3. Early childhood, youth investments, lack of support for children

4. School safety - gun violence on campus

5. School to prison pipeline

6. Teachers talk about real support

7. I just want my kids / everyone's kids to be safe going to school

8. School violence

9. School violence

10. Lack of resources / support for vulnerable youth

11. Lack of civility

12. Leaders are unsafe for fear of punishment from certain structures - feel unsafe because they might get punished so they stay silent

13. Political groups hijacking the conversation (vs. impacted people)

14. Political tool

15. Political unrest, polarized communities

16. Respecting people with differently political or policy perspectives

17. Rise in crime post 2020

18. Drugs in schools

19. Drugs coming across the border and into our communities

20. Drugs

21. Fentanyl epidemic

22. Opioid/fentanyl epidemic - overdoses

23. Lack of respect for government in general

24. Lack of firearms educator

25. Inability of firearm owners to secure their weapons

26. Concerned that the state legislature does not do enough to address gun violence

27. Drive by shootings & stray bullets

28. Increase in guns on streets

29. Gun violence

30. Gun violence

31. Low clearance rates for gun crime

32. Black communities are victims too (in relation to property crime)

33. Property crimes - impact on businesses

34. Property crimes - anti-business

35. Impact of crime on communities - loss of jobs and investment

36. Panhandling issues

37. Economic opportunities, jobs lost (property crime)

38. Wealth stripping - as a result of penalties

39. Relationship between victim & coming perpetrator - today's victim is tomorrow's perpetrator

40. Impact on victims

41. Disproportionate impact on African-American/Black communities

42. Lack of community engagement because they don't believe the system is legitimate

43. Distrust of justice system

44. Legitimacy issue in the court system - system is stacked against them to such an extent that they distrust its legitimacy

45. Police engage in Community

46. Lack of respect for law enforcement

47. Immigrant communities lack trust in law enforcement

48. In communities of color there is a radicalizing that is happening - they feel overpoliced and under protected and this undermines the legitimacy of law enforcement

49. Lack of community policing

50. Need to correct law enforcement and community

51. Overpoliced in certain communities

52. Fear of police killing black youth

53. Hypervigilance Hyper responsiveness

54. Difficulty recruiting law enforcement officers - "need to lower recruiting standards" so we can hire

55. Fair and competitive pay for police

56. Inadequate police staffing

57. Law enforcement officer shortage

58. Prisons have become de facto mental health institutions

59. Adequate & appropriate treatment for behavioral health needs

60. Lack of access to mental health services

61. Lack of mental health support

62. Mental health challenges

63. Gangs

64. Human trafficking

65. 65.Sex trafficking

66. Biased news coverage

67. Biased news reporting

68. Perception of who is responsible

69. Narrative drives perception rather than data

70. Perspective - not everything is a problem, some is just perception

71. Concerned layers of safety: personal, gender, mother/father, children, resident in general

72. Home invasions

73. Safe spaces in communities - parks, green spaces, etc.

74. Lack of access to economic mobility

75. Unemployment

76. Dissolution of family

77. Lack of access to healthcare

78. Homelessness

79. Lack of access to housing

80. Material conditions in neighborhoods are unequal

81. Resources are distributed inequitably

82. Race appears to be at the root of not being safe

83. Community safety requires more than police & prisons; it requires jobs, education, housing to produce safe communities

84. Community safety requires nuance; we can have justice, accountability, and safety; it's not an either/or, it's a both/and

85. Issue of safety not being addressed until it directly impacts individuals

86. Need to address underlying economic and social disparities, address root causes of violence - conditions in neighborhoods

87. Symptoms and root causes

88. Talking to true community leaders, not just leaders in title

89. No real punishment for criminals IF they are caught (in and out of the system)

90. Bad driving

91. Reckless drivers

92. Red light cameras (bring back)

93. Red light runners

94. Speeding drivers

95. Tractor trailer parking on shoulders

96. Traffic safety and unsafe driving

97. Violence against women

98. Ills of society now in the hospital - health personnel fear for safety daily. (hit, punched, bit, lewd acts, screaming, threatening) Lack of respect

References

1   FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program, *Crime in the United States Estimations, 2022* (accessed February 2024), https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend.

2   Ernesto Lopez and Bobby Boxerman, *Crime Trends in U.S. Cities: Year-End 2023: Update* (Council on Criminal Justice, January 2024), https://counciloncj.org/crime-trends-in-u-s-cities-year-end-2023-update/#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20homicides%20in,assaults%20in%2011%20reporting%20cities.

3   FBI, *Crime in the United States Estimations*.

4   Jeffrey M. Jones, "More Americans See U.S. Crime Problem as Serious," *Gallup*, November 16, 2023, https://news.gallup.com/poll/544442/americans-crime-problem-serious.aspx.

5   FBI, *Crime in the United States Estimations*.

6   FBI, *Crime in the United States Estimations*.

7   FBI, *Crime in the United States Estimations*.

8   FBI, *Crime in the United States Estimations*.

9   "North Carolina Profile," Prison Policy Initiative, accessed February 2024, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/NC.html#:~:text=57%2C000%20people%20from%20North%20Carolina%20are%20behind%20bars&text=Each%20year%2C%20at%20least%20128%2C000,local%20jails%20in%20North%20Carolina.

10 Prison Policy Initiative, "North Carolina Profile."

11 Prison Policy Initiative, "North Carolina Profile."

12 Prison Policy Initiative, "North Carolina Profile."

13 Wilson Center analysis of Offender Population Utilization System (OPUS) data and 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data.

14 North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, *Correctional Program Evaluation: Offenders Placed on Probation or Released from Prison in FY 2019*, (NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, April 15, 2022), https://www.ncleg.gov/Files/Library/agency/dps16606.pdf.

15 North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, *Correctional Program Evaluation: Offenders Placed on Probation or Released from Prison in FY 2019*, (NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, April 15, 2022), https://www.ncleg.gov/Files/Library/agency/dps16606.pdf.

16 North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, *Investing in Behavioral Health and Resilience: A comprehensive plan to strengthen North Carolina's mental health and substance use disorder treatment system*, (NCDHHS, March 2023), https://www.ncdhhs.gov/investing-behavioral-health-and-resilience/download?attachment.

17 NCDHHS, *Investing in Behavioral Health and Resilience*.

18 North Carolina Injury and Violence Prevention Branch, *NC Violent Death Reporting System: Suicide in North Carolina, 2021*, (NCDHHS, January 2024), https://injuryfreenc.dph.ncdhhs.gov/DataSurveillance/VDRS/OverallSuicide2021.pdf.

19 "Mental Health in North Carolina," KFF, accessed July 2024, https://www.kff.org/statedata/mental-health-and-substance-use-state-fact-sheets/north-carolina/; NCDHHS, *Investing in Behavioral Health and Resilience*.

20 North Carolina Injury and Violence Prevention Branch, *NC Violent Death Reporting System: Suicide in Urban and Rural North Carolina, 2021* (NCDHHS, January 2024), https://injuryfreenc.dph.ncdhhs.gov/DataSurveillance/VDRS/Urban_Rural2021.pdf.

21 NCDHHS, "North Carolina Reports 22% Increase in Overdose Deaths," news release, February 21, 2023, https://www.ncdhhs.gov/news/press-releases/2023/02/21/north-carolina-reports-22-increase-overdose-deaths.

22 KFF, "Mental Health in North Carolina."

23 NCDHHS, *Investing in Behavioral Health and Resilience*.

24 NCDHHS, *Investing in Behavioral Health and Resilience*.

25 Caregiving Workforce Strategic Leadership Council, *Investing in North Carolina's Caregiving Workforce: Recommendations to strengthen North Carolina's nursing, direct care, and behavioral health workforce*, (NCDHHS and the North Carolina Department of Commerce, January 2024), https://www.ncdhhs.gov/investing-north-carolinas-caregiving-workforce-recommendations-strengthen-north-carolinas-nursing/download?attachment.

26 North Carolina Division of Public Health, *Firearm Injury and Death in North Carolina, 2021* (NCDHHS, updated January 9, 2024), https://injuryfreenc.dph.ncdhhs.gov/safestorage/docs/2021-Firearm-One-Pager_final_updated-1-9-24.pdf.

27 NC Division of Public Health, *Firearm Injury and Death.*

28 Everytown, *Gun Violence in North Carolina*, (Everytown, updated May 2023), https://everystat.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Gun-Violence-in-North-Carolina-2.pdf; NC Division of Public Health, *Firearm Injury and Death.*

29 NC Division of Public Health, *Firearm Injury and Death.*

30 Everytown, Gun Violence in North Carolina.

31 Everytown, *Gun Violence in North Carolina.*

32 NC Division of Public Health, *Firearm Injury and Death.*

33 Everytown, *Gun Violence in North Carolina.*

34 Leah Efird, "Collateral Consequences of the Criminal Justice System – Durham," UNC School of Government, accessed July 2024, https://ncimpact.sog.unc.edu/2020/05/collateral-consequences-of-the-criminal-justice-system-durham/#:~:text=Collateral%20consequences%20may%20be%20imposed,and%20other%20disabilities%20and%20disqualifications.

35 Efird, "Collateral Consequences."

36 Lindsay Bass-Patel and Angie Weis Gammell, *When the Dollars Don't Add Up to Sense: Why North Carolina Must Rethink Its Approach to Criminal Fines and Fees* (Wilson Center for Science and Justice, November 2023), https://wcsj.law.duke.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/When-the-Dollars-Dont-Add-Up-to-Sense-11.8.2023.pdf.

37 Wilson Center analysis of Administrative Office of the Courts data.

38 Bass-Patel and Weis Gammell, *When the Dollars Don't Add Up to Sense.*

39 Wanda Bertram and Alexi Jones, "How many people in your state go to local jails every year?" Prison Policy Initiative, September 18, 2019, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2019/09/18/state-jail-bookings/.

40 Chelsea Parsons, Ruhi Bengali, Courtney Zale, Lisa Geller, and Spencer Cantrell, *Promising Approaches for Implementing Extreme Risk Laws*, (Everytown, May 30, 2023), https://everytownresearch.org/report/extreme-risk-laws-guide/.

41 "States with Magazine Restrictions 2023, Wisevoter, accessed July 2024, https://wisevoter.com/state-rankings/states-with-magazine-restrictions/.

42 Bass-Patel and Weis Gammell, *When the Dollars Don't Add Up to Sense.*

43 Bass-Patel and Weis Gammell, *When the Dollars Don't Add Up to Sense.*

44 NC Triple P Partnership for Strategy and Governance, *North Carolina Triple P Model Scale-Up Plan* (NC Triple P Partnership, January 2020), https://ictp.fpg.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/NC-Model-Scale-Up-Plan_01.21.2020.pdf.

45 Well World Solutions, *North Carolina Child Care Program Stabilization Grants Sunset Survey* (Washington, D.C.: Well World Solutions, March 27, 2024), https://cms.childcarerrnc.org/wp-content/uploads/NC-Stabilization-Funds-Provider-Challenges-Survey-Findings-3.27-PM-03262024-1.pdf.

46 NC Chamber, "Child Care Breakdowns Costing North Carolina $5.65 Billion in Lost Economic Activity Each Year," news release, June 12, 2024, https://ncchamber.com/2024/06/12/child-care-breakdowns-costing-north-carolina-5-65-billion-in-lost-economic-activity-each-year/#:~:text=In%20total%2C%20child%20care%20issues,of%20issues%20with%20child%20care.

47 United States Census Bureau, *2019 ASPEP Datasets and Tables*, accessed May 2024, https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/2019/econ/apes/annual-apes.html.

48 NC Department of Justice, "Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention", accessed July 2024, https://ncdoj.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Recruitment-and-Retention-One-Pager_4.21.pdf.

49 "What are North Carolina Recovery Courts?" North Carolina Court Records, accessed July 2024, https://northcarolinacourtrecords.us/recovery-court/.

50 "Adult Drug Treatment Court," North Carolina Judicial Branch, accessed July 2024, https://www.nccourts.gov/courts/recovery-courts/adult-drug-treatment-court.

51 "Mental Health Court," North Carolina Judicial Branch, accessed July 2024, https://www.nccourts.gov/courts/recovery-courts/mental-health-court#:~:text=To%20be%20eligible%2C%20offenders%20must,who%20addresses%20public%20safety%20concerns.

52 Caregiving Council, *Investing in Caregiving Workforce.*

53 Taylor Knopf, "State officials tout 'once in a lifetime' investment in North Carolina's mental health services," *NC Health News*, October 2023, https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2023/10/06/state-officials-tout-once-in-a-lifetime-investment-in-north-carolinas-mental-health-services/.

54 Jennifer Fernandez and Anne Blythe, "NC launches safe firearm storage initiative," *NC Health News*, June 6, 2023, https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2023/06/06/nc-launches-safe-firearm-storage-initiative/.

55 North Carolina Task Force for Safer Schools, *State Action Plan for School Safety, 2021-2026*, (NCDPS, updated September 20, 2023), https://files.nc.gov/dps/documents/2023-10/StateActionPlanforSchoolSafety_digital.pdf?VersionId=MS3sxyBSyAJIyjA_kCJZQwoxkLyyzBHn.

56 "Crime Victim Compensation," North Carolina Department of Public Safety, accessed July 2024, https://www.ncdps.gov/dps-services/victim-compensation-services/crime-victim-compensation.

57 "OVC Fact Sheet: Crime Victims Fund," Office for Victims of Crime, accessed July 2024, https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/pubs/crimevictimsfundfs/intro.html.

58 NCDPS, "Crime Victim Compensation."

About the Wilson Center

The Wilson Center for Science and Justice at Duke Law seeks to advance criminal justice reform and equity through science and law. We engage with academics, policy makers, and community stakeholders to translate interdisciplinary research into effective and practical policy. Our work focuses on three key areas: improving the accuracy of the evidence used in criminal cases, promoting fair and equitable outcomes in the criminal legal system, and improving outcomes for persons with mental illness and substance use disorders who encounter, or are at risk for encountering, the criminal legal system. Learn more about the Center at **wcsj.law.duke.edu**.

About the NC Leadership Forum

The NC Leadership Forum at Duke University provides an opportunity for civic, business, and political leaders from across North Carolina to discuss issues central to the future of our state and build trusting relationships between people even where disagreements persist. The Forum provides a venue for North Carolina leaders to discuss the nature of the challenges, to understand different points of view about how to address them, and to advance mutually acceptable solutions that improve the lives of North Carolinians. NCLF aims to transform the State's policy-making environment from one of negative polarization and distrust to one of effective collaboration. Founded by a bipartisan group of NC leaders in 2016 in partnership with the Sanford School of Public Policy, NCLF is now a part of the Center for Community Engagement, a joint effort of **Duke Community Affairs** and **Interdisciplinary Studies in the Office of the Provost**. By June 2025, NCLF will have successfully engaged nearly 440 state and local leaders in North Carolina.