

LR FOR LIFE

A large, stylized red heart with a textured, brushstroke-like border. The heart is positioned behind the text 'LR FOR LIFE', with the word 'LIFE' overlapping the heart's shape.

**Comprehensive
Violence Reduction
Strategy and Action
Plan for Investing
in the Community**



Stop the Violence

Disrupt violence before it starts. Offer potential victims a way out of violence. Aggressively prosecute the small percentage of young people who keep shooting.

- **Violent Crime Apprehension Teams**
- **Ceasefire Little Rock**
- **Multi-agency Intelligence Unit**
- **National Public Safety Partnership**
- **Request Department of Justice Assistance**
- **Group Violence Reduction Strategy**
- **Stopping Domestic Violence**

Strengthen the LRPD

Strong police work combined with help from the community prevents violence in our neighborhoods and quickly holds those who commit violence accountable.

- **Aggressive Recruiting Citywide and Regionally**
- **Recruitment and Retention Incentives**
- **“Gray Squad” and “Telephone Cadet Squad”**
- **Encouraging Citizen Cooperation**
- **More Community Policing**

Improve Our Criminal Justice System

Mayor Stodola convened a task force of criminal justice professionals. Their charge was to improve our criminal justice system.

- **Establish Domestic Violence Court**
- **Electronic Monitoring of Parolees**
- **Required Video Surveillance**
- **Aggressive Federal Gun Crime Prosecutions**
- **Ensure High Bail for Violent Crime Offenders**
- **Tougher Witness Intimidation and Bribery Statutes**

Invest in Prevention

We cannot arrest our way out of this problem. LR FOR LIFE puts a heavy emphasis on helping our young people and families succeed.

- **City Prevention and Intervention Programs**
- **Mentoring**
- **Gun Safety Coalition**
- **Conflict Resolution Training for City Staff**
- **Youth Master Plan**
- **Public Awareness Campaign**
- **Citywide Services Dashboard**

Promote Jobs, Opportunity and Education

People need the tools to succeed. They need to recognize their own worth. To change direction away from crime they need to have something too important to lose – a job.

- **Summer Youth Employment Program**
- **Re-entry Employment Programs**
- **Career Skills Training Programs**
- **Entrepreneurship Training Classes**
- **Vacant Lot Maintenance Program**

Rebuild the Neighborhoods

Blight threatens public safety, lowers property values, holds back neighborhoods, and degrades quality of life. By eliminating blight, we are revitalizing our neighborhoods.

- **Fight the Blight**
- **Clean the Streets**
- **Light Up the City**
- **Expand the Criminal Abatement Program**
- **Love Your Block**
- **Neighborhood Watch Programs**



Stop the Violence



Disrupt violence before it starts. Offer potential victims a way out of violence. Aggressively prosecute the small percentage of young people who keep shooting.

- **Violent Crime Apprehension Teams**

Little Rock Police Department's Violent Crime Apprehension Team (VCAT), launched in February of 2017, now has a team of twenty-five elite law enforcement officers tasked with focusing solely on apprehending Little Rock's most wanted offenders and targeting violent geographic hot spots. The VCAT teams have thus far made 452 arrests resulting in 852 felony charges, and seized 79 weapons. In addition to the successes thus far, they will now be working directly with the Department of Community Corrections to take the most high priority parole and probation absconders off the streets.

- **Ceasefire Little Rock**

Based on models from other cities that have seen significant reductions in shootings and killings in program target areas of up to 45%, CeaseFire Little Rock seeks to increase public safety and curb violence.

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The CeaseFire model uses violence interrupters and outreach workers with street credibility to interrupt and resolve potentially violent situations before they escalate. CeaseFire Little Rock utilizes intervenors with street credibility who have the unique ability to directly engage disconnected youth and young adults to intervene in disputes before they turn violent and to provide access to wraparound services. A pilot program has been implemented and additional intervenors are being added.

■ **Multi-agency Intelligence Unit**

While the LRPD has utilized resources from federal, state, and local partners often for intelligence gathering and especially training, the LRPD-led Multi-agency Intelligence Unit will bring the intelligence and investigative resources of the FBI, Arkansas State Police, Pulaski County Sheriff's Office, the Arkansas Department of Community Corrections, and Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) to bear as a unified effort with LRPD--allowing more concentrated intelligence sharing, accelerated evidence processing, investigations that go beyond the crime at hand to any larger organizations in play, and proactive action on intelligence in order to stymie the current uptick of violence in the city.

■ **National Public Safety Partnership**

In the Fall of 2015, the City of Little Rock joined the Department of Justice's Violence Reduction Network (VRN). The National Public Safety Partnership gives access to not only the technical expertise and resources of the federal government, but also to other cities across the United States who have dealt with many of the same public safety issues that Little Rock faces, particularly violent crime. In addition, the VRN, now known as the National Public Safety Partnership, has led to the local U.S. Attorney's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), LRPD, NLRPD, and Sixth Judicial District Prosecuting Attorney's Office working more closely together and sharing information. In February 2017, 41 indictments of some of the most violent offenders in Pulaski County were announced as a direct result of the work of the Violence Reduction Network. The City of Little Rock has been invited to extend its participation in the program for another year until September 2018.

■ **Request Department of Justice Assistance**

The City of Little Rock has applied to the Department of Justice for three key grants that will help amplify the work currently being undertaken by LRPD and its many partners. These decision are expected to be made in September of 2017.

● ***Project Safe Neighborhoods***

This \$200,000 grant proposal pairs Little Rock with the City of West Memphis for a project to have a multidisciplinary team led by the U.S. Attorney to coordinate responses for violence, evaluate data, and direct enforcement in crime hot spots.

Stop the Violence

- ***Gun Crimes Intelligence Unit***

Leveraging LRPD's participation in the National Public Safety Partnership, referenced above, this request is through the Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance - Technology Innovation for Public Safety. With this funding, the LRPD will form a Gun Crimes Intelligence Unit, purchase Link Analysis and database access software to conduct social network analysis of gun crimes, purchase gunshot detection devices, and expand National Integrated Ballistic Information Network training and certification to identify and process a higher percentage of gun crime scenes.

- ***Byrne Innovation***

This proposal requests \$1 million to research and develop a strategic plan, and implement community based programs. The strategic plan will "micro-target" identified hotspot areas, provide community services and intervention programming. Surveys of community, research, and evaluation of programming and tactics will be evaluated by our research partners.

- **Group Violence Reduction Strategy**

The Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) targets geographic areas of high crime and the groups that commit violent acts. This strategy is based on the belief that violent crime can be prevented when the costs of committing the crime are perceived by the offender to outweigh the benefits. It targets known chronic, violent adult and juvenile offenders. In Little Rock GVRS will include three major components:

- Collaborate with respected members of affected communities along with representatives of the criminal justice system to deliver a single message to violent individuals: stop the shooting.
- Organize and build the capacity of social service providers, clergy, and probation and parole officers so they can provide support and services to those who no longer wish to engage in violence.
- Focus enforcement to specifically deter violent behavior and ensure consequences for those who continue to commit violence.

The typical impact of Group Violence Reduction Strategies in other cities is a 35-60% reduction in community-wide homicides.

- **Stopping Domestic Violence**

Between 2009 and 2016, 17% of Little Rock's homicides were the result of domestic violence. While violence between couples or between children and caregivers does not always receive the most media attention, for those trapped in its midst, stopping domestic violence is literally a matter of life or death. While

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the city redoubles its efforts to stop gun crimes perpetrated by organized groups of criminals, we also need to do everything possible to put a stop to domestic violence.

Much of this work centers on a high level of victim support. On any domestic violence call in the city, whether there is an arrest or not, victims are given a Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Form, which are forwarded to the Victim Services Unit of the Violent Crimes Squad. This unit then follows up with each victim and assists them with medical bills, a safe place to stay, finding a new job, or any other services needed to protect them from another attack.

As part of this effort going forward, Little Rock will work with the Prosecuting Attorney on evidence-based domestic violence prosecutions. The City will work with the prosecuting attorney to make use of circumstantial evidence in certain situations, rather than witness testimony, to pursue domestic violence prosecutions. By utilizing neighbor reports, medical information, emergency services calls, and defendant statements, prosecutors can relieve victims of the burden of testifying against their partners.

Strengthen the LRPD



Strong police work combined with help from the community prevents violence in our neighborhoods and quickly holds those who commit violence accountable.

- **Aggressive Recruiting Citywide and Regionally**

Little Rock city government understands that violence and crime will not and cannot be stopped by putting a police officer on every corner, but the current vacancies at LRPD are hampering the department's efforts to deploy more community policing strategies. Little Rock is not alone in this challenge as urban areas across the country face similar situations. In the current environment, it is increasingly hard to find citizens willing to be police officers.

- To address the shortage, the Little Rock Police Department, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Human Resources Research Organization, and the City of Little Rock's Human Resources Department have transformed the City's process of recruiting and hiring new officers.
- LRPD is already aggressively recruiting in person and is readying to launch a state of the art website and social media effort. Focusing on in-person recruitment, the LRPD Recruitment Unit has had a presence at multiple

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college and university career fairs, as well as the Little Rock Air Force Base, multiple other career fairs in Little Rock, and events around the region with a particular focus on the Hispanic community.

- In addition, Mayor Stodola has also directed City Manager Bruce Moore to immediately engage an advertising and public relations firm to deploy a statewide and regional recruitment marketing plan including television and radio aimed at recruiting currently certified officers from other cities. These officers have a shorter span from engagement to being on the beat.

Progress is being seen. On August 4, 2017, eighteen officers will become certified and two additional classes are scheduled, starting August 21 and November 21, 2017.

■ **Recruitment and Retention Incentives**

Currently, the City of Little Rock is offering a \$5,000 signing bonus for new recruits upon graduation from the Academy. In addition, there is up to \$5,000 available in incentives for new officers who live in the city. Officers already certified from other jurisdictions will also be eligible for the \$10,000 incentive package. Recognizing that we must also reduce the number of retirements, Mayor Stodola is working with the City Manager to develop retention incentives to retain officers eligible for retirement.

Encouraging the idea that “everyone is a recruiter,” City employees are also eligible for a \$500 incentive for referring someone accepted into the academy.

■ **“Gray Squad” and “Telephone Cadet Squad”**

Sworn officers are a police department’s most valuable resource. While certain tasks, such as administrative work or answering calls for minor traffic accidents are essential to a department’s functioning, officers are best used on the street or solving cases. In the past, the City of Little Rock has used sworn police officers for this function.

The City of Little Rock is implementing a civilian squad equipped to handle low-level traffic offenses and administrative work, thereby freeing our police officers to respond to calls for service. LRPD will target young adults in the city with an interest in police work, creating a pipeline of good, local police officer recruits for future Academy classes.

■ **Encouraging Citizen Cooperation**

Police and prosecutors cannot solve crimes and convict criminals on their own. Those in the community with information must come forward and those in the criminal justice community must also provide an environment where the witnesses feel comfortable and safe doing so.

Strengthen the LRPD

In an effort to enhance citizen cooperation, the City of Little Rock will be coupling its continued push for more citizen participation in violent crime investigations with a new \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of suspects in any open homicide investigation in the city. The City of Little Rock will also strive to protect witnesses who come forward by providing increased services to anyone who provides information to law enforcement engaged in an active criminal investigation, including working with the Prosecuting Attorney to provide assistance to witnesses through caseworkers including the possibility of relocation out of the neighborhood where they feel threatened.

- **More Community Policing**

The LRPD is committed to connecting with the community and establishing relationships built on trust and respect. For the past two years, the department has received funding from the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The COPS grant allowed the LRPD to hire additional patrol officers to work beats in select neighborhoods. The current police shortage has hampered these efforts, but as more officers are hired, more will be deployed for community policing. Though the grant will expire later this year, the LRPD is committed to building trust with the community and will explore additional ways to continue this vital work.

Improve Our Criminal Justice System



Mayor Stodola convened a task force of criminal justice professionals. Their charge was to improve our criminal justice system.

Mayor Stodola convened the Capital City Crime Prevention Task Force to investigate ways to reduce crime through adjustments to the current system. The Task Force was comprised of members who can effectuate necessary changes in policy and included members of city and state government, law enforcement officers, corrections officers, judges, society re-entry organizations, and defense attorneys. The Task Force was charged with the duty to review policies and laws while investigating best practices that could be utilized to improve public safety, deter crime, and improve the community well-being. The criminal justice community in Little Rock should study the report and work to implement many of its recommendations. Specific Task Force recommendations include:

- **Establish Domestic Violence Court**

Many jurisdictions have established domestic violence courts to more efficiently process cases of violence between intimate partners or family members. These courts more consistently apply domestic violence law and seek to deter repeat offenders by significantly increasing sanctions, giving domestic abusers access

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to treatment or other counseling, or providing other services to perpetrators and victims. In Little Rock, 17% of homicides are domestic violence-related. Mayor Stodola will work with district courts in Little Rock to establish a domestic violence court.

■ **Electronic Monitoring of Parolees**

Little Rock and Pulaski County receive an inordinate fraction of paroled prisoners in the state of Arkansas. The average caseload for parole officers in Pulaski County is double that in other counties. In order to effectively monitor all of the parolees in Pulaski County, the Task Force recommends the use of electronic monitoring systems. Electronic monitoring utilizes a GPS unit worn on the ankle to monitor the movements of formerly incarcerated persons. Electronic monitoring allows parole officials and police officers to determine if and when a parolee has violated the terms of their parole, which is particularly important for felons who are likely to reoffend - which can be ascertained through effective risk assessment tools. Such systems can also provide evidence of when a parolee is present at a crime scene. Recent reductions in the cost of the system has made it more affordable and it is much less expensive than hiring additional parole officers. Mayor Stodola and the Task Force urge state government officials and the legislature to provide adequate funding for effective implementation.

■ **Required Video Surveillance**

Video surveillance helps deter crime and aid law enforcement by capturing evidence for investigations. Mayor Stodola will introduce an ordinance requiring video surveillance cameras at certain businesses, such as convenience stores, liquor establishments, clubs, special event centers, and other establishments open late in the evening. These businesses will install surveillance cameras in designated locations throughout the store and in parking lots. The ordinance will benefit the business owners, customers, and the Little Rock Police Department in their criminal investigations.

■ **Aggressive Federal Gun Crime Prosecutions**

Federal firearm charges carry longer sentences than state charges. The LRPD and Pulaski County Prosecutor will work closely with the U.S. Attorney to increase the number of federal gun crime charges brought. In addition to the stiffer penalties for perpetrating gun crimes, the City will request that any plea agreements are contingent on the defendant revealing all sources where the guns have been purchased illegally.

■ **Ensure High Bail for Violent Crime Offenders**

According to Pulaski County jail officials, there is no set bail schedule for individuals accused of crimes. Instead, the duty judge determines the bail when the individual goes before the judge. The judge has wide latitude in setting bail.

Improve Our Criminal Justice System

In some recent incidents, individuals released pending trial have committed additional crimes, both violent and nonviolent. Mayor Stodola will work with prosecutors, judges, and the State legislature to ensure that violent offenders face high bail.

- **Tougher Witness Intimidation and Bribery Statutes**

Criminal cases hinge on witnesses coming forward and testifying. Unfortunately, witnesses are often intimidated, threatened, and sometimes harmed for cooperating with law enforcement. State anti-intimidation laws are insufficient to protect citizens who testify in criminal cases. The City will work with the state legislature to toughen anti-intimidation statutes for criminal cases and vigorously enforce these statutes when witnesses are intimidated. Specific statutes include Arkansas Code Annotated §5-54-108 dealing with witness bribery; §5-53-109 dealing with intimidating a witness; §5-53-110 dealing with tampering; and §5-53-114 dealing with intimidating a juror, witness, or informant.

Invest in Prevention



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- **City Prevention and Intervention Programs**

Neighborhood-based programs give at-risk youth a safe environment after school and during the summer. Various community organizations throughout the city run these programs in partnership with the City and reach nearly 1,400 children every year. These programs are geographically based throughout the City in a number of different locations.

- **Neighborhood-Based Programs:** The Department of Community Programs funds a wide range of afterschool and community programs for young people. The DPC works with organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs of America to ensure that Little Rock youth receive high quality afterschool mentoring and enrichment programs. As part of its crime-reduction strategy, the City will continue to ensure that vulnerable youth have a nurturing environment after school and during the summer months. The city currently works with 16 different neighborhood based organizations to reach more than 500 youth. While these programs are located throughout the city, they are concentrated in some of the more disadvantaged areas.

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- **Little Rock Parks and Recreation Summer Programs:** The Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department reports 1,286 youth in its summer programs that include the Playground Program. That program provides children ages 6-15, a rewarding, enjoyable, and safe summer of organized and worthwhile recreational activities while school is not in session.
 - **Summer Enrichment Programs:** The Department of Community Programs also provides support for 19 summer enrichment programs around the city. Partnering with these organizations helps the City of Little Rock reach 570 children who might otherwise be at home alone throughout the summer. During the school year, Community Programs funds enrichment and afterschool programs for vulnerable youth. By providing a safe place for children to learn and play after school, Community Programs helps children to stay in school--and off the streets.
 - **Little Rock School District Summer Programs:** The Little Rock School District, in partnership with the City of Little Rock, hosts summer programs in 22 schools. These programs range from summer recreation to enrichment programs to summer school. Through this partnership, we can ensure youth enjoy safe, fruitful summers in a nurturing environment, instead of spending their free months on the streets.
 - **Little Rock Athletic Programs:** The City of Little Rock offers athletic programs for youth aged 3-17. Encompassing 10 different sports, Little Rock Athletics has engaged thousands of children to teach them teamwork, cooperation, and discipline. These low-cost programs are especially important for our underserved youth, who may not otherwise have the ability to participate in sports.
- **Mentoring**

Children need positive adult role models in their lives. Be it a parent, a pastor, or a concerned neighbor, every successful citizen relied on a mentor's help at some point. Unfortunately, some of our city's youth lack positive adult role models. The city has developed several programs to address this gap in order for our children to develop the character, discipline, and skills to succeed.

- **Our Kids (OK) Program:** In order to foster a positive relationship with the youth they serve, the Little Rock Police Department established the Our Kids mentoring program. The program pairs law enforcement officers and other adult male mentors with a public school, giving the officers space and time to mentor children, especially at-risk youth. Our Kids currently has 193 students enrolled.
- **Girls Empowered by Mentoring Sisterhood (GEMS):** The Little Rock Police Department's GEMS program is patterned after the Our Kids program, except that it focuses specifically on at-risk young girls. The program currently has 30 girls enrolled.

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- **Police Live-in Camp:** Each year, our police force hosts a weeklong summer camp where police and students bond through outdoor activities and recreation. This year marked the 20th anniversary of the program, and 115 students participated.
- **Mayor's Youth Council:** The Mayor's Youth Council brings together a diverse group of high school students to serve their communities. The Council organizes volunteer efforts and other community service activities around the City. The City will use this established platform for connecting with students that are more at-risk youths in the community.
- **Mentors in Our Schools**
 - *City Year:* The City has funded the City Year program for 13 years. The program places Americorp volunteers in 5 schools throughout the city, providing valuable tutoring and mentoring.
 - *School Resource Officers:* Each school day, twenty Little Rock Police Department officers work in our middle and high schools, providing students a chance to interact with and learn about law enforcement and the criminal justice system.
 - *City Employee Volunteering:* Since 2013, the City of Little Rock has encouraged its employees to volunteer for various school and neighborhood-based organizations. An employee can volunteer for up to 52 hours annually. The City will encourage employees to volunteer to be mentors in our schools and organizations focused on youth. Mayor Stodola encourages other business and organizations to allow their employees to receive paid time off to mentor our city's youth.
 - *Community Mentors and Volunteers:* Organizations such as L.O.V.E., Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and numerous other organizations are providing mentors for our youth. Multiple efforts are underway to increase the number of available mentors in the city.
- **Gun Safety Coalition**

Many of our citizens have organized and spoken up against gun violence and unsafe guns in the home. To organize this effort, Mayor Stodola is forming the Gun Safety Coalition to help decrease accidental shootings. The coalition will educate the public about gun safety. Currently, Mothers Demand Action are distributing 800 trigger locks that Mayor Stodola received from Bass Pro Shop. Other organizations such as the Little Rock Police Foundation will be developing additional gun safety programs and materials.

Invest in Prevention

- **Conflict Resolution Training for City Staff**

Escalating conflict to violence is a learned behavior. By modeling peaceful conflict resolution, we can teach our children to solve their differences with words rather than violence. Over the course of a year, thousands of youth interact with our staff at City Community Centers and Neighborhood Resource Centers. The City of Little Rock will implement conflict resolution training for city employees working at these locations. The trainings will also be available to any youth or adults who participate in Little Rock community programs.

- **Youth Master Plan**

From February 2015 to June 2016, Little Rock developed the Youth Master Plan, a visionary guide to improving the health and welfare of the city's young people. The Youth Master Plan committee sought input from stakeholders across the city to inform this plan. The committee combined this community feedback with rigorous evidence and technical support from the Department of Community Programs to develop a comprehensive plan to better serve our young people. Little Rock is actively implementing the Youth Master Plan and welcomes citizen participation in helping to achieve its goals.

- **Public Awareness Campaign**

Little Rock needs an active and informed citizenry to help deal with the pernicious problem of violent crime. The city is engaging and supporting public awareness campaigns, such as Victory over Violence, to help inform its citizens of the community's efforts to fight crime as well as ways citizens can become involved.

- **Citywide Services Dashboard**

Finding the right service or program is essential for citizens who need it. While Little Rock and numerous other organizations provide a wide range of social services, they are not all comprehensively listed in one place. The City of Little Rock is developing a mobile-friendly list of all city and community services that allows citizens to find the resources best suited to their needs.

Promote Jobs, Opportunity and Education



People need the tools to succeed. They need to recognize their own worth. To change direction away from crime they need to have something too important to lose – a job.

- **Summer Youth Employment Program**

Each summer, the Department of Community Programs connects youth ages 16-21 with employers. This year, the Department of Community Programs provided 650 youths--out of 1,200 applicants--a summer job. Throughout the summer, these students learned both the technical job skills and soft skills needed to be a good employee. The City of Little Rock will reach out to the business community and expand this already successful program next year to serve even more of our city's youth.

- **Re-entry Employment Programs**

Returning from prison is a daunting task. Formerly incarcerated individuals face a number of barriers to re-entering society, including criminal background checks, strained family relationships, and trouble finding housing, to name a few. Because of these barriers, a prior criminal conviction vastly increases the likelihood of committing another crime. The State of Arkansas equips former inmates with one

Promote Jobs, Opportunity and Education

hundred dollars and a bus ticket. Since an inordinate number of parolees are released to the city, it is important for the City of Little Rock to reach out to these individuals with programs to assist with their re-entry into society.

- **City Re-entry Program:** In 2013, Little Rock began its Sidewalk Program, which employs former inmates to rehabilitate Little Rock's sidewalks. After seeing significant success with this pilot project the City has expanded its re-entry program to the Public Works, Fleet Services, Little Rock Zoo, Parks and Recreation, Housing and Neighborhood Programs, and the Little Rock Police Departments. Former inmates hired to these projects receive up to nine months of on the job training and mentoring from city staff.
 - **Goodwill Re-entry Programs:** Through our Office of Re-entry Services and our Workforce Development Board, the City refers former inmates to Goodwill's Re-entry programs. These programs offer resume assistance, job readiness skills, job search assistance, job placement, personal development, and soft skills training.
 - **Our House Re-entry Programs:** The City of Little Rock also contracts with Our House to provide re-entry services to people returning to society. Our House works with inmates before they are released and follows up with job training and placement programs.
 - **Rock City Re-entry:** The Little Rock Workforce Development Board has just received a 1.24 million dollar grant to provide intensive workforce reentry services to former inmates. The program will provide participants with on the job training, living expense support, career counseling, and job placement services. The Workforce Development Board will also assist with mental health services and will provide support groups comprised of former inmates.
- **Career Skills Training Programs**

Career skills are an essential part of any job. The City of Little Rock recognizes this need and is working to provide opportunities for career-building skills.

- **Our House Skills Training:** The City of Little Rock works with Our House to provide skills training to the citizens of Little Rock. Through re-entry and workforce development programs, Little Rock residents can access training including obtaining a GED, college readiness classes, WAGE Certificates, the Small Business Academy, and culinary classes.
- **YouthBuild Program:** Administered by the Workforce Development Board, YouthBuild targets youth who are disconnected from the labor force. The program provides intensive wraparound services, including the ability to earn a GED part time and professional certifications in a variety of industries, such as trucking, certified nursing assistants, and the industrial arts.

Promote Jobs, Opportunity and Education

- **Goodwill Adult High School:** With support from the City of Little Rock, Goodwill of Arkansas will open the state's first adult high school. Premised on the idea that everyone should have a chance to finish high school, the program will launch this fall. The school will use flexible scheduling and include care for the students' children. The City of Little Rock will continue to support this important opportunity for its citizens.
- **Metro Vo-Tech:** The Little Rock School District offers vocational and technical training at Metro Vo-Tech. This skills-based school offers high school students training and certification in a wide variety of areas, such as automotive skills, welding, cosmetology, and criminal justice.
- **Pulaski Tech:** Through the various City of Little Rock skills programs, Little Rock residents can enroll in either the Certificate or Associate Degree programs. By achieving a postsecondary degree, residents can improve their chances of finding a good-paying, secure job and improving their lives.

■ **Entrepreneurship Training Classes**

The Mayor has vigorously supported Little Rock's Small Business Development Office. The SBD has trained entrepreneurs for more than 15 years. The Office has trained more than 400 entrepreneurs in 32 different 12-week classes. The Small Business Development Office has continued to provide affordable entrepreneurship classes that turn the hobbies and dreams of Little Rock's citizens into successful businesses. Graduates have gone on to run a number of businesses. Examples include Arkansas Flag and Banner, J Kelly Referrals, the Little Rock Climbing Center, and Asher Dairy Bar. Giving our citizens the tools they need to create new businesses helps reduce poverty and the potential for criminal activity that stems from joblessness.

■ **Vacant Lot Maintenance Program**

The City's vacant lot maintenance program uses local neighborhood organizations to maintain Little Rock's many vacant lots. This provides a valuable service to prevent blight while also supporting the neighborhood. The City of Little Rock will work with these neighborhood organizations encouraging them to use young people from the neighborhood to cut the lots, giving them a job and a way to earn money in the summer.

Rebuild the Neighborhoods



Blight threatens public safety, lowers property values, holds back neighborhoods, and degrades quality of life. By eliminating blight, we are revitalizing our neighborhoods.

- **Fight the Blight**

Blight provides a haven for crime, suppresses property values, turns beautiful homes into eyesores, and lowers quality of life. Reducing the number of blighted properties can improve public safety while providing an economic boost to our neighborhoods.

The City of Little Rock has implemented a number of programs that form a comprehensive anti-blight strategy. Together, these programs address a range of issues to rehabilitate both residential and commercial blight.

- ***Neighborhood Safety Corps***

Following a highly successful model in Detroit, Little Rock will be launching a Neighborhood Safety Corps this fall utilizing ten full time and twenty half time AmeriCorps members who will conduct safety assessments and home improvements; energy efficiency assessments and upgrades; and neighborhood and housing revitalization in seven target areas. The program

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will also leverage additional volunteers for neighborhood-wide cleanup activities and house painting. This program seeks to combat crime in target areas by allowing potential victims to be proactive in deterring crime and raising community involvement in targeted neighborhoods. At the end of the first program year, the program will be responsible for improved home safety measures in a minimum of 95 homes, including improved energy efficiency and general home repairs.

- ***World Changers***

For the last fourteen summers, the City of Little Rock has leveraged volunteers from all over the country through the World Changers program to help transform houses for elderly residents on fixed income who are unable to improve their property themselves. This year, 160 volunteers improved the exterior of 27 houses over the course of two weeks. The group painted and repaired homes in what one resident called a “transformation” of their neighborhood.

- ***Americorps - Energy Conservation Program***

Each year, young people move to Little Rock as part of the AmeriCorps NCCC. One of the major initiatives they participate in is the City’s Energy Conservation Program, which provides free energy testing and weatherization for low-income households. Air leaks are sealed and the property is further insulated to improve energy efficiency, lowering the cost of owner-occupied housing in our city, and allowing low income families to remain in their own homes and build the wealth that comes with home ownership. This past year 60 homes received inspections and repairs. Forty homes were also discovered with gas leaks for which the City coordinated repairs.

- ***Pilot Housing Rehab Program***

Recognizing that rehabilitating houses in tax foreclosure can be a cost-effective way to increase the affordable housing stock, Little Rock is piloting the Housing Rehab Program. The program purchases homes in tax foreclosure, renovates the homes, and sells them to low-income residents.

- ***Community Development Block Grants***

Each year, the City of Little Rock receives money from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Little Rock coordinates and leverages these funds to rehabilitate the homes of senior citizens, provide loans for low-income families to repair their homes, and build new affordable housing stock. Last year, the Housing Department helped 155 families improve their homes or become first-time homeowners.

Rebuild the Neighborhoods

- ***Expanding the Land Bank***

The Land Bank has acquired properties that are abandoned with the objective of rebuilding neighborhoods, rather than letting the property to sit idle for years or decades. The Land Bank has helped return dozens properties to productive use. The City will expand the Land Bank by enforcing city liens against vacant and abandoned properties. Hundreds of properties in the city are encumbered with liens for weed lots, demolition, and housing code violations. The properties are then made available to individuals for re-development.

- ***Demolition***

Properties that are not maintained present a safety hazard for our citizens and are an eyesore on our neighborhoods. When a homeowner repeatedly refuses to maintain a property, the city has the option of demolishing the structure, charging the owner for the cost, then foreclosing on the property, or purchasing the lot at auction. This helps to return properties to commerce, reduces blight, and eliminates havens for crime. Since 2011, the City of Little Rock has razed 453 blighted properties. The city will expand this program to ensure that abandoned structures in crime hot spots in the city are not being used for criminal purposes.

- **Clean the Streets**

Clean streets instill neighborhood pride and help bolster morale for citizens to continue their efforts toward a safer community. In order to support this effort, the City will be focusing on increasing the number of streets in hot spot areas to be adopted through the City's Adopt-A-Street program. Further, the City will work with Keep Little Rock Beautiful and Victory Over Violence to combine the CityWide Cleanup and Victory Over Violence Community Walks. These efforts can transform areas at risk for crime, block by block.

- **Light Up the City**

A well-lit city is a safe city. There are over 24,000 street lights in the City of Little Rock. Many of these street lights are not working and create dark areas in our neighborhoods. Entergy is responsible for maintaining and repairing the vast majority of these street lights. They have a maintenance crew that covers the most heavily traveled streets of the city. They also respond to other repairs in neighborhoods when they are contacted. However, if no one complains, these lights can remain dark for months. Mayor Stodola's challenge to the citizens is to spend the next 90 days looking up to see if the street lights in your neighborhood are on. If they are not, note the location or the number of the pole and call or go online and enter the information into the City's 311 system.

Rebuild the Neighborhoods

■ **Expand the Criminal Abatement Program**

The City's Criminal Abatement Program (CAP) utilizes resources from multiple departments to target specific neighborhoods and buildings with a large number of crime and nuisance complaints. The program targets properties that have become havens for crime. Owners are required to eliminate the problem or face litigation. The CAP program will be expanded to include the City's liaison to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board so that establishments that repeatedly violate their regulations can be sanctioned by the City.

■ **Love Your Block**

Whether it's upgrading playground equipment or installing park benches and grills, residents generate plenty of ideas on how to improve their neighborhoods. The City's Love Your Block program is aimed at promoting volunteerism by assisting neighborhood-based organizations in making public improvements to their neighborhood. The City will award \$28,000 in grants this year to help with those improvement projects.

Any neighborhood-based organization registered with the City is eligible to apply for a Love Your Block grant. Four neighborhood-based organizations from each of the City's seven wards will be selected to participate, for a total of 28 groups. The objective of the Love Your Block Grant Program is to encourage projects with a lasting benefit to the neighborhood and promote volunteerism and foster civic pride. Each group receives up to \$1,000 toward eligible expenses upon completion of the project.

■ **Neighborhood Watch Programs**

In addition to helping the LRPD solve violent crimes in Little Rock, citizens can also help by preventing crimes in their own neighborhood. To help citizens remain vigilant in their own neighborhoods, Little Rock will continue to expand its Neighborhood Watch program. Currently, there are 58 active neighborhood watch programs in the city. The LRPD-run program offers additional training and support for neighborhood organizations that want to set up their own neighborhood watch.

LR FOR LIFE



**Comprehensive
Violence Reduction
Strategy and Action
Plan for Investing
in the Community**



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