



Leading the Way 2025-26 Tour

NEWPORT NEWS REPORT

HIGHLIGHTING WHAT WORKS

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LETTER FROM CITIES UNITED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: **AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Dear Newport News Leaders, Partners and Friends,

On behalf of Cities United, I am honored to recognize the work taking shape in Newport News, work that reflects years of commitment, stronger community partnership, and a growing ecosystem prepared to carry public safety in a more comprehensive way. What we witnessed during our Leading the Way Tour stop was not a jurisdiction searching for a starting point. It was a community building with intention, moving with purpose, and showing what becomes possible when public safety is treated as shared work across government, community, and young leaders.

That spirit was visible throughout the stop. Newport News has not only released Momentum for Peace; it has done so in a way that reflects structure, partnership, and real community investment. The conversations across the tour made clear that this work has been shaped by sustained leadership, stronger cross-sector relationships, and a willingness to build beyond short-term responses toward something more durable. As was lifted up during the stop, this is a significant milestone, one that reflects both the seriousness of the jurisdiction's commitment and the work already underway to support a smoother transition into implementation.

What stood out especially was the strength of young leader engagement. In Newport News, young people were not treated as symbolic participants. They were visible, vocal, and increasingly connected to how the work is taking shape. The Youth Public Safety Council was built intentionally with young people who had lived experience, and those young leaders helped lead perception-of-safety workshops across the city that informed Momentum for Peace.

More importantly, they spoke with clarity about what it means to be heard. As one young leader shared during the stop, **"It's an honor to be here, but what I liked the most about it was just giving my opinion and people listening. Like, my voice mattered."** That single statement says a great deal. It reflects not only the power of the young leader's voice, but the kind of ecosystem Newport News is working to build, one where those closest to the realities of violence are also helping shape the response.

The stop also reflected a jurisdiction that is learning how to hold both momentum and responsibility at the same time. Newport News has meaningful assets to build from: a visible Office of Community Safety, community-rooted partners, a broader violence prevention portfolio, and leaders across sectors who understand that public safety cannot be carried by one office or one strategy alone. At the same time, the tour made clear that the next phase of work will require deeper alignment, stronger accountability, and continued investment in the relationships and infrastructure that allow plans to become shared practice.

For Cities United, this stop also reaffirmed why Newport News matters within our broader national network. Jurisdictions across the country are asking how to move from plan development to implementation, how to deepen coordination without losing community trust, and how to ensure young leaders are not simply present, but central. Newport News is offering an important example of what it looks like to take those questions seriously and to answer them with community, strategy, and shared resolve. During the community dinner, one local leader described the moment as “especially meaningful” as the city continues to prioritize “safety collaboration and community-driven solutions.” That is exactly what this stop reflected.

We remain grateful for our continued partnership with Newport News and encouraged by what is taking shape there. The work ahead will require discipline, honesty, and aligned action. But it is equally clear that Newport News is building with the kind of vision, community-rooted leadership, and young leader engagement that can help carry this work forward. In this moment, Newport News is leading the way, not because the work is finished, but because the jurisdiction is showing what it looks like to build alongside the community, invest in young leaders, and move a comprehensive public safety vision toward lasting practice.

In solidarity,

Anthony D. Smith

Executive Director, Cities United



INTRODUCTION

The Newport News Leading the Way Tour stop took place at an important point in the jurisdiction’s public safety work. In early 2026, Newport News released **Momentum for Peace, its first Comprehensive Community Safety Plan**, following several years of assessment, community safety investments, and growing coordination across local government and community partners. The plan marked a shift from early planning and investment into a more formal phase of implementation, with a **shared framework for advancing prevention, intervention, healing, and accountability**.

That work is also unfolding alongside visible signs of progress. According to Newport News’ January 2026 release announcing Momentum for Peace, the jurisdiction had achieved a 47% reduction in homicides and non-fatal shootings by the end of 2025, exceeding the reduction goal set the year prior. At the same time, Newport News has continued to build the infrastructure needed to support longer-term implementation, including the Office of Community Safety, community-based investments, and structures for young leader engagement.

It was within this context that Cities United came to Newport News to listen, learn, and support the next phase of the jurisdiction’s work. The Tour seeks to:

THE LEADING THE WAY TOUR SEEK TO:

- Highlight effective, comprehensive public safety practices and models
- Foster cross-sector collaboration
- Amplify community-led solutions
- Enhance local capacity
- Evaluate progress and impact through the Cities United Roadmap Framework
- Assess and foster meaningful young leader engagement

In Newport News, the tour highlighted the work already underway across the public safety ecosystem. It also created space to hear directly from leaders, partners, young leaders, and residents about what is taking hold, where stronger alignment is still needed, and what will matter most in the next phase of implementation.

Taken together, the materials reviewed and the discussions held during the tour suggest that Newport News is operating in Phase 3 of the Cities United Roadmap: Implementing a Multi-Year Plan of Action. The jurisdiction has **moved beyond vision-setting into active implementation**, but the tour also made clear that this next stretch of work will depend on how well **strategy, ownership, communication, and accountability continue to come together across the broader public safety ecosystem**.

UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE

Newport News' public safety ecosystem reflects both **infrastructure for action and a growing expectation of shared responsibility**. That shared responsibility was reflected in how participants described the meaning of public safety in Newport News, emphasizing themes such as support, trust, peace, protection, youth development, and community well-being. Taken together, those reflections suggest that public safety in Newport News is understood **not only as violence reduction, but also as the presence of care, opportunity, stability, and connection across the jurisdiction**.

The Newport News Leading the Way Tour stop engaged representatives from the Office of Community Safety, the City of Newport News Mayor's Office, the Youth Public Safety Council, the Mayor's Youth Commission, the Young Adult Police Commissioners, VICTOR, Abu Unity, and other ecosystem partners. Participants also included young leaders, elected and appointed officials, community-based organizations, violence interrupters, law enforcement representatives, and broader community members.

The following subsections draw on what participants shared about Newport News' public safety landscape during the tour stop, including conversations about how their organizations align with the seven pillars and goals of *Momentum for Peace* and insights surfaced through the SWOT activity. Participants considered what strengths they bring to implementation, where coordination or trust may be falling short, what opportunities exist for stronger partnership and alignment, and what threats could hinder progress.

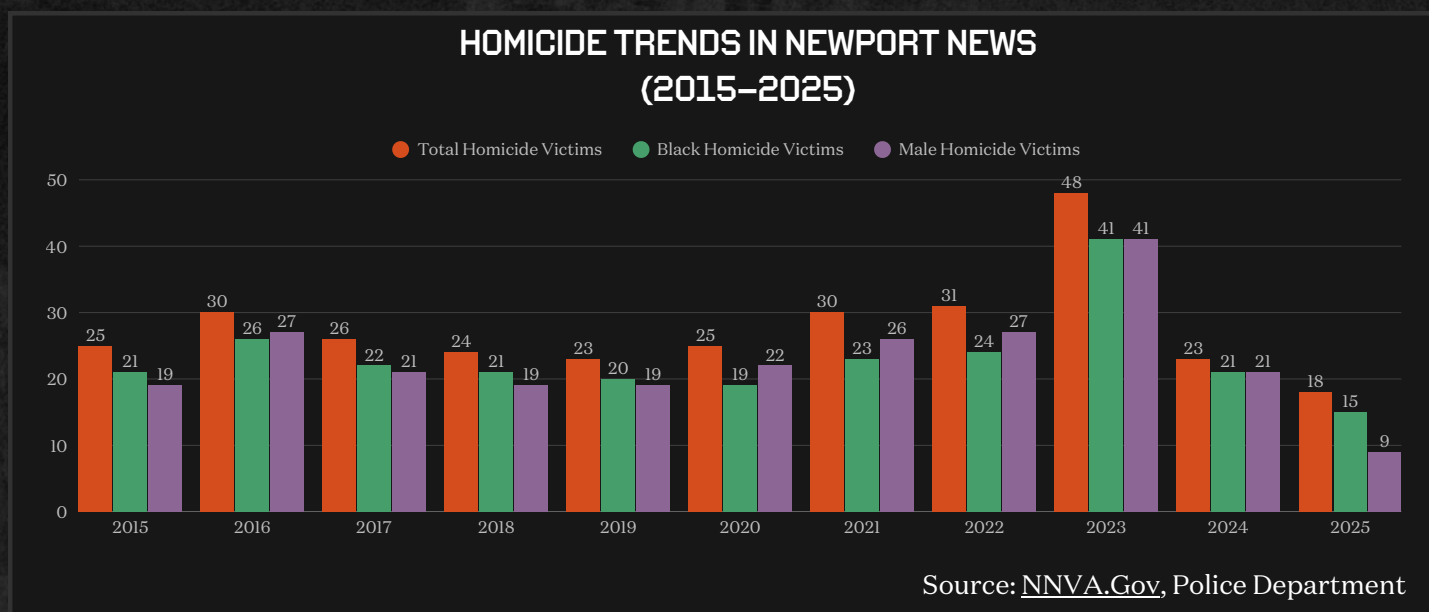
These reflections are organized into four themes: grounded strengths within the ecosystem, persistent challenges that may limit coordination or execution, emerging momentum that points to new opportunities, and strategic considerations for strengthening alignment and long-term impact.

Grounded Strengths: A Strong Foundation for Deeper Implementation

Newport News is entering deeper implementation with a strong foundation of infrastructure, governance, and community-rooted assets already in place. Across the tour stop, participants pointed to an ecosystem that has been built over time through assessment, investment, partnership, and growing public ownership of the work.

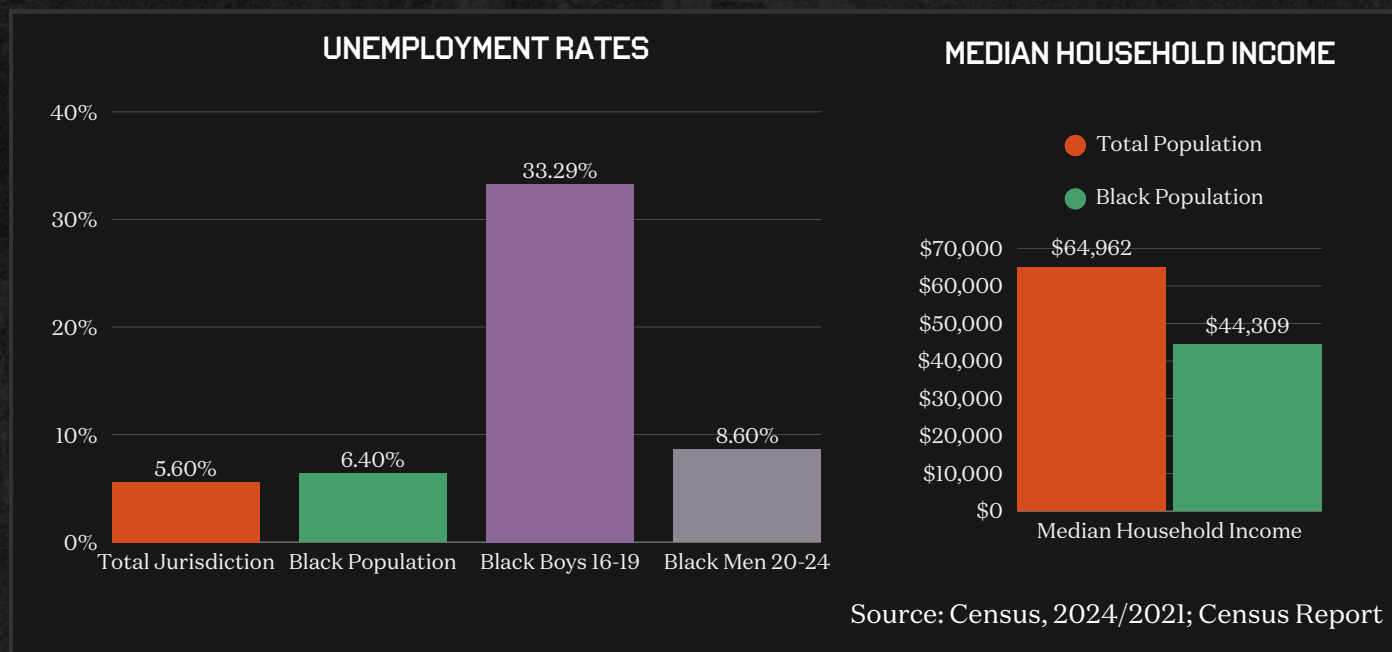
What came through clearly during the stop was that Newport News is not approaching implementation as a brand-new effort. Participants described **a longer arc of work that helped position the jurisdiction for this moment**, including early staffing and city engagement, a 2022 community safety assessment that reached 2,000 residents, community-based grantmaking, and the eventual release of *Momentum for Peace*.

One reflection described Newport News as having “been building out the ecosystem intentionally since 2016,” with earlier efforts eventually “com[ing] full circle, with the build out of the office and the release of *Momentum for Peace* plan.” That sense of continuity mattered to participants because it suggested readiness, not just aspiration. It also provided an important backdrop for the jurisdiction’s publicly reported 47% reduction in homicides and non-fatal shootings by the end of 2025, which participants treated as an early sign of progress rather than a reason to ease up. As one speaker put it, **“that don’t mean we let go,” even as the jurisdiction was “still moving... in the right direction.”**



Participants also pointed to a **prevention ecosystem that is broader than any one program or office**. Across discussions, young leaders and partners named the importance of safe spaces, mentoring, jobs, events, and neighborhood-based supports, while also referencing organizations and structures already doing that work, including the **Youth Public Safety Council, Abu Unity, VICTOR (Violence Intervention Collaborative Training Outreach & Research), and other community-based actors**. Early investments help explain why those priorities felt grounded rather than aspirational. Beginning in FY2023, Newport News committed more than \$3.1 million to grassroots violence prevention services, including mentoring, trauma-informed services, dispute mediation, and high-risk referrals, while 19 community-based organizations received \$1,786,551 in 2023 and 15 organizations received \$1,373,020 in 2024.

The connection to workforce and education also surfaced directly in the room. Participants talked about the need for career exposure, job pathways, and stronger connections between schools, employers, and prevention efforts. One young leader suggested replacing traditional job fairs with “activity fairs” so young people could explore real interests and build a foundation for the future, while another participant pointed to the importance of responding to the fact that Black youth unemployment ages 16–19 is 33.3% and disconnected youth ages 16–19 are 9.92%. Taken together, those discussions reinforced why participants repeatedly connected public safety not only to intervention, but also to opportunity, stability, and access before harm occurs.



The community tour helped make the ecosystem feel tangible. The tour was a chance to “introduce community assets, local leaders, and initiatives driving positive change,” and the sites and examples shared during the tour did exactly that. Participants pointed to East End Cafe, Boys & Girls Club sites, the CARE Team and Community Health Bus, neighborhood watch efforts, community gardens, the Food Forest, and redevelopment efforts tied to Legacy Landing and Marshall-Ridley. One especially concrete example came from the Aqueduct Boys & Girls Club area, where Ketchmore Kids’ neighborhood work was described as contributing to a 20% decrease in crime and an 11-month period with no homicides. That example stood on its own as evidence that neighborhood-based work and trusted local presence can matter in tangible ways.



MOMENT THAT MATTERED

During the community tour, participants heard about Miss Mona, who “feeds 200 people monthly and gives people jobs and treats people like people.” The story grounded the broader discussion in a simple truth: **public safety in Newport News is being carried not only through formal systems, but also through trusted people whose daily acts of care help create stability and connection in the community.**

Young leader engagement stood out in the same way. It felt substantive throughout the stop, not symbolic. In the Young Leader Graduation session, local leaders described intentionally building the Youth Public Safety Council with young people who had lived experience, including youth impacted by juvenile justice, school pushout, and gun violence, and then training them to facilitate perception-of-safety workshops across the city. Those workshops reached 118 young people, and their findings informed *Momentum for Peace*.

Young leaders themselves were direct about why their role matters. They said, “You can speak up, and other youth will listen because sometimes adults ramble,” “We are the community. When you look outside, you see youth,” and “We are most likely to participate in violence so we know what to do about it.” Their presence and clarity reinforced one of the strongest assets surfaced during the stop: Newport News is not only making space for young people to participate, but building conditions for them to help interpret the problem and shape the response.

Additional strengths surfaced but not highlighted above:

- Strong political and civic attention to public safety issues predating the formal office and plan.
- Cross-sector partnership is already part of the jurisdiction’s operating frame, including residents, nonprofits, law enforcement, and public safety agencies.
- The Youth Public Safety Council and Youth T.H.R.I.V.E. provide a stronger base for ongoing young leader leadership.
- School and education-sector participation during the stop signaled potential for stronger prevention alignment.
- Community safety work is already linked to broader opportunity-building efforts, including workforce, family support, and neighborhood revitalization.



PERSISTENT CHALLENGES: WHERE ALIGNMENT AND CAPACITY STILL NEED STRENGTHENING

Even with visible momentum, the tour surfaced several points of strain that could slow deeper implementation if they are not addressed. What emerged most clearly were ongoing challenges around shared ownership, coordination, and the capacity required to carry the plan at the scale it demands.

Across the stop, **shared ownership and accountability are still taking shape.** Participants repeatedly returned to the question of who, beyond the Office of Community Safety and a small group of close partners, is carrying Momentum for Peace in a meaningful way. Participants pointed to **“the need for goal ownership”** and asked, **“Folks seeing themselves in the plan, how do we continue to implement with intention.”** That concern also showed up in roadmap discussions about coordinated accountability, reducing duplication, and helping organizations locate their work within the plan’s broader goals. Participants were raising a harder implementation issue: **whether enough partners see the plan as something they own, not just something they support from the sidelines.**

The stop also made clear that **coordination and communication remain uneven across the ecosystem.** Participants raised the need for stronger information-sharing, more unified messaging, and better alignment between organizations working in related spaces. During the roadmap session, presenters emphasized sharing police and community data with local organizations to better target programming in high-risk areas and improve communication with neighborhoods after incidents. That concern was reinforced by calls to **“build and unify messaging,”** strengthen data and outcome tracking, and ensure that more city stakeholders adopt the plan’s goals and action items as part of implementation. **The issue here is not lack of activity. It is that the ecosystem is active enough that gaps in communication, coordination, and network activation are becoming more consequential.**

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

During the Roadmap Bootcamp report-out, one participant asked a direct question that shifted the conversation from broad alignment to lived experience: “what are we doing in those neighborhoods other than over policing them?” The moment mattered because it made one of Newport News’ core implementation challenges unmistakably clear: the work will need to be experienced differently in the neighborhoods carrying the greatest burden of harm, not just discussed differently across partner tables.

At the same time, participants described an ecosystem where **the scale of need still exceeds current capacity**. Young leaders and community participants raised concerns about barriers to re-entry, uneven access to safe spaces and meaningful activities, racial disparities in public services, housing instability, and the lack of action from people in power.

The community tour made those pressures even more concrete, surfacing practical gaps such as limited relocation options, school zoning challenges, behavioral health access that is not evenly distributed, and neighborhood change that could deepen displacement if residents are not able to remain rooted in place.

The local data sharpens that challenge further: Newport News estimates that approximately 183 residents are at highest risk of violence involvement, underscoring how concentrated the need remains even as violence declines overall. Participants were describing a real capacity challenge, not simply whether programs exist, but whether the ecosystem is currently equipped to respond at the scale, depth, and consistency the plan requires.

Additional challenges surfaced but not highlighted above:

- Business and philanthropy may not yet be fully activated in the ecosystem.
- Public-facing communications and narrative strategy still need to be strengthened.
- Some organizations may still be operating from outdated models that do not align cleanly with the plan.
- Law enforcement and community safety approaches may still need clearer framing so they are understood as complementary without muddying the strategy.
- Sustaining momentum will require more investment, stronger data capacity, and clearer structures for tracking progress and outcomes.

EMERGING MOMENTUM: SIGNALS OF GROWING READINESS

Even with uneven alignment and real capacity gaps, the tour surfaced several signs that Newport News may be moving toward a more mature phase of implementation. What stood out was not just that activity is underway, but that some of the conditions needed to deepen and sustain the work are beginning to come into view.

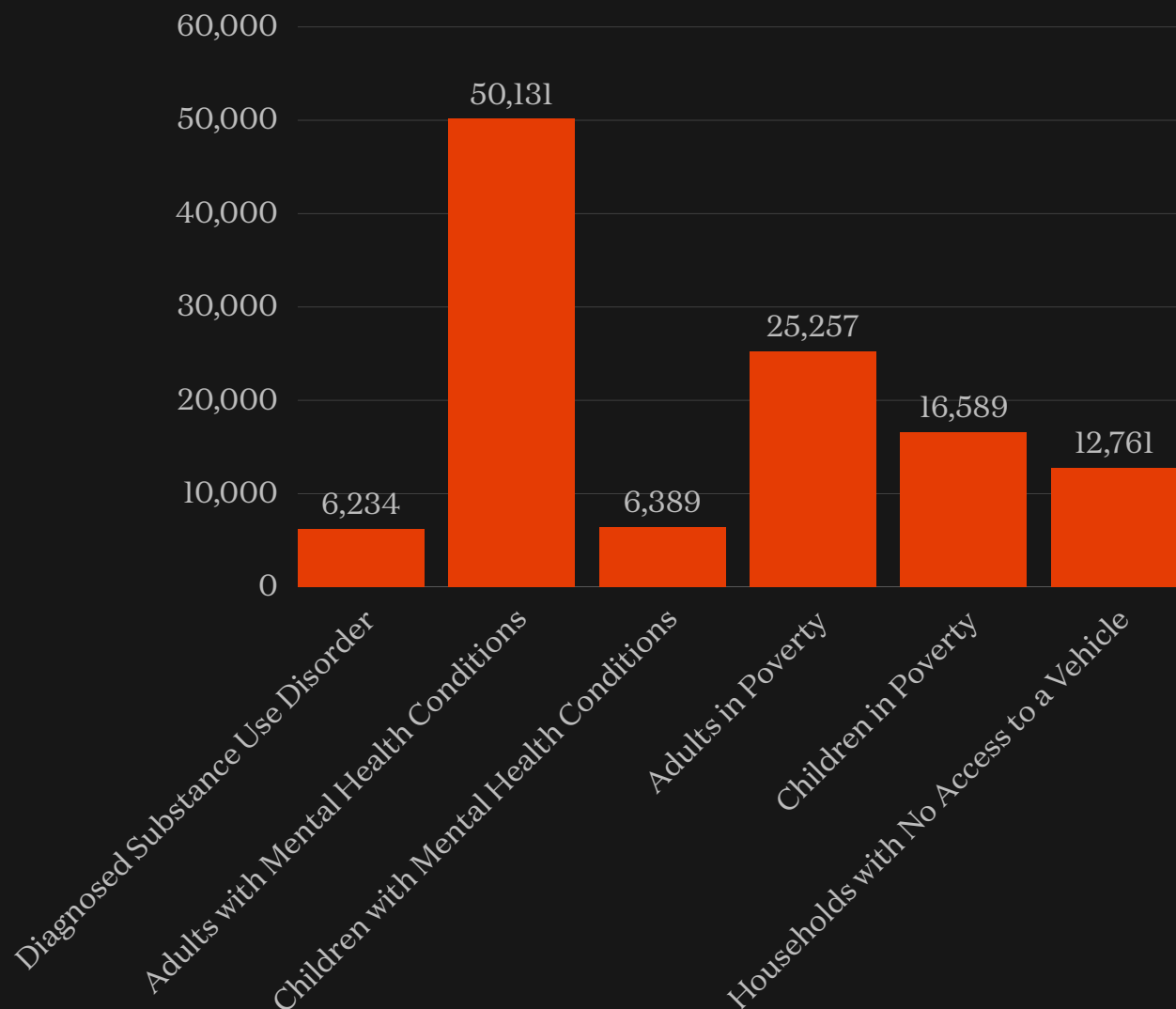
Across the stop, **the plan is starting to function as a more usable reference point, even if working knowledge remains uneven.** During the Roadmap Bootcamp, participants were asked to consider where their organizations fit within the seven pillars and goals of Momentum for Peace. They also reflected on what work was already aligned with the plan and what they could realistically own, support, or help advance. The discussion that followed suggested a form of early traction: participants were beginning to use the plan as a practical frame for locating themselves in the work, even if their familiarity with it remained uneven. What emerged was not broad mastery of the plan, but a more useful signal that participants were starting to connect their role and contribution to a larger implementation framework.

The stop also suggested that **young leader voice is sharpening expectations for what meaningful implementation should look like.** This came through not only in the substance of what young leaders said, but in how they described their role. In the Young Leader Graduation session, one young person said, “It’s an honor to be here, but what I liked the most about it was just giving my opinion and people listening. Like, my voice mattered.” Another shared, “I’m very thankful for this opportunity because ... I am a Young Leader, that my voice matters in my community and that these are my people and I’m making a change.” That sense of ownership matters on its own, but it also points to something larger: Newport News has a sizable base of young people whose experience and perspective could meaningfully shape implementation if the ecosystem continues to make room for it. The jurisdiction includes more than 8,900 Black boys and young men ages 10–24, which raises the stakes of making young leader engagement durable, not occasional.

There were also signs that **public safety is increasingly being understood through the broader conditions that shape whether violence decreases or persists.**

Participants repeatedly linked safety to jobs, mobility, mental health, housing, and family support rather than treating it as a stand-alone issue. The local data helps explain why those connections kept surfacing. In the Hampton/Newport News area, there are more than 50,000 adults with mental health conditions, more than 6,000 children with mental health conditions, more than 6,000 people with diagnosed substance use disorder, and more than 12,000 households with no access to a vehicle.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY VARIOUS WELLBEING INDICATORS
(HAMPTON AND NEWPORT NEWS COMBINED)



Source: Virginia Well-Being Dashboard (2017-2021)

Those figures do not prove direct causation, nor do they need to. They help illustrate the broader context participants were pointing to: reducing violence also means paying attention to the conditions in which violence exists, and that appears to be gaining more traction as part of how the ecosystem talks about public safety. The same broader shift is visible in the work and income data, including unemployment disparities and lower median household income for Black residents, which reinforce why opportunity and stability kept surfacing alongside prevention and intervention.

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

During the fireside conversation, one panelist described Newport News as being in “an especially unique place when it comes to community safety and community planning,” adding, “**We have a thriving ecosystem already here and live. It just took a unification effort to get it working and executed properly.**” The comment highlighted a growing sense that the next phase of work is not about inventing something entirely new, but about bringing more coherence, alignment, and follow-through to what is already in motion.

Additional momentum surfaced but not highlighted above:

- Participants described Newport News as ready to stand out if implementation continues to deepen.
- The public rollout of Momentum for Peace appears to be increasing visibility and giving more people a common point of reference.
- The stop brought together a broad enough mix of participants to make deeper cross-sector planning more possible if sustained.
- Young leader participation is being treated as meaningful and public, not peripheral.
- Leadership messaging during the stop reinforced that the work is moving into an action-oriented phase.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS: WHAT WILL MATTER MOST IN THE NEXT PHASE

As Newport News moves deeper into implementation, the tour pointed to several considerations that may shape whether the current moment leads to durable progress. These are less about identifying new problems than about clarifying what the ecosystem will need to pay closer attention to as the work becomes more formal, more shared, and more visible.

Across the stop, one of the clearest considerations was that **the plan will need to function as a reciprocal implementation framework, not just a reference point.**

During the Roadmap Bootcamp, participants were asked how their organizations align with the seven pillars and goals, what they are already doing that supports the plan, and what they can realistically own or help carry forward. That exercise surfaced more than alignment. It raised questions about ownership, fit, and reciprocity.

Participants referenced the “need for goal ownership,” asked how people can continue implementing “with intention” if they do not yet see themselves in the plan, and wrestled with what may need to shift when an organization’s existing model does not fully align with the direction of Momentum for Peace. The strategic issue, then, is not only whether partners are willing to use the plan. It is whether they are supported in making the shifts the plan may require and whether they have meaningful opportunities to shape how action steps, measures of success, and implementation expectations evolve over time.

Another consideration is that **alignment will need to deepen without flattening the community-rooted character of the work.** One of Newport News’ clearest assets is that public safety is already being carried through trusted community partners, young leaders, neighborhood anchors, and community networks of care. Participants repeatedly named community voice, youth governance, and grassroots presence as essential to the work’s credibility and staying power. At the same time, the stop also surfaced the need for

stronger coordination, more unified messaging, and clearer follow-through across community organizations, city stakeholders, and other partners. The strategic issue is not whether coordination is needed. It is how to strengthen coordination, accountability, and shared infrastructure without crowding out the relationships, trust, and community ownership that make the work real on the ground.

A further consideration is that **long-term implementation will require stronger resource alignment, including deeper engagement from philanthropy and business.** This surfaced not simply as a question of raising more money, but as a question of whether the broader ecosystem is being supported in ways that match the scale of the work. One reflection noted that “implementation and sustainability are presenting challenges due to limited regional philanthropic engagement,” especially from foundations and private donors. Participants also raised the importance of bringing business and philanthropy more fully into the ecosystem as long-term partners, not just occasional supporters. That matters because the next phase of implementation will require more than enthusiasm and good intentions. It will require flexible support for coordination, communications, data use, capacity-building, and the kinds of cross-sector infrastructure that community-based organizations and public partners cannot always sustain on their own. In that sense, philanthropic and business engagement is not separate from implementation. It is part of whether implementation can be carried deeply enough and long enough to matter.

Additional considerations surfaced but not highlighted above:

- Create regular briefing structures so elected officials and other city departments stay connected to implementation over time.
- Develop complementary tools for Momentum for Peace, such as one-pagers and slide decks, to make the plan easier to use across different audiences.
- Build stronger public-facing data and learning structures, including dashboard-style tools tied to the plan’s pillars and goals.
- Continue expanding pathways for paid and meaningful young leader participation as governance structures mature.
- Consider how regional coordination could strengthen implementation, especially for partners and populations that move across jurisdictional lines.

RECOMMENDATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

FOR CITIES UNITED SUPPORT

The Leading the Way Tour surfaced a focused set of priorities to support Newport News as it moves from early implementation into a more durable phase of ecosystem building. These recommendations are organized across two horizons: immediate action steps that can strengthen alignment, ownership, and coordination over the next three to six months, and longer-term priorities that can deepen infrastructure, sustainability, and regional partnership over time.

Taken together, they reflect the themes that surfaced throughout the stop: the need for clearer accountability, broader shared ownership of Momentum for Peace, sustained investment in young leader leadership, and a public safety ecosystem that can hold progress beyond a single moment, office, or funding cycle.

IMMEDIATE ACTION STEPS (3-6 MONTH PRIORITIES)

1. BRIEF ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS AND OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS REGULARLY

A near-term priority is establishing a more consistent cadence of briefings for elected officials, appointed leaders, and other city departments so implementation progress, emerging needs, and shared priorities remain visible across internal stakeholders. Regular touchpoints can help strengthen internal alignment, deepen working knowledge of Momentum for Peace, and reduce the risk that the work is carried primarily by the Office of Community Safety and a small circle of close partners. This step also responds to what surfaced during the stop about uneven engagement across city stakeholders and the importance of keeping the work connected to broader city leadership over time.

2. BUILD ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURES WITHIN EACH PILLAR AND GOAL OF MOMENTUM FOR PEACE

A next step is clarifying ownership across the plan's pillars, goals, and action steps so implementation can move from shared vision to shared execution. This includes identifying who is responsible for what, how progress will be tracked, and what structures will support follow-through across departments, community partners, and other stakeholders. Questions about role clarity, goal ownership, and how organizations locate themselves within the plan surfaced repeatedly during the stop. Building accountability structures can help turn general alignment into a stronger shared implementation framework.

3. CONTINUE SUPPORT FOR THE CITY'S VIOLENCE PREVENTION PORTFOLIO THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING AND COORDINATION

The jurisdiction already has a broad violence prevention portfolio, but the stop also highlighted the importance of strengthening the connective tissue that helps this work function as a more coordinated system. In the near term, this points to continued support for capacity-building, operational alignment, communications, and practical coordination across community-based organizations, city entities, and other implementation partners. Strengthening the portfolio in this way can help prevention, intervention, and response efforts reinforce one another more consistently.

4. DEVELOP PATHWAYS FOR YOUNG LEADERS IN BOTH COMMUNITY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The next phase of implementation will depend in part on whether young leader engagement remains visible, meaningful, and sustained. A clear near-term priority is continuing to build pathways for young leaders to contribute through governance, advising, peer leadership, and paid roles in both community and local government spaces. This builds directly on the strength of the Youth Public Safety Council, Young Adult Police Commission, Youth T.H.R.I.V.E., and the broader young leader presence that was visible throughout the stop. The opportunity now is to make that engagement increasingly durable and connected to decision-making over time.

5. CONSIDER A REGIONAL EFFORT AND APPROACH TO COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC SAFETY, BEGINNING WITH A LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

A regional lens surfaced as an important near-term area for exploration. A leadership summit could serve as a first step in examining what stronger coordination might require across neighboring jurisdictions, sectors, and service systems. This matters especially for those most likely to be impacted by community violence, whose lives, risks, and support networks often move across more than one local boundary. Beginning this conversation now could help position Newport News for stronger regional alignment as implementation evolves.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

(12+ MONTH PRIORITIES)

1. BUILD OUT A FULLY STAFFED OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SAFETY THAT SUPPORTS THE LOCAL ECOSYSTEM AND LOCAL YOUNG LEADERS

Longer-term implementation will depend on whether the Office of Community Safety has the staffing, infrastructure, and operational capacity needed to support the broader ecosystem over time. This includes coordinating implementation, strengthening partner alignment, sustaining communication across sectors, and maintaining meaningful engagement with young leaders and community partners. A fully staffed office is not simply an administrative goal; it is part of the infrastructure required for long-term follow-through.

2. CREATE A SHARED PUBLIC-FACING DATA DASHBOARD THAT CONNECTS TO MOMENTUM FOR PEACE AND ITS PILLARS

Over time, implementation will benefit from a public-facing dashboard that makes the work more transparent, usable, and accountable across audiences. Connected to the pillars and goals of Momentum for Peace, such a tool could support shared learning, make progress easier to communicate, and help residents, partners, and leaders track how the work is moving. This kind of dashboard can also strengthen trust by giving both internal and external stakeholders a clearer way to see what is being measured, how success is being defined, and where attention may still be needed.

3. ALIGN POLITICAL LEADERS AROUND MESSAGING THAT SUPPORTS A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO PUBLIC SAFETY

Longer-term implementation will also depend in part on consistent leadership messaging around what public safety means and how Momentum for Peace should be understood. As the work moves beyond launch and into a more sustained execution phase, political leaders will play an important role in reinforcing a comprehensive approach that remains legible to residents, partners, and other stakeholders. Stronger alignment in messaging can help sustain understanding and support as implementation deepens.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

(12+ MONTH PRIORITIES)

4. BUILD AND SUPPORT A REGIONAL EFFORT AND APPROACH TO COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC SAFETY THAT SUPPORTS THOSE MOST LIKELY TO BE IMPACTED BY COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

Beyond the initial summit or early exploration, Newport News has an opportunity to help shape a broader regional approach to comprehensive public safety. Over the longer term, this could include stronger coordination across jurisdictions, more aligned partnerships, and shared approaches for supporting individuals and families most likely to be impacted by violence. A regional strategy can better reflect how people, services, and risk move in practice and may position Newport News to play a stronger leadership role beyond its own jurisdictional boundaries.

5. INSTITUTIONALIZE EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SAFETY APPROACHES BEYOND INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES OR FUNDING CYCLES

Long-term progress will require more than sustaining the current moment. It will require identifying which approaches are gaining traction and embedding them into longer-term structures, expectations, and operating norms. This includes clarifying how effective strategies are sustained across leadership transitions, funding shifts, or staffing changes, and ensuring that important work does not depend too heavily on a single office, grant, or champion. In this sense, institutionalization is not about bureaucracy for its own sake. It is about creating the durability needed for progress to hold.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIES UNITED SUPPORT

Cities United is well positioned to continue supporting Newport News as the jurisdiction deepens implementation of Momentum for Peace through targeted technical assistance, resource sharing, individual or team coaching, peer learning, and strategic facilitation. The opportunities below reflect areas where Cities United can continue adding value in strengthening alignment, accountability, and long-term sustainability across the public safety ecosystem.

1. IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY SUPPORT

Share practical tools, examples, and coaching approaches that help clarify goal ownership, timelines, and accountability structures tied to Momentum for Peace, including supports that strengthen follow-through across departments and partners.

2. PLAN TRANSLATION AND PRACTICAL TOOLS

Provide templates, visual summaries, and audience-specific examples that help city staff, community partners, elected officials, young leaders, and funders better understand how Momentum for Peace translates into action.

3. YOUNG LEADER GOVERNANCE AND PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT

Share tools, peer examples, and coaching strategies that help strengthen governance pathways, paid leadership opportunities, and sustained roles for young leaders in both community and local government spaces.

4. PUBLIC SAFETY ECOSYSTEM MAPPING AND ROLE CLARIFICATION

Facilitate ecosystem mapping conversations that help clarify roles, responsibilities, and connections across city entities, community-based organizations, young leaders, and other partners, while identifying gaps, overlaps, and priority areas for coordination.

5. COMMUNICATIONS, NARRATIVE, AND MESSENGER ALIGNMENT

Offer communications tools, narrative examples, and facilitation support that help align internal and external messaging around Momentum for Peace, including how the plan is communicated across political leaders, community partners, city stakeholders, and trusted messengers.

6. DATA, LEARNING, AND DASHBOARD DEVELOPMENT

Share examples and technical guidance related to public-facing dashboards, learning structures, and practical progress-tracking tools tied to the plan's pillars and goals, with emphasis on transparency, usability, and shared learning.

7. REGIONAL STRATEGY AND SYSTEM ALIGNMENT

Facilitate peer learning and strategy conversations that help Newport News explore what a broader regional approach to comprehensive public safety could look like, including how neighboring jurisdictions, regional actors, and cross-boundary service systems might align more intentionally over time.

8. PHILANTHROPY AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Curate peer examples and facilitate strategy conversations on how to engage philanthropy and the business community as longer-term ecosystem partners, including approaches to flexible funding, capacity support, and investments that strengthen shared infrastructure.

9. CROSS-SECTOR IMPLEMENTATION LEARNING

Convene learning sessions or peer exchanges that help Newport News draw from other jurisdictions navigating similar questions around plan implementation, partner activation, and long-term sustainability.

10. INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

Share examples, tools, and facilitation approaches that help Newport News think through how effective public safety strategies can be embedded beyond individual initiatives, grants, or leadership transitions.

Conclusion:

A Call for Aligned Action

The Newport News Leading the Way Tour reflected a jurisdiction with **real momentum, a growing ecosystem, and a stronger foundation for implementation** than many communities at a similar stage. The stop made clear that Newport News is not beginning this work from scratch. It is building from years of investment, partnership, community-rooted leadership, and **a broader public commitment to advancing a more comprehensive approach to public safety.**

At the same time, the tour also surfaced what will be required for that momentum to hold. The next phase of work will depend not only on the strength of Momentum for Peace as a plan, but on **the degree to which it becomes a shared framework for action across city stakeholders, community partners, young leaders, and other system actors.** That means strengthening accountability, deepening alignment, and ensuring that implementation is supported by the relationships, structures, and resources needed to carry the work over time.

Newport News has important strengths to build from: **a visible Office of Community Safety, an active violence prevention portfolio, meaningful young leader engagement, trusted community-rooted assets,** and early signs of progress that have helped create confidence in the work. Just as important, the stop reflected a growing recognition that **public safety cannot be advanced by any one office, sector, or strategy alone.** It will require coordination across systems, sustained investment in community leadership, and continued attention to the broader conditions that shape whether **safety becomes more durable in the lives of residents.**

The opportunity now is to **move from momentum to stronger shared execution.** That will require city leadership, community-based organizations, young leaders, residents, philanthropy, and other partners to see themselves not as adjacent to the work, but as part of the broader ecosystem responsible for carrying it forward. If Newport News can continue building that alignment while preserving the community-rooted character of the work, **it will be well positioned not only to deepen implementation locally, but to model what a more coordinated and community-informed public safety ecosystem can look like in practice.**

APPENDIX

REFERENCED QUOTES & ATTRIBUTION

- *“It’s an honor to be here, but what I liked the most about it was just giving my opinion and people listening. Like, my voice mattered.”* (Young leader, Young Leader Graduation session)
- *“You can speak up, and other youth will listen because sometimes adults ramble.”* (Young leader, Young Leader Graduation / young leader session)
- *“We are the community. When you look outside, you see youth.”* (Young leader, Young Leader Graduation / young leader session)
- *“That don’t mean we let go,” even as the jurisdiction was “still moving... in the right direction.”* (Local speaker / session discussion on recent progress)
- *“What are we doing in those neighborhoods other than over policing them?”* (Participant, Roadmap Bootcamp report-out)
- *“Been building out the ecosystem intentionally since 2016,” with earlier efforts eventually “com[ing] full circle, with the build out of the office and the release of Momentum for Peace plan.”* (Reflection shared during the stop)
- *“Feeds 200 people monthly and gives people jobs and treats people like people.”* (Community tour note about Miss Mona)
- *“We have a thriving ecosystem already here and live. It just took a unification effort to get it working and executed properly.”* (Panelist, fireside conversation)
- *“Especially meaningful” as the city continues to prioritize “safety collaboration and community-driven solutions.”* (Local leader, community dinner)
- *“The young leaders’ session continued to highlight that the community they dream of is not unreasonable and is highly achievable for jurisdictions to deliver.”* (Cities United team reflection, Day 1)

KEY DATA POINTS REFERENCED IN REPORT

- **Population:** 183,118 residents
- **Black Population:** 45%
- **Black boys & young men (ages 10–24):** 8,914
- **Estimated population at highest risk of violence involvement:** 183 individuals
- **Violent Crime:** 1,616 total violent crimes
- **Violent Crime Rate:** 882 per 100,000 residents
- **Homicide Rate:** 25 per 100,000 residents
- **Total Homicides (2025):** 18

KEY DATA POINTS REFERENCED IN REPORT

- **Reported Progress:** 47% reduction in homicides and non-fatal shootings by the end of 2025
- **Community Safety Assessment:** approximately 2,000 residents engaged in the 2022 Gun Violence and Community Safety Assessment

Community-Based Violence Prevention Investments:

- 19 community-based organizations funded in 2023 for \$1,786,551
- 15 community-based organizations funded in 2024 for \$1,373,020
- More than \$3.1 million committed beginning in FY2023
- Source: Report draft synthesis drawing from narrative scan and brief materials.

Education / Youth Opportunity:

- **District graduation rate:** at least 90%
- **Black students' graduation rate:** at least 80%
- **Disconnected youth ages 16–19:** 9.92%

Continuing Education Plans (2024–2025 graduates):

- 269 **attending two-year colleges**
- 617 **attending four-year colleges**
- 219 **other continuing education plans**
- 304 **employment**
- 94 **military**
- 242 **no plans**
- 1,745 **total graduates**

Work and Income:

- **Overall unemployment rate:** 5.6%
- **Black unemployment rate:** 6.4%
- **Black youth unemployment (ages 16–19):** 33.3%
- **Median household income:** \$64,962
- **Black median household income:** \$44,309
- **Community Well-Being Conditions (Hampton/Newport News area):**
- More than **50,000** adults with mental health conditions
- More than **6,000** children with mental health conditions
- More than **6,000** people with diagnosed substance use disorder
- More than **12,000** households with no access to a vehicle

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SOURCES OF CU TEAM & LTW JURISDICTION MEMBER FEEDBACK

- Newport News Leading the Way Tour session recordings and transcripts
- SWOT reflection materials completed by participants
- Sign-in sheets from Newport News tour convenings
- LTW Newport News live notes and working notes
- Community tour notes and agenda materials
- Public Safety Meaning Definition responses collected during the community dinner
- Daily reflection forms completed by Cities United team members
- Copy of Leading the Way Tour Post Brief, Newport News
- Leading the Way Tour Brief, Newport News, VA
- LTW Newport News Landscape Analysis
- Newport News Data brief
- Prospect / funding scan for Newport News
- Momentum for Peace and related City of Newport News public materials





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