



2026

HOUSING & SAFETY FOR ALL

PLAN



SUMMARY

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The **2026 Housing & Safety for All Plan**, developed by the Nashville People's Budget Coalition through direct engagement with thousands of directly impacted Nashville residents, is a **\$25 million plan** — **0.5% of the total operating budget** — to lay the foundations necessary to *guarantee* permanently affordable housing and genuine community safety for all Nashvillians:

SOCIAL HOUSING FUND	\$500k for staffing; \$9.5M for 3-5 yrs of debt service costs for permanently affordable social housing	\$10 million
COMMUNITY SAFETY FUND	MPHD grant fund for community-based non-police safety programs, allocated through community-led process	\$13 million
REACH PROGRAM EXPANSION	Expanding 24/7/365 coverage for REACH, Metro's non-police mental health crisis response program	\$2 million
TOTAL		\$25M

INTRODUCTION

According to this year's Vanderbilt poll and years of public testimony, **permanently affordable housing and genuine community safety are Nashville residents' top priorities.**

Mayor O'Connell says they are his as well: at his weekly media roundtable on January 9, 2026, Mayor O'Connell told the press: **"I am personally committed to safety and affordability as our top priorities."**

Stating a commitment to safety and affordability is one thing. But making **unprecedented public investments** to fund housing we can stay in and community safety we deserve is another.

A stylized illustration of a modern, multi-story building with a grid-like facade, rendered in shades of blue and white, located in the bottom right corner of the page.



SOCIAL HOUSING FUND: \$10 MILLION

The rent is too damn high. Most new housing is for rich people. Genuinely affordable housing is sparse and doesn't stay affordable for long. The city currently invests less than 2% of the city's massive \$3.8 billion budget on affordable housing. Almost none of the affordable housing that the city funds is guaranteed to remain affordable permanently.


In 2023, Mayor O'Connell told us: **"I want you to stay."** We want to stay, too. But **we can't stay without unprecedented investment in permanently affordable social housing**, as opposed to temporarily affordable housing.

We call on Mayor O'Connell to allocate **\$540,684** for three staff to establish and operate the **Nashville Social Housing Fund**, because the specialized, devoted positions required to fulfill this work successfully do not yet exist within Metro Government.

Our full Nashville Social Housing Fund proposal may be viewed [here](#).

Social housing is high-quality, permanently affordable, publicly-owned, bond-financed, mixed-income, community-governed, environmentally sustainable housing.






Cities like Atlanta, Chicago, Seattle, and Chattanooga are joining cities around the world in embracing an approach to housing that meets people's needs and pays for itself over time and generates more housing more quickly without depending on federal funds that are quickly disappearing.

Nashville has a chance to become a leader in social housing by sustainably addressing the urgent affordability crisis in our city.

Catalyzed by the thousands of Nashville residents who keep telling us they need housing that allows them to stay in Nashville, we are also expanding our call to include an additional **\$9.5 million** to dedicate for **3-5 years of debt service** payments on **\$50-100 million in bonds** that we urge the city to issue over the next year.

While debt service is paid after bonds are issued, the urgency of our crisis demands a guarantee now that the funds will be available for future debt service payments to create and maintain permanently affordable social housing in Nashville. Setting aside those funds now will free up space in the budget in years ahead without sacrificing funding for housing.




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COMMUNITY SAFETY FUND: \$13 MILLION

Traditional “**public safety**” approaches *react* after harm has already taken place with a one-size-fits-all approach: a badge, a gun, the authorized use of force, the threat of violence and captivity, and surveillance.

Community safety, in contrast, *prevents* harm at the root and *responds* to harm according to context and need. The disparity in spending between these two approaches — nearly \$1 billion for public safety and \$5 million for community safety — will not begin to change without unprecedented investment into non-police alternatives.


We call on Mayor O’Connell to allocate **\$13 million** for the **Community Safety Fund**, currently funded at \$3 million annually and facilitated by the Metro Public Health Department, which makes grants to community organizations engaged in violence prevention work and other forms of community safety fully outside Metro Nashville government. This money should come with a formal, codified guarantee that these funds will never be routed to police, courts, or jails, or to organizations that programmatically support the work of police, courts, or jails.



Many existing and nascent grassroots community organizations have the skills, relationships, and expertise to create genuine safety beyond policing. What they don't have is the resources to grow and sustain their work.

Community organizations already doing community-based safety work or who have the skills but not the resources to do so need no-strings funding and, when necessary, support in completing applications and providing information needed to receive funds.

The distribution of Community Safety Fund grants is currently determined by a Metro Public Health Department committee. In addition to a \$13 million allocation to the Fund, we call for a restructuring of the process by which its grants are made. Specifically, we call for the creation of a new committee with the power to select grant recipients composed as follows: one-third people with lived experience of community violence or criminalization, one-third non-police community safety practitioners, and one-third Metro Public Health Department staff.



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REACH PROGRAM EXPANSION: \$2 MILLION

We also call on Mayor O'Connell to allocate **\$2 million** to the **REACH non-police mental health crisis response program**, facilitated by Metro Fire/EMS and Mental Health Co-Op, in order to allow it to expand its 24/7 programming and thereby expand its impact. The REACH program, together with the Office of Youth Safety, are the only Metro-operated community safety programs that function separately from the criminal justice system.

CONCLUSION

This platform is the result of years of grassroots participatory democracy and community engagement centered around the idea that residents should have a more direct say in how their tax dollars are spent, and that the first priority of a city budget should be to fully meet residents' needs.

This platform calls for a truly minuscule amount of money — **\$25 million, 0.5% of the total operating budget** — to be invested to lay the groundwork for permanently affordable housing and genuine community safety for all Nashvillians. The demands correspond precisely with the stated commitments of city leaders and directly address community needs identified by city researchers.

At the end of the day, while we call for these items to be funded, we also call for a full democratization of budgeting and governance in our city. To that end, when these items are funded, community organizations and impacted community members must be centrally included in the process of bringing the vision articulated here to life.

ABOUT



The Nashville People's Budget Coalition is a member-based organization that educates and organizes to create safe and thriving communities for all by increasing investment in life-giving public goods, building genuine community safety beyond policing, and radically democratizing municipal budgeting and governance.

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