



PLANK 15: Rebuild communities and support survivors.

For many survivors of sexual violence, the current system of police, prosecution, incarceration, and surveillance does not provide the types of accountability and healing they seek and need. Instead, the criminal-legal system often causes [more pain](#) both to survivors and to those who caused them harm.

Public safety must promote true safety and healing. Increasingly, survivors are seeking non-carceral models of accountability, such as healing justice, peacemaking circles, and conflict resolution programs. These options can help individuals and communities process, account for, and heal from sexual violence and other harm without relying on police and jails. We must support and advocate to expand the availability of these non-carceral programs while ensuring that they remain defined and led by community members. We must also advocate for the funding of holistic and supportive services that can facilitate survivors securing their safety — such as reparations for harm, vouchers for safe housing, mental health services, and other community-based supports.

**The carceral
system destabilizes
communities by
tearing families
apart with no
room for healing,
accountability,
and growth.**

State Policy Priorities

Invest in healing justice and non-punitive accountability

- Establish a grant program that provides multi-year funding for community-based organizations and nonprofits to create spaces for non-carceral, non-punitive forms of accountability. These accountability programs should help individuals and communities process, account for, and heal from incidents and systemic injustices that have caused harm. Funding should support programs, including — but not limited to — healing justice, economic justice, peacemaking circles, and conflict resolution. The grant should (1) target resources at grassroots, survivor, LGBTQ, people with disability, and/or Black, Brown, and Indigenous-led organizations; and (2) utilize “restorative contract management” to ensure that any contracts issued appropriately account for power imbalances, amplify community-based organizations’ expertise, and fully integrate shared values.
- In cases that involve instances of interpersonal violence, ensure that survivors are made aware of non-carceral programs and alternative accountability options and that these programs appropriately center the agency and autonomy of the survivors involved. Ensure that further criminal-legal involvement, such as a deferred prosecution, is never a requirement or a sanction associated with participating in the accountability programming. Further ensure that there are no additional requirements assigned based on the survivor’s or the harm-doer’s mental health or substance use history.

Lay the foundation for reparations

- Establish a commission, led by individuals who have been directly impacted by criminal-legal harm, to study, publicize information on, and administer reparations that address the harms of slavery, the War on Drugs, and mass incarceration. This commission should conduct robust hearings and research, as well as produce a report with recommendations regarding (1) the forms and amounts of redress to be made; (2) eligibility requirements, selection mechanisms, and timeline for reparations; and (3) oversight of the reparations process. Forms of reparations may include, but are not limited to:
 - Financial redress for those who were incarcerated, on community supervision, or otherwise harmed by mass incarceration or the War on Drugs;
 - Funding for culturally specific health, mental health, employment and workforce development services, financial security and asset-building programs, housing assistance and home principal forgiveness programs, education, civil legal services, and other services for directly impacted individuals and their families; and
 - Grant funding and technical support for community-based organizations, including organizations led by LGBTQ people and Black, Brown, and Indigenous individuals, to provide or facilitate public education, engagement, art works, and memorials commemorating these harms and struggles for justice.

- Establish a commission, led by individuals who have been directly impacted by police brutality and state violence, to study and administer reparations that address the harms of police violence. This commission should conduct robust hearings and research, as well as produce a report with recommendations regarding (1) the forms and amounts of redress to be made; (2) eligibility requirements, selection mechanisms, and timeline for reparations; and (3) oversight of the reparations process. Forms of reparations may include, but are not limited to:
 - Financial redress for those harmed by police brutality and state violence;
 - Funding for culturally specific health, mental health, employment and workforce development services, financial security and asset-building programs, housing assistance and home principal forgiveness programs, education, civil legal services, and other services for directly impacted individuals and their families; and
 - Grant funding and technical support for community-based organizations, including organizations led by LGBTQ people and Black, Brown, and Indigenous individuals, to provide or facilitate public education, engagement, art works, and memorials commemorating these harms and struggles for justice.

Build a state infrastructure to support survivors — outside of the criminal-legal system

- Establish a new, non-carceral, equity-focused Survivor Safety Office within state Departments of Health and Human Services. This office should (1) fund programs to holistically support survivors and prevent harm through non-carceral practices, with a certain percentage of funding (*i.e.*, no less than 25 percent) earmarked to support culturally specific organizations that primarily serve LGBTQ and Black, Brown, and Indigenous survivors; (2) conduct research and provide recommendations on policies, interventions, and other programs that use non-carceral approaches to support survivor safety; and (3) facilitate, such as through a formula grant, every community statewide having a community-led, non-carceral office to holistically support survivors, including survivors who are involved with the criminal-legal system. Funded programming through this office may include:
 - Creating a new infrastructure for survivor safety, such as through:
 - Creating an advisory council of harm survivors who can inform the development, implementation, and oversight of policies that support survivor safety;
 - Conducting local needs assessments to determine the key issues that violence survivors face, as well as identify gaps in necessary services in a given community;
 - Funding for local community-based organizations providing survivor services to fill any resource gaps identified; and
 - Coordinating between survivors, community-based organizations, and government agencies to create and facilitate access to non-carceral resources.

- Public education and mobilization efforts among community-based groups fighting abuse, violence, and exploitation. Preventing violence and harm, such as through:
 - Community-led abuse and violence interruption and prevention programs, particularly programs that center survivors' experiences, voices, and needs and prioritize survivor agency and autonomy;
 - Evidence-based mentoring and education programs led by trained community leaders to support healthy relationships;
 - Trainings on bystander intervention and other forms of community-based and community-led violence intervention;
 - Technical assistance and training on violence prevention best practices; and
 - Programming related to non-carceral, non-punitive accountability mechanisms.
- Meeting survivors' needs, such as through:
 - Trauma-trained, peer and near-peer crisis responders and front-line responders;
 - Trauma-informed and trauma-responsive health services (including nurse care management and medical navigators), case management, counseling services, support groups, and other healing supports for survivors;
 - Safe spaces for survivors;
 - Assistance with finding safe, affordable and healthful housing;
 - Unrestricted cash assistance, made available directly to survivors, including assistance designed to meet survivors' monetary restitution needs;
 - Programs that support survivors in building financial security, including creating safe, quality jobs that proactively meet survivors' needs; creating public programs that replace survivors' wages when they are temporarily unable to work due to serious health issues and caregiving responsibilities; protecting survivors from discrimination by employers, lenders, and other institutions; providing trauma-responsive workforce development services; supporting survivors in identifying alternative pathways to income (e.g., entrepreneurship); offering credit, micro loans, and debt relief; and providing asset-building opportunities (e.g., child savings accounts, survivors savings accounts, lending circles, and savings matching programs); and
 - Civil and criminal-legal services for survivors, including assistance with legal proceedings arising from collateral consequences of violence and abuse.

- Create a new grant that explicitly funds emergency financial assistance, stipends, and other safety net assistance made available directly to survivors, particularly when an individual lacks the resources to leave an unsafe living environment or is struggling financially after leaving an unsafe environment.
- Support reparations to provide victims compensation funding for survivors of police violence or families of victims of unlawful use of deadly force by police.
- Expand funding categories within existing grant programs or create new funding for programs to increase civic engagement for justice-impacted people.
- In coordination with the state Department of Housing and local housing authorities, establish a Survivor Housing Voucher Assistance Program, which provides housing vouchers for individuals who must leave unsafe living environments due to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, abuse, and/or stalking. Ensure that these voucher programs support survivors in finding housing that is sustainable long-term.

Prevent coercion of survivors

- Bar prosecutors from using coercive and abusive tactics against survivors, including the use of material witness warrants, as described in **Plank 5: Ensure accountability and transparency in prosecution.**
- Ensure that no survivor is required to cooperate with an investigation or prosecution in order to be eligible for any programs, supports, or resources.



Federal Policy Priorities

Invest in healing justice and non-punitive accountability

- Establish a grant program that provides multi-year funding for community-based organizations and nonprofits to create spaces for non-carceral, non-punitive forms of accountability. These accountability programs should help individuals and communities process, account for, and heal from incidents and systemic injustices that have caused harm. Funding should support programs, including — but not limited to — healing justice, economic justice, peacemaking circles, and conflict resolution. The grant should (1) target resources at grassroots, survivor, LGBTQ, people with disability, and/or Black, Brown, and Indigenous-led organizations; and (2) utilize “restorative contract management” to ensure that any contracts issued appropriately account for power imbalances, amplify community-based organizations’ expertise, and fully integrate shared values.
- In cases that involve instances of interpersonal violence, ensure that survivors are made aware of non-carceral programs and alternative accountability options and that these programs appropriately center the agency and autonomy of the survivors involved. Ensure that further criminal-legal involvement, such as a deferred prosecution, is never a requirement or a sanction associated with participating in the accountability programming. Further ensure that there are no additional requirements assigned based on the survivor’s or the harm-doer’s mental health or substance use history.

Lay the foundation for reparations

- Pass legislation that establishes reparations for slavery, like [H.R. 40, The Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act](#).
- Establish a commission, led by individuals who have been directly impacted by systems of harm, to study, publicize information on, and administer reparations that address the War on Drugs and mass incarceration. This commission should conduct robust hearings and research, as well as produce a report with recommendations regarding (1) the forms and amounts of redress to be made; (2) eligibility requirements, selection mechanisms, and timeline for reparations; and (3) oversight of the reparations process. Forms of reparations may include, but are not limited to:
 - Financial redress for those who were incarcerated, on community supervision, or otherwise harmed by mass incarceration or the War on Drugs;
 - Funding for culturally specific health, mental health, employment and workforce development services, financial security and asset-building programs, housing assistance and home principal forgiveness programs, education, civil legal services, and other services for directly impacted individuals and their families; and
 - Grant funding and technical support for community-based organizations, including organizations led by LGBTQ people and Black, Brown, and Indigenous individuals, to provide or facilitate public education, engagement, art works, and memorials commemorating these harms and struggles for justice.

- Pass legislation to establish a [Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation](#) to properly acknowledge, memorialize, and be a catalyst for progress toward jettisoning the belief in a hierarchy of human value, embracing common humanity, and eliminating persistent racial inequities.

Increase accountability for harm done

- Pass legislation to transform the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights into a U.S. Commission on Civil and Human Rights to expand its mandate to include not only civil rights issues, but also monitoring human rights implementation and enforcement efforts and to make structural reforms to improve the commission's ability to function as an independent national human rights institution.

Support survivors of criminal-legal harm

- Pass legislation that incentivizes networks of local actors to coordinate wraparound services for reentering individuals.
- Direct the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to update its pandemic guidance to explicitly recognize and include decarceration and expanded access to health care for incarcerated and recently released individuals as necessary guidance for federal, state, and local elected officials to reduce the spread of disease and protect the most vulnerable within the nation's jails, prisons, youth detention facilities, and immigrant detention centers.



Build a state infrastructure to support survivors — outside of the criminal-legal system

- Pass a new Violence Against Women Act that centers non-carceral approaches to supporting survivors and keeping them safe.
- Transfer the non-carceral, non-punitive components of the Office on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs and Prevention to a new Office of Youth Safety located in a new division at the Department of Health and Human Services that would focus on non-carceral approaches to community safety.
- Create a new Office of Survivor Autonomy located in a new division at the Department of Health and Human Services that would focus on non-carceral approaches to community safety. This office should (1) fund programs to holistically support survivors and prevent harm through non-carceral practices, with a certain percentage of funding (*i.e.*, no less than 25 percent) earmarked to support culturally specific organizations that primarily serve LGBTQ and Black, Brown, and Indigenous survivors; (2) conduct research and provide recommendations on policies, interventions, and other programs that use non-carceral approaches to support survivor safety; and (3) facilitate, such as through a formula grant, every community having a community-led, non-carceral office to holistically support survivors, including survivors who are involved with the criminal-legal system. Funded programming through this office may include:
 - Creating a new infrastructure for survivor safety, such as through:
 - Creating an advisory council of harm survivors who can inform the development, implementation, and oversight of policies that support survivor safety;
 - Conducting local needs assessments to determine the key issues that survivors of violence face, as well as identify gaps in necessary services in a given community;
 - Funding for local community-based organizations providing survivor services to fill any resource gaps identified;
 - Coordination between survivors, community-based organizations, and government agencies to create “one-stop-shops” for services to facilitate access to resources; and
 - Public education and mobilization efforts among community-based groups fighting abuse, violence, and exploitation.

- Preventing violence and harm, such as through:
 - Community-led abuse and violence interruption and prevention programs, particularly programs that center survivors' experiences, voices, and needs and prioritize survivor agency and autonomy;
 - Evidence-based mentoring and education programs led by trained community leaders to support healthy relationships;
 - Trainings on bystander intervention and other forms of community-based and led violence intervention;
 - Technical assistance and training on violence prevention best practices; and
 - Programming related to non-carceral, non-punitive accountability mechanisms.
- Meeting survivors' needs, such as through:
 - Trauma-trained, peer and near-peer crisis responders and front-line responders;
 - Trauma-informed and trauma-responsive health services (including nurse care management and medical navigators), case management, counseling services, support groups, and other healing supports for survivors;
 - Safe spaces for survivors;
 - Assistance with finding safe, affordable, and healthful housing;
 - Unrestricted cash assistance, made available directly to survivors, including assistance designed to meet survivors' monetary restitution needs;
 - Programs that support survivors in building financial security, including creating safe, quality jobs that proactively meet survivors' needs; creating public programs that replace the wages of survivors who are temporarily unable to work due to serious health issues and caregiving responsibilities; protecting survivors from discrimination by employers, lenders, and other institutions; providing trauma-responsive workforce development services; supporting survivors in identifying alternative pathways to income (e.g., entrepreneurship); offering credit, micro loans, and debt relief; and providing asset-building opportunities (e.g., child savings accounts, survivors savings accounts, lending circles, and savings matching programs); and
 - Civil and criminal-legal services for survivors, including assistance with legal proceedings arising from collateral consequences of violence and abuse.

- Channel new resources into emergency financial assistance, stipends, and other safety-net assistance that is made available directly to survivors, particularly when an individual lacks the resources to leave an unsafe living environment and/or situation or is struggling financially after leaving an unsafe environment and/or situation.
- In coordination with the state Department of Housing and Urban Development and local housing authorities, establish a Survivor Housing Voucher Assistance Program, which provides housing vouchers for individuals who must leave unsafe living environments due to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, abuse, and/or stalking. Ensure that these voucher programs support survivors in finding housing that is sustainable long-term.

End the coercion of survivors

- Amend the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act to remove all police report requirements to help survivors recover from coerced and fraudulent debt.
- Ban police report requirements or requirements related to cooperating with prosecution efforts with respect to an individual's eligibility for federal safety net program waivers or exemptions, or access to victims' compensation.
- Ban the Victims of Crime Act compensation eligibility requirements that mandate reporting to police and require survivors to cooperate with police or prosecution. All obligations of police officers to survivors shall remain intact.
- Eliminate rules in trafficking programs that require mandatory collaboration with law enforcement agencies in order to obtain immigration relief or services. Such collaboration often presents a significant barrier to access to services for all survivors of trafficking, and particularly LGBTQ youth and adults who are routinely denied help by police, profiled as perpetrators of violence, or subjected to dual arrest even as they are targets of violence.
- Bar prosecutors from using coercive and abusive tactics against survivors, including the jailing of material witnesses, as described in **Plank 5: Ensure accountability and transparency in prosecution.**

Ensure justice for immigrants who are harm survivors

- Modify the requirements for obtaining U, S, or T visas by:
 - Eradicating the requirement that survivors of violence must obtain certification from, or collaborate with, police, prosecution, and/or child protective services to apply for U, S, and T visas; and
 - Allowing any state or community services agency to provide certification.
- Enshrine the right to seek asylum and withholding of removal based on domestic violence or sexual, homophobic, transphobic, reproductive, ableist, and gang violence.
- Bar deportations at courthouses, hospitals, health care clinics, schools, and places of worship, and deem all local, state, and federal courthouses and community agencies as sensitive locations.

