

## Overview

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Neighborhood Safety Initiatives, a program of the Center for Justice Innovation, seeks to improve public safety in New York City by investing in residents, transforming public spaces, and influencing policy. The program provides training to local residents, agency partners and key community stakeholders in community organizing, human-centered design, and re-envisioning public spaces to promote wellbeing. Residents propose tangible solutions to challenges and learn how to access the resources needed to carry them out and support community safety.

The key pillars that form the foundation for our work are:

- racial equity
- shifting power
- access to resources
- inclusive design
- deep participation

### Reimagining Public Safety

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives improves public safety by training local residents, agency partners and key community stakeholders in community organizing and problem-solving efforts, human-centered design, and re-envisioning public spaces to promote people's wellbeing.

Residents propose tangible solutions to challenges and learn how to access the resources needed to carry out plans of action that support community safety. Staff co-design and execute participatory decision-making processes to center residents in government decision-making and resource allocation.

### ▪ Invest in Residents

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives hires, trains, and supports community organizers; recruits and organizes resident leadership teams; designs and implements social programs; manages community action plans; and implements data collection and evaluations. Social programs include youth mentorship, coding courses, music mentorship, adult entrepreneurship, intergenerational green space stewardship, healing and justice events, public education campaigns, summer time basketball series, economic mobility events and more. Neighborhood Safety Initiatives also responds to residents' immediate needs. The program coordinates collaboration across city agencies and other non-profit partners to answer food needs, connect residents to resources, and host conflict resolution events.

### ▪ Transform Public Spaces

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives works with residents to re-envision public spaces to make them more welcoming and promote people's wellbeing. In the last two years, as part of the action plans, the program has designed

and implemented a series of community gardens and recreational public spaces, wayfinding projects, murals, creative lighting installations, and a pop-up outdoor program with movable kiosks.

#### ▪ **Influence Policy**

One of the program’s overarching goals is to bridge the gap between policymakers and community members. Neighborhood Safety Initiatives uses resident teams to identify policy issues and discuss them with representatives of city agencies and other stakeholders. The teams then use a participatory decision-making process to bring even more residents to the table. Additionally, the program co-hosts a yearly policy summit, an interactive day of learning and idea sharing about how to create safety.

#### ▪ **Emergency Response**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Neighborhood Safety Initiatives has invested in resident well being and local leadership networks by conducting a needs assessment, helping residents deliver essential goods to their neighbors, and offering informational seminars.

#### **Impact**

Since 2018, Neighborhood Safety Initiatives supports the implementation of NeighborhoodStat, a team of local residents, community stakeholders, and city agency representatives who work together to identify and solve public safety issues. NSTAT and Neighborhood Safety Initiatives work together to engage residents in community organizing and local problem-solving efforts and invest in solutions that build capacity and provide access to city resources and opportunities.

From 2018-2022, Neighborhood Safety Initiatives worked with each resident team to complete their action plans and access \$10,000-\$57,000—a total of \$550,000 citywide for resident-driven projects to improve public safety annually. The program has reached over 60,000 residents of the New York City Housing Authority.

#### **Locations**

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives currently works with the following 30 public housing communities:

- Beach 41
- Boulevard
- Brownsville
- Bushwick
- Butler
- Castle Hill
- Gowanus
- Ingersoll
- Jefferson
- Johnson
- Langston Hughes
- Linden
- Marcy
- Mitchell
- Morris
- Mott Haven
- Patterson
- Polo Grounds
- Queensbridge
- Red Hook
- St. Nicholas
- Stapleton
- Sumner
- Tilden
- Tompkins
- Van Dyke
- Wagner
- West Brighton
- Whitman
- Wychoff

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#### **Background**

NSI supports the implementation of NeighborhoodStat (NSTAT), a resident-driven community organizing initiative within Mayor’s Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP) is a comprehensive strategy to enhance public safety and strengthen community well-being in 30 public housing developments across New York City. Funding from the Fund for Public Housing has allowed NSI to increase large scale capital investments in the Bronx at Patterson and Castle Hill Houses. Funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance has allowed us to increase investments at Wagner Houses and extend the Center’s community mobilization and placekeeping model to Jefferson and Johnson Houses to address gang and gun violence in East Harlem.

#### **For More Information**

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