

Council of the District of Columbia
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC OVERSIGHT ROUNDTABLE
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

COUNCILMEMBER CHARLES ALLEN, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY

ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC OVERSIGHT ROUNDTABLE ON
EXPLORING NON-LAW ENFORCEMENT ALTERNATIVES TO
MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Thursday, December 17, 2020, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Virtual Roundtable via Zoom

To Watch Live:

<https://dccouncil.us/council-videos/>
<http://video.oct.dc.gov/DCC/jw.html>

On Thursday, December 17, 2020, Councilmember Charles Allen, Chairperson of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, will convene a public oversight roundtable on “Exploring Non-Law Enforcement Alternatives to Meeting Community Needs”. The roundtable will be held virtually via the Zoom platform from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Public witnesses will testify from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., followed by government witnesses from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

The default response to addressing many community needs in the District of Columbia is law enforcement. From mental and behavioral health crises to noise complaints, fireworks to parking, Metropolitan Police Department officers are expected to be the primary – and often, only – solution to most calls for 9-1-1 service, regardless of a call’s acuity, relationship to alleged criminal activity, or potential for resolution by other government agencies or community-based organizations. This overreliance on law enforcement strains officers’ capacity and impacts their health and wellness; diverts critical resources from other needs; creates redundancies and siloism in the provision of government services; increases the likelihood of the use of force, particularly serious or deadly force; exacerbates distrust in police; drives criminal justice involvement; and fails to address root causes.

Cities and states across the country are actively considering, developing, and evaluating non-law enforcement responses to community needs. Whereas the District’s emergency response system is based primarily on a binary choice – either police or fire and emergency medical services – jurisdictions including Eugene and Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Francisco, California, Seattle, Washington, Denver, Colorado, and Albuquerque, New Mexico are supplementing or supplanting traditional law enforcement responses to approach the prevention, intervention, and response to social issues in innovative ways.

The purpose of the Committee's public oversight roundtable is to explore such alternative responses, including the specific models under consideration or already in place in other jurisdictions and internationally. The Committee will discuss the programs' governing philosophies, structures and relationships to government systems, staffing, costs, efficacy, and suitability for the unique context of the District. Further, the roundtable will also consider the need to integrate social services and public health approaches *within* District law enforcement. Lastly, the Committee will discuss relevant current and former legislative and agency initiatives in the District, such as the Pre-Arrest Diversion Pilot Program.

The Committee invites the public to provide live and/or written testimony. Public witnesses seeking to provide live testimony at the Committee's roundtable should review the following instructions:

- Anyone wishing to provide live testimony must email the Committee at judiciary@dccouncil.us and provide their name, telephone number, organizational affiliation, and title (if any), by the **close of business on Monday, December 14.**
- The Committee will approve witnesses' registrations based on the total time allotted for public testimony. The Committee will also determine the order of witnesses' testimony.
- **Witnesses who are approved by the Committee to testify will be emailed Zoom registration instructions for the roundtable, which they must complete in order to be placed on the final witness list and receive their unique Zoom link.**
- Representatives of organizations will be allowed a maximum of five minutes for live testimony, and individuals (and any subsequent representatives of the same organizations) will be allowed a maximum of three minutes.
- Witnesses are not permitted to yield their time to, or substitute their testimony for, the testimony of another individual or organization.
- If possible, witnesses should submit a copy of any written testimony electronically in advance to judiciary@dccouncil.us.
- Witnesses who anticipate needing language interpretation are requested to inform the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than five business days before the roundtable. The Committee will make every effort to fulfill timely requests; however, requests received fewer than five business days before the roundtable may not be fulfilled.

For witnesses who are unable to testify at the roundtable, written statements will be made part of the official record. Copies of written statements should be emailed to the Committee at judiciary@dccouncil.us **no later than the close of business on Friday, December 18.**