

# NOT A GAME TO US



a look at how the World Cup impacts  
police budgets and what the cost is

Sunrise  
Movement





WHO IS  
"WE"?





This summer, the World Cup is coming to Kansas City. Over 650,000 visitors will arrive for "the ultimate celebration of the beautiful game."

While Kansas City welcomes tourists from around the world, what will happen to those of us who already live here? How our city is being prepared and manicured for this celebration begs the question: Why are our leaders more motivated to look good than serve the people of Kansas City?

Hosting the World Cup intensifies already-existing harms that make our daily lives and our neighbors' lives difficult.

public money sent to private corporate interests

gentrification & displacement

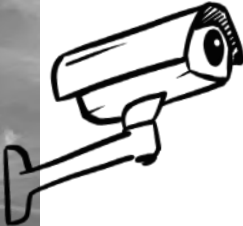
crumbling public transportation

housing insecurity/homelessness

immigration/deportation

environmental destruction

policing, incarceration, militarization, surveillance



These harms are hidden behind promises of 'economic improvement' & 'international prestige.'

In the following pages, we discuss how this happens, why it's important, & what we can do about it. Not because we dislike soccer or occasions for community celebration, but because we can imagine a city that invests in its people over capital.

**There will be winners and losers at the World Cup, but the rich and powerful have already decided who the first loser is before any formal kickoff: (us.)**

# WHO OWNS THE POLICE?

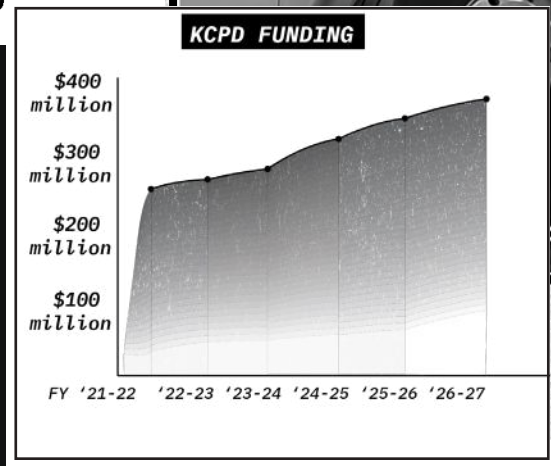


The Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) does not belong to us. Kansas City (KC) is one of the only major U.S. cities, along with St. Louis, with a state-controlled police department. While other cities run their own police, ours is governed by a five-member Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC). Missouri's governor appoints four BOPC members and KC's mayor holds the remaining seat. The BOPC exercises power over KCPD's policies and, most importantly, its funding. \$\$\$



As Kansas Citizens, we don't get a say in how (or how much of) our tax dollars fund KCPD.

In 2022 and 2024, voters across Missouri decided that KC must pour **at least 25% of its General Fund** into KCPD yearly. Our tax dollars fund a police department unaccountable to us at a rate we don't get to set. !!!





Even then, most of our city leaders give in to state control, often surrendering more than the mandatory 25% to the police. So, every budget cycle, KCPD's money continues to grow at alarming rates.



City leaders are using the approaching World Cup to reason that public safety justifies a ~\$365 million police budget, amounting to ~39% of the General Funds, around \$20 million above the state requirement. This is a 5.6% increase from last year's police budget and the largest amount of money that has been handed to KCPD to date.\*

To be clear: we deserve to be safe before, during, and after the World Cup. What we don't deserve is having the programs that keep us and our communities safe be sidelined by a bloated police budget. Instead, our local and federal tax dollars are funnelled into a police department that pays out exorbitant amounts in settlements, spends lavishly on militarized equipment and surveillance technology all in the name of the World Cup.



\*This zine was published after the '26-27 city budget was adopted on March 26, 2026 but before the adopted budget was made publicly available. Our calculations and updated budget numbers are included in the source list.  
[bit.ly/Zine\\_2\\_Sources](http://bit.ly/Zine_2_Sources)

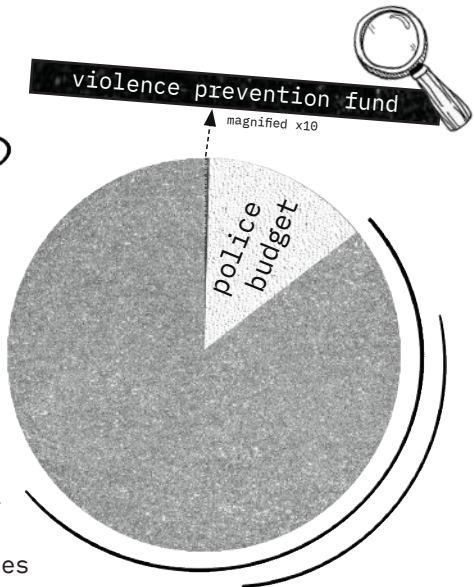


# "THEIR" MONEY IS OUR MONEY

Although our City Council is limited by state law, they often well exceed the required threshold to fund the police. Hosting the World Cup, the largest sporting event ever, further validates their eagerness. While public safety is a valid concern for such a large-scale event, long-term safety comes from addressing root causes of harm to communities: poverty, untreated mental and physical health conditions, housing instability, and addiction.

The obsession with funneling money towards KCPD comes at **direct costs to our communities.**

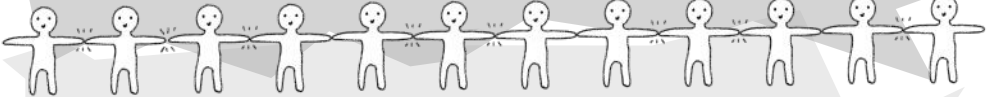
This year's **\$2.6 billion** city budget only includes a mere **\$6 million** for KC's Violence Prevention Fund (VPF). When city leadership undervalues or outright ignores investments that allow neighborhoods to thrive, KC's community driven violence prevention programs risk closure. It is vital that we prioritize successful, care-driven approaches to safety rather than policing and incarceration. Let's take a closer look at local VPF funded programs that address root causes of harm:





## **Journey to New Life (JTNL)**

- JTNL works with formerly incarcerated people, supporting them with the most significant barriers after being incarcerated: housing instability, lack of healthcare, unemployment, and addiction recovery.
- Since 2023, JTNL has served ~2,300 formerly incarcerated people. 80% of people did not recidivate after 12 months.



## **Strengthening the Health of Neighborhoods (STRONG)**

- Operating on a neighborhood level, STRONG gives money directly to low-income families, recognizing that resourced and connected neighborhoods are the first line of defense for KC's most vulnerable communities.
- STRONG has supported ~4,500 people since 2024, including those impacted by domestic violence, which is linked to an increase in financial strain and pressure.



***"When folks are connected with each other and have relationship with each other you have lower instances of violence."***

Alana Henry,  
executive director of the Ivanhoe Neighborhood

It's clear that what little funding we receive for community-led programs is important. **These programs are lifelines for our communities. They keep us connected and safe.** Where, then, are the funds being directed instead?

# PAYIN' FOR

# THE DIRT

© "By state statute, [KCPD's] not allowed to run out of money"

♥ - Mayor Quinton Lucas

While community-led programs are underfunded, the police keep getting more money. For the World Cup, KCPD's getting a **\$20 million increase** to their budget.

Yet, Chief of Police, Stacey Graves, continues to request more of our tax dollars. It never seems to "be enough," as Chief Graves calls for "drastic" cuts to department spending as it deals with a budget imbalance. Meanwhile, Chief Graves herself is getting a **~\$20,000 raise** this year, upping her salary to a cool \$275,000.

## Ricky Kidd

Ricky Kidd is a Kansas Citian who was incarcerated for **23 years** for a **double homicide he didn't commit**. Exonerated in 2019, he eventually sued KCPD for his wrongful incarceration. As of June 2025, KCPD paid out \$4.2 million of the **\$14 million total settlement**, the largest in KCPD history.

One reason for KCPD's budget imbalance is that it paid **\$13.8 million** in legal settlements to people victimized by KCPD officers or the local criminal legal system.

Even then, city leaders can't resist throwing more of our money to cover a police budget drained by their own misconduct. Days prior to finalizing the '26-27 budget, Council approved gifting **another \$3.5 million** to KCPD to cover the massive costs of settlements and police overtime during the World Cup.



# Y WORK



**Blayne Newton** has racked up a long record of violent misconduct that includes kneeling on the back of a 9-month pregnant Black woman, shooting a teenager in the head, and **killing at least 3 Kansas Citians**. At one point, his salary was \$94,900. KCPD has paid out at least **\$4 million** in settlement fees to the families of his victims. He resigned in February 2026 in a 'mutual agreement' with KCPD, earning **him a \$50,000 payout**. Without being fired and no criminal charges, he's ready to join another police force!

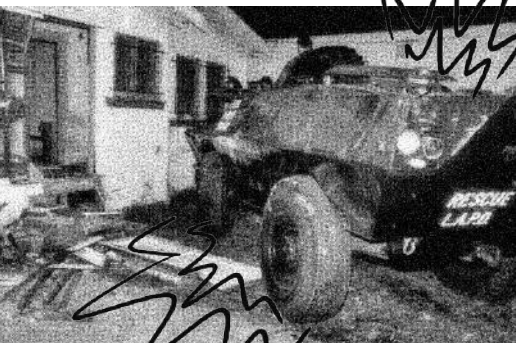


In December 2019, **Eric DeValkenaere** executed Cameron Lamb, a 26-year-old Black Kansas Citian, in Lamb's backyard. DeValkenaere did not have a warrant nor probable cause, yet began firing within 9 seconds of arriving. DeValkenaere was **convicted of involuntary manslaughter** in 2021 but was later **granted clemency** by then Missouri Governor Mike Parsons. Cameron Lamb's family sued KCPD and received a **\$4.1 million** settlement in April 2025.

KCPD's money is our money. While our money pays for KCPD's violent misconduct, local violence prevention programs that actually keep us safe must compete for funding annually. This harms us and our communities.

# THE WORLD CUP IS ONE SUMMER, THE POLICE STATE IS FOREVER

When cities host large sporting events like the World Cup or the Olympics, the money poured into public safety leaves behind an extensive surveillance network & a militarized police force that are used against vulnerable communities.



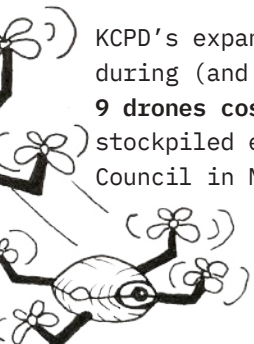
Before Los Angeles hosted the 1984 Olympic games, its police department, the LAPD, used federal funding to buy military-grade equipment: machine guns, infrared viewing devices, and a tank-like SWAT vehicle. These resources didn't just disappear after the Olympics. They were weaponized against the most vulnerable Angelenos and normalized militarized policing for years onward. It resulted in the brutalization of Rodney King and repression against protestors during the subsequent uprising.

## Why would Kansas City be an outlier?

For the World Cup, we're already seeing the expansion of the police and surveillance state. KC received ~\$90 million from the federal government, earmarked in Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill. \$59 million of that will cover KCPD's overtime during the World Cup; another \$2 million will be used to buy new police cruisers.



KCPD's expanded **drone program** will surveil us during (and after) the World Cup. Each of their **9 drones cost ~\$28,000**. By June, they will have stockpiled even more drones with the **\$500,000** gift from City Council in November 2025. See sources for more information.



Other new equipment for the World Cup (and after) include:



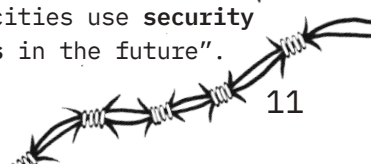
THE CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI	
Bomb-and-Arson Command Vehicle	.....750,000,00
Mobile Command Center	..... 2,100,000,00
Counter Drone Radar Surveillance System (From DHS).....	11,800,000,00
<b>THANK YOU!</b>	
	



On top of that, Congressman Emmanuel Cleaver wants another **\$2 million** to upgrade KCPD's **Shotspotter** system, a controversial surveillance technology claiming to detect gunshot sounds. Established research scrutinizes its effectiveness and its deployment into already-overpoliced communities. When paired with drone software with the ability to enable **predictive policing**, the surveillance systems propped up for the World Cup creates a feedback loop of overpolicing in our most vulnerable communities.

These tools of surveillance and militarized equipment are long-term investments purported to make us safer for the World Cup. But these justifications echo the empty claims that more policing can address root causes of harm.

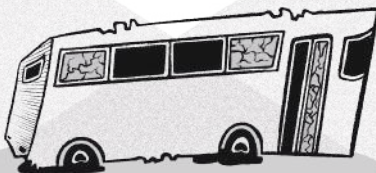
KCPD tells a KCTV 5 reporter: "it's not just about security for the World Cup. It's setting a **new standard** for how major cities use **security apparatuses** in the future".



# WHEN THE CUP LEAVES, WHAT REMAINS?

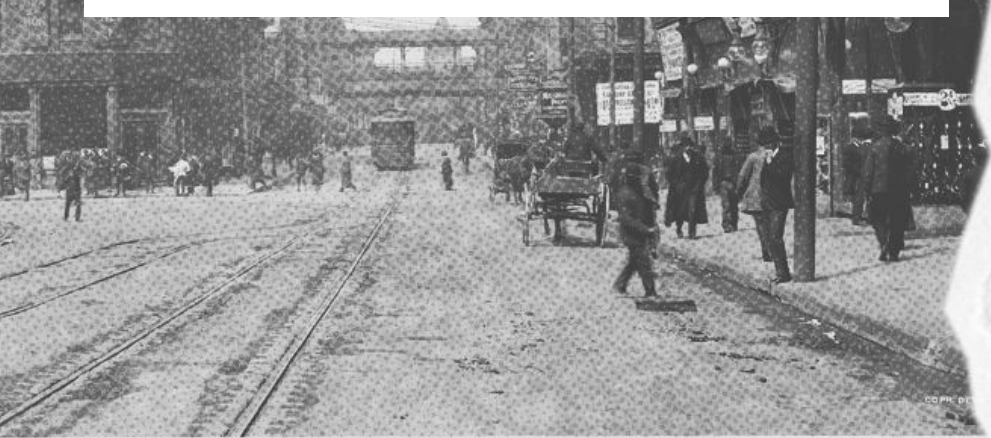
The stadium lights will dim. The crowds will move on. But the budgets approved in its name aren't going anywhere. Surveillance systems don't pack themselves away. Jail beds don't dissolve. What's built for a temporary event often becomes permanent infrastructure.

We are told this is 'safety'. Yet safety is not measured in drones, razor wire, or police overtime hours. Safety is measured in whether people have stable housing, whether mental crises are met with care, and whether neighbors know each other by name. Safety is meeting people in crisis with resources and compassion instead of force and punishment.



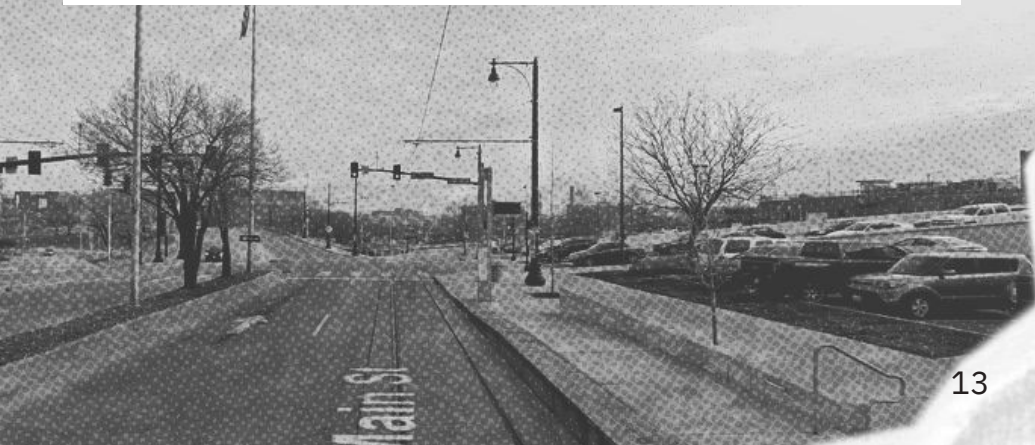


We all deserve to be safe before, during, and after the World Cup. Instead of relying on policing and incarceration, true safety means giving real power (and resources) to the people and organizations who will actually live with and beyond the consequences of the games: tenants, community-based organizations, and neighborhoods. They bring the relationship networks and lived experiences that make us safer and more connected than we've ever been.



Main & Delaware, Kansas City, Missouri (1906 vs. 2015)

If safety is the goal, the question becomes what we invest in: more surveillance and cuffs or care and community that reduces harm by targeting root causes? Safety isn't built in a month. ***The World Cup will be temporary. The choices we make will not.***



# WHAT TEAM CAN YOU JOIN?

## Join and Support Decarcerate KC (DKC)

- DKC aims to raise awareness, build power, and create change around issues of incarceration and policing in Kansas City.
- DKC has fought for and won community-based safety programs i.e., *REACH*: KC's first pre-arrest diversion program, or DKC's Community Safety Hubs initiatives.
- DKC is a multiracial, multigenerational organization that centers those impacted by incarceration and policing in order to end the reliance on incarceration and policing, and build a safer Kansas City for all.
- Get involved: [decarceratekc.org/contact](http://decarceratekc.org/contact)



## Sign Decarcerate KC's Petition to Stop the 'Temporary' World Cup Jail

- [bit.ly/worldcupjail](http://bit.ly/worldcupjail)





## Support the work of *The Kansas City Defender*

THE **Kansas City**  
DEFENDER®

- Much of the research for this zine series relies on the work of *The Kansas City Defender*. They are a local youth-led Black community media platform made up of writers, designers, and innovators whose work is inextricable from their experiences as community organizers and abolitionists.
- Their work follows in a tradition of radical Black press and is rooted in “collective liberation and invested in the future of the communities [they serve].”
- Subscribe and donate to *The KC Defender* for more radical journalism about the World Cup and the resistance growing alongside it.

## Utilize and Support Existing Alternatives to Incarceration:

- **Responding with Empathetic Alternatives & Community Health (REACH), KC’s first pre-arrest diversion program.**
  - If you know someone who is struggling with mental health issues, substance use, poverty, homelessness: Call REACH: (816) 513-6010 or email reach@kcmo.org or submit an inquiry for help through [www.cognitofrms.com/KansasCity2/REACHOut](http://www.cognitofrms.com/KansasCity2/REACHOut)

## Advocate for Local Programs & Policies that:

- Promote universal right to cradle-to-grave care (e.g., healthcare, education, childcare, elder care).
- Promote a basic right to life (e.g., housing, employment, income, etc.)
- Stand firm that these programs must be common goods: universal and decommodified.

**VIEW SOURCES**

[bit.ly/Zine\\_2\\_Sources](http://bit.ly/Zine_2_Sources)



## Sunrise Movement - Kansas City (SMKC)

We're a multi-racial, cross-class, anti-racist movement of young Kansas Citians, organizing to address the climate crisis of today and tomorrow. We build people power through direct action, local policies, mutual aid, deep democracy, and community relationships, in order to win a just transition for KC that ends our reliance on fossil fuels, abolishes the systems of racial capitalism, and centers the leadership and well-being of the most impacted communities.

Get involved with us: [bit.ly/JoinSunriseKC](https://bit.ly/JoinSunriseKC)

