



## Listening Circle Summary & Analysis | Summer 2021 | Lima City Wards 3,5,6 Facilitated by Crime Victim Services Violence Prevention Program

### Background

27 residents representing wards in the City of Lima with the highest rates of violent crime participated in a series of Listening Circles during the summer of 2021. 9 residents from Ward 3, 8 residents from Ward 5, and 9 residents from Ward 6 participated in the guided discussions, which provided a structured but less formal way for residents to share about the causes and impact of violent crime in their neighborhoods and serves as a launch point for community service agencies like Crime Victim Services to develop programming that will directly address residents' expressed needs.

This document summarizes themes, key issues, and priorities identified throughout the series of Circles.

### Demographics

The average participant was a 59 year old, Black male, having lived in Lima for more than 12 years. He would categorize his experience as mostly positive, with a 7.32 on a scale of 1 to 10.

- 56% of respondents were over the age of 64, 31% of respondents between the ages of 55-64, and 6% of respondents between the ages of 35-44.
- 15% of respondents have lived in Lima less than 5 years, 15% between 6-10 years, 34% at least 10 years, and 34% more than 15 years. Note that two participants had lived in Lima for more than 50 years.
- 50% of respondents identified as male, 43% identified as female, and 7% preferred not to self-identify.
- 63% of respondents identified as Black/African America, 15% identified as white, 5% identified as Asian, 5% identified as Hispanic, 5% identified as Native American, and 5% identified as Native Pacific Islander.

### Themes

When asked about factors that contribute to the culture of violence in the ward, the following themes emerged:

- A breakdown of the family structure.
- A lack of positive role models/youth mentors.
- A lack of employment opportunities with benefits, resulting in high rates of poverty.
- The decreasing rate of home ownership across the city, resulting in an increase of transient neighborhoods.

- A lack of neighborhood respect and pride coupled with decreasing property maintenance.

When asked what barriers are preventing positive change in the ward, the following themes emerged:

- The high transitory rates of the residents, both related and unrelated to the high rates of rental properties.
- A lack of collaboration and follow through amongst agencies and organizations.
- Prevalence of guns & drugs in the community.
- A lack of supports for parents/families to care for and support youth.

When asked what makes residents feel safe, the following themes emerged:

- Connecting with others in the community/neighborhood.
- The Listening Circles.
- Open communication and dialogue (with leadership, LPD, and neighbors).
- Gatherings where diversity is apparent.

### Priorities

While a variety of themes were identified across the wards related to risk and protective factors contributing to the climate of violence, the participants identified these priorities that they believed were most important to address first:

1. Protecting youth. Strengthening families, increasing the prevalence of positive role models and youth mentors, and creating more opportunities for youth to engage in prosocial behavior.
2. Cultivating pride. Improving property maintenance, building trust through collaboration & follow through.
3. Connecting communities. Bridging the gap between youth and adults, residents and their leadership, and across neighborhoods.

### Recommendations

The first round of Listening Circles was successful, as measured by a follow up survey (reported below), and has provided important insights into residents lived experiences, strengths and opportunities for improvement. The participant pool, however, was small.

CVS believes that facilitating additional Circles will not only provide more input and feedback, but will result in increased community engagement, effectively addressing the identified priorities. CVS intends to target youth in a follow up series, as well as business owners, and community leaders.

- 93% of participants reported feeling understood by the facilitator.
- 87% of participants reported feeling safe expressing themselves during the circle, would participate again, and would recommend a friend join them.