

What to Do Instead of Calling the Police

We all want to feel safe. But for Black and Brown communities, a police response can have deadly results. What are the alternatives? Communities are beginning to have dialogs and imagine a society where people of color are not profiled, where people who are homeless or who have mental health challenges are cared for, where we defund bloated police budgets and instead invest in programs that uplift community development and true community safety – living wage jobs, access to housing, health care, and education, and where restorative justice programs disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.

Here are some things YOU can do now

- If you live in Oakland and need emergency services, instead of calling 911, call the fire department at **(510) 444-1616**.
- If something of yours is stolen and you need to file a report for insurance, consider going to the police station instead of bringing cops into your community.
- Keep a contact list of community resources like suicide hot-lines. When police are contacted to “manage” such situations, people with mental illness are 16 times more likely to be killed by police than those without mental health challenges.*
- Check your impulse to call the police on someone you believe looks or is acting “suspicious.” Is their race, gender, ethnicity, class, or housing situation influencing your choice? Such calls can be death sentences for many people.
- Hold and attend de-escalation, conflict resolution, first-aid, volunteer medic, and self-defense workshops in your neighborhood, school, workplace, or community organization. Check out regular offerings from SURJ or Community Ready Corps (CRC).
- Find more suggestions online in *12 Things to Do Instead of Calling the Cops*, by the May Day Collective and Solidarity & Defense.

For further reading

- *Public Safety Begins with Public Health: Making Oakland Safer Together*, Ella Baker Center
- *Building Momentum from the Ground Up: A Toolkit for Promoting Justice in Policing*, www.justiceinpolicing.com
- *Defund OPD: Invest in Community*, www.defundopd.org
- *End the War on Black People, Movement for Black Lives Policy Platform*, www.policy.m4bl.org

Want to learn more?

Internationally renowned expert on alternatives to policing, Alex Vitale, Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College and coordinator of their Policing and Social Justice Project, will discuss his new book, *The End of Policing*. Sponsored by the Center for Political Education and Critical Resistance:

- **Thursday, January 18 • 7:00 - 9:00 pm** @ Mission Center - City College of San Francisco, 1125 Valencia Street, San Francisco
- **Friday, January 19 • 7:00 - 8:30 pm** @ Diesel Books, 5433 College Avenue, Oakland



Showing Up for Racial Justice, Bay Area Chapter
www.surjbayarea.org

* *Overlooked in the Undercounted: The Role of Mental Illness in Fatal Law Enforcement Encounters*, report by Treatment Advocacy Center's Office of Research & Public Affairs