



Arthur Hunter's Summary Platform

Mission Statement: To set a new standard and a national example by enhancing public safety in New Orleans through respect, equality, fairness, accountability, and opportunity.

Guiding Principles

1. **Public Safety:** Strive to protect communities, reduce criminal offenses and improve quality of life.
2. **Respect:** Treat everyone—from victims to witnesses to defendants—with respect.
3. **Equality:** Apply the law equally regardless of race, age, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
4. **Fairness:** Prosecute only the cases that are supported by facts, evidence and law.
5. **Accountability:** Prosecute cases fairly, ethically, and professionally, and without undue delay.
6. **Opportunity:** Reduce recidivism by offering assistance through specialty courts, an expanded diversion program, and restorative justice initiatives.

Proposed Programs and Units

1. Specialty Courts – Criminal Justice + Mental Health & Drug Addiction Expertise = Prevention and Reduction of Crime. Expand the use of specialty courts for nonviolent offenses. Defendants may qualify for courts specializing in drug/opioid addiction and abuse, mental health issues, re-

entry or assisting military veterans. I will draw on my experience in Mental Health Court and will work with mental health professionals to establish a Crisis Stabilization Unit to treat those arrested for non-violent offenses with mental health issues. The goal is to provide treatment and services instead of placing mentally ill individuals in the Orleans Justice Center (formerly known as Orleans Parish Prison or O.P.P.). Charges will be dismissed against qualified individuals participating in the program upon successful completion of the program.

2. Diversion – Create a robust diversion program for those aged 18 to 25 who are charged with a nonviolent offense. This program will be based on re-entry principles and my experience running the Re-Entry and Veterans Treatment Courts. There will be no fee to enroll.

3. Restorative Justice – Implement restorative justice to provide closure for victims and accountability for defendants. This will also help reduce recidivism. The pilot initiative will be in juvenile court. The young person and their guardian will meet with the judge, the defense attorney, assistant district attorney, social worker, school official and/or psychologist to develop a comprehensive, holistic plan for the young person and to address issues within the home. The victim would have the choice about whether to meet with the young person while accompanied by the judge and attorneys.

4. Conference with Stakeholders – Convene a meeting with the mayor, city council, public defender, police, sheriff, school board, education administrators, social workers, mental health professionals, business leadership, faith communities, neighborhood and community organizations, and nonprofits to develop a holistic comprehensive criminal justice policy for the City of New Orleans. We will develop an achievable action plan with transparent benchmarks and performance measures for all stakeholders focused on three objectives: How will we fight crime? How will we reduce and prevent crime? How will we pay for it?

5. Special Units – Create additional units at the DA’s Office to prioritize prosecution of certain offenses and office initiatives:

A. Special Crimes Unit – This unit will focus on prosecuting offenses involving multiple individuals that pose the greatest risk to the health and safety of New Orleans residents. The unit will identify, investigate, and indict major drug gangs; assist the NOPD in establishing a Drug Interdiction Unit to investigate and prosecute the transport of large quantities of illegal narcotics; and investigate public corruption cases. It consists of the Intelligence Division, Major Case Narcotics, and federal law enforcement agencies.

B. Special Victims Unit – This unit will focus on prosecuting offenses for which the victims may require specialized assistance. These offenses include hate crimes; domestic violence; sex crimes; human trafficking, including trafficking in unpaid labor; and crimes against undocumented immigrants, children, and the elderly. This unit offers assistance from assistant district attorneys, police officers, social workers, and psychologists—all of whom are specifically trained to deal with these issues. The unit will also coordinate with the Family Justice Center, Family Court, Municipal Court, and Juvenile Court to ensure a holistic, comprehensive, and just resolution.

C. Victims' Rights Unit - The DA's Office will oversee the immediate creation of a Victims' Rights Unit. This Unit is specifically designed to assist victims of all types of offenses and will include coordination with the Family Justice Center. The Unit will be staffed by attorneys, social workers, and investigators to better provide holistic support to victims. It is the goal of the Victims' Rights Unit to empower victims to be heard by the justice system and to work with them to receive satisfaction from the resolution of the case.

D. Screening Review Unit – This unit will focus on supporting law enforcement in its investigations and avoiding arrests or searches unsupported by probable cause. An assistant district attorney will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to screen affidavits in support of search and/or arrest warrants. The assistant district attorney will determine whether the warrant is supported by sufficient facts and evidence, and whether there is a statutory basis for arrest. Once an arrest has occurred, this unit is responsible for ensuring that the charged offense is the most appropriate offense based on the facts and investigation. Additionally, this unit will provide open-file discovery upon arrest.

E. Conviction Integrity Unit – This unit will review closed cases and examine current applications for post-conviction relief. It will also seek grants and funding to support this unit in its mission. Orleans Parish has the highest rate of wrongful convictions per capita as well as one of the highest exoneration rates. Currently, convictions are only overturned if relief is requested within the statutory time limits or newly discovered evidence is found. Therefore, the number of reported wrongful convictions is artificially low because many of those wrongfully convicted have no recourse for release because of the length of time since their convictions.

To ensure that convictions receive the necessary level of thorough and independent review, this unit will be located off-site. Additionally, this unit will be staffed by personnel that were not previously employed by the DA's Office.

F. Special Counsel Office – This unit will rebuild public trust in the DA's Office by providing sound legal advice to the District Attorney's Office, ensuring ethical and professional standards are upheld by assistant district attorneys, investigating misconduct by assistant district attorneys, and representing the office in litigation. This unit also provides the public with an option for communicating complaints and concerns about the DA's Office. One of the primary goals for this unit will be to increase transparency and accountability.

G. Community Quality of Life Office – This unit will investigate nonviolent offenses affecting multiple victims or with the potential for a widespread impact. These offenses include economic crimes, contractor fraud, computer crimes, election fraud, swindles, and scams.

H. Community Outreach Office – This unit will provide services to the community and help guide policy at the DA's Office by gathering data to evaluate policies and programs. In addressing crime down the street and around the corner, it is important to recognize the economic and quality-of-life issues that place individuals at increased risk for committing criminal offenses. This unit is responsible for reaching out to traditionally underserved communities, including but not limited to those in the Black and African American community, the Latinx community, the Asian community, and LGBTQIA community. This unit will also provide victim and witness assistance, create economic opportunities for the residents of New Orleans, and work to reduce and prevent crime by coordinating with political entities, community groups, and nonprofit organizations. This unit will be located offsite, e.g., Corpus Christi Center, to increase accessibility.

6. Community Outreach Program – The DA's Office is viewed with skepticism and distrust. In serving the community, it is important to demonstrate that the office actually *serves the community*. To that end, the Office hopes to supplement its efforts to keep New Orleans safe by being proactive about affecting change that will reduce contact with the criminal justice system. Reducing contact with the criminal justice system depends on reducing the impact of economic and educational inequality in our city. This program will include initiatives to: (1) bring back community policing, which gives residents and police officers an opportunity to get to know each other; (2) guarantee early childhood education, so children enter kindergarten with good social skills and the ability to read and write; (3) bring back summer camp in neighborhood schools to give children options and assist parents who cannot afford childcare; (4) encourage local businesses to hire at least one high school student each summer; and (5) connect those who have

had contact with the criminal justice system with resources in the community, including job placement, job training, counseling, and other appropriate services.

Day 1 Policy Changes

1. No prosecution of misdemeanor marijuana possession.
2. Will not seek monetary bond and will not object to requests for ROR release unless the arrested person is either (a) a danger to the community, or (b) a flight risk. Assessments for danger or risk for flight will be based on a standardized assessment protocol.
3. Will not notify ICE or Border Patrol of the immigration status of any person reporting an offense.
4. Work with victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse to overcome fears about testifying, and never use the threat of subpoena or jail for those who do not wish to testify to avoid imposing secondary trauma.
5. Will only transfer a juvenile to adult court if there is a determination that the juvenile's maturity and the seriousness of the offense warrant a transfer, which is mandated by *Miller v. Alabama*.
6. Provide open-file discovery upon arrest to comply with *Brady* requirements.
7. Examine pending litigation against the DA's Office, and quickly resolve cases with legitimate claims to save taxpayer money.
8. Habitual offender sentencing enhancements will not be used for non-violent offenses.
9. Notify defense attorneys when a grand jury returns an indictment, so the attorneys may have the opportunity to address the judge regarding bail.

10. Provide line prosecutors with the training and resources needed to present the best case to the judge/jury.
11. Diversify the staff at the District Attorney's Office by reaching out to those in underrepresented communities, including but not limited to the African-American community, the Latinx community, the Asian community and the LGBTQIA community.
12. Provide due process, including the right to a hearing and to an attorney, before issuing a subpoena for a material witness.
13. Waive the District Attorney's portion of the filing fee for expungements.