



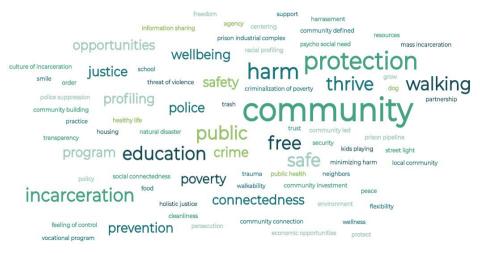
NDSC Criminal Justice Data Initiative: **DEFINING PUBLIC SAFETY**

The Neighborhood Data for Social Change (NDSC) platform, a project of the USC Price Center for Social Innovation, is a free, publicly available online resource for civic actors in Los Angeles County to learn about their neighborhoods. In the spring of 2019, the USC Price Center partnered with Microsoft and the **USC Safe Communities Institute** to launch the **NDSC Criminal Justice Data** Initiative, a pilot project to collect, aggregate, and disseminate additional public safety indicators on the NDSC platform, including arrests, stops by police, and calls for service from community members. The Initiative hosted a number of gatherings to engage public safety professionals, community-based organizations, and researchers for the purpose of grappling with the issue of public safety data. A summary of community definitions of public safety is shared below.

KEY FINDINGS: DEFINING PUBLIC SAFETY

When asked to define what public safety meant to them, event and listening session participants provided a range of answers and experiences that varied depending on their occupation and neighborhood of residence. Figure 1 below displays their answers in word cloud format. Definitions from law enforcement officers shared common themes of protection from harm, teamwork, and transparency. By contrast, definitions from local government and nonprofit representatives focused more on topics like health and wellbeing, community investment, economic opportunity, and built environment. South Los Angeles residents reflected on their communal experience with police and the criminal justice system and shared themes like the criminalization of poverty, racial profiling, and the desire for investments in community programs rather than police.

FIGURE 1 PUBLIC SAFETY DEFINITIONS FROM LISTENING SESSIONS



While these stakeholder groups defined certain aspects of public safety differently, some common themes also emerged across all groups. In various ways, law enforcement officers, community residents, and local government/nonprofit representatives all expressed the shared idea that public safety also includes intangible elements like community belonging, connectedness, and opportunities to thrive and be free. This common piece of understanding allowed for productive and respectful conversations among listening session participants who shared few other similarities when reflecting on what public safety meant to them. However, this also presented a challenge for project staff, as it is difficult to conceptualize measuring ideas like belonging, connectedness and freedom at the neighborhood level, much less finding a reliable and comprehensive data source to do so.