



PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY: YEAR ONE REPORT.

 **CHICAGO**
MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON





LETTER FROM MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON AND DEPUTY MAYOR GARIEN GATEWOOD

Our fellow Chicagoans,

Everyone who has heard me speak knows that I love my home community of Austin but there is no denying that in communities like mine, there has been a shattered sense of safety. The challenges we face in our communities are the results of decades of intentional disinvestment and indifference. It is no coincidence that the communities with the highest rates of violence in Chicago also have the highest rates of school closures and unemployment. It's also not a coincidence that the communities that are disproportionately impacted by violence also have the highest population of young people and adults who are trapped in repeating cycles of harm and trauma. Therefore, we need to continue to work on reducing and preventing harm while also recognizing that sustainable safety can only be achieved by addressing the root causes of harm and investing in communities and people.

A little over a year ago, we stood alongside leaders from City agencies and departments and hundreds of philanthropic, business, community, and faith leaders to share the *People's Plan for Community Safety*. The *People's Plan for Community Safety* is a community-led initiative that harnesses the full force of government to address historic disinvestment, work toward healing our communities, and make all of Chicago safe for everyone.

We are just getting started but we are excited to share some of what we've achieved in partnership over the last year. In the twelve months since launching the *People's Plan for Community Safety*, we've used data to prioritize four communities for our initial place-based work; worked with dozens of departments, agencies, foundations, community leaders, and others through cross-sector working teams to develop new initiatives; kept our commitment to transparency by hosting quarterly public meetings attended by hundreds of Chicagoans; and made millions of dollars in investments to prevent and reduce violence.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to this work to-date by participating in meetings, showing up to work shoulder-to-shoulder with us to bring resources to communities, and sharing your feedback. We also express gratitude to the Mayor's Office of Community Safety and the Community Safety Coordination Center teams for leading and managing this cross-departmental strategy, and the countless City staff for designing and helping to implement these initiatives.

Safety is an essential human need and we believe that every Chicagoan has the right to feel safe and secure in their community. We also believe that government alone cannot make Chicago safer; community safety is everyone's job which is why we called it the *People's Plan for Community Safety*. It's the people that make Chicago a place we are proud to call home. And it's the people of this city who can help us build a stronger, safer Chicago.

Brandon Johnson
Mayor of Chicago

Garien Gatewood
Deputy Mayor of Community Safety

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INTRODUCTION

The strength of Chicago comes from its people — from every corner and every background. Home to diverse Black and Latine populations, one of the largest urban Indigenous communities in the country and growing Asian and Middle East and North Africa communities, Chicago embodies and reflects a broad spectrum of identities and experiences. Yet our diverse tapestry bears the marks of systemic challenges; the city’s history is marked by policies such as Jim Crow, Redlining, and Urban Renewal that continue to influence the fabric of our communities. These practices, reflective of broader systemic racism, have contributed to lasting disparities and cycles of disinvestment in communities of color.



Stark disparities in the lived experiences of residents is apparent when it comes to community safety. Despite making up less than 30% of the City’s total population, Black residents made up nearly 80% of homicide victims in 2023. In some predominantly Black neighborhoods, such as West Garfield Park, the homicide rate is almost 20x more than homicides in other police districts. These disparities extend beyond gun violence into other economic, educational, and health disparities that starkly delineate the intersection of race and access to opportunity. Confronting this reality requires acknowledging that current conditions stem from government policies and practices which created and perpetuated racial disparities.

On May 15, 2023, Mayor Brandon Johnson took a significant step toward addressing the root causes of crime and violence in Chicago by establishing the position of Deputy Mayor for Community Safety. The newly created Mayor’s Office of Community Safety (“MOCS”) is tasked with the development and implementation of a comprehensive, healing-centered approach to community safety that works to eradicate the systemic issues contributing to violence and crime in the City. MOCS aims to break the cycle of trauma and create a safer, more equitable future for all Chicagoans. This represents a significant shift in the City’s approach to safety, acknowledging the need for a more holistic, community-driven strategy that addresses the systemic inequalities that sustain cycles of violence and trauma in Chicago’s most vulnerable communities.

Addressing complex issues of crime and violence requires listening to and working with stakeholders across Chicago’s diverse communities. To ensure that its strategies and initiatives are inclusive, effective, and responsive to the unique needs of each community, MOCS is actively collaborating with a wide range of partners that include community leaders and organizations, faith-based institutions, youth advocates, social service providers, educators and school administrators, businesses and economic development organizations, law enforcement agencies and legal system representatives. By engaging with this diverse group of stakeholders, MOCS fosters open dialogue, builds trust, and develops collaborative solutions that address the root causes of crime and violence. This inclusive approach ensures that lived experiences and expertise inform the office’s strategies for those most directly affected, prioritizing more effective, sustainable, and community-driven interventions.

THE PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY



The 2023 Mayoral Transition Report laid out a clear vision for public safety under the Johnson Administration:

Rather than relying on the same failed approaches that have brought trauma to communities across the city, we must chart a new path to public safety that includes working with police and first responders to invest in community-based interventions that de-escalate conflict, reduce violence, and make our neighborhoods safer.

MOCS turned this vision into action through community collaboration to develop the *People's Plan for Community Safety*. The plan lays out strategies to interrupt and address acute violence while eradicating the root causes of harm to uplift the people and neighborhoods that have been disinvested in and underserved. The challenges we face today are not new; they are the result of decades of intentional disinvestment. The *People's Plan for Community Safety* aims to address decades of disinvestment with purposeful, intentional investment through a two-pronged approach:

- **People-Based:** interrupting violence and protecting adults and youth of highest promise – members of our community who have been impacted by the repeated the cycle of harm due to purposeful disinvestment– in addition to victims and survivors of violence.
- **Place-based:** addressing the root causes of violence by investing in education, economic opportunity and upward mobility, housing, health, community environment, and policing.

In a departure from traditional City approaches, the *People's Plan for Community Safety* leverages the strength of government agencies as conveners bringing, community organizations, businesses, philanthropic groups and other stakeholders. This collaborative model harnesses the expertise, experiences, and dedication of diverse partners, to comprehensively tackle the complex, long-standing issues of crime and violence. By focusing resources and support in hyperlocal areas, the plan aims to create a model for community-driven violence prevention that can be scaled and replicated across the city.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

In 2023, MOCS began to develop the collaborative framework for the *People's Plan for Community Safety* by bringing together hundreds of community leaders, researchers, government staff, business leaders, philanthropic partners, labor and faith leaders, and youth to discuss challenges that Chicago communities are facing and opportunities to build safety. These became the nine pillars of the plan. MOCS held a series of meetings with community organizations and residents to gather input critical to refining the pillars and their ambitions. On December 14, 2023, the Mayor officially announced the launch of the *People's Plan for Community Safety*.

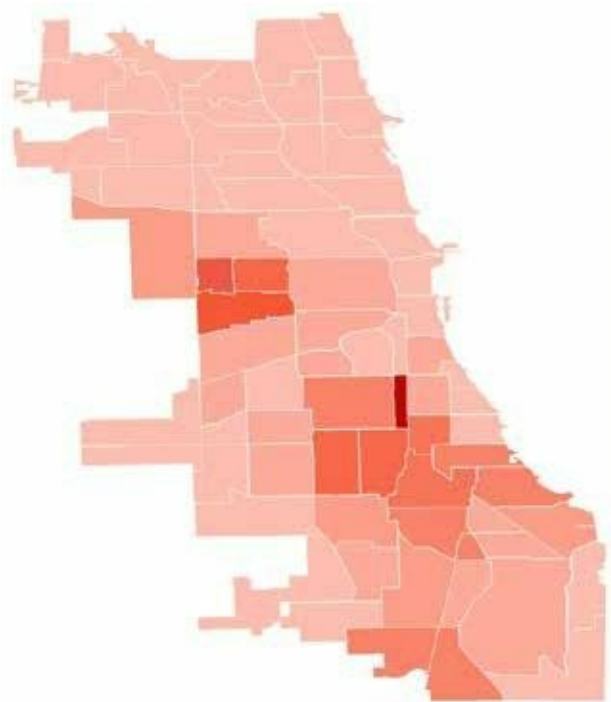
BLOCK GROUPS

Violence in Chicago is heavily concentrated in communities on the City's West and South sides. In 2023, neighborhoods with the highest homicide rates experienced approximately 30x more homicides than the neighborhoods with the lowest rates.

The communities experiencing these high rates of violent crime are overwhelmingly Black and Latine, and violence has persisted for decades because the underlying issues, such as systemic racism, disinvestment, poverty, and lack of social services, have gone unaddressed, and the reliance on policing as the primary solution has failed. Strategies to address violence and build safety, therefore, must recognize just as the impact of violence and disinvestment is not evenly distributed across the city, the most impactful solutions require prioritized investments in those areas most impacted.

MOCS identified early on that in a city as dynamic as Chicago, hyperlocal community needs and assets must be taken into consideration, which is why the *People's Plan for Community Safety* focuses on challenges and opportunities at the block group level. Block groups serve as the foundational unit for the plan's hyperlocal "stacking" strategy, concentrating resources and investments to maximize impact and address the root causes of violence. A block group is the most constrained geographic area utilized by the U.S. Census. It stays the same year-over-year and census-over-census providing an opportunity to use a data-driven approach built off a stable geographic map. Each block group comprises 8-10 city block clusters with 250-550 total housing units, typically housing 1,000-3,000 people in urban areas.

The use of block groups is a key innovation of the *People's Plan for Community Safety*. This hyperlocal approach allows for a more granular understanding of the complex factors that contribute to violence, such as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and limited access to health and social services. By collecting and analyzing data at this level, it's possible to identify the most pressing needs and opportunities for intervention, and develop targeted strategies that address the root causes of violence. Moreover, the block group approach facilitates deeper community engagement and ownership of the violence prevention process. By working closely with residents, community-based organizations, and local leaders in each block group, MOCS seeks to build trust, foster collaboration, and empower communities to drive their own transformation.



Victimization rates in 2023

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

When there is a crisis, you have to triage. This is why we will start the place-based components of this plan within a handful of community areas that are most in need of intervention: Austin, West Garfield Park, Englewood and Little Village (South Lawndale). These block groups were selected through a rigorous assessment of qualitative and quantitative data in a process designed to prioritize areas with the greatest need and potential for impact, while also ensuring that the selected block groups had the necessary community partnerships and infrastructure in place to support successful implementation. Some of the key criteria used to guide prioritization include:

RECENT AND LONG-STANDING TRENDS OF VIOLENCE

Recent and historical rates of fatal and non-fatal shootings, homicides, and other violent crimes both in total and per capita were a key consideration in the selection process. Block groups with the highest levels of violence were prioritized as having the greatest need for immediate intervention and support. However, the selection process also recognizes that violence is a symptom of deeper structural issues, and that there are factors beyond violence that may contribute to a community's sense of safety.

HISTORICAL DISINVESTMENT METRICS

Metrics indicative of long-term disinvestment and disadvantage, including the percentage of residents without a high school diploma, unemployment rate, median household income, and prevalence of vacant lots and housing, were considered as a measure of the structural barriers and inequities that contribute to violence and hinder community well-being.

STRENGTH OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The presence of longstanding community-based organizations, block clubs, and other community-led groups was considered as an indicator of the strength of community partnerships, which will be needed to co-create solutions with residents. These local partners bring deep knowledge of community needs and assets, as well as the trust and legitimacy needed to effectively engage residents to drive change. Block groups with strong community partnerships were prioritized as having the necessary foundation for successful implementation.

EXISTING SAFETY INFRASTRUCTURE

The availability and strength of existing violence prevention and intervention programs, such as community violence intervention (CVI) initiatives and alternative response models like the Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) program were considered. The presence of these resources are seen as potentially indicating a baseline level of community readiness and capacity to support the plan's strategies.

In addition to these data-driven criteria, the selection process placed a strong emphasis on community engagement. Aldermen and community stakeholders were closely consulted to gather local perspectives on geographic areas. This collaborative approach helped to ensure that the selected block groups aligned with community priorities and had the necessary local ownership and leadership to drive change.

OVERVIEW OF PHASE ONE BLOCK GROUPS

Ultimately, the selection process identified 10 block groups across four communities - Austin, Englewood, West Garfield Park, and Little Village (South Lawndale) - as the focus for the first wave of the *People's Plan for Community Safety*.

Across all of these block groups, the *People's Plan for Community Safety* will work closely with local partners and residents to implement a range of place-based and people-based strategies tailored to the unique needs and strengths of each of these resilient communities. By focusing resources and support in these hyperlocal areas, the plan aims to create a model for community-driven violence prevention that can be scaled and replicated across the city.

AUSTIN



1. Madison to Adams by Laramie to Lavergne
2. W. End to Madison by Laramie to Lavergne

The two selected block groups in Austin have experienced a total of 35 shootings between 2020 - 2023, with rates as high as to 25 shootings per 1,000 residents in just one year. This is significantly higher than the city-wide community average of 7 shootings per 1,000 residents during the same period. Austin faces challenges related to unemployment, poverty, and life expectancy but also has a strong network of community-based organizations and local leaders committed to driving positive change.

ENGLEWOOD



- 1. Garfield Blvd. to 59th by Racine to Morgan
- 2. 59th to 63rd by Racine to Morgan



The two selected block groups in Englewood have seen a total of 71 shootings from 2020 - 2023, with rates as high as 29 shootings per 1,000 residents in 2023. Englewood has been deeply impacted by historical disinvestment and systemic inequities, with high rates of unemployment, poverty, and health disparities. However, the community also has a rich history of community activism and resilience, with many local organizations and leaders working to address the root causes of violence and promote community healing.

WEST GARFIELD PARK

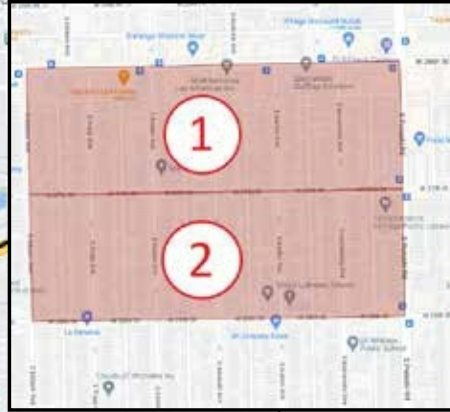
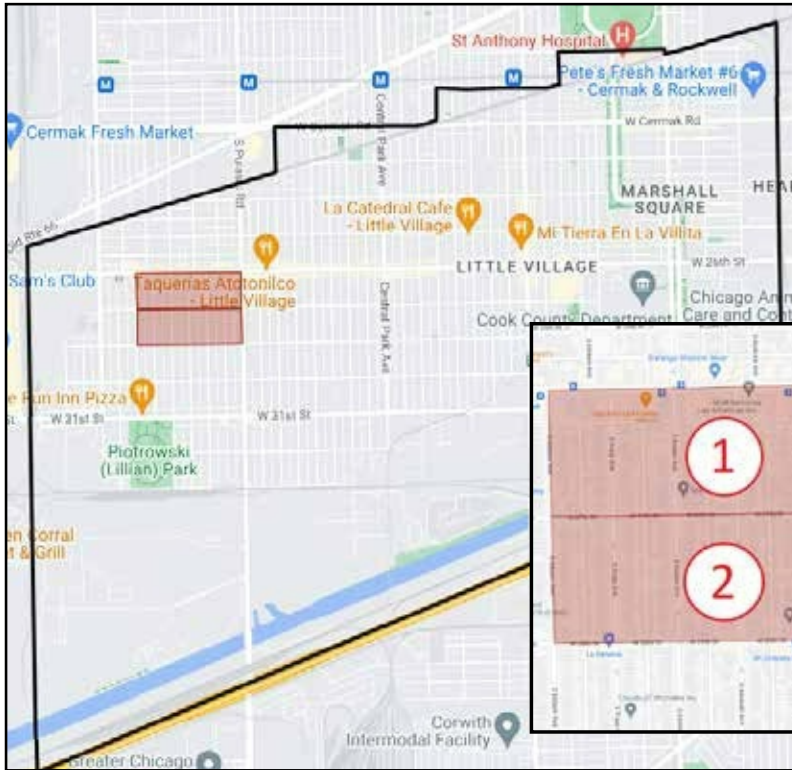


1. Madison to Lexington by Kenton / Kolmar to Kostner
2. Adams to Eisenhower by Kostner to Keeler
3. Adams to Eisenhower by Keeler to Pulaski
4. Jackson to Harrison by Pulaski to Hamlin

The four selected block groups in West Garfield Park have experienced a staggering 226 total shootings from 2020 - 2023, with 62 shootings per 1,000 residents in one year. The community faces significant challenges related to poverty, unemployment, and vacant properties. Still, it also has a strong network of community-based organizations and local leaders committed to violence prevention and community development.



LITTLE VILLAGE (SOUTH LAWDALE)



1. 26th to 27th by Kildare to Pulaski
2. 27th to 28th by Kildare to Pulaski

The two selected block groups in South Lawndale (Little Village) have seen a total of 16 shootings from 2020 - 2023, with rates as high as 12 shootings per 1,000 residents in one year. While these rates are lower than some of the other selected block groups, they still exceed the city-wide community average. South Lawndale faces challenges related to poverty, education, and health disparities, but remains known for its vibrant cultural heritage and strong community pride.

INITIATIVES

The *People’s Plan for Community Safety* adopts a comprehensive approach to address violence and its root causes in Chicago utilizing people-based and place-based strategies. Place-based initiatives aim to eradicate the root causes of harm by focusing on specific geographic areas most impacted by crime and disinvestment, considered the highest opportunity for impact. People-based initiatives look to interrupt and address violence by focusing on high-promise populations, individuals and groups most at risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence. Language is powerful; it shapes our perceptions, influences our behavior, and empowers – or marginalizes – individuals and communities. Therefore, we are taking an asset-based approach, focusing on the strengths of our people and the potential we know can be achieved when we reverse the tide of historic and purposeful disinvestment.

To implement the *People’s Plan for Community Safety*, the Mayor’s Office of Community Safety has launched nearly 20 cross-functional initiative teams, one for each priority initiative. Each team is co-led by a representative from the Mayor’s Office and representative(s) from City departments and agencies with the expertise necessary to guide implementation. Teams are composed of representatives from various government agencies and departments, as well as other stakeholders, ensuring a collaborative and multi-faceted approach to violence prevention and reduction.

The following sections take a closer look at each of these pillars and the specific initiatives MOCS currently has in the works.



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT



Objective: Drive sustained community engagement by investing in improvements to build and activate safe spaces.

Partners: Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), Department of Planning and Development (DPD), Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), Department of Housing (DOH), Department of Streets & Sanitation (DSS), Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Library (CPL), Department of Buildings (DOB), Chicago Police Department (CPD), Department of Law (DOL), Fleet & Facilities Management (2FM), Chicago Public Schools (CPS)

Initiative: Permanently activate vacant lots & buildings to increase number of publicly accessible spaces.

Background and objectives: There is significant data to suggest that activating vacant lots - which includes cleaning, greening (planting grass, trees, and other landscaping), and development for housing, businesses, or community use - helps to decrease crime rates. Studies have also shown that visual evidence of vacancy and community disinvestment such as trash, dumping, and overgrown weeds, harms the mental health of neighbors and puts them at greater risk of depression, stress, and elevated rates of intentional injury, as well as social fragmentation. This initiative aims to improve the efficiency of cleaning and maintenance of vacant lots and help advance pathways for permanent activation via leasing or ownership.

Achievements to-date: 250 vacant lots were identified across the ten focus block groups, with 35.6% located on the West Side (West Garfield Park, Austin, Little Village) and 64.4% located on the South Side (Englewood). In partnership with the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS), 100% of the vacant lots in the initial wave of block groups have been cleaned and a monthly maintenance schedule has been established. Roughly 10% of vacant lots in these block groups have been identified as high-potential candidates for turnover to the community for activations and conversations are underway regarding the legal process to do so.

Initiative: Expand safe space access, use and consistent programming.

Background and objectives: Prosocial engagements – community events, block parties, and enrichment programs – and safe physical spaces where residents can gather without fear of violence are key to creating a thriving community. This team aims to ensure there are positive and inclusive events and programming in focus block groups and accessible safe spaces, and consistent community engagement.

Achievements to-date: With a focus on the summer month, City departments and agencies including the Chicago Parks District, Chicago Public Libraries, Chicago Department of Public Health and Chicago Public Schools, worked with community-based organizations to host an additional 19 safe space activations in the focus block groups and surrounding area. Campaigns such as Cyclebreakers and My CHI. My Future. are helping to raise awareness of events and activities in or near these communities.



In addition, MOCS launched the “Take Back the Block” initiative in 2024 to bring the full force of government out to communities impacted by summer violence. Six “Take Back the Block” activations were held across the city on Fridays over the summer to energize and inspire residents, create prosocial opportunities, connect communities with local government and provide infrastructure improvements. For each community activation: infrastructure departments mobilized to complete outstanding maintenance requests and to “clean and green” the area; local aldermen, CPD, community and faith leaders joined Mayor Johnson for a rally to lift-up community needs and resources; and City departments and agencies partnered with community-based organizations to share resources and host a safe space event. In all, hundreds of Chicago residents attended and over two dozen City departments and agencies participated in some capacity along with dozens of community-based organizations and community violence intervention organizations. In the ensuing weeks, MOCS and the Community Safety Coordination Center (CSCC) hosted follow-up meetings in each community to discuss opportunities for ongoing collaboration and resource sharing.

Initiative: Improve the 3-1-1 infrastructure to increase the number of effective repairs.



Background and objectives: Timely response to infrastructure needs (e.g. streetlight outing, graffiti, street sign removal) can be instrumental in preventing violence, while also contributing to the overall sense of community maintenance and wellbeing. Chicago’s departments and agencies responsible for filling infrastructure requests largely rely on tickets submitted via 3-1-1 to track and response to needs. This initiative looks to ensure that all residents – particularly those in the focus block groups – understand how to utilize 3-1-1 to submit requests, and that infrastructure departments are held accountable for timely and effective repairs in chronically undermaintained neighborhoods.

Achievements to-date: Implemented a system “tag” within the 3-1-1 software for 3-1-1 requests in the *People’s Plan for Community Safety* focus block groups and formed a working group to promote accountability and support problem-solving. This effort contributed to the timely completion of 5,108 requests in target block groups. In order to increase community awareness and comfort when submitting 3-1-1 requests, Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) and the CSCC developed community ambassador training. The first cohort received training in 2024 and consisted of four community leaders from each community identified for the first wave of the plan, with additional sessions planned for early 2025.

EDUCATION



Objective: Increase sustained engagement or reengagement with the education system or career pathways.

Partners in this work: Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Department of Family & Support Services (DFSS), Illinois Department of Human Services Office of Firearm Violence Prevention

Initiative: Increase reengagement in the education system and expand wraparound supports to enable engagement / reengagement in education systems or career pathways

Background and objectives: The connection between disengagement from school and gun violence is clear; recent studies show that more than 90% of school-aged victims of gun violence were inactive at the time of their victimization. Existing violence prevention programs for youth often focus on those who still have some connection to school. Consequently, young people disconnected from school have historically been out of reach of crucial services and support. This initiative looks to develop a program capable to successfully re-engaging students in school or, if appropriate, connecting them with alternative pathways for success such as jobs or career training.

Achievements to-date: Internal and external research teams conducted an analysis that included interviews with youth and service providers to gather information on similar programs in Chicago and nationwide. This analysis, along with learnings from previous student re-engagement programming at CPS, was then utilized to design an expansive re-engagement program that will leverage a community-based organization as an “anchor” to oversee and support the organizations that are directly serving disconnected youth. The Illinois Department of Human Services Office of Violence Prevention and the City of Chicago jointly agreed to fund this program, and CPS released a request for proposal for the anchor organization in late 2024. The program is anticipated in start serving youth in 2025.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND UPWARD MOBILITY

Objective: Increase sustainable employment opportunities to enable long-term upward mobility.

Partners in this work: City Colleges of Chicago, Department of Family & Support Services (DFSS), Cook County Workforce Partnership, Black Roots Alliance, Chicago Community Trust, Chicago Jobs Council, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, Circle of Service, Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, Illinois Coalition to End Permanent Punishment, Illinois Justice Project, Equity and Transformation, Joyce Foundation, JPMorgan Chase, Northwestern University, Polk Brothers Foundation, Worker Center for Racial Justice

Initiative: Raise usage of job training programs connected to jobs upon completion.

Background and objectives: Research has established that an increase in employment rate is correlated with a decline in crime rates, particularly firearm violence and homicide. In addition, individuals who receive a living wage (defined as employment that enables individuals to meet their families' financial needs, supporting economic success and feelings of dignity and belonging) are more likely to have stable employment and improved mental and behavioral health outcomes for themselves and their children. Unfortunately, individuals living in the MOCS focus communities may experience significant barriers in accessing employment that pays a wage that is sufficient to support their families. This initiative will work to ensure that residents are not only connected to job training programs, but through job training programs get access to jobs that will put them on a path to upward mobility.

Achievements to-date: Cross-sector initiative team conducted research to identify the industries that are currently hiring into sustainable jobs and has begun establishing partnership with business orga-





nizations and organizations offering job seeker assistance. Together with City Colleges of Chicago and the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, in late 2024, MOCS planned and facilitated a comprehensive hiring event in Englewood. Approximately 2,000 residents registered and over 800 attended the one-day event where they had the opportunity to meet directly with employers and get information on resources available to job seekers through the City, County, and local community-based organizations. Over 140 job seekers received on-the-spot offers of employment. The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership has committed to partnering to host an additional 5 hiring events in 2025, with the goal of connecting hundreds of Chicago residents to sustainable career pathways.

Initiative: Expanding guaranteed income and wraparound supports.

Background and objectives: Evidence shows that cash transfer programs and robust welfare systems are effective policies for reducing homicide, assault, property crime, overdose deaths, and intimate partner violence. The relationship between inequality and violence is well-established, and cash transfer programs, such as guaranteed income, reduce poverty, financial need, and inequality. This initiative was established to continue the guaranteed income pilot, formerly known as Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot, with a focus on supporting those communities and people most impacted by violence.

Achievements to-date: The initiative team worked hard throughout 2024 to design a second round of the City’s guaranteed income program, including defining the population for targeted outreach, research objectives, and identifying documentation options to lower the barriers for applicants while effectively verifying eligibility. Ultimately, no funding was available to implement a guaranteed income program in 2025. Plans for the program will be codified in order to preserve them for a future date when funding may be available, and the City is working to share information with the County government – and others – who may be positioned to support a guaranteed income program in Chicago in the coming years. In 2025, MOCS will seek to identify new initiatives to advance economic opportunities and to address financial needs as part of the *People’s Plan for Community Safety*.

HEALTH

Objective: Address and prevent harm by expanding access to health services.

Partners in this work: Chicago Department of Public Health, City Colleges of Chicago, Department of Family and Social Services, Westside United, Bright Star Community Church, Michael Reese Hospital, Rush Hospital, University of Chicago Hospital, SEIU Healthcare

Initiative: Build and empower a community health worker workforce to address the health needs of community members where they are.

Background and objectives: Communities on the South and West side have been historically underserved in the broader approach to health – physical health, mental health, behavioral health, and emotional health. Community health workers (CHWs) share life experience with the people they serve and have firsthand knowledge of the causes and impacts of health inequity. They provide a critical link between marginalized communities and health care services. Several studies have demonstrated that CHWs can improve the management of chronic conditions, increase access to preventive care, improve patients' experience of care, and reduce health care costs. CHWs also advance health equity by addressing social needs and advocating for systems and policy change. Studies again and again show that access to all forms of healthcare decreases the likelihood of violence and increases life expectancy.



Achievements to-date: The initiative team identified that the intersection between community health workers and community violence intervention (CVI) is integral in the continued growth and acceptance of healthcare in our communities. In 2024, the team conducted a survey of CHW employers to gather information on current trainings and needs and worked with the University of Chicago Crime Lab to analyze the responses. Survey results indicated a clear need to embed violence prevention and intervention training within existing CHW programs.

A curriculum that includes training for CHWs on violence prevention and intervention was developed, and plans are underway to integrate it into CDPH's 2025 training program that will be available citywide. The initiative aims to promote further integration and cross-collaborative training that will allow CVI practitioners and CHWs to continue upskilling to provide better service to community members.

Initiative: Through Mental Health System Expansion, formerly known as Treatment Not Trauma working groups, explore increasing access to and quality of behavioral health services, and expanding healthcare-centered alternative response and diversion programs.

Background and objectives: Data from the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) shows that over 65% of Black and Latine Chicagoans with serious psychological distress are not currently receiving any treatment; rates of mental health hospitalization have been declining since 2016 but are consistently highest among Black Chicagoans; further, rates of hospitalization for schizophrenia spectrum disorders are five times higher among Black Chicagoans than white or Latine Chicagoans. Lack of access to quality, low-barrier mental health services can lead to detrimental consequences to Chicagoans, their families, and entire communities. This initiative aims to build on and operationalize the recommendations from the Mental Health System Expansion (MHSE) Working Group report.



Achievements to-date: The Mental Health System Expansion (MHSE) Working Group developed a report - published in May 2024 - that proposes a framework and roadmap to expand behavioral and mental health clinical services, reimagine the citywide response to behavioral and mental health crises, and increase community awareness around available resources. In 2024, this work was advanced in the form of layering mental health services into an existing CDPH clinic in Pilsen, co-locating mental health services at a library in West Garfield Park, planning for an early 2025 re-opening a previously shuttered mental health clinic in Roseland, doubling the number of Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) alternate response teams, and implementing a health-driven (non-police) model of behavioral health crisis response. Funding was secured for FY2025 to enable OEMC to hire 14 new behavioral health telecommunicator positions in order to triage behavioral health calls. Furthermore, work is underway to expand the CARE Program into additional police districts and establish a citywide response team.

HOUSING

Objective: Increase access to safe and stable housing for people most burdened by violence.

Partners in this work: Chicago Department of Housing (DOH), Chicago Bar Foundation – Early Resolution Program, Law Center for Better Housing, Beyond Legal Aid, Illinois Justice Project, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Smart Policy Works, Cook County Justice Advisory Council (JAC), All Chicago

Initiative: Institute more immediacy, optionality, and flexibility into the housing process for those most burdened by violence.

Background and objectives: The process of finding or relocating to affordable housing is highly prohibitive (e.g., needless eligibility criteria and applications, limited and inequitable housing supply, prohibitive policies, landlord discrimination, etc.) which contributes to a lack of safe housing options, especially for victims and survivors of crime. This initiative looks to help unwind restrictive housing policies or pass policies built on equity and fairness, and advance programs and investments that enable those most burdened by violence to access safe housing. The immediate focus was on programs for victims and survivors of gender-based violence. Studies have shown that nearly 50% of homeless women reported that they had previously stayed in abusive relationships because they did not have other housing options. Survivors of gender-based violence often face additional barriers to finding safe housing including little or no access to money, social isolation, and “zero tolerance for crime” housing policies that penalize victims in addition to perpetrators.

Achievements to-date: The initiative team identified a promising pilot program that would support victims and survivors of gender-based violence with emergency relocation assistance crucial for their safety. The program looks to provide survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking in DOH-funded rental housing units with emergency transfer support after incidences of violence, utilizing a “whole person” approach to provide resources that fill gaps in service and to leverage recent legislation to improve developer compliance with emergency transfer best practices. Program administrators have been identified to lead in program implementation and case management, and philanthropic funding secured to launch a two-year pilot starting in 2025.

Initiative: Scale the City’s Right to Counsel Pilot for eviction support services.

Background and objectives: The housing crisis in Chicago stems from an inequitable housing supply in target neighborhoods. A Department of Housing Inclusionary Housing Task Force reported a citywide shortage of nearly 120,000 affordable homes. As housing prices grow faster than wages, large swaths of Chicago are out of reach for low-income and working-class Chicagoans, resulting in a rise in unsheltered/homeless populations. Those who are unable to keep up with rent or mortgage payments are often quickly evicted from their homes with complex and costly legal proceedings as the only potential remedy. According to the Law Center for Better Housing, without an attorney, the likelihood that an eviction order will be entered against a tenant is ~62%; having an attorney decreases the odds of a tenant getting an eviction order by ~25%. This initiative works to ensure that City’s existing program to ensure that tenants have access to these critical legal resources, Right to Counsel, reaches and saturates the four communities of focus for the *People’s Plan for Community Safety*.

Achievements to-date: A robust outreach strategy was developed to expand Right to Counsel services to additional communities – including all four focus communities – in 2024. An independent evaluation of the pilot found that more than 70% of tenants said they were confident that they would be able to or were able to achieve their housing goals with the help of Right to Counsel and the Cook County Early Resolution Program. For Right to Counsel clients with a goal of avoiding eviction, more than 92% of those tenants were able to achieve this goal. The combined Right to Counsel and Early Resolution Program model is unique nationally in its level of customization for each client’s needs and with sufficient funding, could be a cost-effective approach to promoting housing stability .

POLICING

Objective: Build trust between community, law enforcement, and other response groups while prioritizing reform, accountability & transparency.

Partners in this work: Chicago Police Department, Department of Family & Support Services (DFSS), Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC), CRED, Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, Civic Consulting Alliance, Joyce Foundation, Pritzker Pucker, Policing Project



Initiative: Foster oversight and accountability in CPD's workforce allocation process.

Background and objectives: The allocation of police department resources in many cities is based on the desires and intuition of key decision-makers, which can lead to resourcing decisions that are political and unequal. The consequences of this inequitable distribution can be seen in the disparate response times in communities within Chicago; in some areas, residents receive a rapid response, whereas in others, no officers may be available to respond for hours. To ensure resourcing decisions are made in a way that is equitable, transparent, efficient, and data-drive, the City of Chicago is conducting a workforce allocation study, as mandated by City Council in February 2024. This initiative team aims to support CPD is conducting this analysis in order to ensure that the process is timely and equitable.

Achievements to-date: In 2024, a scope of work was finalized and an independent vendor identified to conduct the analysis. The study commenced this year, with regular public updates planned as the work is underway.

Initiative: Develop holistic youth deflection and diversion strategies and set youth up for long-term success.

Background and objectives: Diversion – a process or program through which youth who commit certain offenses are held accountable for their behavior without resorting to legal sanctions, court oversight, or threat of confinement – has been proven to not only help mitigate the negative impact on a young person's future of criminal legal system involvement, but also to reduce recidivism. Through diversion, youth are connected to community-based services, offering a path to treatment and healing that helps to keep them from entering the juvenile justice system. Chicago has utilized various models of youth diversion in the past decade, including the Juvenile Intervention and Support Center (JISC) and the current Youth Intervention Pathways (YIP). This initiative looks to further youth diversion in Chicago by understanding the current state, exploring opportunities, and utilizing best practices to promote restorative and youth-centered diversion and deflection strategies.

Achievements to-date: In 2024, DFSS and CPD increased the number of youth detectives trained on the Youth Intervention Pathways (YIP) program to ensure that those CPD officers who interact most with youth have all available training and tools on diversion. In addition, work began to develop a deflection policy to decrease the number of youth who enter the criminal legal system and subsequently obtain criminal records. Youth spaces – designed by youth – are currently being established at select

police districts to serve as separate, safe, age-appropriate rooms for young people who come into contact with the police.

Initiative: Conduct 9-1-1 call analysis and review options for additional alternate response.

Background and objectives: According to the Vera Institute, each year, people across the country make approximately 240 million calls to 9-1-1. However, only ~1% of 9-1-1 calls in major cities are to report violent crimes in progress. Instead, 911 has become the default option for many people seeking support for a broad array of problems— including disruptive neighbors, loose animals, or people engaged in “suspicious” activity. When law enforcement officers are dispatched in response to many different call types, neighborhoods—especially in communities of color—can quickly become overpoliced. Furthermore, police resources may be utilized ineffectively, contributing to delays in police response to incidents of violent crime. This initiative seeks to conduct an analysis of 9-1-1 calls for service to determine the reasons for which people call 9-1-1 in Chicago and identify potential opportunities for alternative (non-police) response that would supplement existing alternate response programs such as CARE.

Achievements to-date: The University of Chicago Health Lab was engaged to conduct an analysis using publicly available 9-1-1 call data. Internal and external experts are then engaged to review the analysis and make recommendations regarding options for alternate response given best practices. In late fall 2024, in collaboration with CPD, a robust community engagement process began to gather community input on policing efforts, as well as the expansion of alternate response models that are aimed at strengthening safety citywide and ensuring Chicagoans in need of assistance are always met with the most appropriate resources. Led by community-based organizations, sessions will continue into early 2025 across the city.

Initiative: Reshape community policing alongside community members and oversight organizations.

Background and objectives: Strong relationships of mutual trust between police and the communities they serve are critical to maintaining public safety and effective policing. Police officials rely on the cooperation of community members to provide information about crime in their neighborhoods, and to work with the police to devise solutions to crime and disorder problems. Similarly, community members’ willingness to trust the police depends on whether they believe that police actions reflect community values and follow the principles of procedural justice.



Achievements to-date: The Chicago Police Department is currently engaged in process, with input from the Mayor’s Office, to operationalize Superintendent Snelling’s vision for community policing that “every officer is a community policing officer.” This entails deep engagement with officers and CPD leadership, as well as other stakeholders, to articulate a comprehensive department-wide approach. The community engagement project – see 9-1-1 call analysis initiative above for more information - will gather crucial input from residents into how the Chicago Police Department can broaden communication and collaborative problem-solving between CPD and the communities it serves.

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS



Objective: Help address the intersectional layers of trauma impacting people who have been harmed and who have caused harm, by offering high-quality and immediate support.

Partners in this work: City Colleges of Chicago, Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), Chicago Survivors, Darren B. Easterling Center for Restorative Practices, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, William Everett, Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Mothers on a Mission, Solutions and Resources, Chicago Police Department (CPD)

Initiative: Build capacity of quality, trained victim advocates and create centralized support structures

Background and objectives: Victims and survivors of violence often experience multiple long-term behavioral and physical health challenges, ranging from post-traumatic stress to substance use to revictimization. By investing in the training and capacity-building of victim advocates who provide critical support to victims in the hours and days following an incident, the Mayor’s Office of Community Safety aims to ensure that every survivor has access to the compassionate, trauma-informed care they need to heal and rebuild their lives. This initiative aims to build a pipeline of victim advocates by improving awareness of and access to training and building a comprehensive training curricula grounded in trauma-informed best practices. Through training, this initiative seeks to professionalize this career and create career pathways for victim advocates across the city.

Achievements to-date: The initiative team developed a trauma-informed curricula for victim advocates that includes best practices for operating at the scene as well as guidelines for administering support to victims and survivors. This curriculum was developed in partnership with individuals with lived experience as well as researchers and practitioners. This program marks the City of Chicago’s first-ever training for victim advocates. The first cohort of advocates completed the program in December at Malcom X College. Ultimately, the goal is to open this course to victim advocates or prospective victim advocates across the city and to establish it as a certificate program.

Initiative: Define roles for victim service personnel in immediate response and develop systems of coordination

Background and objectives: Currently, coordination between and across victim service organizations in Chicago largely depends on individual relationships and varies greatly by community area and organization. However, coordination amongst organizations is crucial in ensuring that stakeholders responding to the scene do so in a trauma-informed way that provides comprehensive support for victims and survivors in their time of need. The initiative aims to increase coordination among service providers and define stakeholders’ roles in responding to the scene of an incident (e.g., first responders, VAs/providers,





city employees, etc.) and in the hours after. This will help ensure alignment about roles across organizations and responders, streamline the victimization notification, and sequence support at the crime scene to provide holistic support centering on the needs of the victim.

Achievements to-date: An evaluation of the current on-scene response process was utilized to develop a Victim Services Coordination Guide. This guide is intended to serve as a tool for advocates that outlines the rules of engagement for how advocates and services providers should work alongside each other and first responders to support survivors. Additionally, a Victim Services Coordination Pilot was launched in Little Village to bring together victim service providers in the community to build and strengthen relationships. This pilot – which will be expanded in 2025 into additional focus community areas – strives to increase survivor access to and utilization of services along their healing journey while promoting information sharing and capacity building.



ADULTS OF HIGHEST PROMISE (COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION)

Objective: Reach and support adults of highest promise by strengthening the presence, quality & coordination of community violence intervention

Partners in this work: Chicago Police Department (CPD), Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), CRED, Metropolitan Peace Academy, Institute for Nonviolence Chicago, Claretian, Project H.O.O.D

Initiative: Expand and scale the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and CVI professional understanding initiative



Background and objectives: Numerous studies have demonstrated the incredible impact of community violence intervention (CVI) programs on gun violence, including a recent study by Northwestern University that found that those who completed the full program were 73% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime in two years following enrollment compared to individuals who did not participate. CPD and CVI leaders, in collaboration with the Community Safety Coordination Center, have spent the past two years developing a professional understanding that outlines their complementary, but independent roles in increasing safety and reducing violence. The goals of this initiative are to ensure that CPD and CVI understand, appreciate, and respect one another's professional roles and boundaries and to expedite shooting notifications from CPD to CVI partners so that all can work quickly to prevent the next act of violence.

Achievements to-date: In 2024, this program was expanded to an additional 12 police districts and corresponding CVI organizations. Implementation thus far has been very successful in outlining clear roles, responsibilities, and boundaries and expediting notifications. Early data shows a decrease of 25% in response times by CVI organizations following an incident, a result of the expanded notification protocol. This is crucial as it allows victims to be more quickly connected to resources and all partners, CPD and CVI, to be more effective at preventing potential future violence in the form of retaliation. Expansion will continue in 2025 until all police districts in Chicago that have a CVI presence are included.

Initiative: Facilitate government agency CVI training and accountability, to ensure common understanding and dissemination of best practices.

Background and objectives: As part of the City of Chicago’s continued commitment to scaling community violence intervention, the Mayor’s Office of Community Safety and the Community Safety Coordination Center have developed and delivered trainings to educate government partners on CVI’s unique role in reducing violence.

Achievements to-date: To date, CPD members from various police districts, as well as staff from several CVI organizations, have participated in joint training on the complementary but independent roles that CPD and CVI play in reducing violence. The training, developed and delivered through a joint effort between Metropolitan Peace Academy and CPD, focuses on respecting the distinct roles and rules of engagement between CPD and CVI, which aligns with the CPD-CVI Professional Understanding. The training will continue to be offered as more police districts and CVI organizations adopt the Professional Understanding. This training is also being offered to City departments and agency leadership, and the initiative team is exploring opportunities to expand to other government leaders and stakeholders.



YOUTH OF HIGHEST PROMISE



Objective: Reduce the involvement of youth in violence by improving our ability to reach and support youth of highest promise

Partners in this work: Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), City Colleges of Chicago, Chicago Public Libraries, Cook County Justice Advisory Council (JAC), Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS)

Initiative: Build a service model capable of reaching and supporting youth of highest promise by finding and engaging Youth of Highest Promise

Background and objectives: While the number of young homicide victims in Chicago has been generally decreasing since the 1990s, research by Northwestern showed that those aged 18 – 24 remain at the highest risk of homicide victimizations. In 2019, Black Chicagoans between 18 – 19 faced a homicide rate more than 10 times the city average, while Latine youth in the same age range faced a homicide rate nearly 2 times the city average. Therefore, it is critically important that we reach, engage, and support these youth. “Youth of highest promise” are young people ages 10 – 24 who are most at risk of being victims or perpetrators of violence. They likely experience some combination of risk factors, including a history of involvement with the criminal legal system, being disconnected from school or work, experience with the criminal legal system, and exposure to community violence. Chicago has numerous departments and agencies that offer services and programming, many with long-standing and existing relationships with community-based organizations directly serving this population. Therefore, this initiative seeks to combine those



services through a centralized model that better coordinates service delivery and enables transparent assessment and evolution.

Achievements to-date: In 2024, the Mayor’s Office of Community Safety met with over 100 youth and youth-serving community-based organizations to discuss what young people need the most and how the City can provide support. The initiative team is working to build on those learnings and an understanding of existing youth programs (e.g. SCaN, Choose to Change, etc.) to develop an outreach strategy to find and connect with the young people who need support most.

Initiative: Build a service model capable of reaching and supporting youth of highest promise by offering enrichment opportunities

Background and objectives: While everyone needs their basic needs met, all youth and their families may not travel the same pathways to get there. This initiative seeks to build a youth referral process to take a direct approach to helping young people get exactly what they need – whether it be support for employment, adult education, safe spaces, or a myriad of other things.

Achievements to-date: After bringing together representatives from City departments and agencies to understand their offerings for this population and discuss how youth navigate those programs and resources, the initiative team is working to lay the foundation for better coordination of services across all City departments and agencies, including building out the variety of services and resources available and building relationships with community-based organizations and others serving youth in their communities.



NEXT STEPS

With the selection of the 10 focus block groups for phase one, place-based investments, and the launch of almost twenty initiative teams, the *People's Plan for Community Safety* advances further into implementation. Led by the Mayor's Office of Community Safety, cross-sector initiative teams will work to further develop strategies and implementation plans for specific objectives. These teams are instrumental in shaping the approach across the block groups in all four initial communities – and, eventually, the city.



Effectively implementing these strategies will require them to fit the distinct circumstances of each community, and the most beneficial knowledge and experience about the needs of each community resides in those most impacted. Therefore, the City looks to community-based organizations, residents, and community leaders to help tailor the strategies and approaches to hyperlocal needs and assets.

Holistic Investments in Community Safety

The *People's Plan for Community Safety* recognizes that safety is more than a reduction in violent crime. Safety is access to education and jobs that pay a family-sustaining wage. It's an accessible place for people to gather and has a well-maintained infrastructure. Safety is trauma-informed support for individuals in crises that helps break the cycles of harm. Therefore, when looking to invest in safety, it's critical to look at more than just investments in policing. To purposefully re-direct investments into the communities most impacted by harm and decades of disinvestment in order to build safety, we must understand not just what programs we are investing in but where those investments are flowing in the City.

With this in mind, the Mayor's Office of Community Safety, with pro bono consulting support from Civic Consulting Alliance and Kearney, conducted a community-level investment analysis to examine where resources – in line with the holistic approach of the *People's Plan for Community Safety* – have been previously invested by the City to help build safer communities. The results showed that in some communities, investments in safety were matched to need (i.e. these communities with higher rates of violence received more safety resources, presumably in order to bring down that violence). On the other hand, there were numerous communities on the South and West Sides that experienced higher than rates of violence than the city average but did not receive corresponding higher than average resources for safety.



As we advance, MOCS is committed to keeping this conversation going, ensuring investment strategies use a comprehensive approach to safety, advocating for more equitable and data-drive investments in 2025 and beyond, and championing place-based budgeting and reporting across City departments and agencies.

Community Conveners

A core tenet of the Mayor's *People's Plan for Community Safety* is collaboration - the City alone cannot create safe and thriving communities. It will take all of us: government, philanthropy and



business, advocates, labor, and community-based organizations. In 2024, the City released a \$1M request for proposal to partner with a total of four qualified community-based organizations, one qualified community-based organization in each of the initial priority community areas of Austin, Englewood, South Lawndale/Little Village, and West Garfield Park, to advance work and provide services in their communities that align with the priorities of the *People's Plan for Community Safety*. After a thorough review process, we have selected organizations and collaborative work will begin in earnest in 2025.

Community conveners will work with other community-based organizations, local faith and business leaders, and residents to provide services and programming in line with PPCS priorities and existing/new quality-of-life plans, such as workforce development efforts to create alternative economic opportunities to limit participation in the illegal cannabis market and support youth and adults of highest promise (including returning residents). They will also coordinate and facilitate regular meetings between community leaders and the City, collecting community concerns and feedback related to community safety and crime to provide to the appropriate City staff/dept/agency. Their work includes compiling information on community assets and needs to serve as a liaison between community members and the City.

By empowering local leaders to drive the violence prevention process, MOCS seeks to build community ownership and sustainability for the long term.

Evaluation and Scaling

Following the implementation of these strategies will be an evaluation process to measure their impact and identify best practices. This evaluation is anticipated to include both quantitative metrics, such as reductions in violence and improvements in community well-being indicators, as well as qualitative feedback from residents and stakeholders.

The lessons learned from the first wave of implementation will be used to refine and scale the *People's Plan for Community Safety* to other block groups and communities across the city. By demonstrating the effectiveness of a hyperlocal, community-driven approach to violence prevention, the plan seeks to catalyze a broader shift in how the City addresses public safety and invests in its most vulnerable communities.

Collaborative Implementation

Implementing these strategies will involve close coordination between the community conveners, city agencies, service providers, and other key partners. The *People's Plan for Community Safety* will serve as the framework for this collaboration, effectively targeting resources to ensure all partners work towards a common vision of community safety and well-being.

There will be ongoing community engagement and dialogue throughout the implementation process to gather feedback, assess progress, and make necessary adjustments. This iterative approach will help ensure that the strategies remain responsive to each community's evolving needs and priorities.

Ultimately, the success of the *People's Plan for Community Safety* in these first 10 block groups will depend on the strength of the partnerships and the depth of the community engagement. By working collaboratively and empowering local communities to lead the way, the plan has the potential to create lasting, transformative change and build a safer, more just, and more resilient Chicago for all.

STRONGER TOGETHER: OUR PARTNERS

In addition to our partners from across City departments and agencies, MOCS is grateful to collaborate with individuals and organizations from across sectors and geographies in both designing and implementing the *People's Plan for Community Safety*. It's the people that make Chicago a place we are proud to call home, and it's the people of this city who will help us build a stronger, safer Chicago.

Acclivus	Chicago CRED
All Chicago	Chicago Jobs Council
ALSO	Chicago State University
Amazon	Chicago Survivors
Austin Coming Together	Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
Beyond Legal Aid	Circle of Service Foundation
Beyond the Ball	Circles and Ciphers
Black Men United	Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago
Black Roots Alliance	Civic Consulting Alliance
Breakthrough	Compago Group
Bright Star Church Chicago	Cook County Office of the President
BUILD	Cook County Public Defender's Office
CARPLS	Cook County State's Attorney's Office
Centro Sanar	Crown Family Philanthropies
Chapin Hall	Darren B. Easterling Center for Restorative Practices
Chase Bank	DePaul University
Chicago Bar Foundation	Enlace Chicago
Chicago Beyond	Equity and Transformation
Chicago Coalition to End Homeless	Garfield Park Community Council
Chicago Community Trust	Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative
Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership	

Grow Greater Englewood	NAACP West Side Branch
Hire360	Northwestern Medicine
Illinois AmeriCorps	Northwestern University
Illinois Answers Project	The Obama Foundation
Illinois Coalition to End Permanent Punishments	Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities
Illinois Collaboration on Youth	Policing Project
Illinois Commerce Commission	Polk Bros Foundation
Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services	Pritzker Foundation
Illinois Department of Human Services	Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation
Illinois Justice Project	Real Freedom
Illinois Lieutenant Governor's Office	Rush Medical Center
Illinois Prison Project	SEIU Healthcare
Impact for Equity	Smart Policy Works LLC
Institute for Non-Violence Chicago	Solutions and Resources
Joyce Foundation	Steans Family Foundation
Kadens Family Foundation	Teamwork Englewood
Lawndale Christian Legal Center	UCAN
Legal Aid Chicago	United Way Chicago
Loyola University Chicago	University of Chicago
MAAFA Project	University of Illinois Chicago
MacArthur Foundation	West Side United
McCormick Foundation	Workers Center for Racial Justice
Metropolitan Family Services	World Business Chicago
Michael Reese Foundation	Youth Guidance
Mothers on a Mission	...and countless others – thank you!



 **CHICAGO**
MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON

