

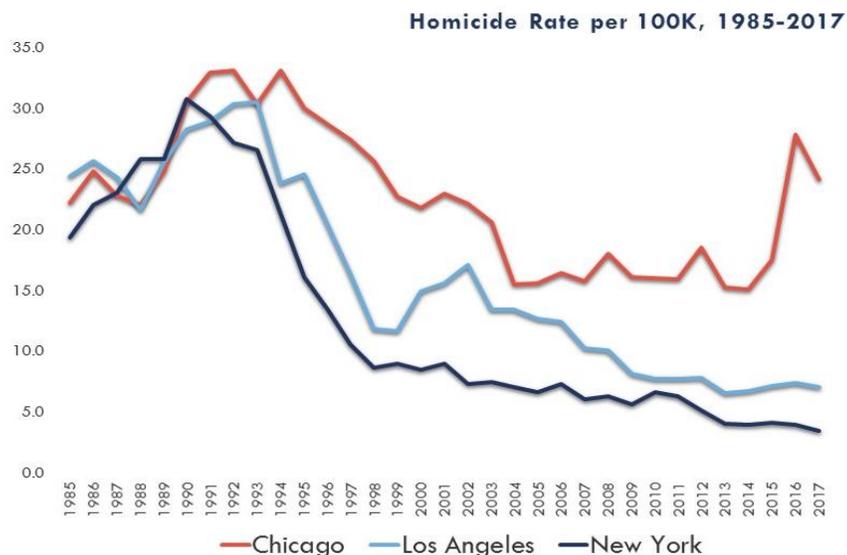
A CRITICAL OPPORTUNITY AND PROMISING SOLUTIONS TO CHICAGO'S GUN VIOLENCE

A Message to Chicago's Next Mayor

Chicago is facing dual, mutually-reinforcing crises of debilitating gun violence and eroding police legitimacy. In 2016, Chicago experienced a dramatic rise in gun violence, representing [nearly half of the nation's total increase in urban murders](#). That year, fueled in part by a lack of trust between the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and communities, CPD [solved fewer than 1 in 5 murders](#)—a distinction that made Chicago the city with the worst homicide clearance rate in the country.

After years of steady decline, the homicide rate in Chicago had plateaued and then saw a dramatic spike in 2016. Meanwhile homicide rates in New York and Los Angeles continued on a path of substantial drops dating back nearly three decades. Chicago experienced a slight reduction in shootings and homicides in 2017 and year-to-date in 2018, but the homicide rate remains tragically high and significantly higher than New York and Los Angeles.

CHICAGO'S HOMICIDE RATE REMAINS TRAGICALLY HIGH



Data Source: University of Chicago Crime Lab – data from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program

Gun violence is everyone's crisis. The root causes are interrelated and reflect the difficult history of our country. Major contributing factors include systemic racism, segregation, an often unfair and inhumane criminal justice system, the easy availability of guns, an education system with persistent racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps, and an economy that today provides fewer options for work as a path to self-sufficiency.

It is clear that a sustained reduction in gun violence will require long-term work across issues, neighborhoods and sectors. What can be done in the near term to meaningfully reduce gun violence in Chicago?

CHICAGO'S PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY IS ALIGNED AROUND FOUR PROMISING SOLUTIONS

Several Chicago foundations started addressing this question together in 2016. Informed by their long-standing work to address the root causes of gun violence, foundations supported the operations of the Police Accountability Task Force and made rapid-response grants to more than 70 neighborhood organizations in communities most affected by violence. As work began, this initial group of funders recognized the lack of a coordinated citywide plan to reduce gun violence and that, to solve the dual crises of gun violence and police legitimacy, Chicago required a more comprehensive and strategic approach.

From these beginnings, the [Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities \(PSPC\)](#) coalesced and committed to aligning its resources to support proven and promising approaches to reducing gun violence. Members of the Partnership conducted a gap analysis of their existing violence prevention and reduction funding, reviewed research about solutions, and visited other large cities to assess what worked and could be adapted in Chicago. Four broad, evidence-based strategies emerged. To date, members of the Partnership—which has grown to over 35 funders including corporations, foundations, individuals and families—have committed more than \$50 million to these strategies.

Members of the Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities are working together to coordinate their individual investments across these four promising, evidence-based strategies to reduce gun violence and increase police legitimacy in Chicago:

1. Street Outreach and Transitional Jobs

- *What it entails:* Intervening, with those most at risk of shooting or being shot, through street outreach, cognitive behavioral therapy and jobs. More than 80 percent of the Partnership's funding has been dedicated to this strategy.
- *Efforts supported to date include:*
 - READI Chicago (led by Heartland Alliance): Engages men who are most highly affected by gun violence and connects them to paid transitional jobs, cognitive behavioral therapy and support services. The program's effectiveness is being evaluated by a randomized control trial led by the University of Chicago Crime Lab. More details at: <https://www.heartlandalliance.org/readi/>.
 - Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P—led by Metropolitan Family Services): Scales violence interruption and outreach services by credible messengers to mediate and de-escalate conflicts; creates and reclaims safe community spaces through Light in the Night summer activities; and professionalizes street outreach through the Metropolitan Peace Academy, which promotes a shared understanding of roles of the outreach worker, police and other stakeholders in addressing and responding to violence. The program's effectiveness is being evaluated by a prominent researcher at Northwestern University. More details at: <https://www.metrofamily.org/cp4p/>.

2. Police Reform and Community Relations

- *What it entails:* Increasing legitimacy for and effectiveness of the Chicago Police Department by improving training and support; transforming police-community relations; ensuring greater community voice in the design and oversight of police accountability structures; and other related reforms
- *Efforts supported to date include:*
 - Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability (GAPA—led by United Congress for Community and Religious Organizations, UCCRO): Genuinely engages communities affected by violence

in the development of police-community oversight policies and structures. More details at: <http://chicagogapa.org/>.

- Support for the Illinois Attorney General's consent decree community engagement process
- Creation and implementation of an Officer Support System with the Chicago Police Department to identify officers in need of training or support, and provide them with appropriate services
- Improved management training for law enforcement leaders

3. Gun Policy Reform

- *What it entails:* Strengthening Illinois gun laws to reduce the flow of illegal guns into Chicago by addressing the sources of guns used in criminal activities
- *Efforts supported to date include grantee activities related to:*
 - Advocacy and outreach around licensing and certification for state gun dealers prohibiting the selling, leasing, or otherwise transferring firearms without a valid certificate and requiring training, security systems, and periodic inspection

4. Rapid-Response Fund for Community-Led Summer Activities

- *What it entails:* Supporting grassroots, community-based organizations for events and projects across Chicago community areas most affected by gun violence to foster stronger community bonds, crowd out violence, and promote constructive engagement with law enforcement.
- *Efforts supported to date include:*
 - Creation of the Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities, which awarded grants to community organizations across neighborhoods most affected by violence supporting activities that build social cohesion and promote peace: 132 community organizations in summer 2018; 120 community organizations in summer 2017; and more than 70 community organizations in summer 2016. More details at: <http://www.safeandpeaceful.org/blog>.
 - Increased capacity of community organizations to communicate effectively about their work and impact

No single approach or effort will solve Chicago's gun violence crisis. However, if combined with shorter-term efforts by others, including the City of Chicago and Chicago Police Department, and longer-term approaches to alleviating the root causes of gun violence, we believe these four strategies can make a significant contribution to a comprehensive plan for the city. Together, these strategies focus on Chicagoans at the highest risk for gun violence involvement. They draw from evidence-based approaches that have worked in other large cities. They are informed by research. And they include rigorous evaluation where possible to inform scalable, longer-term solutions.

Members of the Partnership hope that by coming together to support work across Chicago, especially in communities at greatest risk, we will help identify effective and scalable solutions, strengthen communities, and lay the foundation for a meaningful reduction in gun violence over the coming years.

POTENTIAL FOR CITYWIDE SET OF SOLUTIONS TO TAKE ROOT

Sustainable change of any kind requires meaningful, collaborative investments and partnerships between the public and private sectors. From the beginning, Partnership members have built in ways to assess the effectiveness of approaches. We are optimistic that the investments made over the last two years are beginning to show signs of helping to reduce gun violence and contributing to better relations between police and residents. But philanthropic investments cannot be sustained at this level over the long term. Our hope is that after this infusion of early stage private sector and foundation funding and testing, over time the most promising, evidence-based solutions to reducing violence and transforming police-

community relations could be replicated and expanded with sustained public funding. We see early stage funding as our contribution to a comprehensive, citywide violence reduction plan for Chicago.

In New York, Los Angeles, and other cities, prevention and intervention strategies like those we are supporting were key components of effective violence reduction and prevention plans. Specific organizational changes in city government agencies were critical as well. As part of their citywide violence reduction plans, New York and Los Angeles each created an empowered and centralized unit of city government, with dedicated resources and clearly defined authority, to coordinate the wide variety of violence prevention-related work and programs across agencies and neighborhoods and to enact reforms that address structural barriers to constructive change.

The creation of the Mayor's Office of Violence Prevention in the City of Chicago's 2019 budget is a significant first step to adopting this successful approach, but it is just the beginning. Many details about coordination and capacity building still need to be worked out and initial resources dedicated to the effort are insufficient.

Reducing violence in Chicago requires a mayor and other public sector leaders who will adopt a violence reduction plan that includes structures and funding to sustain proven approaches. The new Office of Violence Prevention, the prospect of a comprehensive citywide violence reduction plan, and the incorporation of promising, scalable interventions offer great potential for positive change to take root. The ideas and voices of those directly affected by violence and others who have a stake in long-term solutions—community members, police officers, faith leaders and Chicagoans everywhere—are also crucial to reversing the trends in violence. Robust engagement by and across city and state agencies, the Office of the Mayor, and others in government as well as partnerships with residents and communities, will be essential to solving the interrelated crises in Chicago.

As private and corporate funders, we are committed to continuing to support innovative approaches and promising ideas, collaborating with the public sector on planning and implementation, and filling gaps that are hard to fund to address the short- and long-term drivers of gun violence. But no group—communities, philanthropy or public agencies—can do this critical work alone or in isolation. Gun violence is everyone's problem and we all have a role to play.

Chicago's gun violence is unacceptable.

We can and must do better.

**LET'S ADDRESS THIS
CHALLENGE TOGETHER.**

About The Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities

The Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities is a coalition of more than 35 Chicago funders and foundations committed to aligning their funding to support proven and promising approaches to reducing violence.

hello@safeandpeaceful.org | <http://safeandpeaceful.org/>