



THE CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD POLICING INITIATIVE

RESEARCH & EVALUATION
REPORT: 2019-2022

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Dr. Chad Broughton

Karlia Brown

Yulan Guo

Fernanda Villela Oliveira

Soledad Adrianzén McGrath

Dr. Andrew V Papachristos

Katie Pelech

Milan Rivas

Wayne Rivera

Kris Rosentel

Michelle Shames

Akeem Shepherd

Lila Talbott Wells

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Executive Summary

In 2019, the Chicago Police Department (CPD or the department), in partnership with the [Policing Project](#) at New York University (NYU), implemented the Chicago Neighborhood Policing Initiative (CNPI). This initiative is composed of two interrelated goals:

Restructuring district-level police operations by establishing new standards of community policing (i.e., relationship building and proactive problem solving by officers), incorporating specialized officers' work into community policing, and developing new geographic boundaries within which these officers work.

Establishing trust and working relationships between officers and community members by centering the role of Community Ambassadors and other residents in CNPI activities and larger district wide public safety planning.

To achieve these goals, the initiative includes specialized community policing officers, called District Coordinating Officers (DCOs), and community volunteers, called Community Ambassadors, in CNPI districts. CNPI theory hopes to ensure that DCOs and Community Ambassadors work together to co-create public safety priorities and engage regularly as part of their respective roles.

The Center for Neighborhood Engaged Research & Science (CORNERS)¹ at Northwestern University is CNPI's research and evaluation partner, and this report builds on CORNERS' prior evaluation reporting, including the center's [interim report](#) published May 2021. Since first launching in District 25 on Chicago's Northwest Side, CNPI has expanded to nine additional Chicago Police Districts. This report includes data from Districts 25, 15, 10, and 4 (identified as "evaluation districts" throughout); the Policing Project and the Chicago Police Department (CPD) have identified a set of "gold standard" districts – Districts 25, 15, 10, and 7 – where additional efforts are being made to implement the CNPI model to fidelity.

Research activities in evaluation districts sought to answer the following questions related to CNPI's impact:

¹ CORNERS originated as the Northwestern Neighborhood & Network Initiative (N3), which was established in 2018 by Faculty Director Dr. Andrew Papachristos. The research center, while maintaining its core ethos and activities, rebranded in 2022 to reflect its distinctive "neighborhood science" approach.

1. Did CNPI establish the necessary infrastructure and relationships to build trust and co-produce public safety?
2. How do CPD officers perform and experience their roles as DCOs?
3. How do residents in CNPI areas experience the strategy?
4. Has CNPI influenced residents' trust in the police? If so, how?
5. Is CNPI associated with a change in residents' perceptions of public safety?
6. Does CNPI contribute to any observable reductions in crime?

To answer these questions, CORNERS built a multi-method research design capturing perspectives of residents and police in CNPI districts through in-depth interviews, systematic observations at police and community meetings and events, and analysis of key documents detailing CNPI activities. CORNERS also conducted quasi-experimental statistical analyses that tracked trends in five different metrics related to public safety, using a stepped wedge model, to estimate an average program effect across the 10 CNPI districts.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Notably, in the roughly four years since CNPI was first introduced in District 25, CPD has not yet implemented the initiative with complete fidelity to the program model, which has so far hindered progress on key metrics and has limited the overall impact of CNPI at both a district- and department-level. Despite the best efforts and intentions of individuals close to the project – within CPD, the Policing Project, CNPI communities, and the City of Chicago – the work of this relatively small group has understandably not overcome the barriers presented by a department that has struggled to commit to full implementation of CNPI as a department-wide community policing strategy. The findings below provide continued evidence of these challenges and contextualize these ongoing barriers to full implementation:

1. CNPI has not yet distinguished itself meaningfully from one of CPD's key community policing strategies, CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy), and this confusion has resulted in inconsistent implementation and demonstrably different models of CNPI in the districts where it has been implemented. Those closest to CNPI, namely DCOs and Community Ambassadors, can point to key differences between the strategies, but department and district leadership have yet to clearly and broadly communicate the ways in which CNPI departs from prior community policing strategies. This has created confusion among officers and district leaders and has limited the ability for CNPI to emerge as part of the department's "core philosophy."
2. Beat officers struggle to understand the role of DCOs in their districts and are generally disconnected from the work of CNPI. In trainings, beat officers have openly expressed their disdain for community policing work, and DCOs note that

beat officers conceive of the DCO role as being “soft policing” primarily intended to free up time for other officers to respond to calls. At most, beat officers provide referrals for problem-solving to DCOs, but very rarely are these officers involved in problem solving activities themselves.

3. **As CPD continues to experience staff shortages, DCOs are being pulled from their responsibilities to fill beat officer roles, even in “gold standard” districts.** Regular police functions often take priority over DCO responsibilities in many leading DCOs to be pulled from their problem-solving activities to fill beat cars in understaffed districts. In recent months, Commanders in CNPI districts have communicated an expectation that DCOs fill both roles at the same time, responding to problems and answering calls for service on days when they are reassigned to the watch, which DCOs note is challenging and sometimes impossible.
4. **Officer and Commander turnover continues to present a barrier to consistent CNPI implementation and relationship building.** Community members express their dissatisfaction with frequent personnel changes in the department, noting that staff turnover often means building relationships from the ground up every few years.
5. **Internally, the department has yet to establish and implement a clear plan for CNPI’s measurement and reporting.** DCOs and district leadership (including both DCO leadership and Commanders) expressed interest in exploring ways to measure and report their work, which they see as inherently qualitative and relational in nature. Meanwhile, the department has only recently developed plans for measuring DCO work – in a single district – and has not yet provided a clear plan for reporting DCO activities and impact to the department or the community. This often leaves officers feeling as though their work is not being adequately understood or recognized within CPD.
6. **DCOs do extensive community engagement work and respond to a variety of problems with non-enforcement solutions, which often includes working with a diverse group of community stakeholders.** Analysis of DCO activity logs and meeting notes from regular check-ins with officers suggests that much of the DCO role is, in fact, focused on community engagement and problem-solving, the two primary responsibilities of these specialized officers. DCOs received referrals for problem-solving from a variety of sources, both within and outside the department;

conducted extensive follow-up toward non-enforcement solutions; and reported high levels of engagement, particularly early in CNPI's implementation.

7. **Community engagement, while a critical component of CNPI, remains both a key success and a key challenge for the initiative.** Community residents stress the importance of community engagement in the DCO role but feel that officers are at times inconsistent in this work. Meanwhile, DCOs note some skepticism of the motivations residents express for engaging with officers and point to department constraints on their time as key barriers to effective engagement. Despite this, both parties are clear on the importance of meaningful community engagement in relationship-building.
8. **Analysis of measures related to violent crime, 911 calls for service, and arrests all provide no evidence of CNPI impact at a statistically significant level.** Meanwhile, analyses of sentiment metrics provide an inconclusive picture of CNPI, painting the program as having potentially weak but conflicting impacts on trust in police and perceptions of safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As CNPI enters its fourth year of pilot implementation, the City of Chicago has indicated an intent to expand CNPI to all 22 police districts by the end of 2023. As expansion plans develop, and with recognition of leadership transitions in both the Mayor's office and CPD, the findings above lend themselves to a series of recommendations:

1. **CPD should more clearly differentiate between CAPS and CNPI strategies and the roles of CAPS officers and DCOs.** Key differences between CAPS and CNPI should be officially codified and clearly, consistently communicated to all levels of CPD leadership within districts to facilitate effective and consistent implementation across all CNPI districts.
2. **The department should continue to clearly inform and educate beat officers and leadership about the DCO role and the role of the entire department in CNPI implementation.** This should include internal CPD trainings and communications that emphasize the broader goal of CNPI to co-create public safety with community, rather than simply manage the department's reputation or extract information, as many beat officers currently conceptualize the role of community policing.
3. **CPD should end – or at least minimize – the practice of deploying DCOs to beat officer duties and other non-DCO roles and make efforts to prioritize the work of**

DCOs in their communities. This includes formal commitments to keeping the work of these officers within their assigned responsibilities and districts, as well as clear expectation-setting with district Commanders and other department leaders who are often making the decision to reassign officers.

4. CPD should prioritize selecting DCOs who are more likely to stay in the position longer and should establish clear plans for officer and leadership transitions, with consideration for the impacts of officer turnover on relationships with community members. This includes developing procedures for “warm hand-offs” between officers who are exiting and those filling the role, to allow community members to meet new officers before transitions happen. When this is not possible, DCO partners should facilitate introductions to new team members to continue relationships with community stakeholders. Many of these same practices should apply to leadership as well, to ensure community relationships are appropriately prioritized when senior officer transitions happen.
5. Departmental tracking and measurement of DCO activities and impact should include qualitative data that capture DCOs’ intensive problem-solving work and should include community members in data reporting processes. By capturing the fullest possible picture of the work of these officers, the department will be better equipped to develop systems through which they can recognize and reward achievements in community policing.
6. CNPI stakeholders – including CPD leadership, DCOs, and Community Ambassadors – should establish clear norms and communicate expectations around community engagement. The department and Community Ambassadors should establish clear expectations about the role of DCOs at events, co-develop and clearly define roles and responsibilities for CNPI stakeholders, and pay careful attention to the geographic boundaries within which DCOs engage in relationship-building activities on a regular basis. These activities should be responsive to the needs and expectations of community members within their District Coordination Areas.

At the individual district level, DCOs and community stakeholders – including formal Community Ambassadors – remain invested in the interpersonal impacts of the initiative and continually stress the importance of relationship-building and problem-solving as key components of public safety strategies in their communities. However, departmental and institutional challenges continue to impede implementation of the model consistently throughout the evaluation districts and remain a barrier to effectively implementing CNPI as a citywide strategy.



Introduction

While discussions of community policing and resident trust in policing are not new, recent high-profile incidents of police violence – both within and outside of Chicago – have once again highlighted the need to redefine the role of police and policing in the United States. National public opinion research conducted in the year and a half following the murder of George Floyd suggests that the number of Americans reporting a great deal of confidence in police has decreased over time, dropping roughly six percentage points between November 2020 and December 2021. Community policing efforts seek to respond to these concerns by building trust and relationships between police and community members.

In Chicago, community policing has existed in some form since the early 1990s, with the creation of the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS).³ This strategy “created opportunities for police and residents to build positive relationships with one another,” while also engaging in key problem-solving activities through regular meetings between officers and residents. In its early years, the program was robust and well-liked by both residents and the department, but the recession of 2008, coupled with changes in CPD leadership and disinvestment in community policing, left CAPS “on life support.” While CAPS still draws a high level of name recognition across the city, the spirit if not the practice of community policing seemed to have dropped significantly in the list of department priorities.

In 2019, the Chicago Police Department (CPD or the department), in partnership with the Policing Project at New York University (NYU), implemented the Chicago Neighborhood Policing Initiative (CNPI). Through CNPI, the department attempted to establish a new

2 Kennedy, B., Tyson, A., & Funk, C. 2022. “Americans’ Trust in Scientists, Other Groups Declines.” Pew Research Center. [Available here.](#)

3 Skogan, Wesley G. 2022. “Prospects for Reform? The Collapse of Community Policing in Chicago.” *University of Chicago Law Review* 89(2):383.

4 Skogan, 2022:384

philosophy of community policing within CPD. The initiative was implemented in response to high levels of distrust in police following the death of Laquan McDonald and renewed national attention surrounding police violence and misconduct. Additionally, the current Consent Decree⁵ contains a section dedicated to community policing; many of its requirements closely align with CNPI's theory. CNPI was first implemented in an ethnically and racially diverse area on the Northwest Side of the city and subsequently expanded to an additional nine districts throughout Chicago; current departmental plans include implementation in all 22 Chicago Police Districts by the end of 2023. Throughout CNPI's implementation, CORNERS' evaluation has centered around the following research questions:

1. Did CNPI establish the necessary infrastructure and relationships to build trust and co-produce public safety?
2. How do CPD officers perform and experience their roles as DCOs?
3. How do residents in CNPI areas experience the strategy?
4. Has CNPI influenced residents' trust in the police? If so, how?
5. Is CNPI associated with a change in residents' perceptions of public safety?
6. Does CNPI contribute to any observable reductions in crime?

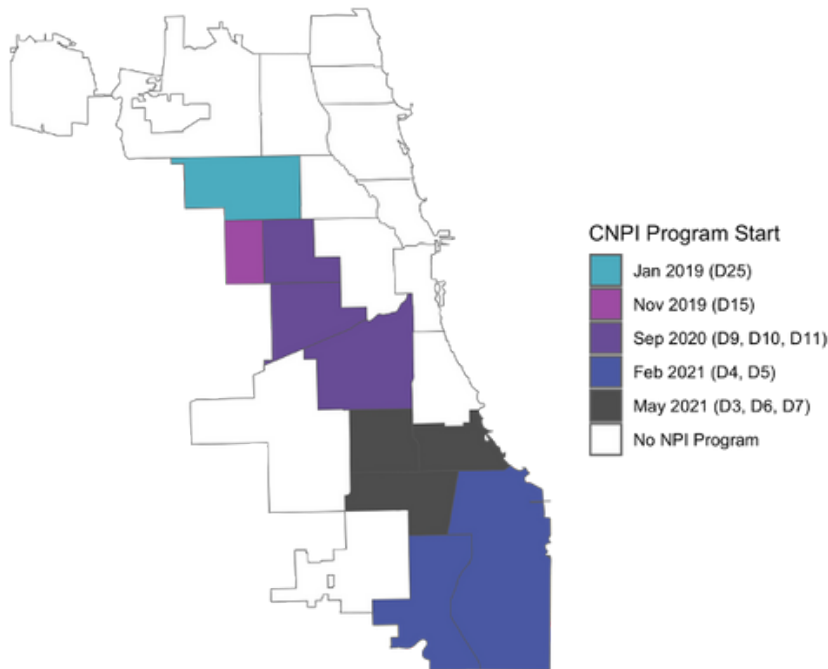
To answer these questions and better understand the process of implementing CNPI, CORNERS designed a multi-methods research and evaluation design. In-depth descriptions of key research activities are included in Appendix Table 1.

As CNPI implementation evolved, CORNERS adapted the research design and focus of research activities. Accordingly, this report expands on findings and recommendations from [prior reporting](#), presenting new findings based on observations, interviews, and quasi-experimental analyses both in prior evaluation districts – Districts 25 and 15 – and new ones – Districts 10 and 4; these four districts are referred to as “evaluation districts” throughout. Continued research demonstrates mixed but promising results for individuals involved, largely through changes in relationships between officers and residents, but significant institutional barriers to implementation remain. Effects on crime, calls for service, and perceptions of trust and safety remain largely inconclusive. Further detail on these findings is included in the sections that follow. Each section of the report concludes with recommendations for CPD and the City of Chicago to strengthen and improve implementation of CNPI throughout the city.

⁵ Per the City of Chicago's official website, “a consent decree is a court-approved settlement that resolves a legal dispute between parties. This consent decree requires the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and the City of Chicago...to reform training, accountability, officer wellness, data and information systems, and more. The goal is to ensure that the CPD performs constitutional and effective policing that keeps both community members and officers safe and restores the community's trust in the CPD.”

CNPI Overview & Evolution of the Initiative

CNPI Rollout Date by CPD District



CORNERS' prior research on CNPI focused largely on a subset of Chicago Police Districts where the initiative was implemented; around the same time, CPD and the city committed to expanding CNPI to a total of ten districts, located primarily on the South and West Sides. Demographic data for these ten districts are included in Appendix Table 2, with values reflective of 2020 Census data.

Since CORNERS released its May 2021 interim report and set of recommendations for CNPI implementation, the department paused program expansion to launch an internal, department-led initiative audit to ensure fidelity to the model in CNPI districts. At the same time, Policing Project and CPD leadership identified three districts as “gold standard districts,” meaning CNPI implementation in these districts followed the intended program model.

Each gold standard district underwent a series of resource evaluations by CPD’s Office of Constitutional Policing and Reform, and resources were planned to fully staff and support CNPI inside of the district. Gold standard districts originally included District 25, District 10, and District 07. In recent weeks, District 15 has been added to this list as well. Both CPD and the Policing Project continue to pay particular attention to implementation in these districts, to pilot the full CNPI model across a subset of CPD districts throughout the city.

At its core, CNPI is composed of two distinct but inter-related components:

1. Restructuring district-level police operations by establishing new standards of community policing (i.e., relationship building and proactive problem solving by officers), incorporating the work of specialized officers into community policing, and developing new geographic boundaries within which these officers work.
2. Establishing trust and working relationships between officers and community members by centering the role of Community Ambassadors and other residents in CNPI activities and larger district wide public safety planning.

To achieve this, the initiative engages participants in two ways:

1. District Coordinating Officers (DCOs): Police officers in CNPI districts who develop relationships with residents and respond to public safety issues using non-enforcement problem solving tactics.
2. Community Ambassadors: Volunteer residents of each district who meet regularly to develop public safety priorities and strategies to address them, in collaboration with Community Engagement Specialists (employed by the Policing Project) and DCOs.

Through collaboration, communication and cooperative problem-solving, Community Ambassadors and DCOs work together to determine public safety priorities and response strategies.

As part of the model, CNPI also developed new geographic areas within each district, called District Coordination Areas (DCAs) which encompass multiple beats and represent the natural boundaries of communities within each district. A pair of DCOs is assigned to each DCA. Each CNPI district employs between 5 and 12 DCOs; these teams are managed by 1-2 DCO Sergeants and usually at least one Lieutenant, who often work directly with Commanders. On the community side, Community Engagement Specialists (Policing Project team members in Chicago) manage CNPI's Community Ambassador Coalitions⁶ engage, on average, between 10 and 13 Community Ambassadors in each district.

⁶ Per the Chicago Neighborhood Policing Initiative, "Community Ambassador Coalitions are comprised of community members who volunteer to work closely with Chicago police officers to bridge relationships and achieve safety goals."

Efforts to improve CNPI implementation in 2022 include:

1. **Integration and involvement of beat officers in CNPI activities and priorities:** In the second half of the year, Policing Project staff conducted a series of presentations with beat officers in gold standard districts. These presentations provided an overview of CNPI history and priorities and described how beat officers would be involved in CNPI activities. Policing Project presenters noted that beat officers would be expected to engage in problem solving activities between emergency calls, primarily by following up on DCO-identified public safety issues in the community. At full implementation, problem solving should occupy roughly 30% of beat officers' time.
2. **Development of systems for data tracking and sharing, particularly related to DCO problem-solving activities:** Around the same time as these beat officer presentations, Policing Project staff and leadership within CPD's Office of Constitutional Policing developed and implemented a problem-solving activity code within the Office of Emergency Management & Communications (OEMC). This code allows officers to report and track problem-solving activities through the same systems they currently use, while the department works to systematize problem-solving reporting to allow for internal reporting within the department and reporting to the broader community in an effort to enhance transparency and communication.
3. **Community Ambassador led development of public safety priorities across all 10 CNPI districts:** Through a series of guided discussions led by Policing Project staff, Community Ambassador Coalitions developed a list of public safety priorities, goals, and activities for 2022. Progress toward these goals drove community-side CNPI engagement and collaboration efforts.
4. **Convening of a CNPI working group:** As CNPI continues to evolve and expand, Policing Project staff and the city have convened a working group made up of stakeholders from CPD, the Mayor's office, and the Policing Project. This group has been tasked with identifying roadblocks to CNPI expansion, as well as developing and implementing solutions across stakeholder groups.

Crucially, despite nearly four years since CNPI's inception, continued refinement of the model, and multiple expansions of the initiative across the city, the Chicago Police Department has yet to fully implement CNPI to full fidelity in any district. Individuals close to the initiative – including CPD leadership, officers, Policing Project staff,

community members, and city stakeholders – continue to advocate for full implementation of all CNPI components, but these efforts have so far been largely unsuccessful in the context of broader CPD challenges and barriers to implementation. These barriers are explored in more depth throughout this report; indeed, the qualitative findings provide numerous empirical examples of individual actors trying to advance the goals of the initiative. Yet, without sincere institutional commitment to the model—as well as necessary organizational changes, such obstacles remain insurmountable by individual efforts alone. The recommendations presented here offer insights for improvement but ultimately still rely on CPD’s sincere commitment to implementing CNPI in full alignment with the initiative’s philosophy. Opportunity remains for the department and the City of Chicago to commit to full implementation of CNPI as CPD’s overarching community policing strategy, should they be invested in doing so.

A mosaic artwork titled "Officer Friendly" depicting a police officer in a blue uniform and cap standing on the left, and a young girl in a red and white striped shirt and orange overalls standing on the right. The girl is holding a small teddy bear. The background features stylized trees and a sky. The entire scene is composed of small, colorful tiles.

CPD Implementation Barriers & Opportunities for Growth

OLD VS NEW MODELS OF POLICING: DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN CAPS AND CNPI

As the Chicago Police Department continues its implementation of CNPI, key challenges exist related to the way the initiative differentiates itself from CPD's most well-known community policing model, CAPS.



Policing in Chicago has included community policing efforts for three decades, starting in the early 1990s with the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS). Through CAPS, the department developed new ways for officers and community members to build relationships with one another while also mutually identifying and responding to public safety issues.⁷ The program created a specialized unit within the department, which allowed CAPS officers to host community events and work with community members to resolve public safety and quality of life issues through non-enforcement means. In the 1990s and early 2000s, CAPS experienced high levels of community engagement at regularly occurring beat meetings and generally enjoyed the support of residents and public officials alike.

Despite this, by 2010 CAPS looked like a completely different program and had been largely decimated by the recession, Superintendent and Commander turnover (and subsequent varying levels of support by CPD leadership), evolving political and social landscapes, and implementation of new technologies like 311 systems that made communities less reliant on the intervention of community policing officers in quality-of-life issues. Ultimately, these factors and others limited both the scope and impact of CAPS as Chicago's community policing strategy. Although CAPS exists in some form within the department, in many ways it represents a much less robust version of its original vision.

At this point, the CAPS department engages residents largely through event organization and resource provision for highly specific issues – including domestic violence, troubled buildings, youth engagement, business issues and elderly care.

⁷ Skogan, Wesley G. 2022. "Prospects for Reform? The Collapse of Community Policing in Chicago." *University of Chicago Law Review* 89(2):383–404.

Those closest to CNPI clearly distinguish between CAPS and CNPI

The legacy of CAPS as Chicago’s primary community policing strategy lives on within the department, where the name is ubiquitous – “CAPS is the new Cheerios or Kleenex” according to one department leader, noting that CAPS has a sense of “brand recognition” in the department and city. Because of this, and likely because of the early successes of CAPS in Chicago, CNPI faces persistent challenges in differentiating its strategy from that of CAPS and redefining community policing within CPD. According to some CNPI stakeholders, a key distinction between CAPS and CNPI lies in the differentiation of roles; whereas present-day CAPS officers engage in community event planning, the DCO role focuses more specifically on public safety problem solving. In this way, CAPS programming fills a different role than CNPI.

Importantly, CPD leadership in the Office of Constitutional Policing and Reform, which oversees CPD’s implementation of CNPI, clearly distinguishes between the role of DCOs and CAPS officers through four key elements:

1. **Geography:** While CAPS officers work with the whole district, DCOs work in smaller geographic units (DCAs) and are therefore able to have more regular contact with residents in the district.
2. **Issue Focus:** As a function of their geographic differences, CAPS officers work on resident issues across the entirety of the district. By comparison, DCOs work block-to-block on hyper-localized issues.
3. **Contact:** The CAPS office hosts meetings and events where residents come to them, while DCOs go out to where residents are and can reach parts of the community where, historically, police have not been as engaged in relationship-building.
4. **Approach:** CAPS officers often refer problems out to other city agencies and then are done with them. DCOs own the problems they’re working on from beginning to end, through the referral process and beyond, to problem resolution.

However, CPD personnel within districts and community residents still express conflicting and, at times, confusing perceptions of the differences between the two. Qualitative data from evaluation districts suggest several ways district stakeholders perceive the difference between these strategies, but many of these perceptions are in direct conflict with one

another and create competing narratives about the department's community policing strategy more broadly.

Community engagement is a core strategy for community policing

While community engagement is a key tenant of both CNPI and CAPS, the role of this engagement is, in some ways, different. CAPS officers engage community members through events to build relationships, often as a means of improving the department's reputation in communities.

According to one CPD Commander, “the difference is [the] CAPS department, they keep up with their engagements, and it's engagement driven.” Comparatively, DCOs identify public safety priorities by “going out looking for problems,” conduct problem solving activities like resource referrals, and participate in community events intended to meet a public safety goal. In one example, CNPI stakeholders expressed frustration with a DCO donation drive because “it doesn't fit in with public safety solutions. If a community member wants to do a [donation drive], DCOs should be referring them to CAPS officers.”

By comparison, a stakeholder shared that “there are situations where going to events makes sense for DCOs, like [a Halloween event], which got a lot of media presence. But Halloween is a dangerous time for young people and hosting [a Halloween event] with Community Ambassadors gives young people a safe alternative.” The key distinction here is that some events serve a public safety goal and are therefore within the scope of the DCO role, while others intend solely to improve the relationship between community and police in Chicago and should be handled primarily by CAPS.

Community members echo this sentiment; in a Community Ambassador meeting in mid-2021, one Ambassador pointed out that CAPS is the program that “hands out teddy bears,” although in the same conversation they noted some confusion over the DCO role and whether these officers' roles primarily revolve around relationship-building or crime-solving. Earlier in program implementation, another Community Ambassador shared that they were “totally fed up with CAPS,” suggesting a desire for a different, newer model of community policing.

CPD leadership buy-in to new models of community policing remains unclear

Some districts with vibrant and active CAPS teams, particularly those that enjoyed high levels of support from Commanders and other district leaders, struggled to balance changing community policing priorities and objectives. One stakeholder pointed out that,

“A lot of CPD feel like they’ve been doing this [CNPI] for a while, but they haven’t been doing it effectively so let’s try doing it a different way. The flip side of that is that we’re talking about almost 30 years since CAPS was introduced, and that’s what they’ve held onto as the community policing strategy.”

At the same time, this individual – who is a stakeholder outside of CPD – noted that “someone could argue we’ve made good strides with where we’ve come this far in helping them to progress” because CPD is “not going to shift [community policing strategies] in five years.”

In differentiating between CAPS and the DCO role, one district Commander conceptualized DCO responsibilities with respect to prior models of community policing: the Commander referred to DCOs as “CAPS Tactic” (by “tactic” the Commander was making an association with “tactical units”, i.e., other police divisions that engage in information gathering or strategically guided actions) and noted that the current DCO and CAPS sergeants “were...like unofficial DCOs before the program even started.”

Both DCO and CAPS sergeants consistently raised the volunteer work and event engagement of DCOs as examples of the core impact of CNPI. Like the previously mentioned donation drive example, these officers referred extensively to a community activity that was coordinated and conducted jointly by CAPS and DCOs. Prioritization of event attendance and community giveaways remain core to community policing in Chicago, even as CNPI stakeholders work to disentangle these responsibilities from DCOs and place them more consistently within the purview of CAPS officers.

DCOs clearly differentiate between their roles and the role of CAPS officers in districts

Importantly, DCOs themselves recognize and can define the difference between their role and the role of CAPS officers. While officers report working closely with CAPS on referrals for problem-solving and community engagement initiatives, they also see their work as inherently different. One DCO who previously worked in CAPS noted that the two roles differentiate in the ways they engage with community; from the officer’s perspective, DCOs are out in the community more, connecting with residents to address specific needs. The officer added feeling that, as DCOs “we do more” because of this personal, hyper-local strategy. This sentiment came up frequently in conversations with officers, who felt that the key difference between CAPS officers and DCOs was their point of contact with residents; where residents meet CAPS officers in the station or at large events, DCOs meet residents on their blocks.

Elsewhere, officers in one district reported frustration with their own DCO leader's understanding of the DCO role, noting that "[the DCO leader] doesn't really understand what we do" and "[they think] we're CAPS but we're not." In this case, DCOs pointed to a lack of training as a primary issue; because the leader in question had not participated in official DCO training, they over-emphasized the role of events while under-emphasizing the role of problem solving, which officers saw as central to DCO responsibilities. For these officers, problem solving is a central component of their work and often distinguishes them from other community policing officers and from the standard enforcement approach more broadly.

Meanwhile, officers in three separate districts expressed skepticism about the value of event attendance as a DCO. One officer noted that although they were happy to attend community events to engage with residents, "this isn't the role of the DCO." Rather, the DCO felt "what we should be doing is following up on problems" because problem solving and information gathering happen when "knocking on doors," not at events. The officer felt that "our job as a DCO isn't to be out here taking pictures, it's to be solving problems." Elsewhere, another officer noted that "CAPS throws a lot of events at us...if it's in my sector, I'll definitely always go. If it's not my sector, I don't feel like I should have to go...because there's just too much going on. There's so many events. If I'm doing an event every single day, it just burns me out."

This officer also expressed feeling like CAPS Sergeants didn't have a clear understanding of the distinction between CAPS officers and DCOs when it comes to events: "I feel like [they don't] understand that only the sector that is involved should probably be going. [They want] us all there."

For this DCO, events weren't a priority in the same way they were for CAPS officers. In yet another district, at another event, one officer shared that showing up to events was "mostly about doing feel good stuff like toy giveaways," and therefore the role of the DCO at these events was to show up because they "need the information so we can know who to do community engagement with versus who we need to do enforcement with." Although DCOs generally noted that they rarely engaged in traditional enforcement, for this officer, engagement with community served primarily as information gathering opportunities to solve crimes in the community. Similarly, one Commander noted that "CAPS has become more of an event-driven, outreach-driven, that type of thing, and DCOs [are] like the enforcement side. You know, they're actually fixing the problems."

Community members want new models of community policing

Community members – including those not formally engaged as Ambassadors – expressed their optimism about DCOs as representatives of a different community policing strategy within the police department.

At a community event in one evaluation district, a resident compared CAPS and DCOs by noting that “it’s night and day. You just get the sense some of them in CAPS are in it for an easier workload or something, not because they care about the community like the DCOs do.” In another district, a community member described CAPS as an outdated “dog and pony show,” operating more as public relations for the department through events.

For community members, CNPI represented a newer, revitalized model of community policing. These residents wanted community policing officers to have an investment in their neighborhoods and to engage meaningfully outside of events.

By comparison, the resident described DCOs as doing “real community engagement.” Community members in CNPI districts have felt the impact of the department’s disinvestment in CAPS as a community policing strategy and shared their frustration with outdated community policing practices openly; for them, CNPI – and DCOs more specifically – represented a newer, revitalized model of community policing. These residents wanted community policing officers to have an investment in their neighborhoods and to engage meaningfully outside of events.

The future of community policing includes CNPI and CAPS

Some stakeholders, most notably Policing Project staff, have expressed their belief that CAPS as a community policing strategy should end entirely. This, however, remains in contrast with the perspective of some department leadership and other community stakeholders, who are interested in developing pathways through which CAPS and CNPI more effectively work together. In particular, the Office of Constitutional Policing and Reform has expressed keen interest in eventually integrating both CNPI and CAPS into one unified community policing strategy across the department. For commanders in evaluation districts, the work of the two teams is already interrelated; one commander noted that, in their district, CAPS and DCOs have “kind of melded together in a lot of ways because...it’s a force multiplier for us... They still have their separate goals...but in the end they pretty much end up working together.”

This integrated approach is currently being piloted in one South Side district, where CAPS officers are trained in DCO problem-solving strategies, and the two teams work closely together. However, the impacts of this integration remain to be seen, and integration in additional districts is not yet planned.

Recommendation #1: Differentiate and codify community policing practices

Ultimately, for CNPI to represent a new model of community policing for the Chicago Police Department, it must contend with and overcome the history and reputation of CAPS. For CPD, this means more clearly differentiating between the two strategies and the roles of CAPS officers and DCOs. CPD leadership should develop policies and procedures plainly outlining the DCO role and CNPI structure.

Key differences between CAPS and CNPI should be officially codified and communicated clearly and consistently to CPD leadership at the district level to facilitate effective implementation across all CNPI districts. Given CPD's plans to integrate the two strategies, this distinction should be incorporated into department messaging and practices before combining efforts, to ensure that the work of distinguishing between CAPS and CNPI is not lost in the process of merging the two.

LACK OF BEAT OFFICER UNDERSTANDING OF - AND BUY IN TO - CNPI REMAINS A PERSISTENT CHALLENGE

The role of the beat officer in CNPI is key because CNPI includes a dispersed model of community policing in which beat officers participate, primarily by dedicating 30% of their time to community engagement and problem-solving activities. Yet, a key implementation challenge stems from beat officers' limited understanding of CNPI and their lack of buy-in to the initiative and community policing more generally. One DCO in an evaluation district explained that confusion about the DCO role among beat officers led many beat officers to develop resentments and negative attitudes toward CNPI:

“If they don’t really understand what we do, then they talk a lot of crap. A LOT of crap ... They don’t realize ... how involved our jobs are. So you hear, ‘they’re just hanging out in the office all day. They don’t actually do anything. They’ve got it easy.’ That sort of stuff.”

Additionally, some beat officers used disparaging terms to describe CNPI including “the hug-a-thug program” or “soft-policing.” Several DCOs expressed that these sentiments prevented beat officers from collaborating with or referring community problems to the DCO office. Beat officers also often described the primary goals of community policing as improving the department’s reputation and extracting information from residents, goals that differ substantially even from CAPS' stated goals of co-producing public

safety with community members. For instance, at a recent community forum, one beat officer declared that “information is the key and service to the community is just a tool for us to get that information.” Additionally, while CNPI is intended to be a core strategy for the entire department, many beat officers draw a distinction between community policing and their own responsibilities, suggesting that community policing should fall solely to CAPS and DCOs. For instance, at a community event, one beat officer expressed that,

“Having personnel for these community issues—I mean it’s good—but we need to make sure we have enough police for regular policing ... the DCOs have a role to play ... If [the DCOs] free the rest of us to focus on getting offenders off the street, that’s good.”

Similarly, at annual community policing trainings, many officers openly and vehemently disagreed when the facilitator presented a slide that read, “Community policing is the responsibility of each and every member of the Chicago Police Department.”

Recommendation #2: Prioritize effective communication and training for beat officers and leadership

Starting in the summer of 2022, Policing Project representatives have held informational sessions about CNPI with beat officers within gold standard districts. Given the urgency to address misperceptions and negative sentiments about the CNPI within the department, clear communication and ongoing training of beat officers and district leaders (e.g., sergeants and lieutenants) on the CNPI model should be prioritized. It is particularly important that internal CPD trainings and communications emphasize the broader goal of CNPI to co-create public safety with community, rather than simply manage the department’s reputation or extract information, as many beat officers currently conceptualize the role of community policing.

DEPARTMENT STAFFING CHALLENGES LIMIT DCO EFFECTIVENESS

CPD continues to note a significant staff shortage, particularly when it comes to beat officers within districts. While this shortage is felt department-wide, it has had a particular impact on CNPI. In addition to stagnation in the size of DCO units, special assignments and deployments are taking a toll on DCOs' problem-solving work and officer morale.

DCO unit size hinders overall impact of CNPI

Across all ten CNPI districts, DCO units range from 8 to 14 members including officers and DCO leadership.⁸ With an average district population of just under 100,000 people across CNPI districts this equates to roughly one officer per 9,000 people. Because pairs of DCOs are assigned to DCAs, this results in little to no DCO coverage when partners have coinciding days off or vacations. In districts where DCOs have alternating days off this can mean as many as four out of seven days a week in which DCOs are working alone, without a partner. As such, DCOs and Community Ambassadors feel that CNPI's ability to have a broader impact is limited.

Reassignments continue to frustrate DCOs, even in gold standard districts

While some district leaders have begun to develop a better understanding of the DCO role and express pride in the work of these officers, challenges remain when it comes to effectively institutionalizing the DCO role at the department level. Commanders in multiple CNPI districts shared their overwhelming support for the work of DCOs, with one Commander actively engaging along with the officers as a way to develop and maintain relationships with community members. Commanders shared their excitement about the DCO work, with one noting that *"the DCOs are huge in being able to take relationships with the community...and just give it that extra time that other officers and units don't have, that our other personnel don't have."* CNPI district Commanders appear invested in the work of the initiative and the DCOs, while at the same time continuing to implement department-wide orders to reassign DCOs to beat cars or expect these officers to conduct regular traffic stops, both of which fall outside the DCO role.

"Downtown doesn't understand that community engagement also helps to stop the violence."

8 The phrase "DCO leadership" generally refers to sergeants and lieutenants who lead teams of DCOs within their districts.

Through 2022, DCOs experienced regular reassignments to the beat.⁹ even in “gold standard” districts, which pulled DCOs away from their defined duties. DCO units regularly operated without a sergeant for a day or more while DCO sergeants fill in for beat sergeants. While DCOs expect a certain number of reassignments during busy summer months, reassignment to the beat continued at high frequencies through fall and winter 2022. This was largely related to staffing issues, end-of-year furloughs, and officer trainings that consume large amounts of time leading up to end-of-year consent decree deadlines. DCOs increasingly note that reassignment to the beat happens with little notice and leaves little to no time for problem solving activities.

A few DCOs feel that benefits of occasional reassignment to the beat include the chance to strengthen relationships and communication with beat officers and the opportunity to learn about problems that would not have otherwise made their way to DCOs. However, officers overwhelmingly voiced frustration about the frequency of reassignments. In one district, DCOs estimated spending as much as 80% of their time working on non-DCO responsibilities at a particular point in time and noted that their problem-solving time was “getting less and less the longer it goes. I feel like it defeats the purpose, it feels like we’re on the [beat.]”

In addition to official reassignment, DCOs in all districts frequently reported performing duties related to special missions including traffic control, funeral details, and securing large public events. Furthermore, when the watch is short-staffed, DCOs in some districts are asked to answer calls for service, while DCOs in other districts provide backup voluntarily out of a sense of responsibility to their overworked colleagues. One officer noted that “every summer it’s up for grabs” in terms of day off cancellations. The officer explained the department was “stretched thin, that’s the reason for the days off cancellation.” Many DCOs noted that they will always be “police first,” and in principle understand and support the need to back-up understaffed beat cars, but also found these instances frustrating both logistically and emotionally.

Officers noted several clear negative impacts of reassignment:

1. Negative impact on problem solving: Interruptions can push back problem-solving timelines dramatically in cases where the strategy requires coordinating with external entities. It also creates extra work in terms of rescheduling and catching up on community concerns that get backlogged while they are reassigned. One officer in a leadership position explained that “it comes from downtown, it’s unfortunate but downtown doesn’t understand the program. They need the numbers and are trying to tamp down violence. Downtown doesn’t understand that community engagement also helps to stop the violence.”

⁹ Referring to the geographic areas within which beat officers work, this often means that DCOs are being reassigned to respond to emergency 911 calls

2. Negative impact on community relationships & trust: DCOs report that being absent from their regular circuit can strain relationships with community members, especially those who expect the DCOs' presence. One officer explained the importance of keeping promises in mending community-police relations, noting that canceling last minute due to the short notice of reassignments undermines their already fragile relationship with certain residents. Community Ambassadors have noted that they understand why these reassignments are happening but feel that this strategy is indicative of the ways in which CPD deprioritizes community concerns, the work of DCOs, and CNPI more broadly.

3. Negative impact on officer morale: Several officers mentioned that the frequency of reassignments made them question CPD leadership's dedication to community policing. DCOs expressed feeling both explicit and implicit pressure to continue making progress on problems for which they were actively seeking solutions while doing beat work, making reassignments that much more stressful and exhausting. This is further exacerbated by the frequency with which DCOs' days off are cancelled or shifts are extended to 12 hours. In an informal conversation, one DCO mentioned that they had worked 17 days in a row and wondered how effective they would be at dealing with the community if this continued, a sentiment echoed by officers across multiple settings.

Community Ambassadors have noted that they understand why reassignments happen but feel that the strategy is indicative of the ways in which CPD deprioritizes community concerns, the work of DCOs, and CNPI more broadly.

Deployments present unique challenges to maintaining DCO work

In addition to being pulled off their problem-solving work to staff beat cars, time spent on special deployments also significantly detracts from DCOs' ability to carry out their scope of work. CORNERS' prior report noted that during the pandemic and protests in 2020, officers were often pulled out of their districts and reassigned to downtown locations or other districts across the city. Similar deployments have continued to periodically occur, most recently in January 2023 when CPD implemented a new community crime prevention initiative which deploys officers to go door-to-door providing public safety information in select areas. This particular initiative has taken community policing officers and other units off their regular work to hand out flyers in other districts, for one or more shifts per week.

Deployments share the previously mentioned negative impacts of being reassigned, but officers highlighted several additional concerns about being taken away not just from their work, but from their districts as well.

One officer shared that when working weekends over the summer, “there’s no end in sight,” so they would prefer to at least work in their DCA, where the officer is more familiar with the area’s residents and their needs. DCOs also raised the dangers of lacking critical local knowledge when deployed to other parts of the city and noted that maps aren’t always enough to effectively navigate. For instance, officers shared concerns about their unfamiliarity with hyper-local violent activity. They also noted the difficulties of quickly getting emergency medical services in the event of an injured officer or community member, so if officers are deployed to different areas and don’t know where they are, “that’s a very big issue.”

Another officer noted that “a lot of problems need to be addressed in our own DCAs, but we can’t because we’re being deployed to districts where we don’t know where the hospitals are, we don’t know what resources are available, but we’re being asked to pass out flyers.” Instead of conducting follow-ups or engaging residents, as they would in their own districts, officers tasked with showing police presence in other districts frequently cited spending their entire shifts merely sitting in their car on a particular block, which, according to DCOs, felt like a waste of resources and time. For deployments involving disseminating public safety information, DCOs noted that these only facilitated brief, one-time interactions with no opportunity to follow-up or develop relationships and felt that flyer dissemination was an inadequate substitute for addressing residents’ expressed needs and concerns.

Recommendation #3: Minimize DCO deployments and prioritize DCO work

While the department continues to respond and look for solutions to issues of manpower, DCOs frequently find themselves being treated as a temporary solution, including through reassignment to the watch or deployment to other, unfamiliar areas. This distracts from both the problem-solving and relationship-building work of individual officers, becomes overwhelming when officers are expected to perform the role of the watch and the DCO at the same time, and raises officer concerns about safety and effectiveness when placed in districts outside of their own. The department should prioritize the work of DCOs in their communities, which includes formal commitments to keeping the work of these officers within their assigned responsibilities and districts.

CPD STAFF TURNOVER UNDERMINES EFFORTS TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY

Adequate staffing continues to be a challenge for CPD, and the impacts of this are felt in how the department handles officer turnover and promotional structures. Over the course of the evaluation, multiple districts experienced considerable change in the makeup of their original DCO units and district leadership. In one district, over half of the original cohort of DCOs exited in a six-month period, in addition to multiple changes in DCO leadership over time. Officer turnover poses a considerable, unresolved challenge to CNPI, largely due to its disruption of relationship building and standardization of CNPI's implementation at a district level.

While turnover is a concern across the entire department, steady turnover among DCOs undermines relationship-building and CPD's express commitment to collaborative policing through strategies like CNPI.

Both residents and officers understand a core tenet of community policing as working to repair damaged relationships between communities and CPD. Residents' hopes for CNPI are partly shaped by a belief that the current structure of policing does not encourage or allow officers to be invested in communities, something that is born out in their experiences of policing in their neighborhoods - from negative interpersonal interactions at headquarters to the unrecognizability of officers in street interactions year-to-year. Both officers and residents believe that residents' long-engrained mistrust requires police to demonstrate commitment to consistency and rebuilding relationships over time through repeated positive interactions. High turnover has the potential to reinforce the perception of disinvestment while undermining officers' attempts to demonstrate commitment to communities.

While turnover is a concern across the entire department, steady turnover among DCOs undermines relationship-building and CPD's express commitment to collaborative policing through community policing strategies like CNPI. CNPI provides residents an opportunity to build one-on-one relationships with the same officers over time; often these connections also facilitate relationships with Commanders and other district leaders. As such, residents' concerns about turnover primarily stem from having invested time and effort into building relationships with officers and leaders they trust and wish to work with, only to have to start over after those individuals leave. These

concerns raise questions about how long DCOs and leadership should be expected to remain in a position heavily reliant on the slow process of relationship-building, and how strategies for exiting the role must differ relative to the rest of the department.

District leadership changes present unique challenges to CNPI's implementation, and residents and officers alike noted that these changes happen often and frequently involve little transition planning or communication. Particularly in districts where leadership – specifically Commanders – demonstrate a vested interest in CNPI or community policing, residents expressed feeling as though they were having to start over and rebuild relationships with district leaders – particularly those not as proactive about or familiar with community policing efforts.

Commander turnover presents a challenge to the continued and consistent investment in CNPI at a district level. As mentioned previously, Commanders' interpretations of the initiative frequently determine the ways in which its implementation happens district-by-district, and the effect of regular changes in command is felt strongly by DCO teams and community stakeholders with whom they work closely.

Both residents and DCOs shared concerns that new commanders could threaten the existence and effectiveness of CNPI at a district level if new leaders do not share a commitment to community policing programs or if their definition of meaningful community policing differs substantially from DCOs, community members, or prior commanders. To a lesser degree, this also reflects concerns about sergeant and lieutenant changes as each may have different expectations about how to accomplish DCO work that requires adjustment both for DCOs and residents working with CNPI.

Recommendation #4: Mitigate the impacts of DCO turnover

Community members feel strongly that officer tenure, particularly for community policing officers, contributes to stronger, more meaningful relationship building. As such, the department should consider the possible tenure of these officers during the selection process, to ensure that officers selected to be DCOs intend to remain in these communities for longer periods of time. Although longevity may not be the single most important element in DCO selection decisions – given that the department does and should continue to prioritize officers' desire for community engagement and proactive problem solving – ensuring that officers have a long-term, vested interest in the communities where they work will likely lead to DCO teams where officers occupy the position for longer and feel more invested in contributing to the community over time.

The department should prioritize officers with a strong background in community policing and personnel with meaningful connections to the district in which they work. Alternatively, these selection processes would disincentivize selecting officers who express an interest in diversifying a resume or trying out a variety of roles, as these are more likely to lead to officer attrition over time.

When DCOs do plan to exit their roles, Commanders and DCO leadership should take steps to mitigate the negative effects of this turnover, particularly through the creation of “warm hand-off” practices or community members with whom exiting officers have developed strong relationships. Where possible, DCOs who are transitioning out of their role should be responsible for personally contacting residents, particularly key stakeholders, before leaving, to notify them of the change and connect them with another officer who can act as a future point of contact. These conversations should include concrete plans to continue relationship-building and problem-solving activities in the officers’ absence, as well as a personalized introduction to officers who will take over the role, with clear internal documentation of transition processes along the way. In some districts, this has been handled by exiting officers’ partners, who generally hold relationships with similar groups of stakeholders and can step in to participate in an introductory, warm hand-off period between residents and a new DCO partner.

Generally, these efforts have been well-received by residents, who feel that this creates a sense of continuity between officers and residents through a process that otherwise feels stilted and challenging. This contrasts strongly with situations in which officers have left with little to no warning – leaving some community members to only discover these changes when new officers are introduced.

Some of this transition work can also be done in the context of existing DCO relationships, regardless of whether they are currently exiting the role. Officers should continue to rely on other members of their team, particularly DCO leadership, to ensure that residents have relationships with multiple DCOs and reduce the likelihood of a relationship being lost when one officer transitions out of the role.

Long-term, the department should seek to better understand and address officers’ desires to leave CNPI. CPD should build incentives for retaining officers, particularly in the form of promotions and lateral positions. As it currently stands, officers have noted that a key challenge of the initiative is the lack of advancement opportunities. At the same time, our findings suggest that it takes significant time for new DCOs to acclimate to their role, develop relationships, and understand the community. However, such learning curves may be significantly shortened when there are tenured officers who are familiar with their DCA and the role more broadly to train them and introduce new officers to the area. Tenured officers present a key asset during transitions, and CPD

should continue to invest in DCO longevity to avoid losing significant numbers of their officers at once and ensure that institutional knowledge specific to the role and the district can be shared among team members, even through inevitable transitions.

Ultimately, residents do not just desire relationships with officers, but consistent and long-term ones. Building these relationships over time means investing in the longevity of officers and leadership, as well as developing systems that prioritize warm hand-offs between officers and residents, and consistent implementation regardless of individual district leaders.

CPD STRUGGLES TO EFFECTIVELY MEASURE DCO ACTIVITY AND IMPACT

As the department continues to expand CNPI, critical challenges related to measurement remain. Working group members – comprised of representatives from the Policing Project, City of Chicago, and CPD – continue to work toward standardized models of data collection across CNPI districts. While these models are being developed, DCOs and district leadership (including Commanders and DCO leaders) express interest in measuring the impacts of CNPI to fidelity and finding ways to demonstrate change in ways that aren’t solely related to activity counts.

Quantitative measurement is insufficient and flawed at capturing DCO impact

DCOs and district leadership conceptualize CNPI’s impact measurement as inherently mixed methods, pointing out that a full understanding of the impact of community policing needs to include qualitative storytelling as a key component. DCOs in two districts expressed concern about the measurement of their work, noting that much of their relationship-building and problem-solving work cannot be fully captured without including qualitative information related to interpersonal work. One officer noted at a community meeting that “community policing is told in stories, while it doesn’t come up in CompStat¹⁰ meetings.”

Further, one officer expressed skepticism and concern about the effects of measuring activities like problem solving through quantitative counts of activity. From their perspective, focusing on quantitative measures like number of problems solved incentivizes officers to open and close problems frivolously to meet pre-determined benchmarks. An officer in another district noted that this kind of measurement is further complicated by the fact that some public safety problems are not cleanly closed in a way that fits numerical reporting; some problems are continuous, require regular follow-ups, and may never be sufficiently closed.

¹⁰ Per CPD General Order G01-08, “CompStat is a performance management process that is used to reduce crime, enhance implementation of Department strategies, foster compliance with Department standards, and achieve other Department goals and objectives.” CompStat meetings happen weekly at CPD headquarters and involve Commanders from all 22 districts, who report directly to the Superintendent on recent district trends and activities.

Officers feel skeptical about one-size-fits-all measurement

This skepticism around quantitative data may be related to officers' cynicism regarding CPD quotas for positive community interactions (PCIs); one DCO noted that “you can't just come here and roll around and just pull PCI numbers, which is what they want us to do, the bosses...these PCI numbers, they have to be genuine.” For DCOs, PCIs are “something I do all the time...why am I getting an event number for something that I do anyway?” Like concerns about tracking problem-solving numbers, officers suggested that “it's just a façade...it's phony.” DCOs engage in these activities regularly in their role as community policing officers and feel that measuring them in this way is a misrepresentation of the work and, in many cases, unnecessary.

Particularly when it comes to relationship-building and non-enforcement work, officers think of their work as preventative – e.g., providing solutions that don't result in arrest as a way to avoid escalation or future violence – and one Commander posed the question of how someone “can...measure something that's not happening. You can measure arrests and other police actions, but DCOs are working to prevent problems; you can't measure something that you're preventing.” One officer noted that the department rewards enforcement activity for other officers, but that there's no official measurement or way to recognize the relationship-building, non-enforcement work of DCOs. He suggested that this has a noticeable effect on morale for officers, like DCOs, who feel a sense of satisfaction in their work but don't feel that it's being recognized or measured appropriately.

Recommendation #5: Integrate qualitative data and community reporting into CNPI metrics

Officers, district leaders, and the department recognize the importance of measuring their work to demonstrate impact; how that work gets measured matters to these officers, and all agree that demonstrating DCO work means more than quantifying event numbers. CNPI activity tracking should incorporate elements of qualitative data reflective of DCOs' intensive problem-solving work and should continue to incorporate community members both in collection and reporting processes to create a feedback loop through which residents can better understand the work of DCOs in their district.

By capturing the fullest possible picture of the work of these officers, the department will be better equipped to develop systems through which they recognize and reward achievements in community policing and problem solving.

Understanding DCO Roles & Responsibilities



Consistent with prior findings, DCOs stress their satisfaction with the job, and many note that the DCO role gives them an opportunity to police in a way that they feel helps the community. Some officers noted that the problem-solving and relationship building approach of the DCO role represents a style of policing they feel personally invested in, but that they previously did not have time for when responding to calls on the watch. Relationship building over time allowed officers in some districts to develop personal connections with community residents, and DCOs noted that they frequently reached out to these residents to check in, even outside of specific problem-solving activities.

Commanders also noted an increase in the number of officers interested in doing the work of community policing; one Commander stated: “I have more officers now that are interested in the program, that wanna take part in the program, that are doing it on a daily basis.” For DCOs and other officers, CNPI represents a style of policing that they are invested in pursuing.

However, CNPI meeting observations and interviews included in prior reporting have not sufficiently answered the question of the kinds of work in which DCOs engage day-to-day. To date, full transparency into DCO roles and responsibilities has remained elusive.

To more accurately capture DCOs’ routine work, researchers analyzed three sets of data:

1. **Roll calls:** To this point, the research team has conducted more than 120 meetings with DCOs in four districts. These meetings provided an opportunity to check in with DCOs regularly (weekly or bi-weekly) and receive updates on officers’ activities and responsibilities for the week. Findings below include notes from all districts, but trends are weighted toward District 25, where approximately 75% of roll call meetings were conducted.
2. **Daily Activity Logs:** These standardized forms are filled out by DCOs at the close of every shift and reflect hour-by-hour (and sometimes minute-by-minute) information on officer activity. The research team analyzed a sample of 12 months’ worth of Daily Activity Logs from one gold standard district.
3. **Ride-Alongs:** Members of the research team joined DCOs in evaluation districts for ride-alongs in which they shadowed officers for a full- or half-shift, to better understand the regular interactions and activities of DCOs in the field. Although ride-alongs were paused for some time due to COVID, the research team completed nine observations of this type, both before and after the onset of the pandemic.

Roll call analysis provides insight into officers' activities

Roll call data provide a consistent means through which the research team is better able to understand the work of DCOs. In these meetings, DCOs report regularly engaging in problem solving work, community engagement, foot patrols and block walks, investigation and enforcement activities, administrative responsibilities, and crowd control and deterrence details. Notably, through roll calls, DCOs also shared information about times when they were tasked with responsibilities outside of their official role; these are covered elsewhere in the report.

Given the centrality of “Problem Solving” in the CNPI model, and that it accounted for over half of the daily activities reported during roll calls, the following section first provides an overview of problem-solving strategies, including information about the types of problems DCOs work on and their reported referral sources. A summary review is then provided of the five other categories of work DCOs perform on a regular basis.

DCO PROBLEM SOLVING

DCOs generally grouped problem solving into two types: addressing “community concerns” that are isolated events which can be easily resolved; and working on longer term “problems,” which require more time or complex solutions. Officers primarily address community concerns by submitting city requests and connecting people to resources. For example, DCOs directed residents with permit parking issues to their alderperson and put in 311 requests to fix road signs, remove graffiti, and get abandoned vehicles towed.

DCOs frequently expressed high satisfaction after successfully connecting residents in need with essential resources and services. In some cases, this involved connecting residents with organizations that assist with housing, employment, healthcare, or legal services. In other cases, DCOs were more directly involved in resource provision. For example, one DCO arranged to have staff from a local medical center join the officer’s regular premise check on a group of habitual loiterers. As a result, “two people accepted treatment and a few people got the COVID vaccine, which is a great win for that area.” In another instance, DCOs solicited clothing donations from their colleagues and family members (in part while off-duty) for a local organization housing a family in need. Despite DCOs’ efforts to locate and build relationships with external agencies and organizations, they sometimes felt frustrated about the lack of viable resources and the time it took to find them.

DCOs also reported tracking down & communicating with owners of businesses, buildings, and lots to inform them of issues related to their property and provide recommendations regarding how these could be addressed. In their role, DCOs regularly contact businesses around which a problem exists, including in circumstances where the business is not directly causing the issue. For instance, DCOs have asked liquor stores not to sell alcohol to certain people who habitually loiter while publicly intoxicated. Property owners are also contacted about improving their lighting and adding security where illicit behavior is a consistent problem.

DCOs frequently pointed to a success story in which they convinced the owner of a lot with frequent gang activity to install a fence around the property. According to the multiple members of the DCO team, the fence made trespassing through the lot much more difficult, which resulted in an immediate drop in violence after its installation. DCOs have also successfully petitioned the city for the installation of Police Observational Device (POD) cameras in areas where residents and property managers have had repeated serious safety concerns.

For low level offenses, DCOs often try to problem-solve before turning to enforcement.

For low-level offenses, DCOs often try to problem-solve before turning to enforcement. For example, multiple districts reported placing “fake tickets” on cars with information about illegal parking prior to writing tickets. DCOs have also negotiated timelines with residents and business owners to provide them with additional time to work toward legal compliance. In cases involving youth or people experiencing financial or health-related difficulties, DCOs often take more time explaining why something is illegal and search for resources to help prevent individuals from making the same mistake again. Officers note the importance of these strategies with regard to gaining the trust and respect of the community.

What kinds of problems are DCOs working on?

The nature of issues where DCOs engage in problem solving can be divided into seven main categories, listed below, with categories at the beginning of the list appearing more frequently in roll call conversations than those at the end of the list. Notably, many of these issues span multiple weeks and are raised in more than one roll call, so categories mentioned more frequently may represent longer-standing problems rather than the overall volume of problems DCOs are responding to.

1. **Criminal activity:** Though DCOs do not typically deal with enforcement, they frequently visit areas in the aftermath of violent or repeat criminal incidents, such as shootings or burglary sprees, to see if any impacted residents need resources and to deter future activity. Other criminal activities for which DCOs frequently engage in problem solving include narcotics sales, car jackings, gang-related graffiti, and criminal trespassing.
2. **Quality of life problems:** Quality of life problems are low level offenses and violations including littering, loitering, and noise violations. DCOs also regularly deal with issues related to homelessness, sex work, and substance abuse through a lens of problem solving and resource provision instead of criminalization.
3. **Welfare problems** frequently handled by DCOs include mental health crises, elder neglect, and families lacking basic necessities.
4. **Parking and circulation problems** mostly involve illegal parking in school or residential permit zones, as well as abandoned vehicles. DCOs have also gotten involved in traffic circulation-related issues such as broken street signage or addressing the root cause of chronic violations at specific sites.
5. **Business problems** can be subdivided into two types: (1) Issues that businesses complain about such as trespassing, theft of merchandise, or threats to customer retention from quality-of-life related issues near their property; and (2) Issues with business themselves, such as operating without permits or blocking public property with company vehicles. For example, DCOs are frequently contacted about auto-shops blocking alleys or taking over public parking with client vehicles.
6. **Land and building problems** that DCOs most frequently report addressing issues of trespassing on private or city property, in addition to abandoned buildings and vacant lots that attract quality of life offences and criminal activity.
7. **Residential problems** primarily stem from disputes or safety-related concerns. DCOs have intervened in landlord-tenant disputes and disturbance-related disputes between neighbors, as well as properties with safety-related issues such as debris or sanitation-related concerns such as hoarding. They also frequently work with property managers who have concerns about extra-legal activities on their property.

Who's referring these problems to DCOs?

DCOs generally learn about problems through members of the public, city officials, or CPD. Members of the public accounted for two-thirds of the 300 referral sources reported during roll calls. Community members who know about CNPI frequently contact DCOs directly on their department cellphone or email, but DCOs also get connected with community members who first reached out to their alderperson or other CPD units. In addition to residents, sources included property and business owners, community leaders, and staff at institutions and organizations like schools and non-profits.

While CPD accounted for a minority of referral sources, DCOs in some districts have recently noted an increase in these referrals as beat officers and district leadership (at all levels) better understand the DCO role. Officers noted several cases in which they were alerted by watch sergeants about repeat calls for service. DCOs feel that they have more time to investigate and tackle the root cause of chronic problems and thereby eliminate future related calls for service. In some cases, DCOs are asked to respond or provide backup for calls involving issues where they are potentially better equipped than beat officers, particularly in welfare-related cases. DCOs also get information about potential problems through CPD technology such as video surveillance.

Finally, DCOs also cited instances where they discovered or identified problems while working in their DCAs. For example, DCOs noticed abandoned buildings, graffiti, and broken road signs while driving to/from another assignment. DCOs also mentioned learning about problems through proactive community engagement. For example, on numerous block walks, residents have alerted DCOs to nearby welfare concerns or suspicious activity, which may otherwise have gone unreported.

OTHER REGULAR DCO ACTIVITIES

Community engagement, another key DCO responsibility, accounted for roughly 20% of activities mentioned at roll calls. DCOs across districts report attending community events, though the emphasis placed on this activity varied by district. Through meeting new people at events like block parties, resource fairs, sports tournaments, and community meetings, DCOs can expand their community networks, inform people about CNPI, and share their contact information. In some districts, a central part of event attendance includes handing out free items like food, hand sanitizer or toys, which DCOs find particularly helpful for breaking the ice with young children and their parents. In other districts, DCOs focus on distributing informational flyers that include a DCA map, DCO contact information, and a list of upcoming beat meetings.

After connections are made, some DCOs dedicate additional time to maintaining relationships. For instance, in early January one DCO noted, “given how cold it is, I’ll be checking in with families that I’ve dealt with in the past to see if they need any resources or help with heating.” DCOs also frequently visit alderpeople, organizations, and businesses to check in and see if there is anything that needs their attention.



Foot patrols and block walks are another aspect of community engagement that DCOs plan and/or participate in on a regular basis. These are often employed as part of both proactive and reactive strategies. On the proactive side, patrols are another way to meet residents and share information about CNPI. Officers also see this as a way to signal their interest in and commitment to working with the community. Patrols are also used to provide general public-safety information, including advising residents not to walk alone late at night and not to leave running cars unlocked. However, officers also frequently noted conducting walks and foot patrols in response to violent incidents or reported increases in activity. In these cases, patrolling was employed to show presence (both to deter additional activity and help residents feel safer), as well as a space to canvas for footage and witnesses that may help with open investigations.

Investigation and enforcement, while not part of traditional DCO responsibilities, appeared frequently in roll calls as justification for various activity. For example, on several occasions officers mentioned leveraging their relationships with residents and property managers to access private security systems to retrieve footage of illegal activity for other CPD units. DCOs also frequently give warnings for low-level violations

such as parking or noise complaints. They describe turning to enforcement as a last resort, mostly in the form of citations after several warnings have been ignored. However, several DCO activities can ultimately result in criminal enforcement – for instance, recommending that businesses sign no-trespass affidavits.

Administrative responsibilities. In addition to CPD paperwork such as daily activity logs; problem and follow-up reports; and activity related paperwork such as violent incident reports, DCOs expressed spending a significant amount of time contacting people to provide and receive information. For example, DCOs in two districts reported reaching out to Community Ambassadors, leaders, and organizations to notify them after shootings. After scheduled days off and reassignments, DCOs also discussed dedicating time to catching up on emails, voicemails, and text messages they received while they were out. Officers are also required to attend several days of CPD training each year, go to court hearings, and spend time in internal meetings. While DCOs expressed understanding the utility of many of these responsibilities, many nevertheless raised how these responsibilities detracted from their time in the field. This is particularly the case in instances where they felt this time loss was futile, such as commuting to other districts during rush hour or attending meetings spaced in a manner that prohibited them from working on problems in between.

Control & deterrence details, though less consistent, can take up significant amounts of DCO time at certain times of the year. These activities mainly include:

1. Special attention at schools during dismissal to deter illegal parking, fights, or criminal activity;
2. Traffic/crowd control at special events such as parades and festivals;
3. Monitoring retail corridors during holidays and civil unrest; and
4. Providing crime scene control.

While some of these responsibilities fulfill other DCO goals, such as building relationships with parents and school staff while on dismissal details, activities like traffic or crowd control and retail corridor monitoring were often seen by officers as time taken away from problem-solving.

DAILY ACTIVITIES REPORTED TO THE DEPARTMENT

An analysis of daily activity logs from one gold standard district, including roughly one year's worth of data sampled from 12 different months between 2019 and 2021, revealed similar activities to those reported in roll calls, but with slightly different classifications due to the format of official officer logs. For example, community engagement, area checks, and showing presence are often strategies employed to problem-solve. However, these were classified as their own categories because of the frequency with which they appeared and the lack of explanatory detail accompanying them in the documents. Descriptive examples of each activity group are available below, in no particular order, and a list of all activity types by group is available in the appendix (Appendix Table 3).

Activity Group	Examples
Administrative	Captures internal CPD meetings, reports and other paperwork, and officer trainings.
Area Checks	Includes business checks, park checks, and other premise checks.
Community Engagement	Generally, describes time spent building relationships outside of specifically addressing community concerns – i.e., attending community events and meetings, speaking with alderpeople, and attending block walks.
Problem Solving	Describes activities undertaken specifically to address a community concern, which include explicit mentions of problem-solving strategies employed strictly for problem-solving purposes.
Showing Presence	Includes activities such as special attentions, school dismissals, and targeted foot patrols.
Non-CNPI Activities	Entries for which activities do not clearly fall within DCO responsibilities. These include criminal enforcement, backup, and investigation; emergency response; and special assignments.

Officers report high levels of community engagement, relative to other activities

Figure 2 (below) provides insight into the number of times these activity groups appear in daily activity logs across the entire 12-month sample; these data were strategically selected to represent both cold- and warm-weather months, with additional considerations for early implementation, COVID onset, periods of social unrest and established CNPI activity without additional confounding factors. We have included a full list of dates included in our sampling procedure in Appendix Table 4, for reference. Based on these data, community engagements appeared dramatically more often in officer logs than any other category, and nearly four times as often as explicit problem-solving activities did.

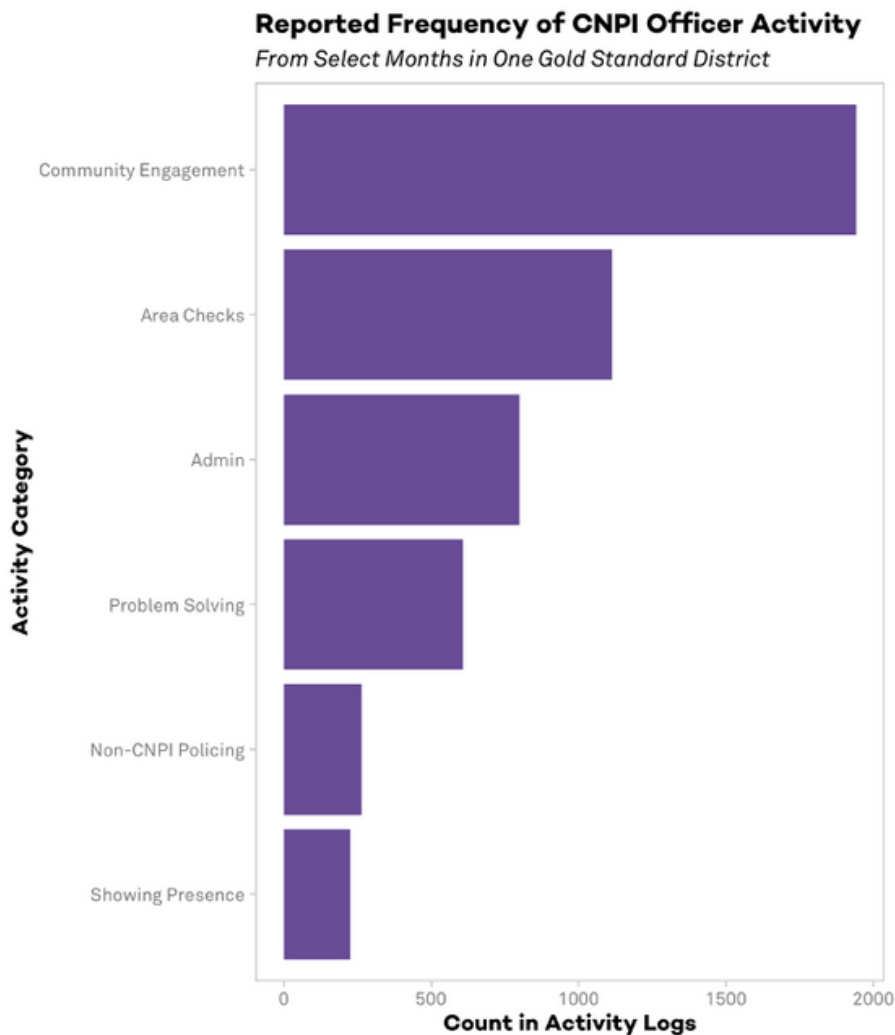


Figure 2. Graph displaying the self-reported frequency of different CNPI activity types.

Administrative duties consume large amounts of DCO time

The frequency with which each of these activities was reported in daily activity logs does not take into account the amount of time DCOs spend on each activity; these data are included in Figure 3 (below). While community engagement appeared more frequently than any other category, this activity generally consumed less time for officers than other tasks. For instance, administrative tasks took officers nearly an hour to complete on average, while community engagements lasted on average fewer than 20 minutes.

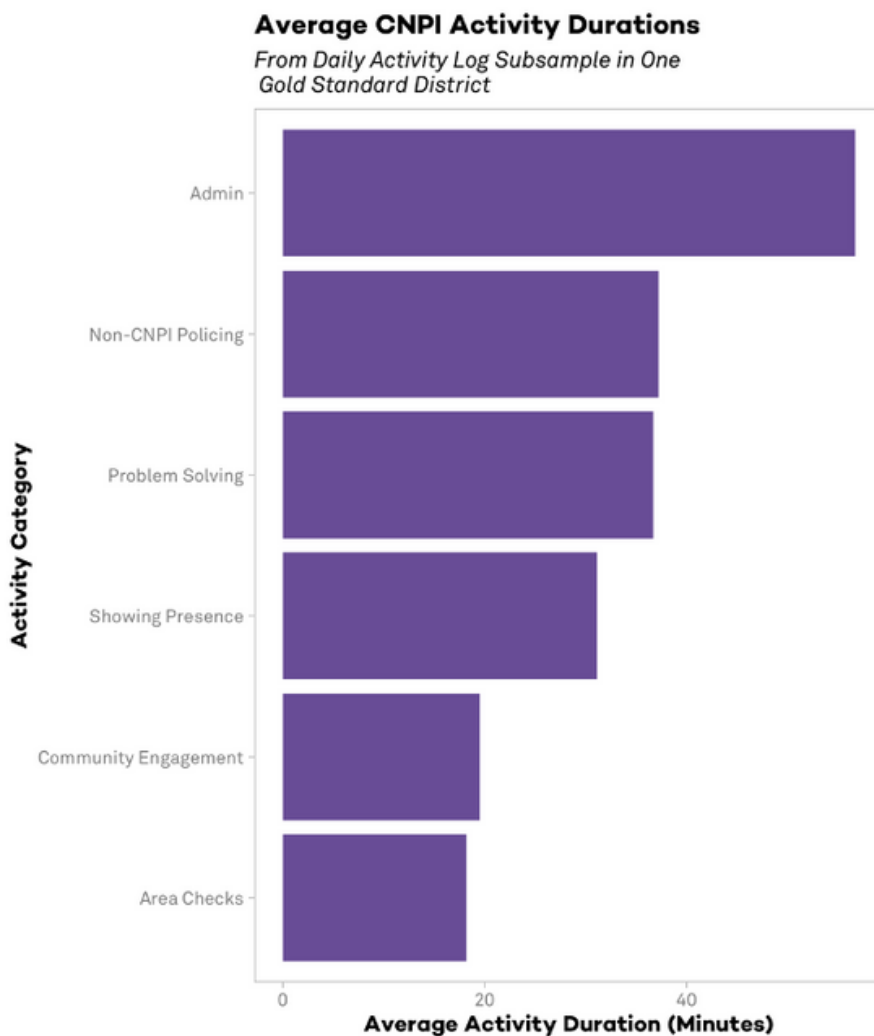


Figure 3. Graph displaying the average amount of time in minutes spent on different activities by CNPI officers.

DCO activities are evenly distributed geographically but change over time

The distribution of activities varied to a small extent between DCAs. This is consistent with comments from officers that flexibility in their daily work is critical for appropriately addressing issues specific to their area. On the other hand, our analyses reveal significant changes in activity patterns over time, as demonstrated in Figure 4 (below). The two most notable differences were the high number of community engagements reported in the summer 2019 sample and comparatively low activity counts in the winter 2019 sample. The spike in community engagements during the first summer of the initiative may be due the newness of CNPI, as officers spent their first summer establishing and sustaining new relationships.

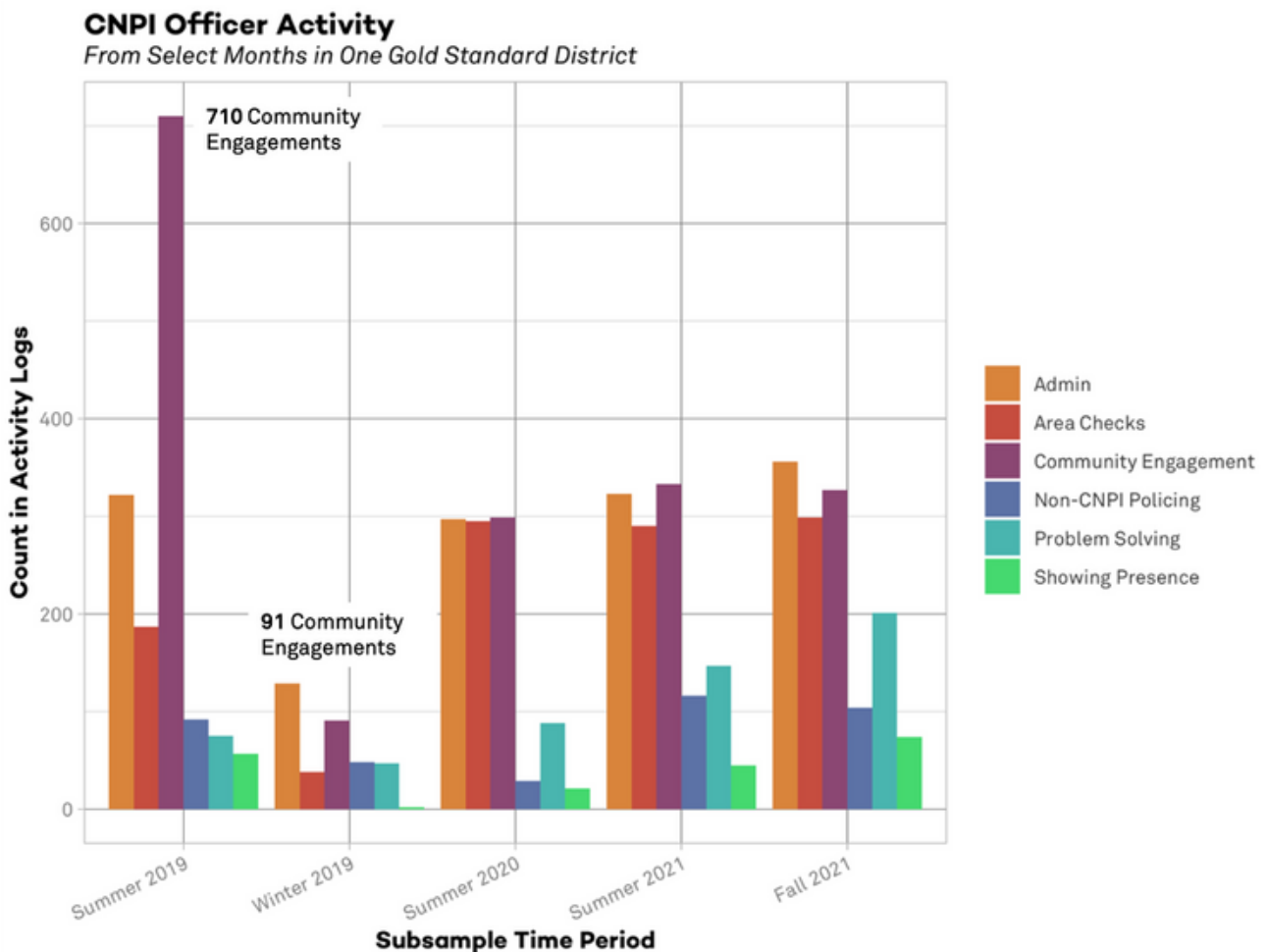


Figure 4: Frequency of different CNPI activities by time period.



Community Ambassadors & The Role of Engagement

Resident experiences with CNPI compose a core part of the initiative’s implementation. Community Ambassadors and other residents generally expressed that they could form more meaningful working relationships with DCOs, noting that DCOs often seem genuine and interested in helping. Youth at a community event in one district noted that DCOs “seemed like real people and are a lot nicer than most cops.”

Community leadership and public officials expressed similar sentiments, with one alderperson sharing their enthusiasm for the DCOs - “I call them my officers...they’re my District Community Officers.” DCOs are visible in their communities, and residents – particularly Community Ambassadors – generally share their optimism about the relationships they have formed with these officers.

However, key differences between the police and community infrastructure required of the initiative continue to limit stakeholders’ ability to fully implement CNPI:

- DCOs are paid, full-time employees of the police department while Community Ambassadors are volunteers, often engaging in CNPI activities only a few hours a month.
- Community Ambassadors continue to rely on personal relationships with officers as a key access point into the work of CNPI, which can at times be sporadic depending on the demands placed on DCOs by the department and the district

- DCOs’ connection to Community Ambassadors differs widely between districts; while some districts demonstrate strong, long-standing connections between Ambassadors and officers, in others Community Ambassador Coalitions are weaker or less familiar to officers, who instead build relationships with community leaders outside the Ambassador Coalition. In essence, these districts have a team of DCOs operating outside of the Community Ambassador structure.
- Connection to Community Ambassadors is frequently dependent on buy-in from Commanders and DCO leadership, which remains inconsistent across districts.

While CNPI previously conceptualized DCO-resident relationship building as happening through these Community Ambassador Coalitions, in practice, officers are frequently building relationships independent of Community Ambassadors. Both community members and officers associated with CNPI agree that relationship building between police and community remains a key component of successful implementation. One Community Ambassador expressed the importance of officers having personal connections to the community:

“We want to feel that police officers are part of the community, not just coming to do the job... And I don’t mean just working, I mean treating the community like it is theirs. When they are part of that community that’s when equity and respect step forward – when their heart and head are really invested.”

Meanwhile, DCOs also noted that involvement in CNPI “gives [officers] the opportunity to interact with [community members] and be like, ‘Hey this is what’s going on.’ And [community members] feel more comfortable. They don’t see the uniform anymore.” Another officer explained that **“without the cooperation of the public, police work is very hard.”** For these DCOs, connection to community is a central part of their work, and of policing more broadly.

For districts where connection to Community Ambassadors has been non-existent or tenuous, this relationship-building often happens with other community leaders instead – namely alderpeople and faith leaders. Connection to Community Ambassador Coalitions does not happen organically but rather through well-organized and clearly communicated standards of relationship building and regular engagement.

And yet, as CNPI continues to expand, this engagement remains at times challenging, at least in part because introductions to and collaboration with Community Ambassadors are limited by disorganized communication between CPD and CNPI stakeholders. Importantly, with new Police District Councils¹¹ eventually taking over the management

of these community coalitions, both DCOs and Ambassadors have expressed confusion about how this transition will happen; in one district, Community Ambassadors openly shared their interest in lobbying the city to maintain Policing Project’s involvement in Ambassador activities, primarily out of concern that the coalition was still too new to maintain through this transition.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A KEY CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

Community members want more meaningful engagement from DCOs

A key challenge for CNPI has been establishing consistent community engagement across evaluation districts. Some community residents described instances of positive engagement and relationship-building with DCOs. For instance, one community member who worked with a youth-serving organization shared enthusiasm for DCOs in the district:

“We want to feel that police officers are part of the community, not just coming to do the job... And I don’t mean just working, I mean treating the community like it is theirs. When they are part of that community that’s when equity and respect step forward – when their heart and head are really invested.”

However, many residents also expressed frustration that DCOs and Commanders were not showing up to meetings or events, communicating clearly with Community Ambassadors, or taking community concerns seriously.

In meetings, Community Ambassadors shared that DCO presence varied widely at community events; at one event, organized by ambassadors, DCOs attended but did not interact with residents, which ambassadors expressed was a “net negative.” In the same meeting, however, another ambassador shared that DCOs interacted more with residents and attendees at an event that ambassador organized but explained that this difference might be because the alderperson’s office was also present.

Some Community Ambassadors and residents raised concerns that their input and requests were not being taken seriously by DCOs or Commanders. For instance, an ambassador in one district explained that ambassadors organized a sports program in the park to positively engage teens and build relationships with law enforcement. However, when the ambassadors reached out to DCOs about participating, they refused:

¹¹ As part of an ordinance passed in July 2021, Chicago created a new, democratically elected body in each Chicago Police District, called a District Council. Per the City of Chicago, District Councils “will be made up of three people elected in regular municipal elections every four years” and “will have several key roles,” namely “building stronger connections between the police and the community at the district level, collaborating in the development and implementation of community policing initiatives, holding monthly public meetings, working with the community to get input on police department policies and practices, ensuring that the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability gets input from the community, [and] nominating members of the Community Commission.” Long term, the District Councils will convene CNPI’s Community Ambassador Coalitions and manage CNPI’s community components. District Council elections were held for the first time in February 2023, as part of Chicago’s municipal election.

“we were told by their top DCO ... ‘We don’t do that kinda thing. We don’t do the feel-good stuff.” Similarly, in another district, a Community Ambassador expressed frustration that the district’s annual strategic plans for community policing rarely included safety priorities raised by residents at CPD community listening sessions.

DCOs feel more comfortable forging relationships on their own

DCOs in some districts also prioritize engaging with previously established contacts and stakeholders over Community Ambassadors and other residents. At community events across multiple districts, officers mainly approached and spoke to residents and stakeholders with whom they had existing relationships but rarely attempted to forge new relationships. At events in which officers had few established ties, they often engaged at the periphery, performing routine duties such as traffic control and equipment setup instead. In some districts, DCOs expressed that they preferred working with other community partners or the alderperson’s office instead of Community Ambassadors.

For instance, one DCO sergeant noted that the district was reluctant to work with Community Ambassadors because some had been critical of police in the past, stating: *“I’m worried. I wonder how difficult it will be for them to be a liaison between the community and us if they openly express their disdain for the police.”* Other officers shared their concern that Ambassadors might be volunteering for the express purpose of personal gain (e.g., to have officers that they can pull into minor neighbor disputes) rather than as representatives of their community, which has led to skepticism of Community Ambassadors’ motivations for participation.

Officers see lack of engagement as an organizational barrier

Meanwhile, DCOs often expressed that these challenges stemmed from CNPI’s organizational and administrative barriers rather than a lack of desire to engage. Lack of awareness of CNPI in the community was a major issue; one Commander noted that *“people who deal with [DCOs] know who we are, but the rest of the community doesn’t know.”* Unclear goals for collaboration have also been a common barrier. For example, a meeting was planned in one district to help build relationships between Community Ambassadors and DCOs, but the purpose of the meeting was never explained to the DCOs in attendance. This led one frustrated officer to conclude, *“they want us to go to these meetings that have nothing to do with us.”* A DCO in another district raised concerns that the DCOs were also overscheduled and overburdened, which made it difficult to follow up on community concerns or spend time with residents:

“My biggest pet peeve is that our calendar is just flooded ... I want to get back to [serving] my families... Yesterday, we went and we [brought a care package to this refugee family]. It was rush rush. I met her really quick, and it was literally five minutes because they were already giving me another job and I had to say ‘I’m sorry, maybe later I can sit down with you and hear about your story and learn about your struggles’ ... It’s pulling [us] from effectively reaching the community.”

Recommendation #6: Establish norms of engagement and communicating expectations

While engagement and relationship-building are not practices with a one-size-fits-all solution, residents clearly feel a sense of frustration about the ways in which officers are not consistently and meaningfully engaging at community events and in their neighborhoods more broadly, while officers and district leaders feel disconnected from their ambassadors and express their own challenges to relationship-building. As a result, relationships between DCOs and community ambassadors become strained and difficult to maintain.

CNPI stakeholders should establish norms and communicate expectations around engagement. This includes mutual expectation-setting with community members about the role of DCOs at events, co-developing and clearly defining roles and responsibilities for CNPI stakeholders, and paying careful attention to the geographic boundaries within which DCOs engage in relationship-building activities on a regular basis. DCO relationship-building activities should also be responsive to the needs and expectations of community members within their District Coordination Areas.

Quantitative Impact Analysis & Findings



Did CNPI have a measurable impact in perceptions of public safety, trust in the police, or other safety and policing outcomes?

CNPI was conceived with the idea that changing the way officers and Community Ambassadors engaged with the community at large would result in measurable increases in trust in the police, and, through this increased trust, police could impact other outcomes, like perceptions of safety, or even the level of crime in a neighborhood. This section provides an update and expansion of the quantitative assessment of CNPI's impact conducted for previous reports. This update relies on a 'stepped wedge model'. A quasi-experimental approach that could accommodate the staggered start dates of CNPI in the various districts was required. The stepped wedge model uses the natural groupings of districts that implemented CNPI at the same time. When interpreting the results discussed below, they should be viewed as a general evaluation of the initiative, not of its implementation within specific districts. Unlike the previous sections of the report, which focused on a limited number of 'evaluation districts,' the stepped wedge models incorporate data from all 10 CNPI districts, though the graphics below will break out the evaluation districts for comparison.

When interpreting the results discussed below, they should be viewed as a general evaluation of the overall Initiative, not of its implementation within specific districts.

Broadly, results did not indicate a consistent program effect for CNPI across outcomes, which validates previous findings. For rates of violent crime, 911 calls, and arrests, there was no evidence in the models that CNPI had any impact on outcomes. In these models, factors like seasonality, district demographics, and other major events (such as pandemic lockdown), all showed significantly more statistical link to their respective outcomes. For sentiment-based outcomes (trust in police and perceptions of safety), results were also largely inconclusive, the result of both positive and negative results being detected at a statistically significant level. The sections below provide more context around unique dynamics surrounding each of these outcomes, and the resulting models created.

¹³ Previous evaluation analyses conducted by the research team CORNERS failed to detect a measurable effect in any outcomes.

¹⁴ Following a recent acquisition, the company previously known as Elucid's formal name is now Elucid by Zencity, but for the purposes of brevity, Zencity will be used in this report

MEASURING PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND TRUST

To consistently capture Chicago residents’ perceptions of safety and trust in the police, we rely on a set of survey data of a stratified random sample of between 1,500 to 2,000 Chicago residents in each of the city’s 69 police sectors every month. The monthly survey, collected by the private administrator, Zencity, asks residents three different questions based on prior social scientific research—two questions centered on trust in the police and one question about perceptions of public safety (see Appendix Table 5).

Survey respondents select their score on a 1 to 10 scale, and responses are presented as the weighted average response within police sectors. As such, the reported scores represent an “average response” to the questions and can be compared across sectors with some confidence. The raw number should be not read as a percentage but, instead, as a standardized metric across sectors with which to compare changes over time.

Average Zencity Trust Scores Since 2018 Average Zencity Safety Scores Since 2018

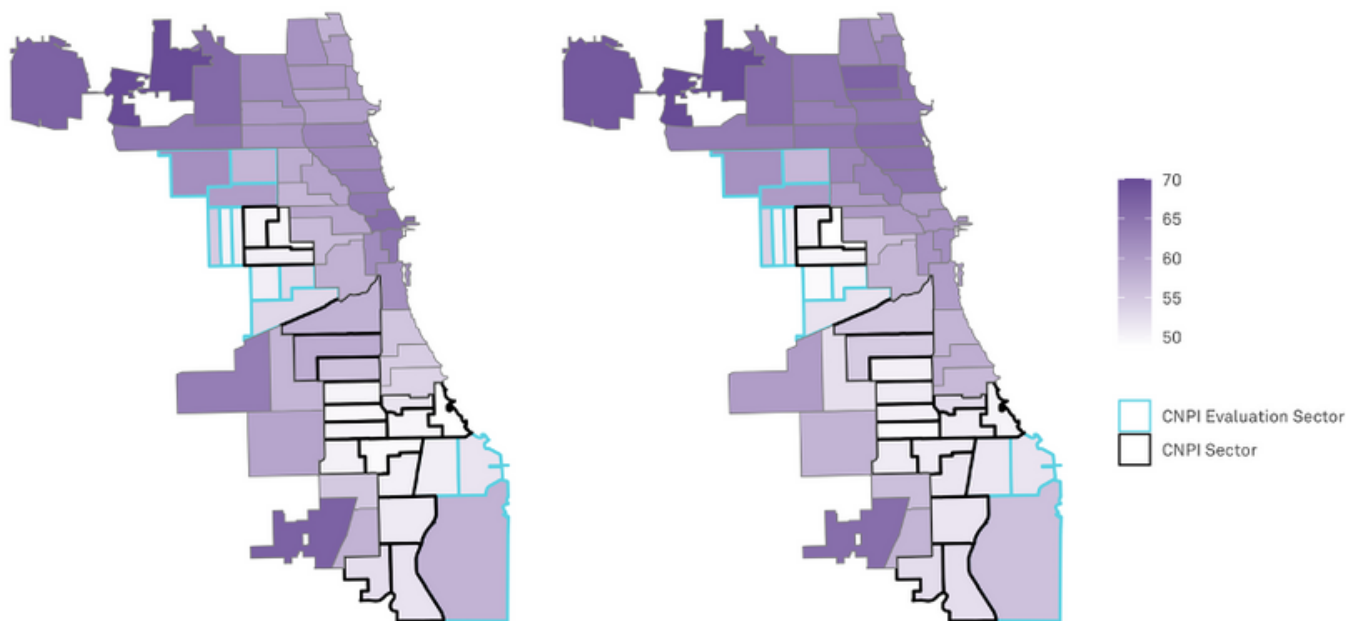


Figure 5: Average Zencity scores by police district from 2018 – 2022. Outlines used to distinguish type of district.

Figure 5 above displays average trust and safety survey responses by police sector since 2018. These metrics largely align with previous reports and established research on perceptions of police and safety in Chicago. Lighter sectors in Figure 4 represent districts with lower levels of trust in police and lower feelings of overall safety, and represent largely Black and Latino communities.

Figure 6 (below) displays the change in recorded perceptions of trust and safety over time, with the primary comparison being between overall city averages and the average of districts for which CNPI ended up being implemented. In essence, a higher line indicates higher general perceptions of personal safety and trust in the police at that point in time. The clearest trend is that regardless of time, CNPI districts remain consistently less trustful of police and demonstrate lower perceptions of safety. This is in line with Figure 5, given the composition of CNPI districts is almost exclusively South and West Side communities.

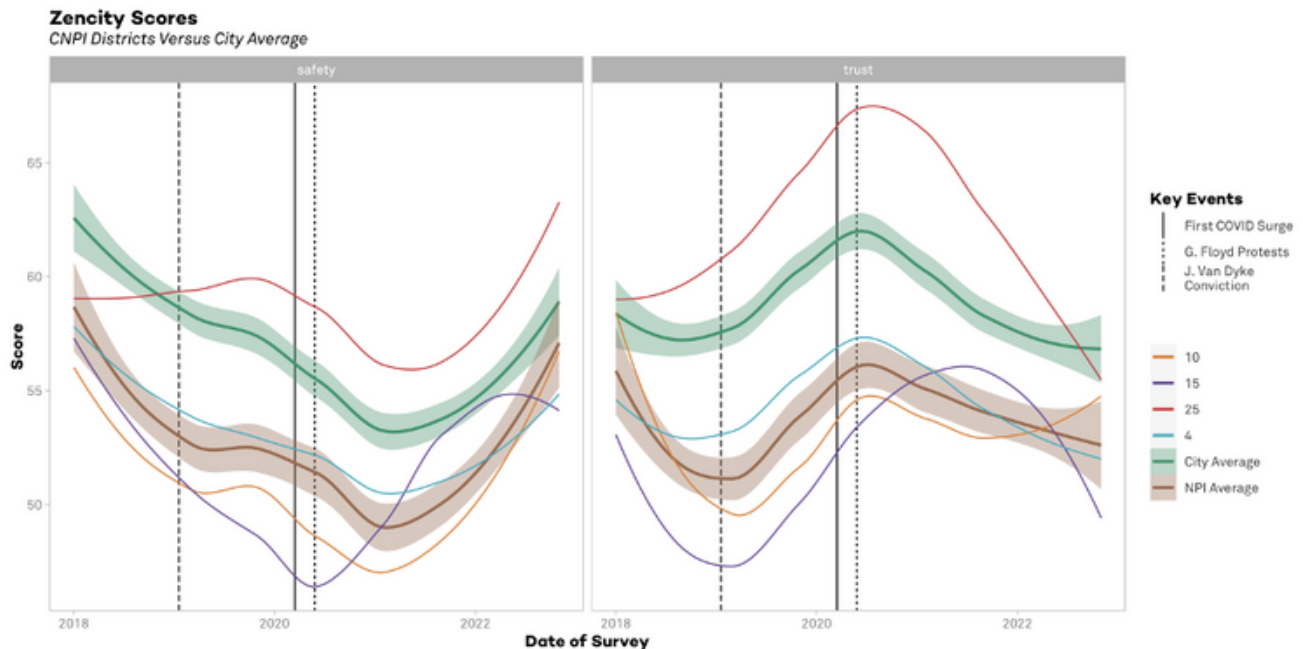


Figure 6. Comparative trust and safety score averages across CNPI geographies.

In addition to these relative rates, Figure 6 provides evidence for the importance of several events that correlate with large swings in perceptions of trust and safety. These events range considerably but were consistently high-profile and deeply tied to policing and safety in Chicago or nation-wide.

Notable among these is the conviction of Jason Van Dyke for the murder of Laquan McDonald in 2018, which coincides with a low point in community trust in policing for almost all districts, after which sentiment improves. In contrast, the uprisings that occurred in response to the murder of George Floyd happened alongside the beginning of a strong drop in trust in police. Meanwhile, perceptions of safety appear to mirror general crime trends more than individual events, with the nationwide surge of violent crime in 2020 predictably resulting a definitive low point in safety perceptions, after which there is a rebound, mirroring the same trend in violent crime.

These events, when assembled, inform much of the landscape of public sentiment in Chicago, and therefore pose important obstacles to consider when developing methods for evaluating the impact of CNPI, as is done above.

SENTIMENT METRICS: INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Similar to the results of outcome models discussed below, stepped wedge models evaluating trust and safety metrics failed to detect conclusive evidence of a positive CNPI impact. In the model evaluating trust, CNPI program implementation was associated with a slight increase in trust in police over time (a slope change), suggesting that the timing of CNPI implementation was associated with a small increase in trust overall.

For context, the impact on trust the model associates with the COVID-19 pandemic is more than 10 times greater than that from CNPI (both are slope changes). In the case of the metric measuring perceptions of safety, a similarly small increase over time in perceptions of safety was directly countered by a significant decrease in the safety score upon program implementation.

Taken together, these results do not represent conclusive evidence of program impact, especially in the context of other model results. As outlined above, the evaluation of sentiment metrics faces a number of sophisticated confounders, and as such the statistical effects as observed could be explained by multiple external factors, and thus should be interpreted with caution.

911 CALLS FOR SERVICE: NO SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

One of the stated objectives of CNPI is to decrease the volume of calls for service by having DCOs and ambassadors work with residents to address the underlying problems in communities that generate many 911 calls. At the same time however, the program model of CNPI seeks to increase community trust in CPD, which could result in people feeling more comfortable in calling 911. Additional qualitative evidence suggests that DCOs regularly recommend citizens call 911 so that problems are documented and thus receive department resources; this adds another complicating layer, though the extent of this sort of practice's adoption is unknown. Therefore, it is unclear whether the expected result of CNPI should be a higher or lower call volume if the initiative was successfully implemented.

Figure 7 (below) shows the trend in calls for service over time, and while the city average of calls per month appears relatively stable, individual CNPI districts experienced volatility in their call volume, which could be indicative of changing relationships with the police (CNPI or otherwise), or simply reflecting the reality of changing crime rates at the time.

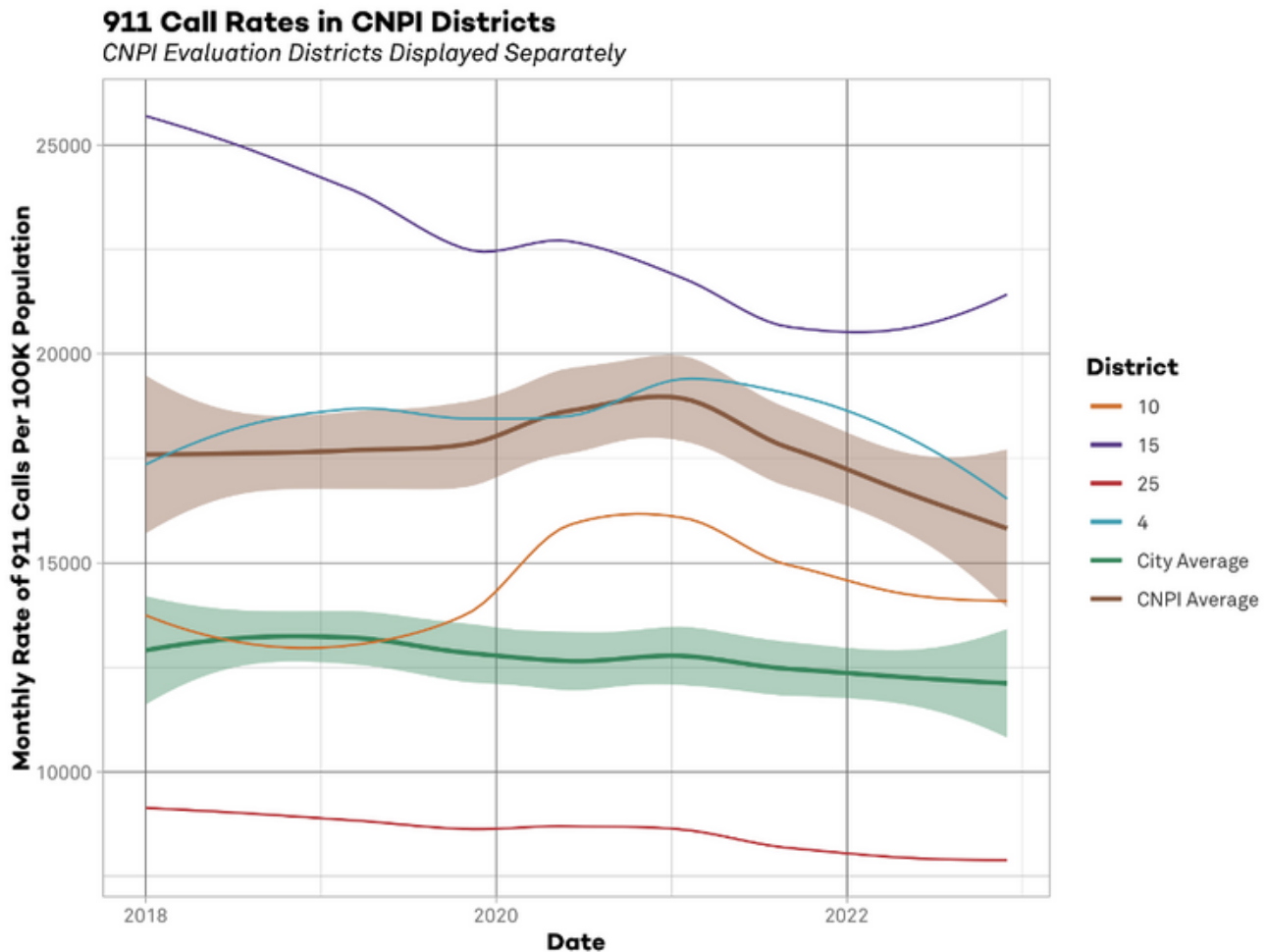


Figure 7. Comparative rates of 911 call volume across CNPI geographies.

Perhaps due to such competing forces, the model results around CNPI’s impact on 911 call volume do not display significant results in either direction. As seen in Figure 7, factors such as the seasonal trends in calls and the demographic composition of a district remain far more predictive of the eventual rate of 911 calls than those relating to the implementation of CNPI. Further complicating the landscape of factors influencing 911 call volume in Chicago is the launch of several 911 alternatives in recent years, such as the CARE (Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement), which may have diverted call traffic, but remain very difficult to model.

VIOLENT CRIME: NO SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

CNPI’s program theory posits that improved relations between the police and communities should result in higher levels of engagement with the police, and thus greater ability to prevent criminal activity such as violent crime. To be clear, this model theory is dependent on an intermediate improvement in trust because of CNPI, which has yet to be conclusively demonstrated. Regardless, a quasi-experimental approach was developed to measure if the implementation of NPI was associated with any detectable difference in violent crime rates across CPD districts.

This quasi-experimental approach was unable to detect any evidence for a relationship between the rollout of CNPI and changes in the violent crime rate of a given district. Given the unclear nature of the result of CNPI on resident trust, this is not surprising. Especially considering the limited number of officers involved in CNPI, and thus the limited scale of the intervention, it is not surprising that a second-order effect such as changes in violent crime is not detectable at a statistically significant level. Figure 8 depicts the combined rate of non-fatal shootings and homicides across different geographies.

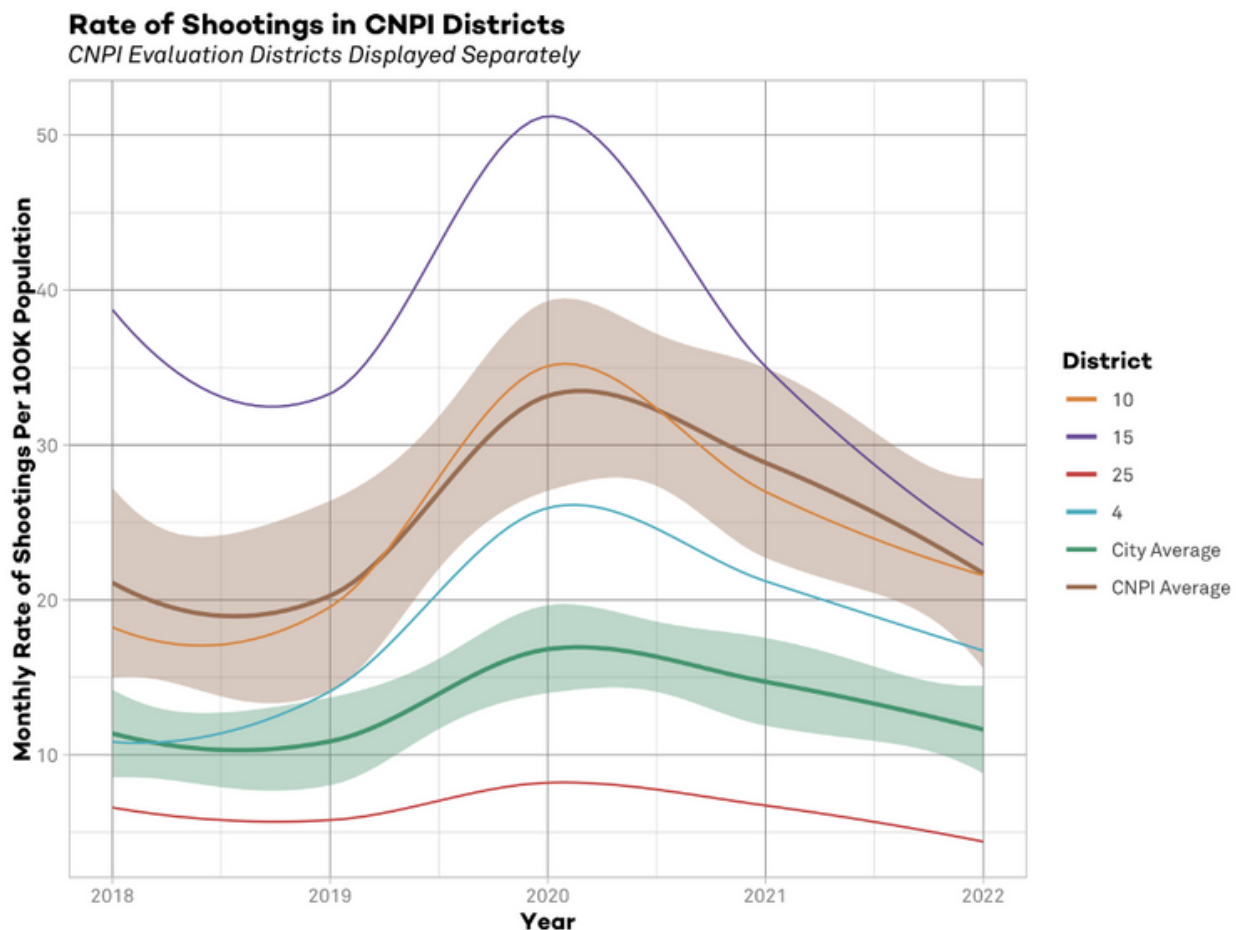


Figure 8. Comparative rates of gunshot victimization across CNPI geographies.

As has been previously described, violent crime increased significantly in 2020, both in Chicago and nationwide, while subsequent years have seen reductions from that peak. With strong trends in violent crime present in the data that are (presumably) unrelated to the implementation of CNPI, an important element of the evaluation was ensuring that model results did not incorrectly attribute observed changes over this period to CNPI. This is especially important as many CNPI district rollouts occurred post-2019, which would mean that evaluations may be susceptible to falsely ascribing the naturally occurring decline in violent crime in Chicago as resulting from CNPI intervention.

ARRESTS: NO SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

Interactions that result in arrests are influenced and generated by multiple factors and circumstances, and thus are often difficult to predict. Often, arrests are an indicator of police activity which itself is influenced by deployment or operational and policy decisions. At the same time, valid community concerns around real changes in crime can result in pressure for police to spend more time in certain places.

In the context of CNPI, which is designed to increase trust through greater interaction between officers and community but is supposed to represent an increased emphasis on positive relationships by the police department, the direction of the overall change is ambiguous. CPD, motivated by a desire to improve relations with the community, could scale back punitive measures like arrests, or simply by being more present, officers could witness more crime for which they feel compelled to make an arrest.

Similar to the results from the quasi-experimental violent crime model, our model of change in arrest rates showed no evidence of an effect from CNPI rollout. This lack of discernable effect size could be attributed to many things, but the recognition that the adoption of CNPI represents only a limited portion of overall CPD activity should be presented first, and that absent larger changes in CPD philosophy and practice, it would be hard for CNPI to change the overall trajectory of an outcome as central to the standard model of policing as arrests.

Figure 9 depicts rates of arrests per district since 2018. As can be seen, arrest rates were driven down by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown (despite rising crime rates), and current arrest rates are down to less than half of their rates at the beginning of program evaluation. This sharp decline poses another challenge to an evaluation of program effects, but from a programmatic perspective, a decrease in emphasis on punitive enforcement by CPD could also provide a better platform from which to increase community trust.

Arrest Rates in CNPI Districts
CNPI Evaluation Districts Displayed Separately

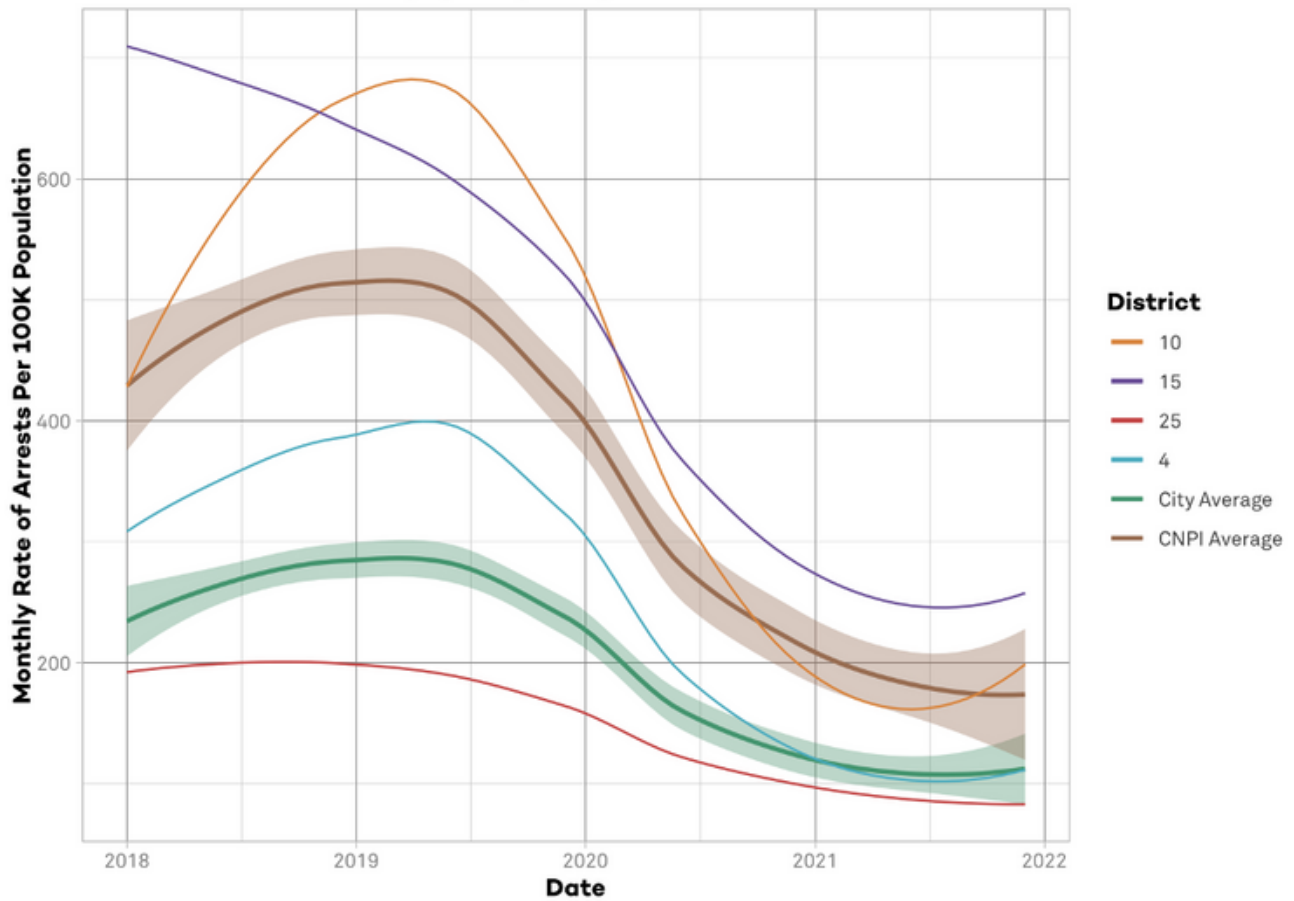


Figure 9. Comparative arrest rates across CNPI geographies.

While lack of conclusive evidence for program effect may be due to a number of factors, qualitative analysis suggests that some key institutional barriers to full implementation continue to hinder CNPI’s progress in relationship building and, likely to some extent, public safety metrics. In addition, the scale of CNPI remains significantly smaller than that of traditional police activities, resulting in a situation in which even proper implementation might be difficult to detect statistically. The lack of conclusive results in this report is in line with previous analyses, which utilized entirely different statistical methods. Together, these analyses reinforce the claim that CNPI has yet to generate¹⁵ impact that is detectable at the statistically significant level.

15 The synthetic control model that was used in the previous report failed to demonstrate significant results for the program’s implementation in District 25.

Conclusion

Nearly four years into its implementation, CNPI continues to demonstrate mixed results for those closest to the initiative and has not produced conclusive results on citywide metrics related to perceptions of safety and trust, 911 calls for service, violent crime, or arrests. This may be largely due to the fact that CPD and the City of Chicago have yet to fully implement the initiative with fidelity to the model, despite being four years into the project and committing to multiple expansions across the city.

While individuals associated with CNPI (e.g., Community Ambassadors, DCOs, and other CNPI stakeholders) point to positive changes related to relationship-building, engagement, and – for DCOs – job satisfaction, the initiative continues to face significant structural barriers to full implementation. These barriers largely revolve around definitions of community policing, beat officer buy-in to CNPI activities and objectives, department staffing challenges that limit DCO effectiveness, continued staff turnover without sufficient transition planning (particularly related to relationship maintenance), limitations around effective measurement, and challenges to meaningful community engagement. As CPD and the City of Chicago plan to expand CNPI city-wide, they should clearly communicate and codify practices related to community policing to ensure effective, meaningful future-state implementation of the initiative. This process is particularly important given current leadership transitions within the Mayor's office and CPD, which coincide with existing plans to shift Community Ambassador Coalitions management to local District Councils and the citywide Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability.

Full, successful implementation of the initiative depends on clear prioritization – through communication, adoption, and resourcing – of CNPI practices and philosophies, throughout the department and in communities, in full compliance with the initiative's model of community policing.

Appendix

Appendix Table 1. Research Activities

Data Collection Activity	Description of Activity
Semi-structured interviews with officers and residents.	CORNERS researchers continued to conduct interviews with residents and officers involved in CNPI at regular intervals. While interviews in Districts 11 and 15 were ended due to saturation, the team expanded to District 10 and continued to speak with stakeholders in District 25. To date, we have conducted 300 interviews with 80 police officers and 66 community members. In 2022, we also conducted a series of interviews with members of district leadership
Ethnographic observations of community meetings and events	Our work in 2022 continued to involve ethnographic observation of key CNPI events and meetings. In total, as of February 2023, the CORNERS team has engaged in participant observations in five CPD Districts: District 25, District 10, District 15, District 11, and District 4. These observations include more than 100 regular check-ins with officers, upwards of 60 community meetings, and various other community policing events and department meetings.
Collection and analysis of key program documentation	CORNERS reviewed and analyzed a sample of officers’ Daily Activity Logs for one CNPI district. These documents date back to the beginning of CNPI’s implementation and include a sample of 12 months’ worth of reporting, spanning from late 2019 through the end of 2021.
Quasi-Experimental analysis of key safety and public sentiment data	Evaluation activities included in this report also reflect updated analyses of Zencity public sentiment metrics, particularly perceptions of safety and trust in police. Through an interrupted time series (ITS) analysis, we determine what impact, if any, the implementation of CNPI had on these metrics, as well as measures including 911 calls for service and violent crime in evaluation districts.

Appendix Table 2. Demographic Make-Up of CNPI Districts

District	Total Population	% African American	% Hispanic	% White, non-Hispanic	% Unemployed	% in Poverty
3	70,825	90%	3%	4%	17%	32%
4	117,929	61%	31%	7%	13%	23%
5	68,353	93%	4%	2%	21%	26%
6	88,238	95%	2%	1%	17%	26%
7	52,007	90%	7%	1%	24%	36%
9	157,356	10%	54%	15%	11%	22%
10	100,924	31%	63%	6%	11%	27%
11	67,329	78%	16%	4%	17%	36%
15	56,308	84%	12%	3%	16%	31%
25	196,000	15%	67%	15%	7%	17%
Citywide	2,666,487	29%	29%	33%	4%	17%

Appendix Table 3. Daily Activity Report Category Sorting

Activity Category	Activities Included (pulled from Activity Logs)
Admin	Administrative
Non-CNPI Policing	Accident/Crime Scene
	Criminal/Enforcement
	Emergency Assist
	Special Assignment
Area Checks	Business Check
	Premise Check
Community Engagement	PCI (Positive Community Interaction)
	Community Engagement
Problem Solving	Community Concern/Safety
	Problem Solving
	Violation
Showing Presence	Special Attention
	Foot Patrol
	Show Presence
	Canvas

Appendix Table 4. Daily Activity Report subsample time periods

Time Period	Months Included	Selection Criteria
Summer 2019	June, July	First summer post-implementation
Winter 2019	January	Pre-COVID winter
Summer 2020	June, July, August	Summer outlier (COVID & social unrest)
Summer 2021	June, July, August	“Standard” CNPI summer
Fall 2021	October, November, December	Fall/Winter sample

Appendix Table 5. Zencity Survey Questions Used to Measure Trust and Safety

Trust Questions	Safety Questions
How much do you agree with this statement? The police in my neighborhood treat local residents with respect. (Score from 1–10) How much do you agree with this statement? The police in my neighborhood listen to and take into account the concerns of local residents. (Score from 1–10)	When it comes to the threat of crime, how safe do you feel in your neighborhood? (Score from 1–10)

Appendix Table 6. CNPI Rollout Structure Used to Design Stepped Wedge Evaluation

	Pre-Period	Time Period 1	Time Period 2	Time Period 3	Time Period 4	Time Period 5
Start Date	Jan, 2018	Jan, 2019	Nov, 2019	Sep, 2020	Feb, 2021	May, 2021
D25	Control	Treated	Treated	Treated	Treated	Treated
D15	Control	Control	Treated	Treated	Treated	Treated
D9, D10, D11	Control	Control	Control	Treated	Treated	Treated
D4, D5	Control	Control	Control	Control	Treated	Treated
D3, D6, D7	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Treated

Appendix Table 7. Results of stepped wedge model analysis of perceptions of safety

<i>Predictors</i>	safety		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>std. Error</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	62.94	1.71	<0.001
vio count	-0.05	0.02	0.004
pct af am	-1.46	1.58	0.357
pct pov	-11.08	6.40	0.084
treatment	-4.58	1.97	0.020
months since start	-0.29	0.03	<0.001
pandemic grad	3.56	1.08	0.001
treatment × months since start	0.30	0.05	<0.001
treatment × pandemic grad	-10.45	1.58	<0.001
Random Effects			
σ^2	19.73		
τ_{00} group	3.75		
ICC	0.16		
N_{group}	5		
Observations	549		
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.248 / 0.368		
AIC	3226.782		

Appendix Table 8. Results of stepped wedge model analysis of trust in police

<i>Predictors</i>	trust		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>std. Error</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	69.99	1.72	<0.001
pct af am	-10.19	1.39	<0.001
pct pov	-17.67	5.98	0.003
post van dyke	-17.78	1.53	<0.001
months since start	-0.74	0.17	<0.001
post floyd	31.50	5.76	<0.001
pandemic grad	-0.77	1.25	0.540
treatment	-3.12	2.69	0.246
post van dyke × months since start	1.33	0.18	<0.001
months since start × post floyd	-1.12	0.17	<0.001
pandemic grad × treatment	-2.68	1.92	0.164
months since start × treatment	0.22	0.10	0.028
Random Effects			
σ^2	17.98		
τ_{00} group	2.00		
ICC	0.10		
N_{group}	5		
Observations	550		
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.557 / 0.601		
AIC	3176.950		

Appendix Table 9. Results of stepped wedge model analysis of 911 call volume

<i>Predictors</i>	count 911		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>std. Error</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	21857.36	1437.75	<0.001
sin(2 * pi/12 * months since start)	-156.97	230.51	0.496
cos(2 * pi/12 * months since start)	-961.27	241.72	<0.001
vio count	118.00	15.80	<0.001
pct af am	4565.43	1281.36	<0.001
pct pov	-33949.99	4970.47	<0.001
pandemic grad	-145.34	850.09	0.864
treatment	-314.47	1531.72	0.837
months since start	-12.65	26.62	0.635
pandemic grad × treatment	885.36	1227.71	0.471
treatment × months since start	-32.88	39.29	0.403
Random Effects			
σ^2	11783506.09		
τ_{00} group	3690295.06		
ICC	0.24		
N_{group}	5		
Observations	559		
Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.271 / 0.445		
AIC	10578.713		

Appendix Table 10. Results of stepped wedge model analysis of shooting victimizations

<i>Predictors</i>	count		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>std. Error</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	-7.62	5.62	0.176
sin(2 * pi/12 * months since start)	-6.38	0.55	<0.001
cos(2 * pi/12 * months since start)	-7.04	0.57	<0.001
pandemic grad	15.00	2.18	<0.001
treatment	7.16	4.10	0.081
pct af am	33.45	3.25	<0.001
pct pov	18.03	13.45	0.180
months since start	-0.06	0.07	0.434
pandemic grad × treatment	-8.61	3.26	0.009
treatment × months since start	-0.02	0.11	0.850
Random Effects			
σ^2	84.24		
τ_{00} group	109.85		
ICC	0.57		
N_{group}	5		
Observations	559		
Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.504 / 0.785		
AIC	4085.697		

Appendix Item 11. Results of stepped wedge model analysis of arrest rates

<i>Predictors</i>	log count		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>std. Error</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	5.45	0.29	<0.001
pct af am	1.25	0.13	<0.001
pct pov	0.23	0.54	0.666
pandemic grad	-0.79	0.08	<0.001
treatment	-0.13	0.17	0.461
months since start	-0.01	0.00	0.020
pandemic grad × treatment	0.23	0.12	0.047
treatment × months since start	-0.01	0.01	0.342
Random Effects			
σ^2	0.10		
τ_{00} group	0.31		
ICC	0.76		
N_{group}	5		
Observations	440		
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.444 / 0.865		
AIC	300.971		

An aerial photograph of Chicago, showing the city's skyline with numerous skyscrapers in the distance, a dense residential area with many small houses in the foreground, and a major highway interchange in the middle ground. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

The Center for Neighborhood Engaged Research & Science (CORNERS), housed at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research, leverages the transformative power of networks to help community and civic partners build safer, healthier, more equitable neighborhoods.

For more information about this report or CORNERS, please contact Andrew Papachristos at avp@northwestern.edu. Follow CORNERS on Twitter [@CornersResearch](https://twitter.com/CornersResearch).