

Corners

CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD
ENGAGED RESEARCH & SCIENCE

Communities Partnering

4 Peace

2018 - 2023

**Five Year Research &
Evaluation Report**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CORNERS gratefully acknowledges the following partners and funders for their contributions to this report:



THIS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION WERE MADE POSSIBLE WITH SUPPORT FROM THE JOYCE FOUNDATION, PRITZKER PUCKER FAMILY FOUNDATION, AND THE PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFE AND PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES.

PHOTO CREDIT: COMMUNITIES PARTNERING 4 PEACE

Table of Contents

01

Executive
Summary

03

Introduction

05

Engaged
Research
Approach &
Partnership

06

Early Lessons

09

Research Design
& Methods

11

Findings

23

Conclusion

24

Appendix



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Gun violence—a key driver of premature death and racial disparities in life expectancy in the US—remains especially damaging to Chicagoans, who face consistently higher per capita rates of gun violence than residents of other large US cities.

In response to this persistent challenge, Metropolitan Peace Initiatives (MPI), a division of Metropolitan Family Services, convened eight community-based organizations in Chicago in 2017 to form a CVI coalition called Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P). The coalition's goal is to reduce gun violence stemming from interpersonal and group conflicts among the individuals most likely to be involved.

To achieve this, CP4P organizations provide participants with conflict mediation and de-escalation, mentorship, case management, and referrals to direct services, including legal advocacy, employment support, educational

opportunities, and trauma-informed behavioral health counseling.

The Center for Neighborhood Engaged Research and Science (CORNERS) served as CP4P's research partner to evaluate the coalition's violence reduction efforts. CORNERS used an engaged research process to co-design a multi-method evaluation in partnership with MPI and CP4P leadership. This report builds on previous interim reports on the coalition's individual and community-level impact.

CORNERS' research and evaluation strategy is focused on assessing the following three key aspects related to CP4P's reach and impact:

1. The ability of CP4P to reach and provide services to individuals most acutely impacted by and involved in gun violence.
2. The impact of CP4P services on individual-level participant outcomes, including involvement in gun violence and service use.
3. CP4P's potential impact on gun violence at the community-level.

To answer these questions, CORNERS built a multi-method research design that captures the experiences and perspectives of CP4P participants through focus groups, periodic surveys, and in-depth interviews. CORNERS also conducted quasi-experimental statistical analyses that demonstrate CP4P's impact on gunshot victimization among its participants and within its coverage area.

FINDINGS

CP4P's collaborative approach is an innovative shift among CVI organizations in Chicago towards coordination and alignment. The coalition, which has now expanded to include 13 organizations covering 27 different community areas, delivers an array of services and resources to individuals with the greatest likelihood of gun violence involvement. **Key findings from CORNERS' evaluation at the five-year mark include:**

1. CP4P finds the right participants. Consistent with CP4P's theory of change, CP4P organizations recruit and enroll individuals from a subset of Chicagoans experiencing the highest levels of gun violence involvement. Through its intervention, the coalition has reached participants from nearly all of Chicago's 77 community areas.
2. CP4P participants experienced declines in gunshot victimization. Participants experienced noticeable decreases in gunshot victimization in the months following their enrollment in CP4P.

In addition, individuals who participated in CP4P partner programs experienced a modest decline in arrests for violent crimes over the long term.

3. CP4P has other positive effects on participants. Beyond traditional violence intervention, CP4P delivers an array of impactful services to its participants. CP4P organizations help improve participants' lives through programs that include employment support, educational opportunities, and mentorship. Data from surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus groups underscore these benefits.

4. CP4P helps make its neighborhoods safer. The coalition's efforts potentially prevented hundreds of shootings and violent crime arrests in its coverage areas when compared to similar synthetic control areas of Chicago.

Findings show CP4P:

- Reaches the **right people**
- **Lowers rates** of gunshot victimization among participants
- **Improves access** to employment, education, and other services
- Leads to **safer neighborhoods**

Introduction

Gun violence is a leading cause of premature death and a key driver of racial disparities in life expectancy in the United States.¹ Gun violence is especially high in Chicago where the city consistently reports higher per capita rates than other large US cities.

In 2021, Chicago recorded one of its most violent years in decades with over 800 homicides.² This spike in gun violence occurred within the context of a national reckoning with the racial inequality and social harms associated with conventional policy approaches to crime response such as intensive policing and incarceration. Acknowledging the importance of alternative strategies to reduce gun violence without exacerbating these harms, civic leaders and policymakers have called for an expanded investment in community violence intervention (CVI). Community violence intervention—commonly understood as the work of preventing retaliatory shootings, mediating gang and interpersonal conflicts, monitoring and responding to flash points for community violence, and mentoring those at highest risk of violence and connecting them to crucial social services —has been identified as a key strategy to reduce violence in Chicago and throughout the nation.^{3,4}

In response to a 61% single-year surge in gun homicide in 2016, and with the support of the private philanthropic community in Chicago,⁵ (Figure 1), in 2017 Metropolitan Peace Initiatives (MPI), a division of Metropolitan Family Services, convened eight community-based organizations to form a CVI coalition called Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P).⁶

CP4P is a coalition of Chicago CVI organizations coordinating their activities towards a common goal: to reduce gun violence among individuals who are most likely to be involved in gun violence, neighborhood disputes, and group conflicts. The coalition develops and coordinates interventions in neighborhoods with the highest levels of gun violence using an approach that relies on multiple outreach organizations across the city to strengthen relationships throughout their respective communities and serve as front-line violence preventionists.

CP4P is a collective effort to standardize practices, foster collaboration, and coordinate violence prevention activities citywide. At its core, CP4P centers the expertise and hyper-local knowledge of its partners to coordinate violence reduction efforts and share best practices across a city-wide network of CVI organizations. CP4P's main violence reduction efforts include: mediating street group conflicts, "canvassing" neighborhood streets to build relationships and recruit participants, and supporting victims of violence and their loved ones in the immediate aftermath of shootings.

Introduction

Beyond direct violence prevention and response, MPI offers CP4P participants services such as legal advocacy, workforce development support, educational opportunities, and trauma-informed behavioral health counseling.⁷ Since it was formed in 2017, CP4P has expanded from eight to 13 organizations in 27 different community areas (Figure 2). See Appendix A for an in-depth overview of CP4P.

The Center for Neighborhood Engaged Research and Science (CORNERS)⁸ serves as CP4P’s research partner to evaluate the coalition’s coordinated violence reduction efforts in Chicago. CORNERS conducts rigorous and cutting-edge research into the ways that **Neighborhood Science** can be used to understand and address gun violence and other pressing social issues.

Working closely with community and civic partners through an engaged research process, CORNERS collects and analyzes a wide range of data on the complex networks of residents, institutions, and organizations that make up the “connective tissue” of communities and – by extension – our cities.

CORNERS conducted a five-year, multi-method evaluation of CP4P to answer the following primary research questions:

1. Does CP4P reach and provide services to those individuals most acutely impacted by and involved in gun violence?
2. What is the impact of CP4P services on **individual-level** participant outcomes, including involvement in gun violence and service use?
3. What is CP4P’s potential impact on gun violence at the **community-level**?

Homicides and Non-Fatal Shootings in Chicago and CP4P Coverage Areas (2013-2022)

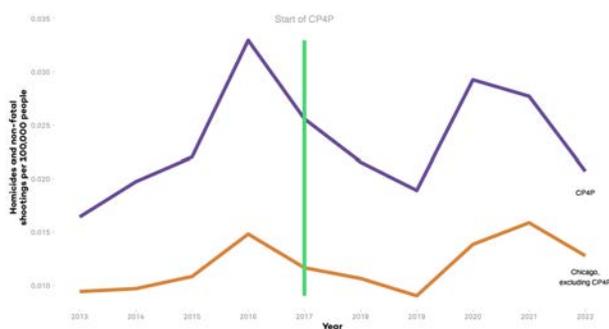


Figure 1. Homicide and non-fatal shootings trends (counts per 100,000 people) for the decade preceding the end of the CP4P evaluation period. The green, horizontal line signifies the start of CP4P.

CP4P Coverage Areas by Start Date

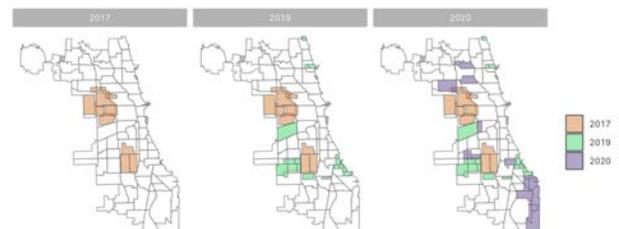


Figure 2. The spatial boundaries of street outreach organizations’ coverage areas, designated by start year into CP4P. Note, that organizations that joined in 2021 are not included in the evaluation, thus some coverage areas are missing above.

Engaged Research Approach & Partnership

To evaluate CP4P, CORNERS implemented an engaged research approach that involved working in deep partnership with CP4P partners on study design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings.

From the outset, it was first imperative to develop an equitable research approach that acknowledged the prior harm and longstanding mistrust of research institutions by many of the communities covered by CP4P. Chicago residents, and street outreach workers in particular, have a long history of “being studied” by researchers external to the community whose research appears to provide little benefit to their lives or neighborhoods.⁹ Many organizations and communities involved with CP4P had previous experiences with being part of research projects in which they felt like they had little input or power to guide the research activities and little or no voice in framing or using research findings. Given such a history, some CP4P leaders expressed initial hesitancy around data privacy, transparency, and engagement with researchers.

During the initial stages of the partnership, CORNERS and CP4P leadership openly discussed these and other issues of concern and committed to straightforward communication and mutual transparency that would guide decision making, access to data, and use of any research findings. Together, the CP4P and CORNERS teams co-designed data collection activities, tools, and metrics to ensure that neither CP4P partners nor CORNERS’ researchers left out important measures as a result of being too close (partner organizations) or too far removed (researchers) from CVI work.

Other collaborative research activities included participant focus groups and interviews that researchers and CP4P CVI staff facilitated in tandem. Additionally, CORNERS’ researchers met regularly with CP4P data managers to craft and eventually deploy an innovative, transparent mechanism for individual-level data collection. Finally, CORNERS shared findings throughout the research process. This helped inform CP4P decision making and ensured that partners had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the interpretation of findings prior to any public release or external facing presentation or publication.



Early Lessons from Chicago's Community-based Collaborative Response to Gun Violence



CP4P changed the nature of CVI work in Chicago by forging a coalition of community-based organizations to address gun violence together.

Its unique collaborative model holds promise to unite, coordinate, and amplify CVI efforts throughout Chicago. Prior to CP4P, many CVI organizations worked independently in their respective communities with little sharing of best practices, exchange of information on violent incidents, or coordination of violence response. Competition for scarce resources further isolated organizations from one another and at times undermined violence prevention efforts.

MPI and CP4P leadership recognized that this siloed approach often hindered the sharing of best practices, stymied innovation, and likely limited impact. The coalition sought to turn CVI competitors into partners through coordinated violence response, shared resources and funding, and professionalization and support of the workforce. CP4P has largely realized these aspirations, and in doing so has helped establish the foundation for a citywide violence prevention infrastructure in Chicago.

Although shaped by the specific dynamics of CVI coalition building in Chicago, there are several key insights that have the potential to inform CVI coordination and collaboration efforts in other cities and contexts.¹⁰

Early Lessons



Collaboration can bolster CVI capacity and resiliency

Supported in part by MPI, enhanced data capacity and consequent data-informed decision-making are key benefits of the CP4P collaboration. For example, the coalition regularly analyzes trends to help guide critical decision-making about the establishment of violence “hotspots” and locations for Light in the Night events.¹¹ Coordination calls are supplemented with spatial and other forms of data which keep frontline staff informed about violence in and across their communities. Data-informed outreach practices enable CP4P to target its efforts where conflict mitigation is most needed, with fidelity to its foundational commitment to “hyperlocal” strategies, while also modeling transparency by documenting violence trends in designated hotspots before and after the coalition’s intervention. Finally, CP4P partners’ collective success in bolstering their data management capacities and systematizing data collection practices has been essential in demonstrating the coalition’s ability to standardize practices across a diverse group of organizations.



Collaboration can help communities navigate broader social conflicts.

The benefits of the collaborative relationships developed through CP4P extend beyond addressing incidents of gun violence to other moments of community unrest. For example, using their credibility and proximity, several outreach workers from various CP4P organizations worked together to help calm a racialized conflict that was developing, in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, along the border of North and South Lawndale in Chicago.¹² In a tense and critical moment, organizations were able to leverage relationship and communication channels established and strengthened in part through their involvement with CP4P. This mediation culminated in a “Black-Brown Unity March”¹³ through the heart of Little Village¹⁴ that helped dissipate the potential for future violence.

Early Lessons



Collaboration can help support innovation.

CP4P helps support the implementation of Flatlining Violence Inspires Peace (FLIP), an innovative CVI initiative spearheaded by Chicago CRED¹⁵ in partnership with local street outreach organizations. FLIP is designed to buttress Chicago’s growing outreach capacity by recruiting residents and deploying them as Peacekeepers who serve as temporary violence preventionists in areas of their neighborhoods experiencing high levels of violence. As of January 2023, eight of the ten organizations implementing FLIP are also CP4P partner organizations. CP4P’s model of collaboration and coordination of violence response among multiple CVI organizations helped inform FLIP’s cross-organizational strategy.



Collaboration can amplify programmatic differences that stress and challenge coordinated efforts.

The coalition’s rapid expansion and onboarding of new organizations has presented occasional challenges to collaboration. CP4P partners retain their organizational culture upon joining the coalition. Yet, the diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and programmatic theories – in addition to pre-existing tensions that occasionally resurfaced – at times created disagreements over conflict mediation, service referrals, data usage, and other activities. Moreover, as public funding opportunities became more readily available to CP4P, some newer partners expressed concern and hesitation regarding certain data collection requirements.



Research Design & Methods

CORNERS sought to develop a research design that fully captured the complexity of CP4P’s structure and the comprehensive nature of its work.

In doing so, the research team encountered two primary challenges. First, the multi-site nature of CP4P, the coalition’s expansion over time, and the multi-organizational activities posed unique challenges to implementing the research design. For example, while each CP4P organization has a goal of reducing violence in their communities, organizations vary in their approaches, specializing in different services and recruitment strategies depending on their own resources and the needs of their communities. Second, the non-random concentration of gun violence in particular communities and the rapid expansion of CP4P hindered the ability to rely on many traditional research designs that require randomization or untreated comparison methods to assess impact. In short, the diverse and unique nature of CP4P rendered a rigid research design infeasible.

To address these challenges while also reflecting the complex nature of CP4P, CORNERS developed a research design through deep engagement with coalition partners. The multi-methods research design, described in more detail below, facilitated both actionable data for CP4P partners and a rigorous evaluation. The research design and methods were developed to investigate the primary three research questions focused on CP4P reach, individual-level impact, and community-level impact.

Reach and Individual-level Impact: To assess the impact of CP4P CVI services on individual participants’ violence involvement, CORNERS selected 2,828 CP4P participants with corresponding Chicago Police Department (CPD) administrative records and performed a descriptive analysis of changes in gunshot victimization and arrests for violent crimes at 12- and 18-months following enrollment in services. CORNERS’ data scientists worked closely with CP4P and MFS staff to pilot and formalize a quantitative data sharing procedure that allowed participant data essential for the evaluation to be regularly and securely transferred, deidentified, processed, and stored. Referred to as “matching sessions,” this process represents an innovative model of linking (or “matching”) CP4P participants to municipal arrest and victimization records.

Through this matching process, CORNERS systematically and securely collects demographic (name, birthdate, gender, community where active, etc.), service (service type, duration, tenure, first and last service dates, etc.), and survey (positive outcomes such as education and employment attainment, etc.) information from participants. To safeguard and protect sensitive participant information, CORNERS’ matching process anonymizes individuals who have administrative records while still allowing them to be uniquely identified along with the services they engage in, and none of the original or derived data are shared with any entity or organization outside the matching session.

Research Design & Methods

This process allows organizations to retain complete control of their data while providing safely anonymized data to researchers. Matching also lays the groundwork for assessing whether CP4P reaches those at the highest risk of gun violence.

While individual-level violence reduction is a key success metric, CORNERS also evaluated several possible positive outcomes of CP4P services on participants' lives. With input from CP4P stakeholders, CORNERS developed a survey instrument that assessed educational attainment, employment status, and other measures of well-being. CP4P frontline staff administered the survey among their participants on a quarterly basis. This survey yielded self-reported data from 1,806 CP4P participants between July 2017 through December 2022.

To highlight the voices and experiences of participants, CORNERS also conducted in-depth interviews and focus groups with participants from CP4P partner organizations. In total, CORNERS completed 16 focus groups and 16 interviews with CP4P participants between 2019 and 2020. Two focus groups were held at each of the eight CP4P partner organizations—one focus group that included participants with less than a year of participation and the other that included participants with tenures longer than one year. Individuals were asked to discuss several topics, including impactful moments during their time in CP4P, CP4P's influence on their mindsets and values, and their perceptions of success and failure as participants. A sub-set of focus group participants were selected for in-depth interviews to further discuss these topics and were sampled to capture a range of participant demographics.

In keeping with CORNERS' engaged research approach, focus groups and interviews were co-facilitated by a CP4P outreach supervisor and a CORNERS' researcher.

Community-level Impact: Evaluating the non-randomness of gun-violence at the neighborhood-level generally requires a quasi-experimental research design. Our evaluation relies on the quasi-experimental “synthetic control” method to generate controls using statistical modeling of real communities in Chicago that do not receive the “treatment” of CVI services from a CP4P partner organization. In this synthetic modeling approach, non-CP4P candidate areas are weighted based on their similarity to the demographic, economic, and violence characteristics of CP4P target areas. When summed, these weights create a synthetic control unit for each treated CP4P unit, allowing us to conduct a comparative interrupted time series and estimate the causal effect of CP4P neighborhood interventions on our outcome of interest—rates of non-fatal shootings and homicides—across time. Using data starting from January 2014 to establish a considerable pre-intervention period, the results highlighted in this report include the statistically significant immediate (“level”) and longer-term trend (“slope”) differences in quarterly rates of shooting incidents between CP4P and control areas.



Findings

Demographics

Most CP4P participants (73%) are male, with females comprising nearly a quarter of all participants (Figure 3). In addition, approximately 77% of CP4P participants identify as Black, while roughly 14% identify as Latino (Figure 4). Finally, the mean CP4P participant's age is just under 31 years old (Figure 5).

Participants by Gender

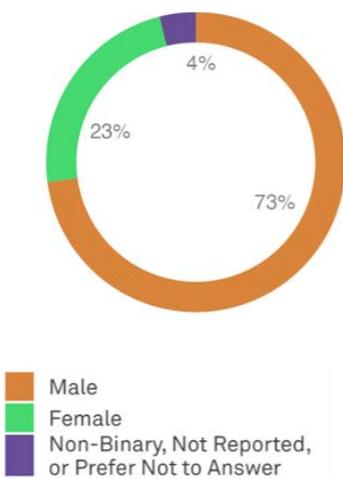


Figure 3. CP4P participant gender

Participants by Ethnicity/Race

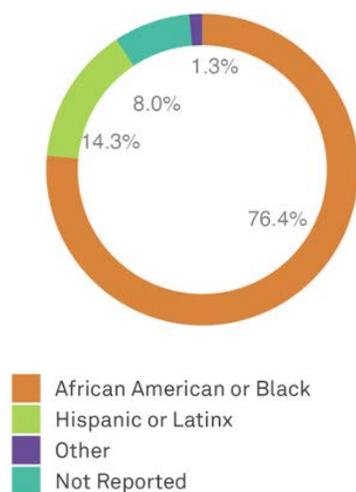


Figure 4. CP4P participant ethnicity/race

Age at First CP4P Contact

For participants Linkable at CPD Data

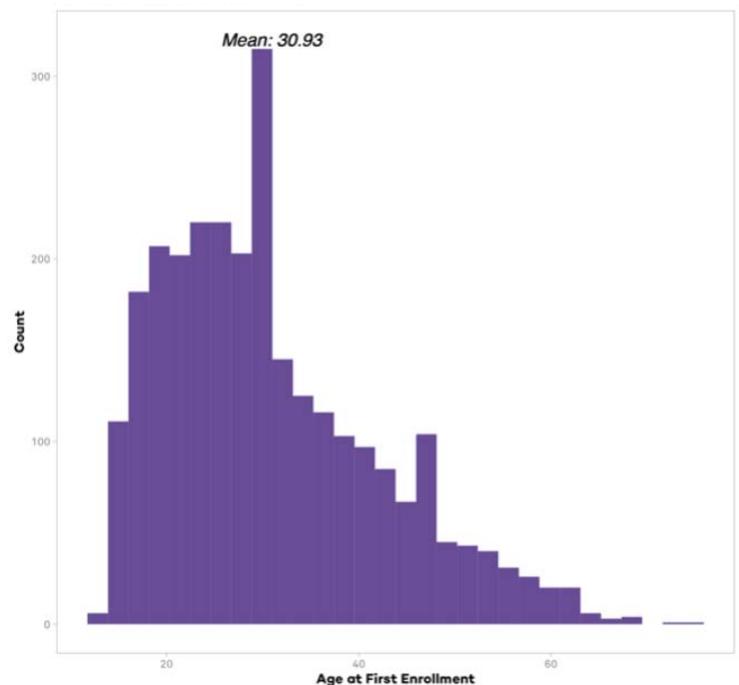


Figure 5. CP4P participant age at first contact with a CP4P partner organization

Findings

CP4P Finds the Right Participants

CORNERS' analyses find that CP4P successfully recruits and enrolls individuals from a subset of Chicagoans experiencing the highest levels of gun violence involvement. CP4P participants live in the specified target communities that experience the highest levels of gun violence in Chicago (Figure 6). Indeed, when comparing the rates of non-fatal shootings and homicides (per 100,000 people) between different groups in Chicago, CP4P participants have 6.5 times the risk of gunshot injury than the population within their same Census block groups, and almost 11 times greater risk than Chicago's general population (Figure 7). In summary, CP4P participants are more susceptible to gun violence compared to the rest of Chicago and reaching these individuals with services is key to violence prevention and improving citywide safety.

CP4P. Participants by Community Area

Point Location is Street Block of Most Common Arrest

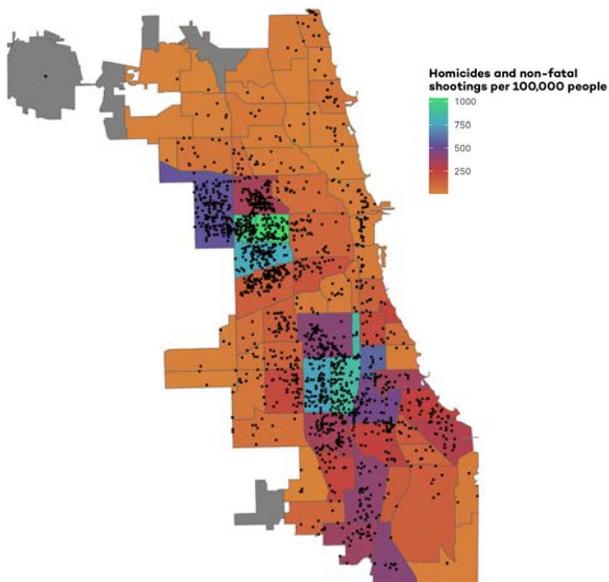


Figure 6. A map of participant locations, represented by jittered coordinates on the street block of most common arrest, overlaid on the 2016 homicide rates by community areas. This map highlights the immense risk of gun violence within CP4P participants' environments.

Violence Risk by Population Group

In 2016

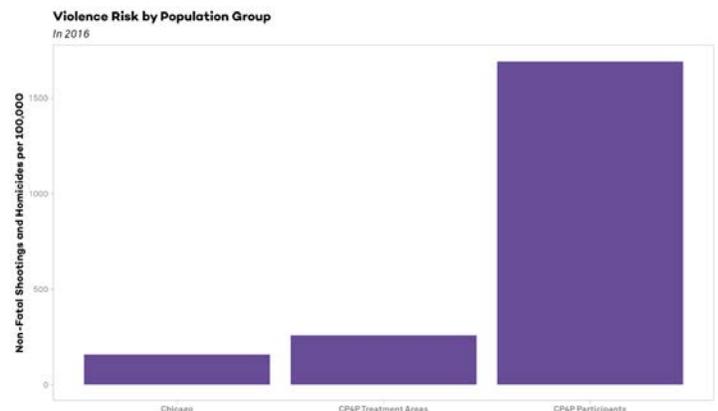


Figure 7. A bar chart for estimating violence risk by different populations, where risk is calculated as the total non-fatal shootings and homicides in the geographic boundaries of the population group, per 100,000 individuals.

Findings

CP4P provides a targeted provision of services to participants in neighborhoods and social networks. During the evaluation period, CP4P served thousands of participants and was able to contact them dozens of times with a multitude of services. Indeed, from July 2017 through December 2022, CP4P partners provided at least 199,602 services to 5,516 participants (Figure 8), with participants receiving a median of about 12 service contacts. A total of 68,270 service contacts were made during 2022 alone.

CP4P Participants Over Time

Direct Reach 2017-2022

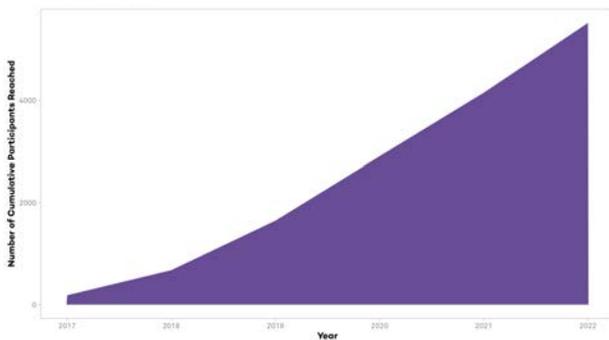
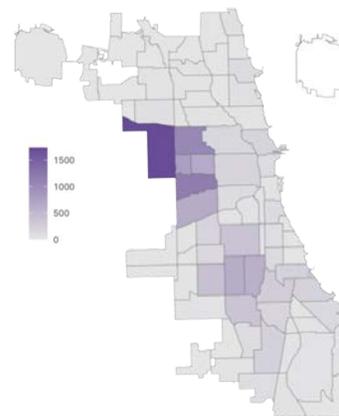


Figure 8. A plot of the cumulative number of participants reached over time. CP4P has maintained a steady stream of recruitment and contact with participants since it began.

CP4P's geographic and social reach expands beyond the coverage areas of partnering organizations. CP4P directly reached and provided services for participants in 69 out of 77 community areas, but the indirect reach (i.e., the co-offending ties of participants) expanded into all 77 community areas (Figure 9). Combined with the successful recruitment of individuals at exceedingly high risk of gunshot victimization relative to their peers, CP4P's wide geographic range has reached a significant proportion of individuals with the highest exposure to gun violence throughout the city.

Network Members by Community Area

Direct Matched Participants & their Co-Arrest Network



Network Centroid Map

Number of Ties

40
80
120
160

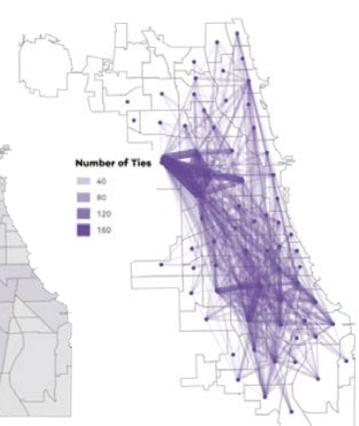


Figure 9. Direct and indirect reach of CP4P service providers by community area and co-offending networks of CP4P participants with ties demonstrating participant's first- and second-degree connections throughout the city.

Findings

CP4P Participants Experienced Declines in Gunshot Victimization

CORNERS' analyses find that CP4P participants experienced noticeable decreases in gunshot victimization and modest declines in arrests for violent crimes. Findings from the individual-level evaluation, which assessed the impact of CP4P on individual-level gunshot victimization and violent crime arrests, are presented below.

Gunshot Victimization:¹⁶

Participants experienced a 44% decrease in gunshot victimization after 12 months of accessing services through CP4P partner organizations relative to the 12 months (Figure 10a) before accessing services. There was a sustained decrease of 42% in gunshot victimization in the 18 months after accessing services relative to 18 months before (Figure 10b). These findings suggest that individuals who participated in programming with CP4P partner organizations had a lower risk for gunshot victimization in the year following program enrollment with a persistent reduction in victimizations for another six months after starting services.

Violent Crime Arrests:

Participants experienced a 1% increase in violent crime arrests in the 12 months after initially accessing services relative to the 12 months (Figure 10a) before accessing services. However, individuals experienced a 9% decline in violent crime arrests after 18 months of initial program enrollment relative to 18 months before (Figure 10b). Broken down by program year, four out of five cohorts experienced decreases in violent arrests, especially in the 18 months following program participation. These findings suggest that individuals who participate in CP4P partner organization programs experience a longer-term modest decline in arrests for violent crimes, despite a small increase in the initial 12 months of services.



Findings

Limitations

It is important to note that the percent changes in violence-related outcomes described above do not represent causal analyses of the impact of CP4P on participant outcomes. Rather, these represent changes in raw counts of incidents before participant enrollment compared to the months after enrollment with no significance tests or other statistical claim to the direct effect of CP4P. Because these are counts, small changes in the number of incidents can look like a large percent change (e.g. one gunshot victimization in the pre-period and two gunshot victimizations in the post-period would look like a 100% increase in victimizations); as such, while percent-change numbers show potentially meaningful trends in violence, they often fail to accurately tell the story of an intervention's impact on individual outcomes.

Methodological Challenges and Future Work

For the reasons described throughout this report, quantitative evaluation of the individual impact of CP4P is methodologically challenging. Differing theories of change, program implementation, services offered, and program tenure across partner organizations preclude traditional quasi-experimental evaluation designs. CORNERS is exploring innovative options for causal inference on the individual-level.

One such option is the consideration of individual “dosage” of services received across partner organizations with a wide variation in the types of services provided (e.g., education, housing support, violence prevention, employment, etc.), how services are delivered (e.g., in-person, over the phone, by text, etc.), and the length of time individuals are involved in programming. CORNERS is working on understanding dosage through evaluating which services are most predictive of violence-related outcomes, what the relationships are between the amount of services received and future gun carrying and other risky behaviors, and determining a “typical” CP4P participant’s profile of services received, tenure of contact, and overall dosage of programming. This work is ongoing, and will help to inform CP4P partner organizations on which services—and at what dosage—might be most important for violence reduction.



Outcomes for CP4P Participants during 12 Months Before and After Start Date

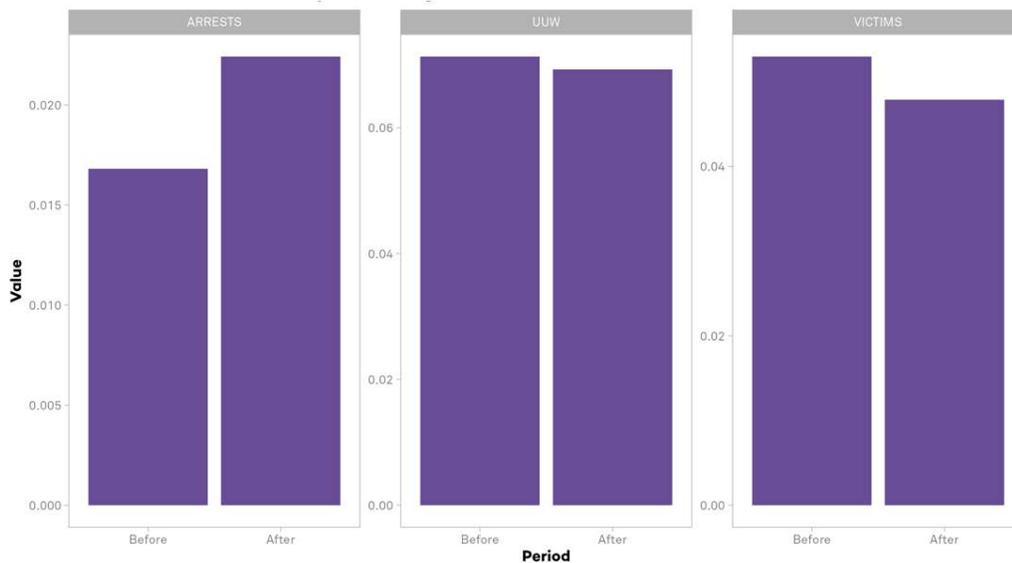


Figure 10a. Percent change in arrests for violent crimes, unlawful use of a weapon (UUW), and gunshot victimizations for CP4P participants at 12 months after enrollment in programming relative to the same amount of time before enrollment.

Outcomes for CP4P Participants during 18 Months Before and After Start Date

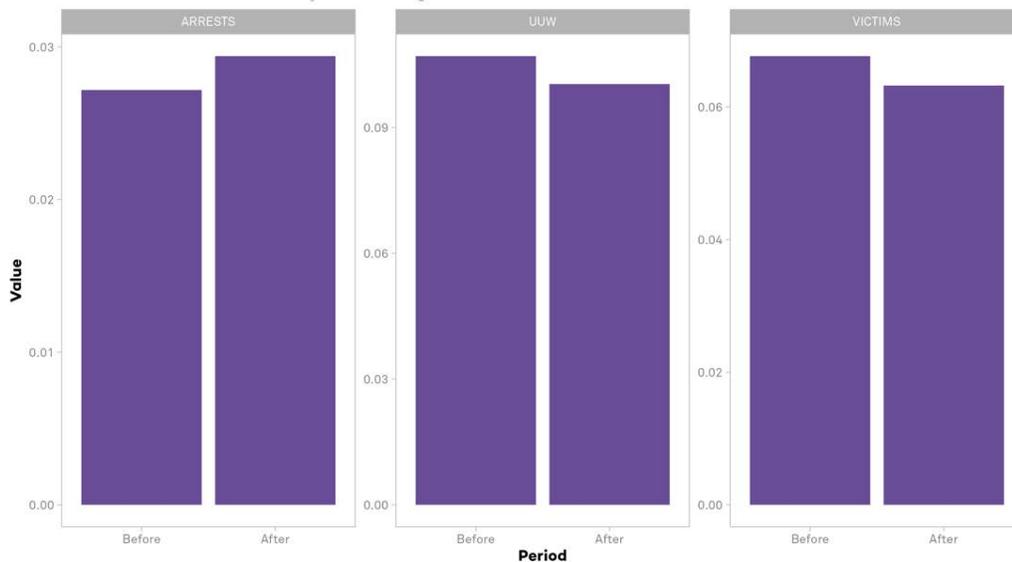


Figure 10b. Percent change in arrests for violent crimes, unlawful use of a weapon (UUW), and gunshot victimizations for CP4P participants at 18 months after enrollment in programming relative to the same amount of time before enrollment.

Findings

CP4P Has Other Positive Effects On Participants

CORNERS' analyses find that CP4P organizations and outreach workers help improve participants' lives through programs and services such as employment, education, and mentorship.

Beyond violence prevention, CP4P partner organizations provide services that include educational opportunities, employment support, mental health and substance use counseling, mentorship, and more (Figure 11). For example, CP4P partner organizations operate various workforce development programs, offer financial literacy classes, and run weekly food pantry distribution centers in their communities. CP4P street outreach workers also play an important mentorship and social support role in the lives of their participants, helping them navigate challenging times, and served as a critical resource to communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To capture the wide range of positive effects CP4P participation may have on individuals' lives, CORNERS analyzed data from surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus groups, all of which underscores the benefits of the diverse set of services and resources provided by CP4P.

According to participant survey data, 87% of CP4P participants reported being employed at the time of their most recent survey, of which 68% held full-time jobs. In terms of educational attainment, 46% of participants had less than a high school diploma at the time of their most recent survey, while 15% maintained or increased their educational attainment during their program involvement.

Participating in CVI programs may also improve individuals' sense of safety in their communities and connection to their neighborhoods. At least 40% of CP4P participants reported feeling "safe" or "very safe" at the time of their most recent survey. When comparing initial survey responses to their most recent responses, only 19% of participants reported a decrease in their perceived level of safety and about 19% of participants increased their involvement in community events.



Types of Services CP4P Participants Received

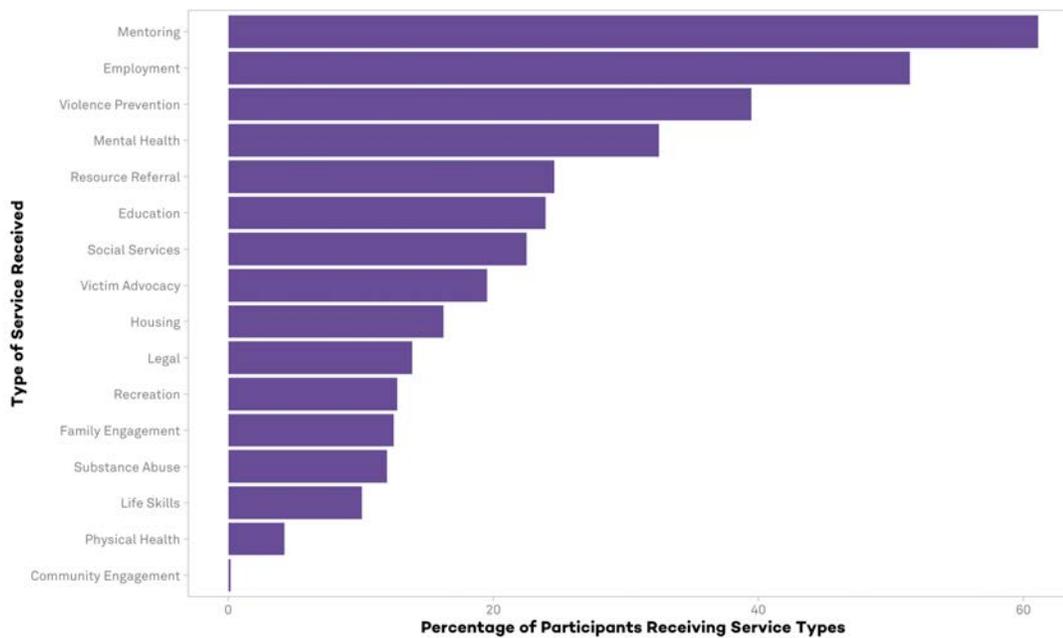


Figure 11. The types of services that CP4P participants received.

In addition, interviews and focus groups with participants revealed that CVI workers operate as conduits that connect participants with services and provide mentorship that help participants navigate life’s most difficult moments.¹⁷

For instance, a participant who met a CP4P-affiliated outreach worker after suffering a brutal attack recalled how the outreach worker supported him through dark times, “When I was really down, they came through. They showed as much love as they could. I appreciated that because it could be rough times...While you [are] sitting there shedding tears, they would always call.” The CVI worker’s mentorship—in combination with the programming and services provided by the organization—marked a turning point in this participant’s life. The participant further described how such social support and access to services helped empower him to work toward his educational goals and contribute positively to his community.

Reflecting on the ways his involvement with a CP4P organization changed his life, he said, “I stick with what I’m doing now... any spare time that I got, I go do something positive. I believe I can reach any goal.”

Data from focus groups and interviews also shed light on how participants understood their journeys through their respective programs and the impact CP4P had on their lives. Respondents described their journeys as dynamic, continuous development processes rather than conclusive successes or failures, and considered changes to their socioeconomic conditions, habits, and mindsets to be most meaningful.

One participant in his early 20s visualized himself confidently engaging prospective employers with the soft skills learned through a workforce development program. “I probably [know] how to go in and do my interviews, how to come in well-prepared, dressed,” he said.

“Basically, get that eye opening...[They will say] ‘He wants to work here. We should hire him.’” Additionally, participants discussed how CP4P involvement provided a vehicle for them to demonstrate their commitment to contributing positivity to their neighborhood.

“If a person was to come to me like, ‘What you did for your community?’ I’d be like,

‘Man, I participated in a violence prevention program and we did a damn good job.’”

- West Side participant

During the onset of the COVID-19 crisis and the accompanying uptick in violent crime in 2020, CP4P partners and street outreach workers took on an expanded set of responsibilities¹⁸ to address the multitude of effects of the pandemic within their communities. CP4P organizations mobilized to maintain their connections with participants and other community members and partners working to address unmet economic and social needs in the community due to the pandemic.

Outreach workers provided more frequent and broader support to communities and residents through the dissemination of public health education materials, the distribution of critical supplies like food and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and the adaptation of standard violence reduction tactics in accordance with unprecedented stay-at-home orders. CP4P’s model—inherently relational in its approach to conflict mediation and community engagement—was acutely tested by the social distancing measures and restricted access to facilities during the pandemic’s initial shock, while its ability to swiftly adapt and augment its operations was facilitated by its foundational commitment to collaboration. Between 2017–2022, the CP4P CVI workforce also grew considerably, with a significant infusion of additional CP4P outreach workers into the CVI workforce at the start of the pandemic (Figure 12).

Number of CVI Workers in CP4P Community Areas

July 2017–December 2022

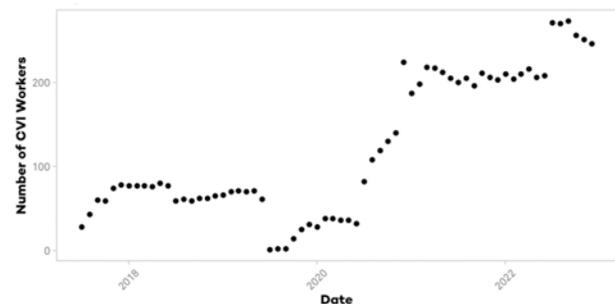


Figure 12. A plot of the number of CP4P CVI workers throughout the evaluation period. Of note is the steady increase in the number of CVI workers in early 2020, a response to meeting the challenges of the pandemic beyond the duties encompassed by street outreach

Findings

CP4P Helps Make Its Neighborhoods Safer

CORNERS’ analyses find that the coalition’s efforts potentially prevented hundreds of shootings and violent crime arrests in CP4P coverage areas when compared to similar synthetic control areas of Chicago.

To assess how the impact of CP4P might affect broader rates of violence across communities, CORNERS conducted a quasi-experimental analysis that relied on comparing synthetic controls against CP4P coverage areas before and after the start of CP4P.

The majority of CP4P coverage areas that experienced statistically significant changes in the community-level outcomes of interest—non-fatal shooting and homicides rates and arrests rates—demonstrated an improvement over their comparison areas through December 2021. For the combined outcome of non-fatal shooting and homicide rates, 30% of the CP4P areas (four out of 13) had statistically significant favorable changes relative to their comparison areas after the introduction of CP4P programming (Figure 13).¹⁹

These results include three areas estimated to have prevented 355 non-fatal shooting victimizations and homicides from the start of CP4P through

the end of the evaluation period relative to their controls (i.e., rates or the “slope” of victimizations changed, per a population of 100,000 people) and one area estimated to have prevented 28 non-fatal shooting victimizations and homicides in the quarter immediately following the start of CP4P relative to its control (i.e., the “level” of victimizations changed in the quarter after CP4P’s start per a population of 100,000 people).

Differences in Pre-Post Intervention Slope Changes for CP4P Areas Relative to Controls

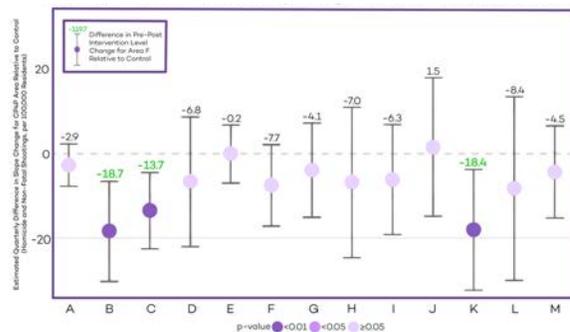


Figure 13. The results of using the synthetic control method to create comparison groups for CP4P treated areas, for homicide and non-fatal shootings. The confidence intervals summarize the range of quarterly differences between controls and CP4P areas, and there is one confidence interval per CP4P area. The bolded values in green represent the statistically significant mean difference in these quarterly changes. The inset box contains the value for the only statistically significant immediate or “level” change in homicides and non-fatal shootings in the quarter following the start of CP4P.

Findings

Reductions in rates of arrests (Figure 14) were similarly favorable across CP4P coverage areas overall. Compared to their controls, four CP4P areas (30%) had significant reductions in arrests, while one CP4P area had a significant increase in arrests. While one area had an increase in 478 arrests in relation to its control, nearly 1,083 arrests are estimated to have been prevented in CP4P treated areas, representing a net total of 605 arrests potentially prevented by CP4P's efforts from July 2017 through December 2021.

Of course, not every neighborhood had statistically significant immediate or longer-term changes in post-intervention outcomes. This is not to say that CP4P did not have an impact in these areas, but we cannot statistically attribute any differences between target and control

Differences in Pre-Post Intervention Slope Changes for CP4P Areas Relative to Controls

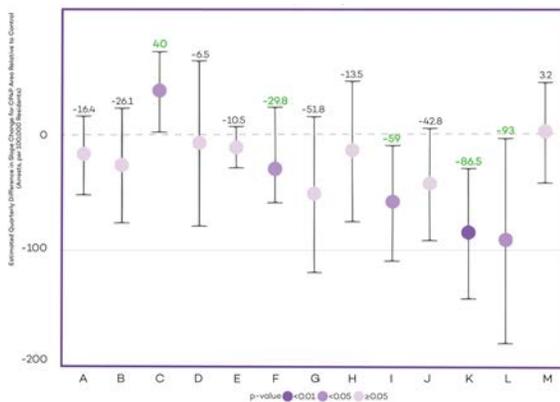


Figure 14. The results of using the synthetic control method to create comparison groups for CP4P treated areas, for arrests. The confidence intervals summarize the range of quarterly differences between controls and CP4P areas, and there is one confidence interval per CP4P area. The bolded values in green represent the statistically significant mean difference in these quarterly changes.

From July 2017 through December 2021, CP4P potentially prevented at least

383

Fatal & non-fatal shooting victimizations

605

Arrests for violent crimes

areas, favorable or otherwise, to the efforts of CP4P. An important limitation to note is that the rapid expansion of CP4P eliminated candidate areas for synthetic controls after December 2021, which made the implementation of the comparative interrupted time series for both victimizations and arrests infeasible.

Thus, while the overall favorable changes in CP4P areas in which a statistically significant reduction in outcomes occurred is promising, there are emerging methodological avenues that the research team is currently exploring. First, a longer evaluation period could allow us to detect stronger post-intervention effects. Second, the research team is exploring additional innovative statistical methods to assess causation.

Conclusion

While the full individual- and community-level impact of CP4P's efforts is still emerging, the coalition's work over the past five years has helped change and strengthen the landscape of CVI in Chicago. This, during a tumultuous period during which the COVID-19 pandemic and a nationwide rise in gun violence threatened the health and safety of Chicagoans. CP4P's early experience yields key lessons for the field, including the recognition that collaboration requires strong, communicative relationships among partners, a goal achieved through time-intensive means. Continued investment in trust and capacity-building strategies is key to expanding its impact on individuals and communities. In addition, because CP4P is a coalition, rather than a defined program, practices and programs at partner organizations vary widely to meet the unique needs of their communities.

The role of MFS and MPI as an intermediary organization²⁰ in facilitating collaboration and sustainability of city-wide CVI efforts cannot be discounted and much remains to be learned about its place in the broader CVI ecosystem as the coalition and its work continues to evolve. Much also remains to be learned about how specific services offered by respective CP4P organizations, and the amount of each service received, might impact participants' involvement in gun violence or community-level trends in violence. Ongoing research will help us better understand which services are most effective for participants and what amount of services is necessary to reach or exceed program goals.

Appendix A- In-Depth Overview of CP4P



Four Pillars

- Restorative**
Our evidence-based philosophy which emphasizes the importance of building relationships and repairing harm caused by conflict and wrongdoing
- Nonviolent**
Our philosophy which recognizes that if violence is learned, cyclical, and perpetrated by a small number of individuals, nonviolence can also be learned and become cyclical when enough people peacefully resolve conflict
- Trauma Informed**
Our approach and services are grounded in recognizing that the impact of trauma is extensive and seeks to prevent re-traumatization
- Hyperlocal**
Collaboration which emphasizes the local community in street outreach and the importance of understanding the connection between and the maximization of assets within the community



IMAGE CREDIT: CP4P

Recognizing that gun violence results from a sequela of individual, situational, contextual, and community-level factors underpinned by unequal access to economic opportunities, social support services, and mental health care, CP4P is a collective effort to standardize practices, foster collaboration, and coordinate violence prevention efforts citywide, rather than a single program.

CP4P's approach balances standardization with customization, allowing its partner organizations to retain their unique identities and programmatic cultures while adhering to **four common principles** that guide the coalition. These principles inform CP4P's operations at all levels and include: a deep commitment to **nonviolence** as praxis; helping violence-affected communities heal through **trauma-informed care**; strategic reliance on **hyper-local collaboration**; and conflict resolution through **restorative justice practices**.

In addition, nearly all outreach staff of CP4P affiliates underwent an 18-week 144-hour standardized training and certification program covering necessary job skills, including conflict mediation, negotiation, victim advocacy, mental health first-aid, and trauma-informed participant care. Within their respective community areas, participating organizations provide conflict mediation and de-escalation, mentorship, and case management, as well as referrals to direct services including legal advocacy, employment support, educational opportunities, and trauma-informed behavioral health counseling.

Appendix A

Over the course of CP4P's first two years, the partner organizations developed practices that would shape the coalition's CVI efforts in the city. These practices centered on the professionalization and development of the CVI workforce, coordination of services and community engagement, and workforce support.

Professionalization and Development: Established in 2018, The Metropolitan Peace Academy (MPA) serves as the primary training center for Chicago's CVI workforce. MPA provides an intensive 18-week curriculum designed to foster a public health approach to violence prevention led by a multi-disciplinary team of expert practitioners and researchers. The curriculum includes training in restorative justice, trauma informed care, nonviolence principles, mediation and conflict resolution skills, and place-based community engagement. In addition, MPA provides an introduction to basic wellness services, worker safety and well-being, and other general career and life skills development. The MPA trainings benefit newly hired and veteran CVI workers alike—providing ongoing professional development that standardizes best practices while allowing organizations to maintain their culturally- and neighborhood-relevant service delivery.

Coordination of Services: Early in its inception, CP4P sought to create low-cost and efficient ways for partner organizations to share on-the-ground information regarding violence intervention efforts and coordinate violence prevention and community engagement. MPI has facilitated twice-weekly conference calls for CP4P partners and other CVI partner organizations to coordinate incident responses, local events, resource distribution, and other key violence prevention operations since 2020. Much of the conference calls are spent developing collaborative-wide responses to shootings that span the coverage areas of multiple CP4P partners. For instance, it is common for a gun victim to be shot in a neighborhood where they do not reside. In such cases, these coordination calls allow the partner organization responsible for the coverage area where the shooting took place to coordinate a response with the partner organization responsible for the area where the victim lives. Many of the CP4P partners believed that such a city-wide violence response was not possible prior to collaboration.

In addition to coordination meetings, CP4P is a major presence at other regular community and safety meetings that engage the full spectrum of Chicago's public safety professionals. For instance, CP4P leadership and outreach staff play an essential role in biweekly, area-wide conference calls that convene street outreach, law enforcement, community-based organizations, and other public safety stakeholders to align their strategies and efforts.²¹

Appendix A

Community Engagement: CP4P partners coordinate community and city-wide events that bring neighborhood residents together to foster community engagement. CP4P's main community event, **'Light in the Night'**, is strategically hosted by outreach staff at neighborhood hotspots with histories of violent conflicts between groups. Light in the Night events are held year-round and include all-age activities such as barbecues, basketball and softball games, arts and crafts, movie screenings, and free giveaways. By hosting Light in the Night in neighborhood hotspots, CP4P helps residents reimagine their blocks as safe zones for socializing and recreation. Additionally, reflecting CP4P's hyper-local and collaborative nature, CP4P organizations regularly partner with elected officials and neighboring community groups to sponsor larger events related to holidays or the back-to-school season. These events bring neighbors together to encourage the formation of social bonds and connections that strengthen the community over and beyond violence prevention.

Workforce Support: CP4P marshalled the coalition's combined influence to procure competitive employee benefits and ongoing workforce support for its partners' CVI personnel. A key success was the establishment of a higher baseline salary for full-time staff. Prior to the advent of the coalition, most outreach workers were paid salaries under \$30,000; with seasonal pay not uncommon due to budget constraints. Recognizing CVI workers' unique skill sets and demanding workloads, MPI instituted a \$36,000 base salary in 2017. As the coalition grew and secured more funding, MPI and CP4P worked alongside the partner organizations to allocate some of those dollars to higher salaries for frontline staff. By the start of the 2023 fiscal year, all CP4P partners had committed to a formalized salary structure guaranteeing entry level staff \$45,000 annually—about 7% higher than Chicago's per capita income in 2021.²²

CP4P also offers health insurance and employee assistance programs to its partners' salaried CVI practitioners. Additionally, given the violence exposure inherent to CVI work, CP4P partner organization staff have access to trauma-informed mental health care through the Metropolitan Peace Initiative's Behavioral Health team. Finally, CP4P provided frontline CVI workers a formalized pathway to prepare for supervisory and management positions via the Metropolitan Peace Academy's (MPA) professional development programs. Recognized by federal and state legislators as an integral component of violence prevention efforts in Chicago, the MPA is preparing to move into a new facility, the Training and Wellness Center, located in the Pilsen neighborhood.²³ This new space is projected to double the MPA's capacity to train CVI workers, in addition to serving as a central hub for the workforce to coordinate amongst themselves and engage in self-care.²⁴ Such enhanced employee benefits are a notable accomplishment in CP4P's push to further professionalize, support, and more equitably compensate CVI work.

APPROXIMATELY **3,500 LIGHT IN THE NIGHT GATHERINGS** WITH NEARLY **354,000 TOTAL ATTENDEES** WERE HOSTED BY CP4P ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH JULY 2023.

References

1 Kalesan, B., Vyliparambil, M. A., Zuo, Y., Siracuse, J. J., Fagan, J. A., Branas, C. C., & Galea, S. (2018). Cross-sectional study of loss of life expectancy at different ages related to firearm deaths among black and white Americans. *BMJ evidence-based medicine*.

2 2022 homicide figures were retrieved from the Chicago Data Portal:
<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/vrd/home.html>

3 Building Bridges and Growing the Soul of Chicago: A Blueprint for Creating a More Just and Vibrant City for All. (2023).
https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/TransitionReport/TransitionReport_07.2023.pdf

4 The White House. "Fact sheet: More details on the Biden-Harris administration's investments in community violence interventions" (2021).
<https://whitehouse.gov/briefingroom/statements-releases/2021/04/07/fact-sheet-more-details-on-the-biden-harris-administrations-investments-in-community-violence-interventions/>

5 The Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities (PSPC) has been a critical supporter of CP4P since the coalition's launch. Since 2016, PSPC has committed \$140 million to violence reduction efforts in Chicago, and continues to help advance community-led, evidence-based solutions that the public sector can scale as part of a comprehensive approach to addressing gun violence. See <https://safeandpeaceful.org/>

6 Metropolitan Family Services (MFS) is a longstanding social services nonprofit based in Chicago. In 2017, MFS established its Metropolitan Peace Initiatives division, which then convened CP4P, the Metropolitan Peace Academy (MPA) and other initiatives related to CVI and community wellness.

7 Metropolitan Peace Initiatives (MPI) is a division of Metropolitan Family Services (MFS) that convened CP4P in 2017 and continues to support the coalition of CVI organizations "to help heal Chicago's communities experiencing the highest levels of gun violence."

8 CORNERS was founded in 2018 by Faculty Director Dr. Andrew Papachristos as the Northwestern Neighborhood & Network Initiative (N3). The research center, while maintaining its core ethos and activities, rebranded in 2022 to reflect its distinctive "neighborhood science" approach. The Center is housed within the [Institute for Policy Research](#) at Northwestern University.

9 Chicago Beyond. 2018. Why am I Always being Researched? Retrieved 9/1/2023 (<https://chicagobeyond.org/researchequity/>)

References

10 These insights were drawn from CORNERS' regular and ongoing observations of CP4P's involvement in violence prevention efforts throughout the city and state. These events include but are not limited to: (1) twice-weekly MPI-led coordination meetings (starting in March 2020- present) that convened CP4P partners and other CVI entities to review gun violence incidents, mediation efforts, and community events; (2) biweekly CP4P Executive Committee meetings facilitated by MPI; (3) broader CVI meetings with CP4P leadership and organizations (e.g., biweekly area coordination calls that include diverse CVI entities and city agencies); and (4) less frequent convenings like the annual Citywide Street Outreach Convening featuring hundreds of representatives from CVI organizations across Chicago.

11 Hotspots are specified intersections deemed to be at elevated risk of gun violence. This determination is made considering several factors, including street groups engaged in active conflict and/or a significant uptick in shootings over time.

12 Flannery, M. (2020). Alderman says he witnessed racially motivated attacks on black people in Little Village. [online] FOX 32 Chicago. Available at: <https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/alderman-says-he-witnessed-racially-motivated-attacks-on-black-people-in-little-village> [Accessed 22 May 2023]

13 Malagón, E. (2020). Little Village Residents March in Support of Black Lives Matter Protesters. [online] Chicago Sun-Times. Available at: <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2020/6/3/21279494/little-village-residents-march-26th-street-support-black-lives-matter-protesters-fight-not-end-today>.

14 Little Village is a neighborhood on Chicago's near Southwest Side and is formally contained within the South Lawndale community area.

15 Chicago CRED—Create Real Economic Destiny—is an anti-gun violence organization in Chicago co-founded in 2016 by former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Laurene Powell Jobs, founder and president of Emerson Collective. See <https://www.chicagocred.org/about/>

16 Percentages provided for changes in gunshot victimization and violent crime arrest are simple before-after counts of incidents with no accompanying statistical test or determination of causality

17 Northwestern Neighborhood & Network Initiative (N3). (2020, August 11). Communities Partnering for Peace (CP4P) Street Outreach: The Moments that Matter. Institute for Policy Research Rapid Research Report. <https://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/documents/reports/ipr-rapid-research-reports-cp4p-street-outreach-11-august-2020.pdf>

18 Northwestern Neighborhood & Network Initiative (N3). (2020, September 17). Managing multiple pandemics: How street outreach workers are addressing gun violence and COVID-19. Institute for Policy Research Rapid Research Report. <https://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/documents/reports/ipr-n3-rapid-research-reports-multiple-pandemics-17-sept-2020.pdf>

References

19 “Favorable” changes here include either a smaller increase or a larger decrease in the rates of change for arrests or homicide and non-fatal shooting victimizations. It is important not to conflate “favorable” changes with just decreasing rates, as this misrepresents important and positive “dampening” of otherwise increasing rates when compared to controls.

20 Nieto, B., Costa, J. & Carillo, P. (2023). Leveraging intermediaries to strengthen the community violence intervention field. Giffords Center for Violence Intervention

21 “Areas” here refers to Chicago Police Department geographic areas which are comprised of various police districts wherein CP4P operates.

22 <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/chicagocityillinois/INC910221>

23 Evans, M. (2023). Anti-Violence Advocates Celebrate Momentum, Call For Leaders To Invest Even More In Grassroots Work. [online] Block Club Chicago. Available at: <https://blockclubchicago.org/2023/02/03/anti-violence-advocates-celebrate-momentum-call-for-leaders-to-invest-even-more-in-grassroots-work/>

24 Dick Durbin for Illinois. (2023). Durbin Secures \$800,000 for Metropolitan Family Services to Train Professionals Responding to Gun Violence | U.S. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois. [online] Available at: <https://www.durbin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/durbin-secures-800000-for-metropolitan-family-services-to-train-professionals-responding-to-gun-violence>.



Photo Credit: David Schalliol

**THE CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD
ENGAGED RESEARCH & SCIENCE
(CORNERS), HOUSED AT NORTHWESTERN
UNIVERSITY'S INSTITUTE FOR POLICY
RESEARCH, DEVELOPS TRANSFORMATIVE
RESEARCH PROJECTS WITH COMMUNITY
AND CIVIC PARTNERS AIMED AT
IMPROVING HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR
MORE EQUITABLE NEIGHBORHOODS.**

For more information about this report or CORNERS,
please contact Andrew Papachristos at
avp@northwestern.edu.



Contact

CORNERS

2040 Sheridan Road,
Evanston IL 60208

www.cornersresearch.org 

corners@northwestern.edu 

@CornersResearch 

**CORNERS
RESEARCH & EVALUATION REPORT**