



101 NORTH WACKER, SUITE 1700  
CHICAGO, IL 60606  
PH: 312-986-4000 | F: 312-986-4313  
[www.MetropolitanPeaceInitiatives.org](http://www.MetropolitanPeaceInitiatives.org)

**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Media Contact:** Bridget Hatch  
MPI PR Manager  
(630) 995-0275 cell  
[hatchb@metrofamily.org](mailto:hatchb@metrofamily.org)

## **Sen. Durbin to Visit Metropolitan Family Services to Highlight Importance of Continued Investment and Partnerships in Chicago Community Violence Intervention (CVI)**

**CHICAGO, August 11, 2023** – Senator Richard J. Durbin will visit Metropolitan Family Services (MFS) Midway Center on Monday, August 14, 2023 to tour the facility and highlight recent investments into Chicago Community Violence Intervention (CVI) and his partnership and collaborations with MFS President and CEO Ric Estrada.

The updates will focus on the new Metropolitan Peace Academy (MPA) Training and Wellness Center, a multi-disciplinary training site focused on professionalizing and strengthening the fields of street outreach and CVI. Recent investments into expanded training capacity at the center will increase professional development and well-being opportunities. Mr. Estrada will provide opening remarks on community safety and maintaining strong partnerships in order to combat violence.

The MPA, led by the Metropolitan Peace Initiatives (MPI), has broken ground on a new training and wellness center that will double outreach professional training capacity from 60 participants to nearly 120. MPI convenes Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P, a coalition of community-based organizations focused on helping heal Chicago's communities experiencing the highest levels of gun violence. CP4P staff attend the MPA's 18-week, 144-hour curriculum to professionalize their work and create an interdependent network of outreach workers, victim advocates and case managers who are able to share knowledge, resources and conflict reduction efforts. To date, MPA has graduated 335 Outreach Workers and 88 Case Managers who serve as hyperlocal community first responders to gun violence, conflict mediators and retaliation preventionists. In addition to increased classroom space, the MPA will also provide a meditation room, a café and lounge area, administrative offices and a media studio. \$800,000 in federal funding, with Senator Durbin's assistance, will help launch this first dedicated CVI training academy in Chicago.

“By investing in Metropolitan Family Services and expanding training for dedicated professionals across Chicago, we can make a significant impact in curbing the violence that has touched far too many lives,” said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL). “Together, we can forge a path where compassion and expertise unite to pave the way for lasting change, proving that every life deserves protection, and every community deserves peace.”

“MFS is grateful to Senator Durbin for his unwavering commitment to peace and for his innovative sponsorship of programs, like HEAL, Southland RISE and the Metropolitan Peace

Academy. Together, these programs offer help and healing to our neighbors experiencing trauma from gun violence. Metropolitan Family Services is proud to partner with Sen. Durbin to provide comprehensive, interdisciplinary, social services in Illinois," said MFS President and CEO Ric Estrada.

**About MPI**

*Metropolitan Peace Initiatives (MPI), a division of Metropolitan Family Services supporting Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P), convenes community-based and citywide organizations to help heal Chicago's communities experiencing the highest levels of gun violence. MPI also leads the Metropolitan Peace Academy (MPA), a multi-disciplinary training program focused on professionalizing and strengthening the fields of street outreach and community violence intervention. For more information, visit our website at [www.MetropolitanPeaceInitiatives.org](http://www.MetropolitanPeaceInitiatives.org).*

**About CP4P**

*Communities Partnering 4 Peace's (CP4P), convened by Metropolitan Peace Initiatives, mission is to engage and build trusting relationships with individuals and groups most vulnerable to gun violence, and to mobilize and provide them with a comprehensive set of services that lead to their healing and the healing of our communities. For more information, visit our website at [www.MetropolitanPeaceInitiatives.org](http://www.MetropolitanPeaceInitiatives.org).*

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