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Amidst Historic Decline in Gun Violence, Community Violence Intervention Programs are Going to Scale in Four Communities with Three Others in the Pipeline

With gun violence in Chicago dramatically declining, public officials, community leaders and funders of a major effort to scale up community violence intervention (CVI) programs gathered at a high school in Little Village today to mark the city's progress and provide an update on the work. As of this summer:

- Under an initiative announced last year called [*Scaling Community Violence Intervention for a Safer Chicago*](#), or "SC2," four communities are now "scaling up" CVI programs with the goal of serving 75 percent of the individuals at highest risk of shooting or being shot: North Lawndale, Austin, Humboldt Park and Little Village. In these four communities, SC2 is currently serving an additional 1000 high risk individuals.
- CVI Leaders in three additional communities, Garfield Park, New City and Englewood, continue to develop plans to take CVI to scale.
- Citywide, publicly and privately funded CVI programs serve nearly half of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods.
- [*According to the city*](#), gun violence citywide is down for six of the last eight years; this year, through mid-July, all shootings, including fatal and non-fatal, are down approximately 41 percent, and homicides are down approximately 31 percent.

Susan Lee, Executive Director of SC2, said, "This scaling effort is only possible because of the extraordinary level of collaboration among the public and private sectors and the community. Collectively, we are building a model for public safety that empowers community organizations, complements traditional policing and should be a permanent feature of Chicago's public safety strategy."

Lee, who served as Deputy Mayor for Public Safety under Mayor Lori Lightfoot and has been working for CVI organization Chicago CRED since 2016, moderated a panel of local CVI leaders, including:

- Matt DeMateo of New Life Centers, which serves Little Village.
- Teny Gross of the Institute for Nonviolence Chicago, which serves Austin.

- Jose Pizarro of the Alliance for Local Service Organizations (ALSO), which serves Humboldt Park.
- Dr. Paviella Foster, Senior VP, UCAN, which serves North Lawndale.
- Yolanda Fields, Executive Director, Breakthrough, which serves Garfield Park

DeMateo welcomed the attendees to the neighborhood and pointed out that Little Village, after a surge in gun violence last year, has seen an astonishing 80 percent drop in gun violence this year. He said, “CVI work begins with saving individual lives, but our collective goal is to transform whole communities. SC2 is making that possible, and if these trends continue, we will get there.”

Mayor Brandon Johnson attending the gathering, which was held at Farragut High School in Little Village, 2345 South Christiana Avenue. At the event, the Mayor said, “Thanks to our partners in law enforcement, the CVI sector, private funders as well as our work to address root causes by investing in people, Chicago has seen a stark decrease in violent crime during the first half of the year.” Johnson added, “While we are on the right track, our work to prevent violence and bring down crime is never done. Backed by the full force of government, we will continue to show up across Chicago as we work every day to build the safest, most affordable big city in America.”

The City of Chicago, Cook County, and the State of Illinois have all helped fund CVI programs in Chicago, suburban Cook County and across the state. They coordinate some of their investments through an intergovernmental task force, the [Government Alliance for Safe Communities](#) (GASC).

At the Farragut event, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said, “Since 2021, we have been working with our government partners to strengthen the local community safety ecosystem, improving how we administer funding and support community-based organizations. This unprecedented level of collaboration and partnership is proving to be a model for meeting our biggest challenges. Cook County is proud to see promising reductions in rates of gun violence, and we remain committed to ongoing investment and collaboration to continue this critical progress.”

The State of Illinois has also played a key role in supporting CVI. Governor JB Pritzker, who was unable to attend Tuesday’s event but was represented by Grace Hou, Deputy Governor for Health and Human Services, provided the following statement of support: “Community violence intervention programs have had a transformational impact on our neighborhoods – saving lives, creating real jobs and opportunity, and making residents feel safe and secure. I’m proud to join advocates and law enforcement in celebrating that progress and look forward to expanding these programs as part of a new vision for a safer city and state.”

The Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities (PSPC) is a consortium of donors and foundations formed in 2016 to support public safety strategies, including CVI. The business community, through the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club, partnered with PSPC in 2024 to raise \$100M to support SC2.

A joint statement from PSPC and the Civic Committee highlighted the partnership among philanthropy, business, government and community that makes SC2 possible: “All of Chicago is united behind this effort to take community violence intervention to scale and help every

community and individual in Chicago thrive. We are deeply grateful to all of our financial supporters in the public and the private sectors.”

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