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COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION ORGANIZATIONS CELEBRATE A DECADE OF GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION AT “ART OF PEACE” EXPO

CHICAGO, ILL, June 10, 2026—Chicago’s community violence intervention (CVI) sector hit a major milestone this year with a decade of growth and investment that has contributed significantly to Chicago’s 60-year low in gun violence last year. Four leading CVI organizations, numerous community partners and donors, came together at the Epiphany Center for the Arts, 201 South Ashland Avenue, to celebrate their decade-long impact and consider the role that CVI is playing in Chicago’s continuing effort to become a safer, healthier city.

The Art of Peace Expo included a “Maker’s Fair” where CVI participants sold products they have made, a storytelling activation for participants and others to share personal insights and experiences, a short film screening and discussion, and a podcast taping featuring CVI staff and alumni. It also included a panel discussion featuring the leadership of four organizations founded roughly a decade ago and moderated by Chicago journalist Laura Washington.

The leaders thanked elected officials at the State, County and City level as well as the philanthropic and business communities for investing an estimated \$1B over the last decade to build Chicago’s CVI sector. The new state budget includes \$115M for CVI, one of the largest public investments in CVI of any state in the country. In recent years, the City and County have each invested between \$15M and \$30M annually, while the private sector has provided hundreds of millions of dollars for CVI in the last decade.

Esther Franco-Payne, the Executive Director of the [Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities](#), a coalition of more than 50 funders and donors said, “For the past decade, Chicago’s philanthropic community has been steadfast in their support for proven, promising approaches to reducing gun violence, such as CVI—an essential component of a comprehensive public safety strategy. With the partnership of the public and private sectors, we can go even further in ensuring safe, peaceful, and thriving communities.”

Vaughn Bryant is the Executive Director of [Metropolitan Peace Initiatives](#) a consortium of 15 CVI organizations serving 28 neighborhoods across Chicago. He said, “The research is clear: Community Violence Intervention is helping reduce shootings and save lives. While this progress is encouraging, there is still work to be done to create a safer Chicago and a safer nation. Now more than ever, we need sustained investment in CVI so that frontline workers and advocates have the resources, training, and support they need to be effective in their current role and prepared to lead the work in the near future.”

Teny Gross is a national anti-violence leader who came to Chicago a decade ago and founded the [Institute for Nonviolence Chicago](#) (INVC), which serves both west side and south side communities. He said, “The CVI architecture in our city is more extensive than any other city in America. We have over 2000 people

working in the field, dozens of organizations, public and private funding, and the research to back it up. This city should really be proud of what we have built. We are leading the nation in this field.”

[Chicago CRED](#) founder Arne Duncan said, “The fact that gun violence in Chicago is hitting historic lows even as arrests are also down significantly over the past decade strongly points to the impact of our work and the synergy of CVI and traditional law enforcement. The men and women at highest risk have never really had a first chance in life because gun violence was all around them. Thanks to CVI, instead of being part of the problem, they are now part of the solution.”

Panelists cited [research from Northwestern University’s Center for Engaged Neighborhood Research and Science \(CORNERS\)](#) linking CVI to reductions in gun violence in the most violence-plagued neighborhoods of Chicago. The City of Chicago’s [violence reduction dashboard](#) shows a 58 percent decline in shootings and a 48 percent decline in homicides over the last four years.

Today, the CVI sector in Chicago is active in 51 of Chicago’s 77 neighborhoods, with the level of activity varying by neighborhood based on the level of gun violence. In a handful of communities where gun violence is most acute, CVI organizations are attempting to “go to scale” and serve up to 75 percent of the highest risk individuals under an initiative called [Scaling Community Violence Intervention for a Safer Chicago, or “SC2.”](#)

To date, thousands of individuals at highest risk of shooting or being shot have received a menu of services including outreach, life coaching, victim support, trauma treatment, education, and job training. The goal of CVI is to help these individuals heal from the trauma associated with gun violence. Many of them also work in the field of CVI today, helping Chicago become safer.

For further information visit:

- Metropolitanpeaceinitiatives.org
- Chicagocred.org
- Nonviolencechicago.org
- Safeandpeaceful.org

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