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Metropolitan Peace Academy Celebrates Newest Graduating Class of Community Violence Intervention Professionals

CHICAGO, June 12, 2026—Metropolitan Peace Initiatives (MPI) proudly celebrated the graduation of its Spring 2026 cohort of the Metropolitan Peace Academy (MPA) on June 11 at the South Shore Cultural Center, marking another milestone in the effort to strengthen Chicago's Community Violence Intervention (CVI) workforce.

The evening honored 69 graduates who successfully completed MPA's intensive 18-week training program, which prepares participants for careers as street outreach workers, case managers, victim service professionals, and other frontline roles dedicated to reducing violence and supporting healing in communities across Chicago.

This year's graduation marked new milestones for the Metropolitan Peace Academy, including the addition of participants from the [Lake County Peacemakers](#) who service areas such as Waukegan, North Chicago and Zion. The graduates also included the second cohort of the [Management and Supervision Fellowship](#) which helps bridge the gap between frontline work and leadership for emerging supervisors and mid-level managers.

The celebration began with welcoming remarks from MPI Executive Director Vaughn Bryant, who congratulated the graduates on their achievement and underscored the critical role CVI professionals play in building safer, healthier neighborhoods. Bryant praised the graduates for their commitment to service and their willingness to step into challenging yet rewarding careers that make a tangible difference in the lives of Chicago residents.

“CVI is selfless work that doesn't stop at 5 o'clock or on holidays, these graduates are our city's superheroes”, said Bryant. “We are incredibly proud of the hard work and dedication of each graduate to develop into the CVI professionals. With this achievement, they didn't just receive a certificate, they also accepted the responsibility of building safer and stronger communities across Chicago.”

Graduates, their families, community partners, and supporters were also treated to an inspiring musical performance by Chicago artist and youth advocate Zion Ali, whose message of resilience, hope, and empowerment helped set the tone for an evening focused on achievement and community impact.

The ceremony's keynote address was delivered by Chicago Deputy Mayor for Community Safety Emmanuel Andre, who commended graduates for choosing careers dedicated to public safety and community wellness. Andre highlighted the importance of community-centered approaches to violence prevention and encouraged graduates to carry forward the skills, compassion, and leadership they developed through the academy.

The Metropolitan Peace Academy is MPI's premier multidisciplinary training program designed to strengthen and professionalize the field of Community Violence Intervention. Through a comprehensive curriculum rooted in evidence-based practices, trauma-informed care, hyper-locality, and nonviolence, participants gain the knowledge and practical skills needed to effectively serve individuals and communities impacted by violence.

As graduates crossed the stage to receive their certificates, the ceremony served as both a celebration of their accomplishments and a reminder of the vital work that lies ahead. With each graduating class, the Metropolitan Peace Academy continues to expand Chicago's network of trained violence prevention professionals and strengthens efforts to create safer communities across the city.

MPI congratulates the Spring 2026 graduating class and looks forward to the positive impact these new professionals will have in neighborhoods throughout Chicago and beyond.

ABOUT MPI

Metropolitan Peace Initiatives (MPI), a division of Metropolitan Family Services, convenes Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P), a coalition of 15 community-based organizations focused on reducing gun violence in 28 of Chicago's highest-risk neighborhoods. For more information, visit

www.MetropolitanPeaceInitiatives.org.

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