



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 25, 2022

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**THE COMMUNITY SAFETY COORDINATION CENTER MARKS ITS FIRST
YEAR OF OPERATION**

*Community engagement, cross-departmental collaboration, and data show
progress as work continues*

CHICAGO — The Community Safety Coordination Center (CSCC) marks the 1-year anniversary of its activation by recognizing the tireless work of dedicated violence prevention specialists, survivors, and community leaders who have worked collaboratively to drive change and keep communities safe. In the past year, the CSCC has worked with agencies and in various communities across the city to implement a holistic and evidence-based approach that addresses the root causes of violence.

"The CSCC has become an invaluable part of our efforts to reduce violence in our communities while working alongside community members," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "Thanks to the many organizations and individuals that have partnered with the CSCC, as well as their collective decades of violence prevention work, we have been able to deploy block-level supports to those who have been or are at risk of being impacted by violence. I am proud of the collaborative work the CSCC has accomplished in its first year and look forward to seeing how it continues to advance our mission to make our city a safer place."

"While we mark CSCC's first year of operation, we realize that many of our partners have been doing this violence prevention work for many decades," said Tamara Mahal, Chief Coordination Officer for Community Safety. "We are privileged to have a seat at their table to support the hyperlocal strategies that are unique to their communities. We look forward to earning their trust and building safe and thriving communities together."

Some highlights of CSCC's long-term strategies as well as near-term initiatives to address violence today include:

- **Cross-departmental Coordination:** The CSCC has worked with all City departments and sister agencies, many of which have existing programs



or strategies to address community safety, to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to violence prevention. The City developed a public health framework for community safety to implement a whole-of-city approach to violence prevention and ensure equitable investment in the communities with the highest levels of disinvestment and lack of opportunity. The framework was instrumental in understanding the wide array of violence prevention programming in the city of Chicago. This month, the Community Justice Action Fund's inaugural City Violence Prevention Index and scorecard [ranked Chicago among the top cities](#) in the nation for achieving the broadest range of violence prevention programs, services, and policies. Examples of successful cross-departmental coordination include:

- Targeting City programming toward those most at risk of violence: The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services' (DFSS) Youth Service Corps program now ensures that 50% of participants are opportunity youth, including those at risk of violence.
 - Using data to focus safe space activations on high violence blocks: The Chicago Department of Public Health's (CDPH) PlayStreets expanded to all 15 communities and activated in hot spots.
 - Utilizing City locations to ensure public safety: Chicago Park District lit up arena lighting in 15 parks overnight during the weekend to provide more light in high violence areas.
- **Community Engagement:** The CSCC is implementing a multi-layered engagement strategy that solicits feedback from community members and subject matter experts alike to drive the violence reduction strategy across the city and from the ground up.
 - As part of Chicago's whole-of-city approach to violence prevention that aims at collaborating closely with and in service of community, the CSCC is coordinating closely with the Community Safety Leadership Collective — a committee of community partners that is advising the City on its approach to violence reduction. The Collective meets weekly to discuss, coordinate, and drive developmental and sustainable efforts to violence reduction in these community areas. With a “seat at the table,” leading violence prevention organizations, medical providers, faith leaders, and other community organizations can receive information and influence decision-making across City departments by collaborating with the CSCC.
 - In the last year, the CSCC provided multiple opportunities for residents and community leaders to learn more and weigh in on the City's approach to violence prevention, including tabletop



exercises that utilized tailored case examples to activate stakeholders on a hyperlocal level in order to leverage existing resources and identify service gaps, block-club community action kick-off events that helped identify block-level challenges and solutions in partnership with the City, and [community safety town halls that brought decision-makers across City departments to provide information and answer questions about community safety](#). The Town Halls brought together nearly 1,000 participants and resulted in a [report](#) that includes a summary of the community concerns, answers to commonly asked questions, and available resources.

- CSCC's engagement strategy also relies on community engagement staff who have deep connections and credibility in the community that they represent and work directly with the City to provide resources and support. Hired independently with funding from philanthropy and embedded in the CSCC, community engagement managers are currently funded in Garfield Park, Greater Englewood, Little Village, and North Lawndale. The CSCC looks forward to working with partners to hire additional community engagement managers and expand capacity in other community areas. Additionally, the CSCC, through CORE, has hired community mobilizers who go door-to-door to engage with community and help build block clubs and target service requests to the most violent areas.
- **High-risk Intervention Teams:** The CSCC coordinates high-risk intervention teams to expand pathways to direct services and referrals for individuals most impacted and most at risk of violence. We conduct weekly shooting reviews and work with partners to identify what is driving violence in each community area and what solutions we can quickly use to address hotspots and ensure a coordinated response to incidents. We are currently coordinating high-risk intervention teams across 6 community areas and look forward to expanding to all 15 CSCC priority communities.
- **Antiviolence Marketing:** In June, the CSCC [launched The Ripple Effect](#), a campaign that honors the lives lost to gun violence, shows the ripple effect violence has in communities across the city and highlights the path forward. Over 15 violence prevention experts, survivors, researchers, and community leaders took part in the campaign. These efforts led to the creation of three walking trails and an audio companion telling the stories of those most affected in the wake of



gun violence. The campaign sparked a conversation among Chicagoans and generated over 15 million social media and radio impressions and almost 800,000 social media video views. The CSCC plans to continue to use marketing as a tool to change perceptions, influence behavior, and increase individual and collective responsibility.

- **Home and Business Protection Program:** The City's [Home and Business Protection Program \(HBPP\)](#) helps Chicago residents and business owners obtain private security devices to protect their property and feel safe. The program provides rebates up to certain amounts that cover the costs of outdoor security cameras, one year of cloud storage for video footage, outdoor motion sensor lighting, vehicle GPS trackers, and subscription costs. Since its June 6th rollout, the City has received 3,400 applications for reimbursement and looks forward to expanding the program and providing security devices to those who cannot afford to purchase them upfront.
- **Addressing Trauma:** As part of the City's healing-centered approach to trauma, the CSCC partnered with the Chicago Department of Public Health to provide resources and help traditional and nontraditional healers implement trauma-informed approaches in their work.
 - In 2022, the City made a historic investment in mental health resources to build a trauma-informed network of care and [expand access to mental health services across all 77 communities](#). In addition to the investment, the CSCC is supporting people who are most likely to encounter those who have experienced the impacts of violence, such as street outreach workers, victim services providers, faith leaders, mentoring and youth serving staff, and hospital personnel.
 - This March, we held a [Symposium on Trauma-Informed Response to Violence](#) that addressed the intersection of mental health, substance use, and violence. Over the summer, we brought [mental health skill building trainings](#) to communities most impacted by violence and trained twelve separate cohorts with a total of over 250 individuals, providing support and strategies for responding to trauma.
 - The CSCC is hosting a fall convening to bring together participants of the mental health skill building cohorts to celebrate their participant, discuss next steps, and explore innovative ideas to continue equipping communities with mental health resources and training opportunities.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



- **Streetscape Improvements:** The CSCC works closely with the City infrastructure departments to improve the physical environment and increase green space in priority communities, a violence prevention strategy that is proven to decrease mental fatigue and tendencies toward psychological aggressions, increase social interactions and decrease violent behavior. The CSCC is proactively surveying and identifying streetscape issues on the most violent census blocks in 15 communities, prioritizing services to the issues that directly impact public safety. Since May, the CSCC has worked directly with community partners to identify and address 412 infrastructure issues, including improving street and alley lighting, removing graffiti, cleaning and fencing vacant lots, and addressing abandoned buildings. These efforts also include cleaning, greening, and adding fencing to beautify up to 545 vacant lots.
- **Low-Key Kickbacks: Saturday Edition:** The CSCC launched [Low-Key Kickbacks: Saturday Edition](#) in July to ensure that youth across Chicago have access to engaging activities and necessary resources within communities on the South and West sides. The Low-Key Kickbacks are held on Saturdays in parks throughout the summer from 6 to 9 p.m. Hundreds of youth experience live entertainment, food, and various free activities. The CSCC has hosted four out of eight events with nearly 500 youth and family members in attendance.

For more information on the CSCC, visit www.chicago.gov/csc.

###