



**Transforming First Response in Chicago:
*Thoughts, Direction, and Feedback from Some of
the Most Affected Communities***

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Introduction

With a population of 2.8 million, Chicago is the third most populous city in the United States.¹ While 29.2 percent of residents are Black and 33.3 percent are white, over 80 percent of Chicago's 2021 homicide victims were Black, and only 3 percent were white.² For decades gun violence and crime have been at the center of conflict in the city, and 2021 was the deadliest year for residents in more than a quarter century. The Chicago Police Department (CPD) recorded 797 homicides for the last year – the most since 1996 and more than any other city in the United States.³

CPD's inequitable first-response practices and interactions with the community are equally fraught issues that date back at least a century. In 1919, Chicago erupted in race riots following the murder of a Black teenager named Eugene Williams. One of the event's primary legacies is that Chicago police failed to intervene on behalf of Black residents and actively demonstrated sympathies with white rioters.⁴ Fast forward fifty years, and it is alleged that as many as 120 mostly Black men were tortured into giving confessions by former CPD Commander Jon Burge and his team of officers between 1972 and 1991. Then, in 2015, the Guardian produced a series of reports on Homan Square, a CPD facility where only .94 percent of over 7,000 detainees were permitted access to counsel between 2004 and 2015.⁵ During this same period, Sgt. Ronald Watts and his tactical unit worked in Chicago's South Side area surrounding the former Ida B. Wells Housing Project. In 2013, he and another officer pleaded guilty to taking money from an FBI informant and extorting money from residents and drug dealers.⁶

A significant number of recent fatal use of force flashpoints involving CPD officers and Chicagoans have further exacerbated relations and called the department's role in providing public safety services into question.

For example, in 2012 Rekia Boyd was fatally shot by an off-duty CPD officer after he approached her and some friends in a park to tell them to quiet down.⁷ In 2013, a white officer fatally shot Cedric Chatman, an unarmed Black teenager, while he was running from police following an alleged carjacking.⁸ On October 14, 2014, CPD Officer Jason Van Dyke fired 16 shots at 17-year-old Laquan McDonald after arriving at the scene to support officers who had already surrounded the teenager.⁹ Laquan's murder prompted the DOJ to open an investigation, which concluded that his death reflected broader problems within the department, particularly concerning how CPD officers use deadly force in violation of the fourth amendment.¹⁰ The morning after Christmas in 2015, Quintonio LeGrier contacted 911 three times for help while experiencing a mental health crisis; his father also called 911 to state that Quintonio was armed with a bat. A responding officer opened fire at the teenager outside the house, claiming in a later statement that he swung at him with the bat. A stray bullet fatally wounded a

¹ [Chicago city, Illinois](#), United States Census Bureau

² [Chicago's most violent neighborhoods were more dangerous than ever in 2021](#), January 3, 2022

³ [2021 ends as Chicago's deadliest year in a quarter century](#), January 1, 2022

⁴ [Doubt about police in Chicago manifests itself on racial lines in monitor's survey, legal challenges over street stops](#), September 25, 2020

⁵ [Homan Square revealed: how Chicago police 'disappeared' 7,000 people](#), October 19, 2015

⁶ [Ex-CPD sergeant's corruption toll: 212 convictions overturned after dozens more thrown out Friday](#), April 22, 2022

⁷ [Ex-Chicago detective acquitted in Rekia Boyd killing wants court records expunged](#), November 14, 2019

⁸ [This could be the next Chicago police shooting video to roil the city](#), December 16, 2015

⁹ [Chicago police officer who shot black teen 16 times found guilty of murder](#), October 5, 2018

¹⁰ [Investigation of the Chicago Police Department, United States Department of Justice](#), January 13, 2017

neighbor named Bettie Jones.¹¹ On March 29, 2021, 13-year-old Adam Toledo was shot and killed by CPD following a foot pursuit.¹²

These instances are but a snapshot of fatal interactions between CPD officers and Chicagoans, and are listed here to provide context for residents' perceptions and attitudes towards the police and public safety more generally. Over the years, these incidents have produced considerable community outrage and protest. In response, CPD has implemented various reforms to address factors contributing to marginalized communities disproportionately bearing the burden of first response system failures. They include:

- Internal monitoring via the Independent Police Review Authority (IPRA)¹³
- The Police Accountability Task Force (PATF) to produce recommendations for reform¹⁴
- Changes to use of force policies and creation of a [use of force dashboard](#)¹⁵
- Civilian oversight via the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability¹⁶
- Reform-minded terms in the new Police Union contract
- The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy, otherwise known as CAPS¹⁷

However, most of these reforms have focused on back-end accountability, whereas our research is more interested in community sentiment and suggestions for front-end changes. This report presents learnings from conversations with residents of some of Chicago's communities most affected by policing and other first-response practices. We detail their perceptions, ideas, and attitudes toward reducing the scope of policing, increasing the use of alternative responders to address community needs, and other ways to transform first-response systems.

As part of this effort, we concentrate on two of Chicago's newest initiatives designed to do more than reform; instead, they adhere to core philosophies within the national movement to reimagine public safety.¹⁸ Namely, we pay special attention to the Neighborhood Policing Initiative (NPI), which is a partnership between CPD and the Policing Project,¹⁹ and the City of Chicago's Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement program (CARE), launched in September 2021.²⁰

¹¹ [Quintonio LeGrier called 911 three times before a Chicago cop shot him](#), January 26, 2016

¹² [Chicago police officers won't be charged in shooting of 13-year old Adam Toledo](#), March 15, 2022

¹³ [Advisory concerning the Civilian Office of Police Accountability's practice of administratively terminating disciplinary investigations](#), September 2020

¹⁴ [Press release: Mayor Emanuel announces Task Force on Police Accountability](#), December 1, 2015

¹⁵ [Chicago police Supt. Johnson announces new policy on use of force](#), May 17, 2017

¹⁶ [Chicago Police Department getting first-ever civilian-led oversight commission](#), July 21, 2021

¹⁷ [Chicago Police Department, What is CAPS?](#)

¹⁸ Ponomarenko, Maria. 2022. "Our Fragmented Approach to Public Safety." *American Criminal Law Review*; Gaherty, Kirby, Andrew Moore, Yucel Ors, James Brooks, Tony McCright, and Haruka Braun. 2022. *Reimagining Public Safety: A Toolkit for Cities and Towns*. (National League of Cities). https://www.nlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/YEF-RPS-Toolkit_FINAL.pdf; Benet, William J., and Joseph McMillan. 2021. "Reimagining Public Safety in the Aftermath of George Floyd." *Journal of Social Change* 13 (1): 7.

¹⁹ [The Chicago Neighborhood Policing Initiative: Interim Findings and Recommendations](#), May 17, 2021

²⁰ [Chicago rolls out mental health emergency teams to reduce police encounters with people in crisis](#), September 2, 2021

Methods

Research Questions

1. How do community members define public safety?
 - a. How do community members characterize organizations' and professionals' roles and responsibilities for establishing public safety?
 - b. What do community members perceive as the most effective sources of public safety services?
 - c. What do community members view as the biggest threats to public safety in their neighborhoods?
2. What are community members' perceptions of recent attempts to transform first-response in their neighborhoods?
3. What first-response services are unavailable, inaccessible, or unusable in these neighborhoods?
4. Where, how, and from whom do community members want to obtain first-response services and support?
5. What is the current police footprint in neighborhoods, and what is the desired police footprint?

Preparation and Recruitment

Our research team consisted of the principal investigator (PI), a five-person community advisory board from Chicago, five facilitators who are Chicago residents, and five co-facilitators who reside outside the state of Illinois. Our advisory board members hailed from CPD's 25th District, 15th District, 10th District, 9th District, and 6th District. The facilitators were masters and PhD-level researchers trained in culturally relevant and equitable evaluation (CREE) practices and lived in Chicago for at least five years. The co-facilitators had all previously served in that position during community conversations held in two other cities.

The PI and two co-facilitators held two preparatory meetings with the advisory board (AB). At these meetings, the AB helped to decide on the event's location, questionnaire content, structure of discussion aids, and the facilitator question guide. In particular, they recommended adding questions about police training to the question guide. After the community conversation, the AB reviewed emerging findings and helped to identify the most salient findings for inclusion in the executive summary.

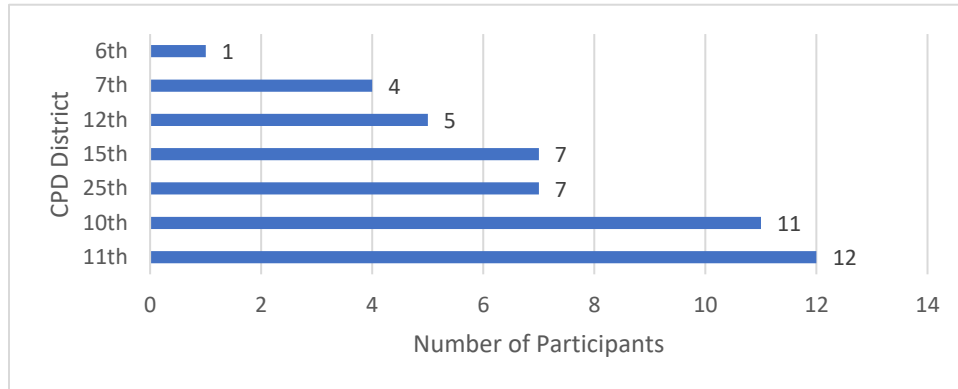
The PI and co-facilitators also met with the facilitators twice to prepare for the event. The PI, facilitators, and advisory board members circulated information about the event to their personal and professional networks via text messaging, phone calls, emails, and during casual face-to-face contact (at coffee shops, parks, bible study, etc.). Thus, we used a snowball recruitment method that prioritized people who lived in CPD districts 6,7,9,10, 15, and 25. The research team fielded calls, emails, and internet contact form inquiries from potential participants. Inclusion criteria included speaking fluent Spanish or English and being at least 18 years of age. Once a participant met the criteria, the research team member encouraged that participant to invite a friend or family member to register to join them.

Participants

In all, 36 people registered to attend the event, 11 were placed on the waitlist, and 12 were turned away because the event was full. On the day of the event, 28 individuals attended. The participants are relatively homogeneous in some demographic categories. Most participants are Black (23), and the remaining (5) are Latina. Women are overrepresented, with seven (7) men in attendance. The group skews older with an average age of 52, although

the youngest participant is 19 and the oldest is 73. Household incomes also represented a wide range (from below \$20,000 per year to above \$100,000 per year), but over a third of the participants (10) have a household income below \$20,000 per year. Furthermore, everyone has lived in Chicago for at least 15 years.

Figure 1: CPD Districts Where Participants Have Lived, Worked, or Attended School



**Note that numbers do not add up to 28 because some participants have lived, worked, or attended school in more than one district.*

Nonetheless, the participants represent the diversity of experience, particularly in ways pertinent to providing feedback on Chicago’s first response system. As is shown in Figure 1, all the community conversation participants are intimately familiar with the areas where the CARE or NPI programs operate, with some having lived, worked, or attended school in more than one of the districts. Figure 2 shows that, currently, they reside in a variety of neighborhoods predominately on the West and South sides. Furthermore, their employment status varies, including ten people who are employed full-time, four homemakers, three retired individuals, and five people who are currently unemployed. Throughout the day, participants described themselves in the following ways, exemplifying the diversity of public safety experiences and expertise:

- Former police officer
- Previously incarcerated (2)
- City of Chicago employee
- Vietnam vet
- College student
- Retired teacher
- Block club president
- Block leader
- Former member of the CAPS team
- Aunt of a Chicago PD officer
- Mental health professional
- Ace Foundation volunteer
- Greater Food Depository volunteer
- Justice 2020 steering committee

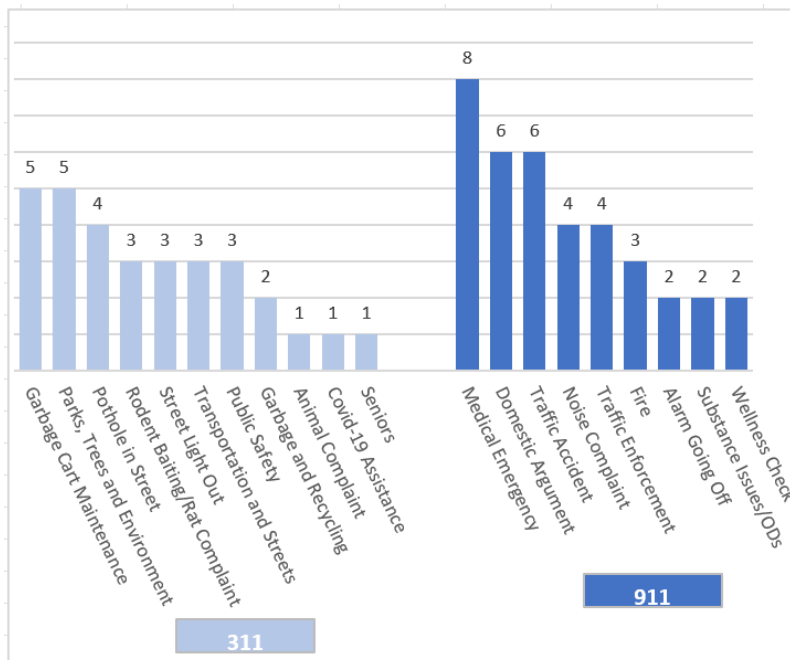
Figure 2: Neighborhoods where participants currently reside



Note: This illustration is weighted so that communities with greater representation are in larger fonts.

Attendees were also uniquely qualified to provide feedback and opinions on public safety system service use. More than half (16) of the community conversation attendees had called 911 recently, and a large number (12) had contacted 311. As is represented in Figure 3, the top three reasons for calls to 911 included medical emergencies, traffic accidents, and domestic disputes. At the same time, people tended to utilize 311 for issues related to garbage cart maintenance, parks, and potholes.

Figure 3: Reasons for Participants' Calls to 911 and 311



Data Collection

We designed a three-prong data collection plan to answer our research questions. First, after arriving and completing the informed consent process, participants completed a CAPI enrollment questionnaire consisting of questions on demographics, use of service, perceptions of police,²¹ and program knowledge. The final question asked respondents: “When you signed up to join this conversation, is there a specific topic you hoped we'd discuss?”

Next, participants engaged in the first round of focus groups. Question routes for these focus groups were identical and focused on a predetermined set of topics (although the AB helped inform the specific examples, probes, and question wording we used). The question route moved from general to particular, employing probes to maximize the detail and clarity of participant data. The morning question route focused on the following topics (in order):

- Definitions of public safety
- Perceptions of agencies, organizations, and local citizens’ roles and responsibilities
- Public safety resource utilization, including access to and usability of services
- Desired public safety services and resources
- Feedback on recent change efforts, specifically NPI and CARE

At the end of the morning session (during the lunch break), the research team gathered to discuss emerging themes and review the results from the enrollment questionnaire, including answers to the final question previously referenced. The team used this information to determine four topics of discussion for the afternoon focus groups. After lunch, participants chose to participate in a focus group regarding one of those topics. Ultimately, the participants decided to discuss three topics.

- Community Policing and Collaboration
- Creating Accessible Programs (2 groups, including Spanish)
- Improving Neighborhood Bonds (2 groups)

For these focus groups, facilitators aimed to achieve saturation of items in the semi-structured question guide by choosing the most appropriate probes in lieu of maintaining verbatim fidelity to the questions. The afternoon focus group ended with participants completing and sharing their answers on a worksheet designed to elicit feedback on trusted people and organizations with the skills, talents, and resources that could contribute to first-response transformation efforts in Chicago.

All focus groups had a facilitator/co-facilitator design. Each group contained five to seven community members to ensure the proper balance between collecting rich data at individual levels and maintaining vibrant discussion at group levels. Participants were fully oriented to the focus group processes before participation and fully debriefed at the conclusion. We audio-recorded every focus group meeting and used Rev.com and Vanan Services to transcribe the English and Spanish recordings, respectively.

²¹ Nadal, K. L., & Davidoff, K. C. (2015). Perceptions of police scale (POPS): Measuring attitudes towards law enforcement and beliefs about police bias. *Journal of psychology and behavioral science*, 3(2), 1-9.

Analytic Approach

The analysis of the questionnaire data is purely descriptive and consists of basic univariate statistics. We analyzed the transcribed recording of focus groups using both closed and open coding. Closed coding refers to reading documents and identifying excerpts corresponding to predetermined themes. Open coding refers to identifying important excerpts and then grouping them into themes.²² We performed two rounds of open coding²³ before finalizing the codebook, which names and defines all the themes supported by participant statements.

The PI completed all coding using the Dedoose software program.²⁴ Unless otherwise mentioned, any finding included in this report is based on evidence (i.e., excerpts) obtained from at least half of the pertinent focus groups. In other words, we exclude any belief, perception, or idea that was offered by a minority of the groups (two or fewer based on independent analysis of morning or afternoon-specific thematic codes, four or fewer for thematic codes that were discussed throughout the day).

Description of Public Safety²⁵

Many of our participants struggled to define public safety because many said they had never experienced safety in public. However, there was broad agreement that public safety refers to “multiple bodies working together [Spanish translation]” to “make the streets safe” enough that “communities can come together,” “kids can play,” “elderly can walk down the street,” and adults can “not get pulled over” for simply driving down the street. Based on their descriptions, **these community members define public safety as the ability to spend time in public spaces without the risk of bodily harm.**

Roles and Responsibilities

It's like you don't really know who to rely on. 'Cause, you want to rely on your public figures and you also want to rely on the people in your community but in truth it's only you and yourself.

Monica's quote in the blue box above succinctly captures the participants' complicated thoughts about different groups' roles and responsibilities for establishing public safety in their neighborhoods. In an ideal situation, government organizations and community members are responsible for public safety. But in reality, residents are responsible for securing their safety within their neighborhoods. As one

²² Williams, M., & Moser, T. (2019). The art of coding and thematic exploration in qualitative research. *International Management Review*, 15(1), 45-55.

²³ Glaser, B. G. (2016). Open coding descriptions. *Grounded theory review*, 15(2), 108-110.

²⁴ Dedoose, V. 8. 3. 4. (2012) Web application for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed method research data. Los Angeles: SocioCultural Research Consultants.

²⁵ Note that participants used euphemisms like “crowds”, “groups congregating,” “do what they do” and other phrases to refer to gangs and gang activity.

participant stated, “what should and what is are two different things” regarding public safety in their communities.

Community members detailed a three-level system when describing the public safety landscape that should exist. At the most distal level, municipalities and politicians would be responsible and held accountable for providing adequate infrastructure. The intermediary level would include a group of community police officers who many participants named “Officer Friendly.” Finally, the most proximal level would consist of a group of tight-knit neighbors.

Municipalities and Politicians

- Everybody plays a role. Even our politicians.
- I think we all play a role in it from the community, to police officers, to politicians.
- It's not just a policing issue for me. It's about the City cleaning up these areas and cleaning the streets. Cut these trees down and clean up these vacant lots. Why? Because you'll be able to function better.
- Elected officials are responsible for our communities and we do not hold them accountable. They are responsible for our communities and they are responsible for how police act in our communities. And they don't do anything, and I guess it's part like our fault because we don't hold them responsible.

Officer Friendly

- You know I mean I thought the police were just the Mr. Officer Friendlies until I had 3 black sons and I just seen how discriminated they were.
- I have never seen an Officer Friendly. Well, I've seen one in Lincoln Park area when I was working there as a preschool teacher. They always had a Officer Friendly come in and talk to the children. [In] North Lawndale, I have never seen an Officer Friendly.
- It should be like when you knew Officer Friendly, you knew the crossing guard.
- It is strange because I grew up in the DARE program and I had a friendly officer at my neighborhood school, and that officer was the only friendly officer in the neighborhood. The people would stop and actually say, 'oh chill out that's Officer Joe, oh no Officer Joe told you to get off the corner, man that's Officer Joe, move around.'

Friends and neighbors

- Ideally, community people (like the people or the residents that live in the community) all coming together first. And then police if it has to come down to it.
- I just think we should be able to turn to our neighbors before we use the police.
- Now, you don't know your neighbor, so you don't wanna get involved, 'cause if you step in, you might be the one who gets shot, get killed. You know, you wanna help, you should be able to help, but you can't help.
- You have a lot of people that are, like, mothers, fathers, grandmothers of these individuals that are committing these acts, and they're not gonna be accountable for their own relative? Absurd.

However, participants made it clear that, in their neighborhoods, none of these ideal aspects of public safety exist.²⁶ In contrast to Officer Friendly, the CPD's primary function is enforcement. In the absence of these publicly provided resources and informal collective resources, individuals are responsible for establishing their safety. The conversation attendees seemed to recognize that individual responsibility negates the idea of collective or public safety, but they see it as the most effective system given the circumstances.

As one person stated, "I understand the necessity for law enforcement, but I don't think that they necessarily provide that level of public safety." Another participant elaborated, "Police, at many times, can intensify certain things. They can make people more reluctant to get involved in any of these particular situations that may go off." In these ways, participants indicated that **CPD's current role in the public safety system is limited to enforcement and does not include protection.**

- I think we put a lot of ownership on the police department as if the police are somehow going to stop somebody from doing something to you. They're not. It's impossible.
- We're acting as if an officer is going to take a bullet for you, they're not going to do that.
- Safety is about having public consciousness of the fact that the police's only job is to police criminals.
- Why would the police be there? It's the enforcement, they're only used for enforcement.
- Every time I have this discussion everyone brings up it takes a village to raise a child. But never have I heard it takes police to save the community.

When describing the existing public safety system, participants spoke mostly about individuals ensuring their safety. They used the term "rely on" rather than trust in discussing the need for individual responsibility, indicating that they "can't rely on no one else," "you can't rely on [the police]," and "who else would you rely on?" In every session, at least one person discussed methods they use to keep themselves and their family safe. In all, 30 excerpts detailed individuals' roles in securing their safety. Most were similar to the excerpts below.

- To me, public safety starts with myself. I'm not calling the police for nothing until I call them because I need them to come to get you.
- When you think about safety, for me, safety starts with me first. It doesn't start with anybody outside of me. I keep myself safe...Safety starts with me first, not the police.
- There's no such thing as public safety anymore. I agree with you Ralph, I'm going to take care of myself too.
- I have three kids and all three of them know that they're safe. Simply because they know I'm their daddy. I instill that safety in them every day.
- It's the individual's responsibility. You're responsible for yourself.
- I think to a certain degree, we are all responsible for safety. Starting with self-first. In my house, I know I'm responsible for my child's safety. My husband is responsible for everybody in the

²⁶ Note that Chicago is the first city we've visited where people say they cannot rely on their neighbors or fellow community members to contribute informally to their safety.

house safety. Like Carson said, depending on where you go, you won't go to a certain place because at certain stores, they're not responsible for your safety.

- Each person protects themselves. Or maybe the lifestyle here in America is like, 'take care of your own thing, nothing else,' something like that. [Spanish Translation]

Public Safety Threats

I miss the children being able to run and play on the block without having to worry about cars coming and bullets flying, or police with cars coming to interrogate their parents in front of them.

In this quote, Ms. Gwen summarizes the two threats to public safety most commonly cited during our conversations: (1) guns and (2) police. **When we asked, “what are the biggest threats to public safety in your neighborhoods?” the most common response was guns, followed by police, and then drugs.** However, participants almost always talked about drugs and guns in conjunction with youth. This intersectionality may be because our participants’ ages skewed older and older adults’ tendency to vilify youth.²⁷ Regardless of the reasons, the excerpts below provide examples of typical statements during the focus groups that conflated guns and drugs with young people.

Youth, Guns, and Drugs

- So, these little kids come in there with guns bigger than them. I'm always looking at them like "boy, what you gonna do with that?"
- The criminals don't fear the police. I mean the police are the target. The police can't police because of these doggone young kids out here doing all these doggone bad things.
- Teens got guns bigger than police now. What need does an average individual have for an assault rifle?
- Kids are able to just get guns.
- When I was growing up, we didn't fear each other like that. It wasn't a lot of guns in the street like that. You didn't fear people like that. So now, we fear each other.
- A police uniform used to carry a sign of respect. Just the uniform itself. These little kids don't care about that because they can shoot through that just like they can shoot through [pulls his shirt] this Bears jersey. When they realize that, the fear leaves people.
- Do you know what is another threat? The access to the purchase of weapons in our community for young adults. That is a threat, and now everyone can carry a gun. Everyone threatens you with a gun. [Spanish translation]
- I don't think it's only guns. I think drugs play a part in it as well.
- Drugs are really prevalent now in younger kids. It's amazing how many young kids do drugs.
- The biggest threats I think are so many drugs out there. Drugs, especially with the young people.

²⁷ Byron T. We see children as pestilent. *The Guardian*. 2009;17:8; Welch MP, Eric A.; Yankey, Nana. Moral panic over youth violence: Wilding and the manufacture of menace in the media. *Youth & Society*. 2002;34(1):3-30.

- Actually, we were talking in the car earlier that my son told me, mom, they sell more drugs in the school than out of it. I was so scared. How? [Spanish translation.]

Police Officers

- The police, um - they're the largest gang in the city. The largest.
- Moderator: If we could pinpoint them, what are the biggest threats?
 - The police.
 - [All group members nod or verbally agree.]
- I don't envy police. It's a extremely dangerous job, especially in Chicago, extremely dangerous ...but the police is still the largest gang in the city, 'cause they live by a code...Police have killed police and they know it and they've gotten away with it. They overtly commit crimes that tetter on just perpetuating this oppressive and racist dynamic that we've had since the origin of this country. And they're legally, like, protected. They slay children in their sleep, in the streets. They do things because they have a code that they will stick to. They will know that they brother is wrong, and they will not say anything for fear of their own safety and being ostracized.
- As soon as I got in the car, the police stopped us, we ain't pulled out...And in an instant, if I'd a said the wrong thing the woman was ready to shoot me.
- You are here to protect me but you're also the person that brings me the most fear.

Current Police Footprint

Conversation participants described several types of incidents that account for much of the police response in their neighborhoods. For example, both Spanish and English participants highlighted “domestic violence” and “shots fired.” Several groups also discussed theft (primarily auto-related, ranging from carburetors to carjackings) and well-being checks. Nonetheless, community members complained that, in response to these calls, “they swarm” or “use 20-30 squad cars, and it doesn't take all of that.”

Beyond emergency response, participants described the day-to-day police presence in their neighborhood as primarily symbolic. Specifically, they discussed the **placement of police cars or cameras as an ineffective policing strategy without police actually present.**

- There's something that I noticed in my neighborhood in the heavy crime areas and heavy drug trafficking areas. They have a police car parked there 24 hours a day.
- In the neighborhood that I stay in to see this big station and all these like little white cars is giving like they want to instill some type of overall sense of fear or terror. Of just like, ‘we're always watching, we're always around.’ I find it so hypocritical and ironic: I have a police station in the front facing of my block but like behind my block it was so many shootings. The next 2 blocks from that police station there's so many shootings.
- So many instances happening and cameras are right there. And you say, “okay well you got a camera?’ ‘Oh but we didn't see that part on the camera.’ So, what are these cameras actually doing?

- That one street is just troublesome and [police] don't stay there, they don't. They just install cameras to watch, I guess?

Participants preferred the presence of police officers to police cars or cameras because they believed that “a cop's presence is a deterrent.” But they also explained that the **police officers who are present in their neighborhoods spend their time engaging in “stop-and-frisk” and ignore signs of drug/gang activity.**

- I've a partner, and every time he'll go to the grocery store or walk to the local corner store (never stood on the corner or anything), they will stop and frisk him. Every time. And they ask him, 'oh there was a shooting nearby, do you know anything about that?' Isn't that illegal just to stop and frisk a person in general?
- I had one son that, because of the police always just stopping him, when they pull up and he sees them come up by, he automatically holds his hands up in the air. He opens his legs up and sticks his tongue out. And my daughter makes fun of him. She said, 'they haven't even asked you to do anything.' But he's traumatized!
- They pulled me over because the taillight was not broken but their premise was that it was. They asked me to stick my tongue out and they asked my sons to stick their tongue out. When we pulled off ('cause I know to just be quiet and do whatever you live to see another day) I asked my sons, 'why do they have me stick my tongue?' He say, 'cause they think you're a dealer.' That was just amazing to me, you know? I was just driving!
- These are the same officers that are shaking down my grandfather just going to the grocery store, when we know several kids who are stick up kids currently. And you're not shaking them down at all. You're just letting them work their way to the system.
- [Participant describing an interaction with a police officer who pulled him over.] I say, "You ain't got nothing else better to do? You ain't got no Dodge with all tinted windows to pull over?" [Laughter] Them the ones that got all the guns, so you scared to pull them over. But you wanna mess with me and my dealer plate.
- [Police officers] driving around the neighborhood, that's a joke. If I drive past you 15 times and you're still in the same place where you were from the first time I saw you, maybe ask, 'can provide me with information as to why you're here for eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve hours?'
- What I've seen is there is a demographic discrimination. Now, you come to Chicago, and you see these people, these guys they gang, uh, they standing there from sunup to sundown. But if you go to Cicero, if you go to Old Park, if you go to Old Brook, there's none of that gathering. So, I had an opportunity to go to uh a community meeting in Cicero, and I asked the question, I said, 'it's here, but I don't see it here.' And [the Cicero community members] said, if there's three people crowding it's considered as gang, I mean mob action. So, it's on the police to tell them to disperse.' Again, you can go there right now and see no one ganged up. When you come to Chicago, it's like they're allowing them to do that.

Reasons System Change is Needed

Safety as a “Fantasy”

A really important factor that you probably should realize out of this crowd of people that you have right here [motions a circle around the group], that's almost a fantasy: to be safe, truly safe. Like Robert said, you could be sitting in the house watching one of your programs or reading a book and a teenager with an AK shoots and it goes through your wall. You were in the house. You weren't even visible. So, that's the kind of stuff we see, or we live with, or we have to deal with on a regular basis. Black mothers are seen on the ground crying over their kids. This happens on a regular basis. That's something that we're plagued with. So, public safety is really a fantasy to the average African American individual.

Many participants explained that public safety “doesn’t exist” or “is a fantasy” in the communities where they live and work. Therefore, it may be more accurate to say that our participants thought **there was a need for system design before redesign or system reform**. When asked to reimagine public safety, they asked for time to imagine it first because they had never directly experienced it enough to ‘reimagine’. As Kevin explained, “Let me get the first imagination... I live in the Englewood area, I see this stuff all the time, and I’m a gambler; I’m in the barber shops and everything down South and even out West...Safety is an imagination in the sense that people fear each other today.” To obtain that image, they referred to what they know about neighborhoods “up north” (referred to in five focus groups) and suburbs (referred to in six focus groups).

- When I think of public safety, I do not feel secure because I don't believe that we really have it. Some neighborhoods are better than others. So, in some places I may feel secure. In some places, I'm watching over myself. Some places I just won't go. Because there is no public safety to me.
- A couple of my co-workers are case managers, they sent me the flyer. When you talk about reimagining public safety, I can't even imagine public safety as a black man. Let alone reimagine it.
- So, what are we reimagining? Let me get the first imagination in. [Laughter]
- There is no public safety to me. If you at the Gold Coast, you gonna get that proper police officer. If you're on Michigan Avenue, you're gonna get that. But we're not gonna get that.
- I will only say the people up north are the only ones that know public safety and feel comfortable calling the police or relying on the police for anything because everybody Black know that you don't call the police for anything.

Perceptions of Corrupt Systems and City Officials

Focus group participants separated issues with systems and city officials from problematic police officers. They discussed distrust of elected officials as a distinct problem. Specifically, the participants do not believe elected officials act in their communities’ best interest.

- When election come, I always say you vote the less of crooks. Which crook do you want in the house? 'Cause they all crooks.

- Once the election’s over, if you pay attention, you never hear nothing else. They make all these thousand promises, and don't follow through. They'll visit you. They'll come to your church. They'll come to your job. They pass out flowers. Soon as they get voted in, you never see these people again. [Spanish translation]
- But see, none of that’s gonna be effective unless we have reliable representatives. [Referring to more funding for public safety.] If the Alderman is involved, if the senate, you know we don’t have liable representation to back us up as a community to push certain things.
- We have nobody - we have no judges that come from where we come from. We have no prosecutors that come from where we come from. And, we may have a few police officers, but maybe it's just not enough.

Instead, **officials’ actions align more with a system that the participants believe is designed to prioritize profit over public safety.**

- It’s too many times where something negative has happened with the police and here comes the mayor’s office coming to etch up something to smooth things out. But then you’re just smoothing it out with the public to keep your voters keeping you in office, and you’re getting kickbacks from these guys.
- Once I learned that the purpose, the true purpose, of the policing system was never to solve crimes, it was never to ensure safety at all. Once I learned the core values the first ever police department was built upon, it just all makes sense for what I see currently in the day. No, they don’t serve and protect. They ticket people and pull people over for little, the smallest things to try to siphon more money from people that are already impoverished.
- Back in the day they was arresting people for having one marijuana joint. What was the reason for that? Catch you with a little bag of something, take ‘em to jail. The reason is that’s when they privatized prisons. You can’t make money unless they filled.

Emergency Services Are Unusable or Inadequate

It's like a conflict: when do you call and when don't you call? Because you're scared to call. You don't know what to do in those situations and that's a safety issue. Because if you're scared of your protector, that's a domestic violence issue. That's a classic domestic violence issue. So, we have a classic domestic violence issue in America with the police department. We're afraid of our protectors.

Focus group attendees thought that 911 was unusable in several situations. First, reporting certain crimes could lead to “backlash” or “repercussions” from the alleged perpetrators. Second, participants feared that police responders could exacerbate emergencies. Third, residents of their neighborhoods expect to receive slow or otherwise inadequate responses when they risk using the emergency response system.

In the enrollment survey, only nine people said they might hesitate to call 911 in an emergency. However, during the focus groups, **more than half of the participants said people in their neighborhoods refuse to call 911 to intervene in crime because of fear of retaliation.** The potential for

backlash was by far the most common reason they gave for residents failing to reach out to emergency services to address threats to public safety. [Refer to the appendix for additional stories of retaliation after witnessing or reporting a crime.]

- Everybody is afraid of retaliation.
- People want to come forward but, like you saying, nobody wants their family shot.
- We had drug dealing on our block ... The car parks and waits, the buyer waits, and then the dealer comes and they passes it right in front of me. I see them passing right in front of my house. They pass the drugs and they pull off. Am I gonna report that? Am I stupid? You know, I mean, no!
- So, that's why I think so many people don't speak even if they see something, because a person who was a witness in a case, she said what she saw and then she started getting threats. And she would tell the police, and the police just told her that they would be outside her home, that's the alleged safety said they would provide. The lady regretted it, she said she wanted to move out because she was receiving threats because of what she saw. [Spanish translation]
- Usually you can't give them information about what happened. There are just people just watching.
- And then on the same token, you'd be rarely trying to report to the police. Somehow that information always gets out: who told or what have you. That puts you and your family in danger.
- People are also scared to call the police. The police do not care, they will put your information out there. So, most people don't call.

As seen in these excerpts, the possibility that perpetrators will learn the identity of the reporter (either through direct observation or from the police department itself) limits community members' use of emergency services to report crime. As one participant stated, "There is so many more negative repercussions from involving the police than there is positive." Her comment could refer either to potential retribution from the accused perpetrator or the **risk that a police presence will exacerbate the incident.**

- Like, if I call them, I don't know what's going to happen, if it's going to be worse than if I didn't call them.
- I wouldn't wanna call the police, either, 'cause I feel like the situation would go way further than it need to go and then I wouldn't feel safe.
- They don't call 911 for fear of their life, fear of things becoming worse.
- So, a lot of times people don't want to make matters worse because they know what cometh.
- We have had prime examples of people who have called the police and end up dying as a result of that.

The attendees report that they and their neighbors have to weigh the risk of retaliation and the potential for escalation against the quality of service they expect to receive. Our participants shared several experiences of nonresponse, delayed response, or inadequate response to 911 calls.

- And that's another thing too, you call the police they may come, they may not.
- You look at its utility: how long is it going to take?

- If you call 911 to say, “I feel that I'm being threatened,” they're going to respond but they're gonna put it on the low level. Your complaint might take 10-15 minutes.
- There's a police station right around the corner...They called the police before, and it was, like, a 30-something minute response.
- They don't do anything. If they show up, the situation is over and whoever you were dealing with is gone. A lot of people look at it as a waste of time. If I call the police, it will take them forever to come. Then, when they get here, they go by whoever tells the best story.
- The police can't be trusted, they don't do shit. So I think in some instances people may not call 9-1-1, like, what's the reason? Like, they ain't going to do shit anyway.

The Chicago Police Department

“The Chicago Police Department, as part of, and empowered by, the community, is committed to protect the lives, property, and rights of all people, to maintain order, and to enforce the law impartially. We will provide quality police service in partnership with other members of the community. To fulfill our mission, we will strive to attain the highest degree of ethical behavior and professional conduct at all times.”

-CPD Mission Statement

Focus group participants believe **the CPD mission statement is more of a vision statement**. They agree with the underlying sentiments but do not believe it is being implemented. As was previously discussed, participants were particularly skeptical about efforts to “protect.” In addition, as discussed below, they questioned the phrases “of all people” and “in partnership with members of the community.”

- It took me a little bit to keep from laughing. This, to us, is a joke. There's quite a few things in here that sound like a beautiful idea. But that's like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.
- I can't talk about this, I'm too biased. We have done training with the police department and they were too scared to walk through the communities without their guns.
- It's a really nice idea. But it ain't real. So, it's hard for me to see this. It's a beautiful idea. This would make me feel safe if I actually saw it. I'm sure there are officers out there that this means something to them. But they're outnumbered so dramatically to the point that it makes this [motions to green slip] nonexistent.
- Written like this it looks very good, and we would like to believe, but, we would also like it to really happen. [Spanish translation]

According to our participants, racial discrimination—at structural and individual levels—is the primary obstacle to implementing the mission statement. As is displayed in Table 1, the attendees’ perceptions of police were neutral when asked general questions about police officers’ personal characteristics.²⁸ However, they had strong feelings about bias among police officers, **strongly disagreeing with every question that described Chicago police officers as fair and unbiased**.

²⁸ Participants’ cynicism about whether CPD officers protect them has been discussed earlier in the report.

Table 1: Focus Group Participants' Perceptions of Chicago Police*

Police provide safety	Neutral
Police are helpful	Neutral
Police are trustworthy	Neutral
Police are reliable	Neutral
Police officers care about my community	Neutral
Police officers are friendly	Neutral
Police officers protect me	Somewhat Disagree
Police are good people	Neutral
I like the police	Neutral
Police do not discriminate	Strongly Disagree
Police officers are unbiased	Strongly Disagree
Police officers treat all people fairly	Strongly Disagree

**Based on the median and mode (all coincided) of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.*

The idea that participants are indifferent about police in general but, at the same time, recognize that they discriminate may seem counterintuitive. Yet, their statements throughout the focus groups provide some clarification. Participants have a nuanced understanding of the position police are in when serving their communities. They recognize that officers are exposed to danger and trauma in ways somewhat similar to residents. Participants also acknowledge that there are some “good apples” working on the force. However, that level of understanding does not blind them to the role systemic racism plays within local policing practices nor to misconduct among police.²⁹

Nuanced Views

- I have had a few policemen that really were on my side. I knew it. But, they were with policemen that weren't on my side.
- When the pandemic hit, a lot of things surfaced...With the police department, the mentality and experiences, you saw a lot of suicides among the police.
- They see us as a threat. So, they want to try to be almighty and stuff, you know, they want to have their guns out and be aggressive towards us 'cause they know we a threat.
- It's like it is weird because like growing up in these communities you see the community crime, but then you turn to the man in blue and you think that they're here to resolve that. Instead they're terrorizing the people who are already being terrorized.
- There is also distrust because I believe that the police sometimes try to protect themselves, even over you. But I know it's not all of them [Spanish translation]
- Residents are scared to even talk to the police.
 - The police are scared, too. I'm sorry. They're scared of residents, but you shouldn't be over here policing if you're scared.

²⁹ Refer to the section on Police Misconduct in Appendix A. The excerpts describing misconduct are too long and detailed to insert here.

Racism

- They live by a code of, 'I don't give a fuck, if you are a minority, you're going to go by this blue or we're gone kill you.'
- To this day, Chicago police and a lot of police departments won't acknowledge that their foundation is rooted or was rooted in systemic racism.
- Stop making new programs without acknowledging the core issue or the core thing. The racism is too blatant and it's not just in the police department.
- My father's White and my mother's Black. Now the way my father would talk to policemen a black man would be killed. You know he'd want us to know their badge number, what they were stopping him for, they had to tell him or he would even tell 'em shut the blank up and just give me the ticket. You cannot do that as a black man.

In sum, the focus group participants believe that efforts to reimagine public safety in their neighborhoods should have four goals.

1. Establish physical safety in public areas.
2. Remove the fear of retaliation for reporting crimes, especially crimes that pose an immediate threat or are in progress.
3. Reduce the likelihood that calling 911 will magnify the crises or inflict additional harm.
4. Address racism within policing practices.

In the next session, we review two of Chicago's most recent efforts to reimagine public safety. As seen in the next section, the community members who participated in our focus groups believe NPI has the potential to partially address goal (2), and CARE may contribute to goal (3). Nonetheless, similar to their views of CPD officers, they have nuanced opinions about both programs.

Recent Attempts to Transform Public Safety

We focused on two initiatives that were relatively recently implemented in Chicago. The City of Chicago's **Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement Program (CARE)**³⁰ dispatches multidisciplinary response teams to specific 911 calls, including for mental health or behavioral issues. NYU School of Law's Policing Project spearheads the **Chicago Neighborhood Policing Initiative (NPI)**.³¹ The program focuses on improving relationships between community members and police by modeling New York City's neighborhood policing philosophy.

Community conversation participants had the opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on these efforts to reimagine public safety within the Chicago city limits. Although the programs have very different philosophies, goals, and structures, three themes overlap across the programs. So, the

³⁰ To learn more about the CARE program and review official summary statistics about CARE encounters, visit [Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement \(CARE\) Dashboard \(chicago.gov\)](#).

³¹ To learn more about the NPI structure, history, and efforts, visit [Chicago NPI — The Policing Project](#) or [Chicago Neighborhood Policing Initiative \(chicagonpi.org\)](#).

following messages seem to reflect community members' sentiments about any newly formed initiative to transform first response in Chicago.

First, community members **questioned whether these programs exist**. Participants' distrust³² of municipalities and organizations within the public safety sphere goes beyond whether they can design effective programming. Instead (reflecting on earlier findings about the fantasy of public safety), they discussed whether we were distributing propaganda about programming that was not in place.

- If I see this in action, I'll believe it's workable. But we don't see it. If I don't know it's there, it doesn't exist.
- Is this the real program, or is it just a piece of paper?
- I'm like, is this really real? Or is it just on the paper?
- Don't nobody come out to the neighborhoods and form relationships or anything. So that one I don't believe.
- The thing is, if it's been in place and we don't know about it, then that's a problem. And then that means they not doing it.
- All this sound great, you just need to see it. It sound great. It's like when you in the store and you see a package and it looks good, and you get home and say, 'Oh man, I wasted my money.'

Second, participants **bemoaned the geographic restrictions** of both programs. Conversation participants noted that the programs “started up north, of course” and questioned whether their neighborhoods would ever “benefit” or “get access” to the programming. Several participants recognized and reminded others that “this is just the beginning” and the programs will “grow into other areas.” However, even those participants questioned how geographic areas are chosen to be pilot areas. As one participant questioned, “Who decided ‘here?’ How did they determine that these would be the areas?” [translated from Spanish].

Third, conversation attendees **warned against “reinventing the wheel.”** Participants identified preexisting state or community-based programs that could house CARE and NPI programming, respectively. Community members worried that “starting these brand-new things” would be inefficient, increase competition for resources, and decrease community-centered decision-making. At the end of the morning session, we asked participants, “Is there anything else we should know about NPI or CARE?” and one group responded as follows:

- Speaker 3: You want to get involved in an organization that's already doing the work. You know? It could take years to start a new organization.
- Speaker 1: Right.
- Speaker 4: Like, they doing these new things instead of using programs that already out there in the community doing the work.
- Speaker 2: And perfecting things.

³² I intentionally use “distrust” here to refer to prior experience, knowledge, or other evidence that leads to a lack of trust, as opposed to “mistrust,” which refers to a feeling or intuition.

Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE)

I like the idea about the mental health thing. Force and incarceration are not necessary for mental health situations. Give me an alternate number to call. We raise our kids to call 911 if something is happening. We didn't raise them to assess the situation and call someone else. All the ideas here are beautiful. But us benefiting from it, having access to it, is almost a fantasy.

This quote—from a Black man in his 50s who resides on the Southside—highlights community conversation participants' complex and complicated sentiments about CARE. Participants support the initiative's philosophy and intention, but the support is qualified.

According to data from the enrollment questionnaire, only three participants had heard of the CARE program before attending the Community Conversation. After distributing an infographic, we asked them if they thought CARE could improve public safety in Chicago. Most of the responses echoed statements such as “it sure can help” or “I think so.” The consensus was that programs like CARE could help to “get [police] where they really need to be” and would “**give police more time to handle other situations.**” More than a handful of people highlighted the follow-up process after the first contact. As Magdalena explained, “you can detect that there is a problem, but if you do not follow up, nothing will happen [translated from Spanish].”

Most, but not all, of the community members' comments also supported integrating CARE into the existing 911 infrastructure. Even when people raised the prospect of “another number” or “alternate number,” other participants questioned, “who would determine when you call the police if this is a mental health crisis or not” or how people would “know what that number is.” So, overall, they **lauded the fact that CARE works within and through the existing 911 system.**

- Why do I have to evaluate the situation and choose who to call? Why can't it be if you feel like there's an emergency, you call 911 and when you tell the operator what's going on, they dispatch the right people versus us trying to figure out who to call?
- I would suggest that the operators are better trained on how to handle a 911 call and who to send. People are busy these days and don't have time to learn about how mental health cases work.
- That's why I'm saying the people behind the phone should be trained to know those issues to know who to send. My first thing is to call 911.

Although most of the community conversation attendees supported programming to dispatch alternative responders to mental and behavioral health crises, they had two reservations about the structure of CARE. First, they **prefer alternative responses to co-response** and worry that CARE replicates and competes with state-sponsored programming. Participants believe that **police officers' primary role is enforcement, so they are not essential responders to most mental health crises.**³³

³³ Only one participant had direct experience with the CARE program, which operates in the geographic area where she works. She believed the best part of the program was the officer's training and compassion. However, she stated that “the cop mentioned he was protecting. The cop said he had to be there to protect the baby's life.” You can read the entire description in Appendix A: Salient Stories.

- Like, for the police department, what is the need? We have ambulance, we have firemen, we have healthcare professionals and like urgency care. Why would the police be there?
- And it's like, it's the enforcement that they're used for. Enforcement. And it's like a lot of the times you don't need force to do anything.
 - Right!
 - Yeah.
 - Yeah, yeah. It's a bad mix.
- Not somebody who's gonna be a part of the CPD department—that's a part of uniform that works in the same station. It would be somebody that, that's not gonna be bound to their code.

Second, participants were uneasy about **CARE's overlap with the Illinois Department of Human Service's Program 590 Crisis Care System**.³⁴ According to the Illinois DHS website, Program 590 focuses on building a system that provides “someone to respond” in lieu of simply “someone to call.” While CARE trains dispatchers to identify mental health crises, Program 590 allows and depends on individuals to identify mental health crises. Program 590 is also statewide (providing wider geographic coverage than CARE) and funds community organizations to perform outreach, develop communities of practice, and increase partnerships.

Three of our participants had direct experience with Program 590 (a grantee, an employee, and a person who had used services). Their groups compared CARE to Program 590 and elaborated on the earlier discussed theme of “reinventing the wheel.” Their groups stated plainly: “stop making new programs.”

- Well, I just found out that it was sponsored by the city of Chicago, after we got the state's 590 mobile crisis program. The city has a program like this? What- what are we doing? (laughs) Are we competing against each other instead of working together? We playing ourselves.
- We should all be working together instead of constantly developing all of these different systems.
- Everybody's fighting for the same staffing here.
- I just had to laugh. Like, oh, we actually have this program and ... it's a 24 hours crisis care.

The Neighborhood Policing Initiative (NPI)

Similar to CARE, community conversation participants expressed qualified support of NPI. Seven participants were familiar with NPI and two community ambassadors participated in the conversation but, as described earlier, a significant number of participants still questioned whether this program actually exists. Other participants were optimistic that NPI could help the existing system to function better, primarily by addressing the gulf between community members and police officers. The **Black participants hoped the community ambassadors could serve as trusted mediators to indirectly address the problem, while Latina participants hoped the program would directly increase trust between police officers and community members.**

- Well, I think it would begin to develop trust towards the police [translated from Spanish].
- I think it would be a chance for people to start trusting the police [translated from Spanish].
- When I see this program, I feel the sense of, “okay community has some people who they feel more comfortable coming and bringing these matters to.”

³⁴To learn more about Program 590, visit [Program 590 \(state.il.us\)](https://www.state.il.us/Program590).

- [Community ambassadors] can go and bring these problems to the people who can actually solve them and let them know, like, I'm here speaking the voice of many.
- Just in trusting that these community ambassadors can also educate the community because a lot of the misunderstanding when it comes to dealing with law enforcement is because you don't know what to say or what not to say.

Your time is precious, and people need to pay you like they pay the other people because you're the real experts.

Participants spent a lot of time discussing NPI's community ambassadors. The shared sentiment was that community ambassadors are the "only part of the program that could work" because "you're getting expertise from the experts" and "built-in trust." However, every group thought that **failing to pay community ambassadors was at best problematic and at worst unethical**. They worried that the program "isn't gonna last" because "ain't no one gonna keep doing that for free" or "they're gonna see it's just the same—they're just tryna make money off us."

- I believe that the light bulb needs to go off because it says, "neighbors who volunteer." See, they always want the residents to volunteer.
- No. Pay the people. Give them a wage. Make them understand how valuable they are.
- These other people are not volunteering to this. It take money to run fliers.
- I think it's a great idea. But this says neighbors who volunteer...
 - They gotta get paid huh?
 - That's what I'm saying. [Translated from Spanish]
- That's a lot of work. It's like you have to deal with different people regularly and I'm volunteering to do this?

Community attendees had several ideas about **improving the NPI programming**. The suggestions listed below were independently provided by at least three attendees.

- When I hear about crime, I hear a lot about the involvement of youth. So, it would be helpful to get the youth involved.
- I dunno what the qualifications are to be a community ambassador but I think it's important that we can choose people to be one.
- And not a permanent position.
 - Not a permanent position!
 - It should rotate!
 - That's the problem with the aldermen and the police commissioners..
 - Yes, Yes!

Suggestions for Continued Transformation

Coordination across Jurisdictions and Specializations

Enough is enough, you know what I'm saying? We just need to get together, see where there are holes, fill the holes instead of keep starting new programs.

One of our participants made this statement during our discussion of NPI, and it received endorsement (nods and “mmhmm's”) from the other focus group members. Their shared sentiment is that there is a “never-ending cycle” of new programming. Programs compete for funding and staffing, the “connected ones” or “people in their network” get established, they “don’t do nothing” or “only work for them, not us,” the programs “give up,” and the cycle begins again.

The focus group attendees suggested **building a collaboration that includes existing community assets to encourage coordination across geographies and services**. They point to 311 and 911 as an example of the potential of collaboration across existing services that needs to be perfected.

- So, we need the coordination of services.
- And they're not partnering with you?
 - [Response from an AB member who learned about CARE from us]: Well, we took a year to develop our program, then that's when we heard about this. So, we are actually on the line, you know, doing some stuff with CARE now. But it's just like, we just gotta do a better job. We're not getting the best bang for our buck because we're not collaborating together.
- Whoever they are, they need to correspond and they need to collaborate.

311/911 as an example of coordination and awareness gap.

- Everybody doesn't know the difference between 911 and 311. Sometimes you call 911 when you really should have called 311.
- Getting to know more about the community, the Alderman, where we belong, what can we ask the Alderman, what can we ask 311, what can we ask 911. So, there could be more trust in knowing the available resources, who can help, and who to call if someday this happens to you. [Spanish translation]
- I don't think it's an emergency if I'm at home and I hear gunshots, so I don't call 911. I can call 311 and tell them I heard gunshots. They're going to ask me where and I'll say I don't know. I'm in my house, but I heard four or five shots around.
- I think that's more for 311 because it's not something you're seeing. It's not an urgent emergency and then 911 cut you off because if I waste time with you, I'm not saving another life. It's my opinion, I don't know, if you hear shots, maybe call 311 and say, “I'm okay, but I'm hearing shots. I didn't want to call 911 because it was not an emergency, I don't know where around here it is happening.” [Spanish translation]
- Moderator: Who would you want to call for help or what would you want to happen?
 - I would want to call 311 and..but I don't want them to connect me to 911.

- Right.
- Mmhmm.
- During this year the tree across the street from my house fell... So we tried 3-1-1, no answer. We tried to call the property and no answer. So, we ended up calling 9-1-1. And they said well, why did you call us? I said well we tried the other numbers that we were supposed to call first, we got a tree, can't nobody come through here. It's a whole tree, missed my tire by this much. So that did get somebody out there (laughs). It did get somebody out there, we weren't tryna call 9-1-1, it's just we tried to do the proper channel, the proper channel didn't answer the phone.

Additional Alternate Responders

[Police] should be consulted as to like, “what do you know about this?” in violent situations. But even that's difficult because we have street outreach that area, they're in neighborhoods, they're from the neighborhoods. They also have credibility with the neighborhood, so they are perceived as say, “okay it's something going on let me go to the street outreach first.” Then they may be perceived as not trustworthy anymore ‘cause now you fuck with police. Like, we know you from the area so it's difficult.

As was previously discussed, participants believe the CPD has a limited role in public safety, namely enforcement and not protection. Recall statements made earlier in this report that police “are not going to take a bullet for you” and “protect themselves, even over you.” So, the community members in our focus groups **advocated for limiting co-response and supporting alternative responders**. For example, although they realized that, often, CARE includes a co-response, they believed one of the program’s most significant contributions is “getting [police] where they need to be.” If enforcement is not needed, they suggest sending people who have lived experience that prepares them to deal with specific public safety needs, what Al Young refers to as redeemed Old Heads.³⁵

- Who should 911 send? I guess it depends on the situation. Somebody who specialized in that situation. Not always cops.
- You can't have the little kids stealing the candy bar from the store. I'm not telling the store owner, “we'll call the police and get the little kid locked up. You know, there should be a restorable process for that instead of tryna, you know, get little kids locked up.”
- A lot of the times, situations that go on they don't necessarily need the police. It might just be a mom having a breakdown or something. Or a kid, just acting irrational or something like that, and the police are there for that, when they clearly need counseling or something like that. You know what I mean?
- The music is a problem but stop using the police to avoid human contact. Realize you putting someone else in a situation where their life could be taken because you just made a simple complaint [when you] could've came just like, “hey, I'm your neighbor from so and so, I would appreciate if you could...”³⁶

³⁵ Young, V. A. (2007). *Your average nigga: Performing race, literacy, and masculinity*. Wayne State University Press.

³⁶ Noise complaints was commonly given as an example of issues that do not need a police response. Nonetheless, a sizeable subset of participants also stated that it's too dangerous to confront neighbors directly. The

Examples of integrating redeemed old heads

- ECCSC [Ex-cons for Community and Social Change] just got the contract to protect CTA's because of the crime on the train. That's the police. That's why we talk about partnerships. You can't always send the police to the train tracks, somebody has to be back in those streets.
- We [Wellness Heals] would send a therapist and a community outreach engagement specialist, which is a person with lived experience. That person says, "Okay, I've been to jail. I know what it is to do XYZ. I know what it is to have a mental breakdown. Let me tell you, you can survive this." So, these are people who have survived and are now thriving, you know?

Awareness Campaigns

Participants believed that increased awareness of the City's reform efforts, including CARE and NPI, could help to heal relationships between community members, elected officials, and police officers. Much of their disbelief about program existence stemmed from the fact that they had never heard of the programs before, in their daily or virtual environments. So, the participants recommended:

1. Developing public awareness.
2. Design awareness campaigns that do not rely on typical methods, such as websites, flyers, and news stories.
3. Focus on strategies that distribute information face-to-face, in public spaces, and on social media.

Developing Awareness

- We might have access to things. But we don't have the information to know that we have access to things. It should be some kind of way to inform individuals about certain things.
- I think that the disadvantage that these programs have is that people do not find out that they exist...how many times there are programs like this that can save lives, and we do not know how important it is? I think they should be spreading it on Facebook. [Spanish translation]
- They may not be aware of this, and how it could potentially benefit these communities, so I think a huge like, media or some type of introduction to this and encouraging the community to engage.
- If the City of Chicago could do something different either to support NPI or replace NPI, what would you suggest?
 - Not a campaign, but a huge awareness thing. Like social media is huge. There's many people that, myself included, that may not know anything about this.

Ineffective methods

- Everybody don't watch the news. Like, you know, you might briefly watch it. Um, a- a commercial, you're not paying any attention to commercials. But to actually get out there in the

recommended using "air pods," "ear plugs," or "just don't get any sleep that night" instead of addressing the problem.

community and let them know that this is available, we are here for you, that's something totally different.

- And I hate to tell you all, folk don't read no more. You know, people Tik Tok. So, you know, we Tik-Tok, and we you know, got our little, uh, Twitter stuff, and all that. You know? They want stuff that's fast. Please. People not reading like this anymore [motioning to the city's CARE handout].
- Well, we ain't gonna read the paper that you hand out. It's what I do with all of my other papers, right? So, giving little quick things like magnets just for people to put on the refrigerator.
- Not on a website or a small flier.
- I'm also younger and stuff and so I don't like go on the news or I just don't stay up to date with the situation.

Effective methods

- They definitely need to be publicized more. Whether it's commercials, whether it's social media, something, they definitely need to be publicized 'cause I knew nothing.
- Being on the bus stop. I saw them, because somehow you need to put it where I can see. Like parking areas, high traffic areas. Put the information out there.
- It needs to be on billboards. Or even those little, those lawn signs with a phone number on it.
- There should be resource stands. For example, there are many community events, we call them health fairs. So, they should also have a stand there, and if I come by and say, “hey, what is this about?” Let the person tell me directly [Spanish translation]
- They need to go to every door, every household in the community, because it's about relationships.
- We actually go door to door using our TRIM 8 block sector map. We have North Lawndale divided into 44 eight-block sectors. And so, when we started hiring our outreach specialists, they took that 44 sector and told the sectors they were gonna go to.

Block Clubs

I've stayed all over Chicago, all over the westside of Chicago, and I've been blessed to been on one block that had an established block party. We stayed on that block for almost 10 years, and that was the best life I had just because, although around the area was a lot of violence, on the actual block itself was a sense of peace. And that alone was nice because you could sit on your porch and not have to worry about a drive by happening, or worry about the police coming to interrogate you about a matter that has nothing to do with you.

Participants were eager to discuss ways neighbors could band together to establish a safe environment without relying solely on public institutions. Two of the afternoon focus groups chose to focus on “strengthening bonds and ties among neighbors.” During those afternoon discussions and every morning discussion, attendees seemed interested in forming or expanding block clubs.

To be clear, their description and understanding of block clubs did not conform to the clubs supported and sponsored by the CPD.³⁷ Instead, most of the discussion focused on **recreating strong ties that existed “back in the day,” which could now be formed through either informal and formal block clubs.** Participants believed the difference between neighborhood ties then and now is due to high rates of transience (including the integration of black and brown neighbors) and the danger of retaliation.³⁸

Back in the day

- So, the collective safety, I think it is a whole new era. When I grew up, the entire neighborhood, everybody knew everybody. It's been a trend that I've noticed from, even with my limited engagement with people that, it's been a lot of impoverished individuals that are always traveling. So, meaning, I may stay in this neighborhood for six months to a year, then I'm in another neighborhood, then I'm in another neighborhood. So, in many cases you have a lot of families being displaced and moved around. So the neighborhood dynamic isn't the same as if I was born here, I went to school there.
- When I was coming up, you know, you had all the neighbors knew each other. If you did something, by the time you got home, your mama knew. Now, you don't know your neighbor, you don't wanna get involved, 'cause if you step in, you might be the one who gets shot, get killed. You know, you can't... You wanna help, but you can't help.

Informal and formal block clubs

- Then, talking with another neighbor, I told her, it would be a good idea to ask the neighbors if we had a meeting, or list on our phones for any situation, because I don't even know the neighbors' names. So, we did it and went to knock on the doors. We said, “so, I have this many years living here, I have seen that you drive your car but I don't know what your name is. I live here, it would be good to get to know each other in case of any situation, right?” And that's what we did. Now, we agreed that we were going to have a monthly meeting. [Spanish translation]
- Well we basically need the block clubs. That's what we need to start with and everybody don't have.
 - What do block clubs give to insure that safety?
 - Well, we have meetings and then everybody get to stick together. Like she said with the phone thing, we call each other even though we don't have a block club right now, we're trying to get one together, but it's a few of the seniors like over over 60 cuz all of my friends are basically over 70.
- You know, that's one of the things: a block club would help you to know your neighbors, respect your neighbors. You know, they come for a better life just as we did back in the day when there was white flight and we were moving into communities.

³⁷ For a description of CPD block clubs, visit [Block Clubs | Chicago Police Department](#). For a more extensive discussion of the history of block clubs in Chicago, see Doering, J. (2020). *Us versus them: Race, crime, and gentrification in Chicago neighborhoods*. Oxford University Press. Visit pages 41-46 for a discussion of the relationship between block clubs and public safety.

³⁸ There is more than a century of research on zones of transition in Chicago, to which the participants seem to be intuitively referring. See Rex, J. A. (2012). The sociology of a zone of transition. In *Sociology of Community* (pp. 227-242). Routledge.

- If I can answer, we don't have a lot of issues on my block. It's a quiet block. It's, it's been maybe a 30-year span, I could probably count on my hand the issues. We don't really have issues. And it's for a couple reasons: our neighbors do watch and we do have ring cameras. And we do watch out through the block club.

Focus on Hiring Instead of Training

Based on advisory board recommendations, we explicitly asked community members about the potential for police de-escalation, anti-bias, and empathy training to improve public safety in their neighborhoods. Participants offered qualified support for de-escalation training. They believed police could benefit from the training “if it’s done in the right way.” However, there was little hope among participants that it would be possible to train police officers to be empathetic or unbiased. Participants argued that those traits develop over time through lived experience. So, instead training police officers to have those characteristics, they should recruit and hire people who are likely to have them already.

De-escalation training

- I think the training would help if it's done correctly.
- So, that's also something the police should do. Their demeanor should not be so aggressive, should not be like, I am the law and you're going to do what I say, and get out of the car, or stuff like that. ... I think the police need to be politer, get better training, and more tolerance. They shouldn't be so aggressive. [Spanish translation]
- That goes into the de-escalating training in those situations or even in general you know with the cops. Y’all know the cowboy thing was like survival first and whoever grab their gun first type of stuff. And even with the black person who don’t got no gun, the police that’s their automatic response.
- Personally, I think the training could be beneficial, but I think it would need to be mandated part of their employment: that they do it regularly and that they use multiple approaches and multiple tactics.
- It could be good in learning about de-escalation techniques instead of just coming to arrest people and instead taking the approach of, "Look, we're just here to, to calm down or to provide a level of tranquility or peace for this environment or this neighborhood"

Empathy and anti-bias hiring

To be empathetic, you have to be able to, to be in someone's situation. Like, if you're not from our neighborhood, you're not from our culture, you're not from this environment, you cannot be empathetic to my plight. You have no idea what it's like to have a extension cord running from three houses down just so we have lights on, or to go and borrow some sugar and rice and milk so people can have a meal. They don't have any idea what it's like to go to school and be hungry, or to like, in the fall, before it even get cold, people in the house with blankets on and coats. They don't... I'm not saying that all of them don't have this, but how do you train in empathy? You gotta come from our situation.

- One of the most empathetic situations with the police department I've ever seen was when Kyle Rittenhouse shot up all those people and was walking down the street with an AK-47. They were so empathetic that they let him walk past after just killing people.
- They have empathy. They don't need to be trained to have more empathy for the same race of people.
- More than all the education, they need to have empathy and compassion for their communities because it would be useless for a cop to take the best training, and not have that feeling of compassion and empathy for a human being. It's not going to work. [Spanish translation]
- Don't think you can be trained to be empathetic. I feel like that's something that you just... it's something from within.
- Do you think training police officers in empathy would improve public safety?
 - How do you train in empathy?
 - That was my first question.
- It's so simple. It's just the fact that we have to sit here and be like, 'oh we need antibias training.' You need to teach someone in the field of employment where human interaction is like 90% of the thing?
 - Shouldn't it be automatic?
 - It should. They should not be biased to us. They should not need training for that.
- It's like in seeing, especially during the pandemic, that a lot of officers are not even officers for the protection of the safety. They're officers because they needed some type of sense of authority in their life from whatever they've been through. And now they finally got this position where they can go and exert this authority to anyone and get this sense of respect they feel so entitled to. How can you educate them to be empathetic?
- Can someone inform me, or clarify for me, is background checks a thing for police departments? Because it doesn't seem like to be a thing. I think with basic background checks before you allow someone to join your force, you can really get a lot of intel of what their upbringing was like.
- I think then also just being truthfully understanding to having that type of burden be placed on you. You, as a person, sought that profession, so you knew that that came with the job. If you felt in anyway about yourself that you couldn't handle that degree of pressure and serve all people whoever they are, that's not the job for you.
- How can you be in a situation or in a foundation where humanly your interactions is always gonna happen and you see people other than human? You see other human beings that don't look like you or don't resonate with you as anything other than human? That's all everyone is.
- But how do you qualify? When we can't go and pull our children's teacher's qualifications to see how they're qualified in order to teach our child, why can't we pull your qualifications to see how well you're qualified to protect our community? Because a lot of them are not.
- When we was growing up, they'd always say, "Stay away from the police." You was considered opposition, you know, if you wanted to become a police officer. But that became our biggest problem. 'Cause now we have nobody that we know inside of the police department. So, now it's all of them and we have none of us working with them to offset - to create that balance that we need.

Appendix A: Salient Stories

Lack of Public Safety

A really important factor that you probably should realize out of this crowd of people that you have right here [motions a circle around the group], that's almost a fantasy. To be safe. Truly safe. Like Roger said, you could be sitting in the house watching one of your programs or reading a book and a teenager with an AK shoots and it goes through your wall. You were in the house. You weren't even visible. So, like I said, that's the kind of stuff we see or we live with or have to deal with on a regular basis. Black mothers are seen on the ground crying over their kids. This happens on a regular basis. That's something that we're plagued with. So, public safety is really a fantasy to the average African American individual.

I actually, had a cab driver, I was coming from the hospital and when the driver heard my address, they told me "no, I'm sorry, I don't go in that area, sir."

That blew me away. I had a cab driver say "I don't go to that area." To live somewhere...I live there. In an area you won't go by in a car. You got two tons of steel around you and a motor and you won't go there because of the area where I live. I have to wake up there. Go to the grocery store there and all of this stuff.

I'm a single parent and I have three boys. And so, as they progressively got older, my concern got worse.

My youngest son, he used to be on the train with his AirPods. I'd say, "Take them out. Don't have your phone out. Focus. Pay attention. Look." I say, "Every night I pray. Like - I just want y'all to make it home safe."

You know? That's all my prayer be like. I be like call me, text me, check on me. I say, "Ya'll know ya'll momma a little thug on the side, [Laughter] but my concern is like, every time they go out, I'm worried. You know? And I don't like the feeling. You know? And they - my kids is grown. Grown, right? And I still worry about them just because. I said, "You just in trouble just because you a Black man and you ain't did nothing wrong." You know? I said, "You just a Black man, that's it. That's all."

Do you know what is another threat? I really think that- the access to the purchase of weapons in our community for young adults. That is a threat to young adults. That is a threat, and now everyone can carry a gun. Everyone threatens you with a gun. Like the case that happened recently with Rosiely(?) in the Westland. Because of a traffic issue, they killed a 3-year-old baby because they chased the girl. I think that maybe she didn't let him pass, he maybe honks, we can never know. But he chased her and shot because got mad. So, we are talking about that. This has to do with mental health, anger, and guns. [Spanish translation]

I know a mother that has street kids that do-what-they-do, and she supports it. You know, she condones it. 'Cause for her, it's safety. And for someone to go through that: they don't have any men in their life that's providing that safety or that security, and sometimes it come from they sons. It comes from those sons that produce that kind of activity. 'Cause, I mean, I was one of those sons. And my mother didn't necessarily condone it, but, she kinda, in her own way, accepted it because I would provide security for the household. Whether it was financial or just security-wise, um ... she definitely wouldn't say "you're doing it," but you have some that will- that supports it. They will support, you know, the home being a safe haven for everybody to come over and think out these crimes that they finna do. Instead of being that mother that go in there and talk to 'em make sure that they not tryna do these things.

Interactions with Police Officers

I had one son that, because of the police always just stopping him, he automatically, when they pull up and he sees them come up by, he holds his hands up in the air. He he he opens his legs up and sticks his tongue out. And my daughter makes fun of him. She said, "they haven't even asked you to do anything." But he's traumatized!

3 People: Mmhmm

Because of being pulled over so much. He's 32 years old and he still just automatically does this! I guess he wants to [show], "I have nothing in my hands, nothing in my pants, and I have nothing in my mouth."

I went to the police station one time because everytime I call them they never sent nobody. I wait for hours and hours and police never came, so I walked to the police station. I go in the station. Nobody say anything so I walk all the way down to the door where the washroom's are. Then I come back and I say, "Helloooooo!!!" Then they, you know, they want to help me then. And then they say, "well you need to go back home." I said, "well, why would I go back home when I'm standing in the police station. I need to talk to a sergeant now." You need to go back home, and we'll send somebody. So now I had to walk all the way up there, I'm over 60 years old. I hadta walk all the way to the police station and I had to walk back. And it still took hours before they sent somebody.

When them cruisers get behind me, I be like, "Oh shit!" And I shouldn't have to feel like that. I should feel like, "I have the police behind me, I'm cool." I be like, "Oh, shit." And I know I ain't doing nothing wrong, but you just - it's just that trauma. The way that they make you feel.

I remember, so I had double plates on my car. So, police pulled up to the side of me, looked in my car and then pulled me over. And he told me I'm breaking the law. And I said, "Gots to tell me, you ain't got something else better to do." 'Cause if I have dealer's plate on my car. You know what that means? I'm a law-abiding citizen with a job. I sell cars. That's what that should tell you. But because it's a Wisconsin plate, you trying to tell me it's illegal to use a Wisconsin plate in Illinois. I say, "You ain't got nothing else better to do? You ain't got no um Dodge with all tinted windows to pull over?" [Laughter] Them the ones that got all the guns, you scared to pull them over, but you wanna mess with me and my dealer plate and I'm trying make so money. So, yeah, police is crazy.

There was in a situation one day and uh the police made a comment that just always stood out in my mind. And his comment was, "when we come here, we come to arrest. Don't call us to be a mediator. We're not you're mediator, we're here to arrest." So, if this is an officer of the law, he's probably not the only officer that has that mindset. Cause a lot of the times, you know, police getting called, it's not necessarily because somebody needs to get hauled off to jail. But a lot of them have that mindset. I'm here to arrest, don't call me because you guys are in a heated argument.

I'm a little biased in all of this simply because I have a background in crime. I was arrested at the age of 19 and I spent 26 years and 6 months in prison. I've worked with the police department since I've been home because of my occupation. I do case management, I'm a victims advocate, I'm a youth coordinator, etc. Some

people will tell you, "he's transformed and turned his life around." I still have the same friends, some of my friends are in they forties. They sell drugs, they have guns, they do whatever they gonna do.

But I think, like Carl said, I know where to place myself at so that I don't be unsafe. For the police, I'm not a criminal, so I should never see the police. The police don't even affect me. When I'm driving down the street...Prime example, two Fridays ago, I had a friend of mine in the car with me coming from a party. I didn't even know he had a gun. The police pulled me over because I have tint on my car. When they pulled me over, he get nervous. I'm like "boy, you in the passenger seat, what you nervous for?" I roll the windows down like, "what you need? My license and my registration?" The cop is like "Yeah." His partner is knocking on my passenger window, saying "Let the windows down." For what? What is you stopping me for? Can you tell me that first?

I rolled the windows down out of respect. First of all, I'm going to respect you so that you can respect me. So, I rolled the window down. But I was really upset with my friend. For one, don't put me, and my car, and my life in danger. I can go back to jail for this. Once they run my name and run my background, they gon' take that gun off of you and give it to me. This is my car, you should have told me that.

Police Misconduct

She also said that when her sons were doing something wrong in the streets in the middle of the night or at any time, and the police caught them-the police would come and take them in the cop car. And you'd think, "it's a good thing they took them, I think they will do something." The mother told me that, what the did when they were in the neighborhood of the two-six gang, they would take them to the next neighborhood of the Latin Kings or the Chinese. And the guys [her sons] had to run because if any one of the other gangs found them, they would get killed or beaten. So, if they say that to me directly, with evidence, thank God it has not happened to my children or anyone in my family. Now that I know, I will be scared, I won't be able to trust the police because I see they do not comply with what they state here [in the CPD mission statement]. [Spanish translation]

There's so many incidents and I have had a few policemen that really were on my side, I knew it, but they were with policemen that weren't on my side. Like, they tried to handcuff me once 'cause I was in the group and uh they did. They handcuffed me and put me (I had never been in in a police paddy wagon or anything before), they put me in the paddy wagon. When the other policeman came and got me out. He asked the others (all of them 'cause there were about 20 police). He said, "who handcuffed her like this?" And the way they handcuffed me, my thumbs and my finger were numb for about a month. I won't, I won't, I won't trust the police anymore.

Okay so what happened to me was at 9:30 at night, a well-being check. Somebody knocking at my door. I get out the bed, I go see who it is. They say it's the police! And I say, "well why would you be in my door?" They said, "'cause somebody who cares about you called us [sarcastic voice]." I said, "you don't know whether they cared about me or not." I said, "but I'm here to let you know that I'm doing fine, I'm well." I said, "thank you for coming out, now do you have a warrant for my arrest?" They said no. I said, "then get out of my hallway!"

And before I could get up my stairs, they let a brother take a hammer, he busts my window out, he broke my doorknob off, and him and all these white police come running up into my home. And then they tried to

manhandle me and my dog was behind me (I have a bulldog) he started barking. They said they would tase him. And I said, "oh no you won't" and I said, "well why would you even be up in my apartment like this?" I said, "oh you trying to say I'm crazy?" They wouldn't say anything, they just tried to get handcuffs on me. But in the long run, I was taken to the mental institution where I had to stay for 72 hours, and then once I did the 72 hours they let me go.

I had a situation years ago with my middle son. They was, there was somebody who was looking for him. And the officer, every time he came, I wasn't home. So I seen all these police cops. "Oh, ain't nobody get out the truck. They doin' work just across the street." No, they was looking for me. [Laughter]. 'Cause they looked for my son. They looked for me and the cop, he was crazy. Came out, "And if we find him first, we gonna kill him." I said, "I know peoples too." So, so he, he came to me one way and I went back to the point that they had to cover my mouth up to shut me up 'cause I was goin'. I was cussing through my hand. I was like, "I don't care what my child did, he's still my child. That ain't how you approach me. Don't talk to me and like, "If we find him, we gonna kill him."

He say, "If we find your son first, we gonna kill him." And I said, "You kill my son, I'm gonna find you." I was willing to go down there. You know, if he'd have came, like, he should, you know, I'da said, "I promise you, if I knew where my son was, I would tell you, I'd tell you." But his approach like, "If we find him, we gonna kill him." You know the code. I think, my approach is, they need to learn how to talk to people. You get a better answer if you talk to me like I'm a human being first and not a animal.

L: After that pandemic, haven't you all heard about police suicides?

K: Yes!

L: You know killing themselves? How many have you heard? I think I heard about 8 or 9 officers.

K: Yeah, there's been a lot since covid, yep.

R: Mmhmm.

L: Yes.

K: The ones that are, they're scared to report their...

L: Their own people.

R: Right 'cause they can't do that. Then that's breaking the code, the whatever, the police code.

L: The code of ethics.

R: Right

L: Then it's like, "okay you my partner, we're police officers, but I know you're taking money 'cause they're selling drugs, you let them stand there."

K: Somebody's taking money.

L: So you get the money, but I know about it, but I'm not taking the money so therefore I can't tell on you because the code of ethics. That's what it is.

R: Right

K: Yeah!

Risk of Retaliation

Speaker 1: So listen to this how this sounds. I call 911 to call drug activity, dispatch says, "Oh we got a call from Ms. Jenny saying that she saw.."

Speaker 2: that stuff is going over the.. you know..

Speaker 3: All airways!

Speaker 1: You see. You think that the drug dealers don't have that?

Speaker 4: Yeah! 'Cause they got it: the scanner. So if you saying that to the police..you see what I'm saying.

Speaker 2: And the police, they in cahoots with the dudes that's on the corner or whatever.

Speaker 1: Yeah! And so it's just like, they gonna get the dudes off the corner, but "your neighbor Ms. Jenny, she started making them complaints. You might want to lay low a little bit or do something about it. It's like, and you wonder why they're now standing outside of your house directly or they now grandstanding like making an example like we don't care.

Speaker 2: I know a lady they bust her window out.

Speaker 4: That's what I was gonna say!

Speaker 2: They bust her window out! She called 911, they said on open air. They knew who it was or whatever and they bust her window out.

Speaker 3: I've never reported that. I was like oh no I'm not reporting no drug dealing.

Hispanic people that don't speak English, or who do not have legal status, don't call the police. They don't even call 311 because, what if the neighbor finds out that you called the police to say, "please, your noise is too loud, it's 3 o'clock in the morning?" So, you have that fear if your neighbor maybe is legal and you are not, and he finds out. You have that fear and it's so real in our community. That happens and because it is happening, the fear doesn't leave if you call 911, if you call 311, and fear doesn't let you act. [Spanish translation]

Public Safety Successes

I've been lucky that the first day I arrived, my neighbor brought me cookies, something I'm not used to. I thought, why is she giving me cookies? But she was like, "hello, I live here, my mom's name is x, okay, look I brought you cookies. I don't have a cake to bring you, but I bring you cookies. So that you know that I'm here, okay?" My other neighbor too, and then he started being friends with my husband, and now we care for each other. So, in one occasion my neighbor left the garage open and we went to knock the door, and he didn't open. My husband couldn't find his number and I said to my husband, "you know what? No one's here, you'll have to get in the garage to close it and run." And he did, he ran. That's what he did, and we told [our neighbor] later. [Spanish translation]

The state's [590] program is encompassing all communities. So, we decided at I Am Able (so that no west side resident falls through the cracks) to partner with the other 590 programs that are offering it. So, we found Habilitative Systems, Sinai, Bobby Wright, and a group in Pillston. I put together what we call the West Side Triple C, and West Side 590 Triple C, so that no west-sider falls through the cracks. [Two people clap] So, even though they may not be in my zip code, which is 60624, 60623, from Western to Cicero, and 290 to Ogden. That's North Lawndale, right? But, what if a person is right across the street? They might fall into Sinai because they're 60608, or they might be in Austin, and that'll be Habilitative Systems. We are now partners so that we will say to the resident, "Uh- huh, if you come to us, we gonna give you a warm hand out. You call Dr. Sophia's folk. We not gonna let you fall through the crack even though you might not be our zip code."

Interviewer: So, what do you think was the best part of the CARE program?

Participant who had engaged with CARE: That the cop was very compassionate. The cop arrived calm. I think that when my colleague called him (she speaks English very well), she explained to him, "I have a person in this situation, in this crisis. She has a baby blah blah blah. The cop arrived and he did not have to arrive like angry, he arrived very calm, he arrived alone. He did not come protected or anything. He did it by himself. He just asked for the baby to the lady. He held the baby while he was calling the firefighters, but they did not arrive. What did arrive was the ambulance because they were going to take her to a place. I do not know if the cop already knew where they were going to send her. The only thing he did tell us is that they were going to make sure that both the baby and the lady were not in danger. [Spanish translation]

A few weeks ago, in an English class, they told us we had to write a letter to the Alderman, in English, and we had to write about an issue we had in our community that we wanted to be heard about. It was an exercise, but then I thought, why don't we do it in real life? I mean, I want to know what the functions of the Alderman are, and how much they can help us because I just know that they're Alderman, and in an electoral campaign they knock on your door and say, I'm this guy, do you need anything? And I remember I said, oh, I need the tree branches... Then they went to cut them, and I was like, look at that, these guys showed up and, whatever you need, right away. I remember I said, I don't know exactly what else. The Alderman where I live sends us letters with his phone number, I wrote it down. I have not had the need to call, no, well, when the electricity failed I did call and they went to fix it like 2 weeks later. But I want to know what else the Alderman could do, and if I had a complaint about many cars doing races on Pulaski, what can you do about it? Or what are you doing because, I don't know. [Spanish translation]

Appendix B: Focus Group Handouts



CRISIS ASSISTANCE RESPONSE & ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM (CARE)



OVERVIEW

- ★ For the first time in City history, the C.A.R.E. program integrates behavioral healthcare professionals into the City's 911 response system by:
 - Adding mental health professionals staffed in the 911 Call Center to respond to mental health service calls
 - Creating healthcare-based co-responder and alternate responder teams dispatched to respond to 911 calls for service with a behavioral health component
 - Building crisis stabilization centers for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis to offer alternatives to emergency departments

GOALS

- ★ Improve outcomes for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis who require emergency response by:
 - Utilizing behavior healthcare responders during behavior health crisis
 - Conducting follow up and outreach to those individuals (families) who were experiencing a behavior health crisis for up to 30 days after the crisis
- ★ Expand the City's current strategies for responding to individuals in crisis by ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive crisis response system

ALTERNATE RESPONSE TEAM: DETAILS

- ★ Services: behavior health crisis stabilization, medical and psychosocial assessment, referral or warm hand-off to community resources, care coordination and case management
- ★ Population served: individuals aged 18-65 years identified through a 911 call for a behavioral health crisis
- ★ The City is piloting three different response team models:
 - ★ Launched September 2021: CFD Community Paramedic, CDPH Mental Health Clinician, CPD CIT Officer
 - Operate in Uptown, North Center, Lakeview and Auburn Gresham, Chatham
 - ★ Launched May 2022: CFD Community Paramedic, CDPH Mental Health Clinician
 - Operate in West Englewood, West Elsdon, Chicago Lawn, West Lawn, Gage Park
 - ★ Launching Summer 2022: CFD Community Paramedic, Peer Recovery Specialist
 - Operate in West Garfield Park, East Garfield Park, Humboldt Park



To learn more about CARE or communicate with the program, contact: CAREProgram@cityofchicago.org



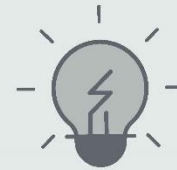


OVERVIEW

C.A.R.E. seeks to ensure individuals experiencing mental health crises are assisted by teams of behavioral health professionals to provide the right kind of care.

SERVICES

C.A.R.E. offers options such as on the spot mental health services, transportation to community crisis facilities or shelters, transportation to hospitals, or individuals can accept service in the community without transfer or transport.



RESPONSE

Co-response dispatched by 911 that sends mental health professionals alongside paramedics and crisis trained officers to provide mental health services, assessments, and de-escalation.

FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up service is offered 1, 7, & 30 days after response to provide comprehensive and targeted care to community members.



OPERATING AREAS

C.A.R.E. currently operates in West Englewood, West Elsdon, Chicago Lawn, West Lawn, Gage Park, West Garfield Park, East Garfield Park, & Humboldt Park.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about C.A.R.E. Chicago by visiting the C.A.R.E. Homepage at the QR Code.
<https://bit.ly/ChicagoCare>



*Based on advisory board recommendations, we created this infographic and printed it on the back of the handout on page 37, which is publicly available and was authored by the mayor's office. The AB asked us to make the City's handout more accessible and to write it at a high school reading level.

CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD POLICING INITIATIVE



WHAT IS CHICAGO NPI?

A collaborative approach to policing with the goal of building trust between residents and police, and resolving issues through community-based resources rather than police enforcement.



COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR COALITIONS

Neighbors who volunteer to work closely with District Coordination Officers (DCOs) and lead the conversation about what makes us feel safe in our neighborhoods.

DISTRICT COORDINATION OFFICERS (DCOS)

District Coordination Officers (DCOs) spend time in communities to identify and learn about public safety issues and the needs of the community to improve their quality of life.



WHERE IS CHICAGO NPI?

Chicago NPI is currently being implemented in 10 CPD Districts encompassing the Westside and Southside of Chicago.

To learn more about Chicago Neighborhood Policing Initiative (CNPI), scan the QR code.

<https://chicagonpi.org/>



*This infographic was reviewed and approved by NPI staff.