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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT RELEASES FIRST BI-ANNUAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
PROGRESS REPORT**

This report demonstrates significant progress toward strategies and goals outlined in the City's first-ever citywide strategic plan to address gender-based violence

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today released the first bi-annual progress report, outlining key accomplishments and significant progress to date on the implementation of the City's first-ever Citywide [Strategic Plan](#) to Address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Human Trafficking.

"Gender-based violence is a pervasive public health crisis and continues to be a top priority of my Administration," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Nine months ago, we put forward a bold strategic plan to address gender-based violence and human trafficking and to date, we have made significant progress. The partnership with community partners and other City officials has inspired unprecedented momentum that will undoubtedly lead to additional accomplishments and successes in reducing gender-based violence in our city."

The development of the City's Strategic Plan began in February 2021 when Mayor Lightfoot launched the GBV Advisory Council and embarked on a robust and inclusive community engagement process, bringing together community partners, survivors, and City officials to define key problems and solutions-driven strategies. In September 2021, the City published the [strategic plan](#) outlining seven key pillars, dozens of goals, and over 150 strategies to:

- Build the muscle within City government to understand and address gender-based violence.
- Design a Citywide ecosystem that adequately prevents, responds, and intervenes to address gender-based violence in trauma-informed and culturally specific ways.
- Invest in critical services to stabilize survivors and increase safety.

Overall, the plan seeks to increase capacity and expertise across City government, enhance coordination between government and community, improve law



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enforcement's response while also ensuring survivors have alternate options to the criminal legal system that are safe and trauma-informed and that collect, analyze and use data to inform prevention and intervention efforts, create stronger policies that foster accountability, and lastly shift cultural norms on what constitutes gender-based violence and its acceptability.

From September 2021 through June 2022, the City has made significant progress on four of the seven key pillars and some progress on the remaining three. Since the inception of this plan, Mayor Lightfoot has remained steadfast in her commitments to address gender-based violence and human trafficking, as reflected in her \$25 million in new investments as part of the Chicago Recovery Plan. She also created the first dedicated Director of GBV Strategy and Policy position in the Mayor's Office.

The City heard community partners, advocates, and stakeholders when they asked for oversight of the implementation. As such, the Mayor's Office stood up the GBV Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force, bringing together community-based organizations and survivors, alongside the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), to advise on and oversee the implementation plan. Additionally, the community partners selected a community co-lead. Olivia Farrell, Policy Director at The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence leads the task force alongside Darci Flynn, the Director of GBV Strategy and Policy in the Mayor's Office.

"When a person has experienced gender-based violence, every aspect of their life and their family's life is impacted. Their trauma requires a survivor-centered and holistic approach," DFSS Commissioner Brandie Knazze said. "Mayor Lightfoot's investment allows us to expand the reach of our services — such as legal, housing, and youth services — to all survivors of gender-based violence. These investments coupled with the key strategies and whole-of-government approach outlined in the strategic plan are undoubtedly going to create safer, more equitable communities in Chicago."

"The creation of Chicago's Gender-Based Violence Taskforce is a historic achievement. And now the difficult work is underway," said Linda Tortolero, *Mujeres Latinas en Acción* and liaison to the task force from the Mayor's Women's Advisory Council. "Our hyper focus on survivors, their children and their families will give Chicago the opportunity to lead on efforts that can prevent future violence and trauma. We welcome all Chicagoans to review this semi-annual progress report and ask questions, provide suggestions and challenge members of the Taskforce to be accountable and think big on what a future without violence should be."



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The report outlines activities, initiatives, and progress towards accomplishing the goals and objectives within the Strategic Plan. Key accomplishments include:

- **The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)**, in partnership with Metropolitan Family Services, launched a pilot program for services for people who cause harm. This pilot will be evaluated by Heartland Alliance thanks to funding from the Michael Reese Health Trust and Polk Brothers Foundation.
- **City Colleges of Chicago's** Be Well Chicago now has four licensed professionals to address mental, emotional, social, or behavioral issues associated with gender-based violence victimization.
- **Chicago Public Schools** began a Prevention Pilot in partnership with the YWCA, allowing four schools to receive comprehensive education around interpersonal violence.
- **Mayor Lightfoot and the Chicago Commission on Human Relations (CCHR)** [enhanced](#) the city's sexual harassment laws by increasing training requirements, requiring employers to provide a written notice and to have a written policy on sexual harassment, and increasing the fines for those in violation of the law.
- **Mayor Lightfoot and City Clerk of Chicago Anna Valencia** announced the partnership with UN Women to participate in their *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces* initiative.
- **The City's Office for the Inspector General (OIG)** hosted a mandatory vicarious trauma training offered by Resilience in December 2021 to support staff in their wellness journey and to provide them with skills for managing stress and trauma.
- **The City's Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE)** program received training on domestic violence from The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence to help equip the team to adequately identify indicators and respond in a trauma-informed, survivor-centered manner.
- **City-funded victim service and violence prevention street outreach organizations** received training on domestic violence in 2021.

To learn more about the City's strategic plan, visit Chicago.gov/gbv. The bi-annual progress report can be found [here](#).

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