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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT RELEASES FIRST-EVER COMPREHENSIVE VIOLENCE REDUCTION PLAN TO GUIDE PUBLIC SAFETY EFFORTS THROUGH 2023**

*"Our City, Our Safety" plan outlines City initiatives and programming to reduce violence over next three years, including piloting a co-responder model and creating a 211 helpline, building on police reform efforts, expanding coordination with State and County, and strengthening the street outreach and victim support network*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today released the City of Chicago's first-ever [comprehensive violence reduction plan](#) that will guide public safety initiatives and programming to sustainably reduce violence over the next three years. Entitled "[Our City, Our Safety: A Comprehensive Plan to Reduce Violence in Chicago.](#)" the new comprehensive and collaborative plan is the result of more than a year's partnership with State and County partners, community members, philanthropy organizations, faith leaders, and business sectors in an all-hands-on-deck effort to expand the City's violence reduction work through 2023.

"The epidemic of violence is a national public health crisis that has taken the lives of too many across our city and our entire country," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Just as Chicago has come together to fight the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on our communities, we must do the same to address the immense challenges they continue to face due to violence of all kinds. This effort starts by tackling the issues at the root of violence, such as systemic racism, disinvestment, and poverty. I am proud to work with our Office of Violence Reduction team, our departments and agencies, and stakeholders across our city to address these challenges head-on through our comprehensive plan, which will help Chicago get that much closer to becoming the safest big city in America."

Since 2016, more than 3,000 people have been killed in Chicago and more than 12,000 have been shot, and yet, the City has never established a comprehensive violence reduction plan in partnership with public and private stakeholders until now. This input was largely collected through a multi-stakeholder Violence Prevention Planning (VPP) process, a year-long convening of government officials, service providers, faith leaders, philanthropic and university partners, individuals with lived experience, and advocates to form the initiatives in this report that are designed to reduce violence in Chicago. Treating violence as a public health crisis that is not only preventable but also treatable through an intentional, coordinated, and sustained effort, these initiatives are led by five guiding pillars, which include:



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1. **Empower and Heal People:** Ensuring residents can thrive without fear of violence by increasing capacity and service quality of gun violence, domestic violence, diversion, and victim services programs while also expanding access to jobs and housing for those impacted by violence.
2. **Protect and Secure Places:** Reducing the “safety gap” between safer communities and those most affected by violence through investing in place-based programming and services, and revitalizing neighborhood economies through City-led initiatives like INVEST South/West.
3. **Improve and Advance Policing:** Increasing police legitimacy in communities where trust has eroded by acknowledging past harms by the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and implementing new police reforms at every level of the Department, consistent with the consent decree.
4. **Affect Public Policy:** Better collaborating with State and County partners in coordinating policy efforts related to public safety and violence prevention, with a special focus on criminal justice reform, gun regulation, and equitable quality of life.
5. **Plan and Coordinate:** Further facilitating coordination among not only City departments and sister agencies but also private and community-based efforts to ensure alignment on public safety strategies and efforts in all 77 of Chicago’s communities.

Since her first day in office, Mayor Lightfoot has been clear that reducing violence in Chicago’s communities must focus on more than just past administration’s law enforcement first-and-only strategies. Decades of failed police policies and institutionalized racism have eroded community trust of law enforcement, particularly in South and West Side communities. In partnership with CPD, this plan focuses on regaining this trust through a variety of actions, including fulfilling the requirements of the consent decree, re-thinking the role of police in public safety and expanding opportunities for alternate first responders to mental health crises, improving mental health support for officers, and improving diversity recruitment efforts.

“Reducing violence in Chicago’s communities is far more than just police deployments and manpower, it’s about building trust between officers and the communities they serve through real reforms and community policing,” said CPD Superintendent David O. Brown. “Each and every one of Chicago’s 13,000 officers are proud to join our City partners, street outreach teams and community-based organizations as part of this comprehensive plan to ensure neighborhoods across Chicago have the support they need to feel safe.”

In addition to the failed police policies of the past, the plan also recognizes underlying systems of inequity and racism that fuel all crises Chicago faces today — the spike in violence, the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn. To address these inequities in every community in Chicago, the plan engages in cross-sector collaboration with the State and County to expand the effectiveness and reach of not only violence prevention work done by other levels of government but also initiatives involving business economic and neighborhood development, education and human services, and more.



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“We cannot address violence without addressing the historic disinvestment in underserved communities, particularly Black and Brown,” said Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton. “And so, my Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative is extremely excited to partner with the city to address violence from an equity and opportunity lens.”

“Cook County is proud to partner with the City of Chicago as we work to reimagine our strategy aimed at reducing violence in our communities,” said President Preckwinkle. “We now know that punitive measures against violent offenders are simply not enough if our goals are to be realized. What is needed in this moment is a holistic approach to violence reduction – one that rebuilds trust between community members and our public safety officers, reclaims public spaces for our law-abiding citizens, works to empower those affected by past harm, and advocates for progressive policy change. This plan represents the path toward collective healing and my administration is committed to supporting our partners wherever, and however, we can be of service.”

Recognizing that law enforcement should not be government’s sole or even leading response to a complex web of social and economic forces, the plan addresses the trauma and mental health impacts communities face today. As part of short-term efforts underway today, the City is working to pilot a co-responder model, where a service provider would accompany police officers to respond to calls related to mental health or substance use crises. To build on these services, the City will also build a 211 Helpline Center that makes referrals to health, human, and social service organizations.

“This comprehensive plan truly acknowledges the way that violence impacts the mental health of individuals and entire communities. I applaud Mayor Lightfoot and the Office of Violence Reduction team for their continued commitment to addressing this reality through coalition-building with local mental health and community organizations to ensure our most vulnerable residents have the services they need to heal and to thrive,” said Alexa James, Chief Executive Officer, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Chicago.

Building on record-high investments in last year’s budget, the plan seeks to establish a comprehensive street outreach and victim support network similar to strategies employed in New York City, Los Angeles, and Oakland. Through key intervention practices such as behavioral health services, living wage jobs, and most importantly, relentless engagement with those who are at the highest risk of violence, such networks have been scientifically proven to reduce violence in major cities. To accomplish this, the City is focused on sustaining current funding investments in street outreach and trauma-informed victim services while mitigating budgetary impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Street outreach organizations like the Institute for Nonviolence Chicago are out in full force every day working to not only intervene in violence but build positive relationships with those who are at the highest risk. With this comprehensive plan to reduce violence in our communities, the City is truly strengthening every network of support on-the-ground and ensuring organizations like ours are a part of the solution,” said Chris Patterson of Institute for Nonviolence Chicago.



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Over the coming months, the Mayor's Office of Violence Reduction will develop workplans for each initiative and strategy laid out in the plan and determine the resources needed to implement. To hold itself accountable and increase transparency in its work, the Mayor's Office will convene the Violence Prevention Planning Committee every six months, beginning in December 2020, to review the City's progress on implementing these initiatives.

"As the City works to implement the strategies and initiatives laid out in this comprehensive violence reduction plan, I can assure that aldermen from every ward are committed to rolling up their sleeves and working in partnership to ensure we get this done because our communities are relying on us," said Alderman Chris Taliaferro, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee.

While today's release of "Our City, Our Safety" violence reduction plan consists of community-informed strategies, the successful implementation of these strategies is also dependent on community involvement. To learn more about the plan and ongoing work by the Mayor's Office of Violence Reduction, please visit [chicago.gov/publicsafety](https://chicago.gov/publicsafety).

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