



Mayor's Commission for a

SAFER CHICAGO

Quarterly Update for Q1 2015



City of Chicago
Rahm Emanuel
Mayor



Quarterly Progress Report

March 31, 2015

In December 2014, the Mayor's Commission for a Safer Chicago – a group of over 130 community and City leaders – released a report and strategic plan to reduce youth violence in Chicago. The report contained 28 recommendations to increase employment opportunities for youth, promote restorative justice in our schools, keep more youth out of the juvenile justice system, improve relationships between officers and youth, treat trauma, and increase access to safe places and activities. The Commission worked collaboratively over three months and talked to over 200 youth in 20 different neighborhoods to develop these recommendations. The complete report is available at www.cityofchicago.org/saferchicago.

Over the past three months, members of the Commission – including City staff and community partners – have been hard at work implementing the report's recommendations. Below is a detailed progress report, prepared by the Commission's co-chairs, on the Commission's accomplishments during the first quarter of 2015.

Working Group Updates

Youth Employment

Co-Chairs: Torrey Barrett, KLEO Center
Evelyn Diaz, Commissioner, Department of Family and Support Services
Andrea Zopp, Chicago Urban League

In Chicago, the neighborhoods experiencing the highest rates of violence are also some of the most economically challenged. During the Commission's conversations with youth and community members, a common theme emerged: to stop violence, youth need to be prepared to work and have access to jobs. Over the past three years, the City has expanded youth summer jobs from 14,000 to 22,500. While a summer job is an important first step toward higher education and career success, the Commission recognized that many youth need additional support and training in "21st Century skills" before they can translate that summer job into unsubsidized private sector employment.

Commission Recommendations:

- Develop a common curriculum focused on workforce readiness and career planning and pilot it with several summer jobs providers in 2015
- Design a training bridge to continue workforce skills training after the completion of a summer job
- Cultivate richer employment partnerships to increase the availability of job opportunities for youth and prepare youth to be successful in those jobs
- Survey 1000 One Summer Chicago Plus participants to assess their skills, interests, and educational needs, and
- Use those survey results to connect One Summer Chicago Plus participants to existing year-round education and employment opportunities.

First quarter achievements include the following:

- Inspired by the Commission's work and vision for youth employment, Earvin Johnson and Mark Walter will invest \$10M over the next 2 years to support the **expansion of the One Summer Chicago Plus (OSC+), a youth employment program for justice-involved youth.** This summer, that investment will support the expansion of the program from 1000 to 2000 youth.
- Earlier this year, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Service (DFSS) issued its request for proposals (RFP) for both of the City's summer jobs programs – One Summer Chicago and One Summer Chicago Plus, and the RFP period just closed. **This year, for the first time, payroll for youth summer jobs will be handled centrally.**
- **Starting in April, youth will be able to apply for One Summer Chicago jobs online.** The Commission will circulate a link to the application as soon as it is live.
- The Commission has enlisted the Civic Leadership Foundation to develop a **new workforce training program and skills assessment** for OSC+ providers to use during the summer.

Health and Healing

Co-Chairs: Colleen Cicchetti, Ann & Robert H Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
Colleen Jones, Metropolitan Family Services
Marlita White, Chicago Department of Public Health

To continue reducing violence, the Commission agreed it must expand efforts to address trauma in some of Chicago's most vulnerable young people. The Health and Healing working group recommended that the City and its partners respond to homicide incidents and expand training in trauma-informed care and the impact of adverse childhood experiences ("ACEs"), so that people who come into contact with youth and families are equipped to interrupt the cycle of violence by assisting those youth and families and referring them for necessary services. The group made 6 key recommendations:

Commission Recommendations:

- Pilot a homicide crisis response protocol to provide immediate support for victims and families in the wake of a homicide and to facilitate referrals to ongoing services
- Develop common core training standards for trauma-informed care and identifying the impacts of ACEs
- Pilot the incorporation of ACEs screenings into standard intake procedures for healthcare providers
- Map opportunities to engage families impacted by trauma to analyze service gaps and identify frontline workers who need training on best practices
- Expand teen dating violence prevention education to make it available to all educators and school employees and
- Launch a campaign to engage communities in efforts to address the effects of childhood exposure to trauma.

First quarter achievements include the following:

- In 2014, the Chicago Department of Public Health received funding from the Department of Justice to pilot a **homicide crisis response system** to minimize trauma and reduce further acts of violence. The City is partnering with Thresholds and Chicago Survivors to develop and test that response system in 2015. Training is underway for the pilot, which is on track to launch later this spring. Trained responders will be dispatched to provide immediate support and services to victims' families and to link families to long-term services.
- Commission representatives have met with and presented to several groups in Chicago that work on issues of childhood trauma and exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs,) to discuss how to coordinate around **common core training and outreach efforts**.
- Working group members are in active discussions with three physicians' groups to discuss **piloting the inclusion of ACEs screenings in health care settings**.

Creating Restorative School Communities

Co-Chairs: Jadine Chou, Chief Safety and Security Officer, Chicago Public Schools
Father David Kelly, Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation
Karen VanAusdal, Director of the Office of Social Emotional Learning,
Chicago Public Schools

A high school diploma is one of the most important protections against violence. Chicago Public Schools, members of the Commission, and other stakeholders have worked to develop strategies to replace the exclusionary discipline practices that were funneling some youth to the criminal justice system with restorative practices that prevent and de-escalate conflict. The Creating Restorative School Communities working group focused on expanding that work to promote a more restorative school culture and engaging entire communities - especially parents - to strengthen outcomes. The group made six key recommendations:

Commission Recommendations:

- Establish 3 new community-based restorative justice hubs to support and complement the restorative practices work being undertaken in schools
- Train and place parents into at least 4 new schools to participate in and help lead restorative practices through Parent Peace Centers
- Seek funding to create a principal challenge grant program to encourage principals to develop and implement proposals to employ restorative practices in their schools
- Develop a restorative practices “toolkit” of techniques and support materials to help schools expand their use of restorative practices.
- Conduct coordinated principal outreach and peer-to-peer education and
- Develop and promote a restorative practices education campaign for parents and community stakeholders.

First quarter achievements include the following:

- In 2015, CPS and COFI/POWER-PAC, with support from the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission (IJJC), partnered to **open 4 new Parent Peace Centers** at Melody, Reavis, Nixon, and Courtenay elementary schools. CPS also recently secured funding from the IJJC to expand to **3 additional sites in Englewood before the end of the school year**. The Parent Peace Centers use trained “peacemakers” from the community to provide restorative techniques like peace circles, restorative conversations, and future planning to address student conflict and misconduct. The Peace Centers complement changes to the CPS student code of conduct and discipline policies to encourage the use of restorative practices instead of exclusionary discipline.
- On February 5, CPS hosted a **restorative practices education** panel, in which principals, deans, and coaches who have experience using restorative practices with school climate supports engaged in peer-to-peer education with principals who are newer to the process and will be receiving restorative practices coaches from the Office of Social and Emotional Learning.
- CPS and restorative justice practitioners throughout the city are in the process of collaborating to develop the **restorative practices toolkit**. By gathering materials from several organizations engaged in this work and agreeing on common principles and definitions, CPS will soon be prepared to offer a comprehensive set of proven techniques and tools to schools interested in expanding their use of restorative practices.

- A coalition of organizations, including United Methodist Church (Commission Member Reverend Biekman) and Community Justice for Youth Institute have received a grant for training and technical assistance to support capacity-building for restorative justice work within community organizations.

Safety and Justice

Co-Chairs: Eddie Bocanegra, Co-Director of Violence Prevention, YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago
Chief Robert Tracy, Chicago Police Department
Janey Rountree, Deputy Chief of Staff for Public Safety, Chicago Mayor's Office

The Safety and Justice working group, recognizing the need to reconsider youth's contact with law enforcement, focused on two separate but related issues: expanding diversion programs, and improving youth-police relationships.

Commission Recommendations to keep more youth out of the juvenile justice system:

- Expand the RISE diversion pilot to serve more arrested youth
- Identify best practices for engaging parents to help identify the drivers of misconduct and connect families to services and
- Develop alternatives to arrest for first-time youth offenders.

Commission Recommendations to improve relationships between youth and officers:

- Expand a new program, Bridging the Divide, created by the YMCA and Chicago Police Department to engage youth and police in meaningful conversation, healing, and relationship-building
- Host a CAPS competition to encourage and recognize officers who develop innovative ways to build better relationships with youth and
- Create a grant program through which youth can seek funding in support of youth-led peace projects.

First quarter achievements include the following:

- The RISE diversion pilot was designed by Chicago's Department of Family and Support Services with input from community based organizations with experience serving justice-involved youth. Through RISE, CPD can refer arrested teens for mentoring, group counseling, and community service in lieu of sending them to court. During the last three months, **the RISE pilot has entered Phase 2, with 18 sites citywide** that will make the program accessible to more youth across the city.
- **Bridging the Divide**, which to date has been active in Chicago Police Districts 4, 8, and 10, has begun expansion into 3 new districts, with continued expansion into an additional 3 districts by the summer.
- The **Youth Peace Grants program is currently underway**. When the Commission interviewed more than 200 youth last fall, many said they wanted to be a part of the solution to violence in their communities. As a result, the Mayor's Youth Council sought and received \$50,000 to establish a fund for youth-led peace grants. Now young people from across the city are encouraged to seek funding for peace projects that address the root causes of youth violence. Grants are available in amounts up to \$5000, and are evaluated on a rolling basis (monthly). Funding will be available through the summer; the final day to apply for grants is June 30, 2015. The application is available at www.mikvachallenge.org/?p=2651

Safe Spaces and Activities

Co-Chairs: Vaughn Bryant, Director of Program Operations, Chicago Park District
Meghan Harte, Deputy Chief of Staff for Sister Agencies,
Chicago Mayor's Office
Rev. Dr. Bernard L. Jakes, West Point Baptist Church

Recognizing that safe and appealing alternatives to violence are an essential part of any violence prevention plan, the Safe Spaces and Activities working group recommended strategies to communicate with youth about activities in their neighborhoods, and to ensure that youth are able to travel safely to those activities.

Commission Recommendations:

- Create a process for youth to provide ongoing input to the Park District about their evolving needs and interests.
- Build a single, mobile-device-friendly source for information about program opportunities throughout the City.
- Enlist high-profile ambassadors to publicize and create excitement around program opportunities.
- Engage community volunteers to mentor, coach, and provide positive activities and presence in spaces and on transport routes that may be perceived as unsafe.
- Promote a system that matches facilities that have unused space with organizations that need space for programs.
- Develop a coordinated plan for safe travel to after-school activities for youth in 3 target neighborhoods.

First quarter achievements include the following:

- On March 31st at its quarterly meeting, the Commission will announce the dates for **Faith in Action/Put the Guns Down 2015**. Last year, more than 200 community groups hosted events on the Friday evening of Memorial Day Weekend to celebrate our city, gather for peace, and urge young people to Put the Guns Down. As a result, Chicago experienced 24-hours without a shooting on a holiday weekend. This year, the Chicago Police Department, the Mayor's Commission for a Safer Chicago and groups across the city will partner to promote Faith in Action events on three weekends: May 22, June 19, and August 4.
- **The Chicago Park District is engaging its teen councils** in conversations around how young people would prefer to give input on program offerings.
- In April the Chicago Park District and community partners in Pilsen including the Boys and Girls Club, local schools, and the office of Alderman Solis, are hosting **Pilsen Hoops** – a basketball tournament that will bring together young people from different schools and organizations for a weekend of fun and healthy competition.



About the Mayor's Commission for a Safer Chicago

The Mayor's Commission for a Safer Chicago was created in September 2014 and charged with updating the City of Chicago's Strategic Plan for Youth Violence Prevention. The Commission's five working groups spent the fall collaborating to arrive at recommendations to address the root causes of youth violence in five subject areas: youth employment, health and healing, creating restorative school communities, safety and justice, and safe spaces and activities. The resulting report, released in December 2014, consists of 28 recommendations that build on current investments and leverage existing City and community resources in service of our shared belief that violence is preventable, not inevitable. The full Commission report can be downloaded at www.cityofchicago.org/saferchicago

If you or your organization is interested in joining the Mayor's Commission for a Safer Chicago, please email saferchicago@cityofchicago.org

