

Building Safer Communities

Evidence from Chicago's Violence Intervention Strategies

Community violence intervention (CVI) strategies are non-punitive, community-driven and designed to engage those at highest risk of gun violence through direct outreach, intervention, prevention, and wraparound services.¹ Over the past decade, CVI has become a critical component of Illinois' public safety infrastructure, with local organizations providing CVI services in at least 35 of Chicago's 77 community areas (Figure 1). Chicago experienced some of the highest rates of violence and lowest perceptions of safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, investment in CVI is showing positive impact on individuals and communities, likely contributing to an overall recovery in residents' perceptions of safety (Figure 2).²

Extended CVI Programming Reduces Participants' Engagement in Violence

CORNERS' research has shown that sustained participation in CVI programming significantly impacts participants' likelihood of engaging in violence. In 2023, CORNERS found that participants who completed all phases of their CVI program were **73.4% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime** two years later relative to non-participants.³

Further, emerging research from a first-of-its-kind survey of CVI participants⁴ suggests that such individuals demonstrate positive behavioral and mindset changes—reductions in gun carrying (56%), decreased participation in risky activities (36%), and less willingness to escalate conflicts with violence. The same survey also reports a significant **40% reduction in participants' violent victimization** and a 19% reduction in participants' secondary exposure to violent victimization.

Map of Community Areas with CVI Organizations in Chicago

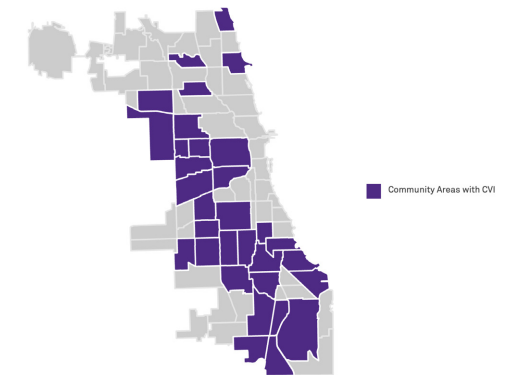
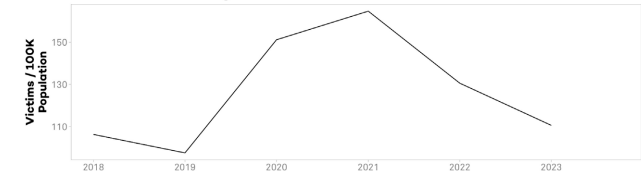


Figure 1: Map of the 35 community areas with CVI coverage in 2025.

Gun Violence in Chicago



Chicago Resident Perception of Safety

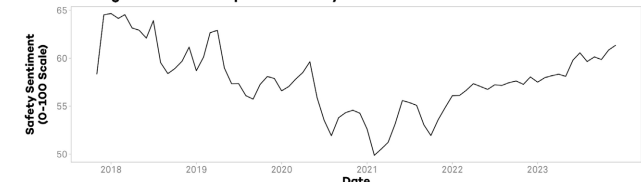


Figure 2: Trends of gun violence and resident perceptions of safety, 2018–2023.

¹ Giffords Center for Violence Intervention, "Community Violence Intervention Explained."

² Zen City and Chicago Police Department, "Sentiment Dashboard – Chicago Police Department."

³ Ross et al., "Evaluating the Impact of a Street Outreach Intervention on Participant Involvement in Gun Violence."

⁴ Center for Neighborhood Engaged Research and Science (CORNERS), Housing & Criminal Justice Experiences among CVI Participants in Chicago: Early Learnings from the Street Outreach Participant Survey.



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Gun Violence is Decreasing in Chicago Communities with CVI

CORNERS' research has shown that, although CVIs are targeted individual interventions, they are having a positive impact on the communities in which they operate. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, communities with CVI started to show decreases in their three-year shooting rates. Like the rest of the city, CVI communities experienced increased rates of violence during the pandemic, but their rates did not increase as dramatically as communities that did not have CVI.

Starting in 2023, CVI communities experienced some of the greatest decreases in gun violence (Figure 3). Further, the publicly-funded [Peacekeepers Program](#) – a CVI strategy that positions workers at local “hotspots” to mediate conflicts and interrupt violence – contributed to a **31% reduction in shootings in Program community areas** during 2023-2024 relative to 2021-2022.⁵ In addition, the number of peaceful days (i.e. days without shootings) has increased in every Chicago community area covered by the Peacekeepers Program relative to the prior year, with 30% of communities experiencing an additional 2 weeks or more in between shootings. The result: **72 more days of peace** in communities with historically high levels of violence. Finally, CORNERS estimates that from July 2017 – December 2021, CVI programs in Chicago **prevented at least 383 shootings and 605 arrests for violent crimes** in their communities, showing a strong positive impact even during the height of the pandemic.⁶

⁵ Center for Neighborhood Engaged Research and Science (CORNERS), Evaluating Illinois' Peacekeepers Program: Peacekeepers Program Data and Violence Trends Analysis July 1, 2023 - December 31, 2024.

⁶ Center for Neighborhood Engaged Research and Science (CORNERS), Neighborhood-Level Impact of Communities Partnering 4 Peace.

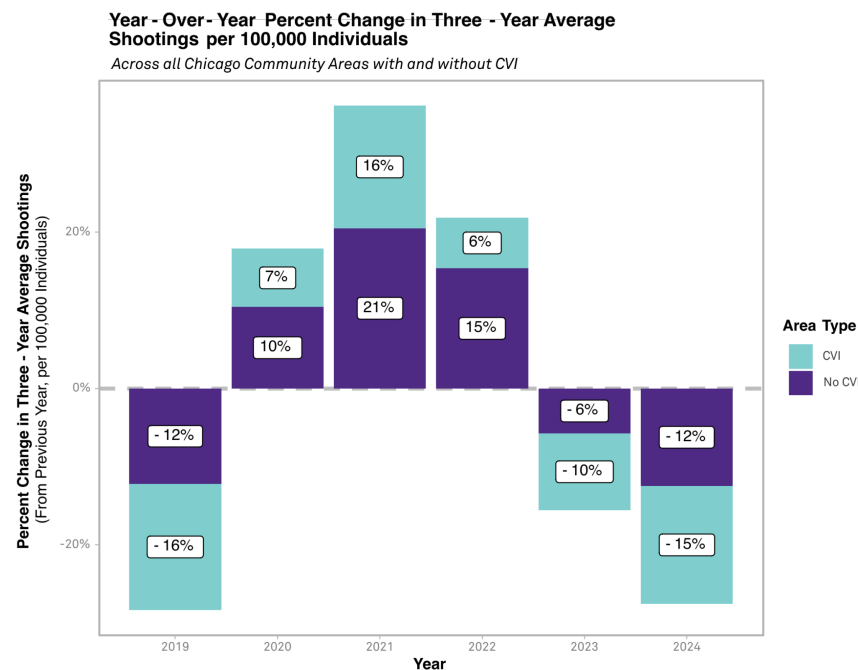


Figure 3: Year-over-year changes in average shooting rates in Chicago community areas

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