

Research and Evaluation of Chicago CRED

2026 Impact Evaluation Report Findings

May 2026

Background

Chicago CRED is a multifaceted approach to reducing gun violence that strives to create lasting change by working directly with individuals who are most likely to be involved in gun violence. Beginning with direct street outreach efforts, CRED invites participants to engage in a comprehensive intervention that includes dedicated life coaching, trauma counseling, education, and ultimately, reliable jobs. Chicago CRED, which launched in 2016, operates in communities on Chicago's South and West Sides.

Since 2019, the Center for Neighborhood Engaged Research and Science (CORNERS) at Northwestern University has partnered with Chicago CRED to conduct ongoing research and evaluation of the program. To-date, CORNERS' evaluation of CRED has found that:

- From 2016 – 2021, **CRED alumni were 73.4% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime** relative to their matched comparisons 24 months following program enrollment.
- In 2024, early findings from the Street Outreach Participant Survey showed that, within the first few months of CRED programming, **participants reported carrying guns less often** and successfully utilizing new resources—including employment support and mentorship from CRED outreach workers and life coaches.

2026 Impact Report

CORNERS' 2026 evaluation report includes an assessment of Chicago CRED's impact on gun violence at the individual and community levels through December 31, 2025 and begins to examine participant outcomes including access to services, perceptions of safety, and the strength of social networks. CORNERS analyzed administrative data, Chicago CRED programmatic data, and participant survey data to examine CRED's impact as follows:

- **Individual-Level Impact on CRED Participants:** CORNERS compared CRED participants enrolled between January 2019–December 2025 and program alumni to a comparison group with similar demographics, risk levels, and arrest histories.
- **Community-Level Impact in Roseland and Pullman:** CORNERS used statistical models to compare CRED’s South Side coverage areas with other neighborhoods similar to but not serviced by CRED or other Community Violence Intervention (CVI) organizations.
- **Street Outreach Participant Survey:** CORNERS analyzed longitudinal survey data collected from October 2023–December 2025 to understand CRED’s impact on participants’ self-reported gun carrying, exposure to violence, and victimization. Statistical models were used to predict outcomes of interest and describe participant changes after four to six months of programming.

Key Findings

Program Completion Reduces Violent Behavior among CRED Alumni

CRED alumni show substantially reduced likelihood of a post-program arrest for a violent crime, with **West Side alumni being approximately 60% less likely to be arrested than matched controls**. Violent crime arrest reductions for CRED alumni suggests that program completion may be key to reducing participants’ violent behavior. Participants’ high likelihood of gunshot victimization relative to their controls may indicate CRED’s ability to reach individuals at the highest risk among Chicago’s high-risk populations.

CRED Intervention Contributes to Significant Reductions in Gunshot Victimizations

From January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2025, statistical models estimate a significant decline in the rate of gunshot victimizations in CRED South Side coverage areas due to CVI programming. While the prevented shootings cannot be entirely attributed to CRED due to overlapping South Side CVI coverage areas, quasi-experimental findings are clear that West Pullman, Pullman, and Roseland would have experienced significantly more homicides and shootings without CRED and other CVIs.

Participants Show Reductions in Conflict Escalation, Gun Carrying, and Violence Exposure

Across the first four to six months of CVI programming, participant survey data collected by CORNERS indicate significant reductions in participants’ conflict escalation, gun carrying, and exposure to violence, even after accounting for individual and social network factors. In addition, certain baseline characteristics of program participants remain important predictors of elevated risk and higher exposure to violence—including age, ethnicity, and having more gang affiliates in one’s social network.