



***For Immediate Release:
Tuesday, February 21, 2023***

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***Cook County Awards Community-Based Service Providers
\$25 Million to Address Gun Violence***

***IDHS and Cook County Justice Advisory Council partner to expand Anti-Violence
Programming in vulnerable communities***

CHICAGO – In response to high levels of gun violence experienced since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Illinois Department of Human Services Office of Firearm Violence Prevention (OFVP), together with Cook County’s Justice Advisory Council (JAC), announced today \$25 million in grants to fund a diverse array of service providers focused on supporting residents at risk of experiencing gun violence in Chicago and Suburban Cook County.

“Gun violence is not inevitable or a sacrifice that we must make in the false name of freedom. And here in Illinois, we treat gun violence like the public health emergency that it is,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.**



“Throughout my administration, we have taken an interagency approach to address our uniquely American problem—and this partnership between Cook County and IDHS is the latest example of the many ways we are investing in our communities to prevent gun violence before it strikes.”

“Gun violence is not normal and never will be. That is why this collaborative effort to fund community-based service providers is crucial to tackling this problem at root causes and essential to uplifting and supporting areas harmed the most when violence happens,” **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton.** “Thank you to the members of the Justice Advisory Council, the Department of Human Services, Cook County, and community stakeholders for doing the work that promotes wellbeing and makes communities safer.”

“Working together, we will rise to the challenge of addressing gun violence in our region,” **said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle.** “For the past three years, we have engaged in an unprecedented level of intergovernmental coordination around gun violence prevention.

This funding is a testament to our shared commitment to building safe and thriving communities in Cook County and throughout Illinois. We will continue to invest in effective, equitable, and sustainable solutions that address the root causes of gun violence in our communities.”

“This funding demonstrates a commitment among Illinois leaders to cooperate and eliminate bureaucratic hurdles so that qualified violence prevention providers can quickly receive the resources that they need to adequately address firearm violence, one of our state’s most significant public health challenges,” **said Chris Patterson, Assistant Secretary, the Illinois Department of Human Services.** “As partners, we will continue to take a thoughtful, targeted approach to violence intervention in communities with the highest rates of firearm violence. Together, through our partnership with Cook County, community stakeholders, and across all levels of government we are working to prevent and reduce crime.”

In the Summer of 2022, the JAC awarded a historic initial \$75 million in Gun Violence Prevention and Reduction Grants, funding individual organizations and coalitions that represent 68 service providers. Partnering with the Illinois Department of Human Services’ Office of Firearm Violence Prevention allows



Cook County to leverage State funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to expand upon JAC’s successful funding model that provides vital support to vulnerable and at-risk residents in communities most impacted by crime, violence, and incarceration.

Through this second funding cycle of \$25 million, another round of grant awards to individual organizations, both grantees and sub-contractors and coalitions will support 74 service providers working to build safer communities in Cook County and Chicagoland. The \$75 million of 2021 funding, builds on over \$50 million in County funded grant investments distributed by the JAC between 2015 and 2020.

“Throughout Cook County, community-based service providers are leading the way in delivering culturally-responsive, innovative, and effective gun violence prevention programming,” said **Avik Das, Executive Director of the Justice Advisory Council**. “These organizations are working on the front lines of the gun violence crisis and they need robust and sustained support to make a lasting impact. Cook County is grateful to be collaborating with the Illinois Department of Human Services Office of Firearm Violence Prevention whose support is allowing us to scale up funding to meet the great need for services.”

“All families deserve safe neighborhoods, and these grants will have a significant impact in communities on the Southside and Southland,” said **Cook County Commissioner, Monica Gordon**. “The Justice Advisory Council has been a tremendous partner in the fight for safer and more equitable communities. I look forward to working with all our partner organizations to continue the work of making Cook County a place families feel safe calling home.”

"The Chicago Heights and its immediate surrounding areas have seen a tragic increase in gun violence, poverty, and unemployment," stated **Angelia F. Smith, Executive Director of the Cornerstone Community Development Corporation**, a 54-year-old nonprofit serving residents in the Southland region. "Unfortunately, gun-related incidents have had a severe impact on local residents’ quality of life. Grant funding from the Cook County Justice Advisory Council will enable Cornerstone to provide workforce development and soft skills training, and the behavioral and mental health support needed to help quell gun violence. This programming will also help prevent and reduce recidivism and provide pathways to economic sustainability for at-risk residents in the Southland."



At the same time, in 2022, the Illinois Department of Human Services issued Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) across the City of Chicago and Cook County to provide similar services to those outlined in the JAC initiative. IDHS has issued over \$140M in violence prevention and youth development services funding across Illinois.

More information about Cook County's Gun Violence Prevention and Reduction Grant Initiative is available here <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/JACGrants>

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