



Strategies for Youth and Neighborhood Centered (SYNC) Safety

Learning Lab

June 26, 2025



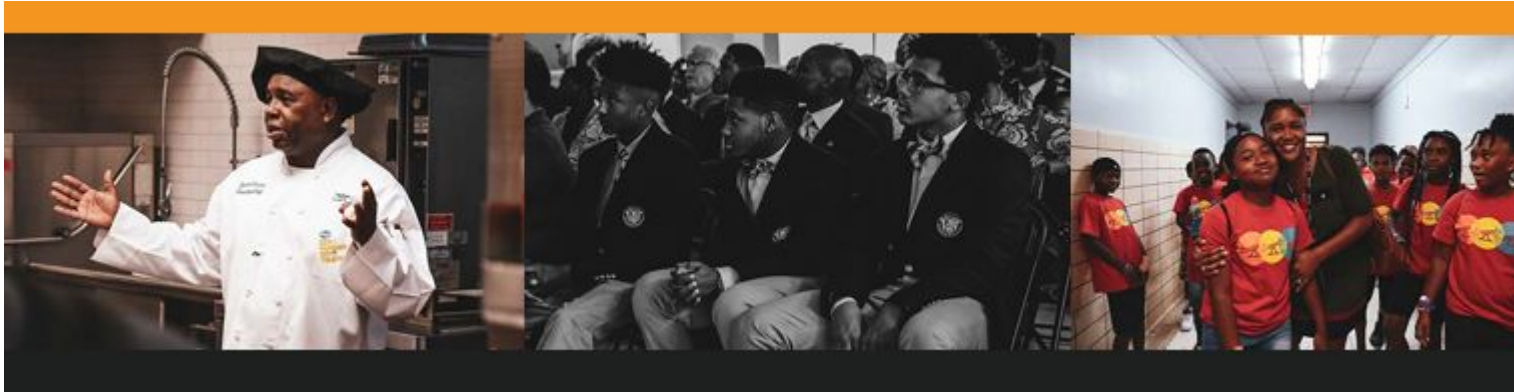


The relationship between community safety & economic justice



Cities United – Reimagining Public Safety Moving to Safe, Healthy, & Hopeful Communities

*“As poverty has been inherited through generations of impoverished communities, so has violence. **One shooting is, in theory, a result of decades of divestment, displacement, discrimination, and economic exploitation.** At times behind a victim and a victimizer of violence and homicide is a history of an area that, by design in some instances, hasn’t invested fully in all of its constituents. **Building an Inclusive Economy is the investment in the people and communities that have been most impacted by systemic economic injustice.**”*



Share...

- What does quality investment look like in a neighborhood?
- What part do you play or could you imagine your CBO playing for economic justice in your community?
- What gaps do you see in your community in economic justice being addressed?





Examples of Economic Justice as Community Safety

Reggie Moore & Dr. Kathryn Bocanegra



Breaking the Cycle: How Economic Justice Builds Safer Communities



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*** all photo credit belongs to Carlos Javier Ortiz, exhibit "We All We Got" ***

Derron's Story

Violence doesn't occur in a vacuum — it's deeply rooted in systemic inequities.

Economic marginalization, structural racism, and lack of access to capital are root causes of community violence.

When communities are denied economic opportunity, the conditions for violence take root and persist.

Community violence leads to business closures, declining property values, and disinvestment.

Fear and instability drive away external investment and internal community cohesion.

This creates a cycle: economic deprivation fuels violence, and violence fuels further economic harm.

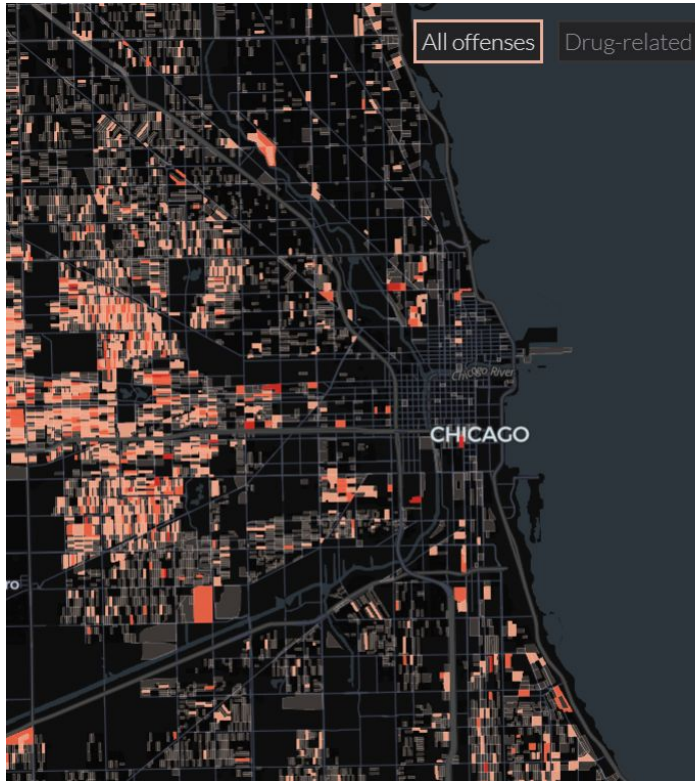


Punishment and Surveillance: the Primary Form of Public Investment in Black and Brown Communities

Disproportionate Spending on Policing and Incarceration: While schools, healthcare, and housing remain underfunded, billions are funneled into law enforcement and corrections — making carceral systems one of the most consistent public investments in Black and Brown neighborhoods.

Surveillance Over Support: Instead of investing in social safety nets, these communities are saturated with surveillance technologies — from gang databases to predictive policing — that criminalize residents rather than offer care or opportunity.

Punishment as Policy: Public policy has historically prioritized containment over care — funding probation, parole, and policing infrastructures rather than addressing root causes like poverty, trauma, and housing instability.



Million Dollar Blocks

Illinois spending on incarceration is ineffective & costly to all. There are better ways to invest public dollars.

With roughly \$8 billion in unpaid bills, the State of Illinois is facing a fiscal crisis.

Meanwhile, in 2015, Illinois committed \$1.4 billion dollars to the Department of Corrections, and that number is on the rise *despite declining crime levels*.

A war on neighborhoods

We hand out harsh sentences for all types of offenses. We give these sentences, overwhelmingly, to Chicagoans who live in our segregated, low-income neighborhoods on the west and south sides. This amounts to a war on neighborhoods.

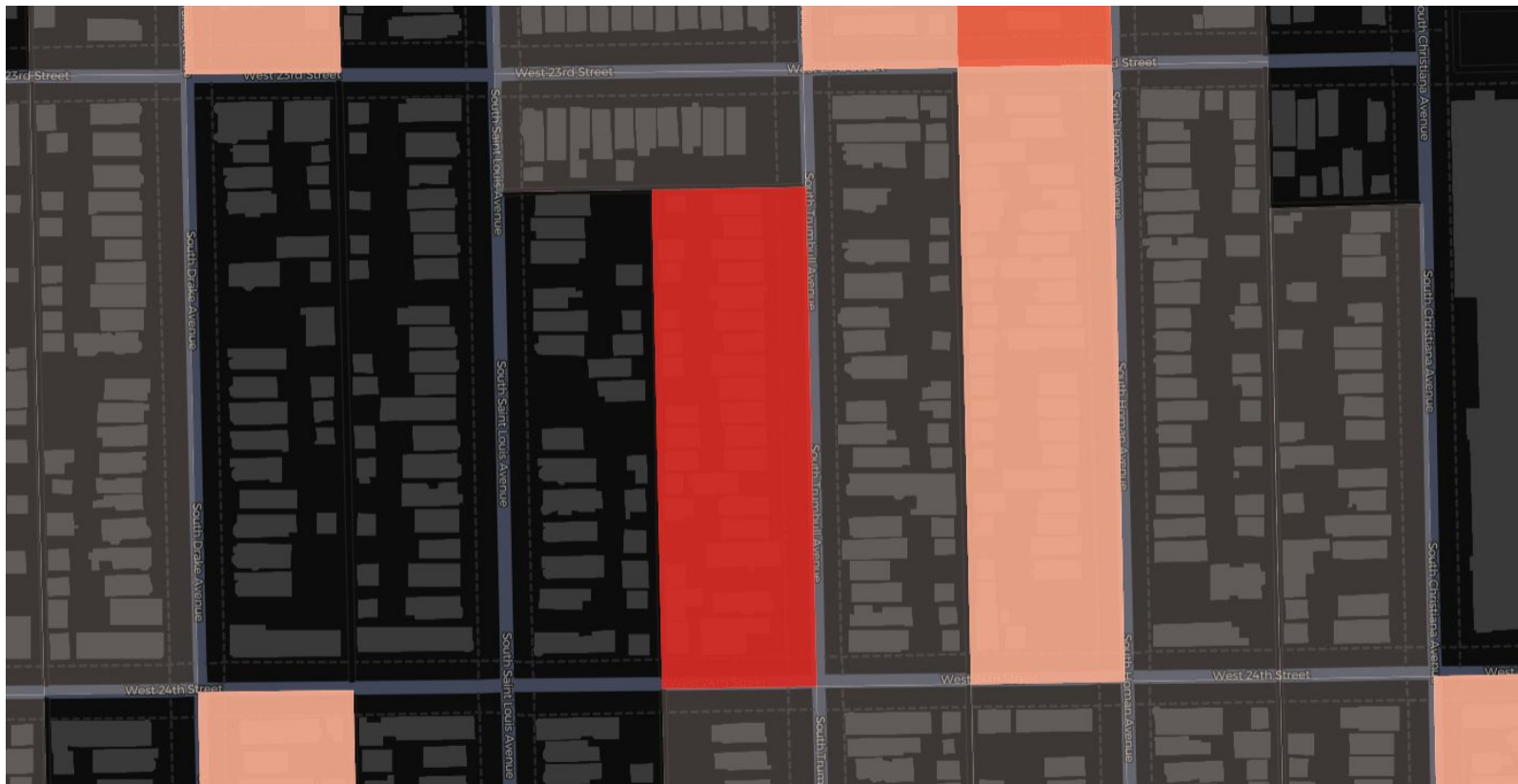
Community Areas with the Highest Spending
Millions Committed to Incarceration, 2005-2009



www.chicagosmilliondollarblocks.com

Lugalia-Hollon, R., & Cooper, D. (2018). *The war on neighborhoods: Policing, prison, and punishment in a divided city*. Beacon Press.

\$2,067,500



Economic Justice is Violence Prevention

Interrupting the cycle requires more than policing — it demands intentional investment in communities.

Economic justice means addressing root causes through reparative, equity-driven strategies.

This includes expanding access to wealth, resources, and opportunity for those historically excluded.

Examples include:

Reparations and restorative investments for communities harmed by systemic disinvestment.

Guaranteed income pilots and other efforts to increase household stability and dignity.

Support for local business development in historically redlined or neglected areas.

Workforce development tailored to systems-impacted individuals.

Sustained funding for CVIPI programs that build community capacity from within.

CVIPI as a Strategy for Economic Justice

CVIPI programs do more than reduce violence — they *build economies of care*.

They invest in frontline leaders from the community — especially those traditionally excluded from employment due to system involvement.

They create jobs, leadership opportunities, and healing-centered infrastructures.

CVIPI supports local nonprofits and grassroots organizations, building a sustainable ecosystem of safety and support.

Example: READI Chicago

- **Data-driven outreach meets real-world impact:** READI Chicago uses predictive analytics and street outreach to engage men at the highest risk of gun violence involvement—reaching individuals often excluded from traditional social services.
- **Integrated support: jobs + therapy:** The program provides 18 months of paid transitional employment, cognitive behavioral therapy, and intensive case management to address trauma, poverty, and social isolation simultaneously.
- **Evidence of effectiveness and high ROI:** Independent evaluations found that READI participants were 63% less likely to be arrested and experienced a 19% reduction in victimization from shootings or homicides, with some subgroups showing up to a 79% reduction. Economic analysis suggests a return of \$3–\$7 for every \$1 invested.



Bhatt, M., Blattman, C., Bertrand, M., Kapustin, M., & Heller, S. (2023). *An experimental evaluation of READI Chicago* [PDF]. University of Chicago Crime Lab. Retrieved from https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w30852/w30852.pdf
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University of Chicago Crime Lab. (2023, July). *READI Chicago: Final evaluation report* [PDF]. Retrieved from <https://crimelab.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/08/READI-July-2023.pdf>
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Kapustin, M., Bhatt, M., Heller, S., & Blattman, C. (2023). *Predicting and preventing gun violence: An experimental evaluation of READI Chicago*. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjz-xxxxx>
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The Snowball Effect of Investment

Investing in people → strengthens neighborhoods

Strengthening neighborhoods → reduces violence

Reduced violence → attracts investment

Attracted investment → creates more opportunity

This is how we build safety from the ground up.

Additional Example: R3 Illinois

Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton

Restore Reinvest Renew

<https://r3.illinois.gov/>



ICJIA Executive Director, Delrice Adams (center), Lieutenant Governor Stratton's Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of the JEO Initiative, Yaacov Delaney (right), and ICJIA Staff pose with 12th's first graduating cohort.

Year	Round	Funding Awarded
2021	Inaugural Round	\$31.5 million
June 2022	Second Round	\$45 million
Aug 2024	Latest Round	\$35 million
Planned 2024–25	Next Cycle	\$30 million
Total to date		\$244 million+

Safety and Healing in Networks of Equity (SHINE): A California project stewarded by Prevention Institute, co-created with a Learning Community of 5 collaboratives, supported by the Blue Shield of California Foundation.

The initiative addresses the root causes of gender-based violence by cultivating community leadership, building community power, and advocating for housing and economic justice, holistic youth and family support, and community-based intergenerational healing.

Economic Justice Examples from the collaboratives' work:

McKinleyville Family Resource Center: Guaranteed income pilot for pregnant people in Humboldt County

The We Take Care of Each Other Collaborative: Direct cash transfers and Youth Emergency Fund to young people at risk of becoming homeless

Mujeres Poderosas Amorosas: Partnership w/ school districts on opportunities for Latina immigrant to train as paraprofessionals within Fresno County school system; programs to provide opportunities for vendors who sell their food to grow their businesses

Promesa Boyle Heights: Postsecondary Equity & Success Programming for youth and their families to pursue higher ed & sustainable careers

East African Youth Collaborative: Directly hiring youth who have been involved in programs