



Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P) Preliminary Individual Results

Northwestern Neighborhood & Network Initiative
at the Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University

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“Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P) Preliminary Individual Results”

by the **Northwestern Neighborhood & Network Initiative (N3)**
at the Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University

Introduction

Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P) is a collaboration between Chicago street outreach and victim services organizations to coordinate their activities towards a common goal: reducing gun violence among individuals who are most likely to be involved in gun violence, neighborhood disputes, and group conflicts. CP4P’s approach relies on outreach workers to strengthen relationships throughout their respective communities and serve as front-line violence preventionists. CP4P organizations also provide participants with direct services such as legal advocacy, employment support, educational opportunities, and trauma-informed behavioral health counseling.

CP4P was formed in 2017 and has since expanded from eight organizations to 16 organizations in **28 different community areas**. The findings presented here relate to the first eight CP4P organizations; future analyses will incorporate the expansion areas as data become available.

Since July 2017, CP4P has **served roughly 3,600 participants** across the city. Approximately 83% of CP4P outreach participants are Black and 16% are Latino. The majority (82%) of participants are male, and the mean participant age is roughly 25 years old. The collaborative’s **outreach workers and other service providers have made nearly 117,000 contacts with participants**, with the average participant receiving about 35 contacts.

CP4P Finds the Right People

CP4P organizations successfully locate and engage individuals at severe risk for involvement in gun violence. CP4P outreach participants experience some of the highest levels of risk of gunshot victimization in the city. **On average, the rates of gunshot victimization among CP4P participants before participation were 60 times higher than the city average and nearly 25 times higher than other residents of CP4P community areas** (see Figure 1). CP4P locates their participants by reviewing and combining outreach staff’s knowledge of the local area with up-to-date data on shootings and disputes to identify those individuals most actively engaging

in violence. Outreach staff attempt to connect with these groups, mediate conflicts, and monitor ongoing peacemaking efforts.

Figure 1. Change in Fatal and Non-Fatal Victimization Rates 18 Months Before and After CP4P Participation as Compared to Chicago and CP4P Annual Rates, 2017–20

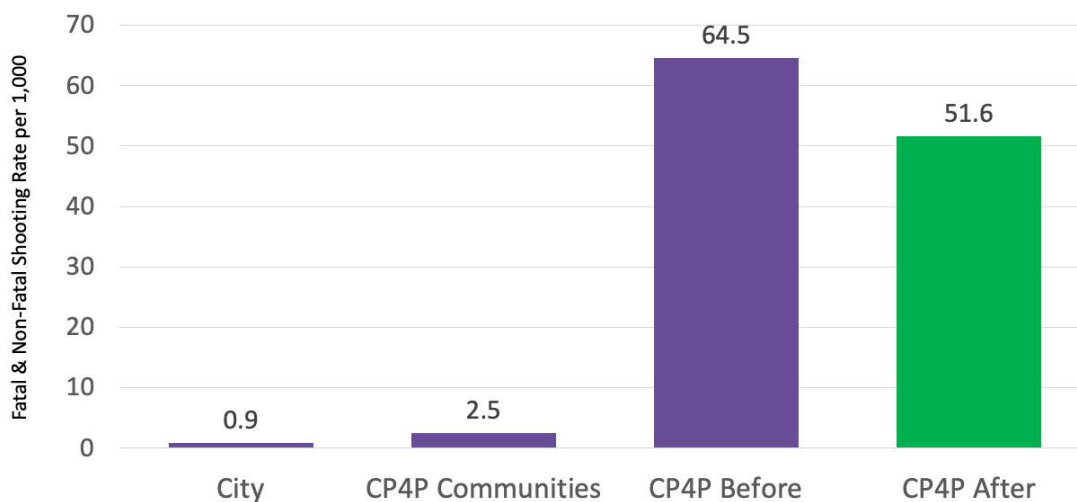


Figure 1 shows the change in victimization rates of CP4P participants across all eight organizations, 18 months after participation as compared to participants' rates 18 months prior to participation. Annual average victimization rates (per 1,000) for the city and the CP4P community areas are also shown as a point of comparison. While levels of victimization drop nearly 20% after 18 months, CP4P participants continue to experience risk levels for violence, far higher than others in the city—and even those in their own communities.

Preliminary Results

Although it is too early to make definitive claims, early program results appear encouraging.

CP4P Organizations Provide Essential Support; Increase Employment and Education Opportunities

Earlier research demonstrates that participants initially get involved with CP4P organizations as a way to avoid pervasive community violence and improve their own situations. In-depth interviews, surveys, and focus group data show that CP4P participants turned to their outreach worker (or victim service advocate) for core emotional support—especially help during “dark times” and to deal with the trauma associated with gun violence. Outreach workers were consistently seen as one of the few “positive role models” in participants' lives, often described as the only person with whom participants “felt safe.”

Participants also viewed CP4P organizations as a key pathway to obtaining social services and legal support, as well as a gateway to educational and employment opportunities. According to a survey of participants, just over 15% of CP4P participants experienced an increase in full or part-time employment and another 15% increased their educational level after program participation.

Suggestive Evidence Of Reductions in Gun Violence Among CP4P Participants

Early results find suggestive evidence of a reduction in gunshot victimization among six of the eight original CP4P organizations, as well as a reduction in arrests for violent crimes among seven out of the eight organizations.¹ **Overall, the number of fatal and non-fatal gunshot injuries of outreach participants across CP4P organizations was 20% lower in the 18 months following participation and nearly 31% lower in the 24 months following participation.**² Outreach participants' arrests for violent crime was 28% lower in the 18 months following participation and 17% lower in the 24 months after participation.

It is important to note that the relatively small number of participants per organization means that changes in these figures are sensitive to even small fluctuations in victimization or arrest.³ Quasi-experimental analyses comparing CP4P participants to more than 2,500 similar young men in Chicago who were not part of CP4P organizations or any known outreach effort does not consistently find statistically significant program effects.⁴

There are several important caveats around these preliminary results:

First, CP4P represents an important collaboration among unique organizations, not a single, unified program. While organizations coordinate and standardize outreach practices, there remains considerable variation across CP4P organizations with respect to resources, programming, and capacity. Importantly, formal statistical analyses fail to capture the significance of the collaboration and coordination provided by CP4P. This collaboration represents a significant development in the field of violence prevention in Chicago that allows each unique organization to retain its respective identity and approach, while also aligning and coordinating efforts. For

¹ "Violent crime" in this study is defined as: homicide, manslaughter, criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, simple assault, and simple battery.

² These pre- and post-figures are derived by comparing the total changes in shooting victimization and violent crime arrests in the 18-month or 24-month window before and after each participant's start date.

³ These pre- and post-figures include only the 542 participants with sufficient data within these time windows.

⁴ Quasi-experimental analyses followed nonparametric survival analysis using Bayesian Additive Regression Trees (BART) and included a range of balancing covariates at the individual and neighborhood level. For a description of our modeling approach, see Sparapani, R. A., et al. 2016. Nonparametric survival analysis using Bayesian additive regression trees (BART). *Statistics in Medicine* 35(16): 2741–53. The present analyses compared 808 CP4P participants against 2,490 individuals in a comparison group generated from the BART model.

example, during the [summer of 2020](#), several different CP4P organizations collaborated to address racial tensions and unrest in North Lawndale and Little Village—an effort made possible by the relationships established through the CP4P collaborative. Likewise, the CP4P collaborative also enabled organizations to coordinate [COVID-19 response efforts](#) and share much-needed resources across neighborhood boundaries.

Second, the scale of success must be put into the context of gun violence and risk in Chicago.

The 20% reduction observed after 18 months of CP4P participation still leaves an estimated risk level that is 50 times higher than the city average and 20 times higher than other CP4P community areas (see Figure 1). While an important improvement—and, indeed, CP4P organizations are keeping participants alive—these victimization rates remain unacceptably high and underscore the extreme level of need of participants. As a case in point, for every CP4P participant, our quasi-experimental had no problem locating at least three other individuals with similar risk profiles who were not part of similar outreach efforts.

Third, it is difficult to fully account for the impact of COVID-19 on gun violence and violence prevention efforts. Both COVID and gun violence disproportionately impacted the CP4P-covered communities. Outreach organizations quickly assumed [new duties](#)—spreading public health information, distributing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and more—within their communities while simultaneously trying to meet the intensified demands of their violence prevention work spurred by increasing shootings and homicides. CP4P organizations worked tirelessly to continue operations despite pandemic restrictions, which complicated their street outreach work by constraining access to prosocial activities, services, and opportunities that generally bolster violence reduction efforts.

Implications and Recommendations

CP4P organizations are involved in life-saving efforts that are showing promising results. Early results suggest that CP4P:

- Successfully **locates** high-risk populations,
- Potentially **increases** positive outcomes such as educational attainment and employment, and
- Potentially **reduces** the risk of involvement in gun violence of its participants in the 18 to 24 months after participation.

CP4P member organizations should continue to develop innovative ways to connect participants to additional programming, social services, and educational and employment opportunities.

This emerging evidence on CP4P—as well as results coming from [Chicago CRED](#) and [READI Chicago](#)—demonstrate that outreach can be an effective tool at reaching individuals at high levels

of involvement in gun violence and who are, for a variety of reasons, “hard to reach.” Yet outreach alone is insufficient given the extreme levels of risk of participants. CP4P organizations—and others like them—should strive to integrate their efforts into broader neighborhood and city level efforts and primary intervention and prevention efforts.

The **Northwestern Neighborhood & Network Initiative (N3)** promotes new ways for faculty, experts, and students at Northwestern University’s Institute for Policy Research to engage communities, civic partners, and policymakers to address core problems facing the residents of Chicago and surrounding communities. Specific projects and types of engagement are linked by a focus on how the social relationships among networks, geographic communities, and the constellation of groups, organizations, and civic partners affect what we feel, think, and do—and how understanding, building, and leveraging this sort of network-thinking can improve neighborhoods, the city, and our region.

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