

# Community Listening Session Report – April 2018

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## I. Introduction

### Introduction to the CGVRC Community Engagement Subcommittee

In the Summer of 2016, both Sinai Health System and America's Urban Campus (AUC) began exploring deeper collaborative work on gun violence research in Chicago. Karen Teitelbaum, CEO of Sinai Health System, published an op-ed in Crain's Chicago Business in July 2016 making the case for researchers at institutions across Chicago to come together around gun violence research, and Executive Committee members for America's Urban Campus (AUC) were simultaneously exploring ways to foster collaborations for gun violence research. AUC member institutions and Sinai Health System held an initial meeting in the summer of 2016, and Sinai Urban Health Institute and researchers from several institutions of higher education launched the Chicago Gun Violence Research Collaborative (CGVRC). Two committees of the CGVRC – the Research Subcommittee and the Community Engagement Subcommittee – have been working to develop the collaboration since its inception.

Between September 2016 and April 2018, the Community Engagement Subcommittee has worked to develop a draft "Community-driven research framework" (Figures 1-2. Pages 2-3) and to gather input from community members and community residents about the principles and activities laid out in that framework. The Community Engagement Subcommittee is chaired by Camille Williamson of Adler University and Jess Lynch of Illinois Public Health Institute. The Community Engagement Subcommittee is focused on how we can learn more from community members and practitioners about how to research and address issues and root causes of gun violence in Chicago. This requires the subcommittee to address factors such as: community relationships with researchers and institutes, community forums that have evoked pain, and ultimately how to take a more respectful and thoughtful approach to gaining their insight and reflections about the topic of gun violence and the practice of research.

Representatives from the following organizations participated in the Community Engagement Subcommittee during the first phase of drafting a community-driven research framework: Adler University, Center for Community Health Equity, Deer Rehab Services, DePaul University, I AM ABLE, Illinois Public Health Institute, Institute for Nonviolence Chicago, Mothers Against Senseless Killings (MASK), SAFER Foundation, Sinai Community Institute, and Sinai Urban Health Institute.

The Subcommittee engaged in deep discussion to conceptualize a community-driven approach to researching gun violence that might be a more useful way to practice research with the intention of addressing gun violence, especially the root causes. Through these discussions, the subcommittee determined several key characteristics for the CGVRC research framework:

- 1) We determined that the framework/model will be responsive to the historical mistrust and power dynamics of research practices and practitioners that have caused harm and transactional relationships, e.g. simply providing a gift card or stipend for participation in a research study.
- 2) We determined that the model will be inclusive of the community's values, perspectives, and needs, e.g. a community may have an intervention that it wants to evaluate.
- 3) We determined that this needs to be grounded in a "research activism" model, and researchers should make a time-oriented, action-based commitment to a community that they partner with to conduct research, e.g. committing to complete research and use the data to help a community create transformative change which may take several years.
- 4) Finally, we determined that an equitable relationship is required to foster a more just outcome as a researcher using this model has a responsibility to be in partnership that yields outcomes that specifically benefit the community, e.g. full transparency and participation in determining the budget for a research study.

## CGVRC Community Engagement Framework

### Vision

Adoption of a community-driven research framework that leads to the development of interventions that advance equity and social justice and have a greater impact on the incidence of gun violence in Chicago.

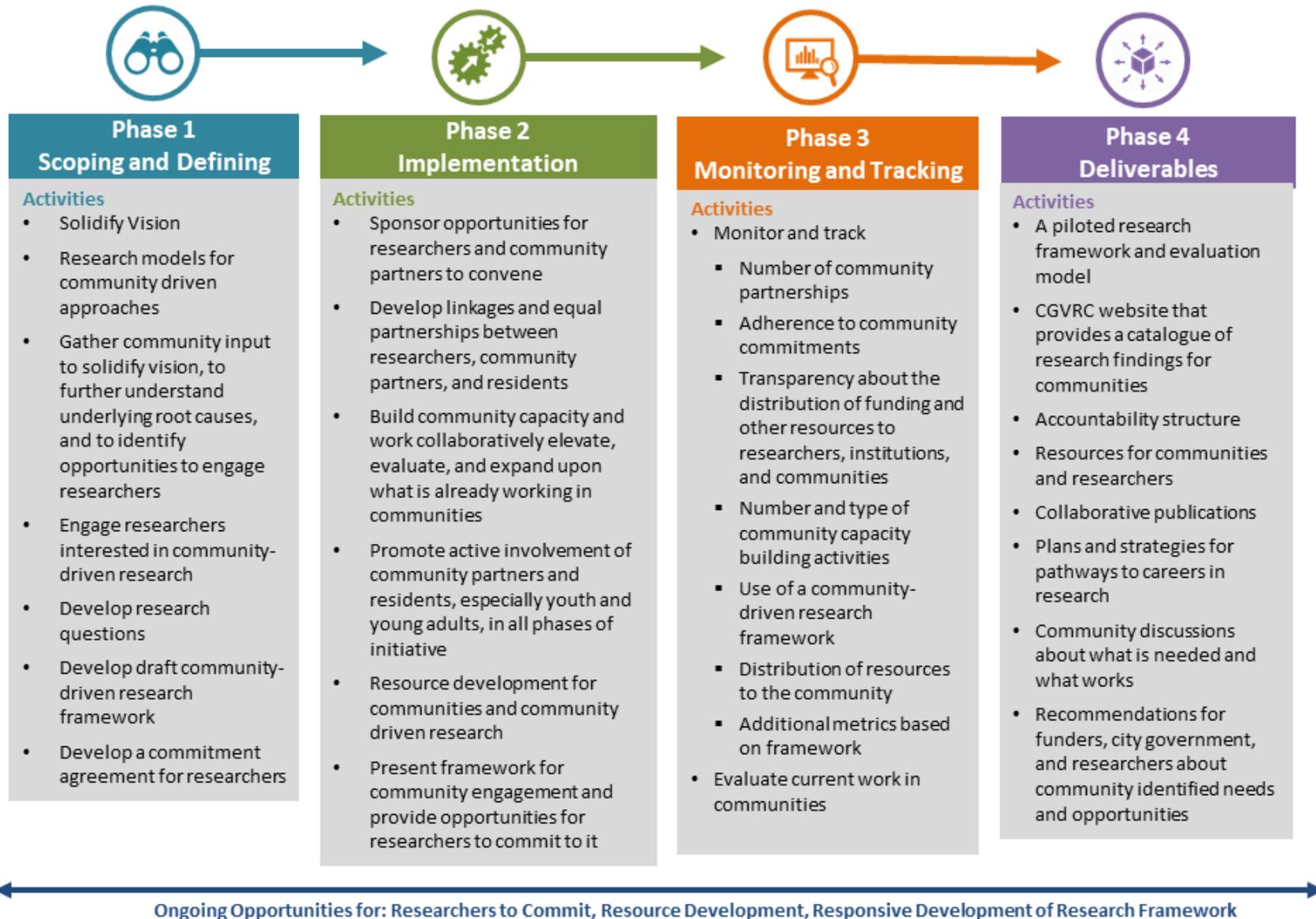
### Goal

**Research activism based on our guiding principles that leads to sustainable positive change**

### Guiding Principles

- **Commitment to addressing the structural causes of violence**
- **Equitable and fully transparent distribution of resources** between researchers and communities
- **Partnership and reciprocity**
- **Work collaboratively and collectively** with those on the ground in communities
- **Collaboratively elevate, evaluate, and expand upon** what is already working in communities
- Use of **community driven and community owned** cross-sectoral approaches
- **Promote active involvement of community residents** and pathways to careers in research
- **Data-Driven** decision making
- **Make research and evaluation findings easily accessible** to communities
- **Sustained transformative change**
- Funding based on the **needs identified by communities**

## CGVRC Community Engagement Framework - Phases



As we were developing this framework, several questions regarding commitment came to mind that must be considered in the practice and execution of research. For example, a researcher may want to answer the following questions to reconcile how they will commit to a community group using this model:

- How might this approach affect your current areas/directions in your work/research?
- Are there institutional politics that you may need to consider?
- What are the multitude of ways that we can participate and demonstrate a commitment to this goal?
- How will a researcher address their advocacy efforts in support of a partnering community, especially if the research results and/or community response, conflicts with political decisions that have been made by elected or appointed officials?

## Description of Community-Driven Research Framework and Phases

### Research Framework and Model

As a subcommittee we developed the research framework to be reflective of community needs as cited in empirical research, community practitioner observations; and ultimately critical feedback from community members during listening sessions. The model, termed “Research Activism” provides a vision for community driven research in which the community itself is the primary benefactor. The Subcommittee developed guiding principles and subsequent practice methods for each principle.

Ultimately, the goal is for researchers to employ this model to address gun violence by:

- Creating trustworthy connections with community members
- Evaluating current practice methods
- Clarifying points of advocacy
- Producing data that is used to influence policy, shifts in media messaging and public discourse, and resource allocation
- Determining new public health implications and supporting implementation and scaling of successful strategies
- Partnering for positive, transformative change
- Supporting new research activism opportunities for youth in communities

Through the course of its work, the Community Engagement Subcommittee has come to acknowledge that it will likely be a subset of researchers and research institutions that commit (at least initially) to approaching gun violence research in the holistic community-driven approach envisioned by CGVRC; however, it is also clear that there is a group of researchers and communities that are excited to collaborate together around a community-driven approach.

### Phases

The Subcommittee also developed phases for the development of this framework and model (Figure 2. Page 3).

**Phase 1 - Scoping and Defining**, which is the current phase of the Community Engagement Subcommittee, is geared toward solidifying the vision, gaining researcher and community feedback and further development of the framework and model. Also during this phase, new research questions are generated through listening sessions.

**Phase 2 - Implementation:** During the Implementation phase, researchers and communities will work together to adopt and utilize the model.

**Phase 3 - Monitoring and Tracking:** The Monitoring and Tracking phase includes formative evaluation, review and report out on the usage of the model, and adherence to guiding principles and practices.

**Phase 4 - Deliverables:** The Deliverables phase will showcase completed research projects and the progression of how the research is being used for positive, transformative change within the partnering communities.

## Community Listening Sessions – Purpose and Process

To further develop the draft research framework and model, the Community Engagement Subcommittee decided to gather more community feedback through community listening sessions. In consideration of aforementioned mistrust and perhaps skepticism, we decided that we should not use a format for community listening sessions that emphasized jargon or typical research model, such as focus groups. Thus, we decided to utilize community listening sessions in our community partner organizations to have open dialogue to gather and incorporate community feedback.

### Our approach to community listening sessions was as follows:

- Collaborate with community partners to host listening sessions in different regions of the city impacted by violence. Thus far, we have heard from community residents in North Lawndale, Austin, Little Village, and Englewood.
- Invite affected community members and practitioners working to prevent gun violence to participate in the discussion.
- Provide refreshments and gift cards as an appreciation for participants.
- Be clear about what our commitments are to the community regarding how we would like to introduce a new research framework.
- Learn from their perspectives on gun violence including root causes to inform development of the research framework and community-research partnership opportunities.
- Directly acknowledge that most research has not been community-driven and be open to hearing criticisms and outside-the-box thinking on what solutions should look like
- Allow for multiple forms of expression to participate, and be clear that we are here to listen

Camille Williamson from Adler University facilitated the listening sessions, with support and notetaking by Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI). Through listening sessions and key informant discussions with community leaders, we heard from 50 community residents in Austin, Englewood, Little Village, and North Lawndale. All participants were community residents, and many also had a dual role with a community organization in their respective community. The summary of listening session participants on page 6 provides more details on participant demographics.

### Community Listening Session Questions (October 2017 – April 2018)

#### Root Causes of Gun Violence

##### **A. What do you think causes gun violence in your neighborhood/community?**

- Probes to dig deeper into the specific issues raised
- What kinds of political decisions do you think contribute to gun violence in your neighborhood?
- What do you think *{insert leaders such as CPD and the Mayor's office, depending on what's brought up by the group}* get wrong about addressing gun violence in your community?

#### Input on Research Model and How Research Should Be Conducted

##### **B. What does research mean to you, and what could your role be in research?**

##### **C. How do you feel about researchers in your communities?**

- How has research been done in your community in the past?
- How can researchers commit to the community in a meaningful way?

##### **D. Review the research framework/model in more depth – What do you think of this research model? What's most important? What else should be added?**

#### Gun Violence Solutions and Research Needs

##### **E. What resources already exist in your community that could be expanded upon?**

##### **F. How can communities be involved and have leadership within research and civic initiatives?**

#### Wrap-up/Closing

- G. "Imagine that the city was to invest \$10 million dollars in your community, how would you spend it?"**
- H. Round robin: What's your vision/dream for yourself and your community?**

# Summary of Community Listening Session Participants

## North Lawndale Roundtable – Monday, October 16, 2018

**Host:** I AM ABLE

**Location:** I AM ABLE, 3410 W. Roosevelt Rd. Chicago, IL 60624

**Participant Information:**

- 10 participants total (all adults)
- Seven I AM ABLE staff participated
- All participants had lived in the North Lawndale community for more than 15 years

## Austin Roundtable – Wednesday, March 21, 2018

**Host:** BUILD and Austin Opportunity Collaborative

**Location:** Northwest Austin Council, 5730 W. Division St. Chicago, IL 60651

**Participant Information:**

- 22 participants total
  - Ages ranged from young adults (late teens to early twenties) to older adults (older than 65)
- All participants were representatives of community based organizations
  - Some of the types of organizations and groups represented included faith-based, youth development, community hospitals, local arts and culture, political groups, community development, law enforcement, local business, and students.
- All participants lived and worked in the Austin community area, most long-term

## Little Village Roundtable – Thursday, April 5, 2018

**Host:** Enlace Violence Prevention with Youth program

**Location:** Enlace, 2329 S. Troy St. Chicago, IL 60623

**Participant Information:**

- 11 participants total (6 Adults, 5 Youth)
- The six participating adults were Enlace staff
- All participants lived and worked in the Little Village community area

## Englewood key informant discussion – Friday, April 6, 2018

Teamwork Englewood

**Location:** 815 W 63rd St. Chicago, IL 60621

## Englewood Roundtable – Monday, April 9, 2018

**Host:** I Grow Chicago

**Location:** I Grow Chicago, 6402 S. Honore St. Chicago, IL 60636

**Participant Information:**

- 7 participants total (3 young adults, 4 older adults)
- Three I Grow staff participated
- All participants lived and worked in the Englewood community area

## II. Results – Root Causes of Gun Violence

In response to the question “What do you think causes gun violence in your community?” participants at the listening sessions described a number of underlying root causes to gun violence including:

- socioeconomic factors;
- generational and historical violence and trauma;
- societal and cultural trends;
- city policies; and
- practices of the Chicago Police Department.

Based on the feedback from participants, several potential questions for further study were identified. Those potential research questions are included at the end of each subsection. Community-specific input is highlighted in the “Potential Solutions” section of this report on pages 15-17.

### Socioeconomic factors

**Participants across all community listening sessions identified multiple socioeconomic factors as underlying root causes of gun violence.** The issues highlighted included:

- the concentration of **severe economic hardship and unemployment** in brown and black communities;
- **housing inequities** including high rates of homelessness, redlining, segregation, gentrification, public housing relocation, taxation policies, and high costs of living;
- **long-term divestment** in schools located in Latino and African American communities; and
- **high rates of food insecurity.**

“The majority of young males are unemployed. They don’t have anywhere to go, and education isn’t an option, so they develop hopelessness. This is concentrated in brown and black communities.”  
*Quote from an Austin resident*

Participants explained how severe economic hardship drives much of the violence in their communities. High rates of unemployment, particularly among young men, combined with pervasive poverty leads individuals to seek out alternative methods for fulfilling basic needs including gang activity and drug distribution.

Participants described how housing inequities including redlining, segregation, public housing relocation, taxation policies, and high costs of living have led to high rates of homelessness and long-term disinvestment in communities. In communities on the South Side of Chicago, there is a concentration of dilapidated and abandoned houses as well as a high concentration of vacant lots. Participants stated that the condition of the housing stock in these communities further discourages investment by the city and businesses. On the West Side of Chicago, participants mentioned that gentrification, redlining, and the relocation of public housing have led to the concentration of poverty and diminished development in certain communities because of a decreasing tax base. Inequities in taxation and the distribution of city resources have led to high rates of school closures and severe degradation in the quality of remaining schools.

“Redlining and segregation are root causes. There were a lot of racist and discriminatory practices by the housing market that had a huge impact on the community.”  
*Quote from an Austin resident*

“You don’t get what you need in school. You get an education, but you know it wasn’t as good as other people’s. You get less, and you know it.”  
*Quote from a youth in Little Village*

Inequities in access to quality education contributes to the high rates of unemployment mentioned previously. Community schools were described as having outdated books and educational materials and underpaid staff. Participants explained that students from under-

resourced African American and Latino schools have a harder time in college, staying in college, and maintaining jobs due to a lack of qualifications. Individuals in one session described how minority students who are struggling with trauma, violence, poverty, and other issues are often pegged as disruptive trouble makers and expelled without consideration for the underlying root causes of their behavior.

**Potential research questions:**

- What strategies could be developed to meet the basic needs of residents in underserved communities long-term?
- How do you sustain efforts to address the underlying root causes of violence?
- Are there strategies that can leverage unused quality housing stock to address homelessness in communities?
- How can investment in underserved communities be encouraged and sustained?
- What tax policies contribute the most to the degradation of certain local schools?
  - How can these policies be changed?
  - What role can the city play?
- How can access to quality education and post-secondary opportunities be improved in African American and Latino communities?
  - What policies and strategies can be enacted to improve minority student success?

## Generational and historical violence and trauma

“In this community, there are just two main gangs. There has been a huge rivalry between those two gangs for decades. This hatred gets passed down generation to generation and you don’t really know the other people.”  
*Quote from a Little Village resident*

Intergenerational trauma and violence were common themes throughout all four of the sessions. Community residents explained that gang related violence in-particular is the result of long-standing rivalries and that the hatred between these groups is passed down within families and communities from generation to generation.

Two of the groups mentioned that older adults will often perpetuate rivalries and that younger generations will continue them even in the absence of an explanation of how the rivalries began. In addition, **living in rival territory and having friends or family members that are involved in gangs puts an individual at risk even if they do not engage in gang activity** - the association alone is enough to spark violence. **School closures leading to students crossing gang boundaries further destabilizes and traumatizes youth.**

**Participants explained how trauma-related symptoms such as hypervigilance, anxiety and fear, feelings of disconnection and hopelessness, and frustration are nearly universal experiences in their communities.** Some of the sources of intergenerational trauma that were mentioned included pervasive economic hardship; being a victim of violence; knowing victims of violence; abuse by police; systemic racism; a lack of safe spaces in communities; and incarceration. Additional sources of trauma mentioned included the poverty, economic divestment, and carceral state that have led to instances of childhood

“Everybody here has extra-sensory perception and it is not normal. Everybody in this room suffers from PTSD and trauma.”  
*Quote from a Little Village resident*

“There aren’t resources in the community or in schools that help us deal with trauma.”  
*Quote from an Austin resident*

neglect. Further compounding the problem is a lack of resources in communities and in schools to address trauma in children and adults. Participants highlighted that persistent trauma often led community residents to carry weapons to feel safe, contributed to high rates of substance use disorders as a coping strategy, and increased the likelihood of violent altercations between individuals and groups within communities.

**Potential research questions:**

- What are the underlying causes of intergenerational violence in different communities?
- How can the cycle of intergenerational rivalries be broken?
- How are school closures contributing to gang violence in Chicago?
- How can community and school-based resources be directed to communities with high rates of trauma?
- What systemic issues are leading to the ongoing traumatization of certain communities?
- Who is most likely to own or carry weapons in communities?
  - In addition to safety, what are the other reasons that community residents have for owning or carrying weapons?

## Societal and cultural trends

“We have a culture of violence in America.”  
*Quote from a North Lawndale resident*

“I’ve worked with a lot of teenagers and guns are cool to them and they are easily accessible.”  
*Quote from an Austin resident*

“I know a nine-year-old who’s an addict. He sees his brother doing it and he thinks it is cool. He says he gets frustrated and then he gets high.”  
*Quote from an Englewood resident*

Participants in all four sessions mentioned the influence of societal and cultural trends in perpetuating gun violence. **Violence is glorified in the United States on the news, in popular media, and in politics.** Within communities with high rates of gun violence, participants stated that it was considered trendy and socially acceptable for young people to carry weapons. It is also considered socially acceptable to settle conflicts through violence. Additional trends that contribute to high rates of violence include the glorification of rap and gang culture. **This problem is worsened by easy access to guns and ammunition both through legal and black-market suppliers.** However, as previously mentioned, several participants explained that **many individuals carry guns because they feel unsafe.** In addition, participants stated that having close contact with older siblings

and adults that have substance use disorders, are involved in gangs, or have been involved in the criminal justice system increases the likelihood that a youth will experience the same issues. Furthermore, participants stated that there is a societal trend of scorning and ridiculing individuals living in poverty and that this can sometimes drive individuals to engage in illegal activities to gain what they need and want.

“Researchers need to address structural racism which is the underlying cause of all these things.”  
*Quote from a North Lawndale resident*

**Systemic racism is another root cause of violence within communities.** Across all listening sessions, participants highlighted the **unfair and unjust distribution of economic resources, educational opportunities, and representation among decision makers** that are a direct result of long-term systemic racism.

### **Potential research questions:**

- What is trendy and popular among youth in communities with high rates of gun violence?
- How can trends be used to direct youth to positive activities?
- What are the most effective strategies for improving conflict resolution among youth and adults?
- What types of wholistic strategies can be used to address family-level issues that contribute to violence and other negative outcomes among youth?
- How can community resources in Chicago be distributed in a more just and equitable way?
  - What policy strategies could be used?

## Policy

### **Policy and politics were universally considered to be underlying root causes of gun violence.**

Several participants mentioned that they felt it is much easier individuals to legally obtain guns and high-powered weapons than it was in the past. The black market for guns, which is often fueled by differences in restrictions on gun sales in neighboring states, was cited as another common source of weapons in communities. Participants in one session described how the passage of concealed carry laws has led some to believe that it is legal to carry a gun at any time and that they are unaware of the licensing requirements.

“There needs to be federal standards for acquiring guns, because having different laws in different states is not working. There is a black market for guns.”  
*Quote from a North Lawndale resident*

for

“We have suffered intergenerational abuse - we don't get resources, we don't get funded. They are taking resources away to see what happens.”

*Quote from a North Lawndale resident*

**Participants stated that when the mayor's office attempts to address community violence, there is too much focus on the violence itself and not enough focus on the underlying root causes.** For example, reductions in city spending on resources and unreliable funding for programs in underserved communities is an underlying root cause of

violence. Limited opportunities for youth to engage in positive activities such as group sports, community events, and after-school activities were a direct result of city-wide policies that provide funding and resources to certain communities and not others. Without these positive activities, participants felt that youth were more likely to engage in gang or clique related violence.

### **Participants highlighted that political decisions about the allocation of city resources are often made based on the voting power of a community instead of need.**

As a result, affluent communities with higher voter turnout have not experienced issues such as dilapidated infrastructure, school closings, limited green spaces and parks, lack of development, and unemployment. Participants also described how the city's efforts to increase the proportion of contracts with minority and women owned businesses and to increase the proportion of underrepresented groups including youth employed in city jobs has fallen short of community expectations. In addition, several participants mentioned that the mayor's office has a general lack of involvement and commitment to unserved communities. Participants explained that a lack of community cohesion further diminishes their power to effect changes.

“The government has fallen short on providing opportunities, education, and jobs for the youth in our communities”  
*Quote from a North Lawndale resident*

### **Potential research questions:**

- What policies need to be enacted to reduce the flow of guns between states?
- What strategies could be used to reduce or eliminate black market sales of guns?
- What strategies could the mayor's office use to address the underlying root causes of \
- gun violence?
- How can city and state governments sustainably increase resources in communities that need them most?
- How can city and state governments protect existing resources in communities from cutbacks?
- How can the city better support the youth workforce?
- How can residents increase their power to effect changes in their communities?

## Chicago Police Department

Participants in all sessions described how a lack of representation by people of color among the police force, police corruption and abuses of power, a lack of police accountability, and limitations in the ability of the police force to address root causes are contributing to violence in communities.

“How can you educate someone on years of culture in a six-month academy class? Segregation in Chicago impacts police and community relationships and it affects how we interact.”

*Quote from a police officer who is an Austin resident*

**Multiple participants pointed to the lack of community representation on the police force as a factor that leads to altercations with police.** Officers who are not from the communities they serve often lack the cultural awareness and sensitivity needed to interact appropriately with communities. Participants explained that poor representation

is in part due to the exclusion of individuals with criminal backgrounds on the police force, since individuals from communities of color experience unjust and disproportionately high rates of incarceration and justice involvement. In addition, many participants felt that adults and youth from certain communities were unfairly generalized and judged negatively by police. They highlighted the need for open dialogue between police and community members to foster understanding and build relationships.

### **Police officers are not trained or equipped to address underlying root causes of gun violence.**

Arresting people is the primary power that they can use to address crime. This approach doesn't solve the problems in communities that ultimately cause violence and can often make the problem worse.

“When we look at statistics for a community, we have to determine what to do to bring those stats down, but our biggest power is to arrest people. This doesn't solve problems in the community, it makes the problems worse. Law enforcement is not designed to address root causes.”

*Quote from a police officer who is an Austin resident*

Several participants described instances of police corruption and abuses of power. They indicated that this has led to general mistrust of the police department. Participants stated that although the entire police force is

“Cops make violence worse. Sometimes cops choose sides and it makes the other person angrier.”

*Quote from a youth in Little Village*

judged negatively as a result of a few corrupt officers, they pointed out that it is impossible to know which officers are trustworthy. As a result, some community members have used interpersonal violence to settle disputes that they felt the police were unable or unwilling to address. In addition, participants stated that officers and the criminal justice system fail to keep the most violent offenders off the streets in communities. In multiple sessions, officers were

“How do we tell which ones are bad and which ones are good? The problem is not with the person, it is with the uniform.”

*Quote from an Englewood resident*

described as inciting violence in certain cases because they were perceived as taking sides in disputes. Officers were described as perpetrators of gun violence due to the number of police shootings in certain communities. Multiple participants mentioned how corrupt officers are not held accountable for their actions and how certain long-standing policies including the Union Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) contract with the city protect them.

Some participants explained the need for additional patrols in certain areas of high crime. They indicated that a more visible police presence in public places like parks would make residents feel more comfortable about using those spaces.

### **Potential research questions:**

- What are the most effective strategies for increasing diversity within the Chicago Police Department?
- How can an open dialogue be created between community residents and police precincts?
  - What can police officers do to foster positive conflict resolution among community residents?
- How can police departments be engaged to address underlying root causes of violence?

- What needs to occur to better equip police officers to respond to community needs?
- How can police officer accountability be improved through policy change?
- What would foster healing between communities that have suffered abuse in the past and the police department?

### III. Results - Recommendations for researchers

Participants at the listening sessions were asked questions that helped us gain insight into:

- how they have interacted with researchers in the past;
- what methods have and haven't worked in communities;
- how communities see their role in future research studies;
- ways that researchers can partner with communities using more sustainable community-driven approaches; and
- their views on our community-driven research model.

This information was used to develop recommendations for future research studies and to refine our community-driven research model.

When asked about their interactions with researchers in the past and what hasn't worked, participants mentioned a number of issues including a lack of follow-through by researchers; a lack of relationship building between researchers and communities; implementation of programs that were short-lived or unsustainable long-term; implementation of programs that were not aligned with community-identified needs; a lack of transparency about the purpose of research studies; and a lack of community vetting of results. Examples of participant responses are listed in Table 1 on page 13. Participants across listening sessions agreed that the community driven research model we presented addressed many of their concerns and requirements for future studies including full transparency from researchers about what they are doing and how it benefits the community in the short and long-term; continual communication with and feedback from communities; supporting what is already working in communities; assistance with the evaluation of existing programs; the use of wholistic approaches when developing programs; relationship building within communities; and the use of community driven programs that empower residents. Examples of participant responses are presented in Table 2 on page 14.

**Table 1. Summary of responses to questions related to how research has been conducted in the past**

Questions	Examples of participant responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you feel about researchers in your communities?</li> <li>• How has research been done in your community in the past?</li> <li>• What has and hasn't worked?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We are asked questions like have you ever been molested or hurt. They've taken all of our information, but they don't come back to help you. They learn about the things that traumatize you, but they don't come back and offer you any services." <i>(Little Village Resident)</i></li> <li>• "Unless the research you are doing turns around some results, then I'm not going to be bothered." <i>(North Lawndale Resident)</i></li> <li>• "If you take our information about trauma, then it needs to be used to address trauma." <i>(Little Village Resident)</i></li> <li>• "The mistake I see with other programs is that the [research] agenda becomes the focus and we skip relationship building. Institutions that want to do research on the community level need to establish trust and relationships – the relationship part needs to come first." <i>(Austin Resident)</i></li> <li>• "The programs that I see out there are not sustainable past 18 months." <i>(North Lawndale Resident)</i></li> <li>• "I don't think people will come and be engaged in this [referring to research] because there is no free stuff. There needs to be an immediate benefit to people." <i>(Englewood Resident)</i></li> <li>• "Funders gave thousands of dollars for new mentoring programs when we have existing mentorship programs. They're not paying into the entities that are already addressing the problem" <i>(North Lawndale Resident)</i></li> <li>• "I don't think it is as accurate if research comes from outsider. People from outside the community lie or have a bias/preconceived knowledge. Data can be manipulated as well." <i>(Little Village Resident)</i></li> </ul>

**Table 2. Examples of feedback on guiding principles of proposed research model**

Guiding Principle	Examples of participant feedback
Commitment to addressing the structural causes of violence	“You need to create whole communities with good schools and opportunities for community residents.” <i>(Austin Resident)</i>
Equitable and fully transparent distribution of resources between researchers and communities	“People need to know what they are going to get out of it.” <i>(Englewood Resident)</i>
Partnership and reciprocity	“There needs to be a responsive form of research that responds to the community's needs.” <i>(North Lawndale Resident)</i>
Work collaboratively and collectively with those on the ground in communities	“My role is boots on the ground. I'm already in the community. I can find out what you want to know.” <i>(North Lawndale Resident)</i>
Collaboratively elevate, evaluate, and expand upon what is already working in communities	“Focus on programs and individuals that are successful and what allows them to be successful.” <i>(Austin Resident)</i>  “Evaluation – Organizations have to pay for it and it might be a large expense. If it were free, then places could learn what works and what doesn't.” <i>(Little Village Resident)</i>
Use of community driven and community owned cross-sectoral approaches	“Need to look at a village approach. Bring law enforcement, churches, different programs, businesses together. Need to bring together all the smaller efforts to have a greater impact – a collective/collaborative effect.” <i>(Austin Resident)</i>
Promote active involvement of community residents and pathways to careers in research	“It should be our people doing the research.” <i>(Little Village Resident)</i>
Data-Driven decision making	“If data doesn't reveal what the program should look like, then it is doomed” <i>(Austin Resident)</i>
Make research and evaluation findings easily accessible to communities	“Make it easy for people to understand and access the research information.” <i>(Austin Resident)</i>  “Reports should be direct and to the point.” <i>(Englewood Resident)</i>
Sustained transformative change	“A lot of researchers are complicit, are not culturally competent, and they're not fearless. I do believe in the scientific method, but academics have lost touch with what they are doing - they do everything by the textbook. Higher-ups won't fund it when researchers want to be fearlessly honest about the results.” <i>(North Lawndale Resident)</i>
Funding based on the needs identified by communities	“Funders dictate prescribed programs and that doesn't work.” <i>(North Lawndale Resident)</i>

## IV. Results - The role of communities in research

Participants provided examples of the roles that communities can have in future research studies. There were four major themes identified from participant responses:

- communities should determine the research questions that are investigated to ensure that they are aligned with their needs and that the results would be beneficial to the community itself;
- communities should direct and oversee research studies including determining data collection methods;
- communities should review research data that has been collected and validate how it used and how it is presented; and
- community residents can serve as boots on the ground and help researchers to build relationships in communities, and youth and young adults can be trained to be researchers in and on behalf of their communities.

### What could be your role in research?

- “Overseeing the research. Who they’re going to ask, what they’re going to ask, and how they’re going to use it.”
- “I live in the neighborhood and would like to ask the [research] questions because I could ask things that people could relate to.”
- “Being a respondent and being actively involved.”

Community organizations and community residents can also use research findings for advocacy, to inform strategy development and implementation, to test and scale effective strategies, and for resource development.

## V. Potential Solutions

### Austin

- Participants in this group talked about needing to focus both within and outside of the community to be successful in creating solutions.
  - Inside – invest in assets; youth; human capital; the village approach, bringing together law enforcement, churches, businesses, different programs to have a collective effect
  - Outside – changes outside the community are needed to address structural factors that lead to violence. Schools were provided as an example where pressure needs to be put on elected officials to change school funding and invest in schools in the communities impacted by gun violence.
- “Create whole communities with good schools and opportunities for community residents”
- Invest more resources in education. There has been a degradation in the quality of schools, and it needs to be reversed.
- More trade schools and vocational opportunities. Need to develop employment opportunities, particularly for young men.
- More resources in communities and schools to help community members deal with trauma.
- Some solutions don’t require a lot of funding like activities for youth, sports, chess, and other clubs.
- Policy change related to guns is important. Revise laws so that with people of history of violence cannot get guns. Gun and ammunition tracking systems to hold gun manufacturers and distributors accountable. Get rid of conceal-carry law.
- As a society, we need to invest more in dealing with the impact of poverty and create reliable funding for community and economic development programs.
- Address unfair employment practices and make sure people of color get their fair share of jobs.
- Support community-based entrepreneurship and collaborative efforts like the time exchange project underway in Austin.
- We need to see more people of color on the police force and more policies/practices that incentivize good and longstanding relationships between police and community residents.

- Abuses of power by police need to be addressed, punished, and prevented.
- Create more inter-generational connections between young and old people in the community.
- Look at what is trending, and influencing/steering people towards more positive trends.

## Englewood

- Support community unity and cohesion through existing organizations and groups and by supporting new ones. Research can help in testing strategies for building unity and community cohesion.
- Find ways to restore funding and incentivize more investment in the community. The city has taken away funding from community centers, schools, women’s shelter, etc. over time so now there are less resources than there used to be.
  - And, there is the current CPS/city effort to merge four high schools into one.
  - Cultural relevance of education and community-based programs is also very important.
- More funding for vocational programs is needed – auto mechanic, welding, etc. Youth job programs are a good resource, but there should be more and they should be focused on skill building so youth have employment prospects or can create their own opportunities through business. Youth in our community have a lot of talents and also interest in entrepreneurship/business, so we should find ways to support that, not cut programs from high schools.
  - Youth see the cycle of disinvestment from schools, decreased enrollment, and decisions to close schools that can be tied back to lack of funding and practical programs that will lead to opportunity.
- Media has a huge influence on young people and also on perceptions of people inside and outside the community. There are opportunities to leverage media to shift trends and cultural norms, influence decisionmakers, etc. that we should take advantage of in tackling underlying root causes.
- Support more community-minded police. The commander in the 7<sup>th</sup> district is really trying to build better relationships between community and police, and we need to hold officers accountable to that vision. Right now, there are some officers whose actions align with community-oriented approach and others who definitely do not.
  - more police is not the answer
  - not enough funding for education; more money allocated to punishing than to education
  - need to shift more funds to education and youth employment
- Build out and scale programs to develop vacant lots and abandoned properties into useful community spaces or other uses.
- Food insecurity is a problem and directly drives some young people to seek out ways to make money at a young age. We need to establish affordable access to quality food.
- Build up facilities and programs for young kids – youth groups, clubs, gyms, music rooms, community centers, etc.
- Community programs need data to evaluate what’s working and look at how to scale it. There are a couple current projects between community task forces and researchers looking at starting to evaluate/track programs and their impact over time.
- Specific orgs doing good work: Target Development, Cure Violence/Ceasefire, Teamwork Englewood, Quality of Life Task Forces, R.A.G.E, Think Outside the Block

## Little Village

- Training for youth in the community on research and social change, evaluation, and how to conduct and utilize research to benefit the community

- Schools need more resources.
- If you're going to develop options/alternatives for youth (programs, youth jobs, etc.), they have to be designed with the youth in mind and appeal to youth. Otherwise, the youth you are trying to reach will have no idea those programs exist and/or won't have interest.

## North Lawndale

- Need for more funding and investment in our children and youth. No music rooms, gyms in schools, and also a need for afterschool programs.
- A holistic approach is needed - Programs and interventions need to be for the entire families, adults, parents, teens, families.
- Mass incarceration creates trauma throughout the community, and we need resources to deal with trauma.
- Police should not be transferred so often because it hinders sustainable relationships between CPD and communities.
- We need to establish affordable access to quality food.
- Research activism is important – researchers need to actively stand up for the community
- Funders should not be in charge of choosing/prescribing programs, because we've seen it doesn't work
- Funders should also work to support existing initiatives that are working, an example was given of funders starting a new mentoring program when there are successful programs already in place in desperate need of funding
- One participant cautioned that we need to be careful about being handicapped by accepting money - we need to build up the community and invest in it sustainably

## VI. Lessons Learned and Next Steps

We plan to reconvene the Community Engagement Subcommittee in May 2018 to review the listening session input and discuss lessons learned and next steps. All of the host organizations for community listening sessions have been invited to join the Community Engagement Subcommittee.