



Covering Urban Violence

A Practical Guide for Reporters

Steve Franklin

The City Public Narrative Workshop



INTRODUCTION

This book is the cumulative result of decades of reporting expertise. It was also born from listening to community members, ethnic and community reporters as well as police and city officials. It was originally produced in 2011, after Stephen Franklin, formerly of the Chicago Tribune and now the coordinator of the ethnic and community project at [Public Narrative](#), was asked to discuss “[Getting it Right: Reporting on Youth Violence](#)” at the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma. Franklin then wrote the first edition of this guide to help reporters better understand the issues. In 2014, Franklin, produced a six-part online series for MSNBC.com with his colleague, video reporter and documentarian, Craig Duff, of Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism: “[Ricochet: Life in a City Under Siege by Guns](#).” This series discusses violence not just as a crime issue but as a public health epidemic. It looks at the people, the police, the gangs, the guns, the cost to the city, the residents and to the families. It also shows that even in these bullet-riddled neighborhoods where people are dying, many are also living. And it outlines their fight — as well as the fight of city leaders — to

find a solution. After finishing the series, Franklin wrote this updated guide. This ebook, produced and designed thanks to the generosity of the [Illinois Humanities Council](#), is meant to be a living and breathing document for reporters covering violence in urban areas. It does not claim to be the last word, but, rather a leg up for reporters, editors, photographers and videographers already facing an uphill challenge on a complex issue. It is to help boost reporting beyond blood, bullets and tears, to tell richer stories that examine the problem, but also the solutions. The book uses Franklin’s work in Chicago as a starting point. But is also a national reference of key experts as well as excellent stories from other reporters. Thanks to the people at the Illinois Humanities Council: especially Angel Ysaguirre, Michele Weldon and Simon Nyi. To the Public Narrative staff, including: Franklin, Maggie Walker, Jocelyn Perry and founder Thom Clark, who started the program. And to our production staff, including Zay N. Smith, who helped with copy editing.

Susy Schultz
president
Public Narrative

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On Covering Urban Violence

(Editor's note: This Guide was written in 2015, since then, one of the most comprehensive series on violence aired, WBEZ's "Every Other Hour.")

Violence has spread like an epidemic all through the news media, especially in Chicago. We are, it seems, in the midst of an epidemic that brings endless deaths and police tape, hand-wringing and tears.

How can people live in these neighborhoods where so many are dying? There don't seem to be any solutions.

That is, too often, the picture we see of violence— because, too often, the violence is all our reporting is about. Pressed by deadlines and understaffed, editors, producers, reporters and photographers don't take the time to search for the people who offer solutions. They don't examine systemic causes. Nor do those in the media measure anti-violence policies from one city to another — what succeeds or fails? And too many stories ignore the impacts violence has on a community emotionally, politically and financially. There is no context for the

stop it. Worse yet, reporting without context can stir unfounded fears and promote stereotypes.

How Violence Stirs Fear

"You live in Chicago? Aren't you scared?" At a national journalism conference in Tennessee in 2014, reporters from other cities, actually asked Chicago journalists: "How do you live there? It's just not safe." There is a belief that Chicago is the nation's murder capital. But it isn't. When you compare Chicago to other cities, be it by murder totals or per capita, the numbers don't add up. But the idea continues to foster fear, financial repercussions and, at best, only short-term solutions.

So, too, does reporting that doesn't take a look at what drives violence. Such reporting can deepen already harmful stereotypes. If we simply report stories about the toll of crime on blacks and Latinos, who suffer much of the violence in Chicago, we may incorrectly imply that these are simply violent people. But violence doesn't fall on black or Latino shoulders for no reason. What are the causes? Drugs, guns, gangs? What

else? What are the underlying stories? We need to go beyond stereotypes, not just to help cities such as Chicago search for solutions, but because these are the deeper stories — stories that uncover the truth, rather than just gloss over it. Are there solutions for the violence? Yes, there are. Indeed, the major declines in crime rates across the U.S. and especially in New York and Los Angeles tell us that violence is not an immutable fact of life in urban America. And many might be surprised to know that crime has declined in Chicago, as well, although not as markedly as elsewhere. Why is that? (And in some Chicago communities perpetually high crime rates persist. Why?)

What We Can Do

We can try to tell the whole story with good, strong reporting — explaining not just what happened but what it means to all of us in the neighborhood, the city and the region. Then we need to ask: What happens next? We need to explore what drives crime down and what allows it to linger. We need to hold up examples of strategies that seem to have made a difference and ask and how they

might be applied in our communities. This guide was created to help walk you through the issues of urban violence, highlighting the most significant research, sources and examples of reporting in nearly all forms of the news media.

Much of the focus is on Chicago, where the work on this guide has taken place over the last few years. But the issues are common across urban America.

How the Guide Happened

Four years ago, the Community Media Workshop began the project “We Are Not Alone/ No Estamos Solos.” It was, and is, an effort to bring together the black and Latino communities with the ethnic news media that report to these communities. We wanted to help improve reporting on violence.

But we quickly realized there was no guide locally or nationally to lead the way. The Workshop has taken its charge seriously. We expanded the work to include the mainstream media whenever possible. We have held numerous forums in Chicago on covering violence with the goal of

helping to produce reporting that can make a difference in understanding the problem. These forums took on a new meaning two years ago when the Workshop joined with the anti-violence effort at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, the city's premier hospital for children's health. Guided by the hospital's public health research and strategy efforts, the forums have focused on specific issues and provided reporters with a room full of experts on violence from academia, government, community agencies and other organizations. The forums are set up so reporters can go to various tables and interview a number of sources to develop their own stories on the spot. Public Narrative continues to work on other communications activities with the anti-violence effort created by the hospital, Strengthening Chicago's Youth. Both this effort and "We Are Not Alone" are, as best we can tell, unique among the nation's largest cities.

The first version of this guide was written several years ago and has been available on the Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma's website. But in 2014, the guide's original author,

Steve Franklin, completed a project with Craig Duff of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, producing a six-part MSNBC series on violence in Chicago. And it became clear to him that the old guide was out of date. Our hope is that this new guide can become a partner in reporting for working journalists and their editors, as well as journalism schools and students. It can also be used as a tool for anti-violence organizations that want to have their stories told. We hope it can promote and expand the discussion of the key issues involved in urban violence.

How To Use the Guide

The guide is fairly self-evident. It walks you through the issues, offers resources, suggests reporting strategies and asks you to consider how you can do your best work on an issue that touches so many lives today. It's a tool to help you think and spur you on to better reporting. Remember, though, this is not a textbook on crime. It is a reporter's guide to covering a complex and important issue. Use it to frame your questions. Let it help you search for the facts, the context and the answers.

The fact is, some basic notions about violence today remain uncertain: Do harsh prison sentences matter? Does intense policing make a difference? You will need to check and reconfirm some long-held notions about what stops violence.

Consider starting with the issues and then moving on to the strategies and reporting examples. You'll find a resource list at the end.

Stephen Franklin

Author

Susy Schultz, Jocelyn Perry and
Maggie Walker

Editors

Public Narrative at
Columbia College Chicago

Chicago, Illinois

312-369-6400

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Part One: The Issues

Gangs

Gangs are one of the driving forces of violence in Chicago. Law enforcement officials often cite Chicago and Los Angeles as the nation's gang capitals even though gangs exist in most large cities. National surveys show that while gang membership declined in the mid-1990s, it began to grow again a decade later and continues to rise.

It is not clear how many gang members live in Chicago. City officials have suggested that the number ranges from 100,000 to 150,000. Asked for details, Chicago police say they do not release specific numbers. Yale University sociologist Andrew Papachristos, relying on Chicago police data, has reported that gangs in recent years have accounted for about one-third of Chicago homicides. He has also indicated a decline in murders among members of competing gangs and a surge in recent years in murders within the same gangs.[\(Papachristos research\)](#).

This theory of the changing nature of gangs matches the observations of gang members themselves and those

who work on the gang problem. The message from these two dissimilar groups is this: Concentrated prosecution of black gang leaders in the last two decades has left a leadership vacuum and a breakdown in gang-enforced codes of conduct. Indeed, some say the large gang systems have broken down into so-called street operations. And it's the competition between these smaller units that drives the violence.

"The biggest driver of violence in Chicago—and where it's becoming difficult to address — is the factionalizing or breaking down of the bigger gangs into these smaller cliques," said Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy in a September 16, 2013, [Bloomberg News story](#) by John Lippert, Nacha Cattan and Mario Parker. What do we know about gangs nationally? In its [2011 National Gang Threat Assessment](#), the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported:

Gangs are responsible for an average of 48 percent of violent crime in most jurisdictions and up to 90 percent in several others, according to NGIC analysis. Major cities and suburban areas experience

the most gang-related violence. Local neighborhood-based gangs and drug crews continue to pose the most significant criminal threat in most communities. Aggressive recruitment of juveniles and immigrants, alliances and conflict between gangs, the release of incarcerated gang members from prison, advancements in technology and communication, and Mexican Drug Trafficking Organization (MDTO) involvement in drug distribution have resulted in gang expansion and violence in a number of jurisdictions.

This splintering of the gangs has hindered undercover agents trying to penetrate their organizations, law enforcement officials say. As a result, gang operations have been more difficult to trace.

For many young people living in gang neighborhoods, meanwhile, joining a gang is not a choice but a matter of survival. Sometimes it is geography that dictates the membership — if you live on this block, you must belong to this gang. Sometimes it is family tradition, as gang membership can be passed down through generations. And while it is true that gangs can be

magnets for violent and unstable people, gangs more often serve as safe havens for youths living in poverty, where family life can be challenged from many directions. Youths feel they need protection, and for some there is also the sense of belonging, camaraderie and a perceived familial bond. Young children are “recruited” to the lifestyle early because men and women in gangs are neighbors, friends, relatives and role models.

There is also a financial incentive to youths living in poverty. All too often, the gangs provide a business opportunity that young people do not see anywhere else in their lives. Gangs are about money, so young people think gang membership is a way out of poverty— a way to make money by pushing drugs, selling guns or taking part in robberies.

But just how involved is the general population of youths in gangs or violence in high-crime areas? Recent research suggests that the real number of youths involved in violent crime is small. Sociologist Papachristos suggests that most people who commit violent crimes are

only a few handshakes away from their victims. If this is the case, it markedly narrows the world of violence in Chicago. There is also a relatively new but strong recruitment tool gangs use today. Gang membership, it is said, has been normalized and glorified as a lifestyle in social media and rap videos. These are used not only to inflate the image of gangs but also as a stage from which to taunt enemies publicly, building a mythology about the power of gangs. A common form of gang violence is impulsive retaliation, and the videos and social media allegedly feed gang fantasies and murderous behavior. But it is hard to be definitive here because some say the music is a healthy release of tension and emotion in a violent world — nothing more. You can find much of the reasoning, rationalization and logic behind gang membership in this in-depth 2009 series from the *Los Angeles Times*, [“Promise and Peril in South LA.”](#)

Guns

National studies show that most gang killings are by gunshot, and in Chicago, gang members are usually the ones who make the gun traffic happen, according to law enforcement officials. Gang members often obtain guns through middlemen trying to turn a profit, called straw buyers. (The U.S. Supreme Court in 2014 upheld federal law making it illegal to buy a weapon for another person.) Or sometimes gang members pick up guns in robberies. Guns have pushed violent encounters to highly lethal levels in the U.S.—and especially Chicago. About 11,000 firearm homicides take place annually in the U.S., and while Chicago's overall homicide rate is close to the rates in New York City and Los Angeles, its firearm homicide rate is markedly higher.

In a [2012 national survey](#), UCAN, a Chicago-based organization, found a marked increase in youths' accessibility to guns — especially so for black youths. The report summarizes:

A comparison of survey results from

May 2009 to January 2012 showed that: Teens are finding it increasingly easy to obtain a handgun, with a dramatic 30 percent rate of increase among all teens and a shocking 62 percent increase among African-American youth.

One reason guns are such a force in Chicago is their sheer number. Police collect more guns in Chicago than in any other city in the U.S. They collect seven times the number of guns New York City collects on a per capita basis. Chicago collected 6,631 guns in 2013, compared to New York City's 2,900, according to figures from the two police departments.

Why are there so many guns here?

Chicago police point to weak gun control laws in neighboring Indiana and Wisconsin. Overall, 60 percent of the guns recovered by police come from outside Illinois.

But there are also ways around Illinois laws if the buyer avoids a regular gun store. Increasingly, guns are sold at gun shows, flea markets and on the Internet — places where law

enforcement has limited capacity to monitor.

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Robin Kelly (D-Ill.) told Congress that the nation is "unfazed by urban violence" and, in a speech before the House, called for congressional action to cope with gun violence.

The number of gun sales have been chronicled in major research, as well as several well-reported stories:

The statistics and research on underground gun markets in Chicago from the [University of Chicago Crime Lab](#) are extensive and dramatic. In May 2014, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel pointed to this report to discuss guns as the driving force of Chicago's crime problem. [The report](#) lists a number of steps that need to be taken involving Illinois, other communities and the federal government. The *New York Times* outlined the plan in a story, "[Mayor of Chicago seeks to further tighten gun laws.](#)"

- "[Why does Chicago have so many illegal guns?](#)" by Aaron Ernst for Aljazeera America in October 2014.

- “Indiana guns: Favorite of Chicago gangbangers,” by Mark Suppelsa, WGN-TV News in September 2014.
- “Gun violence rages in Chicago, even as thousands of illegal guns are confiscated,” by Free Speech Radio News in July 2014.
- “Where do Chicago’s guns come from,” by Whet Moser for Chicago Magazine in August 2012
- “Chicago gangs don’t have to go far to buy guns,” by Frank Main in the Chicago Sun-Times in August 2012.
- And finally, to remind every reporter that it’s about following the money and telling a compelling story, this winner of the 2009 Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma award: “The Path of a Bullet,” which outlines the human and fiscal cost of a gunshot.

Some stories we have not yet seen reported, as of the printing of this ebook, include:

- Have any of the Mayor Rahm Emanuel's proposals been carried out?
- How do these proposals match what has taken place elsewhere—in New York City, in Los Angeles?
- What is the situation nationally for

- halting illegal gun sales?
- What about the agency that serves as the federal government’s major law enforcement arm for investigating illegal gun sales and trafficking? The *Washington Post* and other news operations have pointed out severe staffing problems and other constraints at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). What, if any changes have taken place at the ATF locally and nationally?
- What about the courts? Has there been an increase in gun violation cases locally? How do the courts treat people convicted of using a gun during a crime?

Drugs and Mental Health

Just as guns push violence, drugs and mental health problems seal the tragic fates of many.

Drugs

Chicago police have regularly reported drugs as a factor in crimes and homicide. Drug sales are the main business of some gangs—a match that ignites violent turf warfare, police say. Drug use also propels impulsive and irrational decision-making, which is at the root of many violent acts.

In December 2013, WBEZ public radio and the Chicago Reader produced a [multimedia package of stories](#) that took a comprehensive look at drugs and crime and their impact on Chicago. More than two out of three youths tried in Cook County adult courts had at least one psychiatric disorder and four out of 10 had two or more emotional problems, according to a 2009 study. The fact these youths were tried in adult courts is a message that they were facing more serious charges.

Mental Health

One measure of how emotional problems play out in urban violence is found in the correctional system. As a U.S. Justice Department study showed in 2006, more than half of U.S. prisoners have mental health problems. [The University of Chicago's Law Center's website](#) explains:

Because we have dramatically reduced the number of public and private psychiatric beds in Illinois without adequately funding, our community mental health system, a large number of people with mental illnesses [have ended up in the criminal justice system](#).

Locally, in 2008, Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart referred to his office, which oversees the Cook County Jail, as the [state's largest mental health provider](#). Cook County is the nation's single largest jail, and Dart has [increasingly complained that the jail has become an end-of-the-road solution for the emotionally troubled](#).

Since 2010, Cook County has been under a consent decree to improve the [mental health services within Cook County Jail](#).

In 2014, [Illinois correctional officials agreed to](#) improve the mental health treatment for youths amid long-term complaints about a facility referred to as “an administrative cesspool.” The state was replying to a lawsuit by the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) citing a serious lack of mental youth care in the state’s juvenile facilities.

There is also the problem of mental disorders brought about daily urban violence. At a meeting of Chicago parents who had lost children to violence, one mother talked about the emotional mark that is often left. “Hurt people hurt people,” she said.

Violence traumatizes victims and their families, neighbors, health workers, police and others who deal with the contagion. As you report on violence, it is important to keep in mind the broad circle that violence can touch. A complaint often raised by Chicago parents touched by violence is the difficulty of finding long-term support after they have faced their tragedy.

Here is an WMAQ-TV [interview](#) with Joy McCormack that was broadcast not long after her son's death:

[Mother Assumes Slain Son's Passion for Change](#)

McCormack eventually helped found Chicago's Citizens for Change. The group's goal is not only to foster anti-violence efforts but also to support families that have suffered from violence. This is the link to her group:

[Chicago Citizens for Change](#)

Writing about youths coping with the trauma left by violence, Chicago Reader reporter Steve Bogira provides [this explanation](#) from James Garbarino, a psychology professor and expert on trauma at Loyola University:

Children who are exposed to community violence are also less likely to develop PTSD if their homes are "strong, positive, well-functioning places," Garbarino says. But since poverty is highly correlated with child maltreatment, poor children are less likely to have such homes, he says. "If you live in a violent community and you're maltreated at home, that's the double whammy."

From 1985 through 1994, Garbarino was president of the

Erikson Institute for Advanced Study in Child Development, here in Chicago. He says that in the last 20 years, knowledge about childhood trauma and how to treat it has grown markedly, but the improvement hasn't benefited everyone equally. "For incidents in middle-class communities, we're really good now with psychological first aid. Look what happened in Newtown—every kid was getting something. But in poor neighborhoods, where trauma is more chronic and embedded, we're less good."

He has doubts that the overall picture in poor neighborhoods is improving. It may have even worsened, he says, what with middle-class African-Americans moving to the suburbs, concentrating the poverty of those left behind. "The escalating availability of lethal weapons" has exacerbated things, he says.

There are a number of programs across the U.S. that deal with the trauma of violence. Healing Hurt People is a program at the Center for Nonviolence and Social Justice in Philadelphia. Journalist and author Alex Kotlowitz talks about the work of

the program and the need for helping those touched by violence in this *New York Times* op-ed:

[The Price of Public Violence](#)

And here is an insightful and informative interview from WHYY Philadelphia with two physicians from the center:

[Violence and trauma in the lives of young black men](#)

And a link to Chicago hospitals taking part in the Healing Hurt People effort:

[Bradley Stolbach, PhD](#)

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago has created a network of anti-violence groups that provide training and support for professionals and community groups dealing with violence. The program, "Strengthening Chicago's Youth SCY," is a good place to begin reporting on the subject:

[SCY Chicago](#)

Here is an interview with Rebecca Levin, the head of SCY, where she talks about social strategies to cope with violence:

[The Gun Violence Epidemic](#)

The Criminal Justice System

The criminal justice system is the place where violent crime stops—or doesn't. When the system works, it can monitor and redirect those passing through. When it doesn't, the problems compound.

Facing up to the challenge, criminal courts have sought innovations nationally to deal more wisely with the people brought to them.

These efforts have included gun courts, drug courts and various efforts to divert individuals from prison. One of the strategies includes restorative justice programs. The idea is to bring victim and offender together and for the offender to acknowledge the harm that has been done. The goal is to substitute reconciliation and rehabilitation for punishment and coercion.

Here is a link that will take you to various of these programs in Illinois: [Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice](#)

Reporting on these kinds of

innovations can help drive the public and officials to weigh their current programs and to consider new solutions. What are the key issues and problems?

Nationally, the criminal justice system has long been plagued by staffing and policy problems. Probation and parole departments, which are supposed to help people away from careers of crime, are understaffed and underfunded. The same financial woes have plagued public defenders. Overcrowded jails often reflect lengthy courtroom delays, which can sometimes impede the best efforts of poor and low-income defendants.

After years of embracing tough sentencing policies, California voters, justice advocates and political leaders in 2014 considered measures to reduce the state's prison population. This story explains the reason for the drive in California and elsewhere: [California Voters to Decide on Sending Fewer Criminals to Prison](#)

Here the *Los Angeles Times* weighs in on the proposal, which became quite controversial across the state: [Yes on Proposition 47](#)

This [Chicago Tribune story](#) from 2013 points to one of the problems facing the Cook County courts and probation system:

The Cook County probation department has lost track of hundreds of convicts and overlooked curfew violations and new crimes committed by offenders, some of whom went on to rape or kill while under the court's watch, a Tribune investigation found.

At a time when county officials have argued for more people to be redirected from jail cells to programs such as probation, the Tribune has found a dysfunctional department that falls short of its mission of holding offenders accountable and creating safer neighborhoods. . . .

One solution to violent crime offered by police and prosecutors is the imposing of mandatory minimum sentences for gun crimes. This has been supported by the Chicago Police and Cook County State Attorney's Office, which maintain that removing dangerous people from the streets is one way to reduce violence immediately. Both point to cases where gun-crime violators commit murders while out on probation or

after serving short sentences. But opponents say such sentences can snare persons who do not need to be in jail, that judges need the ability to consider the situation in front of them, that blacks are disproportionately convicted and that there is no proof that such sentencing ultimately lowers long-term violence.

Digging into Cook County criminal court records, the Chicago Reporter discovered that the courts were not using current gun laws to put persons behind bars. Amid the hullabaloo for stiffer sentences for gun crimes, the story raised a significant question about how the courts are dealing with gun violations.

Here is the story's [key finding](#):

If the Chicago Police Department, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and Mayor Rahm Emanuel could agree on Chicago's public enemy No.1, odds are they'd all point to guns. They have been under enormous political pressure to get a handle on the gun violence that has claimed more than 4,000 lives in Chicago during the past decade. But how effective has the criminal

justice system been when it comes to putting alleged gunmen behind bars? It hasn't had the type of success as the public might expect.

From January 2006 through August 2013, thousands of cases involving a weapons violation were thrown out in Cook County's criminal courts, The Chicago Reporter found. More than 13,000 cases that included a gun violation have been dismissed during that period, shows the Reporter's analysis of records maintained by the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County. In fact, more felony cases involving a gun—from illegal possession to unlawful sale to a felon—have been thrown out than cases with any other type of charge."

As you look for ways to explain how the criminal justice system works, a first step may be listening to those whose lives are touched by it. After gathering these impressions, you can begin to see which ring true and have a broader significance.

Here is an excerpt from [a report](#) by the John Howard Association of Illinois, the 114-year-old community

organization that advocates prison reform and provides reports on prison conditions and policies in Illinois. The report offers the views of several youths on their contacts with the police, courts and juvenile corrections. It raises the kind of questions that can be fleshed out with reporting:

The youth that we interviewed overridingly described having negative personal experiences and perceptions in relation to criminal justice. They expressed apathy, bitterness, and intense anger regarding the lack of legitimacy, equality, and fairness they perceived in this system. Youths' perceptions of illegitimacy were directed largely at the procedures and mechanisms of the justice system, rather than the moral legitimacy of laws themselves in proscribing right and wrong. Indeed, every youth that we interviewed believed that they deserved to be punished for breaking the law and causing harm. Their anger, resentment and sense of illegitimacy flowed instead from their personal experiences and beliefs that the (1) criminal justice system failed to treat them with the basic respect and dignity that should be accorded to human beings; (2) that those who occupied positions of

power and authority acted arbitrarily and unfairly, themselves violating the rules and laws; and (3) that the criminal justice system refused to acknowledge their actual lived realities, individual circumstances, and potential for rehabilitation given their youth.

The Police

Police say that they alone cannot sweep away violence. The roots of violence go too deep and too far beyond their responsibilities. Rather, they say they can try to control it and tamp it down. So how are they controlling violence in Chicago and other communities? What are their strategies? How are they staffed? How are they managed?

Reporting on the role of the police in curtailing violence means looking at how they deal with the key forces that drive violence: drugs and gangs and the spread of guns. It requires reporting that looks at how these forces relate to the communities where violence exists. Chicago officials, for example, have often complained about the code of silence that blocks them from solving crimes. If it does exist, why? And what steps have police and others taken to counter it?

One way Chicago reporters have measured police-community relations has been to look at how police discipline their own and what

violations police commit. After a long legal battle, a Chicago blogger was able to obtain the police records of officers who faced abuse complaints. The files immediately were covered by the Chicago news media. Jamie Kalven, who heads a nonprofit community journalism organization, Invisible Institute, explains the significance of the files this way:

The documents I received today from the City are lists, covering the period 2001 to 2008, of Chicago police officers who accumulated repeated complaints of abuse. By releasing these lists, the Emanuel administration has taken a significant step away from the City's long history of reflexively asserting official secrecy and thereby frustrating the possibility of meaningful police reform."

An article in the Columbia Journalism Review tells about Kalven's efforts: [How an activist journalist's commitment to a poor Chicago community led to a big FOIA win](#)

In a city such as Chicago, the police department is a vast operation with many moving parts, dealing with issues ranging from guns to drugs to violent crimes to sometimes fearful

and skeptical communities. How do these parts function? How do they co-exist? Is police discipline a factor? What about morale and styles of leadership?

But let's look at a more basic question: Do police strategies really make a difference?

They apparently do. A study of the dramatic decline in violent crime in New York City over the years by criminologist Franklin Zimring suggests that the single biggest reason for the decline was police strategies. But even then, he could not say definitely it was what made the difference. Rather, he pointed to the impact of policing once he found that most other factors were not as critical: [How New York Beat Crime](#)

From community policing to focusing on hot spots, there is a large amount of research on police strategies that can be reported. In this MSNBC story, Chicago police explain their strategies and local residents offer reactions:

[Gun violence and murder are on the decline in Chicago](#)

What are the most critical strategies employed by the police in your community today? What are the results of these efforts?

Poverty, Isolation, Segregation, Marginalization

There is little doubt that most violence takes place in the poorest neighborhoods of Chicago and other large cities. But along with poverty, Chicago's poor black neighborhoods suffer from some of the highest rates of isolation and segregation among the nation's largest cities.

This 2012 study pointed out that Chicago led the nation's largest cities in terms of racial isolation:

[The End of the Segregated Century](#)

Writing in the Chicago Reader in 2011, reporter Steve Bogira outlined the [state of racial segregation](#) in Chicago:

But most African-Americans are clustered in two areas, as they were in the 1960s: a massive one on the south side, and a smaller one on the far west side. The south-side section, between Western Avenue and the lake, stretches more than a hundred blocks north to south, from 35th Street to the city limits at 138th. This African-American subdivision of

Chicago includes 18 contiguous community areas, each with black populations above 90 percent, most of them well above that. The west-side black section includes another three contiguous 90 percent-plus community areas. Fifty-five percent of Chicago's 964,000 African-Americans live in these 21 community areas, in which the aggregate population is 96 percent black. Two-thirds of the city's blacks live in community areas that are at least 80 percent black.

On the flip side are the 33 community areas, most of them on the north and southwest sides, with less than 10 percent African-Americans. In 26 of these community areas less than 5 percent of the residents are black.

Latinos are segregated in some neighborhoods, too, but not nearly as dramatically; they're a buffer group, living in community areas with whites or with blacks, and sometimes with both.

Poverty, although a powerful force, doesn't alone drive individuals to crime. Everyone raised in a poor

neighborhood is not fated to live a life of violence. That is a stereotype that needs to be avoided. So what then is the force that turns some lives towards crime? What overcomes the resilience that so many show when faced with the same challenges and drawbacks?

How significant is the isolation and segregation of the poor in Chicago? Looking at the concentration of poor in New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles, for example, researchers have noted that poverty has been far more concentrated and long-lasting in some Chicago neighborhoods:

[Homicide Inequality in Chicago - in maps](#)

The challenge is to separate out the forces that trigger violence in some poor neighborhoods and not others.

Whet Moser, writing in [Chicago magazine](#), cites studies questioning why the violence rates varies and offers this understanding:

All of this is a roundabout way of saying: poverty, race, and geography are all closely related to crime, but there are differences within that geography, which Sampson and

other new Chicago School sociologists are working to get to the bottom of. *And it's related to Garry McCarthy's approach to crime, which is influenced by the sociologist Tracey Meares, formerly of the University of Chicago. . . .*

and Dad? Grandma? Great-Grandma?' "

Before any real progress on crime can be made, police-civilian relations must improve. McCarthy says he has been particularly influenced in recent years by the work of Tom Tyler, a psychologist at NYU, and Tracey Meares, a law professor at Yale. "It turns out that the reason people comply with the law isn't because they're afraid of going to jail," he says. "A large body of evidence shows that people comply with the law because of police legitimacy.

McCarthy's strategy for improving that legitimacy can make him sound like a social worker. He favors the establishment of "catchment centers," in churches and nonprofit offices, where police can bring kids picked up after curfew. "So if we bring in Little Johnny, [a social-service provider] can say, 'Why aren't you at home? Did you eat today? Who do you live with? Mom

Social Strategies

Many youngsters who get caught up in crime begin to veer toward it as early as middle school. That is the conclusion of the University of Chicago's Crime Lab, and its advice is that social programs for crime prevention need to step in.

What kinds of prevention programs? Finding jobs. Providing support in school. Pairing youths with mentors. Helping youths returning from detention or juvenile prisons to adjust. Offering mental health support in crises and for long-term emotional issues. These are some of the youth violence prevention strategies that Chicago officials have supported and funded.

What is their impact? A 2012 study by the University of Chicago's Crime Lab of the Becoming a Man (BAM) program showed a 44 percent reduction violence among youths who took part. That is a case of a program living up to its theory. But how many programs have similar rates of success? And what role does politics play in their funding? Undoubtedly, problems can

take place. A 2014 state of Illinois audit of a \$54.5 million state grant to anti-violence programs in 2010 raised serious questions about how funds were handled and how the programs worked.

This is a reminder of the need to check reports and results:

[PLOS - The Gun Violence Epidemic](#)

The Costs of Violence

There is a price to pay for violence beyond loss of life and its emotional burdens. But how do you calculate the costs? This PBS special looked at the total costs of violence in Chicago: [Gun Violence is Public Health Crisis](#)

Many experts have offered suggestions of the price. For example, the Urban Institute several years ago suggested that the total costs for all handgun violence as just over \$600 million.

The Center for American Progress looked at eight US cities in 2012, Chicago included, and measured the cost of violent crime to the criminal justice system and victims, along with the impact on housing values, property taxes, lifetime earnings and investment. The study concluded that the total for all the direct and indirect costs came to \$5.3 billion yearly for Chicago and its residents.

The University of Chicago Crime Lab several years ago estimated the toll at \$2.5 billion annually for Chicago, a figure based on about 420 murders a year.

This story by Ebony examines the impact of violence on health care in black communities and the lack of services in some:

[Lack of South Side Trauma Center May Cost Chicagoans' Lives](#)

Look at these studies and make your own measures of the costs of violence.

What does it cost, for example, to run an emergency trauma center, and how do the center's costs increase as the violence toll increases?

How does violence boost police spending on overtime or special units?

How does violence influence business investments, real estate values and residency rates in crime-troubled communities?_

What toll does violence take on the mental and physical health of community residents—and on the children's potential to grow up and have successful careers and strong families?

Part Two: The Strategies

Building a Reporting Strategy

Using Statistics

Avoid anecdotal information and general impressions. Rely on data and statistics as the foundation of your story. That means learning how to use numbers to do your reporting.

First question: what do you know about the source and accuracy of the numbers you find? Are there any questionable changes over time? Do local police statistics conform to state and FBI crime statistics? In some cases, local police do not use the same classifications as the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports. If police do not openly publish the numbers you are looking for, ask for them. If the numbers are still not provided, then file a Freedom of Information request. When Chicago magazine reporters looked into Chicago crime statistics, for example, they reported finding misleading definitions and misclassified cases. The reporting drew not only a scathing rebuttal from police, but also a City Council hearing. The result: more awareness how crimes are counted.

How do you measure violence?

Traditionally we look at homicides as the most critical measure of crime. It is an important number, but not the only one to consider.

Most police departments compile a violent crime rate. The FBI provides a count nationally and locally on its website, and here is the FBI's definition:

In the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crimes are defined in the UCR Program as those offenses which involve force or threat of force.

Taking these figures, for example, Chicago had the 19th highest violent crime rate and 13th highest murder rate among cities in 2012.

But there are other numbers to look at. One is non-fatal shootings, and here you are looking for numbers on shooting incidents and victims. These

tell us about violence that can have a powerful emotional impact on communities. And so while Chicago had 414 murders in 2013, it had 1,525 incidents in which at least one person suffered an injury—and 2,296 victims all told, including the homicides.

As public health experts point out, one reason for the decline in homicides is that emergency health care today saves many more lives. That is why shootings provide another indicator of the level of violence.

The number of murders or shootings that take place in a city, community or police district needs to be put into context. You need to compare the figures, and you do this by providing a per capita rate. You can arrive at this number by dividing the number of crimes by the population and then multiplying by 100,000. But just counting the number of shootings nationally is not easy, clear or complete, as this article from Pro Public explains:

[Why Don't We Know How Many People Are Shot Each Year in America?](#)

Indeed, analyzing some situations needs extra work because the recorded numbers simply do not exist. For example, how many murders are random shootings? Relying on news accounts, a University of Chicago Crime Lab study found that one-fifth of youths killed between 2006 and 2008 involved random victims. What are today's numbers?

So, too, how good are police at solving crimes? You'll find the beginning of the answer in clearance rates—and the number should lead you to look into what changes have taken place over time. Chicago police reports show that two out of three murders that took place in 1991 were cleared in the same year. By 2011 that number had fallen to less than a third. What happened in Chicago?

[Chicago Murder Analysis](#)

[ABC7 - Solving Homicides in Chicago](#)

[Chicago Murder Clearance Rate Worst in More Than 2 Decades](#)

[Chicago Detectives Solved a Higher Percentage of Murders in 2013](#)

This New York Daily News report, as another example, looks at police clearance rates in that city, along with police staffing and related issues:

Tale of Two Cities

This Washington Post story about the rates in that city stirred a controversy and an editor's note to explain the finding:

[The trick to D.C. police force's 94% closure rate for 2011 homicides](#)

The FBI's 2012 crime report showed a national clearance rate of 62 percent for murders:

[Percent of Crimes Cleared by Arrest or Exceptional Means, 2012](#)

Apply the same search strategy as you look into recidivism rates for youths and adults for various crimes. What are the emerging trends, and why are they taking hold?

Covering Violence as a Public Health Issue

Many see the public health model as a way to understand violence—that is, applying the same strategies that are used against smoking, alcoholism or drug use.

The public health model, as explained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sets out these steps:

1. Define the problem.
2. Identify the risk and protective

factors.

3. Develop and test prevention strategies
4. Assure widespread adoption.

How do we apply this thinking to reporting? We look at all of the forces that drive violence. We look for the ways that these forces combine to accelerate violence and then we report on what is being done to deal with these forces.

Let's apply this strategy with some specific questions for you to look into.

- Which social-political-community forces are most important?
- What about the problems of local schools, housing, jobs and immigration-related issues?
- What is the availability of guns? How many guns have been seized by police? Where do the guns come from? Which court cases can tell the story of illegal gun sales? Have you talked with the ATF?
- What is the relationship between gangs and neighborhoods? What impact does this have on daily life? Can you chart the gangs' turf? What data do you have about gangs and the criminal justice system? How do the gangs recruit and exert their

influence?

- What social-economic-educational changes in high-crime neighborhoods are taking place?

Covering Police and the Justice System

What changes have taken place in how the criminal justice system treats criminals?

- What is the recidivism rate for young offenders, adults, and persons convicted of gun crimes and other major offenses?
- What is the situation for probation and parole in terms of staffing, caseloads and new strategies?
- Profile the youths in detention and being released from juvenile prison. Can you visit a juvenile prison? How do juvenile facilities educate and prepare youths for their release?
- What happens after juvenile prison?
- Do youths get educational training and mental health support in prison?
- Where are youths and adults placed after release from prison, and what impact does that have on

communities?

- Homicides tell us about one part of the violence scenario. What about all violent crimes? What about drug deaths, drug overdoses and hospital admissions as a result of violent crimes?
- What changes have taken place for local hospital trauma units in terms of patients, staffing, costs and levels of violence? What impact from crime is felt by the schools, hospitals, and social service agencies?
- Can you track and compare crimes and crime rates across various parts of the city over time by age, by race, by sex, by poverty rate?
- What happens to the families left behind in the wake of violence? Does anyone help them keep track of police investigations and court actions?

Here is an effort by Columbia College students that looks into forgotten victims:

[Forgotten Dead](#)

And here is a story by WBEZ reporter Natalie Moore that takes this broader strategy and looks at the impact of recent inmates returning to communities with high violence.

The Austin neighborhood, where Edwards grew up, has 21 percent unemployment – and a large population of people with criminal records. For some, where you live can have a profound impact on how your life turns out.

WBEZ analyzed 2012 data from the Illinois Department of Corrections, and found that thousands of adults return to just a handful of Chicago zip codes after they get out of prison. For example, four West Side zip codes – 60651, 60644, 60624 and 60612 – had more than 2,400 parolees return in that one year alone.

Many of these neighborhoods already have high rates of violence, unemployment and poverty. The large number of parolees living there becomes a collective burden increasingly hard to bear.

It's hard enough to find a job without a criminal record.

On a recent morning, a small group of job seekers fills out paperwork at

the Westside Health Authority while community organizer Charles Perry gives them a pep talk.

"If they can get you lined up for an interview, your record isn't an issue. It's just you selling yourself when you get to the job," said Perry, who helps match up his clients with employers.

[Back in the old neighborhood, parolees struggle for fresh starts](#)

Storytelling and the Larger Picture

Narrow your reporting to describe individuals and scenes, but include the larger picture.

An example is the Detroit Free Press 2004 series "Crime in Detroit." One of the stories in the series looks at how a family tries to solve a crime on its own. Another gives a very personal look at a homicide detective's day. Notice the almost novel-like writing: [Homicide in Detroit](#)

Tell complex stories with one or two individuals in these systems and situations.

Take your readers, audience or listeners along to observe how police, courts, juvenile detention facilities operate. Stay on one angle and follow up frequently. Return often and return in the long run.

Create a narrative that makes the story personal and human.

- Tell the story of one event through different eyes — the emergency room physician, the high school principal, the probation officer, the county coroner, the funeral home director, the family, friends and relatives.
- Describe the life on a street, at a school, any location where crime occurred
- Follow one person through the system from the crime to the medical care to the courts and beyond.
- Describe the trauma created for victims and those caught up in the crime, explaining the psychological and physical impact of violence and the fear of repeated violence.
- Use Google maps and ushahidi at <http://www.ushahidi.com> or see click fix

<http://www.seeclickfix.com/> to chart crime-related issues and visualize their impact on a community.

- Develop a regular source, using Storify, for social media, data and other online sources that can tell community stories about violence.
- Bring the community into the story. Here is a WBEZ radio interview dealing with a study of juvenile prisons. Parents of youths in prison take part: [New report on juvenile justice system reform](#)
- And this award-winning, long-term effort by WBEZ radio examined the impact of violence on a Chicago high school, its students and community: [This American Life: Harper High School](#)
- Show us the faces and stories of those charged with crimes and their victims— and what happens to the cases. Here the founder of Homicide Watch in Washington D.C. explains how it looks for details to explain the crime and the consequences: [The Lessons of Homicide Watch](#)

Similar efforts are here:

[LA Times - Homicide](#)

[Chicago Tribune - Crime in Chicagoland](#)

[Homicide Watch Chicago](#)

[New Haven homicide list 2010-2014](#)

[New Orleans Metro Crime and Courts](#)

Don't nurture despair by focusing on overwhelming situations. Don't leave a community without hope or potential solutions. Consider the complexity you are reporting.

Who are the heroes "in the hood"? Can you name them? Have you reported on them? Who are the local experts in dealing with violence? What anti-violence programs seem to work? Who helps the victims and their families? Do police follow up and inform the families of the status of cases? Explain why these people need help.

- Who is spending money on youth violence prevention and what has been its impact?
- What are other communities, cities, states and the federal government doing in terms of spending and programs?
- How do anti-violence and criminal justice organizations cooperate? What is their funding? What do they say about their success, failures and

expectations?

- Consider how you can use youth media, crowd-sourcing, bloggers and blog aggregators. How can you map your reporting? What audio-visual presence are you creating?
- How does poverty and social inequality impact violence? A column by Greg Hinz of Crain's Chicago Business raises this issue: [When it comes to murder, Chicago is two cities](#)

Putting a human face on a story is what we journalists prefer—and what seems to have a powerful impact. It creates drama and gives a life to our reporting.

But there is a danger in focusing only on individuals without stepping back to tell our audiences why this story is taking place. By focusing only on individuals, we nurture a simple sense of personal failure. There are reasons why crime persists in poor and isolated communities. The reasons are complex—and they call upon us to do our best to explain broadly these forces.

Here is a report that looks at the impact of strategies of reporting on violence:

[Moving from Them to Us](#)

About analyzing the larger issues:
Consider Alex Kotlowitz' 2008 story on CeaseFire, in the New York Times, and notice how he goes back and forth from individuals to bigger questions:
[Blocking the Transmission of Violence](#)

Again, as cited above, Kotlowitz' long-term dedication to telling us about children's lives pays off in this excellent WBEZ radio series about the impact of violence on a Chicago high school:

[Harper High School, Part Two](#)

Reporting on Guns and Violence

This is from a conference by the Center on Crime Reporting on gun violence and links:

[Covering Gun Violence](#)

See also the Crime Report for story ideas, approaches and links:

[The Crime Report](#)

And for more tips and guidance on

covering crime:

[John Jay College of Criminal Justice](#)

As part of a series, reporters interviewed someone serving in prison for a gun crime. Note how the series gives a human face to the situation:

[Jiyaad Copeland interview](#)

[Following the Firearms: Gun Violence in Minneapolis](#)

And here is the reporter's notebook from these stories, showing how the series was done:

[Following the Firearms: a reporter's notebook](#)

This is a collection of stories and a Justice Department study looking at gun sales and how the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms deals with the situation:

[Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#)

[Despite politics, ATF makes some gun show arrests](#)

[The bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Investigative Operations at Gun Shows](#)

[Gun Show Undercover](#)

[Inside Gun Shows: Intervention](#)

[Comprehensive Background Checks for Firearm Sales](#)

[Current gun debate may not help beleaguered ATF](#)

Dealing with Victims of Violence and Telling Their Stories

From the Dart Center on children and trauma:

[Covering Children & Trauma](#)

From the Dart Center on interviewing children:

[Interviewing Children: Guidelines for Journalists](#)

"When Crime is Just the Beginning of the Story" from Nieman Reports:

[When a Crime is Just the Beginning of the Story](#)

Trauma lingers. Return to those who have endured violence to explain the impact on their lives. Chart the emotional toll felt by a family, a street,

a school, a neighborhood. Note how this video and photos that won the Pulitzer Prize accomplished it:

[Victims of Gang Violence](#)

Consider the thought and presentation that went into this Chicago Tribune article on the impact of one teenager's death:

[Life After Hadiya](#)

On covering trauma, a story from MSNBC offers this start:

Keauna Wise knows death could come at any moment. So she waits with knots in her stomach and tears in her eyes. She's often breathless, with anxiety that climbs from the bottom of her feet up into her gut.

And here it makes its point:

Of all the destruction that gun violence has heaped on the residents of Chicago's most vulnerable and depleted neighborhoods, physical wounds may not cast the longest shadow. It may instead be the trauma of witnessing repeated acts of violence, of losing loved ones and any sense of safety; of living – for all intents and purposes – in a war zone.

There is a growing body of research around soldiers returning from war with post-traumatic stress disorder and a number of programs have been launched to treat them. But what happens when the war is at home, the soldiers are civilians and the trenches are city blocks, playgrounds and front porches?

A recent study by Chicago's Cook County Hospital, a Level-1 trauma center that treats many of the city's shooting victims, found that 40% of patients showed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Those wounded by gunfire were about 13 times as likely as others to suffer symptoms of PTSD, which include anxiety, isolation, anger and sleeplessness.

[Trauma in the trenches of gun-weary Chicago](#)

This article from ColorLines concentrates on what needs to be done:

Unlike homicides, however, non-fatal shootings and their impact on the health, educational, social and economic outcomes of survivors, families and their communities are

vastly understudied. Yale University sociologist Andrew Papachristos reviewed six years of Chicago Police Department data, running through September 2012, and found that one in 200 black men are victims of a non-fatal shooting each year. That's 12 times the city average. Further, they are concentrated in specific neighborhoods; roughly 70 percent of these victims can be found in small networks comprising less than 6 percent of Chicago's population. The data suggests neighborhoods full of the walking wounded.

Yet, in Chicago, advocates, parents and service providers told Colorlines that there are little to no victim services available for these wounded men—to the point that victims, their families and communities are shouldering alone the financial and psychic costs of crime. There does exist a national apparatus for helping people affected by violent crime recover—an \$11 billion fund Congress established to support crime victims. But young black men have largely fallen through the cracks of these programs, in part because law enforcement often serves as arbiter of who's a

deserving victim and who's not, deciding who gets aid and who must fend for themselves.

Service providers in Chicago also say the lack of an organized response aimed at black male victims is a lost opportunity to stop the cycle of violence. The hours and days following a shooting mark a singular point of vulnerability and are therefore a sweet spot for intervention. Failing to respond in that moment not only wastes the opportunity, it also pushes young men even further off the grid and into the only system that will have them: criminal justice.

"People don't think of African-American males as being victims of violence," says Waldo Johnson, an associate professor of social work at the University of Chicago, who has studied the health of black men and boys on Chicago's South Side for 20 years. "People think of young black males as the ones who perpetrate violent crime, and if they are victims, then that's part of what they experience while doing things they shouldn't be doing."

[Criminals, Victims and the Black Men Left Behind](#)

Reporting on Strategies to Stop Community Violence

From reporter Julie Reynolds on CeaseFire's impact nationally:

[CeaseFire: Proven programs to lower rates of gang violence](#)

From Bloomberg News:

[Chicago Still Deadlier than NYC, LA as Killings Fall 18%](#)

An evaluation of CeaseFire:

[Evaluation of CeaseFire - Chicago](#)

See "The Interrupters" movie on CeaseFire. What reporting tools, suggestions, and insights can you glean from this movie?

[The Interrupters \(Kartemquin\)](#)

[The Interrupters \(PBS Frontline\)](#)

The key theory behind the work of Cure Violence is that violence is a contagion. Here is Dr. Gary Slutkin, who created the CeaseFire effort in Chicago, explaining the theory:

[Let's treat violence like a contagious disease](#)

And here is a Wired article that explores the same issue:

[Is It Time to Treat Violence as a Contagious Disease?](#)

How do gangs operate? What is the impact of gang-related drug trafficking, gun sales, and robberies in a community? What are the similarities among black and Latino gangs and gangs from other communities? Can you draw a map of gang territories?

What's the role of *gangsta* rap or drill music? Here is a story by students at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. What more should be told?

[Chicago's 'Drill Rap' Movement: Expression of Struggle or a Glorifying of Violence?](#)

Here is a story that lays out the dimensions of the gangs and their sprawl in Chicago. What more should be reported on?

[Chicago Gang Rivals Band Together to Control Neighborhood Drug Trade](#)

Here is an award-winning visual and written project from the Los Angeles

Times that looks at the impact of violence from gangs:

[Victims of Gang Violence: the smoke clears, but the pain endures](#)

For more than five years, Newsday reporter Sarah Garland produced stories exploring Latino gangs in the suburbs of Long Island. She came to a conclusion that contradicted federal officials' description of their levels of brutality and sophistication. Her conclusion: The gangs were not transnational operations but largely a local phenomenon carried out by youths who had little criminal contact with their original countries. She linked the youths' problems instead to "residential segregation and educational inequality, violence towards Latinos and a criminal system that elevates punishment over rehabilitation and prevention."

Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) described her reporting:

Journalist Sarah Garland investigates how two of the most dangerous Central American gangs have made their way into the suburbs of Long Island. Garland also

tells the story of several young people whose lives have been affected by gangs or gang violence. Her five-year investigation involves conversations with police, gang members and school officials. That information reveals a different opinion than that of the Department of Homeland Security, who believes the gangs to be a problem on the level of Al Qaeda.

[IRE Resource Center](#)

(You need to be an IRE member to access this.)

Here are examples of videos and stories made by community and youth media groups in Chicago on violence:

[Fighting for a Piece of Peace](#)

[Being Big is a Choice](#)

["My neighborhood is full of hatred": a Chicago girl's video story](#)

How do you measure the police in terms of discipline, and performance? This is a well-documented report by the Mikva Challenge, a Chicago youth group, which looks at youths' transition from detention or prison back to their communities.

[Mikva Challenge report](#)

Here are stories that attempt to look at how police deal with community residents:

[Indicted cop leader drew 36 complaints in 8 years](#)

[Abusing the badge](#)

[Minneapolis police burtality lawsuits renew civilian questions about force discipline](#)

[The Horror Every Day: Police Brutality in Houston Goes Unpunished](#)

[For police accountability, look beyond individual racial bias](#)

[At least 93 Milwaukee police officers have been disciplined for violating the law](#)

This effort by Mother Jones on mass shootings shows the power of an imaginative video presentation:

[American Under the Gun](#)

Here is a video presentation of one of Miami's poorest communities , where crime seems endless. The video is a community effort. How would you change it, or add to it, and what would you do differently in your community?

[Overtown](#)

Overtown: "Bullets don't have eyes"

Natalie Moore of WBEZ raises a question – and offers a direction for a broader kind of reporting. She writes:

I've asked myself another question in the reporting process. What about the youths killed who aren't "innocent"? The ones who were in the wrong place with the wrong company. The ones who brandished guns, retaliated a death, flirted with gangs, dropped out of school, failed to make the honor roll or didn't have a photogenic social media picture. The black and brown youths who are anonymous or receive a news brief instead of a news conference.

Is it the news media's responsibility to give these young adults worthy coverage? Or would their stories dilute the conversation around youth violence?

"In many ways, these kids are victims as well," said community-violence expert Dexter Voisin, an associate professor in the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. "Schools aren't graduating kids successfully, and these kids are also the victims of

structural violence. These kids are becoming products of their community."

Who Should Be Face of Chicago Violence?

Here is an example from the Chicago Tribune of an effort that relies on a number of staff and merges print and visual reporting:

Chicago Under the Gun

Here is an example from the Washington Post of a well-thought-out and wide-scale look at guns:

The Hidden Life of Guns

This MSNBC series looks at the impact of gun violence in Chicago communities:

Ricochet: life in a city under seige from guns

This is a series from the Grand Rapids Press on gun crimes. Note the use of a map to show where the crimes occur and his use of police and other sources to detail the situation. Consider tagging along with police in a high-crime area to describe how

they react to what they face:

[Guns gone bad](#)

Who are the youths involved in crime?

The Washington Times in its 2010 series “A Horrible Answer” examined young wards of the city involved in violence. It found that one out of five homicides in the city involved a youth under the care of the city’s Department of Youth Rehabilitation Service. Until this reporting, there had been no exploration of the role of these youths in such violence. The stories led to the dismissal of the department’s director:

[Youths lost to violence often in city's supervision](#)

We should always look for context in our stories. How has a situation changed over the years? What links one generation to another? What forces a break in a chain of events? Here is a well-reported and well-written effort that tells the story of one youth in Chattanooga, Tenn., and the forces bearing down on him, his family and community:

[Three generations of men on a crooked path. And the youngest stares his future in the face.](#)

The stereotypes the media can provide are examined here:

[Young Guns and Media Images](#)

This is an excellent, award-winning, in-depth study by the Philadelphia Inquirer of school violence. Notice how the webpage includes studies and reports, blogs and reader reactions — and how the stories are updated:

[Climate of Violence Stifles City Schools](#)

[Assault on Learning](#)

This is the profile of an emotionally troubled youngster. The message is how the system failed to help him:

[Teenager's Path and a Killing put Spotlight on Mental Care](#)

Amid city officials’ talk of putting more police on Chicago’s streets and in high- crime neighborhoods, the Chicago Reporter looked at what the presence of more police might mean. It concluded that more police could put more black youths in jail “for low-level crimes at a rate disproportionate to teens of other races.”

An analysis of court statistics showed

that black teens were four times more likely to face misdemeanor charges than white and Latino youths combined. Black youths were also three times more likely to be convicted on the charges.

Among youths arrested on charges of soliciting unlawful business, 99.2 percent of those arrested were black, according to the article:

[Summer slam](#)

Documenting youth violence in photos and videos:

[Getting it Right](#)

From Berkeley Media Studies on covering violence:

[Reporting on violence](#)

Here is a law review article that looks at get-tough policies towards youths and their impact. How can you update and localize the issues raised here?

[Demonizing Youth](#)

Here is an award-winning visual and written project from the *Los Angeles Times* that looks at the impact of violence from gangs:

[Victims of Gang Violence: the smoke clears, but the pain endures](#)

What are the key factors you can identify that have an impact on urban violence — guns, drugs, lack of youth services? Here is a story that examines the impact of financial cutbacks on programs that serve youths. The second story, in Spanish, uses similar information for its focus on the Latino community.

[The cuts that cut youth hopes](#)

[Chicago is the World story in Spanish](#)

What Communities Can Do for Better Coverage

Think Big. What can communities do?

- Encourage young people to speak for themselves. Promote youth-created media to give them the opportunity to do so. Agencies that provide media training for their leaders, for example, can include young people served by the agency as spokespersons.
- Demand more context in reporting about crime. Ask newspapers and broadcast outlets to devote more resources to covering crime, drawing on sources other than police and prosecutors to look for

root causes and to connect individual events to larger public policies. When reporters and editors do a good job, tell them.

- Encourage communities to ask the deeper questions: Who benefits when young people are portrayed as selfish, irresponsible and violent?
- Demand that other youth issues—health care, education, employment, leadership, youth organizing and child abuse—receive as much coverage as crime.
- Be a critical consumer of news coverage. Don't be swayed by sensationalistic reporting. Challenge the myths of rising youth crime and school violence. Examine statistics and determine the facts. If you see crime coverage that draws erroneous conclusions, speak out.

Framing Youth

Here is an editorial from the Gate, a bilingual newspaper that serves the black and Latino communities in the Back of the Yards area in Chicago. It urges the community to become involved and explains that the solution to violence is complicated:

Complex problems require complex

solutions. There is no quick fix for the violence that plagues Chicago's South and West Side communities. Shoring up the violence that affects so many families requires holistic solutions that address the epidemic at every level, and not through one-dimensional policy changes like mandatory minimum sentences on young male offenders (often black and Hispanic), a federal assault weapons ban, or even more police on the streets.

We've all heard the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a family." This statement encompasses a philosophy we must all adopt if we truly hope to bring safety and stability to Chicago neighborhoods.

Intergenerational poverty and a myriad of other socioeconomic factors have all played a major part in fueling the violence in the South and West Side communities of Chicago."

[A closer look at violence in Chicago](#)

On reporting on violence as a public health issue :

[Covering Urban Violence as a Public Health Problem: Context and history](#)

Tips from Top Journalists

Building a Fair and Compassionate Juvenile Justice System

Advice for Editors

Nieman Reports offers much good advice on urban violence:

Media and Juvenile Violence: The Connecting Threads

The Violence Reporting Project

Among the recommendations:

- Create a local violence database that lists violent incidents accumulated from a variety of sources, including law enforcement (police reports), criminal justice (coroner reports, restraining orders) and public health (hospital discharge data, emergency room data). Include a geographic information component so reporters and editors can more easily identify crime trends. Include a story inventory component so reporters and editors can see, at a glance, what stories have been published in which categories.
- Hire a violence reporter who is trained in computer-assisted reporting, has a science or medical reporting background and is familiar with epidemiological methods.
- Establish a violence-prevention reporting team with an editor, violence reporter, police reporter and features reporter. Assign part-time to this team a medical/health reporter, science/technology reporter, education reporter, political reporter, business reporter and graphics editor.
- Organize the team around the violence-prevention reporter, who monitors the local, state and national databases as well as public health research. This reporter presents the information to the team, which decides how to develop stories based on the data. The police and court reporters continue to do their traditional coverage, augmented by what they can retrieve from the database with the help of the violence reporter.
- Eliminate brief items on violence. They offer no context or useful information.
- For every violent incident reported (high-profile or common), add information as text or a graphic to

put each reported violent incident in the context of local violent incidents. Include relevant risk factors, such as the type of weapon, relationship of victim to perpetrator, whether alcohol or other drugs were involved, whether the perpetrator and victim have families. Include as much initial information about consequences as possible: What happens to the families? What is the cost of incarceration?

- For each violent incident reported, do follow-up stories to address the consequences of the incident for immediate families and the community. Include stories and information drawn from public health resources in addition to law enforcement and criminal justice sources. Add information about economic and psychological consequences. These stories would appear in a weekly violence newspaper section, or as a feature on television news.
- Newspapers can publish a weekly page that focuses on solutions to crime and violence. This weekly page would include:
 - A column about the week's most prominent violent incidents, placing them in perspective and

explaining why they received the most attention. This can be written by the newspaper's ombudsman or violence reporter, and in it the writer can also explain how the community is working to prevent such crimes, if they are preventable. If the community is not working to reduce preventable crimes, find a community that has had success doing so.

- A graphic status report on violent crime in the community and how this compares with the national goals set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or local goals set by the community. There should be an annual update on this, also.
- A feature written by the violence, medical/health, science/technology, political, education or social services reporters that focuses on one aspect of a particular type of violence. The story would include solutions and attempted solutions.
- Design a local morbidity and mortality section for the news organization's website. Make the newspaper's local violence database available. Report deaths and injuries from all causes. Include obituaries. This becomes not only a

vehicle for reporting on violence, but a resource to help spot trends in other types of death, including diseases such as hepatitis, AIDS, cancer and stroke—and to do stories if the changes are statistically significant.

Here is an exercise. This is a story about a Chicago youngster nearly beaten to death when mistaken for someone from a Latino youth gang. What more do you need to add to this daily story? What is your plan for a follow-up? Tomorrow? Next month? What can you do to bring this story alive by using maps, social media, Storify?

[Bond denied for suspect in boy's beating](#)

Can you create a dialogue? This piece by WGN reporter Gaynor Hall is the kind of reporting we are talking about here. It opens up a critical issue, and then lets the police and community talk about it, and shows what the police are doing to deal with the issue. It doesn't brush aside the distrust, and Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy acknowledges this legacy:

[Respectful Policing in Chicago](#)

How do others see the situation? See how a German journalist found life in Chicago:

I expected Chicago to be gruesome with its headline-grabbing murder rate. It was not. Maybe it was because I was not living in a neighborhood plagued by guns, gangs and violence. I lived in picture-perfect Ravenswood Manor, where the only problem might be the overpriced latte. If I hadn't come to the city to research gun violence, I could have lived here for two months with the illusion that it was violence-free.

In so many ways, this is a beautiful city that is full of invisible walls. Sadly, I came to believe that a fair share of Chicagoans seem to care little about gun violence — as long as no one is shot on the oh-so-Magnificent-Mile on North Michigan Avenue. Way too often I came across the argument that it's just bad people shooting bad people. Yes, a lot of people make bad choices and, sure, a lot of people choose their way of living knowing exactly what they are doing — and liking it. But a 4-year-old girl who visits her father every week at the Cook County Department of Corrections does not choose this kind of

life. It was made for her.

In Chicago, perpetrators become victims and victims become perpetrators. From my perspective, this is one of the central problems when it comes to violence. Take Juan (whose name I have changed). He's 21. I visited him in jail where he has been locked up for months waiting for his trial on attempted murder charges. He tried hard to escape the Back of the Yards. He tried to make a living as a construction worker outside of Illinois. But he returned home, to his family.

[Perspective: a Berliner's view of Chicago's violence](#)

En Español

The Spanish-language version of the Dart Center's 40-page guide to help journalists report on violence while protecting both victims and themselves:

[Tragedias y Periodistas](#)

A Spanish-language tip sheet on covering disasters:

[Cómo Cubrir](#)

A Spanish-language tip sheet on interviewing victims and families:

[DART Center](#)

A Spanish translation of "Interviewing Children" by Ruth Teichroeb, a tip sheet on protecting children from further trauma when interviewing them about a traumatic event:

[Consejos Para Entrevistar a Niños en Situaciones Traumáticas](#)

A Spanish-language version of a multimedia presentation for journalism educators on maintaining ethics, sensitivity and safety while covering violent news:

[Ser Testigo: Periodistas y Fotógrafos Respondan a la Tragedía](#)

Chicago and Illinois Sources

Community-Linked Mental Health Services Program, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

This program works with schools and other community partners to develop a public health approach to the impact of violence and trauma on youth.

Among other initiatives, the program consults with the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative (NRI), launched in 2010 to help communities prevent violence and provide economic, social and emotional support to young people and parents. Staff members also participate in advocacy and policy groups relevant to children's mental health, including the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership and the Illinois Child Trauma Coalition.

Tali Raviv, Clinical Psychologist

traviv@luriechildrens.org

312-227-8328

Mashana Smith, Clinical Psychologist

masmith@luriechildrens.org

312-227-8359

Between Friends

Between Friends works to prevent domestic violence in the Chicago area. It provides a crisis hotline, counseling and support services, court advocacy and various education programs for

schools, health care and community organizations.

Colleen Norton, Prevention & Education Manager

cnorton@betweenfriendschicago.org

773-274-5232 ext. 26

BUILD, Inc.

BUILD's prevention program promotes positive youth development by providing the life skills necessary to resist the lure of street gangs, violence and drugs. As young participants develop a support system and knowledge base, they are referred to BUILDing Futures to further prepare themselves for academic and career success (Logan Square, West Town, Near North/Cabrini, Hermosa, Belmont-Cragin, Humboldt Park, East Garfield Park, North Lawndale, Englewood and Brighton Park).

BUILD, Inc. (continued)

Daniel Perez, Marketing and PR manager

danielperez.build@gmail.com

773-269-6032

Chapin Hall, Chicago Youth Shooting Review project

Housed at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, the project is a based on the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission and is focused on preventing shootings among youths in Chicago. It develops community collaborations to reduce violence (schools, courts, police, public health, child and family services), identifies system and policy changes and offers research with a broad data set.

Rachel Johnston, Director
rjohnston@chapinhall.org
773-256-5182

Chicago Citizens for Change

Founded by Joy McCormack, who lost a son to violence, the organization helps support parents of victims of violence, promotes restorative justice and works to coordinate anti-violence efforts.

chicagocitizensforchange@gmail.com
312-488-9222

Chicago Youth Programs

The organization serves youths in Chicago's Washington Park, Uptown and Near North Cabrini Green. It hosts

violence prevention workshops led by students and staff to provide life skills and support for youths facing pressure toward involvement in gangs and violence.

Monique J Cook-Bey, Program Chief
cpo@chicagoyouthprograms.org
773-924-0220 ext. 123

Claretian Associates

Claretian Associates is an affordable housing developer that provides initiatives through the New Communities Program.

Jacqueline Samuel, New Communities Program Director
jackies@claretianassociates.org
773-734-9181 ext. 13

Cook County Judicial Advisory Council

The office helps to advance the Cook County Board's public safety agenda. This includes the City-County Violence Reduction & Community Stabilization effort and other efforts relating to criminal violence and judicial reform.

312-603-1136

Cook County Sheriff's Office

The Cook County Sheriff Youth Services Department provides a variety of programs for youths and parents. The focus is violence prevention, and a majority of programs are delivered in classroom settings. The department also provides summer day camp experiences for at-risk youth, with an emphasis on violence prevention.

Joanne Bieschke, Director of Youth Services Department
joanne.bieschke@cookcountyil.gov

773-674-3859

CROSSWalk

CROSSwalk organizes faith groups across the Chicago area to develop a sustained effort to end community violence.

Jacqueline Clark, Coordinator
jack@allsaintschicago.org
708-380-0566

University of Chicago Crime Lab

The University of Chicago's Crime Lab is a unique resource for understanding patterns of violence and research data. with a broad range of [findings](#) on

anti-violence strategies.
crimelab@uchicago.edu.

John Howard Association The John Howard Association is a major non-partisan prison watchdog and advocate for judicial and prison reform.

www.thejha.org

John Maki, Executive Director
jmaki@thejha.org
312-503-6300

Children and Family Justice Center

Founded in 1992, the center is part of the Bluhm Legal Clinic at Northwestern University School of Law. Attorneys and law students work together to promote justice for children and their families through direct legal representation, policy advocacy and law reform.

Bluhm Legal Clinic

Julie Biehl, Director
j-biehl@law.northwestern.edu

Heartland Alliance The Heartland Alliance is a leading anti-poverty organization in the Midwest. It includes Violence Recovery Services, which provides violence prevention, intervention and advocacy. It also offers the Social Resource Impact

Center, a repository of much broad-based data on poverty issues.

[Heartland Alliance](#)

[Social Impact Research Center](#)

Emily Blum, Director of Communications
eblum@heartlandalliance.org
312-660-1313

Illinois African American Coalition for Prevention

This is a statewide charitable organization that strengthens violence prevention programs in African-American communities through culturally relevant research, training and advocacy. It offers a positive youth development framework to provide young people with the skills necessary to address the issues in their lives with the support of parents and other caring adults. Among the varied focuses are childhood obesity and bullying.

Christ Sang, Youth Initiatives Director
csang@ilaacp.org
312-850-4444 ext. 221

Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice

The Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Project seeks to promote balanced and restorative justice practices in Illinois through leadership and education.

[IBARJ](#)

Sara Balgoyen, Executive Director
sarab@ibarj.org
217-778-3351

Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence

The council is the oldest and largest statewide organization in the U.S. working to prevent gun violence.

Mark J. Walsh, Campaign Director
mwalsh@ichv.org
312-341-0939

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

This state agency offers extensive statewide data on crime by county and research on criminal justice issues and programs. Its charts can be especially helpful in showing patterns of crime over time.

[ICJIA](#)

300 W. Adams St., Suite 200
Chicago IL 60606

312 793-8550
312 793-8422 (Fax)

Juvenile Justice Initiative

The Juvenile Justice Initiative is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization working to reform the juvenile justice system in Illinois. It advocates efforts to reduce reliance on detention, to enhance fair treatment of youths and to develop comprehensive community-based resources throughout the state.

[Juvenile Justice Initiative](#)

Nora Collins-Mandeville
224-234-6633

Illinois Collaboration on Youth

The Illinois Collaboration on Youth is a coalition for young people and community-based providers. It offers training, technical assistance, policy development and advocacy focusing on youth violence prevention and child welfare.

Andrea Durbin, CEO
adurbin@icoyouth.org

312-861-6600

Angelica Jimenez, Policy Associate
ajimenez@icoyouth.org

312-861-6600

Kids Off The Block Inc.

Diane Latiker founded this group in 2003 to help young people in her South Side neighborhood. Its goal is to offer positive choices and sanctuary to at-risk children, especially those who do not fit into more traditional youth programs.

[Kids Off The Block](#)

Diane Latiker
diane.latiker@sbcglobal.net
773-995 9077

Kidz Express

Located in South Austin, Kidz Express' mission is to help young people make better decisions and realize their potential when confronted with the challenges of growing up in impoverished urban environments. Kidz Express works with children on conflict resolution and anger management.

Kidz Express (continued)

Doug Low, Executive Director
douglow09@gmail.com
312-730-2670

**Dr. Marie Crandall, Associate
Professor of Surgery, Northwestern
University Feinberg School of
Medicine**

A well-informed source on the impact of violence, Dr. Crandall works closely with the Cure Violence team at her hospital and is a health services researcher in trauma. A WBEZ radio [report](#) cites Dr. Crandall's research on the impact of trauma centers in saving lives and the problems facing some communities.

Dr. Marie Crandall
mcrandall@northwestern.edu
312-695-4835

The Peace Exchange

This is a leadership development program for young people that is dedicated to violence prevention. Each group of Peace Builders participates in a yearlong program involving transformational travel, cross-cultural experiences and neighborhood outreach. Holy Family Ministries, based in North Lawndale, sponsors the program.

John Mjoseh, Project Advisor
john.mjoseh@me.com
Jessica Disu, Co-founder
fmsupreme@gmail.com

Project NIA

This group supports anti-violence efforts and helps youths find community-based alternatives to incarceration.

mariame@project-nia.org
773 392-5165

Purpose Over Pain

Founded by families who have lost children to violence, this group helps others who have suffered similarly and supports efforts to control gun violence.

purposeoverpain@gmail.com
773-234 8117

Safer Foundation

The foundation has worked for more than 40 years to reduce recidivism by helping people with criminal records become productive, law-abiding members of the community. It provides a variety of support services including education, job training, job placement and assistance with such issues as anger management substance abuse and parenting. It is also active in public policy and

advocacy.

Anthony Lowery, Director of Policy
and Advocacy
anthony.lowery@saferfoundation.org
312-431-8992

UCAN

This social service organization works with 12,000 children and youths in Illinois each year. Its primary clients are wards of the state child welfare system – those who have been removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect. It also works with their families. The programs include a therapeutic youth home, a therapeutic day school, violence prevention programs, support for pregnant or parenting teens, foster care placement, vocational training and internships for promising former wards of the state.

Norman Livingston Kerr, Vice
President, CITY Project

kerrn@ucanchicago.org
773-290-5876

Umoja The Umoja Student
Development Corporation works with

public high schools to increase
student attendance and engagement,
reduce violence and disciplinary
infractions and increase graduation
and college enrollment rates.

Ted Christians, Chief Executive Officer
tchristians@umojacorporation.org
773-433-0939

Chicago Youth Leadership Academy

This is a summer program on the
campus of the University of Chicago
that each year offers motivational
college-life experience for 30 at-risk
boys between the ages of 13 and 16,
primarily from the Woodlawn and
Englewood communities. Rudy
Nimocks, Director of Community
Partnerships
rend@uchicago.edu
773-848-8363

Westside Health Authority

This program, based on Chicago's
West Side, provides counseling and
support for former inmates and their
families as they re-enter society.
Charles Perry
www.healthauthority.org
773-378-1878

Youth Guidance: Becoming A Man
Youth Guidance's Becoming a Man

(BAM) program works with at-risk male students in grades 7-12. Working to prevent violence and cut drop-out rates, BAM helps students develop social-cognitive skills linked with increasing their potential and reductions in anti-social behavior.

Christopher Jaffe, Strategic Development Manager
cjaffe@youth-guidance.org
312-994-8118

YMCA – Youth Safety and Violence Prevention

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago operates a number of violence prevention programs aimed at youths, families and communities.

[YMCA - Youth Safety and Violence Prevention](#)
(312) 587 2243

Youth Service Project

Founded in 1975 by a concerned group of Humboldt Park parents and community activists, the project is a response to violence in the form of a variety of social programs on issues ranging from substance abuse to bullying, all based on principals of nonviolence and youth empowerment

Katy Groves, Clinical Supervisor
kgroves@youthserviceproject.org
773-772-6270 ext. 139

The Community Peacemakers

This is a partnership between DePaul University and the Chicago Public Schools. DePaul students serve as mentors to CPS high school students in exploring the roots of violence and promoting peace in the schools and communities

Rubén Álvarez Silva, Coordinator
rsilvaal@depaul.edu
773-325-1193

Community Renewal Society

Alex Wiesendanger is the lead organizer for the Community Renewal Society, a 130-year-old social justice organization that works against racism, poverty and violence throughout the Chicago area. Its wide variety of issues ranges from helping at-risk youths to caring for seniors, from community police tactics to affordable housing.

[Community Renewal Society](#)
312- 427-4830

Precious Blood Ministry of

Reconciliation

This effort in the Back of the Yards community started in 2000 with a few priests of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood who offered years of experience in jail ministry, community renewal, inner city parish work and retreat ministries for reconciliation. It is located in a building that also houses Catholic Charities, Youth Outreach Services and the Second Chance Alternative High School. Known as the Precious Blood Center, it is seen by many as a place of safety, sanctuary and restorative justice.

The Rev. David Kelly
nojail@aol.com,
773-562-8861

Adler Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice

The goal of the institute is to meet public safety challenges with socially just solutions. It helps train public safety professionals – from police officers to school security guards to judges – in a broad range of strategies for handling conflict and preventing harm. These strategies draw from the fields of trauma-informed care, community justice, restorative justice, urban planning and community

mental health.

Elena Quintana, Executive Director
equintana@adler.edu
312-662-4021

Enlace Chicago

Enlace Chicago provides services ranging from school-based prevention work to advocacy for reform in juvenile justice policy. Its major programs include Safety Networks, the Mentorship and Advocacy Program, Community Watch, the Violence Prevention Collaborative and the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative.

[Enlace Chicago](#)

Luis Carrizales, Violence Prevention Coordinator
luis carrizales@enlacechicago.org

Mujeres Latinas en Acción

Mujeres Latinas en Acción serves Latinas in ways that reflect their values and culture and help nurture healthy neighborhoods. The issues range from domestic violence to Latina empowerment.

Maritza Rocha, Director of Youth Programs
www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org
CASEL

CASEL— the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning — works through research, policy development and active support for young people in preschool through 12th grade.

<http://www.casel.org/>

Media Adrian Uribarri, Manager for Communication
auribarri@casel.org
312-906-7582

Beyond the Ball

Working in Little Village and North Lawndale, Beyond the Ball uses sports to offer hope, reclaim space and develop a culture of opportunities for youths and families in Chicago.

Rob Castañeda, Executive Director
rob@beyondtheball.org
773-847-6207

Brady PAC-IL

The Brady PAC-IL promotes a "common-sense" gun legislation agenda, working with political candidates and elected officials. The group works with the Brady Campaign

to Prevent Gun Violence in efforts ranging from issue education to victim outreach.

Jodi Doane, Administrator
<mailto:bracy.pac.i@gmail.com>
773-905-4864

Chicago Youth Boxing Club

The Chicago Youth Boxing Club is a nonprofit youth development organization in Little Village. It provides youths a safe and healthy alternative to gang violence, along with work-readiness training and health/nutrition information. It serves youths ages 8 and older.

Karen May, President
Karen.May@may.com

Child Health Data Lab

Based at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital, CHDL performs epidemiological research to identify risks to healthy youth development and strengthen youth-serving organizations. It works closely with the Injury Prevention and Research Center and the Office of Child Advocacy. It also houses the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System, bringing together data from vital

records, police reports, crime labs and medical examiner/coroner files.

Suzanne McLone, Epidemiologist
312-573-7773

The Brady Campaign

An advocacy group that works to control gun violence.

[The Brady Campaign](#)

The Center for American Progress

A Washington D.C. think tank that also focuses on ways to control gun violence.

[Center for American Progress: Gun Violence](#)

Center for Gun Policy and Research

A research center at John Hopkins University dedicated to studies on ways to reduce gun violence

[Center for Gun Policy and Research](#)

Everytown for Gun Safety

An advocacy group devoted to reducing gun violence.

[Mayors Against Illegal Guns](#)

FBI Uniform Crime Reports

Extensive data on crime.

[FBI - Uniform Crime Reports](#)

National Sources

National Council on Crime and Delinquency

A professional organization that

researches crime prevention strategies and provides a helpful guide to recent articles dealing with crime and violence.

[NCCD Global](#)

National Crime Victimization Survey

From the U.S. Department of Justice, exhaustive information on crime, the impact of crime, and up-to-date statistics on the criminal justice system.

[NCVS](#)

Centers For Disease Control and Prevention

Researches and reports extensive information involving the impacts of violence.

[CDC: Assault or Homicide](#)

The National Gang Center

A federally funded effort that tracks information about gangs across the U.S.

[National Gang Center](#)

U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

The ATF tracks data on firearms and especially firearms seized by police across the country.

[ATF](#)

The Crime Report

This is an exceptional resource for journalists, providing updated stories and guides on crime-related issues.

[The Crime Report](#)

Books

Here are some books about Chicago violence and some that deal nationally with the issue of violence:

[Violence" in Chicago](#)

We All We Got by Carlos Javier Ortiz (2014).

A compelling photo chronicle of the toll of violence in Chicago. Here is a New York Times story that talks about his work:

[Life After Death in Chicago](#)

There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up In the Other America by Alex Kotlowitz (1991).

No other journalist has chronicled the impact of violence in Chicago as brilliantly and humanely as Kotlowitz. His article about CeaseFire led to a documentary about the organization, "The Interrupters." A New York Times review of the documentary:

[Confronting a Plague of Violence](#)

How Long Will I Cry: Voices of Youth Violence edited by Miles Harvey with a foreword by Alex Kotlowitz (2013).

A well-researched collection of interviews with those touched in different ways by violence in Chicago. A must-read for anyone who wants to understand the human impact.

[Author Documents "Voices of Youth](#)

Deadly Consequences (1991) and ***Murder is No Accident*** (2004) by Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith.

Prothrow-Stith is a pioneer in advocating for a public health approach to curbing violence. These two books explain the strategy's background. Here is an interview with her from WGBH-TV in Boston:

[Deborah Prothrow-Stith Interview](#)

The Gun Debate by Philip J. Cook and Kristin A. Goss (2014).

A valuable primer on the most critical issues on guns and violence.

The Gun Debate

Please send your advice, your reporting, and your comments. Let's work together.

Stephen Franklin
steve@chicagoistheworld.org
773-595 8667