

INSTITUTE FOR NONVIOLENCE CHICAGO



Everything the Institute for Nonviolence Chicago does is focused on ending the cycle of gun violence.

Most gun violence is predictable and highly concentrated among small networks of people. We work in areas of Chicago where gun violence is highest, and we deploy evidence-based strategies that have worked in Boston, New York, L.A., and other cities. In partnership with Northwestern and the UChicago Crime Lab, we study social networks to identify those most at risk of being shot or becoming a shooter. Then, through **relentless engagement**, we build trust and mediate conflict.

We aim to help individuals who are most likely to carry a gun or get shot lead lives of nonviolence, foster healing, and actively promote peace. Our robust continuum of care is designed to help participants regulate emotions, restore mental health, and obtain living-wage jobs in the legal economy. **And it's working.**

Since 2016, a group of funders, practitioners and academics have been collaborating to build the **Civilian Architecture of Violence Reduction** to support and sustain community-led strategies. Through partnership with the City, a professional understanding with the Chicago Police Department, along with **radical collaboration** with faith leaders, community organizations, and neighborhood residents, we are making a difference. We are a key player shaping and strengthening Chicago's public safety infrastructure—inspiring hope and restoring safety to our streets, block by block.

We create new pathways to peace, and we walk with participants on their journey. When hurdles arise, we help overcome them. As these men and women begin to live to their full potential, they become mentors and coaches to others creating a **positive ripple effect**.

This work is dangerous and requires 24/7 engagement. We could not do it without the skilled men and women on our team, almost all of whom are from or live in the areas we serve or have experienced gun violence.

“Our goal is to create a Beloved Community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. King's vision guides our hearts, and his teachings inform our efforts. **Practicing King's philosophy provides us with the tools to earn trust and calm conflict.** It offers Chicago a courageous approach to healing by addressing trauma at its root causes. This affords us the opportunity to build a sustainable peace, rather than shift the violence to another neighborhood or to the prison system.

For every person we reach at highest risk of gun violence, there are at least three more in need. That is why we are scaling this work.

There is a role for everyone in reducing gun violence. **Join our Beloved Community** of people taking action to support proven gun violence solutions, transform lives, and heal our city.

CHOOSE PEACE



CONTRIBUTE



nonviolencechicago.org



HEALING OUR HEALERS

We provide evidence-based counseling and robust therapeutic and wellness services to our staff who have experienced trauma on the job and in their prior lived experiences. Our Behavioral Health and Wellness initiatives are integral to staff and our entire organization. We are deeply committed to caring for our frontline healers who take great risks to make our streets safe.

PREVENTING VIOLENCE

We operate a street outreach program 24/7 in four Chicago neighborhoods. We train and support teams of outreach workers who understand street dynamics and are most effective at building trust with individuals and groups likely to commit or be a victim of a gun crime. Using a combination of data and experience, outreach workers know who to approach, where and when to show up, and how to broker peace.

SUPPORTING VICTIMS

Evidence shows that those inflicting violence have also overwhelmingly been victimized. When a shooting occurs, our victim advocates show up within minutes to assist with counseling, medical care, financial and legal support—whatever it takes to manage trauma and ease suffering. Advocates also stay close to victims and their allies to prevent retaliation. This form of engagement builds a supportive community around the victim that accelerates their healing and often converts them into fierce advocates for peace.

OFFERING PATHWAYS TO PEACE

We operate several trauma-informed wellness and job programs including, Workforce Development, READI and FLIP, to help participants build new lives away from the streets. Cognitive behavioral interventions and social-emotional learning infused in our programs help individuals regulate emotions and develop problem-solving and conflict resolution skills. In our programs, participants receive intensive mentorship and nonviolence training while working towards establishing their personal safety, developing pro-social behaviors, maintaining basic daily norms, and achieving self-created goals. They all support participants' progress towards their long-term goal of employment in the legal economy.

BUILDING THE CIVILIAN ARCHITECTURE

In Chicago, we are building a Civilian Architecture with key partners that includes violence intervention, victim advocacy, mental health support, drug treatment, domestic violence counseling, and job readiness. This network will allow us to be far more effective in pre-empting and mitigating trauma in our focus areas. It will also free up law enforcement to focus more of their resources on what they are best set up to do—address violent crime. The Civilian Architecture is essential to dramatically reducing gun violence in our city.

