



COOK COUNTY GUN VIOLENCE TASK FORCE (GVTF)

Final Report: Findings and Recommendations

The Cook County Gun Violence Task Force (GVTF)

Report of Findings and Recommendations

**To the Cook County Board President, Cook County Board of Commissioners,
and Countywide Elected and Appointed Officials**

Introduction & Mission

Introduction—The City of Chicago and Cook County are both engulfed in a crisis of gun violence and the availability of illegal guns in Chicago and Cook County has continued to fuel this crisis. In recent years, Chicago’s homicide rate has hovered around 500 homicides per year. However, the city has already seen more than 700 homicides by late November – a reversal of the progress the city has made toward reducing gun violence during the past two decades. As the crisis and growing rate of gun violence in the City of Chicago and across Cook County has intensified, however, the issue has become better-documented every year. As a result, the GVTF was convened to examine the current gun violence crisis, its underlying causes, and assess various evidence-based programs, policies, and practices as potential solutions for combatting the continued growth of gun crimes and violence across Chicago and Cook County.

In the past decade, over 50,000 African-American men were victims of firearm homicides in the United States. Despite the City of Chicago having a population that is as much as three times smaller, the Chicago Police Department recovers more guns than New York and Los Angeles combined, as well as also recording a greater number of shooting victims each year. In 2015, according to the Chicago Tribune, there were 2,900 shooting victims in the City of Chicago alone. During the same period, the city of New York and its police department reported having only 1,300 shooting victims—less than half of what Chicago recorded. Thus far, in 2016, there

have been more than 3,900 people shot in the City of Chicago, and more than 700 people have been killed as a result of gun violence. Three quarters of the victims of shootings in Chicago are African-Americans. They are heavily concentrated in 10-20 high-crime areas on the city's South and West sides. A disturbing number of these victims are innocent children who get in the way when criminals target rivals.

Homicides that result from gun violence account for only one half of an otherwise incomplete picture, however. Too often forgotten during discussions about firearm violence are the many non-fatal shootings that comprise the other half of the picture. Each year, approximately 900 individual victims of gun violence are treated at Stroger Hospital by the physicians of the Cook County Health and Hospital System. The cost to taxpayers for treatment can typically range between \$35,000 and \$50,000 per victim, or in cases of serious debilitating non-fatal injuries, the costs can total up to \$250,000 for the first year and \$200,000 each year thereafter.

These local statistics paint a stark picture for the City of Chicago and Cook County. Nationally, we have seen instances of firearm violence draw increased attention in the wake of tragic recent events. Despite this increased attention, however, there has been limited action by the federal government; to take concrete steps toward addressing the increase in firearm violence and its surrounding issues. Frustration with congressional gridlock over efforts to combat gun violence, however, should not stop local government and law enforcement from doing what it can to reduce this growing problem.

It is imperative that local stakeholders begin to recognize and acknowledge that there are ways to combat community violence and save lives that have little or nothing to do with either regulating firearms and enacting expensive, grand solutions—both of which have proven to be equally unrealistic and unsuccessful endeavors in spite of an escalating number of incidents of violence across the country. An important part of this recognition process is coming to understand that discussions surrounding violence, criminal justice reforms, and community economic development are not separate and unrelated issues. Instead, these issues are each a critical component

of intrinsically interconnected problems that all stakeholders must begin to address through comprehensive and coordinated programs, policies, and practices that focus on proven evidence-based solutions.

Successful implementation of comprehensive and coordinated proven evidence-based solutions will not be easy, nor will it take place over night. Doing so will require greater public attention, as well as some funding. More importantly, focusing the energies of everyone involved on the evidence-based programs, policies, and practices that have been proven to succeed in addressing all aspects of community violence and its underlying causes will take strong commitment, discipline, compromise, and an unrelenting dedication from all stakeholders. Ultimately, however, through the adoption and implementation of successful evidence-based policy programs and practices the number of firearm crimes and associated incidents of violence could be significantly reduced and prevented across the City of Chicago and Cook County.

Mission—The Cook County Gun Violence Task Force (GVTF) was established to serve as an investigative and fact-finding body authorized to hear and gather testimony and data about the economic, social, and cultural causes of gun violence in the City of Chicago and Cook County, with a specific objective of recommending a broad set of written policies designed to reduce gun violence and its root causes.

As such, the Cook County GVTF seeks to reduce gun crimes and incidents of gun violence that plague neighborhoods across the City of Chicago and Cook County. In doing so, the Cook County GVTF further seeks to reduce the number of gun crimes and incidents of gun violence that have taken a horrific toll on young, innocent lives and the citizens of the City of Chicago and Cook County.

Attempting to understand the economic, social, and cultural causes of gun violence, as well as the best methods and practices for reducing gun violence, the Cook County GVTF believes significant progress toward reducing and further preventing the number of gun crimes and associated incidents of gun violence can be achieved.

Through three public hearings, where expert witnesses across various fields of practice and study provided both oral and written testimony, the Cook County GVTF identified the following list of categories for its findings and recommendations to diminish, reduce, and prevent gun violence:

- Law Enforcement:
 - Strategies and Interventions
 - Training and Reporting
- Data Information:
 - Collection, Sharing, and Access
 - Building Strategic Partnerships
- Community:
 - Strategies and Interventions
 - Economic Development, Education, and Economic Opportunities
 - Public Relations
- Legislative Initiatives—State and Local

See **Appendix I** for a copy of the Cook County ordinance creating and authorizing the Cook County Gun Violence Task Force.

See **Appendix II** for the complete membership list of the Cook County Gun Violence Task Force.

See **Appendix III** for Proposed Resolution for Cook County Gun Violence Research Consortium.

Recommendations

Law Enforcement—Strategies and Interventions

Findings—The Cook County Gun Violence Task Force (GVTF) examined research involving various law enforcement strategies and interventions that have been proven to be successful, evidence-based programs and practices—some already in use by the Chicago Police Dept. and other local law enforcement agencies. Among the successful evidence-based law enforcement strategies and practices that have been implemented, studied, and ultimately determined to be highly successful, are programs and practices that include: hot-spot policing, focused deterrence policing, and community policing strategies. Additionally, the GVTF found the need for greater data sharing between law enforcement agencies, as well as better practices during crime scene investigations. The GVTF also determined that rehabilitating the relationship between law enforcement agencies and communities is critically important to building stronger strategic partnerships. In addition to this, restoring respect for law enforcement agencies and practices in the eyes of community members is equally important and necessary in order to help obtain pertinent firearm crime and violence information, much of which may be known among community members who are otherwise reluctant to share information with law enforcement agencies due to mistrust, miscommunication, and an overall fractured relationship within this partnership.

Hot Spot and Focused Deterrence Policing: The [*Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy*](#) has produced an excellent overview of “hot spot policing.” Traditional policing strategy and interventions have focused on people and arbitrarily defined geographical areas such as police districts, precincts, and patrol routes. What experts and community residents alike have realized, however, is that criminal activity is both transient and fluid; crime pays no attention to arbitrary determinants like geographical boundaries, race, or socio-economic status. As communities have continued to globalize and become more interconnected, so has the criminal activity within neighborhoods. In response, researchers have looked to identify the drivers of this activity,

particularly the causes and best approaches to address its movement and fluidity. What they have found is criminal activity is often the result of a very small subset of places and individuals with huge impacts on crime and violence. These microcosms do not fit neatly within the traditionally defined people and geographies of historical police strategies and interventions.

Instead, thorough studies have demonstrated that policing strategies and interventions can be much more efficient and effective in combatting violent crime if efforts are focused on micro units of geography and individual actors, commonly known as “hot spots.” The policing practices that target activity within these specific groupings has become known as “place-based policing” or “hot spot policing.” Research has found that law enforcement strategies have yielded maximum effectiveness by coordinating practices and resources on policing these micro-geographical areas and the individuals living within. The specifics of hot spot policing strategies often vary, sometimes including an approach that focuses solely on increasing patrol time within a targeted area, targeting specific addresses in a particular area, or targeting specific groupings of streets, addresses, or particular individuals within these locations. Similar to hot spot policing, the specifics of focused deterrence policing or community-based policing strategies and interventions vary. There are numerous definitions and explanations of what constitutes focused deterrence or community-based policing. However, what does seem to be consistent across each variation is that these strategies and interventions focus on specific community problems, in specific geographical areas, among specific individuals and groups of individuals who have been determined to be the primary drivers behind the specific problems in these areas. Additionally, focused deterrence policing practices bring particular stakeholder groups together, including law enforcement, community groups, and individual community members and leaders, in order to play a coordinated role in addressing the specific community issues. The concept relies on the coordinated partnership of these stakeholders to signal a unified public message within the community that there will be serious legal and social consequences for any criminal activity, but also that there will be strong support and provided services for anyone seeking to avoid or leave a dangerous criminal lifestyle. The unified message demonstrates that a clear

community standard has been established against violence and criminal activity, the full and complete legal and social consequences of such activity, and the depth of and commitment to its rejection and disdain for criminal actions and actors.

Regardless of the varied explanations and approaches, there is exceptionally strong evidence to support hot spot policing strategies, as well as focused deterrence policing strategies and interventions. The National Research Council noted in 2004 that hot spot policing is supported by the strongest body of collective evidence currently available, and to date little has changed to the contrary. A 2012 [Campbell systemic review](#) found 20 of 25 tests from 19 evaluations demonstrated noteworthy reductions in crime where hot spot and focused deterrence policing strategies were implemented. During the 1990s, Boston, MA, implemented approaches that involved hot spot policing, and focused deterrence policing or community based policing strategies and interventions; as a result, the policing effort produced a 79% reduction in criminal activity in what has become known as the “Boston Miracle.” In 2015, a [research article](#) was published in the *Criminology and Public Policy Journal* of the *American Society of Criminology* that examined focused deterrence policing in New Orleans, LA under its Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS). The study found that focused deterrence policing had produced statistically significant reductions in targeted violence outcomes, such as gang homicides, young black male homicides, and firearm violence under the GVRS when compared with other lethally violence cities. Among other examples where hot spot policing approaches have been tested and shown to be effective are the [Jersey City, NJ Drug Market Analysis Program Experiment](#), [Minneapolis, MN Hot Spots Patrol Experiment](#), Sacramento, CA, and the problem oriented policing approaches to hot spot policing and cross comparisons conducted in Jersey City, NJ, Lowell, MA, and Jacksonville, FL. In the Minneapolis, MN experiment, police were ordered only to increase patrol time in designated hot spots, but were not given any other specific instructions as to how they should conduct their policing in these areas. The experiment found a mere increase of police presence alone within a specific targeted area produced statistically significant reductions in criminal activity. In particular, the experiment found that each minute of patrol time spent in the specific areas increased

the amount of time before subsequent criminal activity occurred. Additionally, the study found the best approach was for police to travel between individual hot spots, spending fifteen minutes in each area, and ensure travel was done in an unpredictable order. Later, this exact approach was implemented in Sacramento, CA and resulted in declines of serious incidents as well as calls for police assistance.

Data Sharing: The ATF is prohibited from sharing “*eTrace*” results with any law enforcement agencies other than the agency that initiates the initial trace-search. However, the ATF does not prohibit law enforcement agencies from sharing this information with each other once it is in the possession of the initiating agency. Despite this, very few, if any, of the law enforcement agencies that adequately record and trace recovered firearms currently share the trace results with other local law enforcement agencies.

Law Enforcement External Strategies and Interventions—The Chicago Police Department Community

Relations Strategy: In conjunction with the aforementioned internal law enforcement strategies and interventions, there are necessary external strategies and interventions that must be implemented, practice, and continuously reinforced and improved upon. Chief among the external strategies and interventions is the role of law enforcement in the context of community engagement and working with the local community where it operates to promote law enforcement-community partner-relationships that enhance the mission and outcome goals of both partners.

In Chicago, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) began using its Community Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) in 1993, to get the community working with the police to address crime through monthly meetings and relationship-building. Earlier this year, CPD Superintendent Eddie Johnson affirmed in a memo on Community Relations Strategy, that the strategy would include establishing regular beats to build relationships before crises happen:

“Maintaining beat assignment integrity allows assigned members to better recognize emerging crime trends and community issues that are most prominent on their beats. Beat assignment integrity gives officers assigned to a beat the autonomy to engage with the community, a stake in their assignment and the area they serve and a sense of pride in realizing the goals revolving around crime suppression on the beat.”

The CPD Superintendent went on to state:

“[The Chicago Police Department] continues its open dialogue with the community as an opportunity to share experiences and identify differing viewpoints. These dialogues will be productive, based in facts and contentious; not occurring just in times of crisis. [The Chicago Police Department] will work with the community to identify their concerns, develop effective crime prevention activities and coordinate the collaborative response.”

The recently announced CPD Community Relations Strategy policy calls for the following:

- Phone trees after serious events through which police can communicate with community leaders.
- Youth councils that include police, community leaders and area youth to identify problems and solutions.
- Opportunities for community members to engage in a ride-along with officers.
- The Peer Jury Program, which includes youth, their parents, the Cook County Circuit Court’s Juvenile Justice Division and area businesses and clergy.
- The DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program taught by CPD members seeking to reach 5th and 6th graders to prevent them getting into drugs.
- The GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training) Program taught by CPD to keep youth from being drawn into gangs.

The Cook County Gun Violence Task Force believes that this community engagement policy is an appropriate step in the right direction, and that it should both be encouraged and supported. The individual items that the CPD policy is calling for should both be incorporated into the various recommendations that the Cook County GVTF has included throughout this final report. In addition to the items from the list above, the GVTF believes that programs should be designed to have a long-term and sustainable impact, and these programs should be driven by an emphasis on working partnerships between public and private entities. One such program that highlights this process design is the CPD’s extended anti-violence initiative (EAVI). The EAVI is an initiative that involves a crime reduction strategy driven by partnerships between public and private entities, that both leverages the strengths of community engagement as well as city resources while simultaneously working together to resolve problems associated chronic crime and disorder. EAVI leveraged the partnerships and group

accountability through meeting takeaways and “homework” for participants, whether the participants were from the law enforcement community, city agencies, community activists and organization, or private residents. Such group accountability helps to ensure an equal working partnership between all participants as well as long-term sustainability for the initiative and its efforts.

Therefore, in addition to the previously stated internal and external law enforcement strategies and interventions, including the items contained in the CPD Community Relations Strategy policy, the Cook County GVTF recommends adoption and implementation of the following law enforcement strategies, and intervention programs and practices.

Recommendations:

1. Efforts should be made to design and implement hot spot and focused deterrent policing strategies and interventions. Local law enforcement agencies should begin to identify specific micro-geographical areas of criminal activity, as well as specific targeted crime outcomes such as violent crime and firearm crime, and implement policies and practices designed to coordinate police activity and resources around these areas and targeted outcomes. More specifically, the GVTF requests that there be expanded education and training for local law enforcement on the recovery of spent ammunition cartridges. Additionally, there should be enhanced collaboration from the ATF with local law enforcement, as well as consideration for a grant proposal to develop and implement a second National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) system for suburban Cook County.
2. Efforts should be made by local law enforcement agencies to request assistance from the ATF to conduct firearms trafficking training, including “*eTrace*” procedures, and these agencies should implement policies and practices that promote agency-to-agency communication around the results of specific *eTrace* search results. More specifically, the ATF should open up *eTrace* information and

change the process of the information curtains that presently exist and often prohibit interagency information sharing and regional information exchange.

- 3.** Efforts should be made to encourage and produce better crime scene investigation practices that would discourage public obstruction and interference at crime scenes, as well as limit the impact and unintended consequences that result from traumatic exposure to crime scenes by youth community members.

Law Enforcement—Training and Reporting

Findings—The Cook County Gun Violence Task Force (GVTF) has determined that the quality and level of training and reporting for law enforcement, and other stakeholders within the criminal justice system, could be significantly improved. The GVTF specifically took note the low rate of corresponding prosecutions among homicide cases, and the failure to trace and inventory confiscated firearms among local law enforcement agencies. As a result of these examples, the GVTF has concluded that there is a need for standardized training standards, practices, and procedures relating to violence prevention. In addition to this, there is also a need for better investigative practices, effective firearms tracing, data collection and case reporting, and interagency access and sharing of any reports and collected data information.

The GVTF found that there is also a drastically low rate of corresponding prosecutions among homicides. In 2011, according to the [last published homicide report from the Chicago Police Department](#) that is available on their website, only twenty-nine percent (29%), or 128 of 433 homicide cases had a corresponding prosecution. During discussions among prosecutors and law enforcement members, there was an acknowledgement that many homicide investigations are hindered by elements that are beyond an investigator's ability to control, such as uncooperative witnesses, limitations on ballistics evidence, and the indiscriminate nature of modern gang violence -- leaving prosecutors in a difficult position to approve charges where evidence is scant and eyewitnesses may prove unreliable by the time a trial actually commences. Despite these barriers, experts testified, and the GVTF concluded, that low homicide clearance rates have the effect of sending a very clear—but wrong—message to communities; these low rates signal that a person can shoot and/or kill without a reasonable fear or likelihood of being arrested and facing any real consequences.

Additionally, the GVTF identified three contributing factors that are within law enforcement's control. The first factor is that case report writing has become a lost art among many first responders, and the second is that

data recording practices vary across agencies. The third factor is that some law enforcement agencies fail to trace and inventory confiscated firearms, even despite the existence of databases for this purpose. This particular finding was especially prevalent among law enforcement agencies that were smaller and/or lacked adequate financial resources. Together, these three factors have ultimately led to critical data-information gaps and poor data-information quality, which often impede or prevent the ability to successfully investigate, arrest, or prosecute violent firearm crimes. As a result, the GVTF has determined that law enforcement agencies must do a better job of tracking and reporting recovered firearms and that there is a need for better job performance training for first responders, including better training practices for case reporting and data recording, in order to both improve the quality of gathered data-information and case reports, and increase the overall success rates for arrests, investigations, and prosecutions of violent firearm crimes.

Therefore, the GVTF recommends adoption and implementation of the following programs and practices relating to law enforcement training and reporting with the hope of increasing the number of arrests, investigations, and successful prosecutions of violent firearm crimes across Chicago and Cook County.

Recommendations:

1. Develop and implement better law enforcement training standards and procedures, particularly with a focus on firearm violence prevention and effective execution of firearm tracing, case report writing, and data recording and sharing practices.
2. Request assistance from the ATF to conduct firearms trafficking training throughout the State, particularly for county and municipal law enforcement officers, to include “*eTrace*” procedures.
3. A monthly intelligence report on firearm-trafficking trends and techniques should be developed, published, and distributed to all departments of law enforcement. This report would update patrol officers and investigators on current methods and trends used to traffic illegal firearms, and it would

also provide information on organized criminal groups involved in state and nationwide firearm-trafficking.

Data Information—Collection, Sharing, and Access

Findings—The Cook County GVTF examined oral and written testimony from policy experts regarding the importance of quality data information and the need for more data collection, better data recording, and increased access sharing of data across government agencies, particularly between public health and law enforcement agencies, such as the Illinois State Police, the ATF, and various other county and municipal agencies.

The GVTF found there to be a lack of critical and quality data surrounding firearms, and firearm crimes and associated violence. Importantly, of the data and information that does exist, the GVTF also found that there is an unexplainable and worrisome deficiency in data collection and access across all agencies and at every level of government. The GVTF specifically identified a critical deficiency in the available data and information surrounding firearm tracking, firearm ownership, and firearm chain of custody, and the GVTF determined this deficiency to be a direct result of the flaws of current data collection, and access and sharing practices.

Therefore, the Cook County GVTF determined that the failure to share data and provide greater interagency access to important data information amongst government agencies has resulted in a limited ability to build quality information databases, as well as severely handicapped capabilities with regard to identifying and targeting problems, and properly administering and allocating necessary resources designed to address these problems.

Adopting and implementing better data policies and practices, such as thorough agency-to-agency communication, would not only make critical data information -- like “*eTrace*” searches and their results --

freely accessible to all law enforcement agencies, but it would also greatly improve the overall outcomes of efforts aimed at combatting firearm crimes and violence.

Therefore, the GVTF recommends adoption and implementation of the following policies and practices in order to address the need for critical, quality data and information, as well as better data recording, collection, and access across government agencies.

Recommendations:

1. The GVTF has determined that there should be a mechanism to facilitate and promote better agency-to-agency communication and access to data collection and sharing
2. Furthermore, efforts should be made to increase and incentivize participation in and coordination among data sharing programs and policies across government agencies and all local law enforcement agencies. One option that could help accomplish this would be to link grant funding to participation and performance in interagency data sharing programs.
3. The ATF should gather, more quickly tally, and share data on the number of guns crossing state lines – data of confiscated, illegal guns – where they were manufactured and where they were confiscated. This would help, for instance, tracking the flow of illegal guns from Indiana to Chicago.
4. The Illinois State Police currently maintain a Non-compliance List for FOID Card/Concealed Carry Permit Revocations. However, at present, this list has not been shared with local law enforcement agencies. ISP must regularly share this list with local LE agencies. During the course of the ISP experts’ testimony, the Cook County Sheriff’s Office indicated it would utilize the non-compliance list to conduct follow-up house checks non-compliant individuals, and confiscate any issued licenses and firearms in the possession of individuals who are currently out of compliance with state law.

Data Information—Building Strategic Partnerships

Findings—The Cook County GVTF found there to be a lack of quality data and information and research surrounding crime-related violence and its public impact, particularly among firearm violence statistics and research from a public health perspective. As a result, the GVTF has determined that there is a growing need for data and information, particularly in the form of statistical reporting and research studies, such as public health impact studies, youth violence statistics, firearm ownership purchasing and transferring practices, behavioral analyses, and other data-information involving the direct and indirect, short and long-term costs stemming from crime-related violence and the overall economic toll on communities and public resources.

As previously discussed, better data-information policies and practices are needed in order to ensure that quality data is being collected and utilized. The need for better policies and practices that will ensure quality data-information is collected, and utilized is further compounded as a result of a decades-old federal prohibition against firearm violence research. Due to the federal prohibition, and under-utilization of data at the state and local level, a gap in available quality data-information has resulted.

In order to address this gap in quality data-information, the Cook County Gun Violence Task Force (GVTF) has found that government-university partnerships could assist in filling the current void in crime-related violence research. Unfortunately, the GVTF has also found that too often government has failed to effectively seek out, and cultivate, those partnerships.

The GVTF has determined that crime-related violence research conducted through government-university partnership programs would ensure better quality data collection and access, data skill development, and

knowledge transfer between researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders. In addition to these improvements, such partnerships also have the ability to assist with resource allocation and targeting.

Government stakeholders offer valuable assistance in such partnerships because they have unique ability to provide partners with critical data-access, implementation, and solution amplification, whereas, university and other research partners seek both access to data, and the ability to have their research and findings applied directly to policy and planning. Unfortunately, despite the unique two-way desire of these partners, too many burdensome, complex and complicated logistical obstacles and barriers presently exist, that all too often prevent real and lasting, effective government-university partnerships. It is important, therefore, for government and its would-be partners to work together to identify and overcome these obstacles.

As a result, the GVTF has determined that efforts should be made to create local- and state-based crime-related violence research centers in order to help centralize questions and/or problems, spur data-information research efforts, and amplify and direct policy application and solutions. Private university efforts, as well as public-private partnerships have been implemented in jurisdictions across the country, such as New York, Massachusetts, and California. As such, similar endeavors should be pursued in the State of Illinois and Cook County through the creation of a state-based crime-related violence research center in conjunction with universities, and similarly a local-based gun violence research consortium in conjunction with Cook County and the Cook County Health and Hospital Systems.

Last spring, the California legislature created a first of its kind state-based firearm violence research center. The State of California also appropriated \$5 million over the next five years to fund the center and its research. The California research center will utilize various violence data to help fill the void left by the federal prohibition against violence research and inform its state's policymakers. There is presently legislation pending to create a similar state-based center here in Illinois.

An amendment to HB5969 (99th GA) that was drafted by the Office of the Cook County Sheriff would create the Impact of Crime-related Violence on Public Health Research Act within the Illinois Compiled Statutes. This new Act would establish a state-based research center within the University of Illinois system to study the impact of crime-related violence from a public health perspective. The legislation would establish the Impact of Crime-related Violence on Public Health Research Center, and as a state statute, the center would have the flexibility and authority to establish effective and lasting partnerships while also conducting the necessary data collection and analysis that has been lacking. The center would study the nature of crime-related violence, its public health consequences, means of prevention and treatment, the effectiveness of various laws, policies, and programs, and the economic impact from crime-related violence. The research would be published publicly on the center's website and sent to the General Assembly. The center would have the ability to be funded through private donations, as well as through any other revenue means, and it would have the ability to enter into agreements with outside agencies and university partners to further its mission of studying the impact of crime-related violence on the public health. By establishing such a center here in Illinois, the State would be ensuring that policymakers have the necessary information to inform efficient and effective policymaking positions, while also taking the appropriate steps to make Illinois a leader in the nation in crime-related violence reform policy.

While a state-based crime-related violence research center would be best positioned with the appropriate resources and access to successfully perform this designated function, and prove to be an important source of critical data-information and policy efficacy evaluations, the task is not necessarily confined solely to a state-based effort. There is large void in the availability of quality data-information and evaluations that needs to be filled, and a similarly designed crime-related violence research that is locally-based can help fill this void and provide necessary insight into the broader issues and their impacts at a narrower, local level. The GVTF has determined the cost to Cook County taxpayers of treating victims of gun violence typically ranges between

\$35,000.00 and \$50,000.00 per victim. Further, gun violence in Chicago and Cook County has strained the resources of Cook County and stretched the limits of many of the institutions of Cook County government, including the Cook County Jail, Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS), the Cook County Circuit Court and the Cook County Medical Examiner. It is clear that this epidemic of gun violence is a public health crisis. As such, it should be treated as a public health crisis. The CCHHS engage in multiple forms of research in order to expand and improve the understanding of diseases and related conditions impacting the patients that the system serves. CCHHS also contain a Collaborative Research Unit (CRU) which was created in 1998 to promote research on significant problems impacting the health of the vulnerable and diverse patient populations of Cook County. As a result, and as a project of the CCHHS's CRU, the CCHHS should create a Gun Violence Research Consortium (GVRC). (See Appendix III) This GVRC should research and analyze a broad scope of activities, including but not limited to clinical care, health services research, medical education, and community-based studies, with the goal of improving the health of the citizens of Cook County by significantly reducing gun violence throughout Cook County.

Therefore, the GVTF recommends adoption and implementation of the following:

Recommendations:

1. Facilitate and encourage lasting and effective government-university partnerships to ensure data-information collection, access, and sharing.
2. Encourage and support the passage of the amendment to HB5969 (99th GA) to create and establish the state-based Impact of Crime-related Violence on Public Health Research Center.
3. Encourage and support the passage of the proposed resolution to create and establish the local-based Cook County Gun Violence Research Consortium (See Appendix III).
4. Through the establishment of local- and/or state-based crime-related violence research centers, public and private partnerships involving various commissioned studies on the impact of crime-

related violence, public health, and the efficiency and efficacy of crime-related violence policies should seek to study and evaluate the broader issues and root causes of crime-related violence and its impact on the community. Among the various issues of study, commissioned research studies should seek to evaluate additional specific issues such as the number of individuals harmed through crime-related violence who are also violent offenders themselves, the efficacy of using strategies identified as Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) approaches and whether research indicates such approaches are appropriate for application to circumstances of urban crime-related violence, and whether carrying a firearm impacts the likelihood of involvement in future crime-related violence, particularly with a focus on target specific interventions that may not lead to incarceration as a result. These examples are among some of the specific issues that could, and should, be examined through commissioned research via a local- and/or state-based crime-related violence research, but they are not wholly indicative, nor dispositive of the wide ranging research areas that could be the beneficiary of such research centers. Regardless of the specific crime-related violence issues that could be research, there is a strong need for better data-information and follow-up scientific studies to help inform the efficient and effective adoption and implementation of crime-related violence policy. It is the belief of the GVTF that such centers would assist in this function, and therefore, it is the recommendation that such centers are established and such research projects be commissioned.

Community—Strategies and Interventions

Findings—The Cook County Gun Violence Task Force (GVTF) examined research involving various successful, evidence-based programs and practices surrounding law enforcement strategies and community interventions. In addition to law enforcement strategies and interventions, various forms of community intervention programs have been found to have high rates of success, particularly intervention programs that are public-health and youth related.

The GVTF found that long-term community approaches toward violence intervention are of particular importance given that the period an individual is most likely to be drawn into violent criminal activities can span anywhere from 5-10 years, and that the crime rates, including those of violent crimes, have been shown to trend upward during the teenage years and early 20s of an individual before declining. As a result, long-term intervention strategies are necessary to ensure alternative responses exist during this period of time; these strategies can include targeted employment opportunity initiatives, and behavioral and therapeutic public health initiatives.

The GVTF fully understands that reducing and preventing violence is one of the most challenging issues currently facing government officials and communities across the City of Chicago and Cook County. Furthermore, the GVTF also understands the immense complexities involved in identifying and implementing successful approaches for addressing firearm crimes and associated incidents of violence. Although there are no easy solutions or quick fixes to these issues, the evidence-based programs, policies, and practices involving community-based strategies and interventions can produce, both in the short and long-term, significantly better results in violence reduction and prevention, as well as promoting and building upon existing community strengths.

In this section of the Final Report, behavioral and therapeutic public health intervention strategies find their place of importance. The GVTF examined compelling research and testimony from various sources, including the University of Chicago Crime Lab, which showed evidence that most homicides and other violent crimes result less more often because of petty disagreements and other preventable and manageable interpersonal conflicts between individuals and residents of a community as opposed to any given criminal activity or a propensity toward participating in criminal activity,. As such, in order to prevent many instances of violence, solutions must focus on methods and mechanisms for addressing interpersonal conflicts among individuals, neighbors, and community residents prior to these conflicts escalating into violent acts.

The successful evidence-based *Cure Violence* programs offer the possibility of leveraging strategic community partnerships among those working to address issues of violence, and they have demonstrated success in numerous jurisdictions across the country. The strategic community partnerships that serve as the foundation of these programs offer immediate assistance, counsel, and first-hand experience on issues and methods for reducing firearm violence, such as government officials and community leaders partnering with public health experts and other leading practitioners, as well as rehabilitated ex-offenders and former gang members working with government officials and community leaders to address community violence issues.

The *Cure Violence* programs, which initially debuted in cities like Baltimore, New York City, and Chicago, work through community members, called “violence interrupters,” who locate ongoing potentially violent interpersonal conflicts within a community and intervene through a response of various conflict-resolution strategies. The programs’ hire violence interrupters based upon their ability to work both within troubled neighborhoods and among those individuals who are most at risk for participating in community violence. *Cure Violence* has implemented and replicated its programs in various jurisdictions across the country, and they have

achieved some very impressive results, demonstrating significant potential for increasing public safety, as well as reducing and preventing violence.

In Baltimore, MD, the city's public health department, under the direction of the public health commissioner, has recently received much praise for attempting to tackle broader community problems through a public health perspective and approach. Here, *Cure Violence* implemented its program, *Safe Streets*, at four different community program sites. Despite some initial controversy due to the fact that it hinges on employing reformed gang members to intervene in potentially violent community interpersonal conflicts, the program has [already begun to demonstrate impressive immediate success](#). In all four of the community program sites, [an evaluation conducted by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found](#) statistically significant reductions in killings of up to fifty-six percent (56%), and in shootings of up to forty-four percent (44%); additionally, the evaluation also found strong evidence of norm change (e.g. "rejecting the use of violence"). The norms on violence within community program sites changed as a result of the program interventions, and individuals were found to be "less likely to accept the use of a gun to settle a dispute" and "4 times more likely to show little or no support for gun use." The norm changes were also found to have taken place among non-clients of the program. Additionally, the program accounted for 276 conflict mediations, and the reductions in killings and shootings were determined to have also spread to surrounding communities outside of the four community program sites. It is also important to note, the Baltimore study analyzed the impact of policing strategies in conjunction with the deployment of the *Cure Violence* program. As noted by *Cure Violence*, from [the John Hopkins evaluation](#) (at page 13) conducted by Daniel Webster, "We controlled for the effects of the deployment of BPD's Violent Crime Impact Section (VCIS)* into "hot spots" for shootings, which began in the summer of 2007, and Project Exile call-ins† in the regression models using dichotomous explanatory variables indicating whether or not those activities occurred in a particular police post during a given month. We also controlled for the number of arrests for drug- and weapons (possession only) offenses in the previous month in each post."

In Chicago, IL, the *Cure Violence* initiative implemented its program, *CeaseFire*, at seven different community program sites. Across the seven community-program sites, [an evaluation conducted by the National Institute for Justice and Northwestern University found](#) statistically significant reductions in shootings and killings of forty-one percent (41%) to seventy-three percent (73%), reductions in shooting hot-spots of up to forty percent (40%), and a one hundred percent (100%) elimination of retaliation killings in five of eight of the community program sites. The evaluation noted that eighty-four percent (84%) of the clients were categorized as very high risk, and based upon the statistically significant findings, determined the positive effect of the program to be “significant and moderate-to-large in size.” The evaluation further noted, upon program implementation within a community program site, “In every program area there was a substantial decline in the median density of shootings” and violence. The Chicago program was the subject of a second, more specific analysis between 2012 and 2013. [The University of Chicago’s School of Social Service Administration and the University of Illinois-Chicago’s School of Health Policy & Administration, in partnership with the McCormick Foundation,](#) conducted a [quantitative](#) and [qualitative](#) evaluation of the *Cure Violence* initiative’s *CeaseFire* program across four target police beats in two Chicago neighborhoods (Lawndale, Police District 10; and Woodlawn, Police District 3). The evaluations produced interesting findings, even despite the brief one year period of study. Among the various findings from the quantitative and qualitative evaluations, it was determined, “consistent across all of the qualitative interviews conducted with *CeaseFire* high-risk participants were individual reports of decreased involvement in crime and violence, with change in behavior attributed to mentoring, primarily around opportunities for employment”, and that “*CeaseFire* intervention in the targeted districts was associated with a 38% greater decrease in homicides, 1% greater decrease in total violent crimes (including domestic violence), and a 15% greater decrease in shootings as compared to districts that did not receive intervention.” Unfortunately, due to the ongoing budget crisis in Illinois, much, if not all, of the funding for these programs has been eliminated, and as a result, there has been a [documented](#) return of the violence within the areas where these programs operated.

In New York, NY, a *Cure Violence* initiative program, [Save Our Streets](#), was implemented, and [an evaluation conducted by the Center for Court Innovation, in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, found](#) “statistically significant reductions in shootings with a shooting rate twenty percent (20%) lower than would have been predicted if trends mirrored control areas.” its program. The evaluation noted that eighty-six percent (86%) of the clients were categorized as being either high or medium risk, and in addition to its significant reductions in shootings and killings, the program was credited with having conducted more than 100 mediations involving more than 1,000 people. *Cure Violence* further explained, that an evaluation being done by John Jay College in New York City is taking a thorough and comprehensive approach and analyzing the impact not only on shootings and homicides, but also on community norm change in regards to violence. This evaluation utilizes a quasi-experimental design and looks at communities where *Cure Violence* is implemented and [compares to similar communities matched on rates of violence, demographics and size.](#)

Statistics such as these explain why experts and practitioners alike fervently support, and highly recommend replication of these evidence-based public health interventions within high crime, high violence communities. It is for these reasons, the GVTF has determined that employing evidence-based violence prevention initiatives, such as the *Cure Violence* initiative and its various programs, like *Safe Streets*, *CeaseFire*, and *Save Our Streets*, will be absolutely critical to the long-term success of any comprehensive solutions aimed at addressing the current violence crisis; rather than solely relying on traditional punishment-based policing strategies, comprehensive solutions should strive to incorporate, with equal force, community-based policing and intervention strategies, including those from a public health perspective, that leverage strong and strategic working partnerships between expert practitioners, law enforcement agencies, and actively engaged community members.

The success of the previously mentioned programs is due, in part, to their ability to intervene in situations before the events unfold and become violent. Similarly, the GVTF also found early contact and intervention

with youth, both before and after they become involved in violent activities and the criminal justice system, to be absolutely critical to the success of any efforts aimed at reducing and preventing firearm crimes and associated incidents of violence.

Experts often say the youth in the car with, or hanging with, the shooters – though they may not yet be perpetrators or victims – are being set up to assume that role. It is for reasons such as this that some violence-prevention organizations seek out information from probation officers or public defenders to find youth most at risk and help match program dollars to need. The education system could be a useful place for identifying at-risk youth before they ever become involved in the criminal justice system or troubling situations that could ultimately result in crime-related violence. However, education has proven to be an area where obtaining data-information is difficult, and often prohibited due to privacy concerns and protections.

The United States Department of Education recently released a manual that aims to encourage the fight against truancy and other educational challenges. In this [manual](#), the U.S. Department of Education noted the many exemptions to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that allow schools to share student data with agencies acting in their place to target programming for chronic truants. By incorporating crime-related violence programming within schools and education curriculum, the recommendation from this manual might be utilized to assist in identifying those who are most at-risk, as well as providing better education surrounding community violence.

Failure to attend school has been found to be among the top indicators for identifying those individuals who are most at-risk of either becoming a victim of violent crime, or becoming involved in crime, including firearm crimes and violence. Research has found the youth likely to wind up in gun violence are truant 40 percent of the time or more.

School-based programs to target at-risk youth are a great tool to break the cycle of violence, however, sometimes they fail to reach those most at peril of becoming gunshot victims: the children who do not make it to school. Community- and church-based anti-violence programs must make extra efforts to reach youth who

spend more time on the streets than in school as they are at greater risk of being the perpetrators and victims of violent crime. Law Enforcement, with the assistance of community- and church-based organization, could use curfew ordinances and truancy outreach efforts to aid in reaching at-risk populations for follow-up contact efforts, while simultaneously preventing unnecessary and excessive punitive contact with the criminal justice system.

Even when factoring for the youth who might be missed by school-based programs, these programs are critical to any comprehensive approach aimed at addressing violence, and its root causes. Despite obstacles and setbacks, such as the educational privacy restrictions, school-based programs have plenty of potential and students can still benefit from the messaging and education from these efforts. In addition, an effort at messaging and providing educational information and resources still has the potential to be disseminated peer-to-peer both within and outside of the school-based program(s). It is important, however, that school-based programs involve some aspect of follow-up with students as they progress throughout their education. For this reason, it would be recommended that such school-based programming that deals with crime-related violence and activities be incorporated into aspects of educational curriculum, particularly at the earlier stages of students' academic careers. Doing so would not only ensure that the initial positive impact from programming does not taper off as students become further removed from their time initially participating in these programs, but also that the positive impacts would have a "lingering effect" that last longer than the immediate aftermath of program participation; additionally, the fact that the programming would be imbedded as part of the students' educational curriculum would also help emphasize the social-importance of these issues.

Therefore, the GVTF recommends adoption and implementation of the following community strategies, and intervention programs and practices.

Recommendations:

1. Include funding for successful, targeted, evidence-based violence prevention strategies and programs, even if only initially at small funding levels and/or through preliminary pilot programs.

2. Replicate evidence-based policing and community intervention strategies by adopting and implementing proven policies, programs, and practices for initiatives that target all aspects of the issues and causes surrounding the ongoing violence crisis—this includes the following initiatives, programs for targeted education and employment opportunities, particularly for young adults between 17 and 24 years old; behavioral and therapeutic public health intervention programs; and law enforcement community-based policing interventions and strategies.
3. Specifically, in conjunction with the above recommendation, replicate and expand the *Cure Violence* programs, and other similar alternatives, in a coordinated, targeted approach that combines its efforts with the planned strategies of community law enforcement agencies, such as the Chicago Police Department, the Office of the Cook County Sheriff, other local municipal police departments, and law enforcement task forces, such as the South Suburban Gangs Task Force, in order to efficiently and effectively utilize the resources and benefits in a joint manner. This tandem, coordinated effort should zero-in on targeted high-risk neighborhoods (i.e. zip codes), or micro-targeted high-risk areas and individuals within neighborhoods (i.e. specific addresses, corners, streets, and individuals or groups) with the highest levels of crime and violence that also happen to correspond with the neighborhoods having the highest proportion of individuals who have cycled in and out of the corrections system on firearm or violence related offenses reentering. In doing so, this approach would strengthen policing efforts by law enforcement through community engagement and assistance, as well as facilitate trust building and cooperation; additionally, this would also bolster and protect the individual violence interrupters and the efforts of the intervention program.
4. Early contact and intervention with youth, both before and after they become involved in violent activities and the criminal justice system, will be critical to any comprehensive approach aimed at addressing violence, and its root causes. School-based programs, and community- and church-based organizations, in partnership with law enforcement and other willing criminal justice stakeholders, must make extra efforts to reach youth, particularly those who are most likely to be at-risk (e.g.

students experiencing chronic truancy issues). The government, educational administrators, and public school system should make efforts to incorporate crime-related violence programming within schools and education curriculum; some programs already in-place that could help serve as a starting point include: The Peer Jury Program (which includes youth, their parents, the Cook County Circuit Court's Juvenile Justice Division and area businesses and clergy); The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program (which is taught by CPD members seeking to reach 5th and 6th graders to prevent drug use and abuse); and The Gang Resistance Education And Training (GREAT) program (which is also taught by CPD to keep you from being drawn into gang, and gang-related activity). As state above, it is important that such school-based programs be designed to prevent the tapering off of the initial positive impact that they may have, and therefore they must account for the necessity of creating a positive impact "lingering effect" with students. One such way to do this is to ensure that the programming is first provided during the earlier stages of students' academic careers and that the programming is fully imbedded as part of the educational curriculum, whether this is done directly as a stand-alone program or indirectly as a core component of other education programming that is offered at school.

5. Recommendations from the U.S. Department of Education [manual](#) on education data and privacy should be utilized to assist in identifying students who are most at-risk, as well as targeting and providing better education surrounding community violence.

Community—Economic Development, Education, and Economic Opportunities

Findings—Regardless of the specific subject matter being presented, on numerous occasions the Cook County Gun Violence Task Force (GVTF) heard consensus testimony that the best way to reduce and prevent firearm crime and associated incidents of violence is through education and employment opportunities, and community economic development.

In January, the [Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois-Chicago published a report](#) that found desperate and worrisome youth unemployment rates within communities. The report specifically found that the rate for 20-24 year old men who were both currently unemployed and not enrolled in school was 47% of African-Americans, 20% of Hispanics, and 10% of Caucasians. The report also found similarly concerning figures among 20-24 year old women, including 35% of African-Americans, 18% of Hispanics, and 3% of Caucasians, who are currently unemployed and not enrolled in school. These rates for 20-24 year old men and women who are currently unemployed and not enrolled in school are worse than both the national average, and the rates in comparable major cities. Additional testimony referred to a map released by [Crain's Magazine](#) that showed communities with highest unemployment rates and then subsequently found these same areas to also be those with the highest rates of violence, thereby demonstrating a clear correlation between the socio-economic conditions and violence within these communities.

As a result of such a clear correlation, the GVTF believes that in order to combat the hopelessness that breeds criminal activity, young people need to be reconnected to the legal economy, and coordinated efforts must be made to rebuild community economies and create opportunities within disinvested communities where many of these young unemployed members of our communities live. It is imperative solutions address the desperate rate of unemployment, particularly among young people, that has been feeding the growth in community violence

here in the City of Chicago and across Cook County. Disconnected young adults often have criminal records, lack high school degrees, face a growing number of employment barriers, and they tend to live in areas with high gang activity, and large markets for illegal activity. Experts testified that previous summer job programs were directly linked to decreases in community violence and crimes. As such, there must be an increased focus on creating and expanding employment opportunities for 17-24 year olds who are unemployed and not enrolled in school. These programs help teach youth job skills and occupy them for the summer; in doing so, they also thereby accomplish short-term and long-term improvements to the issues and problems of gun violence. For their relatively low cost, summer jobs programs teach youth important work habits, start building their employability and keep them from being victims or perpetrators of summer violence.

The owners of [Chicago Green Insulation](#), [Second Chance Coffee](#), and [Felony Franks](#) all testified that hiring ex-offenders to work at their companies had been a winning strategy for them, giving them model employees and allowing the employees to become productive citizens. Holding up the device his companies use to install the foam insulation, Decker told panel members, “If we can teach someone how to work with this gun instead of that other gun, we can change our communities.” Each of the business owner notes that employment is the best antidote to recidivism, and the recidivism rate among employees has been almost, if not completely, zero.

A [2015 study](#) by members of the University of Pennsylvania’s *Urban Health Lab* examined a program that restored vacant buildings and properties in Philadelphia, PA and found that the program successfully lead to statistically significant reductions in overall crime statistics, with no evidence of crime being shifted to other areas of the city. Programs such as these are not only beneficial due to the potential for crime deterrence and reduction, but also because they help facilitate enhanced community economic development. These programs they can serve as essential opportunities for employment skill training for individuals who otherwise lack employment skills or opportunities.

In late 2013, the Office of the Cook County Sheriff created a program like the one later established and studied in Philadelphia, PA. The Sheriff's program, which still exists today, is called the Restoring Neighborhoods Workforce (RENEW) program. RENEW seeks to accomplish two primary goals: (1) to train detainees in the Cook County Department of Corrections in the deconstruction trade, and (2) to remove blight that attracts crime and lowers property values in disadvantaged communities across Cook County. The RENEW program includes both classroom and on-site field training, and participants receive the federal "OSHA-10" safety certification. Thus far, during first two years of the program's operation, there have been nearly 100 participants and more than 100 blighted structures removed, including scores of vacant houses in economically disadvantaged communities, such as Dixmoor, Robbins, Dolton, Sauk Village, Ford Heights and Chicago Heights. The RENEW program has assisted with the successful placement of several program participants into well-paying union employment positions in the construction industry.

Recommendations:

1. The state, county and city should devote resources to summer job programs, specifically youth internship and mentorship programs, as well as other youth employment and education training programming that may lead to full-time employment, job and life skills development, and long-term careers.
2. The state, city and county should focus attention on recruiting businesses, particularly those that commit to bring job opportunities to economically disadvantaged and blighted areas across Cook County.
3. Continue to support and increase government investment into the Restoring Neighborhoods Workforce (RENEW) program, and other similarly designed policy and programming efforts that aim to clean community blight, repair and maintain community areas and structures, particularly blighted property and buildings, and promote employment training and opportunities for program participants. Organized and coordinated programs, like the program in Philadelphia, PA and the Office of the Cook County Sheriff's RENEW program, that focus on deconstructing and

rehabilitating dilapidated and abandoned buildings and properties could help generate a broad array of community economic development opportunities, as well as facilitate potential for significant progress toward overall criminal deterrence and reduction efforts, particularly as such efforts may relate to violent crimes, such as assaults and gun assaults, and other nuisance crimes (e.g. loitering and prostitution).

4. Encourage criminal justice system stakeholders, when and where appropriate, to consider placement for individuals into such community renewal and employment training programs during sentencing proceedings.

Community—Public Relations

Findings—The Cook County GVTF determined that working with the public and community stakeholders is critical to successfully reducing the current levels of firearm crimes and associated incidents of violence across the City of Chicago and Cook County. The GVTF also determined that rehabilitating the relationship between law enforcement agencies and communities is critically important to building stronger strategic partnerships. In addition to this, restoring legitimacy to law enforcement agencies and practices in the eyes of community members is both equally important and necessary in order to help obtain pertinent firearm crime and violence information, much of which may be known among community members who are otherwise reluctant to share information with law enforcement agencies due to mistrust, miscommunication, and an overall fractured relationship within this partnership.

The Cook County GVTF explored the importance, and the efficiency and effectiveness of different targeted messaging, marketing, and educational initiatives when attempting to implement strategies that aim to reduce gun crimes and associated incidents violence. Additionally, the GVTF examined both the roles of different partnership groups and target audiences, and which audiences and groups were most helpful in implementing various efforts and strategies aimed at violence reduction and prevention. The Cook County GVTF found that strong messaging and clear communication is a necessary component of building stronger strategic partnerships and fostering better community and public relations.

There is significant history demonstrating successful use of public relation campaigns to effect difficult changes to policies and practices. In the past, marketing campaigns have been deployed to successfully change public attitudes and public behavior with regard to indoor smoking; drunk-driving; and use of electronic communication devices while driving. Changing attitudes and behaviors – “Norm Changes” – has saved countless lives as a result.

The statistics behind these examples of past public relation campaigns demonstrate their long-term success. Between 1966 and 2010, cigarette smoking among U.S. adults dropped from 43% to 19%. Among the strategies that brought usage down: A media education campaign using celebrities, peers, teachers, and physicians. It shifted the public perception of smoking from glamorous to harmful. A similar effort has been underway to change attitudes about drinking and driving, through education the public of the serious consequences to drivers (e.g. driver's license forfeiture through mandatory suspensions and revocations, expensive legal costs, and incarceration), and to victims, including horrific injuries and death. From 1973 to 2014, as a result of the DUI publicity campaign, there has been an 80 percent reduction in the number of drivers testing above the legal limit of .08 percent.

The GVTF found that, despite increased attention on community violence, the public is generally unaware of the broader economic toll of violence upon communities and resources, as well as the broader connection between socioeconomic issues and violence. Firearm violence accounts for approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of the area's homicides. In addition to this, the GVTF found that for every fatal incident involving a firearm there are 3-7 non-fatal incidents. These non-fatal incidents carry significant long-term costs for victims, their families, communities, and taxpayers. Many of these non-fatal incidents result in brain damage, spinal injuries, and other long-term or permanent medical conditions and physical disabilities. Educating the public about these costs can be part of the solution. Each individual who becomes a quadriplegic as a result of a non-fatal firearm injury carries a medical cost of approximately \$250,000.00 per year for the first year of treatment; each subsequent year of medical care will cost, on average, approximately \$200,000.00 per year for the remainder of the individual's life. These non-fatal injuries, and this particular example, are just some of the costs society often does not consider when discussing the economic toll of firearm crimes and community violence.

Therefore, the GVTF proposes and supports the following recommendations to utilize public messaging and marketing to change popular attitudes, mindsets and thinking about gun violence – similar to the way attitudes about indoor smoking were successfully changed.

Recommendations:

1. Create a countywide marketing campaign focused on the harmful effect(s) and economic impact(s) of crime-related violence and firearms, and facilitate and develop outside partnerships to both foster and promote additional outreach and reduce overall costs of such marketing campaigns.
2. Create a public service announcement (PSA) campaign to be published and aired in various mediums, such as print, television, and radio. This could be accomplished in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice and various other organizations and community groups (e.g. Chicago Ad Council), and the PSAs could be based upon other examples of PSAs and advertising campaigns that have previously worked well when combatting other issues, such as the indoor smoking and drunk-driving ad campaigns.
3. Create an organized and coordinated public and issue advocacy campaign similar to previously successful awareness campaigns, such as *Mothers Against Drunk Driving* (M.A.D.D.), with universal themes, such as “Respect for Life” or “Peace and Love”, and involve victim impact statements and influential public figures, such as professional athletes and entertainers. Such presentations should be part of structured, on-going program, and they should include among other things teaching techniques for conflict resolution, practices for self-regulating personal emotions, developing and fostering empathy and resilience. By implementing these public announcements and presentations as part of a structured, on-going program the limited effectiveness that too often results from singular, “one-off” projects can be mitigated and/or avoided entirely.

4. Create an “economic cost clock,” similar to the federal debt clock, in order to calculate and demonstrate the huge and growing, long-term impact and economic toll that results from firearm violence at an expense to communities and resources.
5. Minor gunshot victims, their friends, and Victim Impact Testimony: The single greatest indicator for becoming the victim of a severe gun injury is previously having been shot. Intervention should target those who come into the hospital with the gunshot victim. Additionally, allowing gunshot victims to provide victim impact statements to various target groups, similar to how victims and family members offer statements at sentencing hearings in violent felony cases -- particularly for youth enrolled in schools, participating after school programs, community groups of all ages and types, young incarcerated adults as well as incarcerated juveniles, and a wide variety of other entities and associations who might benefit from hearing such testimony. Another variation of this would be presentations from law enforcement agencies, science-researchers and practitioners, particularly public health and medical practitioners, and victims providing victim impact statements, in an effort to create a “redirection” of thinking, behavior, and decision making patterns; these presentations could target, and perhaps in some form even be required or made mandatory, for families and the broader social network of victims of firearm violence, firearm crime offenders, and school-age children, particularly for pre- and early teens, such as those between the ages of 12 – 17, or other groups. (Additionally, these presentations could also include criminally violent offenders, either rehabilitated ex-offenders or those currently incarcerated for violent crimes, who would be providing offender impact statements regarding the negative consequences and impact of their life-changing decisions involving violence.) Such presentations should be part of structured, on-going program, and they should include among other things teaching techniques for conflict resolution, practices for self-regulating personal emotions, developing and fostering empathy and resilience. By implementing these public announcements and presentations as part of a structured, on-going

program the limited effectiveness that too often results from singular, “one-off” projects can be mitigated and/or avoided entirely.

Legislative Initiatives—State and Local

Findings—Due to the various economic, social, and cultural causes of firearm violence, the Cook County GVTF determined more could be done legislatively to address the ongoing crisis of firearm violence in the City of Chicago, Cook County, and across the State of Illinois.

The Cook County GVTF found compelling evidence that nationally the primary problem of gun crimes involving crime guns is caused more often by a select handful of problem gun dealers which supply much of the criminal market and significantly impact the number of crime guns flowing into communities and onto the streets. It has been suggested that nationally these problem dealers account for only five percent of all federally licensed sellers. Despite this, it is estimated that these same dealers account for ninety percent of firearms ultimately used in crimes. As such, the GVTF examined a recently launched national advocacy campaign (“*Stop Bad Apple Gun Dealers Campaign*”) specifically aimed at addressing the issue of problem firearms dealers; the primary goal of this advocacy campaign is to implement legal and policy changes across the country in an effort to ultimately reform or shut down fifty percent of the few thousand “bad apple” gun dealers across the nation.

In addition to reviewing the national advocacy campaign, the Cook County GVTF examined an executed agreement between the Office of the Cook County Sheriff and the Village of Lyons that permits unannounced inspections of the local gun shop in order to help reduce the number of instances where straw purchasing occurs. The GVTF determined this arrangement to be a model that would better regulate local gun dealers and one that could be replicated in other locations around Cook County. The GVTF also determined that efforts aimed at developing and implementing a uniform version of similar model ordinances and/or legislation by State, County, and Local governments to both better regulate “bad apple” gun dealers and straw purchasing, and to capture any relevant data information that may be critical to policymakers and law enforcement would play a

significant role in curbing two practices that directly lead to significant levels of gun crimes and associated incidents of violence.

The Cook County GVTF determined that while firearm tracing resources are available, not every law enforcement agency is utilizing these resources.

Recommendations:

1. Replicate adoption of the Village of Lyons ordinance and agreement with the Office of the Cook County Sheriff in other municipalities countywide to permit unannounced inspections and ensure better regulation of local firearms dealers. This change would help deter and reduce the number instances where straw purchasing occurs.
2. Replicate adoption of the “*Stop Bad Apple Gun dealers Campaign*” model ordinance, in order to better ensure regulation of local firearms dealers with troubled histories of unauthorized and/or straw purchasing practices. This change would help deter and reduce the number instances where firearms flow directly into the hands of individuals who would use them to commit a crime and/or act of violence.
3. Amend current law within the Illinois Vehicle Code to permit the suspension of vehicle license plates of convicted gun traffickers. This change will limit the ability of convicted firearms traffickers to illegally transport firearms. This recommendation and proposed draft legislation was included among the recommendations from the *Interstate Gun Trafficking Task Force “Report of Findings”* (December 31, 2010), but ultimately was not adopted by the Illinois General Assembly. The Cook County GVTF now makes the same recommendation here in its report.
4. Enhance legislation mandating reporting of all lost, stolen, and/or transferred firearms. (See [Public Act 98-0508](#) from the 98th Illinois General Assembly) While the original lost and stolen reporting bill was a significant step, the modified legislation should include a misdemeanor penalty for a first

time offender, and make the penalty a strict liability offense for failure to report within 72 hours (currently, the law requires “knowledge of the loss or theft.” This change will ensure all firearms have a well-documented, traceable, chain of custody in the event the firearm is recovered by law enforcement officers, and improve enforcement of the existing law. This recommendation was included among the recommendations from the *Interstate Gun Trafficking Task Force “Report of Findings”* (December 31, 2010).

5. Enhance legislation mandating all law enforcement agencies trace any and all recovered firearms (See 720 ILCS 5/24-8 – “Firearm Tracing”). This change should include mechanisms to incentivize efficient and effective mandatory tracing procedures are implemented and complied with by all law enforcement agencies, and should be designed to ensure complete accountability and transparency. An example of such a mechanism would be statutorily linking such these policies and procedures to any State and/or local grant money. This change would ensure all law enforcement agencies trace recovered firearms, and therefore allow for greater success in bringing cases involving firearm crimes to a resolution. This recommendation was included among the recommendations from the *Interstate Gun Trafficking Task Force “Report of Findings”* (December 31, 2010), but ultimately was not adopted by the Illinois General Assembly. The Cook County GVTF now makes the same recommendation here in its report.
6. Introduce legislation amending the current Unlawful Use of a Weapon (UW) provisions to include greater penalties, fines, and fees for violators, including suspension and/or revocation of a driver’s license or permit and mandatory towing and impoundment of motor vehicles with requisite fines and fees attached. This change would discourage would-be offenders and guarantee violators receive appropriate punishments that would not only deter harmful practices, but would also generate revenue to support necessary law enforcement activities and other treatment initiatives related to the current gun violence crisis.

7. In addition to requiring mandatory reporting of any lost, stolen, and/or transferred firearms (See Recommendation 3, above), legislation should also increase the penalties, fines, and fees for any individual, and/or businesses or associations, engaging in the practice of straw purchasing firearms for another person.
8. Legislation (e.g. [SB1747 \(99th GA\)](#)) aimed at increasing the number of inmates who could participant in community renewal and employment training programs, like the Office of the Cook County Sheriff's Restoring Neighborhoods Workforce (RENEW) program, was introduced during the 99th General Assembly, but ultimately did not move. The legislation sought to streamline and clarify the statutory language governing sentencing to county impact incarceration programs, as well as to improve the structural requirements of those programs. Similar legislation should again be filed, and ultimately, passed and enacted into law, in order to help expand access to positive, evidence-based programming that enhances the development and productivity of individuals and the broader community.

SUMMARY

In an effort to address the ongoing threat of violence across the City of Chicago and Cook County, the Cook County Gun Violence Task Force (GVTF) held three public hearings this past spring in which various expert witnesses provided oral and written testimony on the issue and causes of firearm crime and associated incidents of violence.

The primary goal of the GVTF was to gather research, identify best practices, and ultimately, based upon the gathered research and testimony, make recommendations to address firearm violence and its harmful effects.

Through identified categories the GVTF is providing recommendations, which it believes, if implemented, will support efforts to combat firearm violence and crime more broadly across the City of Chicago and Cook County.

It is the hope of the Cook County GVTF that these proposed recommendations will be implemented in a coordinated effort to combat the current and ongoing crisis of violence that continues to plague too many of our neighborhoods across the City of Chicago and Cook County.

Therefore, pursuant to the ordinance creating and authorizing the Cook County GVTF, the GVTF also encourages a subsequent meeting of its members be held to facilitate development of a strategy for implementation of the GVTF recommendations following a review by the Cook County Board President and Commissioners.

In turn, the Cook County GVTF believes the proposed recommendations, if implemented in a coordinated and committed effort, will save many young, innocent, lives before they can become victims of dangerously high levels of firearm crimes and associated incidents of violence. For these reasons, the Cook County GVTF urges adoption of the proposed recommendations presented here in its final report.

Appendix I

- ARTICLE VIII. - *GUN VIOLENCE COORDINATOR AND GUN VIOLENCE TASK FORCE*

- Sec. 14-80. - Short title.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the *Gun Violence Coordinator and Gun Violence Task Force Act*.

(Ord. No. 15-5847, 10-28-2015.)

- Sec. 14-81. - Definitions.

The following words and terms shall have the meanings set forth in this section, except where otherwise specifically indicated:

Board of Commissioners or County Board means the Board of Commissioners for Cook County, Illinois.

County means "Cook County, Illinois."

Cook County Code means the Code of Ordinances of Cook County, Illinois.

Coordinator means the *Gun Violence Coordinator*.

Member means appointed members of the *Gun Violence Task Force*.

Ordinance means this ordinance [article] appointing a *Gun Violence Coordinator* and establishing the *Gun Violence Task Force*.

President means the President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners.

Report means the Cook County *Gun Violence Report*.

State means State of Illinois.

Task Force means the *Gun Violence Task Force*.

(Ord. No. 15-5847, 10-28-2015.)

- Sec. 14-82. - Purpose.

(a) The purpose of this Ordinance [Article] is [to] establish the appointment by the Cook County Sheriff of a *Gun Violence Coordinator* and empanel a *Gun Violence Task Force*, which will serve as an investigative and fact-finding body with the objective of recommending a set of policies to the President

and the County Board, the City of Chicago and the Governor of Illinois, designed to reduce *gun violence* in Cook County.

(b) The *Task Force* will hold three public hearings chaired by the *Gun Violence* Coordinator to gather testimony and data about the economic, social, and cultural causes of *gun violence* in Cook County and the best methodology for reducing *gun violence*. The hearings shall take place over a period of time not to exceed 12 months and shall culminate in a written set of policy recommendations put forth under the authorship of the *Gun Violence* Coordinator and designed to reduce *gun violence* in Cook County.

(c) Such hearings shall be held in the Cook County Board Room on the 5th Floor of the Cook County building at [118](#) North Clark Street in Chicago, Illinois, and the *Gun Violence* Coordinator and *Task Force* shall have full access to resources necessary to conduct said hearings and make a record of said hearings.

(Ord. No. 15-5847, 10-28-2015.)

- Sec. 14-83. - Compliance with law.

As an investigative and fact-finding body appointed by the Cook County Sheriff, the *Gun Violence* Coordinator and *Task Force* shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws, rules, regulations, and orders.

(Ord. No. 15-5847, 10-28-2015.)

- Sec. 14-84. - *Task force* membership.

(a) The *Task Force* shall consist of 15 members:

(1) One member designated as the *Gun Violence* Coordinator. The Coordinator shall be appointed by the Cook County Sheriff. The Coordinator shall serve as the official liaison between the *Task Force* and local, state, and federal officials, and the President and Cook County Board of Commissioners. The Coordinator shall have the power to convene public meetings of the *Task Force*.

(2) One Cook County Commissioner serving as an Ex-Officio Member of the Commission with voting rights. The Ex-Officio Member selected from the Board of Commissioners shall be the same Commissioner *tasked* with chairing the Cook County Board of Commissioners' Committee on Human Relations.

(3) One additional member appointed by the President.

(4) Two members appointed by the Cook County State's Attorney.

(5) One member appointed by the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, that member being a bond court judge.

(6) Two additional members appointed by the Cook County Sheriff.

(7) Two additional members appointed by the Cook County Sheriff from the Suburban Cook County Law Enforcement Community.

(8) One member from the Cook County Health and Hospital System appointed by the President.

(9) The Cook County Medical Examiner or a designee of the Cook County Medical Examiner.

(10) Two members appointed by the Mayor of the City of Chicago.

(11) One member appointed by the Governor of Illinois.

(Ord. No. 15-5847, 10-28-2015.)

- Sec. 14-85. - Term of office.

Unless otherwise provided or revised, the members of the *Gun Violence Task Force* shall be appointed for a term of 12 months, subject to the approval of, and extension by the County Board.

(Ord. No. 15-5847, 10-28-2015.)

- Sec. 14-86. - Quorum requirement, absenteeism, administration.

(a) A quorum shall be necessary in order to conduct all hearings of the *Task Force*.

(Ord. No. 15-5847, 10-28-2015.)

- Sec. 14-87. - Expert testimony.

(a) The primary method of investigation by the *Task Force* shall be the solicitation, hearing, recording and transcription of expert testimony. Such expert testimony shall include, but not be limited to, the following categories of professionals:

(1) Law Enforcement at the following levels of government:

a. Municipal.

b. County.

c. State.

d. Federal.

(2) Physicians and Nurse Practitioners.

(3) Medical Examiners.

(4) Government Officials serving at the following levels of government:

a. Municipal.

b. County.

c. State.

d. Federal.

(5) Experts in Psychiatry and Psychology.

(6) Social Scientists with expertise in any of the following areas:

a. Economics.

b. Criminal Justice.

c. Conflict Management and Resolution.

(7) Faith and Community Leaders.

(Ord. No. 15-5847, 10-28-2015.)

- Sec. 14-88. - Cook County *Gun Violence* Report.

Having concluded all hearings and investigatory functions, the *Gun Violence* Coordinator shall compile the testimony collected by the *Task Force*, and based on the information furnished through such testimony, shall author and tender a Cook County *Gun Violence* Report. The length of time between the final hearing and the completion of the Report shall not exceed six months. The Report will contain an overview of factors contributing to *gun violence* in Cook County, the effects of *gun violence* on victims and community members, and a set of policy recommendations designed to reduce *gun violence* and the harmful effects associated with *gun violence*. The Report shall be furnished to the President, the Board of Commissioners, the Mayor of the City of Chicago and the Governor of Illinois. Once the Report is furnished to the aforesaid officials, the *Task Force* shall convene to review the totality of its proceedings to date and determine the steps necessary in order to implement the policy recommendations set forth in the Report.

(Ord. No. 15-5847, 10-28-2015.)

Appendix II

Cook County Gun Violence Task Force (GVTF) Members

GVTF Coordinator:

Michael Anton, Office of the Cook County Sheriff

GVTF Members:

John Buncich, Lake County, Ind., Sheriff

Fr. Michael Phleger, pastor, St. Sabina's Parish

Ernest Brown, Cook County Emergency Management

Thomas Mahoney, Office of the Cook County State's Attorney

Brandon Nemecek, Office of the Cook County State's Attorney

Richard Boykin, Cook County Board of Commissioners

Mitchell Davis, Hazel Crest Police Chief

Richard Eddington, Evanston Police Chief

Dr. Kim Joseph, Stroger Hospital

John Gates, Cook County Medical Examiner's Office

Dr. Beverly Butler, Chief Judge's office

Appendix II

Proposed Resolution—Cook County Gun Violence Research Consortium

A RESOLUTION OF THE COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CALLING FOR THE CREATION OF A GUN VIOLENCE RESEARCH CONSORTIUM AS A PROJECT OF THE COOK COUNTY HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SYSTEM'S COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH UNIT

Sponsored by: Richard R. Boykin, Cook County Commissioner

WHEREAS, every year the physicians of the Cook County Health and Hospital System's Stroger Hospital treat approximately 900 victims of gun violence; and,

WHEREAS, the cost to Cook County taxpayers of treating victims of gun violence typically ranges between \$35,000.00 and \$50,000.00 per victim; and,

WHEREAS, Chicago and Cook County are presently engulfed in a gun violence crisis, with 1,823 people in Chicago shot in 2016 to date, and 312 people killed during this same time period; and,

WHEREAS, gun violence in Chicago and Cook County has strained the resources of Cook County and stretched the limits of many of the institutions of Cook County government, including the Cook County Medical Examiner, Cook County Jail, the Cook County Circuit Court, and the Cook County Health and Hospitals System, among others; and,

WHEREAS, numerous national, regional and local public policy experts have clearly identified gun violence as a public health issue; and,

WHEREAS, on June 14, 2016, the American Medical Association publicly proclaimed Gun Violence to be a "Public Health Crisis," and implored the United States Congress to lift its ban on research of gun violence by Centers for Disease Control (CDC); and,

WHEREAS, on June 21, 2016, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Cook County Health and Hospitals System CEO, Dr. Jay Shannon, stood with other leaders and advocates and demanded that the gun violence epidemic in Chicago and Cook County be treated as a public health crisis; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Shannon stated that, as a health crisis, gun violence "has to be addressed with an equally complex, data-driven approach"; and,

WHEREAS, Cook County Health and Hospitals System engages in multiple forms of research in order to expand and improve understanding of the diseases and related conditions impacting the patients that the system serves; and,

WHEREAS, among the research projects operating under the auspices of the Cook County Health and Hospitals System are the AIDS Malignancy Consortium, the Intimate Partner Violence Protocol, and the Chicago Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Prevention Epicenter (CARPE); and,

WHEREAS, Cook County Health and Hospitals System contains a Collaborative Research Unit which was created in 1998 to promote research on significant problems impacting the health of the vulnerable and diverse patient populations of Cook County; and,

WHEREAS, the current gun violence epidemic is a significant problem that impacts the health of the vulnerable and diverse patient populations of Cook County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby call for the creation, by the Cook County Health and Hospitals System, of a Gun Violence Research Consortium, as a project of the Cook County Health and Hospitals System's Collaborative Research Unit; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Gun Violence Research Consortium shall research and analyze a broad scope of activities, including but not limited to clinical care, health services research, medical education, and community-based studies, with the goal of improving the health of the citizens of Cook County by significantly reducing gun violence throughout Cook County; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Gun Violence Research Consortium shall furnish reports to the Cook County Board of Commissioners every three (3) months summarizing its most recent findings and putting forth policy recommendations on the basis of those findings.