Since its inception in 2018, the FLIP Strategy has acted as an innovation incubator for the field of gun violence prevention, seeking to advance the practice of street outreach and develop a diverse and sustainable workforce. This multi-pronged strategy is designed to buttress Chicago’s growing outreach capacity by deploying Peacekeepers, who serve as temporary violence preventionists during the summer months, to hotspots located in communities disproportionately impacted by violence. Full-time outreach professionals train and supervise Peacekeepers to engage in violence reduction activities, expanding the reach of established violence prevention programs.

In 2021, Chicago CRED and Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P) partnered to implement the FLIP Strategy in 78 hotspots across 12 Chicago community areas. The hotspots were selected after a rigorous and consultative process that included formal statistical analyses (social network, spatial, and spatiotemporal) conducted by the Northwestern Neighborhood & Network Initiative (N3) to identify gun violence clusters as well as on-the-ground information provided by local Chicago Police Department Districts and street outreach organizations. Eight partner organizations (INVC, Breakthrough, Acclivus, Target Area, UCAN, Chicago CRED, ALSO, and New Life Centers) deployed 439 Peacekeepers to hotspots between the program launch on May 21, 2021, and program end on November 27, 2021. The findings presented here in no way represent a causal relationship.

Key Program Outcomes:
- **84% of FLIP hotspots had zero shootings.**
- **FLIP Peacekeepers completed 639 mediations** and established **47 non-aggression agreements.**
- **58% of FLIP community areas** experienced an average **13% reduction in shooting victims** compared to 2020.
- **Four FLIP community areas** experienced a **reduction in homicides of 25% or more.**
- **FLIP expanded the reach of existing violence prevention programs** by 14% in North Lawndale and 5% in Roseland and West Pullman.
- **23 FLIP Peacekeepers were hired into full-time violence prevention positions.**
- **While on duty, one Peacekeeper was fatally injured and two were non-fatally injured.** In total, 17 FLIP Peacekeepers were injured, 7 fatally.
- **While interactions with law enforcement have notably improved, challenges remain, especially with officers respectfully engaging younger FLIP Peacekeepers.**

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1 Program end dates varied by implementing partner and community area.
2 Data sources: Chicago Police Department, routine program activity and outcome reports completed by implementing partners, interviews with implementing partners and FLIP Peacekeepers.
Peacekeepers

Full-time outreach professionals train and supervise Peacekeepers to engage with the community, mediate conflicts, and establish non-aggression agreements (NAAs), or arrangements between rival groups to not instigate conflict. Peacekeepers earn a modest weekly stipend and may also receive services to support their professional development. FLIP is an effective recruitment pathway into violence prevention work, with 23 Peacekeepers hired into full-time positions in 2021; 86 have been hired since 2018. For Peacekeepers interested in careers outside of violence prevention, 58 attained employment and 126 were connected to education and training services.

In 2021, one Peacekeeper was fatally injured and two were non-fatally injured while on duty. In total, 17 FLIP Peacekeepers were injured, 7 fatally. Although FLIP Peacekeepers’ opinions on their victimization risk are diverse, some feel unsafe in their neighborhoods on and off the clock.

Implementing partners rated the quality of interactions with law enforcement a 3.5 out of 5. While many partners and Peacekeepers have seen interactions with law enforcement improve over time, some mentioned that police still targeted and harassed younger FLIP Peacekeepers.

Hotspots

Peacekeepers are deployed to the hotspot with which they have a strong relationship to engage in violence reduction activities. In 2021, Peacekeepers successfully completed 639 mediations, which represent conflicts that, absent intervention, could have erupted into acts of violence. By being physically present around hotspots, and by leveraging personal networks, Peacekeepers can reach people and conflicts that street outreach teams might not have the capacity or connections to reach.

Peacekeepers and street outreach teams collaboratively brokered 47 NAAs in 2021. These agreements may be between rival groups or between members of the same group. As of November 27, 2021, 91% of agreements remained active (N=43). Of the 17 NAAs that were broken at some point during the implementation period, outreach and FLIP Peacekeepers successfully reinstated 76% (N=13). Most NAAs broke down because of a shooting incident. Although more research is needed to better understand the relationship between NAAs and violence outcomes, early results suggest that hotspots with NAAs experience fewer shootings than those without.

During the 2021 implementation period, 4% of all shootings in FLIP-targeted community areas occurred in a hotspot. Compared to the same period in 2020, FLIP hotspots experienced no change in the number of shooting victimizations. While further study is needed to evaluate FLIP’s impact on gun violence more thoroughly, preliminary analysis suggests that FLIP may help reduce group-related violence in the targeted areas.

Communities

Given its hyper-local focus on hotspots, it is challenging to evaluate FLIP’s impact on gun violence in larger community areas. On average, the 12 targeted community areas experienced a 0.5% increase in shooting victimizations in 2021 compared to the same period in 2020. Seven community areas experienced a decrease in total shooting victimizations compared to 2020. Three of the five community areas that experienced an increase also had NAAs that were interrupted and not re-established. Despite the challenge of measuring FLIP’s impact on gun violence at the community area level, the program helps expand the network and reach of existing violence prevention programs. For example, adding 55 Peacekeepers in North Lawndale increased the partner’s total reach, directly and indirectly, by 14.3%. Implementing partners and FLIP Peacekeepers both recognize the value of building relationships with previously underserved groups and community members.

Recommendations:
1. Continued research to understand program impact
2. Focus on non-aggression agreements as a violence reduction tool
3. More programming for Peacekeepers
4. Advocacy to improve interactions with law enforcement

[Peacekeepers] are asking about FLIP becoming a year-round opportunity for them, which shows their investment in violence prevention. They felt that their work really has value for their neighborhood

- Street Outreach Partner