

Executive Summary
Evaluation of CeaseFire-Chicago

by

Wesley G. Skogan, Susan M. Hartnett, Natalie Bump and Jill Dubois
with the assistance of
Ryan Hollon and Danielle Morris

The research reported here was conducted with the support of Grant Number 2005-MU-MU-003, National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. Findings and conclusions of the research reported here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

rev 19 March 2009

All CeaseFire reports are available at: www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/ceasefire.html
For further information contact skogan@northwestern.edu

Executive Summary

Evaluation of CeaseFire-Chicago

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of CeaseFire, a Chicago-based violence prevention program. The program is administered by the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention (CPVP), which is located at the University of Illinois' School of Public Health. CPVP was formed in 1995 with the mission of working with community, city, county, state and national partners in designing community violence prevention programs. Developing and implementing CeaseFire was but one of their roles, but it was a major one. CPVP began fielding an active program in 1999. During the 2000s, it expanded to encompass about 25 program areas in the Chicagoland region and other parts of Illinois. The decentralized, "local host" model that the central office adopted for delivering neighborhood-based programming in numerous and diverse sites is a common approach to social service delivery, and the lessons learned from CeaseFire's experience may be applicable to a broad range of human service programs.

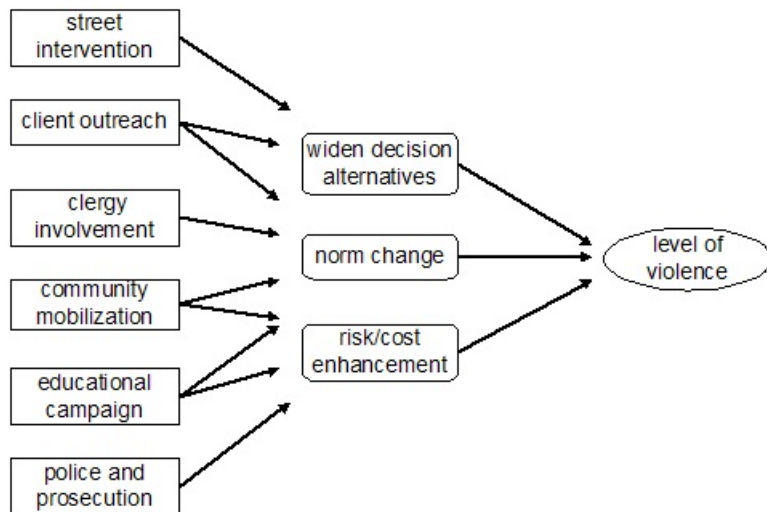
A notable feature of the program is that it did not aim to directly change the behavior of a large number of individuals. Rather, CeaseFire focused on affecting risky activities by a small number of carefully selected members of the community, those with a high chance of either "being shot or being a shooter" in the immediate future. The program's violence interrupters worked alone or in pairs on the street, mediating conflicts between gangs and intervening to stem the cycle of retaliatory violence that threatens to break out following a shooting. Few of the outreach staff members who counseled young clients ever worked with more than a dozen or so at a time. They recruited clients on the street, not through institutions. A feature of the lives of young people who could meet the program's criteria was that, in the main, they were already marginalized from the rest of society. They found their friends, identity and respect on the street, as far from the constraints of society as they could put themselves.

CeaseFire's interventions were "theory driven." The program was built upon a coherent theory of behavior that specified the "inputs" to be assembled and set in motion and how they caused the "outcome," reductions in shootings and killings. Some of the core concepts and strategies were adapted from the public health field, which has shown considerable success in addressing issues such as smoking, seat belt use, condom use, and immunization. Many of the program's daily activities targeted the causal factors linking inputs to outcomes. These relationships are illustrated in the Figure below.

First, the program aimed at changing operative norms regarding violence, both in the wider community and among its clients. Norms are the beliefs, attitudes and values that make up the culture of a community and define the range of behavior that is normally acceptable. Community mobilization, a public education campaign and the mentoring efforts of outreach workers were calculated to influence beliefs about the appropriateness of violence. A second goal was to provide on-the-spot alternatives to violence when gangs and individuals on the street were making behavior decisions. CeaseFire treated the young men and women they encountered as rational actors, capable of making choices. The strategy was to promote their consideration of a broader array of responses to situations that too frequently elicited shootings and killings as a

problem solving tactic. This reflected the often accurate view that a great deal of street violence is surprisingly casual in character; people shoot one another in response to perceived slights to their character or reputation, in disputes over women, or for driving through the wrong neighborhood. Worse, in the gang world, one shooting frequently leads to another, perpetuating a cycle of violence. Once initiated, retaliatory violence can send neighborhoods down a spiral of tit-for-tat killings. Finally, the program aimed at increasing the perceived risks and costs of involvement in violence among high-risk (largely) young people. The risk component reflects a classic deterrence model of human behavior, for among the risks that are highlighted are incarceration, injury and death. In addition, staff members emphasized the "social risks" of involvement, including the impact of violence on the families of clients and the immediate community. The risk component of the model led to a strategic decision to largely hire staff members who could gain the attention of target audiences and communicate these messages credibly.

CeaseFire's Program Theory



The program's inputs were the individuals and organizations identified by CeaseFire as potentially having some influence on its short list of change agents. These included outreach workers. In the program model their principal jobs were stimulating norm change among clients and guiding them toward alternatives to shooting as a way of solving problems. They also did a significant amount of conflict mediation. In public health, outreach staffers would be "lay health workers," or indigenous

people hired to reach sex workers or needle users. Violence interrupters worked the street in the night, talking to gang leaders, distraught friends and relatives of recent shooting victims, and others who were positioned to initiate or sustain cycles of violence. Mobilizing two key groups in the community, the clergy and residents who could be stirred to direct action, was another key part of the program theory. The efforts of these two constituencies were primarily aimed at norm change, both in the community at large and among the outreach worker's clients and other high-risk youths. Community involvement also targeted the perceived costs of violence. CeaseFire's public education campaign was aimed at both changing norms about violence and enhancing the perceived risks of engaging in violence. Outreach workers were to carry the message that "the killing must stop" to their clients, while the clergy were to speak to their parishioners and CeaseFire staff to the broader community. Marches, rallies and prayer vigils, backstopped by the widespread distribution of promotional materials, focused on stirring concern among the public. Community mobilization and public education campaigns are common public health strategies for addressing maladies ranging from obesity to immunization, and were adapted by CeaseFire to

target violence reduction. Finally, actions by the police and prosecutors, and tougher anti-gun legislation, were seen as targeting the risks surrounding involvement in shootings.

A notable feature of CeaseFire's staffing was their commitment to hiring what they dubbed "culturally appropriate messengers" to carry the word to the community. Who they hired was a strategic consideration, and the program was not staffed by trained social workers. Outreach workers and violence interrupters had to fit in, they needed enough street savvy to maneuver through an often rough-and-tumble environment, and they often had to pass muster with gang leaders. By-and-large they had lived in the communities where they worked. They gained legitimacy because many had themselves "lived the life." The archetypal CeaseFire staff member had been in trouble, turned his life around, and now wanted to help others do the same.

For evaluators, a notable feature of CeaseFire was their commitment to developing systematic indicators of program activity and outcomes. CPVP wanted to "manage by outcomes," and their in-house evaluation unit maintained systematic data on area-level trends in shootings and killings. They also assembled systematic measures of program staffing and activity at the site level, and they made frequent site visits to review client and activity records.

About the Evaluation

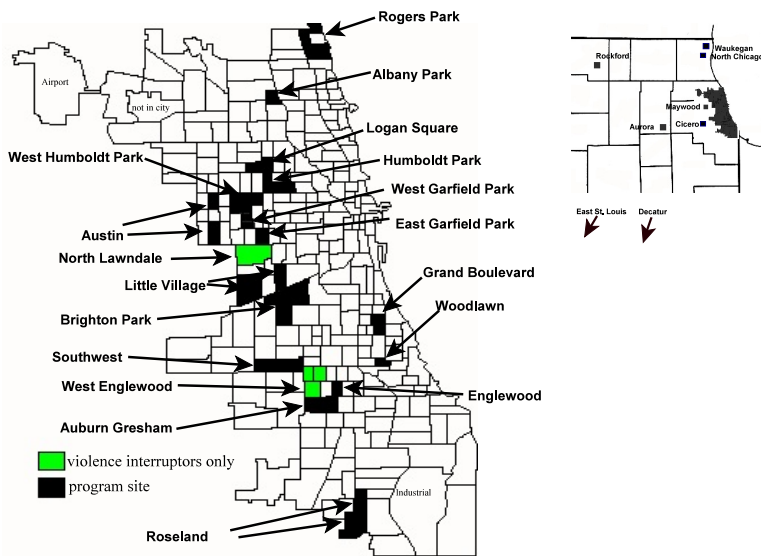
The evaluation of CeaseFire had both process and outcome components. The process portion of the project involved documenting how the program actually looked in the field. This included issues involved in selecting target neighborhoods, choosing local host organizations, and staffing, training, and management practices. This phase of the evaluation involved scores of personal interviews, observations of meetings, and site visits. Systematic surveys were conducted with the field staff. To gauge the extent of CeaseFire's collaboration with local agencies and other stakeholders, we conducted interviews with samples of potential collaborators in 17 sites. They included representatives of organizations in six community sectors: business, churches, community organizations, the police, schools and human service agencies. To learn more about CeaseFire's clients – the issues they were facing, the level of help they were receiving, and their assessments of the program – we conducted personal interviews with a sample of 297 clients from 13 CeaseFire sites. The outcome evaluation used statistical models, crime hot spot maps and gang network analyses to assess the program's impact on shootings and killings in selected CeaseFire sites. In each case, changes in the target areas after the introduction of the program were contrasted with trends in matched comparison areas.

Selecting and Organizing Sites

CeaseFire adopted a decentralized, "local host" model adopted for delivering a neighborhood-based program in numerous sites in Chicago and around the region. One job of CPVP was to identify areas that could benefit from CeaseFire, and to select a community-based organization to administer and house the program locally. A formal contract was signed with the host agency that included a description of the scope of work they were to conduct. Once a site and partner host organization were selected, CPVP continued to be involved in the operation of

the program. The central office provided technical assistance and training to the sites, helped them develop a comprehensive violence reduction plan, and prepared staff for their various roles within the program through an extensive training program. CPVP actively monitored the workload of the sites, and reviewed their files to ensure that suitable clients were being served. In addition, they facilitated a variety of weekly and monthly meetings for the sites' steering committees, violence prevention coordinators, and the CeaseFire outreach staff. CPVP also provided information, guidance and models of best practices for the CeaseFire staff through workshops. Program headquarters also produced printed materials, signs, bumper stickers and tee-shirts for the sites to distribute locally. Crucially, CPVP also played a major role in securing and maintaining funding for the sites, generally passing through state and federal monies to their local partners. Once CeaseFire was established at a site, CPVP shifted from a central management role to a provider of technical assistance, though we saw the central management role prolonged when host agencies were not performing adequately, and at times CPVP reasserted control over faltering programs.

CeaseFire Site Locations



The neighborhoods involved in the program were typically plagued by high rates of violence, and the residents were quite poor. Most were located in the City of Chicago, but others were scattered around the region and Illinois. The location of most sites is illustrated in the map to the left. Among the programs we monitored, eleven served predominately African American neighborhoods, six were largely Latino, and four served diverse populations. An analysis of the sites located in the City of Chicago, places for which we have

consistent crime data, found that most program sites were well above the city median in terms of both crime and poverty.

High need areas could be difficult to serve. In some, it was difficult to find a suitable host agency, due to the limited organizational infrastructure of the area. Because there was a weak community base, implementing the CeaseFire program could be challenging. It could take a great deal of effort to get the "ear" of community residents in areas where crime and violence were commonplace. Many residents had experienced the failure of other initiatives, programs that were begun with great fanfare, but then the funds were cut and the programs subsequently disappeared.

In other areas there was competition to host a CeaseFire site, and this could lead to tension among rival organizations. Sometimes existing groups believed that CeaseFire's mission was similar to their own, and that they were being displaced. There also could be competing agendas. A difficulty with the host agency model for delivering a program with a clearly articulated strategy was that active and experienced local organizations almost inevitably had their own agendas and interests, and their own programs to promote. This could particularly be the case when CeaseFire sites were hosted by faith-based organizations. Their inclination was to use religion as the means for helping clients move away from violence, and to hold standards for hiring that involved church membership. At other sites, established leaders sometimes simply did not agree with aspects of CeaseFire's program model, and neglected tasks they thought made little sense in their community.

Funding politics also played a role in selecting sites and host organizations. Politically influential places had some advantages: they often had strong community-based organizations and vocal political representatives, and activists were able to bring CeaseFire to the community through their political clout. Occasionally CPVP had to resist the entreaties of political leaders who hoped to play a role in hiring, and all politicians apparently felt that, because they supported CeaseFire, they could use the program in their campaign materials. In a few sites we found host agencies whose political agendas strained their relationships with the police. Other politically active host agencies did not have these problems, and we also observed some of the positive features of being known for passionate community commitment. In particular, hosts with strong activist ties evidenced a capacity to build and participate in local coalitions, and they were able to surround themselves with organizations that could provide needed services for their clients.

Size also mattered. Larger and longer-established host organizations typically had a solid financial base, and regarded CeaseFire as an add-on, bringing additional capacity to their programs. Most had established salary and benefit packages, as well as a full range of human resource policies that addressed matters such drug-testing and employee conflict resolution. In contrast, smaller hosts that would suffer financially if the CeaseFire program did not continue at their site were being asked to devise and adhere to personnel systems they had never before needed and conduct administrative tasks with which they were unfamiliar. Many of these sites employed poorly paid hourly workers and offered no employee benefits. At the smaller single-focus sites, handling a problem employee often meant termination rather than attempts to resolve the problem positively. Several large host agencies were themselves service providers. They were able to provide services directly to clients, and had little need to make outside referrals. Larger service providers were also very familiar with the grant-writing process, program documentation, staff management, and day-to-day office functions. A downside to this was that they were less likely to develop extensive partnerships or work building on their community base, because they were so self-contained.

During the evaluation period we saw a tightening of policies and procedures on the part of CPVP that reflected the adoption of a more centralized management role. This was ensure that site activities focused as much as possible on the highest-risk person, hours, and activities, and that all of this was better documented. CPVP took a more active role in regulating program

activities and reviewing site records. Their staff made an increasing number of site visits to ensure better program implementation, and new central office positions were created to handle program implementation and documentation issues. Sites were held more accountable to with regard to shooting responses, client caseload size, and other program activities. CPVP also became more assertive about the hours that sites were to be open, to parallel the hours when violent crime actually occurs. However, at the same time many sites became more self-sufficient, and CPVP was able to hand many of the responsibilities they previously bore. This included taking charge of organizing a celebratory CeaseFire Week each year, political lobbying for program support, and handling day-to-day crises in program administration.

Staffing the Program

For CeaseFire, staff hiring, training and supervision were key issues, because hiring was itself a strategic consideration. As part of their strategy of recruiting clients who were at the highest risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence, and to facilitate access to the world of street gangs, CeaseFire aimed at hiring people who would be credible messengers among these groups. Violence interrupters and outreach workers normally did not have much experience in the traditional workplace, and many had themselves run afoul of the law. This set CeaseFire apart from many social service programs, although it is common for public health interventions around the world to hire and train indigenous people to handle their public interface. It also placed a greater-than-usual burden on its human resources operations.

Hiring high-risk individuals presented unique challenges, and CeaseFire implemented safeguards to ensure – to the extent possible – that their staff stayed out of trouble. These measures included drug testing and background checks, and eligibility requirements such as having a high school diploma following their release from prison. When hiring violence interrupters and outreach workers, CeaseFire faced a challenge: the staff needed to be able to connect with potential shooters and victims, but to have successfully extracted themselves from street crime and gangs. CPVP struggled to find a violence interrupter for one neighborhood; they kept finding candidates who "wanna work, but at the same time, they wanna still be in the gang," but this was unacceptable. CeaseFire occasionally and unknowingly hired individuals who were still involved with drugs and may have still been active gang members, although all of its policies and procedures were aimed at preventing this. The instability of CeaseFire funding, the demands of the job, the high-risk backgrounds of most violence interrupters and outreach workers, and drug testing contributed to staff turnover. And, this came with a cost, most visibly in outreach worker-client relationships that could not be easily rebuilt with another staff member.

Hiring Panels. Each site hired outreach workers and outreach worker supervisors using a formal decision-making process. Hiring panels involved five or six members representing CPVP, district police, and local leaders. The panels helped protect the program from hiring pressures by politicians or by friends and relatives already on the staff, and to forestall (as one CPVP representative put it) "hiring someone because they need a job, not because they can do the job." Both CPVP and the police representative had veto powers, the police because they conducted background checks on applicants.

Background Checks. While CeaseFire wanted its outreach workers and violence interrupters to be close to the streets, they did not want them to be involved in illegal activities or to slip back into a life of crime. Police background checks, the hiring panels, and CPVP staff oversight were all aimed at preventing this. There was particular vigilance regarding crimes against women or children, either of which was unacceptable because of the need to protect clients and staff members. Some sites had even more stringent hiring requirements, and could not take on anyone with a felony conviction.

Drug Testing. CPVP encouraged host agencies to test their outreach staff for drug use. They wanted drug-free employees serving as examples to their clients, and felt a positive drug test "raises questions about fitness for duty." They also wanted to avert the potentially negative press coverage that the arrest of a staff member would spark. CPVP employed the violence interrupters directly, and they were regularly tested. They also tested every candidate recommended by hiring panels. This policy made hiring challenging, and most sites had stories about finding a perfect job candidate who then failed a drug test.

Credentials. CeaseFire generally required that its outreach workers have a high school diploma or its equivalent. They felt this helped ensure that candidates could be trained to handle their paperwork and keep their files orderly. However, the program also believed that street credentials could trump educational ones, and sometimes they reinterpreted candidates' life experiences as qualifications for a position. The harsh world of Chicago's street gangs also guaranteed that former gang affiliations played a major role in qualifying individuals for a job. Sites had to balance the associations of their staff with the distribution of gangs in their area, adding to the complexity – and ramifications – of hiring.

Turnover. CeaseFire had high employee turnover, leaving sites short-staffed and clients without outreach workers. This turnover had a number of sources, beginning with the job's evening hours. There were also frequent short-term layoffs for budgetary reasons. When the program lost outreach workers and violence interrupters, it jeopardized its links to high-risk men on the street. Many sites did not offer health and retirements to its employees, undermining their long-term commitment to the job. Wage policies were set locally by the host organizations, but in the winter of 2005, CeaseFire recommended that outreach workers be paid \$25,000 annually. Most violence interrupters were hired on a series of 900-hour short term contracts that brought few benefits, and they were in the most precarious position.

Training. Because they usually came to the job without any formal qualifications, CeaseFire invested heavily in staff training. Outreach workers began with six-day training sessions combining classroom work and site visits, and there were subsequent monthly in-service classes. These two-hour meetings targeted issues that emerged on the street. Our staff survey found that almost two-thirds of outreach workers felt they were adequately prepared before they first went out on the job, and more than 90 percent of them felt prepared at the time we questioned them.

Unlike outreach workers, violence interrupters did not have regularly scheduled training sessions. However, they met weekly with their supervisor in sessions that featured exchanges about problems they were facing and the strategies they adopted to address them. According to our survey, more than 85 percent of them were very satisfied with the meetings, and 83 percent reported that they were "very satisfied" with their level of preparation for the job.

Funding the Program

From the late 1990s, CeaseFire spawned 27 or so sites in Illinois, and CPVP took the lead in identifying diverse funding streams to support prevention activities. While they varied a bit, a typical CeaseFire site budget was about \$240,000 per year. This enabled the host organizations to pay their violence prevention coordinator, supervisors, and outreach staff. Almost all site operations were funded by the State of Illinois, which channeled the money through the budget of the State Department of Corrections. By contrast, the violence interrupters working in each site were funded by a federal grant as well as some state funds, and they were paid directly by CPVP. The 2007 budget for violence interrupters was \$189,000. Federal, foundation and corporate funding supported central office operations by CPVP and the production of public education materials.

Reliance on state funding for field operations led to instability in the program. Headquarters operations were less affected by budgetary ups and downs because they were funded by multi-year grants, leading to a stable and predictable flow of funds to support central office activities. Site funding was quite another story. Almost all site operations were supported through yearly appropriations by the state legislature. In some years this brought prosperity, when politicians were supportive and old and new sites were and funded by the State. But there were lean years as well, as funding ebbed and flowed in response to legislative politics and election cycles. Needy places sometimes had to be dropped because they failed to maintain support in the legislature, while others were created because their champions spoke up during the budgetary process.

Another negative consequence of this funding arrangement is that CeaseFire evolved into a large number of small and arguably underfunded projects that targeted small areas, because each member initiative was capped. Everyone involved knew that this was not a desirable situation, and every year CPVP argued for a more rational appropriation of funds. To mount a sustained campaign the program needed to be a regular budget item that was monitored and assessed by administrative officials. CPVP believed that, to be more effective, there should have been fewer and more well-staffed sites that could focus on larger and more naturally-defined target areas that might span legislative district lines. But they were unable to break out of a funding trap that eventually snapped closed.

So, although CeaseFire expanded during the 2000s, there were down sides to being a politically-driven program with a yearly budget. The short, one-year funding cycle for most sites created job uncertainty and service interruptions, and drew staff time from operations in order to work on perennial funding crises. Site offices were regularly forced to close temporarily, work

with a skeleton staff, or let staff members work on a voluntary basis until a budget was finally approved. Once the state budget was finalized, some sites would learn that they had been dropped, and had to let their staff go on short notice. In some areas the program came and went several times, each cycle forcing CeaseFire to shut down, leaving the staff unemployed and clients unserved. The political nature of CeaseFire's funding led to needy sites being passed over, while sites with more political clout but less violence received funding. In some sites, CPVP had to resist demands by politicians for a hand in operations. Their role also interfered with the proactive selection of CeaseFire sites based on need and capacity. In addition, the budgetary process which evolved ensured that each site, regardless of size or need, was awarded the same amount of money. The politically driven nature of CeaseFire also did not allow the program to grow in deliberate fashion. In some years sites were cut unexpectedly, while in others perhaps too many sites had to be opened too quickly. Start-up sites were especially impacted, due to the time it took to become operational in the first place, including recruiting and training staff, and developing a client base. Trying to recruit, hire, train and provide technical assistance to as many as a half a dozen new sites all at once was difficult, particularly when there was only a one-year commitment to funding them.

All of this came to a head in summer 2007, when state politics slipped into a stand-off between the governor and the General Assembly. Legislators' requests to fund specific CeaseFire sites were among the many member initiatives listed in a routine "pork barrel" bill, and the governor's staff systematically axed the program from the final budget. Depending on yearly state funding via legislators' personal initiatives proved near-fatal for CeaseFire, and other fund-raising efforts failed to restore the program's budget base. By the end of September 2007, all but two CeaseFire Chicago sites had closed; they raised enough money to reopen, albeit with a partial program. CPVP turned its focus to developing its CeaseFire program model and expanding to other cities. They also managed a federally-funded demonstration site on Chicago's West Side, and twenty or so violence interrupters continued to do mediation work in the field. In an eventual turn-around, CeaseFire was funded anew by the state legislature in fall 2008, and began hiring and training staff, to rebuild its sites over the winter.

Client Outreach

Identifying and providing counseling and services to individual clients was one of the most significant components of CeaseFire. Client work was the domain of outreach workers. They were individuals with street experience and strong local ties that enabled them to navigate their world safely as well as manage complex client relationships. They were hired because their background helped deliver a credible message to the community, and because their own experiences lent them insights into the issues facing clients. Their usually being from the neighborhood helped neutralize potential resistance to the program among residents, activists, and local gang factions. When we asked clients how connected outreach workers were to the street, 82 percent reported they were "very connected." Clients' ties to gangs set constraints on staffing; it was difficult to recruit clients in areas where there were multiple competing gangs, unless the outreach staff included members with ties to each. The staff often had personal connections to potential clients. Many saw themselves as paying back a debt to society they had

accumulated when they were young, and they found a great deal of personal satisfaction in giving back to the community.

From a larger perspective, the benefits of CeaseFire having hired ex-offenders was considerable. During the evaluation the program employed more than 150 outreach workers and violence interrupters, most of whom at one time or another had been active gang members and many of whom had served time in prison. CeaseFire offered them a chance for employment in an environment where ex-offenders have limited employment opportunities. Working for CeaseFire also offered them an opportunity for personal redemption, and a positive role to play in the communities where many had once been active in gangs.

But reliant on their personal experience rather than professional backgrounds, outreach workers often had little to no formal training other than that provided by CPVP and the host agencies. Outreach workers were expected to build and maintain a caseload of about 15 high-risk clients, within four months of starting the job. They also took primary responsibility for carrying out CeaseFire's public education campaign, by door-to-door canvassing and distributing printed material. They also reported doing a significant amount of conflict intervention, backstopping the violence interrupters.

Initially, CeaseFire did not have a client outreach component. From 1997 until 2001, the focus was on fostering clergy partnerships and community involvement, organizing collective responses to shootings, and public education. Between 2001 and 2005 the outreach program went through a period of steady growth, with new sites being added nearly every year. The most dramatic growth in the outreach program was between 2004 and 2005, when the number of outreach workers grew from 20 to 70. In 2005, the outreach program shrank in an equally dramatic fashion due to a temporary loss in funding. While the number of outreach workers fluctuated, in early 2007 they numbered approximately four per site. At time they were monitoring approximately 660 clients in the 13 sites selected for study.

Client selection was a courting process. Outreach workers often initially encountered prospective clients hanging out on the street, and the staff was expected to spend 80 percent of their time there rather than in the office. There they engaged likely-looking candidates on a one-to-one basis in order to gauge their situation, and asked around to find out what was known about them. One of their immediate tasks was to assess whether potential candidates were appropriate for the program. CeaseFire tried to focus on candidates rated as "high risk," using seven criteria. A survey of almost 300 clients and an analysis of program records indicates that this goal was largely achieved. By their own report, 82 percent of clients had been arrested, one quarter of them before age 14. Overall, 45 percent reported having been arrested five times or more, and 56 percent had spent "more than a day or two" in jail at least once. More than 90 percent were involved in gangs. More than 70 percent of the clients interviewed were African American, and 26 percent were Hispanic.

They were a difficult set of "cases" to "manage." High risk clients could easily get themselves into trouble and disappear for periods of time, making it difficult for their outreach

workers to maintain a relationship with them. Despite efforts by CeaseFire staff to steer their clients into job readiness programs or an actual job, some were just not capable of the follow-through necessary to succeed. Some outreach workers perceived that their clients were not motivated to work, and that others came from home environments that were dysfunctional in terms of supporting them in their efforts to hold down a job.

They reported that their biggest problem was joblessness – 76 percent of the almost 300 clients we interviewed reported that they had needed work. Other issues they raised frequently in personal interviews were getting back into school or into a GED program (37 percent), wanting to disengage from their gang (34 percent), resolving family conflicts (27 percent), and getting into a program to help them deal with their emotions (20 percent). Many outreach workers maintained that their clients were not ready to just step into a steady job. Eight-five percent of outreach workers cited a lack of "job readiness" as a major issue for clients. This stemmed, in no small part, from the fact that many clients (82 percent) had been arrested or had been in even deeper trouble with the law. So, they began with preparing them for seeking a job and coping with the requirements of the world of work. Among clients needing a job, 82 percent got help preparing a resume, 87 percent described receiving help preparing for a job interview, and 86 percent reported that CeaseFire helped them find a job opening. The client survey revealed that those who received this kind of help were almost twice as likely as others to have a job at the time we interviewed them. As one satisfied client told us, "Last summer I was selling dummy bags out there, I was bogus. I joined CeaseFire to get a job. CeaseFire hooked me up with it [the job]."

After job-related services, outreach workers invested the most energy in working with clients to improve their educational credentials, through enrolling them in GED programs or alternative schools. Beyond improving clients' job prospects, getting back in school offered them an avenue for developing a more positive self-image and a sense of personal progress. Alternative schools also offered clients a positive social environment where they could interact with other young people away from many pressures of the street. In the survey, among those who reported receiving assistance from CeaseFire in this matter, 30 percent later had completed high school or even had some college or trade school training. In contrast, only 8 percent of those who needed help but did not report receiving any graduated from high school. One of the clients we interviewed had recently enrolled in a plumbing program. "Over the winter [outreach worker] asked me what profession I wanted to do and I decided on plumbing or carpentry. [The outreach worker] hooked me up with the apprentice program at [local college skills center]. I like the program very much, especially the hands-on training they give you."

Clients also needed assistance with mundane yet practical issues. Another basic service commonly provided to clients was obtaining official forms of identification. Forty-three percent of outreach workers report helping get clients drivers licenses, social security cards, or state identification cards every few weeks or so, and 63 percent of outreach workers did so at least once a month. These documents were essential for clients as they pursued jobs and navigated life outside of their home turf. Outreach workers helped in other ways. When clients were asked if their outreach workers had ever gone to court with them or talked with a lawyer on their behalf,

72 percent answered in the affirmative. Another 24 percent indicated that their outreach worker had gone with them to talk to their probation or parole officer.

However, as the list above indicates, clients' problems were often complicated, so linking them to services was only part of outreach work. These largely young men had personal and interpersonal needs that included improving their self-esteem, developing healthier relationships with others, and finding a more positive self-identity. In the client survey, 92 percent of clients with anger management issues talked to their outreach workers about them. Sixteen percent of clients interviewed reported that they had issues with drinking, and 81 percent of these clients talked to their outreach worker about it.

In the survey, 34 percent of clients indicated that one of their problems is that they wanted to disengage from a gang. The clients who participated in follow-up in-depth interviews were able to articulate many of the messages that outreach workers conveyed to them. In particular, they included "stay away from others in trouble," and "don't hang out with known gang members." The survey identified clients who indicated that they had needed help leaving a gang, which was 34 percent of the total. Fully 94 of 95 (99 percent) of them reported that they had received assistance from the program. Among this group, 70 percent were still in a gang at the time of the interview. This is far from a high success rate, but it is movement in the right direction. After one client returned home from prison he shared with us that "I was tempted to return to my street organization and drug dealing. [The outreach worker] told me that 'I'd spent enough time on the street; it's time to move on.'" About deciding to leave the organization permanently, he said, "I didn't want to be around the same people doing the same things. [The gang] didn't want me to go, but I told them I had put my time in and that I was ready to retire. I wanted to help people instead of hurt people." This particular gang gave the client its "blessing" to leave.

One striking finding of the interviews was how important CeaseFire loomed in their lives; after their parents, their outreach worker was typically rated the most important adult in their lives. Well below CeaseFire came their brothers and sisters, grandparents. Spouses, coaches, teachers, counselors and, in last place, clergy, came after, at below 10 percent. Clients mentioned the importance of being able to reach their outreach worker at critical moments in their lives – times when they were tempted to resume taking drugs, were involved in illegal activities, or when they felt that violence was imminent.

Intervening in Violence

Observers of CeaseFire regard violence interrupters as an original and important development in violence prevention. CPVP grafted interrupters to the CeaseFire model in the Winter of 2004, because most outreach workers could not gain access to key decision-makers in the gang underworld. Many sites had at least two interrupters, and in addition violence-interrupter-only sites were opened in two very violent communities. Interrupters cruised the streets, striving to identify and intervene in gang-related conflicts before they escalated into killings, and to step in and halt retaliatory spirals of violence if the shooting had already begun.

Themselves former gang members, and often graduates of the state's prison system, violence interrupters capitalized on their background to develop relationships with people on the street in order to gain access to information and the parties to conflicts, and they attempted to negotiate workable settlements to rivalries both within and between gangs.

Violence interrupters had unique experiences that helped in their efforts to convince high-risk people on the street not to use guns. They could approach them and speak their language because the interrupters largely had themselves been gang members, had gotten in trouble with the law, and served time. Some had struggled to adjust to a new lifestyle, and one job of their supervisor was to help keep them from slipping back into trouble. Most violence interrupters grew up in the neighborhoods where they were assigned, which helped connect them to gangs and young men on the street. It also helped connect them to residents who could be good sources of information and support.

Both supervising and evaluating the work of violence interruptions was challenging. They worked alone or in pairs, almost always at night, frequently in dangerous areas and under threatening circumstances, and on an irregular schedule driven by events. Many of the people they dealt with were dangerous and prone to violence, immersed in activities that they did not want to become widely known, and highly suspicious of outsiders. The interrupter's job was to keep things from happening in the first place, making the assessment task even more difficult. Unlike outreach workers, who reported to their local site, violence interrupters were directly managed by CPVP, where they met for weekly debriefing and review sessions. They were encouraged to coordinate and exchange information with their assigned sites, but how well they did so varied widely.

Violence interrupters spent most of their time on the street, hanging out as they built relationships and waited for conflicts to erupt. This was inherently risky, because of where they worked. They were vulnerable to shootings, to stop-and-frisks by police, and – at the same time – suspicion by gang members that they were somehow affiliated with the police. Being in the proximity of guns and drugs, they were particularly at risk because the legal repercussions for convicted felons caught in association with a gun could be severe.

Interrupters' central responsibility was to mediate conflicts. They were hired because their backgrounds and connections prepared them to do this work, and all of their activities were geared toward this effort. Violence interrupters learned about conflicts and shootings through intimate connections to the communities where they worked. They used their personal *entre* to mediate conflicts. Often, interrupters spoke to those on one side of the dispute – the group they were familiar with or had influence over. In conflicts that required an agreement between two parties, they teamed up with other interrupters who were on better terms with the other gang or faction. At all times they had to work carefully within the boundaries and rules established by the dominant street gangs in the area. While mediating conflicts related to drugs, they had to be sensitive to the political economy of the street.

Intervening in potential retaliatory shootings took a great deal of their time. Whenever a shooting occurred, the interrupter's first steps were to try to the victim or his friends or kin from retaliating. In the paperwork they filed, 40 percent of the intervener's mediation efforts concerned potential shootings that would have been in retaliation for an earlier imbroglio. Violence interrupters learned about shootings that already happened from their personal networks, from CPVP staff, and from local outreach staff. Other CeaseFire employees received shooting information from hospitals and the police. Interrupters also participated in the marches and vigils that CeaseFire organized in response to killings in order to prevent retaliations. They would speak to residents and individuals who were directly involved in the shooting, to try to prevent further violence.

Property disputes – over narcotics, money, and drug corners – lead to shootings all over Chicago. Drug territory could become particularly contentious between crews led by men returning home from prison and younger people who had occupied their corners. Returnees, who needed money to start over, would try to repossess their turf. To get the disputant's attention, interrupters appealed to their impact on the street economy, and to "street property rights." One strategy was to encourage men to maximize their profits and peacefully compromise, because outbreaks of gang warfare were "bad for business." Another was to persuade one faction to sell elsewhere, in order to not attract a police crackdown. They also mediated conflicts that arose out of transactions that had gone awry, because one party or another tried to take off with both the money and the drugs. Similar disputes arise out of robberies of dice games. The loser in such encounters occasionally look for a "hit man" to set things right; hearing word of this and dissuading them from doing so was another role for interrupters.

In step with their strategy with regard to drugs, violence interrupters worked within – rather than in conflict with – street organizations when mediating gang-related conflicts. They used their influence with their former gangs and facilitated communication between them while respecting current leaders' authority and territorial boundaries.

Race and neighborhood shaped the disputes violence interrupters mediated. Latino violence interrupters faced conflicts that were rooted in longstanding rivalries between turf-based fighting gangs and the territorial boundaries that separate them. Boundaries between Mexican-American gangs seemed particularly inflexible when compared to other demarcation lines. Latino gangs also had firmer hierarchies and maintained intense rivalries with one another. West Side African American gangs were always closely connected to the drug trade, while South Side black gangs also had ties to political organizing and more closely resembled the classic organized crime model. Black violence interrupters mediated more conflicts related to the drug trade, because organized drug sales were omnipresent in most of the communities where they worked. They thought many of those gangs had no effective codes of conduct, and that leadership was only about the money.

Competition over women is another leading cause of homicide in Chicago, and violence interrupters needed entirely different strategies to deal with those situations. They tended to avoid getting involved in domestic conflicts, feeling they would have no special influence over the

parties or the outcomes. Apparent disrespect is another homicidal flashpoint, and questioning someone's masculinity can be fatal. Drugs and alcohol could escalate any conflict, but it seemed they could make personal issues particularly volatile. Conflicts over "disrespect" often happened in party situations. It helped that interrupters were familiar with the personalities and interpersonal dynamics of people in the neighborhoods they worked.

Interrupters were supposed to focus on areas in close proximity to CeaseFire's official site boundaries, but many found them too restrictive, and the gangs they monitored were mobile. In the staff survey, 30 percent of violence interrupters estimated that less than half of the people they talked to for information hung out in the target area, and 40 said fewer than half of the conflicts they mediated would have occurred in their target area. The statistical analyses described later in the report monitored crime only in the official sites, and the freewheeling activities of the interrupters did not fit this evaluation model very well.

Forming Community Partnerships

CeaseFire itself was a modest program. The site hosts of necessity had to engage with a diverse set of local partners in order to leverage services and jobs for their clients, access their facilities, gain scale in the distribution of public education materials, and populate the marches and vigils that were held in response to homicides. Building a broad base of support in the community was also an important aspect of partnership-building. To achieve all of this, the sites were encouraged to organize a coalition of local collaborators and hold regular coalition meetings. The report examines the extent of collaboration between the sites and various sectors of the community, including service providers, churches, schools, businesses, community organizations, the police and local political leaders.

Members of the local faith community were regarded as one of CeaseFire's most important local partners. In poor areas that are too often bereft of functioning institutions, the city's many small churches are one of the most vital elements of the community. Most collaborating churches turned out to have separately incorporated not-for-profit arms that provided services; some larger churches also hosted nonprofit housing and community economic development activities. Clergy members are opinion leaders in the community, and they were encouraged to talk about violence, mentor clients, and provide recreational space for programs.

Community organizations provided public input and helped link site activities to the "grassroots." Some also served on hiring panels, and helped generate turnout for marches and shooting responses. Local business owners and managers were asked to display posters and signs as part of the program's public education effort. Their establishments were also a natural place to turn for possible job placements and contributions to support events. CeaseFire staff sometimes provided security on school grounds, and they frequently gave presentations or mentored youth in schools. They worked with school principals, counselors and security personnel.

One of the outreach workers' key tasks was to connect clients with appropriate services. Outreach workers were to develop an assessment of their clients' personal needs, which ranged

from family and health issues to education and employment deficiencies to their emotional state. Following this plan, they were to try to get their clients back in school or in GED programs, help prepare them for the job-finding process, and enroll them in drug and alcohol treatment programs. Some needed to learn more about parenting and daycare, and anger management counseling was often required. At the sites, staff members were tasked with identifying local service resources and working to ensure ready acceptance of their clients when they showed up.

Police turned out to be one of CeaseFire's most frequent collaborators. CeaseFire's supervisory staff needed the immediate information police usually had on shootings and killings. To plan their responses, they needed information on victims and the circumstances of the crime. This cooperation was not automatic, and sometimes connections were broken because of distrust on both sides. In many districts, police officers also provided security at and around CeaseFire events, and blocked traffic for larger marches. Police representatives served on the panels that vetted candidates for staff positions. At the same time, many individual staff members kept an arms length from the police, fearful that being too closely identified could "de-legitimize" them with clients and local gangs.

As the discussion of funding the program indicated, local political leaders played key roles in financing CeaseFire's operations, and even in determining which neighborhoods would be served. The leaders for securing funding were state representatives, for many sites supported funded as member initiatives. Local aldermen could provide general political support for the program, and aldermen were present at some of the site coalition meetings we attended.

The Impact of CeaseFire

The report examines the impact of CeaseFire on shootings and killings. The first approach to this issue utilized statistical models to identify the effect of the introduction of the program on shootings and killings. These analyses employed 210 months (17½ years) of data on selected sites and matched comparison areas to examine trends in violence. We also used crime mapping techniques to examine the impact of the introduction of CeaseFire on short-term trends in the micro-level distribution of shootings. We also examined the possible overlap of the effects of another prominent violence prevention in Chicago, Project Safe Neighborhoods. Each CeaseFire site featured initially at least one "hot spot" of violent crime, and the analyses examined what happened to those hot spots over time in the program and comparison areas. Another statistical analysis focused on gang homicide. It utilized social network analysis to examine the effect of the introduction of CeaseFire on networks of within-gang and between-gang homicides, and the number of violent gangs active in the area.

A limitation of time series analysis in evaluation research is the relatively long period of time that it takes to accumulate post-intervention data. CeaseFire is no exception, and only seven sites, all located in the City of Chicago, were suitable for analysis. Trends in matched comparison areas represented the counterfactual situation of the program areas not being served by CeaseFire during the same period of time. Monthly data, comparison areas and fairly complex analysis methods were required because crime has plummeted in Chicago, and violence was down in both

the target and comparison areas. As a result, the report in essence focuses on whether crime was down more, if crime hot spots moved around or cooled more visibly, and if networks of gang homicide weakened more in the program sites than in the comparison areas, following the implementation of the program.

The table presented below summarizes the main findings. The time series analysis found positive results. In four sites it appears that the introduction of CeaseFire was associated with distinct and statistically significant declines in broad measures of actual and attempted shootings, declines that ranged from 16 to 28 percent. These effects were assessed as “immediate and permanent” in three areas, and “gradual and permanent” in another program site. Gun violence was also down 14-18 percent in West Humboldt Park, but there were parallel declines in its comparison area. The program helped push gun homicides down only in Auburn Gresham, but the report discusses the statistical problems associated with analyzing these relatively rare events. The largest simple percentage declines in violence were actually recorded in Rogers Park, but the low level of crime there and mixed trends in the (inadequate) comparison area did not give us a basis to infer that these declines were due to the program.

Three Approaches to Impact Analysis

	Changes in Violence Due to the Program		
	shootings down ^a	hot spots cooler	gang homicide decline
Auburn-Gresham	-16/- 21%	-15%	gang involvement in homicide down reciprocal killings down
Englewood			
Logan Square	-21%		gang involvement in homicide down reciprocal killings down
Rogers Park		-40%	
Southwest	-20/-23%		gang involvement in homicide down
West Garfield Park	-22/-28%	-24%	reciprocal killings down
West Humboldt Park		-17%	
East Garfield Park	not evaluated	not evaluated	reciprocal killings down gang involvement in homicide down

Note: ^a Two measures: all shots fired, and persons actually shot; gun homicide alone also lower in Auburn-Gresham due to the program

We also addressed the issue of what happened in sites that closed their doors in summer 2007, during CeaseFire’s funding hiatus. Only 11 or 12 months of post-program data were available, not enough for a rigorous statistical analysis. A detailed examination of the existing data did not reveal any dramatic shifts in crime following the closings, when compared to trends in the comparison areas.

The data also helped us address the potential confounding of effects between CeaseFire and another prominent anti-violence program in Chicago, Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). The two programs overlapped in three CeaseFire areas. In each case, CeaseFire was introduced earlier, followed by PSN. A detailed examination of trends in the three areas indicated that trends later along the time line in these areas were largely extensions of patterns established following the introduction of CeaseFire, and the program effects identified by the statistical analyses were an artifact of the introduction of PSN.

The analysis of crime hot spots contrasted shooting patterns before and after the introduction of CeaseFire, with parallel maps detailing changes in shooting patterns in the matched comparison areas. Overall, the program areas grew noticeably safer in six of the seven sites, and we concluded that there was evidence that decreases in the size and intensity of shooting hot spots were linked to the introduction of CeaseFire in four of these areas. In two other areas shooting hot spots waned, but evidence that this decline could be linked to CeaseFire was inconclusive.

The report also considers how homicides within and among gangs changed with the introduction of the program, in contrast to short-term trends in the comparison areas. One statistical measure of interest was changes in the proportion of killings in an area attributable to gangs; by this measure, gang homicide density was down more in two program areas. A second measure was the proportion of gang homicides that were reciprocal in nature; that is, they were seemingly sparked by an earlier killing. These incidents were a special focus of CeaseFire's violence interrupters, and in four sites reciprocal killings in retaliation for earlier events decreased more in the program beats than in the comparison areas. A third measure, average gang involvement in homicide, pointed to greater improvements in three of the areas.

The report considers a number of difficulties with the data and research design. Even the findings of three different approaches only provide a general indicator of the effectiveness of the program. The analyses did not incorporate any measures of the strength of the programs; rather, a simple before-after dichotomy identified pre-program and post-program months of data. There also may have been issues with our designation of when the program began; we choose the month by which community mobilization and public education efforts were underway and outreach workers were on staff and beginning to identify clients. The violence interrupter component of the program was developed later. We obviously could examine only events that were reported to the police and recorded by them. Also, the time series analyses examined crime rates because beat populations changed differentially over the 17-year time frame, and there doubtless were errors in projecting site population figures forward from the 2000 Census.

This was not a neat laboratory experiment, leading to other problems. There was a great deal of spillover in the geographical targeting of interventions. The survey of clients revealed that they frequently lived or were active in areas in the vicinity of the officially targeted beats. Activity reports completed by violence interrupters indicated that they ranged widely, following gang activities. Outreach worker and violence interrupter activity in the evaluation's matched comparison areas could lead us to underestimate the impact of the program in nearby target areas,

because the intervention was not neatly contained within their official boundaries. Other programs were operating in and around the study areas, although we avoided the most significant of them when selecting comparison areas, and they could further contaminate the findings.

In addition, all of the analyses relied on matched comparison groups to represent the counterfactual situation of CeaseFire sites being without programs. However, in principle researchers always under match, and non-randomized comparison groups will inevitably differ from their program counterparts on a host of unmeasured factors. This is linked to the last problem: lying in the background of the evaluation is a huge drop in violence in Chicago, one that began in 1992. The reasons for this decline are, as elsewhere in the nation, ill-understood, and we could not account for possible remaining differences between the target and comparison areas in terms of those obviously important factors.