

# A Multi-Method Community Based Approach to Assessing Gun Violence in High-Risk Chicago Communities



The Chicago Gun Violence Research Collaborative

Myles Castro, MPH<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Schober, PhD, MPH<sup>2</sup>,  
Fernando De Maio, PhD<sup>2</sup>, Christopher Ahmed, MPH<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Sinai Urban Health Institute, <sup>2</sup>DePaul University

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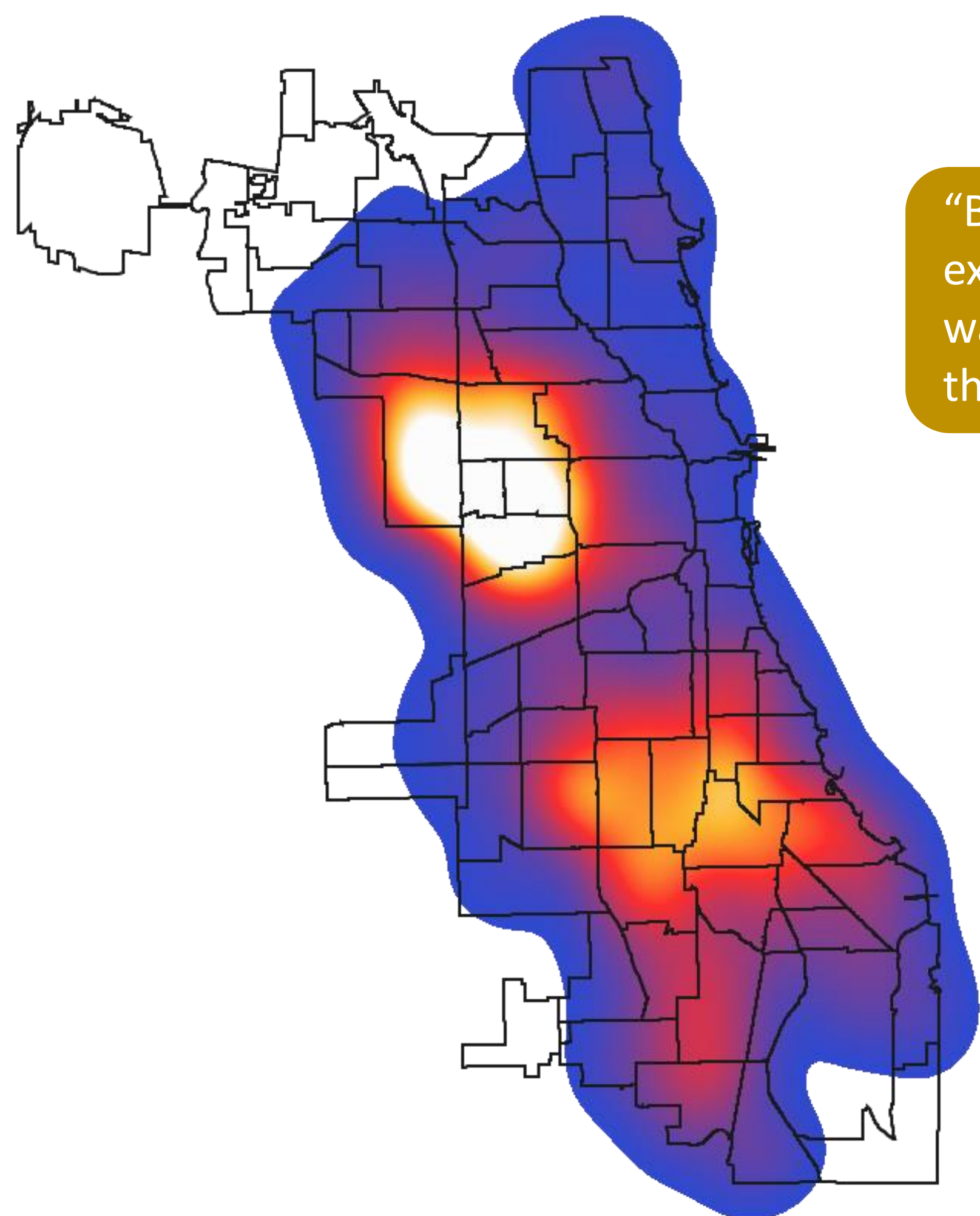


## Purpose

To describe an approach to conduct community-based research and lead social action to address gun violence in Chicago.

## Introduction

- The Chicago Gun Violence Research Collaborative (CGVRC) is a local, multi-sector research initiative of academic researchers with a mission to address gun violence in Chicago.
- In 2016, there was a 43% increase in aggravated battery with a firearm from 2015, and 764 homicides in Chicago, of which 90% involved a firearm. Chicago has more homicides per 100,000 people than New York, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia combined<sup>1</sup>.
- Chicago gun violence disproportionately affects African American and disadvantaged populations in the West and South Sides of Chicago. Almost 80% of all homicide victims are African American, despite comprising less than a third of the population of Chicago<sup>1</sup>.
- Almost a third of homicides in 2016 occurred in 5 of the 77 communities in Chicago located in the West and South Sides<sup>1</sup>.
- Despite accessible secondary data on gun violence, limited research is available to determine community perceptions of gun violence, particularly in Chicago.



"If a 12 year old, can have a gun, but yet cannot get a meal prior to school, we're missing so much. We're just missing a lot." (Public Policy)

"But the gun violence here, that's also been exacerbated as well. Because you know, we have a way of controlling the narrative in this country through media, through publications." (Community)

"The problem are the silos. The problem is that so many people are doing work that no one else knows about and so we're not accessing those resources." (Organization)

"But the reality is that like some of these schools, there's 70 eighth graders and only 20 of them are graduating, 20 out of 70. Why is that? Because in their minds they're being told, well you're not gonna do anything anyway. You're not even going to get to high school." (Individual)



Figure 2. Socio-Ecological Model

Table 1. Key Informant Interview Perceptions of Gun Violence Themes

Results		
Problems Related to Gun Violence	Socio-Ecological Level	Potential Solutions to Gun Violence
Gaps in firearm regulations	Public Policy	Improved firearm laws and monitoring
Negative messages from the media and community	Community	Reframing dialog
Siloed organizations	Organization	Increase organizational partnerships
Poor social influence	Interpersonal	Mentorship
Negative self-perceptions	Individual	Respect and empower youth

"A lot of people feel like they could come in with their little bag of stuff and fix what's going on and it's not that simple... You have to come in and know what's going on to be able to affect change." (Public Policy)

"It [mentorship] would certainly address relevant areas that would maybe intersect with gun violence, but mentorship certainly. I know having a positive adult role model in your life is one of the more important features of guarding against becoming an at-risk adolescent." (Interpersonal)

"I think there has to be an opportunity for kids to tell their story." (Individual)

## Methods

A six-month fellowship of 16 students and six faculty across six academic institutions and community partners focused on violence prevention in four Chicago communities with a high prevalence of gun violence: Austin, Englewood, Garfield Park, and North Lawndale by:

- 1.) utilizing a multi-sector community participatory approach (Business, Education, Faith-based, Health, Social/Community) to compile publicly available information that allowed for the creating of community risk and resiliency profiles.
- 2.) identifying more than 300 community assets and catalogued violence prevention efforts in a community inventory.
- 3.) learning geographic information system (GIS) skills to create visualization products such as a story map.
- 4.) conducting 15 key informant interviews with community leaders to provide perceptions of gun violence, ideas for gun violence prevention, and research needs related to gun violence.

## Conclusion

Local data, perspectives, and visual maps gathered and developed by the CGVRC Fellowship inform strategies to reduce gun violence and strengthen communities. The CGVRC Fellowship serves as a model for future participatory-based research in gun violence prevention.

## Acknowledgements

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## References

<sup>1</sup>Kapustin, M. et al., (2017). Gun Violence in Chicago, 2016. Chicago: University of Chicago Crime Lab.

Figure 1. Aggravated Battery with a Handgun