CREATING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR A DIFFERENT OUTCOME

READI CHICAGO
A HEARTLAND ALLIANCE PROGRAM

Program Model Development & Overview
Miguel Cambray
Chicago homicide rate, 1985-2016

768 Homicide Victims

2016
27.8

2015
17.5

Year

Homicides per 100,000


0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
READI CHICAGO IS AN INNOVATIVE RESPONSE TO GUN VIOLENCE.

In response to a spike in gun violence in Chicago in 2016, Heartland Alliance and six partner community organizations launched the READI Chicago pilot to connect men at the highest risk of gun violence involvement with cognitive behavioral therapy, paid transitional jobs, and support services.

WE ARE DRIVEN TO:

• Decrease shootings and homicides
• Create pathways for better life outcomes
• Promote long-term safety and opportunity in Chicago’s most impoverished communities
READI born out of researcher-practitioner collaboration

Collaborative discussions between researchers and Heartland Alliance

Review of evidence

Basic program model

CBT+
JOBS
Three referral pathways to READI

Community Referrals
Participants identified based on partner community outreach organizations’ experience and expertise

Reentry Referrals
Previously-incarcerated individuals who are reentering their communities from IDOC or CCSO facilities

Urban Labs Referrals
Individuals referred by the Urban Labs Risk Assessment, which uses machine learning to predict one’s risk of gun violence involvement

Photo credit: Heartland Alliance
24 Months of Programming

**Relentless Engagement**
Intensive outreach that won’t give up on difficult-to-engage participants

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**
CBT infused throughout READI including group sessions

**Employment Opportunities**
Skill development, increased responsibilities, pay raises

**Support Services**
One-on-one development sessions, referrals to critical supports

Photo credit: *Chicago Tribune*
READI DESIGN PRINCIPLES & DECISIONS

READI was designed to engage, retain, and serve people at the highest risk of gun violence. Program design features informed by this objective include:

• Highly focused service population, primarily those not seeking services
• Extended engagement period—up to 24 months of engagement
• Very low barriers to entry for programming and employment
• Cohort-based enrollment and work experience
• Multiple chances to make mistakes and reenter programming and employment to try again
• Opportunities for advancement within programming
• Programming rooted in trauma-informed care and harm reduction principles
• Program partners embedded in communities with capacity-building goals
READI Chicago experiences underscore the importance of addressing complex participant needs through a tiered model grounded in evidence-based interventions.

**Increased Needs**
- **Multiple and Complex Needs (MCN)**
  - Ex. Experiencing homelessness, currently offending, problematic substance use, and behavioral health issues

**Moderate Support Needs (MSN)**
- Ex. Experiencing employment barriers, ongoing legal involvement, housing instability

**All participants**
- Men at the highest risk of gun violence involvement

**Highest Level Programming**
- Core Programming +
- Intensive Program +
- Individualized treatment and supports
- Access to transitional housing assistance

**Intensive Programming**
- Core Programming +
- Care coordination and access to behavioral health services
- Family engagement and supports
- Victim and legal services

**Core Programming**
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Paid professional and skill development, coaching, and access to work experience
- Individualized employment support
- Peer Mentorship

**And targeted investments**
- Require more specialized programming
- Over a longer period of engagement

**READI CHICAGO**
- A HEARTLAND ALLIANCE PROGRAM
PARTICIPANT SNAPSHOTS

- **95%**
  - African-American

- **80%**
  - Have been a victim of violence

- **83%**
  - Have lost a family member to violence

- **96%**
  - Have been arrested

- **61%**
  - Have children

- **64%**
  - Have served time in prison

- **70%**
  - Aspire to obtain post-high school education

Data as of April 30, 2021 – updated monthly
In READI’s first three years, in partnership with the University of Chicago Crime Lab and Heartland Alliance Social IMPACT Research Center, we are seeing:

- READI is finding the right participants
  - 97% have been arrested, on average 17 times, including four felony arrests
  - 48% have been arrested for a serious violent crime
  - 47% experienced a violent crime at or before the age of 15
  - 34% have been shot

- READI participants are staying engaged in programming over time
  - 57% of eligible participants start programming over 20 months
  - 72% of men who start employment continued to receive a paycheck after six months; 56% continue to work after 12 months
  - Participants who continued to work have done so for at least 79% of the weeks available to them

- READI may help keep participants safer

Based on 20-month outcomes from the University of Chicago Crime Lab
READI CHICAGO BY THE NUMBERS
As of Apr. 2021

2,456 participants eligible for READI

$9M + wages & stipends paid directly to participants

1000+ of those have started transitional job engagement

$20.5M invested in community partner staff & capacity building

300,000+ hours worked

$25,000 average annual per participant cost
“I knew I needed to steer myself in the right direction and focus on what matters. Now I look at READI as a privilege, something to aspire to.”

–Ubeka, participant
Q&A

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