

# Advancing Community-Engaged Policing and Alternate Response Strategies in Chicago:

A Summary of Themes from the Community Engagement Initiative  
Focused on the Public Safety and Wellbeing of all Chicagoans

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**THE INTERSECT**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in November 2024 through early February 2025, eight community-based nonprofit

organizations in Chicago were selected to co-create and advance a strategy for engaging Chicago residents and community members to inform the operationalization of the Chicago Police Department's community policing strategy and the Mayor's Office of Chicago expansion of alternate response strategies.

The themes emerging from feedback from residents and community members, which are presented in this report, are critical inputs in plans to advance community-engaged policing<sup>1</sup> and alternate response strategies in Chicago. This report is one of several inputs into the overarching strategic and implementation plans that the Mayor's Office of Chicago, and the Chicago Police Department are developing.

Based on residents' feedback, Chicagoans feel strongly that the city should be a place where people feel safe, welcomed, and their wellbeing is addressed in holistic, tailored, and consistent ways. Many residents across the community engagement initiative reiterated that they appreciated being engaged in this effort and they are eager to see how their feedback will be used to advance concrete policy and practice changes.

**Through this initiative Chicago residents said they want to see policing practices that include:**

- Proactive, visible, timely, and efficient engagement by law enforcement in communities including a commitment to foot and bike patrols, community, organization, and business engagement.
- A commitment to building trusting relationships with community members that are free from bias and stereotyping.
- Being engaged with care, empathy, and the appropriate mix of service professionals when there are calls for help.

**Residents raised a set of actions that the Chicago Police Department can take to advance community-engaged policing practices:**

- Commitment by leadership and individuals at all ranks of the Chicago Police Department to advance a vision, policies, and practices consistent with community-engaged policing.
- Consistent community engagement that is codified as part of the Chicago Police Department's overall vision and operating structure.
- Continuous training opportunities particularly around issues of de-escalation and use of force, cultural and community competency, responsiveness to mental or behavioral health calls for

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<sup>1</sup> Through the community engagement process, residents and community-based organizations engaged in this process recommended using the phrase "community engaged policing" instead of "community policing." Throughout the report we have adopted this language.

service, and trauma-informed training.

- Greater and more transparent police accountability through multiple channels and mechanisms.

Residents have mixed feelings about police and non-police interventions when asked about who should respond to a range of different calls for service. Residents recognize the value in triaging calls for service, reducing silos across law enforcement and other trained professionals, and adapting response teams to meet the needs of Chicago residents.

Taken together, Chicago residents and organizations are eager to see the Chicago Police Department and Mayor's Office of Chicago advance community-engaged policing practices and alternate response strategies as critical elements to ensure that all Chicagoans feel safe, welcomed, and have their needs met.