



Community Safety Leadership Academies

Empowering Leaders to Close America's Safety Gap

OVERVIEW

In 2020, American cities witnessed the largest nationwide rise in murders in 50 years, with many setting homicide records. Improving overall public safety and closing these safety gaps will require long-term, sustained investments to address 'root causes'—improving education, reducing poverty, and eliminating segregation. But in the short-term, the day-to-day work of saving lives falls primarily to two sectors of front-line first responders that must shoulder the load: police and community violence intervention (CVI) organizations. Unfortunately, for different reasons, neither sector has been able to capitalize on advances in data-driven management practices that have transformed many other sectors, for example medicine and technology. As a result, neither has been able to deliver as much social good per dollar spent as our cities need.

In response, we are leading the University of Chicago Community Safety Leadership Academies (CSLA), comprised of two academies: the Policing Leadership Academy (PLA) and CVI Leadership Academy (CVILA). The PLA and CVILA offer first-of-their kind programs to train the next generation of policing and CVI leaders from across America—with the goal of having national impact—and are being rigorously evaluated.



Pritzker Director of the University of Chicago Crime Lab Jens Ludwig speaks at the Community Safety Leadership Academies launch event.



The CSLA draws on the best data, behavioral science insights, and learnings from the field to offer curricula focused on bringing the leadership and management practices of policing and community violence interventions into the twenty-first century.

This effort brings together data and behavioral science insights of top academics at one of the world's leading research institutions along with our nation's leading safety practitioners who have a demonstrated track record of real-world success. The Academies run simultaneously and with complementary curricula, focusing on the transformational impact leadership and management can have, aiming to be the most impactful public safety trainings ever offered in the United States.

POLICING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The PLA is led by policing experts from around the country with a proven history of having radically transformed departments to increase public safety effectiveness and fairness.

The program offers a multidisciplinary curriculum that spans five months. Students apply knowledge from the behavioral, organizational, and sociological sciences to become stronger leaders and advance effective evidence-based practices within their organizations. The setup is as follows: one week a month in Chicago, with some virtual learning during the rest of the month. The first cohort of 25 captain/commander-level leaders from localities around the country and world began in May 2023. All travel and related expenses are covered so there is no financial cost to participating departments.

CVI LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The CVI Leadership Academy helps prepare the next generation of CVI leaders on issues like staff management and retention, data use, program administration, and innovation.

This academy provides necessary support to this field: While community-based gun violence intervention programs have operated for over two decades, several factors have spurred increased urgency to expand the capacity and effectiveness of the sector, including the recent surge in gun violence, the failure of a law enforcement-only approach to keep communities safe, and promising evidence that CVI programs can be effective. Randomized controlled trials of CVI programs like Youth Guidance's Becoming a Man, Choose to Change by Brightpoint (formerly Children's Home + Aid) and Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP), and Heartland Alliance's READI Chicago provide policymakers with promising new options for preventing gun violence in the first place.

Beginning in September 2023, the CVI Leadership Academy enrolled 31 diverse leaders representing priority communities across the United States experiencing high rates of gun violence. Participants hold senior or executive-level leadership positions with community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience implementing CVI strategies in alignment with the values and principles embraced by the CVI Academy.



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