



University of Chicago Community Safety Leadership Academy Celebrates Graduation of Inaugural Policing Cohort

Police Leaders Serving Cities Representing 20% of Homicides in America Will Use Leadership and Management Learnings to Save Lives in Their Communities

CHICAGO, IL – Today, the University of Chicago Crime Lab graduated its inaugural cohort of the Policing Leadership Academy (PLA), the only police management and leadership training program in the country specifically designed to increase safety and fairness in America's most violent neighborhoods. As cities continue to grapple with high rates of gun violence, police leaders from departments across America completed a rigorous six-month education program focused on helping them address it through data-driven management, violence reduction strategies, and building community trust. The graduation of the first cohort of students means that rising police leaders will now implement learnings in their communities, which represent 20% of homicides in America.

"The University of Chicago Crime Lab is proud to be at the forefront of innovation in policing and community safety. We believe that education and leadership development are crucial elements in addressing the complex challenges our cities face," said **Roseanna Ander, Executive Director of the University of Chicago Crime Lab**. "The graduates of the Policing Leadership Academy are leaving well-equipped to lead their departments towards more effective, accountable, and community-centered policing."

Making up the PLA are 25 rising police leaders from 24 police departments, including Philadelphia, Chicago, Dallas, and New York City. These leaders oversee policing in some of America's highest-violence police districts. Collectively, they serve cities comprising over 20% of homicides in America.

Unlike traditional police training, the PLA provides an in-depth education. Its six-month curriculum is interactive and practical, with students learning about inclusive and ethical leadership, risk management, trust and constitutional policing, and strategic thinking. The curriculum also involves a unique capstone project in which the students take the lessons they've learned to implement solutions to real issues in their home districts.

"As the new Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department and a longtime educator at CPD's training academy, I understand the complexities and challenges that law enforcement leaders face," said **Larry Snelling, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department**. "The Policing Leadership Academy's commitment to equipping rising police leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the intricate landscape of modern policing is commendable. It is vital that we empower the next generation of law enforcement professionals with the tools and insights necessary to build safer communities."

[Research](#) by the University of Chicago Crime Lab demonstrates that changes in police department management can significantly reduce violent crime rates and police use of force. The PLA draws inspiration from the experiences of Los Angeles and New York City, where early adoption of data-driven management contributed to substantial reductions in violent crime rates.

"With the graduation of the Policing Leadership Academy's first cohort, communities across the country will benefit," said **Charlie Beck, former Police Commissioner of the Los Angeles**

Police Department and former Interim Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department.

"Helping leaders focus on data-driven management and building community trust is a bold first step towards transforming policing across America."

The PLA is part of the [University of Chicago Community Safety Leadership Academies](#), which comprises both the PLA and the Community Violence Intervention Leadership Academy (CVILA). The CVILA is currently hosting its [first cohort of community violence intervention leaders](#).

"The Community Safety Leadership Academies will foster more effective and efficient collaborative efforts between law enforcement and community violence intervention leaders – both of whom are working toward our shared goal of a safer and more inclusive future for all," said **Dr. Chico Tillmon, Director of the CVILA**. "Together, we're building bridges, forging partnerships, and empowering our graduates to navigate the complex terrain of public safety, ensuring that our communities thrive."

Leading researchers from top universities are conducting a multi-city, randomized controlled trial to assess the PLA's impact on safety and fairness outcomes in America's most violence-affected neighborhoods. The PLA will host its second and third cohorts in 2024.

The Community Safety Leadership Academies are supported by Citadel Founder and CEO Kenneth C. Griffin, Michael Sacks, Tom and Susan Dunn, IMC, OCC, RJ Melman, and Lettuce Entertain You, John DeBlasio, United Airlines, Matt Hinerfeld and Nora Jaskowiak, Jeff & Maggie Shapack and Shapack Partners, Neubauer Family Foundation, Dalio Education's Connecticut Opportunity Project, Ken O'Keefe, Keegan Bonebrake, and Motorola Solutions. We're grateful for their generous support.

"The Policing Leadership Academy shows the magic of applying management and leadership best practices to the challenges facing our American cities, and we are proud to help support this effort," said **RJ Melman, President, Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises**. "I congratulate the inaugural class of the Policing Leadership Academy and look forward to witnessing the transformative impact they will have on community safety in Chicago and around the country."

Graduates in the PLA's inaugural cohort represent the following cities:

- Arlington, Texas
- Aurora, Colorado
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Chicago, Illinois
- Cleveland, Ohio
- Dallas, Texas
- Detroit, Michigan
- Indianapolis, Indiana
- Knoxville, Tennessee
- Los Angeles, California
- Madison, Wisconsin
- Manchester, United Kingdom
- Miami, Florida
- Miami-Dade County, Florida
- New Orleans, Louisiana
- New York City, New York

- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Phoenix, Arizona
- St. Louis, Missouri
- Waco, Texas
- Washington, D.C.
- Wichita, Kansas
- Yavapai Nation, Fort McDowell Police Department

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The University of Chicago Community Safety Leadership Academies is an initiative of the [University of Chicago Crime Lab](#). It includes the Policing Leadership Academy (PLA) and the Community Violence Intervention Leadership Academy (CVILA), first-of-their-kind programs to train the next generation of policing and community violence intervention leaders from across America.