

SEPTEMBER 2024

# Policing Leadership Academy (PLA)

The University of Chicago Crime Lab launched its Policing Leadership Academy (PLA) in May 2023. This first-of-its-kind education trains America’s policing leaders working in some of our most violent neighborhoods.

## ABOUT THE PLA

The PLA is a violence reduction initiative that aims to prevent violent crime, support officers, and improve fairness and effectiveness in policing. We do this by developing better police management practices nationwide and in select cities globally, with a focus on many of America’s highest-violence geographies.

The academy, which is being rigorously evaluated to measure its effectiveness, addresses a persistent training gap by providing a five-month, robust management and leadership education to police at the commander level and at no cost to the department.

## FOCUS ON POLICE COMMANDERS

Investing in law enforcement management education can transform public safety in an entire city simply by training a few handfuls of key people.

Currently, there are no national standards, curriculum, or best practices for training and supporting police commanders/ captains/majors - the rank that oversee police precincts and station houses. Police commanders don’t directly supervise patrol officers - they supervise the supervisors and can exert much greater influence over local patrol behavior than department leadership. The PLA is the only police management and leadership education program in the country solely focused on this critical rank of police leader.



### Responsible for:

- Between 50-300 sworn officers
- Between 10-40 professional staff
- Between 4-300 sq miles
- Population: 30,000-300,000 people
- Works with two or more political officials on community problems (city council, alderperson, board of supervisor, etc.)
- Works with community leaders and business leaders.

The PLA builds on [prior research from the Crime Lab](#) showing that changes in police department management can drive reductions in both violent crime rates and police use of force. The five-month curriculum provides hands-on training in data-driven management, violence reduction, and community trust.

## THE CURRICULUM

The PLA is led by policing experts who offer a five-month multidisciplinary curriculum with students in residence in Chicago for one week each month. The PLA builds capacity in reducing violent crime, building community trust, strategic leadership, and data-driven management.

Participants also complete a capstone project, with the support of a dedicated capstone coach, focused on solving an entrenched issue in their home districts.

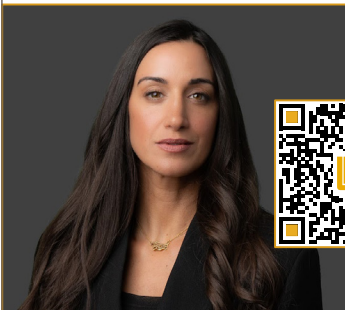
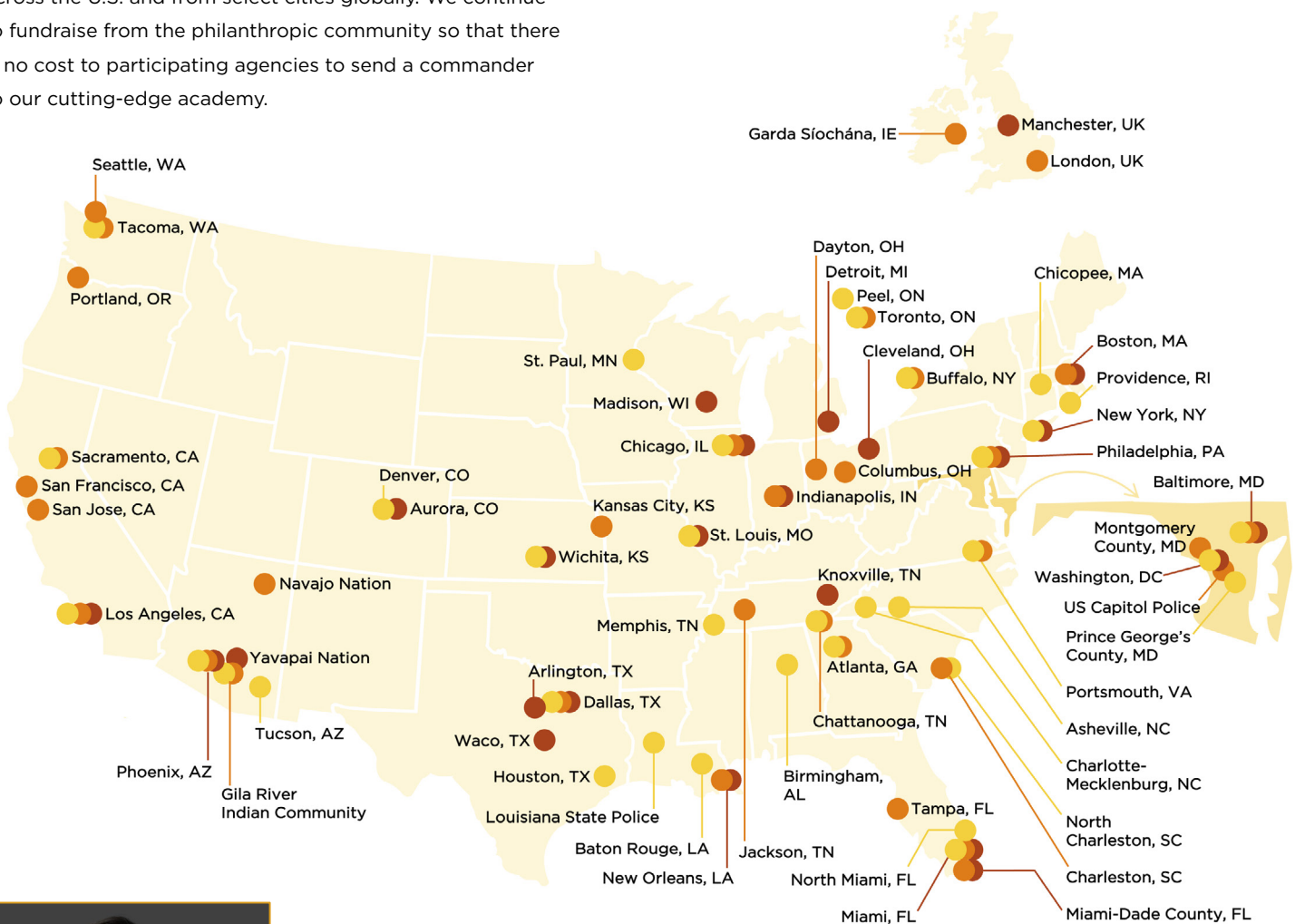
## WHERE WE'RE WORKING

The first three cohorts included 95 police leaders from across the U.S. and from select cities globally. We continue to fundraise from the philanthropic community so that there is no cost to participating agencies to send a commander to our cutting-edge academy.

## ENSURING WHAT WE TEACH WORKS

To test the PLA's effectiveness, researchers at the University of Chicago Crime Lab, the University of Pennsylvania, and Cornell University's Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy are conducting a multi-city, randomized controlled trial to measure the impact of investing in police commanders' leadership and management skills. The evidence generated by this work will inform policing leadership and educational initiatives for generations to come.

● Cohort 1 ● Cohort 2 ● Cohort 3



## CONTACT US

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