

NEWS

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Government Alliance for Safe Communities and UCAN Capacity Building Network Launches to Fortify Chicago-Area Violence Prevention Efforts

CHICAGO—A groundbreaking partnership between multiple governments and a leading non-profit has culminated in the launch of the NETWORK, a new capacity-building hub serving small organizations working to prevent violence in their communities. This unprecedented initiative provides free technical assistance and support to community violence intervention (CVI) organizations throughout the Chicago region, ensuring they have the institutional skills and infrastructure needed for long-term impact.

The Network is a cornerstone project of the Government Alliance for Safe Communities (GASC)—a unified effort involving the State of Illinois, Cook County, and the City of Chicago. UCAN, a nationally recognized leader in youth development and violence prevention, serves as the anchor organization, administering specialized capacity-building services.

The program launched today with 34 community organizations attending a day-long orientation. This inaugural cohort consists of organizations that are supported with GASC CVI funding, have received GASC CVI funding within the past 12 months, and other organizations that actively engage in CVI work and are yet unfunded.

"We are redefining and reimagining capacity building," said **Delrice Adams, Executive Director of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority**. "Hyper-local organizations are doing incredible work in their vulnerable communities, but they often lack the infrastructure needed to meet the compliance requirements for grant administration with the state. Our Network initiative directly addresses this by

replicating ICJIA's proven Institute 2 Innovate (i2i) model, which helps organizations build essential infrastructure for long-term sustainability."

Despite securing grant funding, frontline CVI organizations often face significant challenges in managing grant administration, financial compliance, data tracking, and strategic leadership. These administrative burdens often divert critical resources and time away from direct intervention work.

The NETWORK directly addresses capacity challenges by offering tailored training designed to build resilient organizations. Services provided by the Network include grant readiness and administration, organizational development, and performance and data management.

"The GASC was formed to strengthen our local community safety ecosystem," said **Lanetta Haynes Turner, Chief of Staff for Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle**. "We have worked to eliminate barriers and support community organizations by streamlining public funding opportunities and data collection practices. The GASC Capacity Building Network takes this work to the next level by providing customized support designed to help organizations navigate challenges, meet their goals and thrive in an ever-changing landscape."

The collaboration ensures a unified, coordinated strategy across jurisdictional lines, maximizing the effectiveness of public investment in violence prevention. By leveraging the expertise of GASC and the deep community roots of UCAN, the Network provides support that is both strategically sound and culturally competent.

"UCAN is excited to partner with GASC as the anchor organization for the NETWORK," said **Christa Hamilton, UCAN President and Chief Executive Officer**. "This is a unique and innovative collaboration and a powerful opportunity to equip local organizations with the tools and resources they need to become more sustainable and create lasting impact. As a trusted community partner and pillar, UCAN is uniquely positioned to anchor this project and ensure its success for the communities we serve."

The Network is designed to support CVI organizations at various stages of growth by providing access to vetted subject-matter experts. This capacity-building structure is critical to ensuring that successful, life-saving programs can scale and endure well into the future.

CVI and violence prevention organizations in the Chicago region are encouraged to learn more about the free technical assistance and support services offered by the UCAN GASC Capacity Building Network.



The NETWORK's Inaugural Cohort includes the following community organizations:

A Knock at Midnight	Puerto Rican Cultural Center
Breakthrough Ministries	R2C2
Bridging The Gap HP	Reestablishing Hope Inc.
Catholic Church Archdiocese of Chicago DBA Saint Sabina/Violence Prevention	Roseland Ceasefire Project Inc.
Englewood Hero's	SGA Youth and Family Services
Enlace Chicago	Sinai Health System
Envision Community Services	Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)
Expanded Mental Health Services of Chicago NFP	Strengthening Our Community Alliance
Fierce Women of Faith, Inc.	Target Area
GRO Community	The Firehouse Community Art Center
H.O.P.E. Culture Chicago Inc.	THINK OUTSIDE DA BLOCK
Hug A Child NFP	Together Chicago, Inc.
Lawndale Christian Legal Center	Unstacked Inc.
Lifeline to Hope, Inc.	Urban ROOTS Alliance
New Eclipse Community Alliance	What About Us Charitable Enterprises
No Brother Left Behind	YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago
Project H.O.O.D.	Youth Crossroads

To learn more or apply for capacity building services, please visit www.strongorgs.com.

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