

CHICAGO SPORTS FRANCHISES RENEW ALLIANCE FOR FOURTH YEAR TO SUPPORT SOLUTIONS ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE

Chicago Bears, Blackhawks, Bulls, Cubs and White Sox Continue Collaboration to Support READI Chicago & University of Chicago Crime Lab

JULY 16 – The [Chicago Sports Alliance](#), a collaboration between the Chicago Bears, Blackhawks, Bulls, Cubs and White Sox that began in 2017, announced it will move forward for a fourth year to combine the reach and resources of the iconic franchises in support of impactful, evidence-based solutions to gun violence in the city. As part of its ongoing efforts, the Chicago Sports Alliance and the [Robert R. McCormick Foundation](#) will provide a total of \$1.5 million in grants to support [READI Chicago](#) (Rapid Employment and Development Initiative) and the [University of Chicago Crime Lab](#).

READI Chicago, which has been supported by the Alliance for three years, is a gun violence reduction initiative that engages those at the highest risk of being shot or shooting someone else and has given hundreds of men the opportunity to participate in 18-months of focused transitional job training and cognitive behavioral interventions. With sites serving Austin, Englewood, North Lawndale, Greater Englewood and West Garfield Park, READI Chicago is the first program of its scope, scale and participant population ever to be implemented. They have connected more than 800 men with services since launching in 2017. [Preliminary analysis](#) by the Crime Lab shows that participating in READI may reduce shootings and homicides—the costliest forms of violence—by 32 percent.

“Our partnership with the Chicago Sports Alliance really embodies the collaborative, citywide approach that we need to combat gun violence in our city,” said READI Chicago Senior Director Eddie Bocanegra. “The support of the Sports Alliance helps us continue to deliver strong programming to some of our most marginalized Chicagoans, but more importantly, it emphasizes to the men we work with that they are valuable and have the support of the Chicago community behind them.”

Since the Alliance’s inception, the Crime Lab has worked closely with the five teams to identify promising data-driven approaches to reduce gun violence with the goal of measuring the impact of the investments and generating evidence, which could then be used to encourage additional donors to support these programs. Through the Alliance’s investment in Choose to Change (C2C) in 2017, the Crime Lab was able to generate evidence to show that participation in the program reduced violent crime arrests by 48 percent and increased school engagement by six percent (equivalent to an additional seven days of school). In response to these findings, the City of Chicago and Chicago Public Schools [announced a multi-year investment](#) in 2020 to scale C2C to serve more than 2,000 students at the highest risk of gun violence involvement over three years.

“The Chicago Sports Alliance is setting a powerful example by investing directly in some of the most promising approaches to reduce the tragic gun violence in our home city and doing so in ways that generate insights about what is working,” said University of Chicago Crime Lab Executive Director Roseanna Ander. “While they may wear different uniforms on the field, they are on the same team when it comes to doing something to help make a measurable difference on our city’s most urgent and pressing challenge.”

Working collectively as the Chicago Sports Alliance, \$4 million in grants have since been invested in innovative solutions informed by the research and analysis of the Crime Lab; an additional \$1.5 million in matching grants from the McCormick Foundation has also been provided since 2019, for a total of \$5.5 million in funding. Grants have supported C2C, Little Village Prevention and Intervention Initiative, READI Chicago, the University of Chicago Crime Lab and analyst training by the Crime Lab for the Chicago Police Department’s Strategic Decision Support Centers.

“We are enthusiastic about supporting the Chicago Sports Alliance’s commitment to addressing gun violence in the city,” said McCormick Foundation Program Officer Anna LauBach. “This investment, where McCormick will provide a \$500,000 match, aligns with the McCormick Foundation’s goal of helping to make Chicago a city where people are safe and treated fairly. We are in full support of investing in direct service support to individuals at heightened risk or being victims or perpetuating violence.”

The teams will continue to evaluate the Chicago Sports Alliance’s impact on an annual basis. Decisions regarding programs that will receive future funding will be made as the effort progresses.

To download the Chicago Sports Alliance logo, please click [here](#).

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