



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 2024

CONTACT

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON AND CITY OF CHICAGO LAUNCH "TAKE BACK THE BLOCK" INITIATIVE TO FOSTER SAFER COMMUNITIES

Initiative aims to bring the full force of government together with residents to create a safer Chicago, block by block

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Brandon Johnson, in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Community Safety (MOCS), announced the launch of the "Take Back the Block" initiative. This program is designed to foster community engagement, reduce violent crime, and demonstrate the City's unwavering commitment to community safety and development.

In response to recent incidents of gun violence, Mayor Johnson has called for a unified governmental approach to support impacted communities. Being present in communities allows the full force of government to develop a more intimate understanding of local needs and enhance the ability to address those needs effectively. The inaugural activation was held today on the Near West Side, the site of a recent mass shooting, and will continue to be held on Fridays throughout the summer.

"As we move into the summer months, it is imperative that our communities feel the City's steadfast commitment to safety and collaborative solutions," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "Keeping communities safe is not a burden that can be carried by any of us alone. Our 'Take Back the Block' initiative is an opportunity for the full force of government to stand with the community for an all-hands-on-deck approach to building a safer Chicago, block by block."

"Take Back the Block" activations are designed to energize and inspire residents, create prosocial opportunities, connect communities with local government and provide infrastructure improvements. The engagements are planned for July 12, July 19, July 26, August 2 and August 30 and will take place in blocks or block groups experiencing high levels of violence.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



"We need to 'Take Back the Block' to embody our commitment to safety and proactive community engagement," said **Deputy Mayor of the Office of Community Safety Garien Gatewood**. "We are focusing on creating tangible, positive changes in our neighborhoods by working directly with residents, community organizations, faith leaders and the entire Johnson administration. This initiative is about more than just addressing violence; it's about fostering a sense of unity, resilience, and pride within our communities."

"Take Back the Block" will lift-up the City's programs aimed at reducing and preventing violence such as Peacekeepers and other youth activities, and investments in mental health, including the work of community-based organizations like Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development, Inc. (BUILD, Inc.), to support the well-being of residents. The City will also highlight initiatives for victims and survivors, such as the Emergency Supplemental Victims Fund (ESVF) and the Hospital Based Violence Prevention (HBVP) RFP. The HBVP RFP is funded by \$3 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds through Mayor Johnson's ARPA [Road to Recovery Plan](#). The ESVF program is also funded through a combination of ARPA and City dollars.

Today's launch of the "Take Back the Block" initiative follows a week-long focus on community safety. On Monday, Mayor Johnson was joined by Chicago Police Department (CPD) Superintendent Snelling at a press conference to address recent violence and call for federal support. On Tuesday, Mayor Johnson joined the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) to launch the Cycle Breakers initiative to provide mentorship, mental health support, and conflict de-escalation resources for youth. Tuesday also saw the City stand up an Emergency Assistance Center on the Near West Side to provide critical resources and services to victims and survivors of recent violent incidents. Wednesday, Mayor Johnson joined business and other civic leaders to announce \$100 million in philanthropic funding for community violence intervention. On Thursday, the One Summer Chicago program was expanded to offer over 27,000 jobs for youth, reinforcing the City's safety strategy. Additionally, Mayor Johnson joined CPD as they honored Officer Vasquez Lasso who was killed in the line of duty last year.

"Today marks the beginning of a concerted effort to reclaim our streets until every resident feels secure in their community," said **Mayor Johnson**. "This initiative brings together the Mayor's Office, CPD, CDPH, community-based organizations, faith leaders, residents and young people, all united in the mission to end violence."



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



While this week's focus on community safety has been significant, the Johnson administration reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the prioritization of community safety this week and every week to come.

###