



NEWS RELEASE

Chicago Police Department

David O. Brown
Superintendent

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Contact: Office of News Affairs
312-745-6110

CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT AND MAYOR'S OFFICE OF VIOLENCE REDUCTION AWARDED NEARLY \$1 MILLION GRANT TO IMPROVE INVESTIGATIONS AND RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Grant funds to support CPD who will partner with advocates to improve Department policies and officer training in areas of domestic violence, sexual misconduct, and T and U Visas.

CHICAGO - The Chicago Police Department (CPD) and the Mayor's Office of Violence Reduction today announced that the City has been awarded nearly \$1 million in grant funding to support efforts that will improve the Department's investigations and response towards gender-based violence in Chicago. Awarded by the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Violence Against Women, the \$984,000 grant is designed to improve the effectiveness of the Department and rebuild community trust by partnering with advocacy organizations that will develop new policies and training for Chicago's police officers.

"Domestic violence is not just the problem of a distant stranger but an issue that besets all of Chicago's communities. That is why this grant coupled with additional investments by the City represents our commitment towards not only better serving victims and holding perpetrators accountable but also preventing gender-based violence from happening in the first place," said Mayor Lightfoot. "We look forward to working in partnership with the Chicago Police Department and Chicago's advocacy organizations to build on this effort and address an issue that has been under-resourced, under-recognized and underserved for far too long."

"Domestic and gender-based violence is a serious crime and the Chicago Police Department sees these criminal acts as an assault against an individual as well as a danger to society at large," said Superintendent David Brown. "The grant funding announced today will help provide training to our officers, ensuring incidents are handled in a professional, trauma-informed matter that prioritizes immediate, effective assistance and protection for victims and witnesses."

Designed to support Department efforts over the next three years, the new grant funding will support the City's partnerships with four advocacy organizations, the Network Advocating Against Domestic Violence (The Network), the Police Foundation, Heartland Alliance - National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) and Tom Tremblay Consulting, to assist with the development and implementation of new training to ensure consistency in officers' response to allegations and investigations of gender-based violence.

The new funding will also support the position of a Domestic Violence Advocate at CPD, who will work to ensure these key partners have the tools and resources they need to coordinate the full scope of work, which will include developing and implementing gender-based violence response training for officers, creating T and U visa policies and training, as well as creating and launching a data strangulation dashboard.

“The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence welcomes the leadership of the Mayor's Office in improving the response to domestic and sexual violence by the Chicago Police Department. As data shows, less than 20 percent of sexual violence survivors saw an arrest in their case and they had to wait weeks or months from the time of their assault for their assailant to be detained,” said Amanda Pyron, Executive Director of The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence. “While law enforcement cannot and should not be the only service available to survivors, any response provided by law enforcement should be professional, supportive, and trauma-informed. We look forward to working with the City and our project partners in engaging survivors of gender-based violence directly in improving the City's response to this crisis.”

Over the next three years, CPD will revise its policies and practices related to certifying T and U-Visas, which are designed to provide relief to immigrant victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence by allowing them to stay in the United States. By revising the Department policies, the City will help reduce barriers for victims seeking to access the visas and process and provide quicker relief.

“Under federal immigration law, local police departments play a critical role in ensuring immigrant survivors of violence have access to legal protections that allow them to remain with their communities while they heal, and that survivors of domestic violence can leave their abusers without facing the threat of deportation,” said Trisha Teofilo Olave, senior legal supervisor at the National Immigrant Justice Center. “This grant will support NIJC’s ongoing work to educate officers about their role in the process, as well as the guidelines created two years ago through the Illinois VOICES Act, which was intended to help all of our state’s law enforcement agencies uphold the rights of immigrant survivors.”

In addition to reviewing and revising police training on domestic violence and sexual assault for all CPD personnel, the grant funding will support training and professional development for officers assigned to the Human Trafficking Unit to better improve investigations. Furthermore, the funding will support CPD's compliance with a number of Consent Decree requirements, including the development of officer-involved domestic violence and sexual misconduct policies.

Over the course of the next three years, the Mayor's Office of Violence Reduction will serve as the oversight manager of these efforts to ensure full implementation of the Department's goals. As part of the first step in this process, the Department expects to post the job opening for the new Domestic Violence Advocate later this week.

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