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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# FOUNDATIONS AWARD \$1 MILLION IN GRANTS TO GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS HARDEST HIT BY GUN VIOLENCE

## *Small Local Groups Get Up to \$10,000 Each*

CHICAGO—At a time when the nation is grappling with public safety and policing in BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities, and Chicago is reeling from the [worst spike in gun violence in four years](#), a local gun-violence prevention collective has announced \$1 million in grants to support small, neighborhood organizations facilitating healthy, safe, and peace-building activities in the city throughout the summer and fall.

The [Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities](#) (PSPC) has awarded \$1 million in hyperlocal, rapid-response grants from its Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities to 142 organizations serving 21 neighborhoods on the South and West Sides that experience high levels of gun violence. PSPC is a coalition of more than 50 foundations and funders that have committed \$90 million in funding since 2016 to support evidence-based strategies to address gun violence. This year marks the sixth year PSPC has facilitated neighborhood grants through the Chicago Fund.

In 2020, Chicago Fund awardees successfully adapted their programming to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic safety and social distancing guidelines. As the city is working toward a level of recovery through vaccine accessibility and continued mitigation efforts, community groups have further adapted hybrid models of programming that center safety from COVID-19 as well as gun violence. Many groups, such as block clubs that previously held a single, large event such as an annual block party, are now expanding programming to daily and weekly opportunities to accommodate smaller gatherings, and coordinating with other blocks as well.

“Both the pandemic and rising gun violence in our neighborhoods have taken a toll,” said Deborah E. Bennett, senior program officer at Polk Bros. Foundation, a PSPC member. “But we are proud of the creativity and resiliency of all of the Chicago Fund grantees, who remain committed to offering programming that provides safe spaces and builds community bonds, trust, and social cohesion in difficult circumstances.”

PSPC's Chicago Fund provides grants of up to \$10,000 to small, neighborhood organizations engaged in community-led approaches to increasing community cohesion, safety and peace, with most organizations receiving an average of \$7,000. Proposed grantee program activities range from gardening and peer mentoring projects to digital media initiatives, community yoga sessions, youth sports programs, and other physical activities.

Englewood-based [Think Outside Da Block](#) believes a sustained physical presence in Chicago Police-identified high-crime areas will be a catalyst for community cohesion and peace. The organization is hosting bike tours over eight miles of Englewood-area "hot spots" because, they said, community presence has been proven to reduce crime without displacement. The group used data collected by community partners This is My Englewood for their program, "Roll N Peace," to identify the areas for the bike tours, and they are also planning youth programming that includes health and wellbeing checks, and a bike giveaway.

The [Darren B. Easterling Center for Restorative Practices](#), plans to launch the *My Life is Not My Own* podcast, a media project where women of color from North Lawndale, Roseland, Woodlawn and Englewood will discuss how their lives have been impacted by the loss of loved ones to gun violence, whether by homicide or incarceration "to connect, share and heal," said Director Lisa D. Daniels, who lost her son (for whom the center is named) in 2012.

"The *My Life is Not My Own* podcast is an extension of the work we are doing...in a different format to reach families impacted by violence through media," Daniels said. "Our work in healing requires stories, reflection and vulnerability, and this medium provides an avenue to accomplish this goal."s

PSPC members said they are grateful for the opportunity to continue supporting grassroots organizations that are leading the way to improve their neighborhoods and, by extension, the entire city.

"As Chicago looks ahead towards warmer days and continued recovery from the pandemic, we are honored to help mobilize community-based organizations working to promote safety and peace in their communities," said Anna Lee, Director of Community Impact at The Chicago Community Trust, a PSPC member. "I'm hopeful that through planned efforts to strengthen social connections and encourage community-led engagement, we can lessen the threat of violence."

The grants are provided through The Chicago Fund, which is one of four key strategies of PSPC:

- Street outreach, support services and jobs;
- Police reform and community engagement;
- Gun policy reform; and
- The PSPC Chicago Fund, a rapid-response fund for community-led summer and fall activities

The Chicago Fund prioritizes 21 community areas on the South and West Sides: Austin, Auburn Gresham, Chatham, Chicago Lawn, Englewood, West Englewood, Gage Park, East Garfield Park, West Garfield Park, Greater Grand Crossing, Humboldt Park, Lower West Side (Pilsen), New City (Back of the Yards), North Lawndale, Roseland, South Chicago, South Lawndale (Little Village), South Shore, Washington Park, West Pullman and Woodlawn.

See the [full 2021 list of grantees](#).

### **About the Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities**

The Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities is a coalition of more than 50 Chicago funders and foundations committed to aligning their funding to support proven and promising approaches to reducing gun violence. To date, members have committed \$90 million to street outreach and transitional jobs, police reform and community relations, gun policy reform and a rapid-response fund for community-led summer activities. Learn more about the PSPC Chicago Fund at the Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities website.

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