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Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

CeaseFire: An In-Depth Look at Using Street Outreach Workers to Stop the Epidemic of Youth Violence
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Speakers:

Dr. Gary Slutkin, executive director, Chicago Project for Violence Prevention and CeaseFire;
Jalon Arthur, project coordinator and former community outreach worker, CeaseFire Chicago;
Dr. Jacquelyn Duval-Harvey, deputy commissioner, Baltimore City Health Department; and
Fabiana Silva, research associate, National Council on Crime and Delinquency

JOHNSON: Good afternoon or good morning depending on where you are. This is Cliff Johnson. I am the executive director of the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) at the National League of Cities (NLC). I am delighted to welcome you today to our monthly audioconference from the Institute. This month's call is entitled "CeaseFire: An In-Depth Look at Using Street Outreach Workers to Stop the Epidemic of Youth Violence." We are just delighted to be able to focus on the exciting work that has been going on through CeaseFire in Chicago and the replication efforts in Baltimore, and to have a glimpse of some broader perspectives on the youth with street outreach workers in other communities across the country.

We have a great panel of speakers or participants, with us today so I want to do very brief introductions. First we have with us Dr. Gary Slutkin who is the executive director of the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention and the founder of CeaseFire. Gary is a physician and professor of epidemiology and international health at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health. Welcome Gary. Thanks for being with us.

SLUTKIN: Thanks Cliff.

JOHNSON: Also with us from CeaseFire Chicago is Jalon Arthur. Jalon is Project Coordinator at CeaseFire and also a former community outreach worker with CeaseFire. Welcome Jalon.

ARTHUR: Thanks for having me.

JOHNSON: Our third participant in the call is Dr. Jacquelyn Duval-Harvey. Dr. Duvall-Harvey is the deputy commissioner of the Baltimore City Health Department and at the center of replication efforts for CeaseFire in Baltimore. Welcome Jackie.

DUVAL-HARVEY: Thank you.

JOHNSON: And last we have with us Fabiana Silva. Fabiana is a research associate at the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), which is a national group leading lots of exciting work around juvenile justice and violence prevention based in Oakland, California. NCCD is also a strong partner with NLC on a thirteen city gang prevention network in California. So welcome Fabiana.

SILVA: Thanks Cliff.

JOHNSON: So let's jump right in. And Gary if I can start with you, I am hoping you will give our listeners a sense of why in the CeaseFire work and the framing of the CeaseFire effort you have thought about gun violence among young people and adults as an epidemic and how that has shaped your approach to the work out there.

SLUTKIN: Thanks for asking Cliff and hello everybody who is on. So ordinarily the word epidemic simply means that the problem is larger than it should be. So then the question is, how big of a problem should there be? In other words, how many shootings or killings should there be? So if we think about that, we might say many less, maybe none. However, more concretely to the way that we are thinking about how to affect this problem, when you look very carefully at violence, you see that it has characteristics of spreadability. That is to say one event, like a shooting, leads to a retaliation shooting, leads to another shooting and sometimes to gang wars or larger fights. Similarly people who are abused or have been shot when they are very young may reactivate this behavior when they are older. And then last, when you look at the curves of U.S. cities or even the curves of violence in other places around the world, you see curves that look just like epidemic curves for infectious diseases.

So what we are essentially saying, really, is that violence has an epidemic character, has an infectious character. And what is most important about this as far as strategy is that we are now applying strategies that intervene with how epidemics are ordinarily managed, and we're finding a new set of results through this new way of looking at it.

JOHNSON: And so walk us through a little bit about what that means in terms of the intervention programmatically.

SLUTKIN: Well, it means – so our intervention really consists of three main areas of work that are pretty common to how you intervene in any epidemic. The first is that you must interrupt the transmission. You must detect the potential events and prevent them from occurring and that is what violence interrupters do. Violence interrupters are highly trained specialists who come from the community, some who used to be involved themselves, and they will find out where conflicts are occurring and stop them. In our setting we have stopped about 1,800 of these events over the last four and a half years. So this is a new category of workers called violence interrupters. It is a highly specialized – what is commonly called street worker, but we don't really call them that. We call them violence interrupters.

The second part after interrupting transmission or stopping events is working with the very, very highest risk people. People who might cause an event, say a shooting. So we kind of go about a selection process of thinking about who out there is at risk of either being shot or causing a shooting – and we can tell from their prior behaviors and from what they are doing now – and we enlist them as clients and have outreach workers who are trained in changing their behavior and changing their thinking, most of all about violence, about whether they would use violence ever, and then we additionally help them in their lives.

And then the third part of this is the business of changing the norms of the whole community. Norm means what is normal, and so if it is now normal to be doing a shooting when a number of precipitating ideas have happened, like someone looked at your girl or owes you money, if it is normal to do a shooting in that circumstance, we transform that to no longer being normal. And we do this by a series of activities including involving the whole community in responses to shootings. Involving the whole community in a public education effort and then utilizing the violence interrupters and outreach workers for their very, very high credibility to be also shifting the norms. This has similarities to changes in norms that we have done in society about smoking, about using seatbelts, about eating or about sexual behavior and so on and these are health methods for behavior change using specialized trained workers and using the community as a whole.

JOHNSON: So let me pull Jalon into this conversation and ask you Jalon to describe what this looks like from a street perspective, what the work looks like in the neighborhood.

ARTHUR: Do you want me to speak on both outreach workers and the violence interrupters?

JOHNSON: That would be great.

ARTHUR: Well basically, I mean I thought Dr. Slutkin did a great job, but the outreach workers, they definitely mediate conflicts as well, and of course they have to carry this caseload of fifteen of the highest risk individuals. These are individuals who are most likely to shoot somebody or be shot themselves. We work, the outreach workers work closely with these individuals and we address issues such as anger management, employment, education, and life skills, and we link to relevant resources. There is a great deal of mentoring that goes on. We share with them life experiences and we also evaluate our participants' value systems and how they think about violence. Sharing our life experiences is important as well because some of the consequences, the real life consequences that result as a result of committing gun violence, you

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know, a lot of our workers have endured those consequences so they can share with them firsthand experiences.

Violence interrupters, they are, you know, conflict mediation specialists. These individuals, just like Dr. Slutkin said, they pretty much keep a pulse on what is going on in the neighborhood. Both of our workers work the non-traditional hours. We are out there when the violence is occurring. And we build upon the social networks we already have and meet other individuals as well that are involved in this activity. As soon as something happens, as soon as a situation or conflict erupts, we are right out there immediately. The violence interrupters are out there immediately getting to the root and source of the conflict. They find out who the individuals that are involved are and that pretty much determines who should be involved in that particular conflict. We may have individuals on our team that have relationships already established with the individuals involved, so we will put them to use. It may involve actually clearing up a misunderstanding. It can involve buying time, working out a compromise on both sides, infusing some common sense, and even reaching out to influentials, or other people in the community who can shut down this type of conflict, because a lot of times we operate from the phrase that, you know, everybody will listen to somebody. So we definitely use our influence and we utilize our social networks to stop conflicts from escalating into gun fights.

JOHNSON: So in a given neighborhood Jalon, there has to a pretty high level of communication or coordination between the outreach worker and the violence interrupter is that right?

ARTHUR: Oh definitely, and actually the violence interrupters actually complement the outreach workers and vice versa because, I mean, if you have a conflict that erupts today and you have the interrupters and they go and they mediate a conflict between two sides or two parties – just because you interrupt that conflict today, if the conflict, you know, happens again a week from today and it involves the same individuals, then likely they will respond in the same manner. So a lot of times the violence interrupters, the individuals that they may have an opportunity to mediate conflicts with, they will refer those individuals to the outreach workers and then the outreach workers can work with these individuals long-term and give them, address different issues like I said in order to change their mindset so that in the future, if they are involved in a conflict they won't respond with violence. And really, I mean, responding to conflict with violence is definitely learned behavior, and unfortunately it is the way that is a manner of dealing with conflicts that is respected in our community and in the prison system by individuals who perpetuate violence. So the individuals in the community, the individuals that they look up to and they respect, they see those individuals responding to conflict with violence. So you have to take credible messengers as well that individuals in the community look up to and you have to use these individuals to impress upon these individuals that there are alternatives to solving conflicts without violence.

SLUTKIN: What I would like to add to this is that what Jalon is highlighting here is the specialization between the interrupters and the outreach workers. I mean we all know that there have been outreach programs for decades. There have been outreach programs even in Chicago going back to the sixties, so many cities have outreach workers, so why is the CeaseFire Chicago

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model getting reductions of 40-70 percent in shootings and killings? Why has it been now documented to be able to have such an impact even under the lens of an independent evaluation done by so many universities? It is because what we have done is we have really systematized this and we have made special categories and we have developed structures and processes for who exactly is hired, and how the training occurs, and how they are supervised, and how they are supported.

The selection of workers that Jalon is referring to, as you were asking Cliff, they really, it has to be so that we are ensuring that we cover each of the different groups that might be having difficulty in each of the geographical areas. It is very systematical in that we are also selecting people who have both feet on this side of the line now but also have the potential and the desire to do, to thread the needle on the work. So it is really, the model is really a set of systems, structures, processes, and safeguards that will reliably cause a reduction. And though it looks like a lot and it even sounds a lot, I mean as you listen to Jalon describe it, as ordinary street outreach, it is really a very specific system, or set of systems, that is transferable.

JOHNSON: With a heavy emphasis, I assume, on training, as a piece of this, right?

SLUTKIN: I mean there is no outreach worker who goes on the street without the first forty hours. Interrupters also have an intensive training process and then there are additional training modules that go. We have been working very closely with Baltimore in terms of providing training here and in Baltimore, and the Baltimore people are getting involved and becoming trainers themselves as well. But it is a very concrete curriculum having to do with what the law is, your own personal safety, anticipating situations, managing them, a lot of role play, boundary issues, how to be supervised, how to supervise, manners related to communications between staff, and then there is an enormous amount of work on documentation.

ARTHUR: One thing that I would like to add as well, in addition to the training a lot of workers also attend seminars and gang conferences in order to network with other professionals in the field as well. And aside from the training that we do, all of our workers, violence interrupters and outreach workers, they are all credible messengers and they all have the ability to understand the mindset of the shooter. They have relevant social networks, they have measurable street credibility that enables them to gain the trust needed to access the population full of shooters and they are also knowledgeable in the different dynamics of the communities that they come from, the communities that they work with. So they know the history of the violence in the community, they know the relevant groups, gangs, cliques, that are all in their community and take part in the violence. So for all workers, I mean, the training it definitely enhances the skills that they already have and it proves a point, but, you know, one thing in my opinion, is that you cannot hire the wrong workers and train them to be the right workers. So a lot of our workers, like I said, they come with certain skill sets to the table, and the instant that they put a CeaseFire shirt on, you know, that does not guarantee that they are going to have street credibility. They come with street credibility already, and we enhance that skill set.

JOHNSON: Let me draw Jackie Duval-Harvey from Baltimore into this conversation because it is really striking how much both of you, Gary and Jalon, emphasize the rigor underneath this in

terms of the rigor of the model and, you know, attention to detail that has to be paid to effectively implement or replicate the model. So Jackie, in Baltimore how has that been going as you have been working to adapt and replicate the CeaseFire approach to your situation in Baltimore?

DUVAL-HARVEY: What I will say is that essentially it has worked very well when we fully implement the model with fidelity. Unfortunately we had one experience where the site selected to implement the model thought that they had different ideas about what was effective, and despite repeated efforts around training and support, they continued to try to do it their own particular way and essentially what we saw was an increase in shootings and killings in that neighborhood. So the sites that did understand the concepts, did believe the model was effective to start with, showed tremendous success in actual implementation. So the importance of maintaining full fidelity, in terms of Baltimore's experience, we definitely see the value of that and would strongly encourage folks to make sure that they do that if they are interesting in implementing this model.

SLUTKIN: The rigor of the model situation, I mean, there have, as you know very well, we could each name six to twenty cities that have been doing outreach where things have even gotten worse or have not gotten better. In the disease control world, which is kind of my origin, it is kind of like saying well we have immunization against measles, so now it is done – we just need to immunize, when really what is required is that you are reaching the right children at the right age with the right dose and that you are reaching them in the right place – either in their home or at school or at the community health center. Even with TB (tuberculosis) you can be using the wrong medicines, you could be giving it to the wrong people, or you are not giving it for a long enough period of time. So just having something called an immunizer, or an educator or an outreach worker, can never be expected to have an affect. You have to have specificity to any professional level of work.

JOHNSON: And it is almost always, as Jackie's comments reflect, you know there is almost always some temptation or pushback to think well, our situation is different or we know better or whatever the, "Yes, but..." end of the sentence is right?

DUVAL-HARVEY: Exactly.

JOHNSON: And so you really have to work through that right?

DUVAL-HARVEY: Let me give you perhaps an example of how that manifested itself in Baltimore. And before I do that let me just tell you I think at least one concrete difference in terms of how we implemented the model. The Health Department is the lead agency for implementation of Safe Streets, which is what we call the CeaseFire model here in Baltimore, unlike Chicago where it is a university system. And so clearly with the Health Department interested in this you can see why we were looking for a model that utilized the public health perspective.

JOHNSON: Yes.

DUVAL-HARVEY: So CeaseFire did that. But again, given that this is a city with over 650,000 residents and for whom homicide is the leading cause of death for citizens between 15 and 34 – and we also rank number two in homicides for cities with populations over 500,000 – having an impact in terms of reducing shootings and killings was essential. So it wasn't just important enough to have a public health focus, but we needed to have a model that was effective and had demonstrated effectiveness in bringing down those numbers. And so after considerable effort, we identified CeaseFire and we have not been disappointed in any way. We have seen that when there is full implementation, full fidelity, the shootings come down. When we first implemented the model in our first neighborhood about two years ago, up until we ran, the program was in operation for about a year and eleven months before there was one homicide in that community.

JOHNSON: Wow.

DUVAL-HARVEY: We went with zero homicides in the community that understood the model, embraced the model, and did what it took in terms of fidelity. So they identified the right outreach workers.

JOHNSON: And so this was in a specific neighborhood?

DUVAL-HARVEY: This was in a specific neighborhood in Baltimore. We only have four sites at this point that have the Safe Streets model. And of course we want to expand that, but that same site that had zero homicides started a little before the second site where the program director, the leadership of that program at the second site, thought that because they had staff already employed in their organization who were known to the community, had good relations in the community, that they thought that they could simply transfer those good relationships to an outreach component or to a violence interrupter component. So that is what they did in terms of manipulating the outreach part of things, and those were not the right people. They were not the individuals who had the street credibility to affect change for that particular issue in terms of reducing shootings and killings. They may have been effective for promoting literacy, for promoting out of school activities, for case management type services, so at a later date they may have been useful, but at the point of interrupting, at the point of mediating, these were not the right people and so the program, as I said before, actually had increases because we did not have the right people coming out with that message.

JOHNSON: Jackie you said something if I understood about a piece of this that you have done differently? Is there something else?

DUVAL-HARVEY: The only other piece that we have done differently is because of the size of the communities in which we have the Safe Streets program, we opted and this was with discussion and collaboration with CeaseFire – we did not do this on our own – we decided that we would not have two different staff in terms of outreach staff and violence interrupters, that that role was combined into one. So the same people who do the violence interrupting are the

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same people who do the outreach to the highest risk populations, and that has worked well for us in Baltimore.

JOHNSON: And how large are these neighborhoods in Baltimore?

DUVAL-HARVEY: They are relatively small neighborhoods. We usually only have the program in one police post. So they are not as large as Chicago is and so that is one of the reasons why we were comfortable and Chicago supported the concept of having the merger between the interrupters and the outreach staff.

SLUTKIN: Before we go too much further I just want to make sure that people who are listening are aware that the whole model is in fact larger than the interrupters and the outreach workers but also has a community component. In other words, the whole program is actually grounded in the community, and comes out of a community organization who is doing the implementing who we or the Health Department in Baltimore – we are at the University of Illinois and the Baltimore Health Department in their case – provide the training and technical support, guidance and coordination, etc, and ensuring that there is documentation and monitoring of affect in all this. But the whole thing is really coordinated at community level, and that there is a whole community part of this that has to do with the community doing a response to every single shooting in the neighborhood. That there is a public education campaign full of signs, leaflets, fliers and billboards, just like you would be mounting an immunization campaign or a no-smoking campaign. The clergy are involved with this as well and there are certain connection points which are different at different levels with law enforcement. So the model is substantially larger than outreach, so although the interrupters thread the needle on conflicts, and outreach work with the highest risks, there is still this whole other full community component towards modifying the whole behavioral norm.

JOHNSON: Thank you for that Gary. That is a key piece that we obviously hadn't covered. Let me bring Fabiana into this conversation with a perspective of the work that has been going on at the National Council of Crime and Delinquency looking more broadly at the use of street outreach workers across communities. Fabiana you have heard some of Gary's comments certainly about, you know, the plethora in some ways of street outreach models and different experiences, some positive and some not. What are the big take aways for you as you and your colleagues at NCCD have been looking at the use of street outreach workers across communities?

SILVA: Sure and some of these have already been covered by Gary, Jalon, and Jackie. I would stress that actually historically outreach workers, using people endogenous to the community, have a pretty negative track record. So it is very important to be careful and it is not enough to simply hire someone from the community, so I appreciate Gary's focus on a very detailed rigorous model.

I think the number one most essential thing is hiring the appropriate outreach workers. What is unique about outreach workers is that they are reaching youth that aren't being reached by really any other community agencies. So they need to be credible messengers, they need to

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know where to reach the appropriate youth, and they need to be individuals that the youth will respect and listen to, and ideally the youth will change their actions based on their relationship with outreach workers.

Second of all, something that we saw a lot of is a lack of clarity of goals and purposes amongst outreach programs. So a program will say their goal is to reduce violence in the short-term but really what they are doing is working with 11- and 12-year-olds in schools mostly, making sure they are not truant, that they stay in school and maybe if it looks like they are getting a little bit involved in gangs, making sure to keep them away from gangs. This is a valid activity, but it is very important that programs are clear about their goals and that the strategies they decide on and the people that they hire are appropriate for their goals.

Related to that, the programs need to do a serious problem analysis – they really need to understand what is driving street violence. Are there large structured gangs or small cliques, how entrenched is the violence in the city, why are youth attracted to street organizations, and at what age are they beginning to join them and how many youth are involved as opposed to what groups are involved specifically?

The last thing that I would like to emphasize is the importance of collaboration. Outreach workers aren't social workers. They aren't therapists. They aren't employment specialists. They are very unique at reaching high-risk populations. That is their goal, but to really have long-term affect on the lives of these kids they need to bring additional resources to bear on the lives of kids. So this is – strong relationships with the police are essential, strong relationships with community-based organizations or service organizations, the schools depending on the population, faith-based organizations, and even the business community if employment is a goal of the program.

JOHNSON: Great list there Fabiana. Let me pause. Gary, Jalon and Jackie, any thoughts, reactions to the run down that Fabiana just provided? That you could go on to amplify or talk about more?

DUVAL-HARVEY: I would like to say something about the relationship with the police that she mentioned. I think that has been probably one of the most challenging parts of hiring the right outreach staff, because in some cases those individuals have been incarcerated or have been the target population for law enforcement. And so they are now in a different role, and having them be accepted in that new role can be a challenge and can be very difficult.

One very concrete thing is that all staff wear uniforms to distinguish them from the general population so just practically those kind of things have to happen as well. But the relationship with law enforcement, while a component of the program, can be something that really needs to be managed very carefully. In Baltimore, for example, there is a significant anti-snitching campaign, agenda or belief. So the safety of outreach workers is essential because they are involved in the community, may become aware of issues in a community that are potentially criminal in nature. It is important for their own safety and their own credibility that they not be seen as people who are sharing information with the police. So we go as far as, for example, not hosting meetings in the same building where there might be police presence or outreach staff presence so that no one has any perception that they are coming together to share information.

ARTHUR: I have a comment on that as well, and I definitely appreciate the way that she put that. For us in Chicago as well, I mean, the working relationship as far as police are concerned is that people try to make it more complex than what it is. It is really simple: the police provide our program administrators with shooting and homicide data so that we can conduct timely shooting responses, we can prevent retaliations, and we can evaluate our program effectively. Now just as Fabiana said, most of our high risk individuals are not working with anyone else, and that is why for our line staff – our violence interrupters and our outreach workers – we consider it a privilege to be working with shooters. Because, like Fabiana said, they are not working with anyone else and really being able to work with us, it is on a conditional basis. They realize, the individuals that we work with realize like everyone else, when working with shooters and high risk individuals, by nature of the work, sometimes you become privy to incriminating information. So it is important that our participants and the individuals that we work with know that we only use this information to prevent shootings, not to lock them up, not to share information with police in that manner. By doing that we are able to continue to have that trusting relationship with the shooters, with the high risk individuals, and we are able to actually prevent and intervene in shootings and deactivate shooters by changing their mindset.

SLUTKIN: Let me just add as well to, I mean the brilliant description that Jalon had and Fabiana's precisely perfect points – outreach has, as Fabiana pointed out, generally speaking, a negative track record in the country. The reasons for it are because it has been disorganized or because, as she pointed out, what are the real goals? Are they really working just with the 11- and 12-year-olds, which isn't going to reduce shootings and killings? Or are they too mixed up with the police in which case they are not going to be effective in the street, and the police will even be confused about what their role is, so all of this stuff needs to be clarified. It can't be ambiguous. And if cities or towns begin to try various aspects of this, without really having thought it through or having the system, it is quite likely that things can move backwards and there would be bad press, bad results, maybe a worker hurt or arrested or more than that, and all kinds of bad tension as well between the workers in the community and the police in the community. This has to be put down as a professional enterprise.

I think one of the reasons that I am grateful for you looking to us to do this particular teleconference is that we are now evidence-based practice for this and all your listeners may not know that we have had an independent evaluation. We are a model practice now. We are scientifically proven. There has been an independent arms length evaluation that the United States Department of Justice commissioned. Four universities were involved in it. It has been demonstrated that this method, using these processes reduces shooting and killings, makes hot spots cooler, breaks up gang networks, reduces retaliations and makes neighborhoods safer. So the best way to move ahead is to, in a way, develop a connection with us, loose or tight, as best we are able to do and you are able to do, to work with us with the transferring of this so that you have the best opportunity for succeeding and, you know, we collectively have the best opportunity for learning and moving the field further along so that a neighborhood can actually begin to benefit. In other words, as Fabiana pointed out, if you do this most likely, I meant the experience is that it may not succeed. However, we have now done 18 replications of this with the system.

JOHNSON: So a big caution to try and not make this up on your own obviously.

SLUTKIN: And we are around to talk to us. We are around to be visited and, you know, resources permitting, we can provide training and technical assistance and develop a relationship and you can look at our Web site, CeaseFire Chicago, contact us, and become a part of this partnership and network with ourselves and Baltimore and another half a dozen cities and another two dozen cities we are planning with to really move the whole field forward.

You know another way, if you are thinking about this, you know, there were not emergency medical technicians decades ago. There were not AIDS educators. If you go back, you know, a few more decades, there were not ambulances, so this is now a new field of work which is becoming professionalized that we feel most jurisdictions or cities need to have a functioning and professionalized version of.

JOHNSON: Let me pause here for a second. In the next five to ten minutes we are going to take some questions from listeners. Let me ask our operator to explain how that would happen.

OPERATOR: If you would like to ask a question please press star one on your telephone key pad. That is star and the number one.

JOHNSON: Great. And that will put you in a queue and we will come back in five or ten minutes to see if there are any questions that way. We have been getting some questions via email and if you want to send a question via email that email should be addressed to karpman@nlc.org and we will see that.

Let me run through quickly just a couple of factual questions that we've been asked here. So, Jackie one question for you, you mentioned the police posts, those areas or neighborhoods are how big? 10,000 people? 20,000 people?

DUVAL-HARVEY: I can look that up for you and get back to you in a few minutes.

JOHNSON: That would be fine or just your ballpark sense of how many square blocks or anything that might come to mind would be good. You know, Gary and Jalon, a question from San Diego about this question of links to services and how that is working in Chicago? So Fabiana spoke about needing to be able to broker access to things that really can be helpful in changing the lives of high risk individuals. Is that a big piece of what you are doing in Chicago? How does it work?

ARTHUR: I would definitely like to chime in on that. Now one of the first things that we do as a site when a CeaseFire site is implemented is we identify all the resources within the community, especially those that pertain to our high risk populations, and we actually develop relationships with individuals in each one of those different types of settings. So for example, even in situations where there are multiple service providers that provide the same services – like for example the GED center – we will create relationships with all of those, because the thing is even if you have, you know, an individual that wants to get a GED, and we have a relationship and we can get them bumped up, even if there is a waiting list or something, he or she may not

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be able to go to one particular center because of the area or location because it may be rival as far as the gangs and things of that nature. So you have to have even multiple places that provide the same service. But the thing is developing those relationships and even going so far as putting those resources on the back of a lot of our public education materials is critical. A lot of times we develop these relationships, the individuals or contact people at these different service providers, they will recognize the seriousness because of the population we work with recognizing that giving our participant an opportunity could mean the difference of life and death in some cases. So a lot of times, they will, if there is a waiting list, they will bump us up on that waiting list.

We take down all the information and all the criteria that is needed, if it is an ID, if they have to be in a certain residential location, whatever the case may be, and we do all of that homework up front. We do all the leg work. That way when we do have a participant and we have talked to them and we know his or her situation, when we make the referral, we actually take our participants to the referral. We have already walked through the process so we know exactly what is needed to get them the services that they need. Because if you know anything about high risk individuals, the moment that they are confronted with some type of resistance, you send them to a job interview where they are not going to hire an ex-offender and they have a background or you send them somewhere they need a social security card and they don't have that, then they would be just like "Man, I am not even going to mess with it. I am not going to deal with it at all." So there is a lot of leg work that goes into it as far as being an outreach worker.

Also I think the important thing also is a lot of our workers have to be creative in creating opportunities and talking to the business owners in the communities so that we can create opportunities for them. Jobs are one of those things that there is never enough of, and so a lot of times that is a challenge that we have. But, I mean, the big thing – I liked the way Fabiana put it – she said that, you know, even though we definitely link them to resources, you know, we are not just employment specialists or substance abuse program, our main focus is definitely on the behaviors, stopping the gun violence and we definitely link people to services recognizing that that can actually reduce their risk level. So that is important for us.

SLUTKIN: Let me frame this a bit. The goal of the interrupters, their main job description is about stopping conflict.

JOHNSON: Right.

SLUTKIN: The goal of the outreach workers is to change these people's minds about violence, and then secondly help them in any way that you can. Now two may be more important in their mind than one but the interrupters and the outreach workers, their job is behavior change, and in the context of that job they are helping people in other things that they need and that will be helpful for them.

But I am listening to the questioner deeper, because I am hearing this question all around the country and there is a view out there that if there were more jobs, which of course there need to be, or if we could link everybody with services, the violence would go down. That has never been shown to be the case. It might go down in that person but not in the community.

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We have programs all around the country that have gotten all kinds of people into all kinds of services including thousands or tens of thousands of jobs that have not dropped the shootings or killings in that neighborhood. So our intervention, our workers, the principle intervention is the workers themselves and the work they do on behavior change and it is in the context of that that they are also helping them with their own personal needs, which also included getting them into jobs or school.

JOHNSON: I follow. So one comes before the other one. And Gary how does the training differ for the outreach worker versus the violence interrupter? Or does it?

SLUTKIN: The outreach worker training is – we have been doing it for much longer. It is much more sophisticated. The interrupter training is much newer. The principle difference between, they both need to know the law, stuff about their own safety, how to communicate with each other, how to be supervised and how to supervise. They need to know anticipation of a situation. They need to know how to do conflict mediation. They will role play a lot, and Jalon is particularly good at this, all kinds of situations. But the outreach workers additionally have to know all kinds of things about client's needs, client services and the services that are available and things like that because they are managing that part of it.

JOHNSON: Let me switch to a different question and then see if someone is in the queue. We have a question from Minneapolis about hiring ex-offenders. In Safe Streets in Baltimore, are you hiring ex-felons?

DUVAL-HARVEY: Yes we are and to the earlier question about the size, it is about 50 blocks.

JOHNSON: Fifty blocks, yep. And so you are hiring, some of the individuals that you are hiring in Safe Streets have been convicted of a felony. And that is true in CeaseFire as well?

SLUTKIN: Yes.

JOHNSON: Ah huh.

SLUTKIN: I want to point out that we don't do this because we are nice, although you may or may not think so.

JOHNSON: No.

SLUTKIN: This is being done because it is a public health intervention to use people from the group for reaching the group. We use sex workers to reach sex workers in AIDS outreach. We use moms to reach moms for breast feeding programs. We use refugees to reach refugees in TB programs. So it is essential. It is public health technology. It is actually required.

JOHNSON: So is there anything about prior criminal records that precludes somebody from being in?

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SLUTKIN: We screen out offenses against women and offenses against kids. We also screen out as much as is humanly possible any current or recent activity, for as long a period of time as possible.

JOHNSON: I see.

SLUTKIN: But if they just had an offense in their past that is not against women and not against children and they have changed, then that is actually what we want.

JOHNSON: Yes.

DUVAL-HARVEY: And I will also add that many of the outreach staff that we end out hiring are actually recommended to us by current staff. So our staff know who is in the community and know who is supportive of the model and really wants an opportunity to give back to their community so we also get recommendations from our staff.

JOHNSON: Fabiana let me just check in with you because I think this is an issue that you have looked at as well in terms of hiring practices. Any other observations about more broadly what you see communities doing in this area?

SILVA: Yeah and I think even CeaseFire, and I am sure in Baltimore there are a lot of specific things organizations do to make sure that they are hiring the right people because pretty much to have the impact they need, they do need to have this past, but it is essential that they are still not involved not only because of very, very bad press but because it discredits the program in the eye of the community as well.

Some things groups do are hiring panels, which will have the police and maybe probation involved. Not only is it good to sort of have the police there and to see if the police know the individuals have been involved in anything recently, but it can also be important to tell a worker you are going to have come up in front of the police. Even sort of that, I don't want to say threat, but sort of the knowledge that they are going to have to come up in front of the police can serve as a detractor for people who are still involved.

Organizations also do street background checks. So they check with the communities to figure out if this worker really is clean, how involved he still is. One of the things a lot of groups like to know is how the individual left a gang. I mean, they snitch in prison, did he leave peacefully, how did that happen? Because that will affect his relationship on the streets. What else? You know, if someone has been involved – a lot of individuals don't do this work in a very structured basis but they do have a desire, as Jackie said, to give back to their community maybe because they feel that they have caused a lot of violence and they want to change that. So they may have been doing it on their own for five years, so the organization can really make sure that they really are committed to this issue.

But of course, um, as much as you try sometimes – I would say it is very, very difficult to have 100 percent success rate and hire individuals that aren't going to ever be busted for selling drugs or something like that. Part of it, I think, is working with the media and

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working with the police to understand that some problems and some recidivisms may have to be expected and, you know, like some police are found doing sort of negative things and individuals have been prison. Maybe one of them will be found selling drugs, that doesn't mean the entire program needs to be discredited.

JOHNSON: Right.

ARTHUR: Can I say something about that as well?

JOHNSON: Yes Jalon.

ARTHUR: One thing that is done in CeaseFire in Chicago as well is that we definitely do the hiring panels in the same way that Fabiana described. One additional benefit of doing that is that often times when you implement a program in a particular site and you may have a supervisor or coordinator that is sitting in on those panels, a lot of times you have people that may know the supervisor or coordinator and so everybody – the flood gates are open and everybody that they know wants to be hooked up with a job. “I need a job. I can do this. I can do that.” By having that panel, that “one person, one vote” type of thing, it prevents – you know, the supervisor or whoever the person is, they can let them know, “Look I can't get you in. I only have one vote.” They have to impress and sell themselves to everybody on that panel. So it prevents a lot of favoritism.

One other thing we definitely do is the police street checks. I would like to definitely comment on the street checks that we do as well, which we referred to as checking in with the community. Often times you can have individuals that sit on a panel and maybe a lot of individuals may not even be from the streets and they may not know a lot of individuals that are currently engaged in activity on the streets. So you know, you can have individuals that interview for that position and pretty much put up a smoke screen and say “I have all these relevant contacts. I know all these people, they respect me on the streets” and all of that. What we will do a lot of times is we will definitely go out – the same groups that you say that you have those contacts with, we have relationships with those individuals as well and so we will check and see if there is truth to what the individual said, they are a respectable individual and everything they said checks out. We even offer them, while the jury is still out, to volunteer with us. They can come out and canvas with us and a lot of times we are out there at night walking and talking with the individuals in the community, and there have been times when people will step back and say “You know what, this is not for me.” There have been times that they have walked the neighborhood, you know, miles and miles, and nobody in the community knew who they were or we find out that they weren't even respected in the community. So there are a lot of different checks that we can do to ensure that we get the right people.

We have definitely been successful at that in Chicago and the state of Illinois as a whole, and they have definitely been successful at that in Baltimore as well. I had an opportunity to go to Baltimore, which is one of my favorite cities to go to. I have relationships with a lot of their workers there and I am out there in the streets with them in Baltimore on the east side in Cherry Hill. I mean the level of respect is just phenomenal. Everybody knows and respects these workers. I have had and opportunity to sit in on conflict mediation and talk to

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some of their participants and this program definitely is transferable. It can adapt to any city, you know, with this model, with model fidelity.

JOHNSON: Great insights and advice Jalon. Thank you. I am concerned that maybe we have had someone waiting in the queue to ask a question directly. Operator do we have someone? We have had a lot of email questions.

OPERATOR: We have a question from Dennis Vaganarias with After School Partnership. Dennis.

JOHNSON: Go ahead Dennis.

CALLER: Yes. I had a question. Even with the training that is provided to the violence interrupters as far as establishing street credibility, my question is – I am calling from New Orleans, Louisiana and even with our small urban environment it is very territorial. I guess my question is how do you combat that outsiders bias even when you come in with an ex-offender to speak shooter to shooter, how do you combat that bias or “you are not from my neighborhood, you don’t know me” kind of attitude?

SLUTKIN: They are from the neighborhood. Not from another neighborhood.

ARTHUR: That is the simple answer. They, you know, we, our outreach workers and violence interrupters they come directly from the neighborhood. So even if another city was to use this model, our work would be to provide training and technical support systems but we would still, if it is New Orleans, we have to hire individuals from New Orleans from those neighborhoods that are credible messengers.

CALLER: And you guys have the critical areas?

SLUTKIN: Through the violence program, which we have been communicating with people in New Orleans for a while about working with the people there, a New Orleans program would be New Orleans. It would look like New Orleans. Then each individual neighborhood would be run by groups or some representatives. We are a background organization ourselves. We work in the training and technical systems and help with documentation and ensure that you actually get results in your neighborhoods but from the neighborhoods point of view, they are saying and feeling that they themselves are doing it and they are. See, this looks very community and it looks very street and it is very community and it is very street. But behind it are systems, structures and processes that allow it to ensure that is going to work.

JOHNSON: Great. Let me take an email question here. So a particular question from Rochester about the ability to use the emergency room point as an intervention point to stop retaliations as an immediate response to the transmission of violence and trauma. Gary I know that you have been in the middle of that.

SLUTKIN: Either of these guys can talk about this as well. It is essential. Jackie or Jalon?

DUVAL-HARVEY: We actually have, I'm sorry Jalon were you going ahead?

ARTHUR: No, you first.

SLUTKIN: It is part of the model is what I am going to say but they will describe it.

JOHNSON: Jackie?

DUVAL-HARVEY: Yes. So we actually have a program in Baltimore called VIP, which actually originated at one of our trauma center by physicians in that particular hospital. And when the program started it was primarily sort of a case management social work model program. What they eventually realized was that was not sufficient and the program has actually now added an outreach component very similar to the hospital initiative that we have as part of CeaseFire. So we actually are implementing a hospital initiative. It is at the emergency department level. And again the principles are the same, identifying where potential retaliation might be occurring in terms of containing the spread but also intervening at the level of the individual who has now become a victim and the opportunity to encourage that individual to change their lives. So that is part of the model as well. We didn't elaborate on it, but it is part.

SLUTKIN: The questioner is right on it. It is absolutely essential that whenever there is a shooting there is some assessment of the potential for retaliation. That that be done by professionals trained in this model or something like it so that they can interact with the friends and family or whoever and assure one that there is not a retaliation and two that the person himself then gets on a different path because he is already self proclaimed for being at risk.

ARTHUR: Yeah I definitely want to say that we definitely have a hospital effort here headed by Sheila Regan and our relationship with a trauma unit that services most of the south side of Chicago and like Dr. Slutkin said, it is definitely an opportunity for us to prevent retaliations. Often when the individuals come in and they've been shot, the retaliation is already being planned. Oftentimes you will have the friends, gang members or whatever the case may be, come to the hospital and they are pretty much waiting for the green light, let them know who did it so they can go ahead and conduct a retaliation. So we have our workers who go up there, and they talk with the victim, they talk with the family members they talk with their friends, gang members, and they work on finding a way to prevent their retaliation.

And one additional thing that it serves is a lot of times individuals that are involved in gun violence and may be before they have been shot for the first time, they may feel like they are invincible and then when they get shot they are forced to recognize their state of vulnerability. A lot of times the same individuals that in the past may be they were not receptive to the message and they weren't ready to change, now they are sitting in a hospital bed with a bullet hole in their head or their chest and now all of a sudden it is a small window of opportunity to plant a seed and begin to facilitate change with them and help them to get on the right track.

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DUVAL-HARVEY: In fact, the audience might be interested in knowing I believe that at the end of this month the CeaseFire team will be in Baltimore training the staff in the emergency department at Hopkins and the social work staff as well on the hospital initiative with Johns Hopkins Hospital.

JOHNSON: That is great.

SLUTKIN: A great question. I am really glad that I have heard that. I really thank the questioner for that as we didn't mention it.

JOHNSON: Great. We are just about at the end of our time. Let me see if there is one more questioner in the queue. Operator?

OPERATOR: We have a question from Claudia Fuentes at National League of Cities.

JOHNSON: Claudia is from Minneapolis. Welcome Claudia.

FUENTES: Hi. I asked my question on line. So thank you for answering it.

JOHNSON: Appreciate it. Well let me then see, give each of you a chance for a closing comment and I am particularly interested in the question, you know we have an audience with a lot of city officials on the line and so the question of how city leaders can be engaged in this work and where is the opportunity for them to be supportive. Either what you most appreciate from the support you are getting from city leaders in Chicago or Baltimore or what you see as the opportunity here.

DUVAL-HARVEY: In Baltimore we have a great deal of support, particularly starting with our mayor. She actually goes out and is scheduled to go out again in the next couple of weeks to do outreach with the outreach staff. So not only is there commitment in terms of her personally being involved in the program but we receive funding for the program from the city and we just received \$1,000,000. So she has put her money, time and energy where her mouth is in terms of supporting the program because she understands the value of it, the effectiveness of it and wants the citizens to know that it is going to work in Baltimore City.

JOHNSON: And obviously you are housed in the city's Health Department so that is a big statement of city support in and of itself right?

DUVAL-HARVEY: And our police commissioner, in fact, said that he believes that Safe Streets is the magic bullet in reducing shootings and killings, that it is clear that law enforcement alone will not be effective.

JOHNSON: Gary, Jalon, a thought about city support in Chicago?

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SLUTKIN: You know our mayor, Mayor Daly, is the honorary chair of this program so he has been involved with it in one way or another since its beginning. We have a lot of support from the city, the state and from the federal government as well as from foundations. I think for cities that are contemplating doing this, it is highly important for the highest level of officials to be engaged and to fully understand what the intention of it is and what the potential of it is. Because, as mentioned earlier by Fabiana, outreach itself, it doesn't carry the best history so what the reframing of this now has to be such that people understand that we are now following a best practice model. We are adding public health and science into the realm of reducing violence and that the expectation is – and I think we can predict really reliably – that we will get reductions in shootings and then the political leaders and governmental leaders will benefit, as will everyone in the neighborhood. When we interact with cities to begin this we do like to get commitments at the top. We do like to see that there is some coalition involved in supporting it and that we are looking for the right organization, government or otherwise, to be the main implementer of it.

JOHNSON: Right.

SILVA: And I would like to add that from our research we have seen that cities with very strong relationships, I mean programs with very strong relationships with the city, have been much more successful about receiving funding year after year. Also some mayors that have been really involved have been essential in directing, particularly the police department, to collaborate with an outreach program as well as city agencies to reserve designated spots for clients of outreach programs.

ARTHUR: The only comment I would like to make is having had the opportunity to travel to a lot of different cities, I mean, funding is tight everywhere and so while I think there is a lot of apprehension to take on certain programs because of the track history like what we talked about where we have had a lot of programs that have failed for various reasons, so one thing I want to say about the CeaseFire program, I mean, it definitely works. It is an evidence-based program and saves taxpayers so much money and the model can be adapted to pretty much any city.

SLUTKIN: And I think, you know, to follow on to Jalon's point, that if you are following and evidence-based model that has been kind of validated by the U.S. Department of Justice, you are not only more likely to succeed, you are more likely to attract funding. If there is something small that goes wrong as there is with everybody, you know, you at least can say we are working very closely with the validation point itself. So that kind of provides more additional cover for the political figures to be going in a direction that they should feel more solid about.

Let me say this, if you are working with us and in a way that Baltimore is and Baltimore and Chicago are working very closely together on this, there isn't really a risk. I mean you are not really taking a risk. You are going with something that has now been demonstrated, and it will save lives. It will make neighborhoods safer and it will, as Jalon just pointed out, save an enormous amount of money as these shootings are incredibly expensive to all the taxpayers and to the hospitals and to the criminal justice system. So this intervention saves about \$10 for every dollar and about half of that is saved immediately in the first year just on the hospital costs.

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ARTHUR: One last thing – www.ceasefireillinois.org. Visit www.ceasefireillinois.org if you want additional information.

JOHNSON: Jalon you are reading my mind. I am going to say that one more time, ceasefireillinois, all one word, dot org.

ARTHUR: That's wwwCeaseFire-all one word-Illinois-dot-org.

JOHNSON: Great. Other ways people can learn more? Fabiana?

SILVA: Sure. Our report will be up on our website which is the thirteen city gang network Web site which is www.ccgpn.org, in a couple of weeks. And for people interested in the hospital intervention piece, I know CeaseFire has worked very closely with Youth Alive in, I guess, coming up and developing their own piece and Youth Alive has a very extensive training manual for starting a program. It is called "Caught in the Crossfire." That Web site is www.youthalive.org.

SLUTKIN: Our main number is (312) 996-8775, and Anna Cape-Lewis will direct anybody to anyone with their questions or with any other ways that we could be helpful. We would love to be.

JOHNSON: Thank you for that Gary. This conversation has been wonderful and it could go on for much longer if we weren't out of time. We have some other email questions we have unfortunately been unable to get to, so we will follow up on those. I just want to thank all four of you for your time and your thoughts today. It has just been a great conversation, rich with lost of insights. So I am sure that the folks who have been listening across the country have gotten a great deal out of it. Really, I appreciate it.

ARTHUR: Thank you.

DUVAL-HARVEY: Thank you.

SILVA: Thank you.

JOHNSON: Let me just make one or two final quick announcements. This is the last of our spring/summer series of monthly audioconferences through NLC's Institute for Youth Education and Families. We will resume the monthly audioconferences with a new set of sessions in September. So stay tuned and look for that. If you have been registered for this call or any past call, you will receive a notice from us about that.

A recording of this audioconference will be posted at www.nlc.org/iyef within a few days and a written transcript will be posted within a few weeks of the call. For future audioconferences, registration can all be done through that Web site, which again is

www.nlc.org/iyef. Thank you to our audience for being with us today. Thanks again for our panelists. We look forward to seeing you all at our future calls. Take care.