

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Established in 2009, the Cleveland Peacemakers Alliance ("CPA") is now in its 10th year of executing critical programming aimed at disrupting the cycle of urban gang violence among those age 15-25, through service delivery in four core areas: targeted gang outreach, hospital-based response, court-involved services and case management. Collectively, these four competency areas serve to create proactive responses to gang and group activity and street violence in the city of Cleveland. CPA utilizes best practices in prevention and intervention strategies, and works with a number of community partners, including the City of Cleveland, Cleveland Division of Police, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, Partnership for a Safer Cleveland, and others, to be agile and adaptable in its approach, targeting its interventions to those areas and individuals that need it the most.

Over the past year, CPA has undergone a significant revision of its staffing model, with an increased focus on strengthening an internal culture of support, collaboration, communication and on-going professional development. An additional change was the transition of outreach workers into three distinct teams:

1. Community-based street/school team to provide outreach/in-reach to highest risk youth and young adults in community settings
2. Hospital-based team to provide outreach and follow up to youth impacted by gun violence and
3. Court- team to support court involved youth and young adults and conduct in-reach to detention facilities as needed.

The implementation of this revamped staffing model was led by CPA, with support from its board of directors, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio to ensure maximum oversight and stakeholder investment. The effort was a response to feedback about lack of distinction within areas of outreach and resulted in the creation of revised job descriptions, and the recruitment and hiring of new staff members. As of mid-October 2019, CPA is fully staffed, with a team of qualified, motivated individuals prepared to further the organization's critical mission. As of mid-December 2019, CPA has retained an expert consultant to provide assessment, recommendations and technical assistance to help align the CPA model with national best practices in community violence prevention, intervention and client centered care.

CPA is committed to implementing internal strategies that ensure positive client outcomes, a healthy work culture, rigorous program oversight and long-term sustainability planning. 2020 is an important year of growth for CPA and as part of a strategic plan, each area of the program is slated to undergo comprehensive training and staff development. With an emphasis on a trauma informed care approach, CPA will be introducing Critical Incident Response Management as a key element of the outreach teams combined strategic effort to address and end youth, gang and community violence. The outreach work of CPA is core to the mission of reducing youth and community violence and CPA is invested in ensuring delivery of a model that is rooted in best practices of court, hospital and community based violence prevention, intervention and restoration services for highest risk youth and families. As part of the 2020 strategic plan, CPA is prioritizing the establishment of procedures and policies that will support improved communication and enhance joint efforts with the City of Cleveland's CRB Outreach Team, as further defined in this proposal. As such, CPA is respectfully requesting \$200,000 in grant funding to support the training and development of outreach workers, and the implementation of strategic planning initiatives, including Critical Incident Response Management, in order to ensure positive outcomes and impact from CPA's violence reduction and prevention efforts.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Interpersonal violence is a major public health issue in the United States, with homicide being the leading cause of death among African Americans ages 15-35, the second leading cause for Hispanics of this age group and the fifth cause among non-Hispanic whites.<sup>i</sup> Research from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that the nearly 20,000 homicide deaths in 2016 resulted in \$25 billion in medical costs and lost productivity.<sup>ii</sup> Coupled with non-fatal violent incidents, the cost is far greater. Such interpersonal violence disproportionately impacts males and has been indicated as a key agent in racial and ethnic health disparities through the United States.

In 2015 alone, 196,959 incidents of non-fatal violence committed against African American males between the ages of 15-34 were treated at hospitals.<sup>iii</sup> This type of victimization is rarely a singular event. Rates of recurrence are high, with hospitals typically following a 'treat and release' policy for those with assault injuries. While this method addresses the physical injuries, little (if anything) is done to prevent recurrence. It is estimated that in urban areas, 41% of patients treated for a violent injury are reinjured within five years.<sup>iv</sup> Victims of violent behavior have also been shown to have a higher likelihood of engaging in violent behavior against others, most often in the form of retaliation for the original injury. Additional research indicates that the cultural norms and 'street codes' that structure life in many inner cities lead violently injured young adults to assume that retaliation is critical for avoiding re-victimization. In addition, the limited economic opportunity in most low-income, inner city neighborhoods results in many youths seeking financial gain through the drug trade, further increasing their odds for injury. Without any intervention strategies in place, hospitals are treating and releasing such violently injured patients back into the same environment that led them to their injury, without any tools or options for staying safe, managing the pressure of retaliation and possibly choosing a different trajectory for their lives.

## CURRENT CPA MODEL & OBJECTIVES

The current CPA model consists of three outreach teams supported by a case management team working to create individual service plans (ISP's) and resource connections for participants. The roles and responsibilities of CPA's outreach efforts are as follows:

**Community-based:** Ensures strategic in-reach to schools in highest risk neighborhoods and Safe Passage services during afternoon school transition times and high-risk evening events.

- Provide Critical Incident Response including Crowd Control, De-Escalation, Mediation, Conflict Resolution, services as needed
- Provide in-reach to highest risk youth at target high schools
- Provide vigilant community supervision during high risk "passage times" where youth are most vulnerable to violence
- Build presence to raise visibility of CPA, develop rapport with youth and build relationships with school staff and supports
- Provide Safe Passage services for in/out of school youth during school dismissals, major community events and at known community "hot spots"
- Provide street level outreach to disengaged young people most at risk of involvement in community violence in spaces where youth/young adults congregate
- Monitor known community "hot spots" to identify and connect with hardest to engage youth

- Engage highest risk youth in Peacemakers services including outreach mentoring groups, case management services, life-skills and pro-social programs
- Support highest risk youth in achieving attainments as part of Care Team- Case manager, Programming staff, other service professional or family member as appropriate

**Court-involved:** Ensures strategic engagement, advocacy and service linkage to CPA program and all other appropriate services for court/justice systems involved youth:

- Provide Critical Incident Response including Crowd Control, De-Escalation, Mediation, Conflict Resolution, services as needed
- Provide advocacy, service linkage and barrier reduction for youth involved in court/justice system
- Engage youth in Peacemakers services including outreach mentoring groups, case management services, life-skills and pro-social programs
- Support client participation in case management, restorative justice, community service, or other court mandated service/program
- Support youth in achieving attainments as part of Care Team- Case manager, Court appointed staff, other service professional or family member as appropriate
- Supports Safe Passage services as needed during afternoon school transition times and high-risk evening events to ensure Crowd Control, De-Escalation, Mediation, Conflict Resolution.
- Provide Hot Spot Monitoring to identify and connect with hardest to engage youth and provide linkage to needed services

**Hospital-based:** Ensures clients directly impacted by gun violence are supported, advocated for and linked to CAP and all other appropriate aftercare services post hospitalization.

- Provide Critical Incident Response including Crowd Control, De-Escalation, Mediation, Conflict Resolution, services as needed
- Provide advocacy, service linkage and barrier reduction for youth involved in hospitalization due to violence
- Engage youth in Peacemakers services including outreach mentoring groups, case management services, life-skills and pro-social programs
- Support client participation in case management, trauma counseling, rehabilitation or other needed services
- Support youth in achieving attainments as part of Care Team- Case manager, Court appointed staff, other service professional or family member as appropriate
- Work collaboratively with both hospital system partners on public education campaigns regarding a public health approach to understanding and treating traumatic injuries.

Based on the above, CPA has defined objectives to measure the performance and impact of the overall organizational effort via deliverables for each outreach team segment:

Overall Outreach Objectives:

- Reduce the reinjury rate of victims being treated for violent injuries, including, but not limited to, shootings, stabbings, and/or blunt force injury.
- Prevent retaliatory actions by victims, families, or their associates.
- Provide community-based interventions in conflicts and/or potential conflicts between victims, suspects, families, and/or associates.

- Provide mentoring and support for victims and their families.
- Provide alternatives to violence.
- Develop an evaluation tool that measures effectiveness of the project
  - Provide quarterly reports utilizing this evaluation tool.

Progress towards the above goals is measured via the following deliverables:

*Community-based:*

- Number of successful engagements (documented)
- Number of successful participant referrals to CPA Case Management
- Number of Critical Incident Response interventions
- Number of hotspot checks - camera documentation
- Number of Safe Passages conducted (school dismissal)
- Number of youth attending Outreach Check in groups
- Number of Assemblies, Public Events and Community Gatherings where outreach presented CPA services

*Court-Involved:*

- Number of participants who successfully complete conditions of supervision
- Number of participants that don't acquire additional charges while on supervision
- Number of successful participant referrals to CPA Case Management

*Hospital-Based:*

- Number of waiting room interventions facilitated
- Number of participant interventions facilitated
- Number of discharge recommendations developed
- Number of participants who successfully adhere to their discharge recommendations
- Number of training hours completed by CPA staff
- Number of forums, panels and presentations involving CPA

CPA will continuously monitor and evaluate this collected data in partnership with Cleveland's CRB in order to help identify trends, gaps in coverage and other positive and negative intervention outcomes. This review highlights opportunities for programmatic learning and improvement, helping to ensure 'real time' reactivity to changes within the CPA service landscape.

**2020 GOALS & PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS**

CPA recognizes that the ongoing objectives and outcomes outlined above can only be successfully achieved and scaled through thoughtful, intentional collaboration. Thus, a critical growth and improvement area for CPA in 2020 is the enhancement of the collaborative relationship between CPA and the City of Cleveland's CRB. Based on a recent strategy-focused dialogue with the City of Cleveland, CPA, BGCNEO and CPA funder The Cleveland Foundation, the following strategic alliance goals and objectives have been identified:

- Increasing the volume of community-based engagement activity undertaken by CPA outreach workers. This includes:

- Increasing CPA outreach presence at community hot spots, based on shared CPA and CRB intelligence;
  - Implementing enhanced community relationships via targeted neighborhood presence over extended periods of time, based on shared CPA and CRB intelligence;
  - Increasing CPA outreach presence at school dismissals, at the City's Community Resource Centers and through in-school presence.
- Improving overall communication and engagement between CPA and Cleveland's CRB outreach teams, including but not limited to the following:
    - Establishing formalized, recurring check-in's between CRB and CPA outreach teams;
    - Creating and implementing policies for prompt information sharing between CPA's Community, Hospital-based and Court-Involved Outreach and CRB's community based and Diversion Team staff;
    - Exploring the implementation of a joint data sharing platform (Apricot);
    - Establishing collaborative quarterly team building opportunities for CPA and Cleveland's CRB outreach teams
- Streamlining program resources and service delivery, including but not limited to:
    - Identifying and eliminating redundancies between CPA Case Manager and CRB Community Resource Center Coach referrals, with a goal of centralizing access to resources and assistance;
    - Exploring CPA and Cleveland CRB co-facilitation of programming at Community Resource Centers
- Formalizing and unifying response protocols via joint training opportunities for CPA and Cleveland CRB in the areas of critical incidence response, trauma-informed approaches, vicarious trauma, youth mental health, first aid, de-escalation, and others.

In tandem to undertaking the initiatives outlined above, CPA will be working to implement internal organizational strategies identified by a recently conducted, consultant-led *Work Culture, Program Delivery & Sustainability Assessment*. This assessment was aimed at improving communication, processes and procedures at CPA and resulted in a series of strategic recommendations, a sample program model and a suggested workplan to guide implementation. As indicated below, CPA believes partnering around some of these objectives with the City's CRB would provide added opportunity for collaboration and joint organizational agenda-setting.

Specific assessment recommendations (each containing a series of discreet action items) that CPA will be undertaking in the following year include:

- Planning and hosting a Leadership Retreat for CPA Board Members
- Planning and hosting a staff retreat
- Standardizing CPA All Staff Meeting
- Improving support for trauma-focused work and team wellbeing
- Developing and implementing a Critical Response Management System, include training – in partnership with City of Cleveland CRB
- Instituting a rigorous all staff training plan – in partnership with the City of Cleveland's CRB
- Tightening program delivery model – in partnership with the City of Cleveland's CRB

- Strengthening local partnerships – including City of Cleveland’s CRB

## **CONCLUSION**

In 2019 alone, the dedicated CPA team carried an average monthly caseload of 91 and engaged with approximately 2,800 youth on a quarterly basis. CPA also became a member of HAVI (the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention), an organization that fosters hospital and community collaboration to advance equitable, trauma-informed care for violence intervention and prevention programs. Additionally, CPA continued its ongoing community engagement and violence prevention advocacy work through participation in local events as well as national conferences.

While these accomplishments are commendable, CPA recognizes the existence of critical areas for growth and improvement within the organization and its programmatic structure and is committed to proactively addressing those needs. CPA strongly believes that improved alignment, collaboration, communication and resource sharing with the Community Relations Board of the City of Cleveland is central to enabling and empowering both organizations to better serve the young adults that need us most. CPA greatly appreciates the Community Relations Boards generous prior support and ongoing partnership, as well as its current consideration of this request.

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<sup>i</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. WISQARS leading causes of death reports, 1999-2006. 2010.

<sup>ii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. WISQARS Cost of Injury Reports

<sup>iii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. WISQARS Nonfatal Injury Data

<sup>iv</sup> Kennedy F, Brown JR, Brown KA, Fleming AW. Geographic and temporal patterns of recurrent intentional injury in south-central Los Angeles. J Natl Med Assoc., 1996, 88 (9):570:572