MBK CHICAGO



POWERED BY BRILLIANCE & EXCELLENCE

COMMUNITY ACTION GUIDE

HOW WE WORK TOGETHER TO KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

ONE GOAL · MANY ROLES · ONE COLLECTIVE STRATEGY

MILESTONE 6 · ALL YOUTH REMAIN SAFE FROM VIOLENT CRIME

REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE AND YOUTH EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES.

MBK Chicago brings together residents, young people, community organizations, community leaders, City partners, funders and institutions around one shared goal.

This is not about creating another program. It is about building a **coordinated community strategy** where everyone understands their role, resources are aligned, gaps are identified, and partners work collectively toward measurable improvements in youth safety.

No single organization, agency or leader can accomplish this alone.

DIFFERENT ROLES.
SHARED STRATEGY.
SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.
SHARED OUTCOME.

Launched by President Barack Obama, My Brother's Keeper is a national call to expand opportunity and improve outcomes for boys and young men of color.

WHY MILESTONE 6

1,694 Chicagoans ages 0–29 were victims of fatal shootings, 2020–Sept. 21, 2026.

99% of victims in this age group were Black or Hispanic.

62% of these deaths occurred across 15 community areas.

Source: City of Chicago, Victims of Homicides and Non-Fatal Shootings dataset.



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MBK CHICAGO
COMMUNITY
IN MOTION



THE COLLECTIVE

NO ONE ORGANIZATION OWNS THE STRATEGY. EVERYONE OWNS THE OUTCOME.

1

Shared goal across every community and partner.

4

Steps in every community strategy we build.

5

Rules that guide every MBK Chicago strategy.

SECTION 01

OUR SHARED GOAL

Reduce gun violence and youth exposure to violence in their neighborhoods and communities.

MBK Chicago brings together residents, young people, community organizations, Citywide Decision-Makers, funders and institutions around a common youth-safety outcome.

Instead of creating another program, MBK Chicago helps build a coordinated community strategy: roles are clear, resources are aligned, gaps are named and partners work toward measurable improvements in youth safety.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

No single organization, agency or leader can accomplish this alone. Each partner brings a different asset to the same goal — and is accountable to the same outcome.

- DIFFERENT ROLES
- SHARED STRATEGY
- SHARED RESPONSIBILITY
- SHARED OUTCOME



COMMUNITY MARCH · WEST SIDE, CHICAGO

SECTION 02

THE MBK CHICAGO WAY

Every community strategy follows four simple steps.

STEP 01

UNDERSTAND

What is driving the problem?

Start with data + community voice. Identify who is most impacted, where and when young people are least safe, what youth and families are experiencing, and what root causes are contributing.

EACH COMMUNITY IDENTIFIES 1–3 PRIORITY ROOT CAUSES.

STEP 02

BUILD

What solutions address those root causes?

Communities identify evidence-informed solutions that respond directly to the root causes, strengthening what already exists before creating something new.

EACH COMMUNITY SELECTS 2–4 COORDINATED STRATEGIES.

STEP 03

ALIGN

Who needs to work together?

For every strategy: who leads, who supports, what already exists, what is missing, and what policy, practice, resource or system barrier needs to change.

THE RIGHT PEOPLE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS TOGETHER.

STEP 04

COMMIT

What will we do?

Every strategy becomes an action plan with a named action, owner, partners, target, measure and timeline.

IDEAS BECOME COMMITMENTS. COMMITMENTS BECOME ACTION.

JOBS & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY | MENTORING | VIOLENCE INTERVENTION | MENTAL HEALTH & TRAUMA | SAFE SPACES | EDUCATION | FAMILY SUPPORT | REENTRY

SECTION 03 · HOW WE ARE ORGANIZED

HOW MBK CHICAGO IS ORGANIZED

MBK Chicago is one citywide strategy carried out close to home. The MBK Chicago Regional Community Action Network connects citywide coordination to regions, and each region to the communities and neighborhoods where young people live.

CITYWIDE	One youth-safety outcome, one set of core questions and one table where community partners, Citywide Decision-Makers and funders align.
REGIONS	South, West and Latinx communities. Each region plans and strategizes together, supported by Community Organizers.
COMMUNITIES	Community-based organizations, Community Leads, residents, youth and families choose the priorities for their community.
NEIGHBORHOODS	The blocks, parks, schools and corridors where safety is lived day to day - and where progress is measured.

ONE CITYWIDE OUTCOME. ONE CONNECTED NETWORK. STRATEGY IS BUILT WHERE PEOPLE LIVE.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Each region works toward the same citywide outcome, but communities may choose different strategies because they do not face the same barriers.

We look beyond programs alone to the policies, practices, resources, relationships and beliefs that shape whether young people are safe.

The work is iterative - partners reflect together, build trust and adjust as they go.

OUR CORE QUESTIONS

Each community answers these four questions with local data and lived experience. The answers become that community's action plan - they are not assigned by MBK Chicago.

WHO SUPPORTS?	What organizations, residents, youth, businesses, agencies or institutions need to participate?
WHAT EXISTS?	What programs, services, relationships and resources are already available?
WHAT IS MISSING?	Where are the gaps in services, resources or reach?
WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?	Is there a policy, practice, resource or system barrier preventing progress?

THE GOAL IS NOT TO HAVE EVERYBODY DOING EVERYTHING.
THE GOAL IS THE RIGHT PEOPLE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS TOGETHER.

EVERY ACTION PLAN IDENTIFIES

ACTION
What are we doing?

OWNER
Who is responsible?

PARTNERS
Who is helping?

TARGET
What are we trying to accomplish?

MEASURE
How will we know it is working?

TIMELINE
When will it happen?

SECTION 05 · STAKEHOLDERS

THE COLLECTIVE TABLE

A coordinated community strategy depends on four groups working together.

01 YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Young people and the families closest to the work bring lived experience, voice and perspective.

02 COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS, COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS & COMMUNITY LEADS

Organizers coordinate regional action, organizations connect services and opportunities, and community-selected leads anchor local follow-through.

03 CITYWIDE DECISION-MAKERS

Citywide leaders connect community priorities to schools, public resources, policy and larger systems of support.

04 FUNDERS

Funders align investments with the shared community strategy and the resources needed to carry it out.

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE.

THE GOAL IS THE RIGHT PEOPLE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS TOGETHER.

SECTION 06

YOUTH AND FAMILIES

A collective strategy only works when everyone understands what they bring to the table.



RESIDENTS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS

BRING THE COMMUNITY VOICE

Residents understand their communities in ways that data alone cannot show.

- Identify community needs and barriers
- Share lived experience
- Help identify community assets
- Participate in developing solutions
- Advocate for their neighborhoods
- Hold the collective accountable
- Help determine whether strategies are improving conditions

RESIDENTS ARE NOT AN AUDIENCE. THEY ARE PARTNERS.



YOUTH & TEENS

BRING THE YOUTH VOICE

Young people should have a meaningful role in decisions that affect their safety and future.
Youth help us understand:

- Where they feel safe and unsafe
- When violence or conflict is most likely
- What opportunities are missing
- What prevents access to services
- What programs youth will actually join
- Whether strategies are making a difference

Youth should participate in planning, meetings, working groups and evaluation whenever possible.

NOTHING ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE WITHOUT YOUNG PEOPLE.

SECTION 07

COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

Helping regions coordinate, choose leadership and move local action forward.

- Guide the region's planning process
- Host and coordinate community meetings
- Support planning and priority-setting
- Connect youth, families, organizations and residents
- Support follow-through between meetings
- Help communities identify and select their leads
- Help meeting leaders prepare agendas and next steps
- Help shape strategy at the regional level
- Keep resident and youth voice at the center
- Share learning across regions and with MBK Chicago

THE MBK CHICAGO REGIONAL COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK

SOUTH · WEST · LATINX COMMUNITIES

Community Organizers help each region coordinate, strategize and act together.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Turn strategy into services and opportunities.

Community organizations are often closest to young people and families. Organizations should identify what they already provide, what capacity they have and where they can contribute to the collective strategy.

Organizations should also coordinate referrals and services so young people and families can move between resources more easily. The goal is not for organizations to compete or duplicate services.

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS BRING

- PROGRAMS
- STAFF
- MENTORS
- OUTREACH
- VIOLENCE INTERVENTION
- EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS
- EDUCATION
- SAFE SPACES
- FAMILY SUPPORT
- COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS
- SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE

CONNECT WHAT EXISTS. STRENGTHEN WHAT WORKS. FILL WHAT IS MISSING.



PARTNER PANEL · NEW LIFE CENTERS



PARTNER CONVENING · BUILD CHICAGO

MBK COMMUNITY LEADS

The local anchor for the strategy.

An MBK Community Lead is a trusted local organization or leader selected by the community to anchor local action. Leads convene partners, maintain momentum and follow through between meetings.
All three regions now have named Community Leads, including Derrick Fleming on the South Side.

A COMMUNITY LEAD MUST BE ABLE TO

GALVANIZE

Bring residents, youth, organizations, schools, businesses and faith leaders together.

CONVENE

Host consistent community meetings, working sessions and youth engagement.

ADVOCATE

Represent community priorities with City agencies, funders and decision-makers.

CONNECT

Connect organizations, residents and young people to resources and opportunities.

COORDINATE

Clarify partner roles and keep every part of the strategy moving together.

SHARE LEADERSHIP

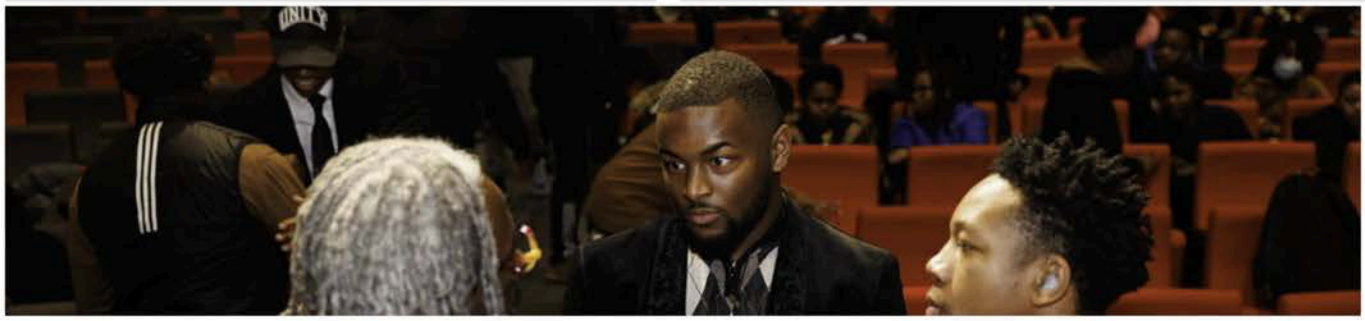
Work collaboratively without controlling every initiative or receiving all credit.

USE DATA

Connect decisions to local indicators, lived experience and agreed root causes.

FOLLOW THROUGH

Track commitments, communicate with partners and sustain action between meetings.



COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP · YOUTH TOWN HALL

SECTION 08

CITYWIDE DECISION-MAKERS

Connecting communities, schools and citywide systems to wraparound support.

Schools are essential partners in connecting young people and families to education, mental health, workforce and other coordinated resources.

CONNECTIONS MAY INCLUDE

- EMPLOYMENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- MENTAL HEALTH & TRAUMA SUPPORT
- HOUSING & FAMILY STABILIZATION
- EDUCATION & SCHOOL SUPPORT
- VIOLENCE PREVENTION & INTERVENTION
- RECREATION & SAFE SPACES
- FOOD & BASIC NEEDS
- TRANSPORTATION
- REENTRY & SECOND-CHANCE OPPORTUNITIES
- LEGAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE
- YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- OTHER CITY SERVICES & RESOURCES

"WHAT CAN GOVERNMENT CHANGE, PROVIDE OR UNLOCK THAT THE COMMUNITY CANNOT DO ALONE?"

City partnership should go beyond referrals.

THAT MAY MEAN

- Changing a policy
- Changing a practice
- Removing a barrier
- Redirecting resources
- Opening access to an opportunity
- Coordinating multiple agencies
- Bringing decision-makers to the table

Community organizations help address immediate needs. Citywide decision-makers help change the conditions and systems surrounding those needs.



SECTION 09

FUNDERS

Invest in the shared strategy.

Funders are critical partners in collective action. Their role is not simply to fund individual programs.

FUNDERS SHOULD UNDERSTAND

- What the data shows
- What the community has identified as its priorities
- What services already exist
- Where gaps remain
- What strategies the collective has selected
- What resources are necessary to implement them

This creates an opportunity to align investments around a **shared community strategy** rather than funding disconnected activities.

FUNDERS CAN SUPPORT

PROGRAMS · CAPACITY · INNOVATION · COORDINATION · COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE · EVALUATION · SYSTEM CHANGE

THE QUESTION BECOMES
"WHAT DOES THE STRATEGY NEED?"

RATHER THAN
"WHO HAS A PROGRAM WE CAN FUND?"



BIG 10 INVESTMENT TO BURKE ELEMENTARY · $50,000

SECTION 10

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM OUR REGIONAL & QUARTERLY CONVENINGS

THE MBK COMMUNITY ACTION CYCLE

01 DATA + COMMUNITY VOICE

▼

02 IDENTIFY ROOT CAUSES

▼

03 SELECT SHARED STRATEGIES

▼

04 MAP EXISTING ASSETS & GAPS

▼

05 ALIGN PARTNERS & RESOURCES

▼

06 TAKE COORDINATED ACTION

▼

07 MEASURE RESULTS

▼

08 LEARN + ADJUST

▼

09 REPEAT

THIS PAGE SHOWS

HOW WORK MOVES

The action cycle turns a community priority into coordinated action. Partners understand conditions, choose a response, organize delivery, measure change and improve the next round.



YOUNG PEOPLE · COMMUNITY EVENT

LEARN.
ADJUST.
REPEAT.

SECTION 11

HOW WE WORK TOGETHER: OUR FIVE COMMUNITY STRATEGY RULES

1 START WITH EVIDENCE

Pair local indicators with lived experience to define the problem.

2 ADAPT WHAT WORKS

Use proven or promising approaches, shaped for local conditions.

3 BUILD FROM LOCAL ASSETS

Connect and strengthen existing efforts before creating something new.

4 ASSIGN SHARED OWNERSHIP

Name responsibilities, timelines and handoffs across partners.

5 PURSUE SYSTEMS CHANGE

Target a lasting shift in policy, practice, resources or decision-making power.



YOUTH AMBASSADORS · NEIGHBORHOOD WELCOME

SECTION 12

WHAT MBK CHICAGO PROVIDES

The relationship between MBK Chicago and Community Leads goes both ways. Community Leads should not be expected to coordinate this work without support.

DATA
Helping communities understand relevant data, trends and indicators.

MAP + CALENDAR
A citywide map of programs, assets and gaps, plus a shared calendar of convenings and community events.

FACILITATION
Support designing and facilitating productive community conversations.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
Training and assistance to strengthen organizations and collective strategies.

PARTNER CONNECTIONS
Connecting communities with organizations, businesses and institutions.

CITY CONNECTIONS
Helping connect community priorities with City departments and resources.

FUNDER CONNECTIONS
Helping funders understand community priorities, strategies and gaps.

COMMUNICATION
Helping tell the story of the work, progress and impact.

COORDINATION
Connecting community strategies to the broader MBK Chicago network.

COMMUNITY LEADS BRING

TRUST + RELATIONSHIPS + LOCAL KNOWLEDGE + CONVENING POWER + ADVOCACY + CAPACITY

MBK CHICAGO BRINGS

TOOLS + COORDINATION + TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE + PARTNER CONNECTIONS + SYSTEM ACCESS

TOGETHER WE BUILD

A COMMUNITY-OWNED, DATA-DRIVEN STRATEGY FOR YOUTH SAFETY.

NOTES & REFLECTIONS

Capture ideas, questions, connections and commitments from the conversation.

MY NEXT STEP:

MBK CHICAGO · NOTES

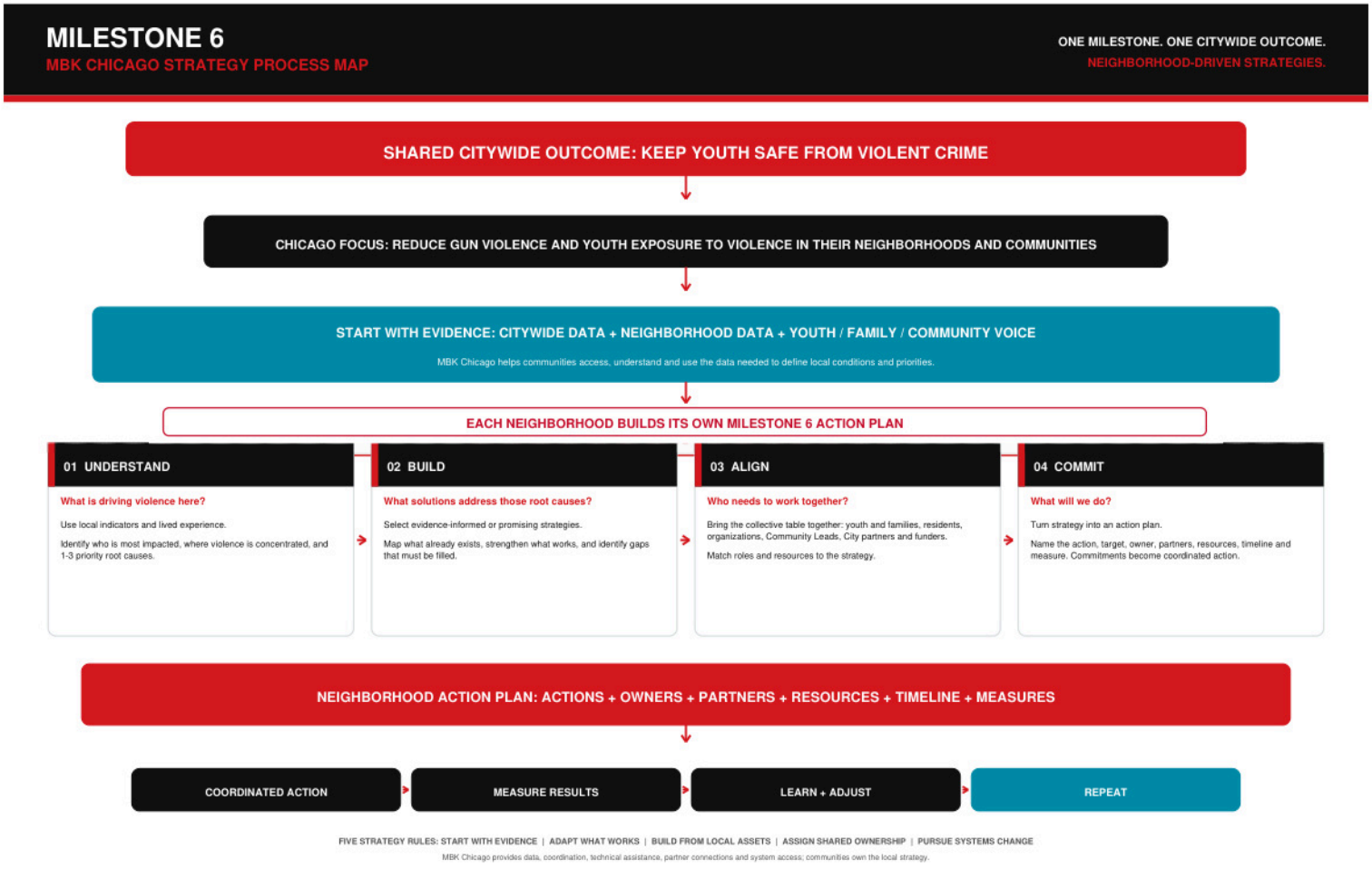
IDEAS & COMMITMENTS

Capture ideas, questions, connections and commitments from the conversation.

MY NEXT STEP:

MILESTONE 6

MBK CHICAGO STRATEGY PROCESS MAP



CONNECT WITH MBK CHICAGO

YOUR ORGANIZATION.
YOUR RESOURCES.
YOUR NEXT STEP.

MBKCHICAGO.COM

Visit the website to:

- REGISTER YOUR ORGANIZATION
- FIND RESOURCES
- GET CONNECTED
- GET INVOLVED

ONE GOAL. MANY ROLES.
ONE CONNECTED CHICAGO.

SCAN TO VISIT
MBKCHICAGO.COM