



NEWS RELEASE

Chicago Police Department

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Chicago Ends 2015 with Continued Reductions in Overall Crime, Despite Challenges

CHICAGO, IL – In 2015, Chicago saw the fourth straight year of reductions in overall crime and the fewest violent crime incidents since the 1960's. Since 2011, overall crime in Chicago has fallen by more than 37 percent – across the FBI's combined major crime indices (homicide, rape, robbery, burglary, aggravated assault, felony theft, motor vehicle theft and arson).

While overall crime continued to fall in 2015, gun violence in Chicago rose – as was the case in many major urban centers across the country last year. That did not apply, however, to juvenile victims – which is significant. There was a 33 percent decline in juvenile murder victims in 2015, and a 14 percent decline in juvenile shooting victims.

"2015 was a year of hard work and real progress but also real challenges," said Interim Police Superintendent John Escalante. "I'm proud that we continue to see an overall reduction crime in Chicago; however we clearly have a lot of work ahead of us. In addition to building upon our public safety accomplishments, our focus for 2016 year will be to restore the trust of the people of Chicago by being more transparent and continuing to work with our external partners to take a critical look at our department to develop best-in-class policies and practices."

Crime Trends

Since last year, overall crime decreased by 6 percent, with burglaries and thefts down by double digit percentages. Since 2011, robberies are down by 32 percent; aggravated battery is down by 20 percent; burglaries are down by 51 percent; theft is down by 19 percent and motor vehicle thefts are down by 48 percent. Murders and non fatal shootings were both up by 11 percent from 2014. Juvenile murder victims (victims aged 17 and younger) were down 33 percent, and juvenile shooting victims were down 14 percent.

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Efforts to Decrease Gun Violence and Violent Crime

CPD continues to focus on the small subset of individuals involved in organized crime and gang activity who disproportionately commit a majority of the city's violent crimes. Since January, the Department has confiscated more than 6,908 illegal guns – an average of one gun every hour and a half – and while arrests for overall crimes fell by 12 percent last year, gun arrests rose by 12 percent. Due in part to comparatively lenient laws in Illinois and the surrounding region, the Chicago Police Department takes more illegal guns off the streets every year than any other major U.S. city including New York and Los Angeles.

In the 2016 budget, Mayor Rahm Emanuel also announced plans for Chicago Police Department to return 319 police officers to the street by hiring civilian professional staff to serve in certain roles.

Police Accountability & Reform

2015 also raised new complexities, and the Chicago Police Department recognizes that public trust has been shaken. The City is committed to a fundamental shift in policing in Chicago. In recent weeks a number of major reforms have been announced to begin to restore that trust; however, further changes and reforms will be required in the weeks and months ahead.

Some of the efforts taken to rebuild that trust in 2015 include:

- **De-escalation Policy**: On December 30, Mayor Emanuel and Interim Superintendent Escalante announced significant policy revisions centered around de-escalation tactics to reduce the intensity of a conflict at the earliest possible moment, emphasizing that the foremost goal of any police encounter is to protect the sanctity of life and the safety of all involved. In 2016, CPD will begin implementing comprehensive and continuous training to help officers to develop and display the skills and abilities that allow them to regularly resolve confrontations using the least force necessary.
- **Taser Expansion**: The city is adding 700 more tasers. By June 1, 2016, every officer responding to calls for service will be equipped with this tool and trained to properly use it, helping to ensure officers can resolve confrontations using the least amount of appropriate force.
- **New Policies Affecting Officers Involved in Shootings**: Going forward, any officer involved in a shooting will have separation from field duties while training and fitness for duty requirements can be conducted. The officers involved will be placed on routine administrative duties for a period of 30 days.
- **Expanded Use of Body Cameras**: CPD is expanding the use of body-worn cameras to a total of seven police districts, covering a third of the City.

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Add Two / Continued Reductions in Overall Crime - 2015

- Independent Task Force on Police Accountability: Mayor Emanuel directed the formation of an independent task force to review the system of accountability, oversight and training that is currently in place for Chicago's police officers.

"Thanks to strong support from Mayor Emanuel, we have the resources necessary to implement greater levels of accountability to earn back the trust of our citizens," said Interim Superintendent Escalante, "We also have started to rethink the way we respond to service calls, determine the use of force, and build greater relationships with the community. I believe 2016 will bring unprecedented levels of positive change to the Department."

Among the indicators that track the effectiveness of community policing strategies and officer training is the level of citizen complaints against officers, which in 2015 was down 17 percent compared to 2014, and represents the lowest levels since records have been kept.

Diversity and Leadership

In December, CPD announced a new leadership team that brings record diversity to the Department's senior command ranks. Now, fifty percent of police chiefs and deputy chiefs are African-American, and more women are serving in executive leadership roles. CPD also launched its first recruitment campaign in two years. As part of the campaign, CPD is making a specific effort to increase minority participation in the written exam to drive greater diversity among its ranks.

Youth Violence Prevention

While Chicago saw an overall uptick in gun violence in 2015, that trend did not extend to juvenile victims aged 17 and younger. Juvenile murder victims were down 33 percent compared to 2014, and juvenile shooting victims were down more than 14 percent compared to 2014.

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Add Three / Continued Reductions in Overall Crime - 2015

Contributing in part to the significant reduction in juvenile murder and shooting victims in 2015 were additional investments in expanded youth violence prevention programs.

- Mentoring for Youth at Risk of Violence: Working with the Department of Family and Support Services, CPS, Cook County Juvenile Probation, and community partners, CPD helped pilot and expand an intensive group-mentoring program for justice-involved youth called RISE. The program empowers youth through skill-building and pro-social activities.
- Expanding Summer Jobs: In 2015, Chicago served a record 24,000 youth with summer jobs, including increasing the nationally recognized One Summer Chicago Plus program – from 1,000 youth served in 2014 to 2,000 in 2015. One Summer Chicago Plus is a proven youth violence intervention that connects those youth most at-risk for violence involvement with a summer job and a mentor.
- Programs to promote trust and understanding between police officers and youth: CPS has partnered with the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) to bring a unique “Law in Your Community” Curriculum to CPS schools. CPD officers engage in role playing and other activities with middle school students to build relationships and mutual empathy. In addition, CPD forged a partnership with the YMCA to create Bridging the Divide, a program to build relationships between youth and officers through officer training, officer-youth engagement. In 2015 the program expanded to 6 police districts.
- School Safety: Chicago Police Department is an active partner in efforts by Chicago Public Schools to keep more youth in school by reducing arrests and exclusionary discipline in our schools. 2015 saw further reductions in arrests during school, and the expansion of restorative justice practices to resolve conflicts peacefully.

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