

December 23, 2021

To: Chris Patterson, Assistant Secretary, Office of Firearms Violence Prevention, Illinois Department of Human Services.  
Fr: J. Hoereth, Director, UIC Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement, Member, Firearm Violence Research Group (FVRG)

**Re: Reimagine Public Safety Act – Eligible Community Areas and Municipalities**

---

Dear Chris,

As you know, the Reimagine Public Safety Act (RPSA) takes a public health approach to ending the epidemic of gun violence affecting communities across Illinois. RPSA enables the Office of Firearm Violence Prevention (OFVP) to support violence prevention programs in the state, and to seek advice from experts to determine the method and data sources for determining where to focus help to communities to maximize impact. To that end, the Firearm Violence Research Group (FVRP) was convened beginning in August 2021, pursuant to the requirement in the Act, to help determine the State’s most concentrated areas of firearm violence for investment.

**Selected Eligible Areas**

After consideration of the requirements of RPSA and available data sources, the FVRG has developed a process for recommending eligible community areas in Chicago and municipalities in Greater Illinois as per the requirements of the Act. The FVRG applied this process to determine the Chicago Community Areas that rate highest in firearms victimization, excluding self-inflicted shots. **The eligible Chicago Community Areas should include:**

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Auburn Gresham         | North Lawndale     |
| Austin                 | Riverdale          |
| Burnside               | Roseland           |
| Chatham                | South Chicago      |
| Chicago Lawn           | South Lawndale     |
| East Garfield Park     | South Shore        |
| Englewood              | Washington Park    |
| Fuller Park            | West Englewood     |
| Greater Grand Crossing | West Garfield Park |
| Humboldt Park          | West Pullman       |
| New City               | Woodlawn           |

The FVRG used a similar process for determining the eligible municipalities with populations less than 1,000,000 people. The Research group applied this process to determine the eligible municipalities from across Illinois that rate highest in firearms victimization. **The eligible municipalities with less than 1,000,000 residents should include:**

- Aurora
- Belleville Cluster (Includes Belleville, East St. Louis, and Cahokia Heights)
- Berwyn-Cicero Cluster
- Calumet City Cluster (Includes Calumet City, Harvey, Dolton, Riverdale, South Holland, Markham, Lansing)
- Chicago Heights Cluster (Includes Chicago Heights, Park Forest, and Sauk Village)
- Danville
- Decatur
- Joliet
- Kankakee
- Maywood-Bellwood Cluster
- Peoria
- Rockford
- Springfield
- Urbana-Champaign Cluster
- Waukegan-North Chicago Cluster

### **Selection Methodology**

#### *Process for Chicago Community Areas (Municipality with more than 1,000,000 population)*

The FVRG determined a blended approach using rate and volume would be most effective in identifying those communities with the most concentrated gun violence to be eligible for funding. The first ten community areas were selected by those that rank highest by a per capita combined fatal and non-fatal victimization rate. The next seven community areas were selected through a ranking of the remaining community areas by total number of victims. Per the RPSA, the OFVP used its discretion to select five additional community areas, which were the next five in highest per capita rate. With this blended approach, some of the smaller community areas with high per capita victimization rates make the list, as do larger community areas with the greatest number of victims.

#### *Process for Municipalities under 1,000,000 in Population*

The FVRG confirmed that the same blended approach used for Chicago would also be the best approach for those municipalities with less than 1,000,000 residents, with the added criteria of clustering municipalities that are contiguous to each other. This process both meets the specific language of the RPSA which enables the OFVP to select up to 15 “municipalities or contiguous geographic areas.” The selection process for the municipalities under 1,000,000 can be described as three steps.

Step 1. The municipalities with populations between 35,000 and 1,000,000 are sorted by rank order on highest per capita rate of fatal and non-fatal firearm-shot victimization 2016-2020 (excluding self-inflicted) for the municipalities of this population size. As per the RPSA, the first 10 municipalities on that list are selected.

Step 2. Illinois municipalities of any population size that were not already selected are then sorted in rank order by absolute (raw) numbers of fatal and non-fatal firearm-shot victimization 2016-2020 (excluding self-inflicted). As per the RPSA, the top five municipalities on this list are selected.

Step 3. After each list is ranked by its respective measure (rate or raw number), any selected municipalities that are contiguous to another selected one are joined together in a cluster. If a cluster is formed in this way, the next highest municipality on the ranking lists is selected in the open slot created by clustering. If that next municipality is contiguous to one in the original selected 15 slots, then it is also selected and joined to that cluster. The process continues down

the appropriate list until there are fifteen total slots filled with selected municipalities and/or clusters of municipalities.

*Data Sources*

The FVRG agreed that there exists no single publicly available statewide data source that meets the requirement of the Act for measuring victim data, specifically “fatal and non-fatal firearm-shot incidents” as specified in 430 ILCS 69/35-20d. To resolve this, the FVRG agreed to the following definition of “firearm-shot” incidents: “[A]ny assault in which a person is shot with a firearm, including both fatal and non-fatal incidents, excluding self-inflicted.”

With no single statewide data source available, the group agreed to use Chicago Police Department Shooting Incident data for cities with population over 1,000,000 (Chicago). Since 2010, the Chicago Police Department has made “shooting incident” and more recently “shooting victim” data available to the public. To identify the Illinois municipalities under 1,000,000 in population, the group used data from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). IDPH provided the group with the number of firearm homicides and number of emergency room admissions for firearm assaults (non-fatal firearm-shot victimization). These measures are consistent with the FVRG definition and have also been used recently in other initiatives, including the Illinois Restore, Reinvest, and Renew Program (R3) and Chicago’s Our City, Our Safety Plan.