

DRAFT LETTER/EMAIL

Purpose: Spread the word out about free mental health trainings

The impact of stigma and untreated mental illness and addiction are painfully visible in the City of Chicago. Lack of understanding about how to recognize and address behavioral health issues, damaged trust between the police and the communities they serve and need for improved capacity and processes to effectively interact with individuals with mental illness and substance use disorder challenges require urgent attention. Existing system gaps in training, data systems, management, treatment options and public understanding have been identified by community stakeholders, including The Police Accountability Task Force.

[I AM/ORGANIZATION IS] working with a group of community leaders and experts¹ convened by The Kennedy Forum and in coordination with the City of Chicago and relevant departments, to address these needs and take action to improve and expand both the training and preparedness of Chicago Police Department (CPD) officers and Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) and also to empower our communities with more information and improved care.

Toward that end, we are implementing an outreach and education project in East/West Garfield Park, Austin and North Lawndale (police districts 10,11 and 15) to provide education and training to community leaders and trusted messengers that interact with individuals who are at high risk for a crisis situation or interaction with the police.

The goal of the effort is to educate, utilizing stigma-combatting strategies, those most likely to call 911 with information about how and when to request a specially trained Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained officer in case of a mental health related situation. We hope to do this by training trusted messengers in the community and providing them with the information and tools to convey this critical information to community members in need. Specifically, we are focused on training faith leaders, staff and volunteers of community-based organizations (CBOs), and school staff and administrators, including teachers.

To do this we are:

- Offering trainings for the audiences identified (school, faith, CBOs) free of charge from January-June. Trainings inform participants about how to recognize mental health or addiction signs and symptoms, treatment and early intervention, ways to support their congregation &

¹ Alderman Burnett, Alderman Ervin, Alderman Mitts, Alderman Scott, Alderman Taliaferro, Anixter Center, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital, BBF Family Services, Blue Cross Blue Shield Illinois, Bobby E. Wright Comprehensive Behavioral Health Center, Catholic Charities, Chicago Area Project, Chicago Police Department, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Office of Emergency Management & Communications, Chicago Urban League, Cook County Commissioner Steele, Cook County Hospital, Garfield Park Behavioral Hospital, Gateway Foundation, Hartgrove Behavioral Health System, I Am Able, JLM Abundant Life Center, The Kennedy Forum Illinois, Loretto Hospital, MADO Healthcare, Michael Reese Health Trust, NAMI Chicago, Next Level Health, The Prairie Group Consulting, Presence Health, Primo Center, St. Anthony Hospital, Sinai Health System, Thresholds, Trilogy Inc., Behavioral Health, University of Illinois-Chicago

community members and get them help, how to access a CIT trained police officer in case of a crisis.

- Developing and distributing informational materials about how to access CIT trained police officers, and information about how to connect to treatment and support services.
- Doing outreach at Aldermen's community meetings and events and other community events, introducing CIT trained officers to the community, disseminating information and resources.
- Evaluating the project with a pre- and post- survey and data collection to inform broader city-wide efforts.

To be successful, we need your help.

We need your help to:

- Spread the word to organizations and individuals in the community about the availability of free trainings. Here is the link for them to request a training: <http://eepurl.com/b8Mobb>.
 - Attached is a fact sheet you can include in an email or e-blast or distribute.
- Identify opportunities, groups and influencers to help us further disseminate this information.
- Participate in a training yourself to become an informed messenger.
- [Download the CIT flyer here](#) and distribute.