

# PREVENTION FIRST

## CHICAGO STRATEGIC ACTION COUNCIL (CSAC)



## Improved Service Quality — Who We Are

Our citywide workgroup brings together prevention providers, community partners, and public health stakeholders to strengthen the quality and consistency of prevention services across Chicago. Our purpose is to help prevention providers attract and retain a qualified workforce and implement high-quality, evidence-based services built alongside communities.

## Why Prevention Quality Matters

High-quality prevention work directly strengthens community health, youth safety, and long-term well-being while reducing the need for more costly interventions later. By investing in competitive compensation and incentivized certification for prevention workers, we can decrease turnover and create a more standardized pay structure. This sustainable prevention workforce supports:

- ▶ Evidence-based prevention efforts that reduce the likelihood that youth become involved with costly downstream services, such as treatment systems or crisis response

- ▶ Consistent community presence of prevention specialists, thereby building trusting relationships with youth and creating conditions to foster positive development
- ▶ Clear, evidence-based standards that reduce liability and help ensure programming efforts deliver reliable outcomes across various settings
- ▶ Wider neighborhood reach and prevention services that are increasingly grounded in community voice and local context, therefore yielding stronger and more equitable outcomes

## What We Are Building

Our workgroup is developing shared structures to strengthen the prevention ecosystem. Our priorities for investment include:

- ▶ **Community-Informed Prevention Quality Framework**  
A shared definition of “quality,” rooted in effectiveness, equity, and accessibility:
  - Supportive workforce recruitment and retention strategies
  - Adaptable framework across rural, urban, and suburban settings



- ▶ **Resource Library and Shared Tools**  
A clearinghouse of shared metrics and reporting templates:

- Strategies to promote trauma-informed, sustainable workplaces
- Technology, confidentiality supports, and emergent tools (including AI)

## Workforce Pipelines and Support

- Compensation models tied to certification and demonstrated expertise, both skills-based and education-based
- Advocacy for livable wages, reflecting the essential value of service providers
- Better-defined entry points for prevention specialists, increasing recruitment and retention through structured career pathways

## Cross-Sector Dialogues and Collaboration

- Aligning prevention efforts across the ecosystem by engaging:
  - Youth, parents, and intergenerational communities
  - Service providers and educational partners
  - Key government officials
  - Public health departments, hospitals, and health systems

# How We Demonstrate Impact

Funders can expect consistent and meaningful outcomes and measures of success, including:

- ▶ Counter-metrics and engagement indicators that reflect increased provider reach, as well as community trust and belonging
- ▶ Adaptable workforce pipeline models and metrics, including program participation milestones (e.g., ceremonies and recognitions to support retention)
- ▶ Coordination and infrastructure metrics, such as the number of cross-agency tools utilized and dialogues held
- ▶ Evidence-based, measurable outcomes tied to youth substance use prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, violence prevention, and positive youth development

# Resources Needed

Support for flexible funding that accounts for the real cost, timelines of delivering high-quality prevention work

Investment in workforce pipelines, fair/sustainable compensation, and certification incentives

Access to high-quality data sources and research expertise to support shared measurement and ensure prevention work is guided by current evidence

