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Chicago mayor's commission unveils plan for a safer Chicago



VIDEO: Mayor's Commission for a Safer Chicago
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okZ0a2zbsWk#t=12>)

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The city of Chicago released [a report](#) today with 28 recommendations to address the city's youth violence problem.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Mayor's Commission for a Safe Chicago released the report. The recommendations include adding eight "peace rooms" in Chicago Public schools for conflict resolution and connecting families with counseling.

“Every child in the city of Chicago deserves a childhood, and that childhood cannot be stolen from them,” Emanuel said in unveiling the plan. “And every adolescent deserves their adolescence free of violence. So I hope we take this work ... not just as another report [but as] a call to action.”

While it is billed as a strategic plan for 2015, most of the report's 64 pages are dedicated to celebrating past accomplishments by the Emanuel administration.



Of the 60 violence prevention programs highlighted in the report's executive summary, 13 of them are new or updated for 2015.

One of the new ideas presented in the plan calls on the Chicago Police Department to explore alternatives to arresting first-time juvenile offenders.

“We recommend exploring possible alternatives to arrest for first-time juvenile offenders such as tickets or ... community service,” said co-chair Eddie Bocanegra with the YMCA.

And the written report says the police department will do just that in 2015. But spokesmen for the mayor's office and CPD declined to provide any specifics on the plan.

The commission's plan focuses on youth violence because, according to the city, people 29 and younger have made up more than 60 percent of Chicago's homicide victims over the past five years. It aims to decrease crime by treating youth violence as a public health issue. That means a focus on education, trauma therapy and youth employment.

Emanuel pointed to [a recent study by the University of Chicago Crime Lab and the University of Pennsylvania](#) that showed the One Summer Plus youth jobs program helped reduce arrests by more than 40 percent over a 16-month period.

This is the first report by the Mayor's Commission for a Safer Chicago. It was written after three forums held over the summer attended by government representatives, faith groups and community organizations.

The commission also sought out opinions from about 200 young people in more than a dozen Chicago communities.

Patrick Smith is a WBEZ reporter and producer. Follow him on twitter [@pksmid](#). The Associated Press also contributed to this report.

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