



Creating a “R.E.I.A.L” sense of community

## **REIAL January 15, 2025, Monthly meeting NOTES and Minutes**

### **Vision**

To build communities where destructive force of gun violence can be replaced with strategies and partnerships that provide the necessary resources to creating a township, city, and state where underserved communities live, learn, work and play without fear of the effects of gun violence.

### **Mission**

To strengthen partnerships that improve the quality of life for families that have been negatively affected by community gun violence. Our goal is to provide access to education, housing, transportation, meaningful employment, wholistic healthcare, mental health services, and a revived sense community. REIAL convenes sustainable key partnerships that consist of community stakeholders, elected officials, and neighboring municipalities maximizing public and private services for the residents of Greater Joliet.

### **Summary:**

LeShae Hudson presented the REIAL’s vision and mission, emphasizing the goal of eliminating gun violence through strategic partnerships and resource access. She highlighted the need for safe environments for families affected by gun violence and initiated a discussion on workplace protocols for handling such incidents. Kraig Kistingner shared his company's approach, which includes Department of Homeland Security training and enhanced safety measures, stressing the importance of de-escalation and contacting authorities in dangerous situations. This exchange underscored a collective commitment to community safety and addressing gun violence.

LeShae also addressed the necessity for improved Emergency Response Protocols in Joliet Township, particularly considering a recent shooting. She announced an upcoming meeting with the chief of police to enhance collaboration between violence prevention efforts and law enforcement. Additionally, she discussed preparations for high-risk events like Memorial Day and July 4th to mitigate potential violence.

LeShae expressed enthusiasm about a partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services to create a regional Memorandum of Understanding for coordinated violence prevention efforts. Angel Contreras provided updates on community violence intervention services and transportation support for residents.

Keshia Ellis highlighted the positive impact of community events in Joliet Township Government, which have provided essential resources to vulnerable residents. She detailed partnerships with local organizations aimed at addressing the needs of those affected by gun violence and outlined the team's response protocol for incidents, ensuring outreach and victim advocacy within 24 hours. LeShae acknowledged the importance of collaboration among various services, including behavioral health teams, to tackle the challenges posed by gun violence. Miguel Cambray discussed the financial implications of gun violence, emphasizing the need for ongoing community collaboration and support.

Cambray presented alarming statistics on gun violence, noting that it results in approximately 125 deaths daily in the U.S. and costs nearly \$280 billion annually. He provided a breakdown of the costs associated with crime, including direct expenses like law enforcement and medical care, and indirect costs such as lost income. Cambray urged attendees to consider reallocating funds from gun violence-related expenses towards education.

He also addressed systemic racism in resource distribution and disparities in the justice system, calling for a reevaluation of how gun violence is classified and addressed. LeShae requested updates on behavioral health programs, and Alicia Morales emphasized the need for proactive government action to combat gun violence.

LeShae Hudson outlined the organization's vision to combat gun violence by fostering community partnerships and providing essential resources. She highlighted the mission to improve the quality of life for families affected by gun violence and sought input on workplace emergency response protocols. Kraig Kistingler responded by detailing his company's multi-tiered approach to safety, including training and facility modifications.

LeShae encouraged participants to discuss any upcoming events, prompting Jaron Nabors to confirm there were no current events planned. Tywanda Smith mentioned an upcoming Valentine's Day party for the youth program and potential adult events like bingo or karaoke.

### **Gun Violence Impact and Economic Costs**

Miguel Cambray presented sobering statistics on gun violence, stating that 125 individuals are killed each day in the U.S., resulting in about 40,000 deaths annually. He discussed the estimated economic cost of gun violence, which totals nearly \$280 billion each year, with gun homicides accounting for approximately \$12 billion of that figure. Miguel aimed to illustrate the widespread impact of gun violence, urging attendees to recognize it as a collective issue rather than a localized problem.

### **Breakdown of Crime-Related Costs**

Miguel Cambray outlined six main categories of costs related to crime, emphasizing the importance of understanding these financial implications. Kraig Kistingler questioned the lack of mention of community and individual costs, suggesting they might not be available in the data presented. Miguel clarified that these costs are included in the last two categories of the report.

### **Cost Analysis of Homicides and Gun Violence**

Miguel Cambray discussed the financial burden of homicides and non-fatal shootings, noting that each homicide costs approximately \$1.2 million. He suggested that these funds could be better utilized in education, particularly in Illinois, where the average cost of a four-year education is around \$27,000 per

year. Miguel also referenced resources from Everytown regarding gun laws and their financial implications.

### **Cost Analysis of Gun Violence and Community Impact**

Miguel Cambray outlined the financial implications of gun violence, noting that communities suffer from both direct costs, such as medical expenses and law enforcement, and indirect costs like lost productivity and decreased property values. He emphasized that society invests more in incarceration than in education or violence prevention, with significant economic losses estimated at \$50 billion annually. Miguel also pointed out the systemic racism in resource allocation, particularly in how gun violence is addressed compared to opioid addiction.

### **Discussion on Systemic Racism and Gun Violence**

Miguel Cambray discussed the disparities in sentencing for drug offenses, illustrating the differences in treatment between individuals based on race. DeMarsh Tarver shared his personal experience with gun violence in his family and pointed out the systemic racism that contributes to violence in economically disadvantaged communities. Both speakers stressed the importance of addressing these issues in the broader conversation about gun violence.

### **Updates on Behavioral Health and Upcoming Events**

LeShae Hudson asked for updates from Karissa and Haydee on behavioral health efforts. Karissa confirmed their presence in schools and with clients, while DeMarsh stated there were no updates from Agape but would provide information in the next meeting.

### **Addressing Gun Violence and Community Initiatives**

Alicia Morales discussed the importance of government leadership in tackling gun violence. She noted the initiatives being implemented in Joliet Township, including the creation of a violence prevention counselor coordinator and a behavioral health counselor, which aim to fill gaps in community support.

### **Action Items**

- \* Leshae Hudson will follow up with the chief of police and provide an update to the team.
- \* LeShae Hudson will provide information on how to establish workplace violence protocols and lockdown drills.
- \* Leshae Hudson will arrange for a safety expert to present on emergency response protocols for gun violence.
- \* Angel Contreras will ensure organizations are aware of the upcoming grant cycles for community violence intervention services.

\* Keshia Ellis will continue to provide updates on community events and partnerships aimed at supporting high-risk populations.

\* Miguel Cambray will share public data sources with LeShae and all participants for their access and reference.

\* Kraig Kistingner will plan for another engagement event at the Life Skills Reentry Center in late spring or early summer.