



Altgeld-Riverdale Consortium

Evaluation Findings

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**SOCIAL IMPACT
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Report Information

The Social IMPACT Research Center thanks the Chicago Housing Authority staff, sub-grantees, partners, and residents, as well as residents of the Altgeld-Riverdale community area who all set aside time in their busy days to participate in meetings, interviews, focus groups, and data collection for this evaluation.

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The Social IMPACT Research Center

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) received a 9-month grant from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority to support the further development of the Altgeld-Riverdale Consortium (ARC) in its efforts to improve safety in CHA's Altgeld Gardens and the surrounding Riverdale neighborhood in Chicago.

Between January and September of 2013, the ARC worked to improve and strengthen community safety, create vehicles for consistent communication, and increase utilization of community resources. Following a community-building model of organizing, the ARC created a collaboration of partners and residents to meet these goals. This strategy relied on identifying existing resources within the community that were complemented by the work and expertise of external partners.

With staffing and leadership provided by CHA, the collaborative work of the ARC was undertaken in partnership with the following types of key players:

- ARC Sub-Grantee Partners whose participation was made possible through sub-grant funding agreements
- Community Partners whose agencies and programs were already present and not dependent on a sub-grant funding agreement for their participation

While the different types of partnerships have differing implications in terms of establishing an ongoing, sustainable presence, both the Sub-Grantee Partners and the Community Partners were critical to the ARC's successes.

Over the life of the grant, the ARC made significant progress in meeting its defined goals and objectives. The ARC was successful in increasing residents' perceptions of safety in the community. For many residents, ARC events, meetings, and initiatives provided a sense of community togetherness that signified the potential to bring positive change. This fortified the determination of the partners and residents to make the community a safer place to live. Through six partner open houses the Consortium encouraged participants to look within the community for resources and opportunities to defy the challenges of its immediate context.

The Consortium's emphasis on community partners and external organizations' resources, however, limited the involvement of residents who were not already engaged in the ARC or leaders of local organizations. Efforts to create vehicles for consistent communication—for example, hiring outreach workers to act as town criers and share local information, and developing mechanisms for consistent email tracking—were necessary to grow the ARC's participation and influence in the community. This was a difficult task that required additional support, clear guidance, and dedicated resources from the ARC leadership and community partners.

CHART. THE ALTGELD-RIVERDALE CONSORTIUM THEORY OF CHANGE



Despite its isolated location on the southern-most border of Chicago and being surrounded by numerous structural disadvantages, the Altgeld-Riverdale community has a tremendous wealth of local leadership, expertise, and dedication to improving the safety of the neighborhood for its current and future residents. As the ARC continues to develop and define itself, the recommendations included in this report are intended to build upon the work already being done, while offering opportunities to transform current efforts into tools of sustainable community change.

Key Accomplishments

- The ARC and its partners held 12 events and initiatives that had a positive impact on community residents' perceptions of safety.
- The ARC's Sub-Grantee Partners implemented a variety of programs and activities that sought to provide positive learning and engagement opportunities for young people and to ultimately build community capacity for promoting safety.
- Two part-time ARC coordinators were hired to lead coordination of the ARC's efforts.
- Three outreach workers, each representing different housing communities, were identified and brought on board to conduct outreach efforts throughout the area to increase engagement of community residents in the ARC's events, activities, and other efforts.
- Nine ARC Forums were held, bringing together Sub-Grantee Partners, Community Partners, and community residents to discuss strategies and resources for improving safety in the Altgeld-Riverdale area.
- Six partner open houses were held in the community with financial support from CHA and safe passage assurance to ensure residents could safely attend and participate.

1. INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Has the ARC accomplished its goals, and if so, how?
2. How effectively does the ARC engage community residents and in what ways?
 3. How effective are ARC-sponsored events and activities and ARC community partners at changing engaged residents' knowledge and attitudes about safety in the community?
 4. How effective are ARC-sponsored activities and events and ARC community partners at increasing community safety—perceived or real?

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) received a 9-month grant from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority to support the further development of the Altgeld-Riverdale Consortium (ARC) in its efforts to improve safety in CHA's Altgeld Gardens and the surrounding Riverdale neighborhood in Chicago between January and September 2013.

The Social IMPACT Research Center (IMPACT) at Heartland Alliance evaluated the group's efforts towards meeting the following goals and objectives as stated in the grant proposal.

Goal 1: Improve and strengthen community safety

Objective 1: Create and coordinate resident-driven safety initiative(s) to enhance existing law enforcement, private security, and community resources and develop coordination among these efforts to keep residents safe as they live and travel within the community.

Objective 2: Create stipend-funded opportunities for community residents to facilitate safety programs and events.

Objective 3: Deliver G.R.E.A.T., an evidence-based gang reduction program taught by uniformed officers to provide youth with pro-social skills training and insights (to make positive decisions about peers to avoid or befriend; how to define, establish, and achieve goals to support healthy and pro-social lifestyles.)

Objective 4: Institute Peace Circles to teach youth and adults alternative non-violent conflict resolution strategies and create community capacity to lead the Circles on an ongoing basis.

Objective 5: Incorporate CeaseFire's Violence Interrupter model to intervene with conflicts as they arise.

Goal 2: Create vehicles for consistent communication

Objective 1: Hire a coordinator to coordinate ARC activities/partners and regularly attend meetings of community partner organizations to gain and share information about events and safety measures.

Objective 2: Create and disseminate a monthly community calendar/newsletter about all ARC partner events, services, and safety measures.

Objective 3: Convene an ARC Forum(s) where residents will review community-wide information about existing services, identify gaps or duplication, and receive reports on the effectiveness of safety measures, towards developing ongoing, sustainable improvements.

Goal 3: Increase utilization of community resources

Objective 1: Realign activity hours or locations of safety measures where needed.

Objective 2: Support and coordinate partner agencies in scheduling “open house” programs to show community residents what they offer, and provide safe passage assurances for participants.

The evaluation was primarily an implementation evaluation with some outcomes elements, and it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Has the ARC accomplished its goals, and if so, how?
2. How effectively does the ARC engage community residents and in what ways?
3. How effective are ARC-sponsored events and activities and ARC community partners at changing engaged residents’ knowledge and attitudes about safety in the community?
4. How effective are ARC-sponsored activities and events and ARC community partners at increasing community safety—perceived or real?

A number of data collection processes and tools were developed for the evaluation including observation of meetings and events, consortium document review, attendance tracking tools, an email tracker, four focus groups with over 40 community residents, safety surveys, and reporting forms. Evaluation methods and tools are described in greater detail in Appendix A. All usable data are reflected in this report.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Community Profile: The Altgeld-Riverdale Area

Bound by 130th Street on the north, I-94 on the east, 138th Street on the south, and the Little Calumet River on the west, the Altgeld-Riverdale area sits within the Riverdale community area and includes Altgeld Gardens, Golden Gates, Concordia Place, and Riverside Village (See Map). These four housing communities—a mix of public and low-income housing and privately owned homes—make up a large section of the Riverdale neighborhood at the very southern edge of the city of Chicago.

Bordered by city landfills (including the only landfill within the city limits that accepts toxic waste) and heavy industrial lands, and exacerbated by limited access to public transportation, Riverdale today is very much isolated and cut off from the amenities and resources of the rest of Chicago. The area is considered a food desert due to limited access to fresh produce and other healthy foods,

MAP: THE ALTGELD-RIVERDALE COMMUNITY



with the nearest large supermarket 2 or more miles away.¹ Jobs are scarce in Riverdale, and those that exist require specialized skills that many residents do not possess.

Riverdale has a total population of 6,431 and is a majority minority neighborhood with a predominantly black population. Nearly 97 percent of the population is black, while 1.6 percent of residents are Hispanic, 0.9 percent are Asian, and 0.4 percent are white. The population is young, with 56.2 percent of residents age 24 or younger who are subject to the compounding disadvantages of growing up in an under-resourced community. Of those age 25 years and older in Riverdale, 34.5 percent have only completed a high school diploma and 24.8 percent have less than a high school diploma or equivalent, making it especially challenging to compete in the labor market.²

Low educational attainment, combined with economic isolation and lack of jobs within in the community, create a climate ripe for poverty. More than one in two residents—60.3 percent—live on incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL). This includes 2,305 individuals—36.0 percent of the population—that are living in extreme poverty with incomes below half of the poverty level. The poverty rate is even higher for children—two thirds (66.5 percent) of the population under age 18 lives in poverty. Children who live in poverty are twice as likely to have experienced violent crimes as children who are not poor, and are 2.2 times more likely to be in families who report they are afraid to go out.³ An additional 20.8 percent of Riverdale residents are living on incomes between 100-199 percent FPL, and are considered low-income or near poor.

Of the 2,139 renter households in Riverdale, nearly half (47.2 percent) are housing cost burdened and spend over 30.0 percent of their income on housing costs, leaving them with fewer monetary resources to spend on meeting other basic needs and ultimately less to contribute to the local economy. Only 5.6 percent of Riverdale households receive cash public assistance, perhaps due to work requirements that limit residents' eligibility for assistance in a job-scarce environment, and 63.5 percent receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to help make ends meet and put food on the table. The combination of these socio-economic factors illuminate the challenges and hardships Riverdale residents face in pursuing opportunities to move out of poverty and build economic security for themselves and future generations.

Despite these dire circumstances, the Riverdale area, and Altgeld Gardens in particular, has long been a community of families. Many residents have called

***“For the last 10 years
it’s been like
we’ve been a lost
community...”***

-Focus group participant

¹ Illinois Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. (2011, October). *Food deserts in Chicago*. Retrieved November, 11, 2013, from <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/IL-FoodDeserts-2011.pdf>.

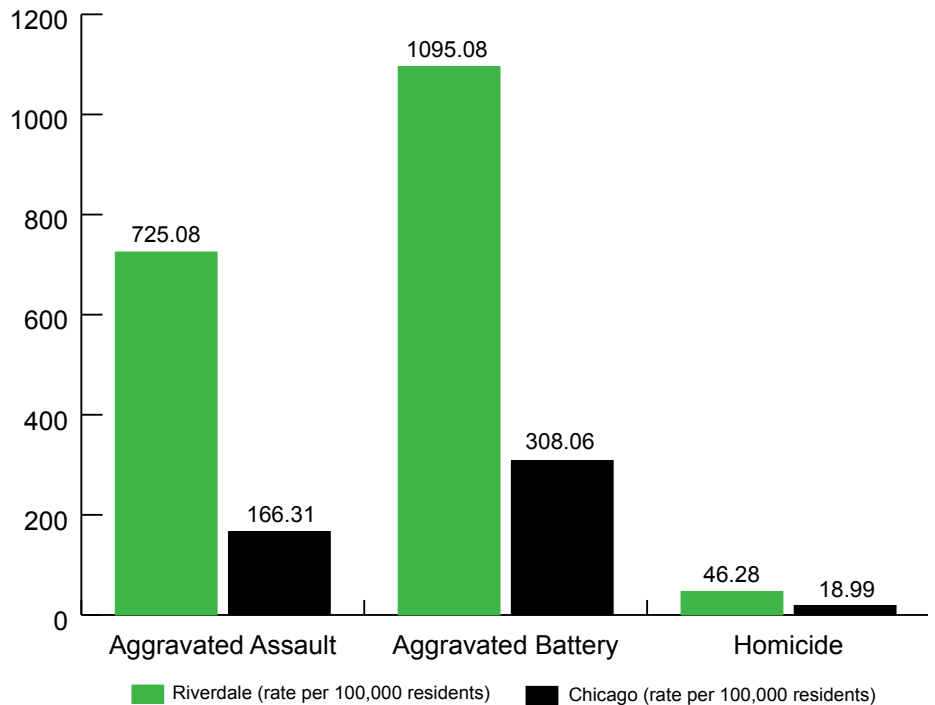
² Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

³ Brooks-Gunn, J., & Duncan, G. J. (1997). The effects of poverty on children. *The Future of Children*, 7(2), 55-71.

the area home for over 40 years and speak fondly of the days when everyone knew each other, looked out for each other, shared resources, and shared in raising the children of the community. And many residents have felt that sense of community change over the last handful of years. Longtime residents have lamented what they see as a shift away from the area’s previous family orientation. Altgeld Gardens, a CHA development, recently underwent major physical rehabilitation and now consists of many families who have recently relocated from different neighborhoods. Residents report they are not familiar with one another and don’t know who they can trust.

In this pocket of limited opportunity and concentrated poverty, safety concerns in the form of gangs, drugs, and violence proliferate (See chart). In 2012, the homicide rate in Riverdale was nearly 250 percent higher than the City of Chicago as a whole, at 46.28 per 100,000 residents compared to 18.99 per 100,000 residents.⁴ Over the years, Altgeld Gardens has experienced incessant gang problems. Younger gang members with smaller factions are more active, less predictable, and commit random acts of violence.⁵ Meanwhile, residents are concerned about insufficient police and private security presence in the area, and 41.3 percent of community residents feel that the police lack a good

CHART. 2012 CRIME RATES IN CHICAGO AND RIVERDALE



⁴ Chicago Health Atlas. (2012). *Riverdale profile*. Retrieved November 21, 2013, from <http://www.chicagohealthatlas.org/place/riverdale#crime>

⁵ The Chicago Housing Authority (2012, December). *Altgeld-Riverdale Community Partnership program narrative to the Illinois Criminal Justice Authority Federal and State Grants Unit*. Chicago: Authors.

relationship with residents of the area.⁶ And while all community members are impacted by crime, young people are at the highest risk as both perpetrators and victims of crime.

Community residents are acutely aware of these issues and recognize the value of community action to improve conditions in the community for all of its residents. With a legacy of community organizing and activism, the Altgeld-Riverdale community is abundant with good will and an ethic of giving what you have, caring for others, and re-weaving the fabric of the community.

2.2 The History of the Altgeld-Riverdale Consortium (ARC)

In 2008, using grant funds from the Department of Justice (DOJ), CHA convened community partners—a combination of nonprofits, schools, service providers, and local leaders—already engaged in local efforts to form the Altgeld-Riverdale Consortium (ARC). Led by the Uhlich Children’s Advantage Network (UCAN) and the Chicago Police Department (CPD), the Consortium centered its initial efforts on increasing youth safety in the housing communities of Altgeld Gardens, Riverside, Golden Gates, and Concordia.

As grant funding from DOJ came to an end and concerns about violence in the community escalated, CHA sought separate grant opportunities to continue the Consortium’s activities, as well as expand its outreach to the community. CHA successfully obtained a short-term grant from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) to fund the Consortium from January to September 2013 in order to enhance violence and crime prevention efforts in the Altgeld-Riverdale area.

Building on the existing collaboration, the ARC expanded to include new sub-grantees, including Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc., OOO Multimediam, and the Community for Justice for Youth Institute (CJYI), and new community partners, including TCA Health & Wellness Collaborative, and the Altgeld Riverdale BPI Early Learning Coalition. By garnering more widespread support from partners to gradually increase the capacity of the Consortium, CHA envisioned the ARC becoming a sustainable and independent organizing entity.

⁶ Based on results from safety survey designed by the Social IMPACT Research Center for the ARC.

3. COLLABORATION STRUCTURE AND PARTNERS

The overarching goal of the ARC under this grant was to curb violence by improving safety initiatives in the community, conducting a resident-driven safety strategy (such as Safe Zones or Safe Path programs), and improving community collaboration, communication, and coordination. The resulting safer and more cohesive community will facilitate increased access to and utilization of existing programs and services within the community, which in turn will continue to support the overall safety and well-being of the community.

The ARC’s structure is very similar to a community-building model that builds collaborative partnerships among the neighborhood’s stakeholders to strengthen the community’s internal capacity to address problems.⁷ This model identifies existing assets and resources in the community, and creates a partnership with local institutions to mobilize and leverage resources to achieve change.

With staffing and leadership for the Consortium provided by CHA, the collaborative work of the ARC was undertaken in partnership with the following types of key players, which are detailed further in the following sections:

- ARC Sub-Grantee Partners whose participation was made possible through sub-grant funding agreements
- Community Partners whose agencies and programs were already present and not dependent on a sub-grant funding agreement for their participation

While the different types of partnerships have differing implications in terms of establishing an ongoing, sustainable presence, both the Sub-Grantee Partners and the Community Partners were critical to the ARC’s successes.

3.1 Chicago Housing Authority (CHA)

As the official grantee and fiscal agent for the project, CHA was a lead partner in the ARC effort over the grant period. The grant was administered by CHA’s Grants Administration, and the administrative team assigned to oversee the Consortium included the Vice President of Resident Services, and the Central Advisory Council Liaison who also served in the role of ARC Program Manager.

CHA’s administrative team was vocal in its desire to build the capacity of the ARC such that CHA could remove itself from the effort, and the ARC could be sustainable into the future and be truly community-led. To that end, the Vice President of Resident Services provided direct supervision to the ARC Program Manager as well as high-level guidance to the ARC more broadly. He regularly attended ARC Forums where he explained grant procedures and

**CHART. THE
ALTGELD-RIVERDALE
CONSORTIUM
THEORY OF CHANGE**



⁷ Smock, K. (2004). *Democracy in action: Community organizing and urban change*. New York: Columbia University Press.

provided updates to community residents and partner organizations. His role was to facilitate broad discussions and address immediate concerns from the Consortium.

Between January and March 2013, the Central Advisory Council Liaison—serving in a dual role as ARC Program Manager—facilitated ARC Forums, developed agendas, and outreached to partners and residents regarding day-to-day functioning. She hired and was the direct supervisor to the ARC Coordinators. She was also responsible for email communication to the Consortium on administrative matters and general matters if the ARC Coordinators were unavailable.

CHA's Grants Administration managed resident applications for funding resident-driven initiatives and occasionally attended ARC Forums to update the group about grant expenditures and funding opportunities.

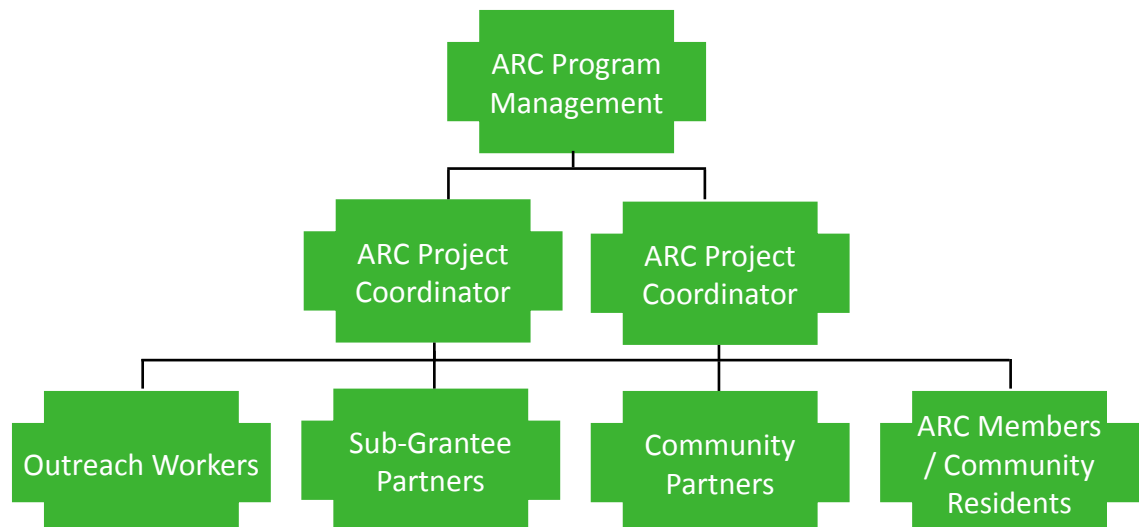
To support the efforts of the ARC, CHA hired two part-time project coordinators to take overall responsibility for the coordination of the ARC's efforts. Their roles are described in greater detail in section 5 of this report.

3.2 ARC Sub-Grantee Partners

The following sub-grantee partners were involved in the ARC effort and received grant funds to support their programs and services operated or provided within the Altgeld-Riverdale area during the grant period:

- Uhlich Children's Advantage Network (UCAN)
- Chicago Police Department (CPD)
- Community Justice for Youth Institute (CJYI)

CHART. THE ALTGELD-RIVERDALE CONSORTIUM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



ARC PARTNERS

Active Transportation Alliance

Aldridge School

Altgeld Gardens Local Advisory Council
(LAC)

Altgeld Gardens Tenant Patrol

Altgeld Riverdale BPI Early Learning
Coalition

Carver Elementary School

Carver Military High School

Centers for the New Horizon Early
Childhood Development Center

Chicago Park District

Chicago Public Library - Altgeld Branch

Chicago Public Schools School Safety
& Security Department

Concordia Place

Dorothy Gautreaux Child Development

Dubois School

Forest Preserve of Cook County

George Washington Carver Farms

Golden Gates Homeowner's
Association

Lloyd Bond School

Larry Hawkins School

People for Community Recovery

Peter Rock Church

Riverside Village

TCA Health & Wellness Collaborative

- Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc.
- OOO Multimedium
- Heartland Alliance's Social IMPACT Research Center⁸

The subgrantee's programs and services were a critical component of the ARC's efforts around its key stated goal of improving and strengthening community safety. About 60 percent of the grant funding—over \$167,000—was allocated to sub-grantees to enhance the work of the Consortium through strategic partnerships and the expansion of relevant efforts, and to engage in an evaluation to inform future efforts. A description of each ARC sub-grantee partner and their efforts in the community during the grant period is included in section 4.2.

3.3 ARC Community Partners and Members

ARC Community Partners

The ARC worked towards its goals in collaboration with the following community partners—service agencies, coalitions, schools, and individuals—which are located within or provide programs and services within and for the Altgeld-Riverdale area (see sidebar).

These partners came together to join efforts in addressing the needs of the community and to reduce overlap in service provision. Through their continuous conversations, they assist the Consortium in coordinating resources and services to Altgeld-Riverdale.

ARC Members / Community Residents

In addition to the community partners described here, community residents are a critical piece of the partnership effort and collaborative model. Also referred to as ARC members—a term which was never formally defined by the group—community residents participating in the ARC are uniquely aware of what the real issues are for the area and thus are equipped to offer keen insight into the goals and strategies of the ARC. Moreover, it is the involvement of these individuals and their local expertise that makes the ARC truly a community-based and community-driven effort.

⁸ The Social IMPACT Research Center at Heartland Alliance was engaged as an ARC sub-grantee in order to conduct this evaluation, and was not directly involved in the ARC effort.

4. IMPROVING AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY

ARC'S OBJECTIVES

Create and coordinate resident-driven safety initiative(s) to enhance existing law enforcement, private security, and community resources and develop coordination among these efforts to keep residents safe as they live and travel within the community.

Create stipend-funded opportunities for community residents to facilitate safety programs and events.

Deliver G.R.E.A.T., an evidence-based gang reduction program taught by uniformed officers to provide youth with pro-social skills training and insights (to make positive decisions about peers to avoid or befriend; how to define, establish, and achieve goals to support healthy and pro-social lifestyles.)

Institute Peace Circles to teach youth and adults alternative non-violent conflict resolution strategies and create community capacity to lead the Circles on an ongoing basis.

Incorporate Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc.'s Violence Interrupter model to intervene with conflicts as they arise.

Key Accomplishments

- The ARC and its partners held 12 safety-oriented events and initiatives that had a positive impact on community residents' perceptions of safety.
- The ARC's Sub-Grantee Partners implemented a variety of programs and activities that sought to provide positive learning and engagement opportunities for young people and to ultimately build community capacity for promoting safety.

The ARC's first goal is to improve and strengthen community safety. To this end, the ARC community partners and participants hosted 12 safety events and initiatives that brought community residents together, shared critical safety information, and positively influenced residents' perceptions of safety within the community. Additionally, the ARC sub-grantee partners delivered critical services, resources, and programming to the community to immediately address pressing safety concerns related to traveling throughout the community, and to equip residents to respond to unsafe situations, and help residents develop pro-social skills for avoiding and mediating conflict.

4.1 Resident-Driven Safety Initiatives

Resident-driven safety initiatives are events or activities, both one-time and ongoing, which involve residents in planning or implementation and are focused on improving some aspect of safety for or within the community. For the purposes of these events, residents and other stakeholders were encouraged to take a holistic view of safety, looking beyond safety from crime or violence to encompass safety as it relates to health and the environment.

According to CHA, the established structure under the ARC was to have Altgeld-Riverdale residents propose and submit resident-driven initiatives either during ARC Forums, or via "community partner safety events" requests. Residents interested in creating an initiative could submit a proposal form and obtain approval from ARC Program Management. However, some residents noted that the process for submitting ideas for initiatives felt confusing and cumbersome. It was also difficult for residents who did not attend ARC Forums to submit proposals if they were not included on email communication. The outcome limited the essence of resident-driven initiatives, which was about the residents' input and design in the ARC's safety events.

Despite these challenges, between January and September 2013, the ARC partners and participants hosted 12 resident-driven safety events, activities, or

“Only way we’re protected is protecting each other... we’re our only safety net.”

-Focus group participant

initiatives. Safety events took a number of different forms:

- Five block parties were held throughout Altgeld Gardens as well as at Concordia and Riverside Village. These parties intended to provide an open space to engage community residents with one another so they would be more likely to assist each other in unsafe situations.
- A clean and green event was held in honor of Earth Day to engage community residents in stewardship of their physical environment.
- The Chicago Fire Department facilitated a fire safety workshop to educate residents about what to do in the event of a fire.
- CPR training was held for community residents to equip them with the knowledge and skills to respond in an emergency.
- A senior safety brunch was held in Altgeld Gardens to provide seniors with information on how to stay safe within their homes. This included tips on preventing house accidents and guidance on responding to emergency situations.

These safety events and activities engaged a total of 390 different attendees, nearly 65 percent of whom were residents of the Altgeld-Riverdale community.

In addition, an ongoing Safe Path effort represented the most visible push to improve community safety among the resident-driven safety initiatives. Building on early efforts led by the Golden Gates Homeowners Association and the Active Transportation Alliance to inspect the safety of the sidewalks, bicycle paths, and roads in the community, the objective of the Safe Path program was to ensure that youth could safely travel throughout the community, especially when going to and from school.

During group discussions, residents and other community stakeholders began identifying paths through the community that were considered unsafe due to lack of visibility, high traffic speeds, lack of sidewalks, or places where groups of youth move to and from school and may congregate. Led by the Active Transportation Alliance, time was devoted during monthly ARC Forums to reviewing maps of the community in small groups in order to identify areas considered to be “hot spots.” Over the course of several meetings, the ARC identified specific hot spots where safety needed to be improved in order to solidify monitored Safe Path routes throughout the community.

In June 2013, once strategic locations in the community were identified, the ARC brought on board 11 Safe Path workers, who completed an orientation and safety training, in order to supervise each target route and assist the youth in traveling throughout the community until the grant ended.⁹

In total, 109 safety surveys were completed by Altgeld-Riverdale residents

⁹ Safe Path workers received a monthly stipend for their time and efforts.

related to these events.¹⁰ Nearly two thirds of respondents identified as female, and their median age was 55 years old. As evidence of the residents' commitment to the community of Altgeld-Riverdale, over half of respondents reported living in the neighborhood for 11 or more years. Sixty-five percent of respondents lived in Altgeld Gardens, and 20 percent in Concordia. The remainder lived in Riverside Village or other places within the Riverdale community area.

Survey results demonstrate that residents' perceptions of safety depend on their location and the people that surround them. Residents of Altgeld-Riverdale feel safer in their homes than in the neighborhood at large.

In fact, nearly 30 percent of all residents surveyed report not feeling safe in the community. Additionally, 31 percent of residents feel unsafe letting their children or young relatives travel alone to school or work in the community. Residents of the Altgeld Gardens public housing development were more likely to feel safe in the neighborhood, in their homes, and traveling through the community than Riverdale residents who did not live in Altgeld Gardens. However, residents from outside of Altgeld Gardens were somewhat more likely to feel safe allowing children and young relatives to travel through the community.

Survey responses overwhelmingly demonstrate that resident-driven safety initiatives had a positive influence on residents' perceptions of safety in the Altgeld-Riverdale community (see Table). More than two thirds of survey respondents believed that these initiatives were effective in helping make the community safer. Particularly, after participating in these events, a large majority of respondents reported a positive increase in their perceptions of safety:

- 65 percent felt more prepared to avoid or prevent an unsafe situation

TABLE. RESIDENT PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY SAFETY

	Altgeld Gardens	Riverdale
I feel safe in my neighborhood.	57.7%	47.4%
I feel safe in my home.	78.9%	68.8%
I feel safe traveling to and from school, work, and other places I have to go regularly.	62.0%	60.5%
I feel safe with my young children or relatives traveling about in my neighborhood.	49.3%	55.3%

- 75 percent felt more prepared to act when confronted with an unsafe

¹⁰ ARC staff were trained to implement the survey but ran into a variety of barriers, and so data were not always collected consistently and correctly. All usable data are reflected in this report.

situation

- 74 percent felt more aware of resources related to safety in the neighborhood
- 76 percent felt more likely to use resources and organizations addressing safety in the neighborhood
- 81 percent felt more likely to collaborate with others in the neighborhood on initiatives to increase safety

“I feel safer out here than anywhere else. It’s not the streets – it’s some of the people on the streets.”

-Focus group participant

Aside from learning concrete skills, like fire safety or CPR, 11 residents reported learning that neighbors can unite to create a better sense of community. Nevertheless, comments like “we talk a good game, but we never do anything,” suggest that there still remains a need to increase the visibility of the positive influence of resident-driven safety initiatives.

In addition, though the survey was not completed along the Safe Path routes, community partners, including CHA, and residents who participated in the ARC meetings noted that the Safe Path initiative successfully increased perceptions of safety in the Altgeld-Riverdale area.

Equally as important as increasing residents’ perceptions of safety, these initiatives were intended to provide residents opportunities to be directly engaged in planning and implementation. However, tracking by the ARC of resident involvement in planning and implementing the 12 events that took place during the grant period did not occur.

4.2 ARC Sub-Grantee Partners

The following sections explore the programming and services offered by the ARC sub-grantee partners, whose efforts collectively represent the remaining objectives under the ARC’s goal to improve and strengthen community safety. These sections address both the challenges and successes experienced by the sub-grantee partners and incorporate feedback received from community residents through the focus groups.

Uhlich Children’s Advantage Network (UCAN)

Stipends: 12 youth, 11 Safe Path workers

UCAN is a 150 year old nonprofit child and community agency in Chicago and has worked with CHA since 2004. As the CHA-funded FamilyWorks agency, UCAN’s capabilities to provide case management support in identifying and outreaching to appropriate families to benefit from the ARC made them an important partner in the ARC effort. UCAN was funded under the grant to devote 0.5FTE Program Coordinator to support community residents to implement the safety initiatives that they identified. In addition to providing this staff support, UCAN was expected to utilize their funding to provide stipends to youth to work

in these resident-driven initiatives.

During the current grant, the Program Coordinator was integral to the coordination of daily activities for the Project ME video project (described below) led by another sub-grantee, OOO Multimedia, and also assisted with the Safe Path effort as needed. UCAN also provided additional support to the ARC in the form of stipends. Stipends were provided to 12 young people involved in the video project (10 completed the project), and to the 11 Safe Path workers, some of whom have stayed on at their posts as volunteers after the grant funds expired.

“I have noticed going to work and my son going to summer school someone watching us. I feel safe.”

-Concordia Resident

Chicago Police Department (CPD)

After school program: 10-25 participants per day, 3 days per week

Family program: 23 participants

The Chicago Police Department, a partner organization since 2008, subcontracted with the ARC under the current grant to implement the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) program in schools in the Altgeld-Riverdale area. G.R.E.A.T. is an evidence-based program focused on addressing aggression, gang activity, conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills issues among youth ages 9-17 in order to provide young people with alternatives to gangs and youth violence.

With funding as a sub-grantee through CHA, the CPD was able to expand the reach of the G.R.E.A.T. program beyond their school-based program to incorporate summer afterschool and family programming.

The CPD conducted the school-based G.R.E.A.T. programming weekly for 3 days per week through the month of July in all of the schools within Altgeld Gardens and also worked with families 1 day per week for 6 weeks. The CPD reached approximately eight families with 23 participants through the family program and 10-25 participants each day in the after school program.

Especially because the program is structured so that students learn skills on one day and put them to practice the second day, the CPD noted the program's most difficult challenge was maintaining constant participation to practice the skills that students learned. According to the CPD, the program's greatest accomplishment was building trust with those students that were present. In a community that has a tenuous relationship with the CPD, opportunities to build that trust with residents are an important component of an effective safety strategy.

Community Justice for Youth Institute (CJYI)

Circle Keeper trainings: 4 trainings, 51 participants

Peace Circles: 14 Circles, 77 participants

The Community Justice for Youth Institute is a leader in the field of restorative

justice. With the current grant, the ARC partnered with CJYI as a sub-grantee for their work related to Peace Circles—a structured dialogue process to resolve conflicts, to provide victims with opportunities to directly address those that have harmed them, and to involve the community in the process of strengthening relationships and promoting offender accountability. CJYI provides Circle Keeper training programs and technical assistance to support the implementation of Peace Circles to engage the community in resolving conflicts and building healthy relationships.

According to CJYI, the most difficult challenge was making initial contact and developing relationships with community residents in order to facilitate Peace Circles and trainings. Subsequently, CJYI did not engage in any Peace Circle activity until August 2013. Once they established relationships with the community, CJYI engaged in activities to enhance the capacity of residents and local organizations to address conflict and trauma and promote healing.

Over the life of the grant, CJYI reported facilitating four Circle Keepers trainings, training 51 Circle Keepers to facilitate Peace Circles in the community. They reported serving an additional 77 individuals through facilitating 14 Peace Circles in two local schools, the Peter Rock Church, a TCA-sponsored health event, and several block parties.

Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc.

Violence Interruptions: 5

Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. uses a public health model acknowledging the contagiousness of violence to stop shootings and killings, tracking “hot spots” where violence is heating up in order to intervene and resolve the situation. To that end, Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. places Violence Interrupters in communities to be a known and consistent presence, build relationships, and ultimately intervene when conflicts arise.

Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. became a sub-grantee under the ARC initiative to provide Violence Interrupters to canvass targeted areas and distribute public education materials about stopping violence. Violence Interrupters were in the community Tuesday through Saturday of each week to engage with residents and provide mentorship to high risk youth in the area. On those days at any given time, no fewer than two Violence Interrupters were placed in the community, and as many as four to six were there on the weekends. When incidents occurred, the ARC Program Manager was notified by Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc.

The group encountered some obstacles during the grant period, mostly related to challenges with communication and accessing buildings and offices that were typically closed during the times that Interrupters are moving through the community. Additionally, early on in the year, Concordia’s management requested that Roseland CeaseFire not return to their community. It is unclear

what prompted this, but Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. respected the request and focused their efforts on the remaining three communities—Altgeld Gardens, Riverside Village, and Golden Gates—where they were able to begin to build relationships and build trust with residents.

While Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. is often noted for its efforts to stop the violence, community residents expressed some skepticism and critiques. Some residents noted that they never actually saw any Violence Interrupters in the community, and were skeptical that they were coming to the area. Others noted support for the Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. model, but suggested that because the Interrupters are not from the communities in which they are working, at the end of the day, they go home, but the community violence is still there. There was some frustration that the work itself was being carried out by people from outside the community, and residents suggested instead that CeaseFire could play a strong role building the capacity of young men who live within the community to be able to provide mentorship and engage in violence interruption.

Despite some criticism from residents and challenges with Concordia, Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. was able to mediate several situations within the community. Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. engaged in a total of five violence interruptions. One situation involved a shooting where a young man was grazed by a bullet. After the shooting, Violence Interrupters met with the young man and his family in order to help them process their feelings about the event and hopefully prevent retaliatory action. In another situation, Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. responded to a shooting that resulted in the death of young man and an arm injury to a young woman in order to mediate and diffuse potential reactionary violence.

In addition to providing a vital mediating presence in the community, Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. was also able, through the ARC's collaborative efforts, to build its capacity to successfully intervene in and diffuse violent situations before they get out of hand. Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc.'s Violence Interrupters engaged with CJYI to participate in a Peace Circle and also received intensive Circle Keepers training to equip them with new skills for averting conflict and violence.

OOO Multimedium

Project ME: 12 youth participants

OOO Multimedium was brought into the ARC effort as a subgrantee partner to implement Project ME. Project ME provides youth with the opportunity to engage in creating original music compositions on a professional level with motivating or solutions-based content. They record their compositions in professional recording facilities while they learn different facets of the entertainment business, different career choices, means of generating income, and money management

skills in the process. At the end of the program, their efforts culminated in two professional music videos of songs they composed.

The Project ME program offered through OOO Multimediuum represents an expansion of the ARC's strategies towards its goal of improving and strengthening community safety. Not originally noted as an objective of the grant, Project ME offered a vehicle to directly engage young people from the community, give them something to do, and thereby ultimately contribute to improved safety.

A total of 12 area youth took part in the program, which met 2 days a week for 2 hours per class. During this period, one youth was dismissed from the program due to behavioral issues and one left the program as a result of relocating. Ten area youth ultimately completed the program and went on to present their final work at the ARC closing ceremony held on September 26, 2013.

4.3 Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

From block parties to fire safety workshops, resident-driven safety initiatives aimed to impact knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of safety in the community. The following are recommendations based on the key findings that the ARC can employ to support further efforts to increase and strengthen community safety:

Continue to plan and implement resident-driven safety initiatives as an effective means of engaging with the community, helping to build relationships among residents, and ultimately improving perceptions of safety within the community.

The 12 resident-driven safety initiatives conducted during the grant period had a positive influence on residents' perceptions of safety in the Altgeld-Riverdale community. In addition to obtaining a better sense of community unity, most residents felt more prepared to manage unsafe situations after participating in these initiatives.

Continue and expand efforts to partner with entities providing critical programming and services within the community.

The Consortium's resident-driven Safe Path initiative successfully created stipend-funded opportunities for 11 community residents, who continued their work on a volunteer basis after the conclusion of the grant. The Safe Path effort was well-received by residents, who noted that it made them feel more safe traveling through the community to see that there were people watching out for them.

By extending the G.R.E.A.T. program to after school, the ARC was able to reach a significant number of youth and families, and provide pro-social skills training and insights that increase their safety.

The Community Justice for Youth Institute facilitated four Circle Keepers trainings and 14 Peace Circles in the community to teach youth and adults alternative non-violence conflict resolution strategies.

Roseland CeaseFire Project Inc. conducted work in three of the four communities served by the ARC and intervened in five violent situations.

Increase efforts to engage residents in planning and implementing safety events, programming, and initiatives in order to build resident trust.

While the safety events and initiatives had a positive impact on perceptions of community safety, they were not as resident-driven as originally intended. Lack of clarity around processes for submitting ideas and gaining approval for resident-driven safety events may have discouraged resident involvement.

Lack of consistent participation in the G.R.E.A.T. program presented challenges for the CPD in delivering the curriculum and achieving desired impact. However, over the course of the youth program they were able to establish greater consistency with program participants. More meaningful engagement of residents may help to cultivate greater buy-in and thus more consistent participation in programs such as G.R.E.A.T.

The dependence on the CHA's resources makes the collaboration vulnerable to external priorities, rather than those of the community. Community residents were critical of an imbalanced focus on CHA's Altgeld Gardens over the rest of the area in terms of targeting of resources, events, and initiatives, and identifying and selecting candidates for stipend-supported opportunities.

Develop the capacity of involved residents to take on leadership roles within the ARC in order to make it more resident-driven and ultimately more sustainable over time.

The ARC's structure and approach to their work closely aligns with a community-building model of organizing for change.¹¹ This model is at risk of indirectly limiting resident involvement because it values institutional expertise over the knowledge within the community. Further progress towards the Consortium's goals may have been hindered by limited outreach to residents not already involved in the ARC effort.

¹¹ Smock, K. (2004). *Democracy in action: Community organizing and urban change*. New York: Columbia University Press.

5. CREATING VEHICLES FOR CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION

ARC'S OBJECTIVES

Hire a coordinator to coordinate ARC activities/partners and regularly attend meetings of community partner organizations to gain and share information about events and safety measures.

Create and disseminate a monthly community calendar/newsletter about all ARC partner events, services, and safety measures.

Convene an ARC Forum(s) where residents will review community-wide information about existing services, identify gaps or duplication, and receive reports on the effectiveness of safety measures, towards developing ongoing, sustainable improvements.

Key Accomplishments

- Two part-time ARC coordinators were hired to lead coordination of the ARC's efforts.
- Three outreach workers, each representing different housing communities, were identified and brought on board to conduct outreach efforts throughout the area to increase engagement of community residents in the ARC's events, activities, and other efforts.
- Nine ARC Forums were held, bringing together Sub-Grantee Partners, Community Partners, and community residents to discuss strategies and resources for improving safety in the Altgeld-Riverdale area.

One of the ARC's key stated goals during the grant period was to create vehicles for consistent communication in order to support efforts to improve and strengthen community safety as well as increasing utilization of existing community resources.

5.1 ARC Coordinators

To support the efforts of the ARC, CHA hired two part-time project coordinators to take overall responsibility for the coordination of the ARC's efforts. The coordinators were intended to serve as the primary point of contact for the initiative, in addition to coordinating training, meetings, and communications with the various partners involved in the project.

Initially, the position was posted on CHA's website as a single, full-time, temporary position without benefits. CHA was dedicated to hiring residents of Altgeld Gardens for the position and found that they were unable to identify candidates that met the minimum qualifications for the position. Instead, they decided to hire two part-time coordinators from Altgeld Gardens with complementary skills. Having two coordinators could assure their presence in the anticipated number of evening and Saturday meetings. The two coordinators were hired and transitioned into their roles in March 2013.

The coordinators' roles in day-to-day activities were intended to be administrative and more focused on the behind the scenes efforts to keep the project moving forward, such as managing communications around meetings, coordinating logistics, serving as a point of contact, and supporting evaluation efforts by implementing data collection tools and providing timely information and materials to the evaluation team. With two coordinators rather than one,

there was opportunity for division of labor between them to increase efficiency. One of the coordinators was responsible for primary oversight of the total project while also sharing in the day-to-day coordination efforts. The other coordinator had primary responsibility for the graphic work associated with producing newsletters, flyers, and calendars, and completed other tasks as assigned.

The coordinators were responsible for attending other non-ARC meetings happening in the community to gain and share information about the various safety events and initiatives happening within the community and to bring that information back to the ARC. The two coordinators attended a total of 43 meetings between March and September 2013.

As the primary points of contact and coordination for the ARC's efforts, the coordinators managed an email list of ARC participants which included an assortment of the ARC's partners as well as community residents. The coordinators reported collecting email addresses from additional residents to support goals around increasing community engagement, but there seem to have been significant roadblocks in integrating new emails into the distribution list. All email communications throughout the life of the grant were sent to those agencies and individuals (mostly representatives of other local organizations) already involved in the ARC and not to those new contacts who might have gotten involved. These technical challenges were a lost opportunity to both develop the infrastructure needed—the vehicles for consistent communication and collaboration—and to cultivate meaningful resident engagement in the area.

In order to support the ARC coordinators in carrying out much of the daily outreach work associated with the ARC's efforts, the ARC engaged three outreach workers representing the housing communities of Altgeld Gardens, Golden Gates, and Riverside Village. The Consortium intended to engage a fourth outreach worker to represent Concordia, but due to challenges with Concordia property management they were unable to do so. Under the supervision of the two ARC coordinators, each outreach worker was provided a stipend for up to 2 hours a day to do door-knocking and hand out flyers to increase resident turn-out for meetings and events and to cultivate broader engagement. During the grant period, the outreach workers were approved for additional hours reimbursement as approved by the ARC program management.

No official position description or promotional materials for the outreach worker roles was ever developed. Rather, the outreach and recruitment process to identify the outreach workers relied on coordinators' verbal promotion throughout the different community areas. Individuals could either self-identify as a candidate or share the information with others. Candidates from each of the housing communities were submitted to the ARC coordinators for review. Finally, the coordinators and the Program Manager spoke with each candidate regarding the duties and to determine whether they would be assigned the position.

The supervision of the outreach workers as well as tracking their work was handled very informally, so there is little record of the nature and extent of their activities. There was a formal process in place for tracking hours worked and submitting time sheets, but not for measuring or understanding how many residents were reached through their efforts or how many materials were distributed.

Residents' observations and comments highlight that, regardless of their activities, residents were somewhat critical of how the outreach workers were identified. Particularly, residents contested the efficacy of employing only three outreach workers to effectively reach the Altgeld-Riverdale community. Many community residents reported limited outreach efforts outside of Altgeld Gardens. More generally, residents noted they felt it was unrealistic to allocate one outreach worker per housing community (none in Concordia) and expect to increase the resident participation in the ARC's events.

5.2 Community Newsletters

In order to develop consistent vehicles for coordination and collaboration the coordinators were also responsible for developing and disseminating a monthly community newsletter and calendar. From March to September 2013, four newsletters were developed. Newsletters were included as handouts at monthly ARC Forums, but it is unclear how or if they were ever broadly distributed to the community outside of ARC meetings. Posting current newsletters and community calendars in public spaces and using email to distribute them among community residents would help to maximize the reach, and thus usefulness, of these materials.

Other efforts to create vehicles for consistent communication included the development of a community website. Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI), one of the ARC's community partners, was already involved in an effort to build an online community web portal called "[The Community Beat](#)," to share community-wide information about services, resources, meetings, and events. The ARC and its partners were able to collaborate with BPI to develop that resource, and The Community Beat launched in August 2013 as a site run by the community and for the community.

The nature of the project necessitated that the ARC coordinators take on these roles and responsibilities very quickly upon being hired, which left little dedicated time for thorough onboarding and training and for being planful about things like supervision and the operational components of the job. Nevertheless, the coordinators adopted additional responsibilities intended for the outreach workers. This resulted, at times, in being overwhelmed by some of the day-to-day aspects of the project. As one might expect, subsequently things did not always get done or did not get done completely. Having the time for training and support as well as time to learn and grow in the position may have better set the

coordinators up for success in their roles and facilitated broader communication with the community.

5.3 ARC Forums

As a strategy to create vehicles for consistent communication, the ARC held monthly partner meetings, called ARC Forums, to convene residents and other community stakeholders to share and review community-wide information about existing services and resources, identify gaps or duplication, and receive reports on the effectiveness of safety measures, towards developing on-going, sustainable improvements.

The ARC convened a total of nine Forums during the grant period on the third Thursday of every month from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. The Consortium intended that meetings be hosted by different partner organizations in the community, but many agency partners were limited in terms of available meeting space. Meetings took place at the Chicago Public Library, Altgeld Branch, as well as at the Riverside Village Community Building, but the majority of the meetings were held at the Community Youth Center (CYC) located in Altgeld Gardens but accessible to residents from other communities. Meetings were primarily promoted by email to those individuals and agencies already engaged with the ARC, as well as through the ARC-developed community newsletters.

The initial design for ARC Forums intended to incorporate community members and organization representatives in developing the agenda, hosting and facilitating the meetings, and taking meeting minutes. As in many community initiatives, there is some tension around how formal to be. There is risk of alienating or discouraging individuals from becoming engaged if processes are overly formalized, just as might happen if processes are overly informal. Striking the right balance will be an interesting challenge for the ARC as the group continues to establish itself as a sustainable community entity.

With no formalized process for developing the agenda for ARC Forums, the coordinators were meant to serve as a conduit between the community and the ARC. Community residents could funnel information through the coordinators in order to add an item to the agenda for an upcoming meeting. More often, however, the agenda was developed by the coordinators in tandem with other CHA staff outside of the group setting. Subsequently, when partner organizations shared facilitation responsibilities, they were then charged with implementing an agenda that they were not familiar with or had not been involved in developing. This resulted at times in the flow of the meetings being disjointed and difficult to follow.

As a standard part of the meeting, most facilitators referenced a review of the minutes from the previous meeting, but changes were never incorporated. Insofar as meeting minutes and agendas are tools for facilitating the group's progress, documenting the efforts of the group, and helping those who could

not be present stay current with the group's efforts, this represents a missed opportunity to cultivate greater commitment among residents in the group and to cultivate broader engagement with the community.

Lastly, ARC Forums had limited engagement and representation of community residents. With the challenges the ARC faced in implementing a sustainable mechanism for tracking and growing the email list over time, the ARC was unsuccessful at increasing the number of residents participating in meetings and becoming involved (see Chart). Out of a total of 97 attendees¹² over the eight meetings for which there is attendance data, only 36.1 percent of attendees were residents of the Altgeld-Riverdale community. The rest were individuals who worked for community partner agencies and programs operating within the community, but did not themselves live there, and additional individuals residing outside of the Riverdale neighborhood.

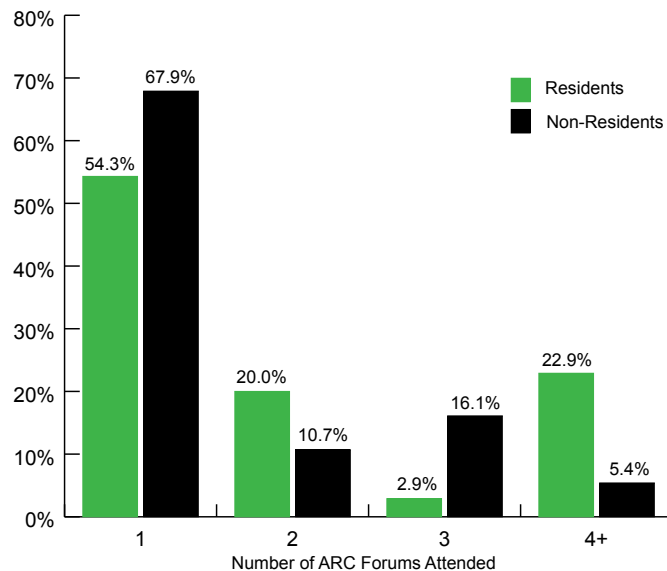
5.4 Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

The Consortium relied on two coordinators and three outreach workers, and utilized ARC Forums, to create vehicles for consistent communication. The following are recommendations based on the key findings that the ARC can employ to strengthen communication with community partners and residents:

Create clear mechanisms and processes for communication about the project and expectations.

Community residents had little input in the functioning and goals of meetings and were often unsure about how to add items to the agenda. Many residents felt marginalized from making decisions that shape the ARC's progress.

CHART: FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT ARC FORUMS



¹² Because attendance data was not tracked consistently, this figure likely undercounts the total unduplicated number of participants at ARC Forums.

Without clear understanding of agenda items, community partners found facilitation of ARC Forums confusing and difficult.

Lack of clear mechanisms and processes for communication amongst sub-grantee partners, community partners, and ARC staff led to gaps in information about the Consortium's progress and efficacy and may have limited the potential reach and impact of the ARC's efforts.

Provide adequate training, support, and resources to enable the ARC coordinators to be successful in the tasks and responsibilities of the position. This should include consistent opportunities for supervision that recognizes coordinators' community expertise, as well as addressing any difficulty in carrying out day-to-day responsibilities.

The very fast pace at which the coordinators had to acclimate to their roles left little dedicated time for thorough onboarding and training and for being planful about things like supervision and the operational components of the job, and may have limited their ability to effectively carry out many critical tasks to the functioning of the Consortium.

Make additional investments in outreach workers so there are more of them to act as communication conduits to residents.

Word of mouth promotion is generally effective in this community, where not all residents have regular access to email, but community residents were critical of having only three outreach workers to take on efforts throughout the Altgeld-Riverdale area. While one outreach worker may be enough in some of the smaller housing communities in Altgeld-Riverdale, some areas such as Altgeld Gardens are much larger and call for multiple people to take on outreach efforts.

Integrate and promote additional methods of outreach to increase awareness of the ARC's events, meetings, resources, and services.

In collaboration with community partners, the ARC supported the development of the Community Beat website to share community-wide information about services, resources, meetings, and events. There is further opportunity for the ARC to promote the Community Beat website and directly contribute content.

Troubleshoot the challenges that plagued the email list so that a comprehensive and up-to-date email distribution list grows over time to include new participants—particularly residents—and ensure that they are included in day-to-day outreach efforts.

Create concrete opportunities for ARC partners to engage in dialogue to define key elements of ARC and create clear messages about why the ARC exists and is needed and what it is intended to do.

The Consortium lacks a clear definition of its mission, participants' roles, and what it means to be a member of the collaboration. Due to a lack of clear and consistent communication, there is a sense of mistrust of the CHA and community partners among community residents.

6. INCREASING UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Key Accomplishments

- Six partner open houses were held in the community with financial support from CHA and safe passage assurance to ensure residents could safely attend and participate.

ARC'S OBJECTIVES

Realign activity hours or locations of safety measures where needed.

Support and coordinate partner agencies in scheduling “open house” programs to show community residents what they offer, and provide safe passage assurances for participants.

The final goal of the ARC was to increase utilization of existing community resources. Partners and members of the ARC recognized that a vast array of services and programs already existed in the community and were available to residents, but they were underutilized. Those involved in the ARC sensed that fear and concerns about safety prevented community residents from taking full advantage of those resources. By providing opportunities for service providers to showcase their programs and services, and by providing safe passage to community residents to ensure that they are able to participate in opportunities throughout the community, the ARC intended to increase utilization. Moreover, the ARC believed that engaging more individuals in the programs and services available would also ultimately support the goal of improving and strengthening community safety by giving people something constructive to do with free time outside of school or work.

6.1 ARC Partner Open Houses

The primary thrust of the Consortium's efforts to increase utilization of community resources was supporting community partner open houses. Community partner open houses are events hosted by agencies and programs operating within the community in order to showcase for the community the services and resources that they offer. As part of the open house events, the ARC provided assurance of safe passage to and from the open houses for community residents. The hope, as reflected in the ARC's stated objectives, was that by providing safe passage so that community residents felt secure attending the open houses, the agencies providing them would be able to educate the community about what is available and ultimately increase utilization of their services and resources.

At the outset of the grant, the plan was to have each ARC Community Partner host one open house. Early on in the grant (March 2013), the ARC identified only six partners or member agencies that were not sub-grantees—a number which grew considerably to 23 by the end of the grant. This represents significant progress towards expanding the ARC to incorporate more community partners. However, programs and organizations deemed by the CHA and the ARC coordinators to be ARC partners did not necessarily know or agree that

they were partners. If there were clearly defined roles or responsibilities for how community partners collaborate with the ARC, this would be a roadblock to meeting those responsibilities. Alternatively, in the absence of those clearly defined partner responsibilities, it may not matter in this kind of community-driven initiative to know exactly what players are involved in order to be effective. Rather, it may be more beneficial for the ARC to take a broad view of potential partners.

Six partner open houses were hosted in the community with financial support from CHA during the grant period (see Table).

Promotional flyers were developed to promote the open houses and disseminated to the partners and members through the email list. The open houses were also promoted throughout the community by word of mouth. Attendance data for these open house events is limited, but shows that only 56.7 percent of open house attendees were residents of the Altgeld-Riverdale community.¹³ Among Riverdale residents attending open houses, 70.9 percent were residents of Altgeld Gardens. Additional attendees were CHA staff, staff of various agencies and programs operating within the area, and other individuals not residing in the community. In order to support the goal of increasing utilization of services, it is imperative that outreach efforts reach those community residents who may be unaware of existing resources.

Flyers and other materials show that partner organizations shared a lot of great information and resources during open houses, but due to limited attendance data the extent to which this information reached residents is not clear. The resources and information shared through the open houses would be most valuable for residents that were not already involved in the ARC effort and tied in with community agencies, so it is important that the open house strategy be approached in tandem with a multi-faceted outreach strategy.

In order to understand how open house events impact residents utilization of existing services and resources within the community requires intention data collection and tracking over time. It is not clear to what extent the ARC's

TABLE.
COMMUNITY
PARTNER OPEN
HOUSES

Name of Event	Host(s)	Date
Health Forum	TCA Health and Wellness Collaborative	5/9/2013
Resource Fair	UCAN	5/18/2013
Beaubien Woods Celebration	Cook County Forest Preserve	6/8/2013
Back to School Parade	UNKNOWN	8/18/2013
Community Walk	TCA Health and Wellness Collaborative	8/24/2013
Peter Rock Church Community Festival	Peter Rock Church	9/22/2013

¹³ Data only available for 3 out of 6 open houses.

community partners tracked service use before or after open houses, but this could prove to be a valuable practice for the community partners as well as the ARC and the community more broadly.

6.2 Service Hours and Locations

The ARC also stated an objective around realigning hours and locations of services and events as needed in hopes of addressing any underutilization of services that might be caused by timing and accessibility. Based on survey results and group discussion at ARC Forums, however, no realignment was needed. Community partners and residents were generally comfortable with the times and locations at which meetings, events, and programs were held. However, for those for whom the hours and locations of meetings and events prohibited them from being able to participate, there was no mechanism to provide that feedback outside of the meetings or events themselves.

6.3 Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

The Consortium's community partners implemented six open houses during the grant period meant to increase utilization of existing community resources among residents to ultimately contribute to improved safety. The following are recommendations based on the key findings that the ARC can employ in order to increase utilization of community resources ultimately contributing to overall efforts to improve and strengthen community safety:

Maintain the current hours and location of services and events, and provide ongoing opportunities for community partners and residents to weigh in.

The ARC and its partners were mindful of scheduling, and as a result, a large majority of community partners and residents generally found the hours and locations of events to be satisfactory. However, for those for whom the hours and locations of meetings and events prohibited them from being able to participate, there was no mechanism to provide that feedback outside of the meetings or events themselves.

Employ multi-faceted outreach strategies to increase resident participation in community partner open houses in order to increase utilization of the programs and services that will ultimately support community-wide safety efforts.

The open house strategy is fundamentally about educating and informing community residents about the services already available within the community such that they will utilize them at a higher rate, but outreach efforts for the open houses led to limited community resident representation among attendees. Just over half of attendees were community residents.

Promotional flyers were developed to promote the open houses, but it is unclear to what extent they reached community residents.

Develop additional strategies to meet the goal of increasing utilization of community resources that includes tracking and sharing information around residents' use of those resources.

In order to understand the impact of open houses on service utilization—and in particular, whether they have been successful at increasing service utilization—requires data collection and tracking over time to develop a baseline from which to measure change. It is not clear that this tracking is currently occurring, or to what extent this information is being shared with the Consortium.

7. CONCLUSION

Between January and September of 2013, the Altgeld-Riverdale Consortium (ARC) worked to improve and strengthen community safety, create vehicles for consistent communication, and increase utilization of community resources. Following a community-building model of organizing, the ARC created a collaboration of community partners and residents to meet these goals. This strategy relied on identifying existing resources within the community that were complemented by the work and expertise of external partners.

Over the life of the grant, the ARC made significant progress in meeting its defined goals and objectives. The ARC was successful in increasing residents' perceptions of safety in the community. For many residents, ARC events, meetings, and initiatives provided a sense of community togetherness that signified the potential to bring positive change. This combination fortified the determination of the partners and residents to make the community a safer place to live. Through six partner open houses the Consortium encouraged participants to look within the community for resources and opportunities to defy the challenges of its immediate context.

The Consortium's emphasis on community partners and external organizations' resources, however, limited the involvement of residents who were not already engaged in the ARC or leaders of local organizations. Efforts to create vehicles for consistent communication—for example, hiring outreach workers to act as town criers and share local information, and developing mechanisms for consistent email tracking—were necessary to grow the ARC's participation and influence in the community. This was a difficult task that required additional support, clear guidance, and dedicated resources from the ARC leadership and community partners.

Despite its isolated location on the southern-most border of Chicago and surrounded by numerous structural disadvantages, the Altgeld-Riverdale community has a tremendous wealth of local leadership, expertise, and dedication to improving the safety of the neighborhood for its current and future residents. As the ARC continues to develop and define itself, the recommendations included in this report are intended to build upon the work already being done, while offering opportunities to transform current efforts into tools of sustainable community change.

***“We have to open up
our hearts beyond
ourselves.”***

-Focus group participant

APPENDIX A: METHODS

Guided by the proposed goals of the grant, the evaluation was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the ARC partnership accomplish its goals?
2. How effectively does the ARC engage community residents and in what ways?
3. How effective are ARC-sponsored events and activities and ARC community partners at changing engaged residents' knowledge and attitudes?
4. How effective are ARC-sponsored activities and events and ARC community partners at increasing community safety—perceived or real?

A number of data collection tools and processes were developed to answer these questions. As described in this section, these tools included: observation of meetings and events, document review, an attendance tracker, email tracking, safety surveys, a questionnaire for sub-grantees and community partners, and four focus groups. Both the ARC coordinators were trained to properly implement the attendance tracker, email tracker, and safety survey, but ran into a variety of barriers to implementing them and so data were not always collected consistently and correctly.

Observations and Document Review

At its most basic level, observations of ARC meetings and events served as the primary collection tool. Some of the observations focused specifically on the logistical proceedings of meetings and events. Others more concretely documented patterns in communication between the ARC sub-grantees, community partners, and individual residents. In combination with reviewing the ARC's documents and materials, observations attempted to better understand the flow of information through the group and how the group works towards meeting its goals.

Attendance Tracker

The purpose of implementing an attendance tracker—a robust sign-in sheet—at ARC events was to understand how effectively ARC engaged community residents and in what ways. This tool collected participants' contact information that would be used to create an email tracker and a participant database to strengthen outreach efforts. Additional questions provided insight into the methods of outreach that participants found most effective in their decision to attend a particular event. Particularly, by asking questions about participants' place residence, the attendance tracker compared the presence of residents and organization partners in ARC events. It also served as measure of the

growth in participation throughout the grant period.

Email Tracker

The email tracking tool was intended to provide a comprehensive database to document the ARC's online outreach over the course of the grant. As emails were sent to ARC participants, the email tracking monitored how often and what types of information community residents received. This effort attempted to answer how effectively the ARC engaged community residents. Also, this tool helped clarify how consistently the ARC created and disseminated monthly community calendar/newsletter about all ARC partner events, services and safety measures.

Safety Survey

To measure the extent to which resident-driven safety initiatives increased perceptions of safety among Altgeld-Riverdale residents, a safety survey focused on how individual events impacted knowledge, feelings, and perceptions of safety in the community. The survey contained 28 open-ended and close-ended questions that aimed to capture residents' immediate feelings of safety, the influence ARC events had on such feelings, and demographic information. This tool was intended to be implemented at all resident-driven safety events and initiatives coordinated by the ARC.

Evaluation Questionnaire for Sub-Grantees and Partners

A short questionnaire was sent to sub-grantees and community partners to learn more about their involvement with the ARC and how they were able to use grant funds to increase the reach and capacity of their program or otherwise have greater impact in the Altgeld-Riverdale community. Some questions focused on the history of the organization and its affiliation with the ARC to illuminate how partnerships began in the community. Other questions inquired about specific ways in which partners utilized grant funds to extend services that were already provided to the community. The questionnaire also provided sub-grantees and partners the opportunity to describe general thoughts about its relationship with the Consortium.

Focus Groups

In order to better understand how effectively the ARC conducts its work in the community, a series of focus groups was held with community residents. The focus groups included discussions on a few different topics, like how people got involved with the ARC, in what ways people have been involved, what might make someone who is not involved interested in getting involved, and how the ARC can best contribute to the community.

A total of four focus groups were conducted with no more than 12 individuals per group. Two of the focus groups were held with residents who have been

engaged with the ARC. This means they had been to a meeting, received emails from the ARC, etc. The other two focus groups were with residents who were not already engaged with the ARC. This means they might have heard of the ARC but had never taken part in any ARC-related meetings or activities.

The focus groups were each two hours long and were held at the Community Youth Center (CYC) building at Altgeld Gardens on August 5 and August 9, 2013. All focus group participants were compensated for their time in the form of a \$50 gift card.

In order to recruit participants for the focus groups, an ambassador strategy was developed. With the help of the ARC coordinators, four residents—one for each focus group—were selected to do outreach and recruit individuals from the community to participate. Ambassadors received a \$50 gift card for their own participation in a focus group, and an additional \$10 gift card for every community resident they recruited that showed up and participated.

APPENDIX B: JOB POSTING FOR ARC COORDINATORS

CHANGE.
CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY

→ **About CHA**
Meet Our New CEO
The Plan at 10
Careers
Treasury Specialist
Altgeld Riverdale Consortium (ARC) Project Coordinator (Temporary)
Temporary Executive Administrative Assistant III
Board Information & Meetings
Plans, Reports & Policies
Media Room
Recovery Funds at Work
Offline Unit Summary
Reporting Fraud
FAQs

→ **Housing**

→ **Housing Choice Voucher Program**

→ **Resident Services**

→ **Doing Business with CHA**

Relocation Rights Contract: Public Notice

Section 3 Application

Sign Up for CHA Email

CONTACT US

Job Opportunity

Altgeld Riverdale Consortium (ARC) Project Coordinator (Temporary)
Grade: 55
Position Number: PCARC-RES904
Minimum Salary: Commensurate with experience

POSITION PURPOSE:
The Altgeld Riverdale Consortium (ARC) Project Coordinator has overall responsibility for coordination of this grant-funded project. The Project Coordinator serves as the primary point of contact for the project and will also coordinate training, meetings and communications with the partners in the project. The position is responsible for monitoring, tracking and reporting all aspects of ARC to ensure meeting the goals of the grant. Establishes and maintains key partnerships and relationships with key CHA staff, contractors and other partner organizations that are essential to the project's operation and success. This position will report to the ARC Program Manager.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES:
Examples of responsibilities of this position may include but are not limited to:

- Maintains full understanding of the ARC Project and provides overall coordination.
- Monitors all aspects of the ARC project to ensure maximum service delivery (e.g. program outcomes, performance of partners).
- Works closely with District 5 Police regarding crime statistics and strategies to address safety concerns.
- Collaborates with and facilitates connections among community partners; develops a working knowledge of community resources.
- Creates reports or solicits information as needed for purposes of reporting and to ensure program compliance.
- Regularly attends community meetings and events.
- Produces a monthly newsletter and calendar about all activities occurring in the Altgeld Riverdale community.
- Convenes meetings of the consortium to facilitate community input into planning and sharing of updates on services and outcomes.
- Coordinates training of Circle Keepers and scheduling of Peace Circles; in collaboration with the Chicago Police Department coordinates scheduling of the G.R.E.A.T. program.
- Creates, maintains and updates a project procedural manual and related policy and project documents.
- Regularly identifies program issues to CHA and makes recommendations accordingly.
- Keeps abreast of other Resident Services programs and activities; participates in Division-wide or other departmental activities as appropriate.

REQUIREMENTS:
Qualified candidates from the Altgeld-Riverdale community will be given first preference. The successful candidate must have experience working with low-income families and experience working with community-based service providers, educational institutions and/or law enforcement. Experience in community organization is desired. Must maintain strong inter-personal skills, be well organized and an effective problem-solver; must be respectful and able to work with diverse cultures. Must possess excellent verbal, written, and organizational skills, and be able to work equally well in a team environment or independently. Required proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite. The ideal candidate will possess a quick learning curve, professional office demeanor, a sense of urgency, and the ability to achieve successful project outcomes. Will work from an office located within Altgeld Gardens and must be flexible to work some evenings and weekends. Must possess a valid State of Illinois Driver's License and have access to an insured vehicle during scheduled work hours.

**This is a temporary full-time position without benefits, and the assignment is projected to last for a period not to exceed eight (8) months.*

Apply Now!

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APPENDIX C: SAFETY SURVEY

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY date: _____ event name: _____

Please complete this short survey about the event you just attended.

This event was organized by a group of community organizations and residents called the Altgeld-Riverdale Consortium or ARC. Your feedback will help ARC understand the impact of this event and how to improve events like this in the future.

Please do NOT put your name on this survey. Your responses are private and confidential.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Jenny Clary, the researcher from the Social IMPACT Research Center who is working with ARC, at 312-870-4955 or jclary@heartlandalliance.org.

This project was supported by Grant # 2009-DJ-BX-0023, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice, or the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

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This first set of questions is about how you feel in general about safety.

1. I feel safe in my neighborhood.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

2. I feel safe in my home.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

3. I feel safe traveling to and from school, work, and other places I have to go regularly.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

4. I feel safe with my children or young relatives (cousins, nieces, nephews) traveling about in my neighborhood.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

5. If you do not feel safe traveling or letting children travel about in your neighborhood, explain why.

6. What do you think is the most important safety concern in your neighborhood? Be as specific as possible.

7. List 3 things (specific changes, resources, or programs) you think would MOST improve safety in your neighborhood.

8. Do you think the police have a good relationship with people in your neighborhood?

- Yes₁
- No₂
- Unsure₃

9. Please explain why you feel this way.

-continued-

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This next set of questions is specific to how you feel about today's event.

10. How did you learn about today's event?

- I am an ARC member₁
- Newsletter₂
- Community calendar₃
- Word of mouth₄
- Other (describe):₅ _____

11. Have you attended an ARC event before?

- Yes₁
- No₂
- Unsure₃

12. What are the top 1 or 2 things you learned or will take away from today's event?

13. I am satisfied with the time of day/week this event was offered.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

14. I am satisfied with the location of this event.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

15. I feel more prepared to avoid or prevent an unsafe situation now than I did before attending today's event.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

16. I feel more prepared to act when confronted with an unsafe situation now than I did before attending today's event.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

17. I am more aware of resources related to safety in my neighborhood now than I was before attending today's event.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

18. I am more likely to use resources and organizations addressing safety in my neighborhood now than I was before attending today's event.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

19. I am more likely to collaborate with others in my neighborhood on initiatives to increase safety now than I was before attending today's event.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

-continued-

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20. I think events like this are effective at helping to make the neighborhood safer.

- Strongly agree₁
- Agree₂
- Undecided₃
- Disagree₄
- Strongly disagree₅

21. Would you recommend today's event to other people in your neighborhood?

- Yes₁
- No₂

22. Why or why not?

These last questions will help us understand a little about who attended today's event.

23. Do you live in the Riverdale neighborhood?

- Yes₁
- No₂
- Unsure₃

24. Do you live at any of the following places?

- Altgeld Gardens/Phillip Murray Homes₁
- Golden Gates₂
- Eden Green₃
- Concordia₄
- I don't live in any of these places₅

25. What is your zip code? _____

26. How long have you lived in your neighborhood?

- Less than 1 year₁
- 1 to 5 years₂
- 6 to 10 years₃
- 11 to 15 years₄
- More than 15 years₅

27. How old are you? _____

28. What is your gender?

- Female₁
- Male₂
- Other₃

Thank you for completing this survey!

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Jenny Clary, the researcher from the Social IMPACT Research Center who is working with ARC, at 312-870-4955 or jclary@heartlandalliance.org.

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APPENDIX D: ATTENDANCE TRACKER

Altgeld-Riverdale Consortium (ARC) Event: _____ Date: _____

Name (include organization name where applicable)	Email	Phone	Do you live in Riverdale?	Do you live in Altgeld Gardens?	Have you attended previous ARC events?	How did you hear about today's event?
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> I am an ARC member <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Community calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> I am an ARC member <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Community calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> I am an ARC member <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Community calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> I am an ARC member <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Community calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> I am an ARC member <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Community calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> I am an ARC member <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Community calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> I am an ARC member <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Community calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

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