



HEAL OUR PEOPLE, CHANGE OUR CITY COUNCIL

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO BUILD A HEALING AND WELLNESS INFRASTRUCTURE

JOSÉ RICO, CANDIDATE FOR 12TH WARD ALDERMAN

Chicago neighborhoods that persistently experience disproportionately high levels of violence are, more often than not, marginalized and working-class neighborhoods. The violence that rips through families and communities is the result of segregation, disinvestment and neglect. Too many areas in the 12th ward have experienced an increase in gun violence. In 2017, the 12th Ward had over 1,000 violent incidents. Every Chicagoan is impacted when violence strikes our neighbors. The trauma that has gripped our city is the highest priority for the people in my ward and a matter of serious concern for all Chicagoans. I demand that we proactively and unapologetically confront the systemic inequities of racism, corruption and misogyny that allow violence, particularly gun violence, to persist in Chicago.

Currently, the southwest side of Chicago has less than 0.2 clinicians for every 1000 residents, while the gold coast has access to 4.5 clinicians per 1000 residents. The 12th Ward is home to established community groups that have implemented and carried out evidence-based violence prevention programs, instituted sanctuary schools and who work tirelessly to support families in spite of the decimation of the social service infrastructure.

HEALING AND WELLNESS CENTERS

My main policy proposal is to create Healing and Wellness Centers so that families can access free, culturally-centered professional mental health services that are integrated with job training services, wellness counseling, and after school programs. I will introduce a city-wide proposal that will invest \$1.3 billion to create neighborhood Healing and Wellness Centers with 20,000 new social workers, psychologists, conflict mediators, mental health counselors, and drug treatment counselors.

Twelfth ward residents would have access to approximately \$50 million of the proposed \$1.3 billion that will cover approximately 315 clinicians, counselors and social workers in over 20 locations, including schools, libraries, health centers and day care centers. Specifically, I propose neighborhood healing centers at the following 12th Ward locations:

1. Schools—Hammond, Telpochcalli, Kanoon, Madero, Latino Youth, Kelly High School, Davis, Burroughs, Brighton Park, Calmecca, Namaste, Shields, Evergreen
2. Libraries—McKinley Park, Brighton Park, and Little Village Branches
3. Health Centers—Esperanza, St. Anthony and Mt. Sinai

State and local budget cuts to social services nearly decimated Chicago's safety net programs. The cuts have been not only to mental health services, but to all the areas that allow families to have basic needs and thrive. Without comprehensive public investments in areas of jobs, housing and education, already-epidemic inequality in our city and around the state threaten to intensify. When poverty is multidimensional, concentrated, and isolating, its negative effects are more pronounced.

PROACTIVELY ADDRESSING VIOLENCE IN CHICAGO

To date, the conversation about violence in Chicago has been reactionary. Instead of addressing the root causes of violence, policy makers have responded by increasing punishment – increasing firearm possession sentences by six times – and instituting new mandatory minimum sentences. This has resulted in more incarcerations, while arrests and shootings remained flat. Public officials openly acknowledge that city and state funding for basic human needs, like early childcare and meals on wheels, are not prioritized. Over several decades, hundreds of millions of dollars that would otherwise have gone to safety net programs have instead been poured into expanding punishment and incarceration. This has not decreased violence or made our neighborhoods safer.

Over the last 8 years, there have been over 24,000 shooting victims and an average of 800 lives lost to gun violence per year. Long-term redistribution of public spending is needed to implement systemic solutions in our most affected neighborhoods in order to create a living wage, fully fund pre-K-20 education, make housing affordable and build comprehensive health networks that are accessible to all.

A large-scale shift in public spending priorities is required to proactively address violence in Chicago. An effective public health approach must address the underlying factors that lead to violence, and must build upon the assets of youth, families, and communities. Violence costs our city and its residents in many ways. By some estimates, if we were to reduce violent crime in Chicago by 25%, we would save \$5.5 billion in direct and indirect costs, which include everything from policing, courts, the pain and suffering of victims. In order to reduce violent crime and reap these savings, we need to radically rethink the way we prioritize government funding at city, county and state levels. In Chicago, we spend over \$2.5 billion every year on policing, and the state spends \$2 billion on corrections. The total cost of \$4.5 billion for policing and incarceration represents an overinvestment in the criminal justice system that could otherwise be used to prioritize jobs, education, housing and mental health support for Chicagoans. Shifting public investment to these areas would actually address root causes of violence and ultimately lead to better public safety outcomes.

PRIORITIZING DIGNITY AND BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS

As Alderman for the 12th Ward, I will be working with leaders in my ward and colleagues in a #BrandNewCouncil to prioritize basic services and dignity for everybody. We can only achieve this through policies that promote racial equity and public awareness of the laws, policies, and ordinances that are responsible for ensuring basic human rights. The \$4.5 billion spent on policing and incarceration would be better spent in the following ways:

1. \$1.3 billion would create neighborhood healing centers with 20,000 new social workers, psychologists, conflict mediators, mental health counselors, and drug treatment counselors.

2. \$2.2 billion would provide 50,000 new living wage jobs and workforce/union apprenticeship programs
3. \$445 million would provide added nurses, social workers and quality after-school programs for 100,000 children living in poverty
4. \$550 million would provide 120,000 families with affordable housing via Renters Tax Credits

BUILDING AN EQUITABLE CHICAGO

We are working together for a new city council where laws, policies, resources, rights, and opportunities are understood, embraced, and applied equitably and transparently. In order to achieve this, we need to reject the false construct of racial hierarchy and embrace racial healing and elevate the human value equity that is important to our campaign.

We are in a historic moment where we can elect a city council that will make our neighbors the group we serve, uplift and are accountable to. We need elected officials to address the most pressing challenges facing our neighbors across the street and across the city. Together, we can ensure that city government and the 12th Ward office invest in the real needs of our families and communities.

To bring that vision forward, I will advocate for the following at City Council:

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE FOR ALL CHICAGOANS—Address the root causes of violence and promote democratic participation in our neighborhoods to increase stability and cohesiveness. Our policies will focus on addressing the root causes of economic segregation, community disinvestment and reforming the entire criminal justice system.

HEALING CENTERS—Create health and human services networks in our neighborhoods. \$1.3 billion would create comprehensive health centers with 20,000 new social workers, psychologists, conflict mediators, mental health counselors, and drug treatment counselors.

Proposal

1. Access to quality integrated health care in schools, clinics, food pantries, business, CBOs, etc.
2. Provide behavioral and mental health services to ensure early identification of trauma and anxiety
3. Deliver affordable therapy and other support services to address trauma and anxiety and enhance coping skills

ECONOMIC SECURITY—Jobs and Neighborhood Economic Development. \$2.2 billion would provide 50,000 new living wage jobs. Targeting economic development & inclusive growth in order to create jobs & build wealth.

Proposal

1. Create new employment opportunities for thousands of people that are unemployed and helping our ward's businesses invest in their workers through subsidizing workforce training costs and providing grants for building repairs and remodeling
2. Revitalize Neighborhood Small Business Zones with a series of incentives to revitalize economic activity through coordinated training, investments and marketing

EQUITY IN EDUCATION—Quality neighborhood schools that our children deserve. \$445 million would provide added nurses, social workers and quality after-school programs for 100,000 children living in poverty.

Proposal

1. Equitable funding for schools with the goal of holistic education for every child
2. Providing fully staffed school and full service community schools
3. Mandate Chicago Educational Facilities Master Plan (CEFMP) as described in SB 630 before they are allowed to close any more schools

HOUSING JUSTICE—Stop the exodus and allow residents affordable options to live in the city. \$550 million would provide 110,000 families with affordable housing via Renters Tax Credits.

Proposal

1. Build more affordable housing and levy taxes on developments to build affordable housing to create more inclusive neighborhoods
2. Adopting city policy of one-for-one replacement of standing public housing units
3. Lift the ban on rent control and enforce rent control in city to prevent further net loss of low-income housing
4. Advocate for the construction of additional permanent supportive housing for people living with disabilities and other special needs

DEMOCRATIC NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS—#PeoplePower organizations would tackle neighborhood problems across the ward.

Proposal

1. Support civic engagement by encouraging community members to participate in setting spending priorities for the ward
2. Ensure that the aldermanic office is a sanctuary zone for our undocumented populations, with Spanish language access and other inclusive measures
3. Create block coordinators who would focus on coordinating educational services and helping the unemployed find jobs with aid from City Hall

EQUITABLE CITY FINANCES—Stop selling off the public interest and require more from corporate interests to balance the budget.

Proposal

1. Progressive Revenue in the FY 2019 Budget
2. Utilize progressive revenue options to ensure that the very wealthy and big corporations pay their fair share in taxes to balance the budget

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS—Protect the air, water, and ground we live in.

Proposal

1. Goal of environmental justice over profits
2. Ensure environmental and economic impact assessments are peer reviewed and made open to the public
3. Ensure all proposals for zoning changes are made public in advance of any approval

4. Exceed the environmental limits set by the Department of the Environment, the Illinois EPS and the Federal EPA in all developments
5. Ensure inspections are regular and results are made public within 90 days

PUBLIC SAFETY—Protecting all Chicagoans.

Proposal

1. Implement Civilian Police Accountability Council with the power to oversee CPD and all police oversight mechanisms
2. Make Chicago a real sanctuary city that does not cooperate with ICE
3. Eliminate database
4. Mandatory trauma services, monitoring, etc. for offenders