Safety.
Community.
Priority.
A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO PROMOTING SAFETY

The Alliance of Local Service Organizations (ALSO) works locally and nationally to prevent street violence and intimate partner violence, all under one roof.

Chicago’s Northwest Side serves as a learning laboratory for ALSO’s direct service pilot initiatives. Traditionally, street violence and intimate partner violence have been treated as separate public health issues, but ALSO understands they are connected.

Why ALSO works:

- ALSO innovates by approaching all of its work with the philosophy that street and intimate partner conflicts intersect and affect each other.
- ALSO pivots to the changing needs of individuals and communities that experience violence.
- ALSO shares lessons from its initiatives with local and national practitioners.
- ALSO builds capacity through training and technical assistance for individuals and agencies to respond to these issues.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Initiatives with In-Risk Men: Healthy masculinity and fatherhood are interwoven into all of ALSO’s work with in-risk men in the streets and in the criminal justice system. Participants confront learned behaviors toward women and other men and explore techniques to increase positive involvement with their children and families. ALSO’s practitioners have lived experience that makes them credible in the eyes of in-risk men, which uniquely positions them to deliver these transformative messages. This results in increased safety and well-being for in-risk men, their intimate partners, their children and the community as a whole.

Youth Initiatives: When youth stay positively engaged in their communities, they become less likely to engage in activities that threaten their safety or the safety of others. This framework guides all of ALSO’s work with youth, which includes subsidized employment, job skills and leadership opportunities. In addition to providing skills to secure future employment, ALSO provides access to national clientele for youth working with New Level Sound and a national platform to advocate for and share their expertise on violence prevention through conferences, round tables, film projects and youth leader exchanges.

Community Building Initiatives: Everyone plays a role in creating a safe community. ALSO’s Your Life is My Life (YLML), Ending Violence Starts with Me bystander intervention training and public awareness campaign recognizes the biggest barrier that people encounter when they witness violence is not knowing how to safely intervene. YLML teaches practical strategies to individuals so they can actively prevent violence in their communities. Similarly, ALSO educates professionals about street and intimate partner violence to develop appropriate, practical responses to both.

Walk for Peace: ALSO hosts an annual Walk for Peace to build connections among community residents and raise public awareness of violence prevention strategies and resources.

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1 “In-risk” acknowledges that risk factors have already resulted in adverse impacts versus “at-risk,” which implies future impacts; term developed by Darrell Johnson, Violence Interrupter, ALSO
Local Roots.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

ALSO believes that no one is free from the threat or act of violence until we are all free from the threat or act of violence. ALSO directly serves Chicago's Northwest Side and participates in citywide networks dedicated to the safety and well-being of Chicago communities.

In parts of the Northwest Side, as many as 20% of young people (ages 16-19) are disconnected from the community, which means they are neither working nor in school, making them more vulnerable to poverty, violence and crime. To address this, ALSO implements direct and indirect violence prevention and intervention strategies that protect young people against violence and strengthen communities.

PROGRAMS

Street Violence Intervention: Reduce shootings. Build trust. Model healthy choices. ALSO’s outreach workers and violence interrupters use evidence-based case management practices to reduce the number of shootings and promote safety on Chicago’s Northwest Side. Violence prevention staff intervene in violent acts, build trust and positive relationships with in-risk youth, including gang-involved youth, and model healthy choices. The practitioners possess lived experience and knowledge of street culture, making them most equipped to model healthy masculinity and prevent acts of violence.

Community Violence Prevention: Youth employment. Parent leadership. Reentry case management. ALSO leads community initiatives to reach at-risk and in-risk youth and their families. With its community partners, ALSO provides and coordinates essential elements of a holistic violence prevention approach through activities that promote well-being and reduce risk factors that lead to violence.

Subsidized Employment for Youth: 10 youth. Making $10 per hour. For 10 weeks. ALSO’s 10-10-10 Job Training Program employs disconnected youth who provide professional sound system services and teach peers about violence prevention and bystander intervention. In addition, they practice necessary job skills and participate in job placement activities to help secure long-term employment after the program.

Social Enterprise: Sound systems. Real gigs. Job skills. New Level Sound (NLS) is a job-training program that teaches young people to operate state-of-the-art, professional sound systems to support events and activities locally and nationally. NLS combines a business-model approach with a commitment to youth development by providing young people with professional experience through on-the-job training and bringing sound services to communities at competitive rates.

2 Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, 2009
Technical Assistance Programs

ALSO believes government and community are equally responsible for solving issues of violence. Violence is pervasive and multi-faceted, so systems must be well informed and highly coordinated to respond effectively. As a result, ALSO’s reach stretches beyond local direct service to provide technical assistance for government agencies and service providers in all 56 U.S. states and territories.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women and expert technical assistance providers nationwide, ALSO builds the capacities of agencies to address domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, children’s exposure to violence and to engage men and boys to prevent violence against women.

What does this mean? ALSO offers trainings, resources and individually tailored consulting, both on location and through conferences and webinars, and by brokering assistance through our network of experts. We keep systems apprised of promising practices in the field and improve their ability to provide effective programming and grant administration to promote safety for survivors of violence and accountability for those who use violence.

Our clients include state- and territory-level grant administrators and their sub-grantees, law enforcement agencies, courts, district attorney’s offices, victim service providers, mental health specialists and others who touch the lives of survivors or those who have been directly affected by violence.

Programs

STOP Technical Assistance to Administrators Resource (STAAR) Project: Tailored consulting. Capacity building. 56 states and territories. ALSO is the comprehensive technical assistance provider for state- and territory-level administrators of the STOP Formula Grant, the largest and oldest federal grant program under the Violence Against Women Act. Our goal? Improve responses for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and teen dating violence through a variety of resources, tools and individualized assistance to all states and territories.

Locally Implementing National Knowledge (LINK) Program: Access to expertise. Multi-disciplinary. Subsidized travel. The LINK Program offers selected professionals the opportunity to attend conferences on best practices in the domestic violence and sexual assault fields. By subsidizing travel expenses and registration fees for participants who might not otherwise be able to attend, participants engage in peer-to-peer networking and information sharing and, as a result, local communities benefit from new practices. Multi-disciplinary teams from almost all states and territories have participated.

Children’s Exposure to Violence (CEV) Technical Assistance: Tailored consulting. Capacity building. Sharing best practices. ALSO assists first responders around the country working to reduce the effects violence has on children (ages 0-12) and their caregivers to prevent future exposure and acts of violence. In addition, ALSO works in partnership with other agencies nationwide that provide violence prevention services to teens, men and boys.
OUR HISTORY

Incorporated in 1998, ALSO was created to coordinate services for youth and families in the Logan Square community on Chicago’s Northwest Side. Becoming aware of the devastating impact of community violence on youth and families, ALSO responded by implementing prevention programs to end street violence.

However, violence is pervasive and spans beyond the streets. In 2007, ALSO expanded its violence prevention and intervention efforts to include intimate partner violence. By working to end violence more broadly, ALSO began to see connections between violence on the streets and violence in the home.

“There are not many places around the neighborhood like this — places that are like a safe haven. The people here do separate things (like work on community violence or family violence) but work together. No matter what you need, there is someone here to talk to.”

— Christopher Serrano, 10-10-10 Program Graduate

“I am so grateful ALSO gave Cambria County — this small, rural county — an opportunity to exponentially enhance their response to violence against women. This is what technical assistance is all about! Thank you again for making an enormous difference in PA. My hope is that Cambria County will become a further catalyst for change in their region.”

— Debbie Rollo, STOP Formula Grant Administrator, Pennsylvania

“I have pushed for policies and resources that make a difference in people’s lives and I was able to do this with the skills I have built working with ALSO. Since then, I have continued to advocate for the people, my people; those who experience underrepresentation and inequity.”

— Gina Rivera, Youth Advocate Program Participant

Regarding the Violence Prevention Working Group ALSO convened to address gaps in domestic violence services: “I am interested to see all this come full circle so that domestic violence agencies become more adept and better equipped to respond to the unique circumstances of women whose partners are gang involved.”

— Kathleen A. Doherty, Executive Director, Between Friends, Chicago