WHAT IS CEASEFIRE?

CeaseFire is a structured, deliberate and disciplined violence intervention that was developed in Chicago based on the premise that violence is a public health issue and can be prevented. The program in Philadelphia is one of the national replication sites of Cure Violence (formerly known as Chicago Ceasefire) public health model and focuses its efforts to stop shootings and killings in hot-spots in the 22nd and 39th Police Districts in North Philadelphia. The approach includes efforts to heighten community awareness about gun violence and encourage area residents, community, business and faith based leaders to work together and get involved.

THE CHALLENGE

No American city better epitomizes the epidemic of youth violence than Philadelphia. Nationally, homicide represents the second leading cause of death among individuals ages 15 to 19 and the leading cause of death for young Philadelphians within this same demographic.

IS IT WORKING?

In 2011, the year the Phila. Ceasefire program began, there were 188 shooting victims and 47 homicides in the 22nd Police District. In 2013 there were 126 shooting victims and 26 homicides in the 22nd Police District. A formal evaluation to measure the impact of the program within its targeted neighborhoods is underway.

THE RIGHT APPROACH

The goal of Philadelphia CeaseFire is to reduce the level of violence, particularly shootings & homicides, by replicating the Cure Violence model within selected neighborhoods in the 22nd and 39th Police Districts of Philadelphia. Philadelphia Ceasefire will utilize the five core components of the Chicago model: 1) Community Mobilization 2) Youth Outreach 3) Faith-Based Leader Involvement 4) Police Department Participation and 5) Public Education. The program’s goals replicate those of the Chicago CeaseFire evidence based program which is an initiative of the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention.

THE RIGHT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The Philadelphia Ceasefire program uses the same client selection criteria of identifying high risk youth of the Cure Violence program. To be classed as high risk, and thus eligible for recruitment, individuals must meet at least four of a list of client criteria. They must be between the ages of 14 and 25; have a prior history of offending and arrests, be a member of a gang, have been in prison, have been the recent victim of a shooting, and involved in “high risk street activity.”

THE RIGHT COMMUNITY

From 2008 through 2010, Philadelphia recorded a total of 697 homicides by firearm. In 2010, 46% of the city’s homicides and shootings were concentrated in the 22nd district in North Philadelphia, an area with less than 10% of the city’s population and approximately 4.25 square miles.

THE RIGHT MESSAGE & MESSENGERS

Critical to the success of CeaseFire is developing the “right message” delivered by the “right messengers.” The right messengers include the Philadelphia CeaseFire staff; the program manager, outreach supervisor, outreach workers & violence interrupters. Clients are selected through a courting process and not done through institutions. Instead, outreach workers spend 80 percent of their time outside of the office and build and maintain a caseload of high risk clients.

THE RIGHT PARTNERS

The program is funded by:
The Center for Bioethics, Urban Health & Policy at Temple University School of Medicine
City of Philadelphia-Philly Rising
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)
US Dept. of Justice-Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency & Prevention (OJJDP)
The US Attorney General Office (Region 3)

Technical support is provided by Cure Violence and Dr. Caterina Roman of the Criminal Justice Dept. at Temple University.

Local community partners include Philadelphia Police Dept., Project HOME, North Central Victim Services, Guccriss.Org, and Lost Dreams on Canvas, Raymond Rosen Housing Development, Databases, 9822nd Police District Police Clergy.
1. Community Mobilization
   Community mobilization focuses on residents, local businesses, service organizations, and members of the faith community to build a safer and more viable community. We will energize a base of support for Phila. CeaseFire to stop shootings and killings in the short term and to change the underlying conditions that give rise to shootings and killings in the long term.

2. Youth Outreach
   Outreach workers are challenged to build sufficient trust with youth and high-risk individuals, many of whom are gang-involved, and redirect them to positive pursuits, including jobs, job training, and returning to school.

3. Public Education
   CeaseFire employs a broad-based public education campaign to facilitate behavior change and promote nonviolence. Neighborhoods are saturated with posters, leaflets, flyers, yard signs, bumper stickers, T-shirts, buttons and other materials that disparage violence and carry pointed messages about the consequences of shootings and killings.

4. Leadership Involvement
   Community and faith-based leaders are in a unique position to influence the thinking and behavior of community members and those who are at risk of involvement in shootings and killings. They assert a strong presence on the streets in response to every shooting. They counsel and support those who seek to change their lives through the provision of positive alternatives. In some cases, they also adopt, mentor, and open safe havens for the youth in our communities.

5. Criminal Justice Participation
   Individuals responsible for shootings and killings need to be held accountable to the community for their actions. This is not an end that can be achieved without the involvement of police, the courts, and corrections agencies - until the thinking completely changes. Furthermore, Phila. CeaseFire takes action to foster relationships between community residents and police in neighborhoods where those relationships may have been strained in the past.