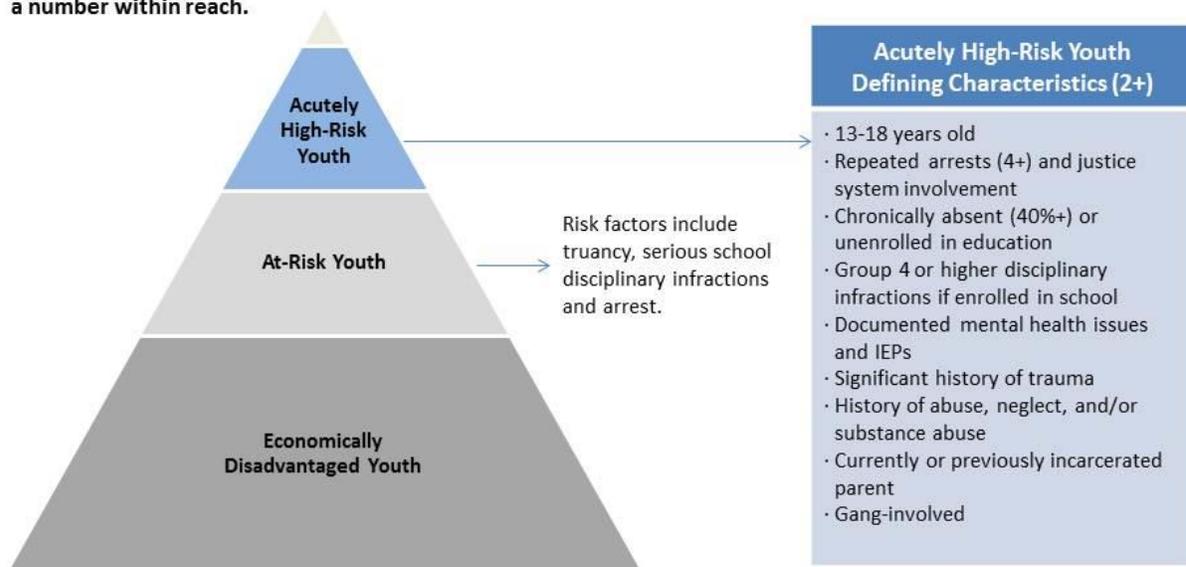# Get IN Chicago: Key Learning to Reduce Youth Violence

In five years of funding and studying youth violence prevention programs, Get IN Chicago has learned a great deal about how we as a city can take incremental progress to larger-scale individual and community change.

1. Increase focus on *Acutely* High-Risk Youth
2. Coordinate comprehensive services for the acutely high risk with youth-centered intensive case management at its core
3. Build capacity of more youth organizations to effectively serve this population
4. Measure youth outcomes in addition to service provision to better gauge progress

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Increase focus on Acutely-High-Risk Youth

- Acutely High-Risk youth are highly likely to be victims or perpetrators of violence and are already involved with or on the cusp of becoming part of the justice system.
- They are typically young men who have been victims of violence, are not engaged in school, had IEPs for cognitive or social-emotional issues when they were in school, have a parent who is or has been in prison and had several interactions with the juvenile justice system.
- Importantly, a distinction needs to be made between these acutely high-risk youth and the many youth in Chicago who are not achieving their full potential and would and do benefit from youth development and extra-curricular programs.
- Get IN Chicago research puts the number of acutely high-risk youth between 2,000 and 4,000.

Coordinate comprehensive services for the acutely high risk with youth-centered intensive case management at its core

- Youth most likely to be involved in violence need a highly integrated set of services overseen by a professional case manager.
- Acutely high-risk youth struggle with a broad set of issues such as homelessness, substance dependence, education challenges, unemployment, trauma and a lack of role models—all of which need to be addressed with the appropriate level and duration of services.
- Given these complex care needs, along with issues of trust, intensive case management that requires "warm hand-offs" to service referrals, accompaniment to appointments, family engagement and more frequent engagement is more effective than traditional case management models.

Build capacity of more youth organizations to effectively serve this population

- The capabilities and capacity of social service providers in Chicago needs strengthening to work effectively with acutely high-risk youth and reduce youth violence.
- Underinvestment in the most violent neighborhoods has also led to insufficient investment in social service providers in those same communities.
- Community-based programs are critical to building trust, leveraging community assets and making it easier for youth to access services.
- Many non-profits are small, with limited funding, and don't have the capacity to invest in continuous improvement around data use, coordination of services, intensive case management and other key functions.
- Investment in identifying and disseminating best practices and expanding capacity is necessary.

Measure youth outcomes in addition to service provision to better gauge progress

- Assessing outcomes for social services is difficult but is necessary and needs to be more sophisticated.
- Program delivery can be improved by instituting new measurement and accountability with the ultimate beneficiaries being youth participants.
- It is necessary to move past the culture of measuring activity (30 young people in a mentoring program) to establish new metrics based on life progress (re-engagement in school, securing employment, getting counseling) and integrating them into performance management systems.