

2023 MAYORAL CANDIDATE CIVIL RIGHTS QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE EXCERPTS

Describe the important components of your public safety plan that do not concern investment in the Chicago Police Department and hiring of additional police officers.

Kam Buckner: “Public safety isn’t CPD – it’s investing in better schools, creating more affordable housing, making sure we have mental health resources across our cities, and tackling other root causes of violence that will keep our communities safe. I will civilianize certain functions in the Police Department...commit to the Treatment Not Trauma campaign...invest in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention... My administration will invest in the individuals and organizations on the ground....and...prioritize passing the Peace Book Ordinance and the Anjanette Young Ordinance...”

Jesús “Chuy” García: “My plan calls for: Investing in community intervention and preventative efforts...Developing a comprehensive Community Development initiative... support[ing] violence intervention efforts...Investing in re-entry efforts...Building stakeholder relationships...
Long-term efforts to address longstanding inequities must be at the front of the agenda....My administration will lead the way in investing in communities and combating the root causes and social determinants of health.... We will promote economic opportunity, housing security, neighborhood stability and resources, better transportation options to employment, schools, services, and green and community spaces...youth workforce development, education, and employment programs....”

Ja’Mal Green: “ABSOLUTELY NO part of my public safety plan concerns investment in the Chicago Police Department OR hiring additional police officers. I have introduced a comprehensive public safety plan called E.P.I.C., which focuses on a four-pronged approach to improving public safety... 1) Economic Prosperity - studies show that the biggest precondition to violence is a lack of resources, i.e., poverty... 2) Prevention - using holistic solutions to prevent crime from being attractive in the first place... 3) Intervention - using a diversified social toolkit, we will divert non-violent 911 calls to a Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) team...4) CPD Reform - We will work to hold police officers accountable...”

Brandon Johnson: “1. Enact a Day-One Plan to Get Smart and Serious About Crime - On my first day...I will enact reforms to make CPD more efficient, train and promote 200 new detectives...improve transit safety, and get illegal guns off our streets. 2. Invest in our Youth and Communities - We start by doubling youth summer employment to over 60,000 jobs, targeting our most at-risk youth and building out a CPS Trauma Response Network. 3. Expand Support for Victims and Survivors ... 4. Mental Health, Addiction Care & Housing for the Unhoused – [I] will support Treatment Not Trauma [ordinance]; reopen shuttered mental health clinics; have health professionals...respond to crisis calls; and support the Bring Chicago Home ordinance...5. Strengthen Police Accountability - I will work closely with [CCPSA] to dismantle systemic racism... enforce long-needed police accountability reforms...”

Sophia King: “...[w]e need to make significant and intentional investments in addressing...the root causes of crime... [M]y Safety and Justice plan...[calls for] increasing resources to violence intervention programs and creating an Office of Gun Violence Prevention... rapidly expand alternative responses to 911 and developing additional pre-arrest diversion for substance abuse, mental health, and extreme poverty. ... As mayor, I would expand and rapidly escalate the Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) program for alternative response... And it goes without saying, that we need to commit to real criminal justice reform. I am committed to fully implementing the federal consent decree on police reform by 2027 and moving proactively to make justice a reality for all...”

Roderick Sawyer: “...I was the architect of Chicago's police reform, the Empowering Communities for Public Safety Ordinance ...Gaining more trust with communities of color and neighborhoods that have been traditionally over-policed and under-protected is a big step in making our city safer both in terms of reducing and solving crimes, and keeping people in marginalized communities safe from police abuses. ... One of the strongest deterrent to crimes is economic opportunity. ... We have to do everything in our power to make sure Chicagoans - especially people from marginalized communities - have every option to make choices OTHER THAN crime. The real solutions to Chicago's crime problem is in long-term solutions that focus on a vastly improved education system, robust economic opportunities to end our city's shameful and intractable prosperity disparity.”

Paul Vallas: “...[T]he Consent Decree requirements in all of its components IS investment in the Chicago Police Department which...I will meet and use as a point of departure for investment in neglected aspects of operations that are impairing the City's ability to meet Consent Decree requirements at pace and at scale. ... I will: Fast-track officer wellness components of the Consent Decree... Fast-track the implementation of a 10:1 patrol officer to sergeant ratio... Make sure...that officers schedules are regular, and not overtime heavy... Fast-track implementation of early intervention systems utilizing best practice data-driven models and analysis... Reinstate the vision and mission-based structural reforms...Create the technical infrastructure needed for data-driven policing strategy...AND administrative and reform management of the department itself....”

Willie Wilson: “I will invest in our communities. Especially, communities with the highest levels of gun violence, unemployment, and poverty. I will require our young people graduating from schools to have a trade. I will reopen our mental health clinics and provide counselors for our young people.”

Pretextual traffic stops and gun searches by the Chicago Police have skyrocketed in recent years, [often without proper data reporting](#). In 2020, Black drivers in Chicago were pulled over 7x more often than white drivers. [Advocates say](#) that this pattern of selective enforcement exacerbates already strained community relations with law enforcement.

What will you as mayor do to identify and remedy racial disparities in policing practices?

[Kam Buckner](#): “I’m committed to making sure that every CPD employee, new and existing, will be thoroughly trained in implicit racial bias and violence de-escalation techniques. Additionally, as Mayor, I will make sure CPD is in full compliance with the federally mandated Consent Decree, which will make the department stronger and better equipped to serve the community. Coming into compliance with the consent decree is a top priority in our Safer-77 public safety plan.”

[Jesús “Chuy” García](#): “...[F]or me, the consent decree is a floor not a ceiling to our aspirations for a modern police department. In building a modern police force, I will focus on rebuilding the police department using its existing budget to add non-sworn officers and staff with skills better suited to addressing community problems including mental/behavioral calls, property and domestic issues, and non-criminal disputes such as social workers, violence interrupters, etc. ...”

[Ja’Mal Green](#): “Racial disparities have existed in policing for as long as municipal policing has existed. We must work to end this centuries-old institutionalized racism, and we must do so swiftly. Within my first hundred days, I will start an audit of CPD to identify all areas in which there is racial disparity in its operations. The city will partner with non-profit and activist organizations as well as legal experts and other stakeholders to rewrite departmental policy top to bottom until the scourge of racism is eradicated.”

[Brandon Johnson](#): “A big part of police accountability is mandating transparency on police interactions with Chicagoans. We cannot end racial profiling without tracking racial profiling. My administration will make publicly available all arrest demographic data, traffic stop demographic data, and release CPD data to FOIA requests.”

[Sophia King](#): “...It is clear that the way law enforcement is working now, is not working. We need to rebuild trust between the community and our officers in order to truly work towards justice. Which is why as mayor, I would disband citywide task forces and expand community policing. ... Adding officers with a real emphasis on beat integrity and a measurable commitment to real community policing in every neighborhood will make the entire city safer.”

[Roderick Sawyer](#): “This would be a top priority in a Sawyer Administration. ... We are going to have community members from every area of Chicago monitoring and reporting how the police interact with their community. ... I would also begin extensive monitoring of how our police resources are allocated, from 911 responses to the number of community officers in each area. Chicago has traditionally offered more police in areas that already are safe and affluent, and fewer in disinvested neighborhoods. That has to end. ... I would not hesitate to fire anyone affiliated with the Proud Boys or a hate group of any kind.”

[Paul Vallas](#): “Strong correlation should be respected as raising and requiring immediate attention to a host of questions, the answers to which should be probed immediately. Under my administration, that follow-up and assessment should be citizen-informed, transparent and swift. ... Racial disparities not explained by crime data have no place in policing. Data and pattern outliers raise questions and demand action. Questions undermine legitimacy and neither should be allowed to fester without rigorous analysis, made public in an accessible fashion...for adverse findings to be transparently and accountability addressed.”

[Willie Wilson](#): “We will bridge the gap between communities and the police that serve them. We will require additional training. Under my Administration everyone will be held accountable.”

Chicago is one of the most heavily surveilled cities in the world. Currently, Chicago's surveillance system includes 50,000+ City video cameras, thousands of business and residential cameras, facial recognition databases, [social media monitoring in Chicago Public Schools](#), the costly and [ineffective](#) ShotSpotter technology, and many other technologies. To date, the City Council has not held a single hearing or considered any ordinance to protect personal privacy in Chicago.

What will you do as mayor to protect Chicagoans' privacy and ensure that personal data is not kept indefinitely by City agencies? Will you commit to holding City Council hearings on any new surveillance technologies?

[Kam Buckner](#): "I will commit to holding City Council hearings on new surveillance technology. Additionally, my administration will commit to transparency overall in how the City manages information and shares information with the public. I've worked to protect individual privacy in Springfield and would bring that same commitment to the Mayor's Office..."

[Jesús "Chuy" García](#): "I am absolutely committed to implementing the consent decree and creating a police force dedicated to community support and safety. I do not support the current gang database and will commit to review of police data and records by the OIG or appropriate agencies followed by hearings on how data should be collected and analyzed. This includes review and hearings on the application and deployment of new technologies."

[Ja'Mal Green](#): "The flagrant disregard for Chicagoans' privacy over several failed administrations must be reckoned with, including the dismantling of failed programs such as ShotSpotter. I commit to full transparency on this issue, and will ensure City Council hearings will be held on and on all new surveillance technology."

[Brandon Johnson](#): "Chicago spends \$9 million a year on ShotSpotter despite clear evidence it is unreliable and overly susceptible to human error. This expensive technology played a pivotal role in the police killing of 13-year-old Adam Toledo. That cannot happen again. As mayor, I will end the ShotSpotter contract and invest in new resources that go after illegal guns without physically stopping and frisking Chicagoans on the street. And any investments must be subject to hearings by City Council committee."

[Sophia King](#): "Yes, I believe that a strong city council is an essential element of good governance in the City of Chicago, and I would commit to holding City Council hearings on new surveillance technologies that the city is rolling out or considering."

[Roderick Sawyer](#): "Our privacy rights are a troubling issue[], especially as we have a need for more security. As an attorney, I understand the delicate balance here. As mayor I will support significantly enhanced transparency for the city, especially in this area. So, yes."

[Paul Vallas](#): "...Law enforcement is not immune from the allure of new technology that pervades our society and leads us in both the public and private sectors to plunge in without consequential thinking or analysis. We seldom do the analysis of consequences or cost-benefit at the front-end, and the courts generally are a few years behind in laying out the constitutional parameters for new surveillance and tracking technologies. The loser is the public we serve....
Will I commit to my Administration being fully cooperative in any such hearings called? Yes. ..."

[Willie Wilson](#): "I support the constitution and constitutional policing. I will do whatever is necessary within the law to stop the violence in our city. I will consider holding a hearing on the issue of new surveillance technologies."

The City of Chicago has a long record of governmental secrecy and cover-ups. Cook County judges, in response to transparency lawsuits, have regularly found City agencies to be unlawfully withholding public records.

Will you implement a City-wide transparency policy? Will you commit to releasing public records when it is in the public interest to do so even if there is a legal basis to withhold them?

Kam Buckner: “Yes, I will implement a citywide transparency policy. My administration will ensure that we have clear government accountability and transparency, and an empowered Inspector General who is given the autonomy and the charter to release findings accessibly. The people of Chicago deserve to receive findings from these investigations promptly and clearly. I will also get rid of the gang database and other similar lists that solely exist to control, not to make us safer.”

Jesús “Chuy” García: “As part of implementing the consent decree I will mandate transparency in how we handle and release public data and data on residents. Releasing public records is critical to maintaining public trust and information should be made available despite legal bases if the public is better served by their release.”

Ja’Mal Green: “As Mayor, I would require full transparency of ALL public records whenever it is possible to do so. The only situation in which records will be allowed to be withheld is in cases of: 1) third party personal privacy, especially in the case of civilians, 2) when doing such would impede an ongoing investigation, or 3) extreme cases of public safety. Additionally, city agencies would be held to extremely strict deadlines in responding to FOIA requests.”

Brandon Johnson: “City agencies and the people who lead them shouldn’t hide behind the law when it comes to matters of public interest and public good. Yes, I commit to a citywide transparency policy. We must ensure that public institutions manage our public resources in a way that maximizes their potential to do good for the residents who need them.”

Sophia King: “Yes, transparency is an essential component of good governance. Chicagoans deserve to know what their government is working on for them, and what is not working at all. To the extent permissible by law, I will release public records if it is in the public interest to do so.”

Roderick Sawyer: “Absolutely. Chicago’s history is abysmal in terms of transparency, and I have been beating the transparency drum my whole life - certainly in my 12 years as an alder and throughout this mayoral campaign.”

Paul Vallas: “FOIA is widely abused and in need of an overhaul. The fact that something falls into an exemption category does not mean the exemption should be invoked; particularly when there is no reason to do so in the context of a specific request – and politics is not an applicable reason in that calculus...”

Willie Wilson: “Yes, I support transparency and will require this in my Administration. I support FOIA and openness.”

How would you describe the effectiveness of the City's police accountability mechanisms, and what concrete steps are you prepared to take to create meaningful accountability for misconduct within the Chicago Police Department?

Kam Buckner: “CPD’s community policing program is half-baked at a time where our city is desperate for real solutions to crime and the gun violence epidemic that plagues us every day. [...] My public safety plan commits to making meaningful progress on the reforms outlined in the Consent Decree, and I’m the only candidate in this race who has experience helping a big city police department work through the requirements of a Department of Justice Consent Decree from my time in New Orleans...My administration will also ensure that CPD is accountable to a standard of conduct – people who exhibit bigotry, such as affiliation with the Proud Boys, will not be tolerated in my administration...”

Jesús “Chuy” García: “The City’s current police accountability mechanisms are ineffective. For one, the city under the current Mayor is not transparent. And for another, under the current Superintendent officers are not held accountable. My Safety Plan Calls For: Training - Deescalation, Trauma Informed Responses, Anti Bias Training[;] Investments in Mental Health and Wellness and Civilian Crises Responses[;] Investments in Community Violence Prevention, Intervention and Community Investments [;] Compliance with the Consent Decree...”

Ja’Mal Green: “The police accountability mechanisms in this city do not work. I am prepared to take on the rampant misconduct within CPD by instituting zero-tolerance policies for racism and discrimination, and by requiring CPD officers to carry their own liability insurance for their own misconduct.”

Brandon Johnson: “Lacking. As mayor, I will work closely with the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability to dismantle systemic racism, strongly enforce long-needed police accountability reforms, and evaluate department goals and performance. Specifically, this means:
-Enact Anjanette Young ordinance to end no-knock warrants[;] -Close Homan Square, fund reparations & Burge Torture Survivors Memorial[;] -End the ShotSpotter contract [;] -Erase the racist Gang Database
-Immediately enact the Federal Consent Decree[;] -Publish arrest and traffic stop demographic data[;]
-Terminate officers affiliated with Oathkeepers and Proud Boys[;] -Collaborate with democratic CCPSA and District Councils[;] -Lift communities as senior partners in Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS)”

Sophia King: “It is essential that we both uplift our police, and hold them accountable. I do not think that the way the department has been run under this administration has led to good outcomes for safety or for accountability. First off, we need to fire Superintendent Brown and promote new leadership from within the Department who has the respect of their fellow officers, knows our communities, and knows the force. We need to fully fund and empower the Office of Constitutional Policing not only to implement the consent decree but to be a true advocate for accountability and good, community driven police work.”

Roderick Sawyer: “I’m extremely prepared to make sure Chicago’s police reform and accountability is extremely effective, it’s my proudest accomplishment in City Council....I will [] have envoys from all communities in Chicago, both geographic and demographic, with heavy emphasis on groups that have been traditionally disenfranchised - Black, Hispanic, Asian and Indigenous people, for example, as well as the elderly, the disabled and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Part of what they would report on and monitor is how the police are working for their communities.”

Paul Vallas: “The City’s police accountability mechanisms are a mixed bag that in the aggregate are in need of a restructure to work as we might hope. I believe the Office of Inspector General in general and its Public Safety Section and Data Transparency Portal are excellent. I would work towards something that was known to be needed but never acted on – a 2.0 version of the current police accountability and investigatory architecture to clarify roles, render them connected and complementary rather than overlapping and competing, reduce bodies and functions that are not needed, and bring greater simplicity and transparency to the whole.”

Willie Wilson: “We all can do better. I will hold police leadership accountable for dealing with misconduct.”

What concrete steps will you take as Mayor to recognize and redress police abuses that have affected Chicago's Black and Brown communities? Consider the Burge, Watts, and Guevara scandals, among others.

Kam Buckner: “I have publicly supported the initiative to build the Burge Torture Survivors memorial for years and will continue that advocacy as Mayor. I’ve also said that the \$5.5M and other “benefits” offered are not enough to repair the damage inflicted by state violence on victims of these tragedies. [...] My administration will work to secure funding and resources to provide true reparations for victims of state-sanctioned violence at the hands of CPD. We will also end qualified immunity and protection of these people who have held our communities hostage.”

Jesús “Chuy” García: “In 2015, I endorsed an Ordinance calling for ...: A full and public mayoral apology; \$100,000 payments to each of the approximately 60 living police torture survivors who had not received compensation from lawsuits; A center where victims of police violence could meet and receive professional counseling; Teaching the history of police torture to students in the Chicago public schools; Job training and free public college education for torture survivors and their families; A public memorial dedicated to the survivors of police torture. ... My plan also calls for full transparency with regard to police misconduct settlements. ...I am committed to speedy compliance with the consent decree.”

Ja’Mal Green: “The legacies of monsters such as Jon Burge are far from over, with people alive today still living in the shadow of the torture they went through. From beatings to electric shock devices, these heinous acts need to be fully accounted for. That means further reparations for all victims of terror once hidden behind the badge.”

Brandon Johnson: “More than 7,000 Chicagoans have been held at an off-the-books warehouse in Homan Square, where they often faced torture and other unconstitutional treatment. We must ensure that the legacy of Jon Burge remains firmly in the past instead of stretching into the future. As mayor, I will close the Homan Square facility, support expansion and professional development for Reparations Won curriculum in Chicago Public Schools, explore plans for reparations for survivors of police torture, and call for full funding and construction of the Burge Torture Survivors Memorial.”

Sophia King: “Officers who commit these crimes ... need to be held accountable, with firing, loss of pension, and civil liability payments on the table. We...can’t act after the fact. We need to proactive in shaping the recruitment, examination and training processes to ensure that we have a police force which looks like – and more importantly, understands – our city. Thirdly, we need to rapidly expand alternative responses to policing. ...[B]y replacing police with social workers and other alternative responses when appropriate we can reduce the risk of incidents while freeing up police to handle the most pressing violent incidents.”

Roderick Sawyer: “I am a firm believer we need reparations in Chicago for the historic and systemic injustices that have not only caused great suffering and injustice, but also harmed the growth, prosperity and happiness of various peoples. I want the victims and descendants of victims to be compensated, but I want broader reparations for all people who have suffered from police injustice in the forms of scholarships, job training programs, and a variety of low- and no-interest rate loans for everything from business development to mortgages.”

Paul Vallas: “...Every civil rights case filed or threatened against the city should receive scrutiny and analysis for systems and standards vulnerabilities that can and should be rectified to prevent future infractions....[E]ffective use of data and simple algorithms and regression analysis could prevent scandals of this nature and scale from metastasizing and running rampant for months to years. We don’t do that. We must. And for that every part of the accountability system must contribute to a infrastructure of holistic reform and risk management.”

Willie Wilson: “We will be fully transparent and hold everyone accountable for their actions.”

A [recent report](#) highlighted persistent problems with police officers lying, both in their reports and under oath, and a "blue wall of silence" that protects these dishonest officers and stops them from being discovered or disciplined.

How will your administration make sure that lying and perjury are aggressively addressed? How will your administration break down the blue wall of silence and make it safe for whistleblowers to come forward?

[Kam Buckner](#): "It's a top priority of my administration to change the culture of silence and hold people who engage in that culture accountable for their actions. I was one of the authors of the SAFE-T Act..., and I'm incredibly proud of that work. The SAFE-T Act includes components that punish officers for corroborating and lying on reports. It also includes provisions that prevent certain types of collaboration and tightens rules on body-worn camera reviews.

[Jesús "Chuy" García](#): "My commitment is to rebuild the police department and creat[e] a police force dedicated to community support and safety. Implementing the consent decree means holding officers accountable for their actions and in following the rules and procedures. I will ensure that the new Police Superintendent is absolutely committed to the same goal and creating procedures to implement that accountability. Diversifying the staff of the police department will be critical to breaking down the old culture and make it safe for good, responsible officers to come forward..."

[Ja'Mal Green](#): "The issue of police perjury - "testilying" - is a major issue that must be addressed immediately. It is crucial to enforce strict consequences for lying, limit opportunities to lie in the first place, and heavily push a shift in culture and transparency within the CPD. Whistleblowers are an important resource to these changes, and we will make changes to ensure there are no retaliatory consequences for doing such. We will work with non-profit and activist organizations and other stakeholders to develop comprehensive reforms of this system immediately."

[Brandon Johnson](#): "We must immediately enact the federal consent decree...Meeting the requirements of the consent decree more quickly will drastically reduce police misconduct. I am also committed to working collaboratively with the CCPSA and district councils to better shape CPD policy, establish goals, and better select police leadership to reflect the public safety needs and values of our communities. And as that leadership is implemented, create and enforce consequences for perjury from all parties involved."

[Sophia King](#): "We need to ensure our officers leverage the technology of body cameras and dash cameras fully and completely for each shift. We need regular audits to ensure compliance and create a culture focused on serving the people instead of a code of silence."

[Roderick Sawyer](#): "...My police reform [plan] includes provisions about the leeway police are given, being allowed to read other accounts of an incident before making their reports. But we also need to add true consequences to this historical problem in policing. Police have cost the city hundreds of millions of dollars in abuse and misconduct settlements, and have brought untold amounts of misery and injustice... Police who lie should face consequences that are swift and severe, including firing and loss of pension."

[Paul Vallas](#): "...An officer who loses [credibility] requires...termination. An officer who permits the untruthful acts or assertions of a fellow officer to proceed unchecked...becomes institutionally complicit in those lies and similarly should be terminated....I will hire and hold to account a Superintendent for the enforcement of Rule 14. I will also direct all relevant city components to work coordinately towards the creation of some form of so-called Brady log so that the City is meeting its constitutional obligations..."

[Willie Wilson](#): "This requires leadership. I will make sure that we have a CPD that is responsive to the community. I will bring back CAPS and beat meetings with the community and all police leaders. We will do whatever it takes to have opens within the Department."