

# Chicago Gang Database: Facts and Figures

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In May 2017, the **Chicago Police Department** released a redacted version of its [“Strategic Subjects List”](#) (SSL) – a tool used by CPD to predict who will be involved in gun violence. Each person receives a score of 1 to 500 based on individual arrest and victimization records as well as networks of known and suspected associates, with higher scores supposedly indicating a greater likelihood of involvement in gun violence.

The SSL includes a column indicating whether an individual is “gang affiliated.” Because the CPD does not publish information about its gang database, the SSL provides the most accurate available information about the CPD’s gang database.

**Overall, nearly 400,000 people are on the SSL.** 52% of people on the list are Black, 25% are Latinx, 45% are less than 30 years old, and 76% are male (Note: CPD uses binary gender codes). 285,000 people have scores greater than 250 – indicating that they are considered priority targets for the CPD. Yet 162,000 of these priority targets (57%) have not been arrested for the four crimes included in the SSL: violent offenses, unlawful use of a weapon, narcotics, or domestic violence.

- 56% of Black men in Chicago ages 20-29 have an SSL score;
- 46% of Black men and boys in Chicago ages 10-29 have an SSL score;
- 73% of Black men and boys in West Garfield Park ages 10-29 have an SSL score.

Below is the breakdown of SSL scores for Black men under 30 in 13 neighborhoods with high arrest rates:

| CCA number | CCA name               | Arrest | N census | Area racial makeup | SSL black men <30 |
|------------|------------------------|--------|----------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 26         | WEST GARFIELD PARK     | high   | 10       | Black              | 72.9              |
| 40         | WASHINGTON PARK        | high   | 8        | Black              | 37.9              |
| 67         | WEST ENGLEWOOD         | high   | 20       | Black              | 49.2              |
| 69         | GREATER GRAND CROSSING | high   | 15       | Black              | 45.0              |
| 25         | AUSTIN                 | high   | 24       | Black              | 42.5              |
| 68         | ENGLEWOOD              | high   | 14       | Black              | 53.4              |
| 27         | EAST GARFIELD PARK     | high   | 19       | Black              | 47.1              |

|    |                 |      |    |                |      |
|----|-----------------|------|----|----------------|------|
| 29 | NORTH LAWNSDALE | high | 24 | Black          | 48.3 |
| 33 | NEAR SOUTH SIDE | high | 3  | Mixed/Black    | 24.3 |
| 23 | HUMBOLDT PARK   | high | 17 | Mixed/Hispanic | 51.9 |
| 38 | GRAND BOULEVARD | high | 20 | Black          | 27.1 |

\* These areas actually have more black men =<30 with SSL than census reported total number of black men age 10-34 (census reports age 30-34 as a chunk).

According to the SSL, nearly 65,000 people in the Chicago area are gang affiliated. 74.5% of people listed as “gang affiliated” are Black, 21.4% are Latinx, 60.7% are less than 30 years old, and 96.9% are male.

**Out of the 64,948 people listed as having a gang affiliation:**

- 72.7% are Black males. 1.8% are Black females;
- 20.4% are Latinx males, 1% are Latinx females;
- 41.6% are Black males under 30, and 14.4% are Latino males under 30;
- 67.5% have never been arrested for a violent offense or unlawful use of a weapon;
- 20.9% have never been arrested for a violent offense, unlawful use of a weapon, or narcotics

While gangs are often blamed for gun violence in Chicago, 67.5% of the people identified as “gang affiliated” on the SSL have never been arrested for violent offenses or unlawful use of a weapon. This raises important questions about how more than 43,000 people ended up on the CPD gang database. In fact, the CPD recently acknowledged that gang membership cannot predict participation in gun violence and therefore dropped gang affiliation from the current version of the SSL algorithm.

In addition, 20.9% of alleged gang members have never been arrested for violent offenses, unlawful use of a weapon, or narcotics. That means more than 13,500 people on the CPD gang database have never been arrested for the three principal activities that the CPD considers gang related.

*The **University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Policing in Chicago Research Group** is a workshop that brings faculty and students at UIC into conversation with community organizations in Chicago. Led by Dr. Andy Clarno, the research group is exploring the ways that advanced data analysis and coordination between local and federal law enforcement agencies have transformed policing in Chicago.*