



**The Network**

**ADVOCATING AGAINST  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

# Chicago Mayor 2023 Election Guide

March 24, 2023

*All of the sponsoring organizations are 501(c)(3) nonprofits and are nonpartisan entities that do not support or oppose individual candidates or political parties. No part of this Election Guide may be construed to be an endorsement of either candidate's campaign or views by the organizations listed above.*

## **The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence**

The Network is a group of member organizations dedicated to improving the lives of those impacted by gender-based violence (GBV) through education, public policy and advocacy, and connecting community members with direct service providers. We lead collaborative work to imagine and realize radical ways to respond to and end gender-based violence, focusing on the intersections between systemic violence and gender-based violence.

## **The Purpose of Chicago Mayor 2023 Election Guide**

The Network distributed a questionnaire to both run-off candidates for Chicago Mayor in the 2023 race. We asked candidates to address issues specific to the gender-based violence community. This guide provides the reader with each candidate's answers, verbatim, and is organized in alphabetical order. It is designed to provide voters with insight on how each candidate will approach gender-based violence as mayor.

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## Network Member Organizations

Anew: Building Beyond Violence & Abuse

Apna Ghar

Arab American Family Services

Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach

Ascend Justice

Between Friends

Casa Central

Catholic Charities of Archdiocese of Chicago

Center for Advancing Domestic Peace

Center on Halsted

Centro Romero

Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation

Crisis Center for South Suburbia

Emmaus

Enlace Chicago

Erie Neighborhood House

Family Shelter Service of Metropolitan

Family Services DuPage

Family Rescue

Healthcare Alternative Systems

HOPE Family Services

Howard Area Community Center

Howard Brown Health

IMAN Inner-City Muslim Action Network

KAN-WIN

Legal Aid Chicago

Life Span

Metropolitan Family Services

Mujeres Latinas en Accion

Neopolitan Lighthouse

North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic

Pathways

Pillars Community Health

Resilience

Rockford Family Peace Center

Sarah`s Inn

SHALVA

Un Nuevo Despertar - A New Awakening  
NFP

WINGS

YWCA Evanston Northshore



## **Candidate: Brandon Johnson**

### *Questions & Responses*

- 1. Will you ensure the City of Chicago continues to have a strategic plan to end gender based violence developed in partnership with leaders in the community?**

Yes

- 2. Services and social safety support for survivors are often administered or provided oversight by multiple city departments. Please describe your training and staffing priorities for departments such as the Office of Public Safety, Department of Family and Support Services, Chicago Police Department and any other departments you feel are important.**

It is crucial to have a clear and concise communication plan among city departments to ensure that survivors of gender-based violence receive timely and appropriate support. This will include but not limited to regular meetings, trainings, and strategic planning that crosses multiple departments. My administration will work to ensure that survivors and survivor-led organizations have an open line of communication with these departments and offices to impart community needs.

- 3. How will you hold city agencies accountable for administering grants and services in an efficient and effective manner?**

The city agencies should establish clear goals and performance metrics for each grant or service they administer. It's necessary for the city to measure progress and ensure that

they are meeting the desired outcomes. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the grant or service will help in identifying any issues or problems that need to be addressed. All city agencies will be transparent in their operations and provide regular updates to the public on the progress of the grant or service. My administration will work to build trust and ensure that they are held accountable. Collaborating with partners like The Network will be key to the city's success.

**4. Will your administration commit to keeping or increasing general revenue funding for gender-based violence services?**

Yes. Gender-based violence is a serious issue that affects people in every neighborhood of the city, and it's important for us to work together and provide adequate funding for services that support victims and survivors of such violence. It's important to ensure that funding for gender-based violence services is maintained or increased, as needed, to provide the necessary support and resources for victims and survivors.

**5. Will you have a Deputy Mayor or policy director specifically assigned to the issue of gender-based violence?**

I will work with current city leaders on the issue, including the Director of GBV Strategy and Policy Office, to strategize the best way to deepen and expand the city's work. I am committed to creating a citywide commission on domestic violence and sexual assault.

**6. In 2022, there were 88 days without adult beds available and 199 days without cribs available for survivors. Outside of emergency shelter beds, other housing options are limited. What are your plans to increase the number of housing options for survivors of domestic violence?**

The lack of housing options for survivors in Chicago is completely unacceptable. I support Bring Chicago Home, which will create a dedicated revenue stream to address the housing needs of vulnerable residents. I will allocate more resources towards programs that provide affordable housing to survivors of domestic violence, through strategies such as rent subsidies, vouchers, or other forms of financial assistance. I will partner with local community organizations, nonprofits, and faith-based groups to create additional housing options for survivors, including converting unused buildings or spaces into affordable housing units, and finding additional funding to organizations to build new housing.

**7. Survivors and stakeholders within the gender-based violence community are often missing from important policy discussions. Domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking are intersectional issues including areas such as healthcare, immigration, public safety, education, economic justice, housing and so much more.**

**When making decisions and drafting policy solutions, how will you ensure survivors and gender-based violence community are at the table?**

Ensuring survivors and stakeholders within the gender-based violence community are included in policy discussions is essential to developing effective and inclusive policies. I believe in co-governance. I will work to establish a survivor-led advisory committee that can ensure survivors are directly involved in the policy-making process. This committee will provide input on policy proposals and ensure that the perspectives of survivors are taken into account.

- 8. In 2022, COPA investigated over 300 allegations of domestic violence by officers. It is harder to determine the numbers for sexual assault, sexual misconduct and other crimes associated with gender-based violence due to unclear data reporting. What will your administration do to address the issue of police officers committing gender-based violence offenses?**

Domestic and gender-based violence by officers will not be tolerated in my administration. I will work closely with the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability to hold police accountable and evaluate the goals and performance of the CPD, the Civilian Office of Police Accountability and the Police Board.

- 9. Recently, Injustice Watch ran a series of articles outlining the failure of the Chicago Police Department to complete 918-B certifications that are required for U-Visa applications. U Visas offer temporary legal status and a path to citizenship for undocumented victims of crime who have been or are considered to be helpful to law enforcement. How will you ensure this problem is addressed?**

I will stop the practice of the Chicago Police Department denying hundreds of U visa certification and T visa declaration requests submitted by crime victims, and ensure that undocumented crime victims are heard and are able to continue their processes to become citizens without delay.

- 10. Human trafficking – including forced labor and sex trafficking - happens across the city of Chicago. Please describe what your investment and resource allocation plan will be to holistically address human trafficking in the city, including how you will involve survivors and community organizations. What city departments will you include?**

Every June, South Side community leaders hold a march advocating on behalf of missing and murdered Black girls and women of Chicago, many of whom have fallen victim to human trafficking. CPD data shows that a majority of missing persons cases are young people. We will launch a new CPD Missing Persons Initiative of civilians trained in crisis response and trauma-informed care responsible for finding and bringing justice in these

cases. We will bring together the Office of GBV Strategy, the Health Department, CPD and more.

**11. According to CAASE’s research report on “The CPD’s Response to Sex Crimes,” only 10 to 20 percent of survivors see their assailant arrested, often weeks or months after the survivor was assaulted. What structural changes will you make during your term to measurably improve CPD’s response to sexual harm?**

All too often victims of domestic violence are afraid of testifying against their assailant. That is why we will establish new Trauma Recovery Centers, built in collaboration with the state government to support victims and survivors of crime and domestic violence. We will fully fund the Victim Support Fund Program and ensure the DFSS Office on Domestic Violence has the resources it needs across the city. We will launch a domestic violence survivor priority public housing list that prioritizes domestic violence survivors for public housing, removing Chicagoans from households where they could be threatened into safe and sound homes. We will fully fund trauma and domestic violence intervention services. And provide judges training on the domestic violence impacts on victims and families.

**12. There has been an alarming rise of domestic violence shootings and homicides in the last two years. Research shows that these specifically are impacting younger Black Chicagoans. Anecdotally, we have found they have some nexus relationship to community violence. How will your administration address the intersection of community and domestic violence?**

As mayor, I will:

- Make communities safer, by investing in people through a comprehensive approach that includes doubling the number of youth jobs, creating youth employment opportunities year round, and investing in schools, parks, and libraries. My better Chicago agenda lays out how we will raise the revenues we need to invest deeply in our communities, tackling the roots of violence.
- Disseminate information on domestic violence resources for victims, and fully fund a violence hotline number that is accessible and widely available on City websites, in newsletters, and in all City mailings, in multiple languages.
- Incentivize businesses to keep survivors employed and to support community efforts such as matched savings programs.
- Create a domestic violence survivor priority list for public housing.
- Develop a trained care professional unit to address domestic violence crisis calls



## **Candidate: Paul Vallas**

### *Questions & Responses*

- 1. Will you ensure the City of Chicago continues to have a strategic plan to end gender-based violence developed in partnership with leaders in the community?**

Yes. As I have discussed throughout my campaign, I plan on creating a Deputy Mayor position that will focus on the health and safety of women, children, and vulnerable populations. Each major department will have a position or designee that focuses on GBV to ensure that we are working collaboratively within the city agencies, with other levels of government, and most importantly, with our community partners. It will take all parties working together to address GBV. As Mayor, providing survivors of violence with the safety and support systems that they deserve will be my top priority. A strategic plan is important to outline this work, but has to be followed up with action steps and plans to achieve outcomes.

- 2. Services and social safety support for survivors are often administered or provided oversight by multiple city departments. Please describe your training and staffing priorities for departments such as the Office of Public Safety, Department of Family and Support Services, Chicago Police Department and any other departments you feel are important.**

DFSS and CDPH are priority departments for addressing gender-based violence. Not only are they responsible for many grants that are disseminated to address domestic violence, but they have multiple programs that will interface with victims on a daily basis. I will rely on a mix of best practices that I see working across the country, on my transition team and regular meetings with the gender-based violence community. I will also ensure that these departments obtain training on sexual assault and human trafficking

in order to expand the response to these survivors – a response that has been lacking for many years from the city. I understand that these and other city departments are interfacing with survivors who do not call law enforcement.

The Chicago Police Department will require a different approach, primarily because of the unfinished work of the consent decree. I will prioritize the recommendations for domestic violence and sexual assault. In addition, I will work with leadership and COPA to determine best practices for responding to officer involved domestic violence and sexual misconduct. This is an effort I look forward to discussing with domestic violence providers.

Finally, the rising number of domestic violence homicides in the city along with the increase in missing and murdered women, particularly in the Black community, are two issues that have been ignored for far too long. I intend to work with all of the city departments and all of you in the gender based violence community to identify real and expedient strategies for addressing these two issues.

**3. How will you hold city agencies accountable for administering grants and services in an efficient and effective manner?**

My team will be reviewing grant- making processes and procurement procedures in an effort to expedite all contracts that involve violence and the safety of Chicago citizens.

I will also develop partnerships with social service organizations that can support smaller community organizations that do not have the experience and staff to complete the City's grant making process. My goal is to support established programs while also building new programs that are sustainable and effective in underserved communities.

**4. Will your administration commit to keeping or increasing general revenue funding for gender-based violence services?**

Yes. While my plan outlines a comprehensive approach to addressing gender based violence, the success of that plan will only happen if I am working in partnership with all of the victim service agencies that have been operating for so long, particularly during the pandemic. Many of you stepped up and filled in many gaps when everyone was shutting down and I look forward to your partnership. The success and safety of victims depends on us working together. Our plans are extensive, but I will seek the guidance of leaders in the community and subject matter experts to create a holistic plan for survivors and their loved ones. As stated, working to reduce and eliminate domestic and sexual violence will be a top priority for my administration.

**5. Will you have a Deputy Mayor or policy director specifically assigned to the issue of gender-based violence?**

I will have a Deputy Mayor position created to focus on the health and safety of women, children, and vulnerable populations. Their team will have priority areas including

domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, missing and murdered women and other issues impacting vulnerable populations. These include undocumented and new Americans, the LGBTQ+ community and children in our communities. The Deputy Mayor will be part of my leadership team and work with me daily.

In addition, this person will work very closely with the Deputy Mayor for public safety in regards to the Chicago Police Department and other public safety departments. I will also ensure a sworn member of the CPD, Sergeant level or above, in the Superintendent's office dedicated to gender based violence. This practice was in place under Superintendent Hillard and showed great success. They will all work together to follow aspects of the consent decree that are outstanding and special projects within CPD related to gender based violence. They will also interface with COPA.

- 6. In 2022, there were 88 days without adult beds available and 199 days without cribs available for survivors. Outside of emergency shelter beds, other housing options are limited. What are your plans to increase the number of housing options for survivors of domestic violence?**

My first step in this area will be to assess current programs addressing housing at the city level to ensure that what is working stays in place and determine what needs to be enhanced. My goal for expanding housing is to include emergent housing, long-term housing options, and providing pathways to home ownership. There are thousands of city-owned properties sitting vacant, in addition to the Cook County Land Bank's portfolio. We will leverage TIF funds, federal dollars, union relationships, and the CHA to rehabilitate and increase housing. Most importantly, I plan to partner with community providers to help manage these properties while also supporting survivors of violence that need additional support when moving into new homes.

- 7. Survivors and stakeholders within the gender-based violence community are often missing from important policy discussions. Domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking are intersectional issues including areas such as healthcare, immigration, public safety, education, economic justice, housing and so much more. When making decisions and drafting policy solutions, how will you ensure survivors and gender-based violence community are at the table?**

There is no one better equipped to talk about what survivors need than survivors themselves. I commit to working with this community to identify the best way to incorporate survivor's voices in my administration's plans and practices. The Deputy Mayor will do all that I have discussed, but also oversee the implementation of the Chicago Women's Commission. I have released plans for this commission to solidify my commitment for a city-community partnership. The Commission will focus on three priority areas: to make Chicago a haven for women in need of reproductive care, to focus on the safety and health of women, children, and vulnerable populations, and to increase and improve affordable housing options. The input of survivors and those on the front lines is going to be a key factor to success.

- 8. In 2022, COPA investigated over 300 allegations of domestic violence by officers. It is harder to determine the numbers for sexual assault, sexual misconduct and other crimes associated with gender-based violence due to unclear data reporting. What will your administration do to address the issue of police officers committing gender-based violence offenses?**

Domestic and sexual violence by police officers will not be tolerated. I helped initiate the recent CPD contract on a pro-bono basis to ensure the provisions for accountability would be adopted. Every city contract will make clear that these actions – if sustained by COPA or the IG- should result in dismissal, and when applicable, the referral for criminal prosecution. In addition, I will work with the Superintendent to ensure additional training for leadership in addressing officer- involved domestic violence. I believe the way a department responds to violence within the ranks starts with leadership.

- 9. Recently, Injustice Watch ran a series of articles outlining the failure of the Chicago Police Department to complete 918-B certifications that are required for U-Visa applications. U Visas offer temporary legal status and a path to citizenship for undocumented victims of crime who have been or are considered to be helpful to law enforcement. How will you ensure this problem is addressed?**

I have had extensive conversations with advocates and with the civil legal community on this issue. The Deputy Mayor will begin working on this in the first 30 days and will work with the CPD Superintendent and legal department on a new process for these certifications. This process will include designating various CPD personnel as certification signers. In addition, they will monitor the situation on a monthly basis to ensure there is not a backlog or stoppage like what occurred recently.

- 10. Human trafficking – including forced labor and sex trafficking - happens across the city of Chicago. Please describe what your investment and resource allocation plan will be to holistically address human trafficking in the city, including how you will involve survivors and community organizations. What city departments will you include?**

I commit to reviewing the budget to determine what funding is allocated to address human trafficking, but I can guess that it isn't enough and will commit more. There are a variety of ways that the city can better respond to human trafficking in addition to increased funding for services. This includes training for screening with city organizations that interface with the public, including the Department of Public Health clinics, it includes my office facilitating partnerships between social service agencies that have not worked together traditionally, it definitely includes the addition of survivor voices for developing a comprehensive plan. In addition, many of the plans I have discussed will cover human trafficking as well – additional housing, addressing missing and murdered women, plus more. I will also ensure that CPD has specialized human trafficking training and human trafficking officers (some cross designated with federal task forces, but also those that are working with our communities and not on federal task forces).

**11. According to CAASE’s research report on “The CPD’s Response to Sex Crimes,” only 10 to 20 percent of survivors see their assailant arrested, often weeks or months after the survivor was assaulted. What structural changes will you make during your term to measurably improve CPD’s response to sexual harm?**

I have outlined my plans regarding CPD, but this particular issue involves the detective division. I have discussed my plans to restore the ranks and allow retired detectives to return to work which would help alleviate this issue with sexual assault. While I have prioritized pushing officers down to the beat level, the investigation of sexual assault has a key place in the detective division. The sworn member on the Superintendent’s staff will be part of the team addressing this as well as a Deputy Chief in the detective division and the Deputy Mayor. I will commit to working with this community to bring additional training to the detective division as well as coordinating a response to survivors that prioritizes their support and healing while also holding offenders accountable. My office will also have to coordinate with the State’s Attorney’s office because they are a key part of the felony process.

I have already mentioned the concerns I have with the consent decree and outstanding issues in this area. In addition, I will advocate for more forensic lab services, including one in Chicago, to ensure that we do not return to the significant backlog we experienced in recent years. I know there are specific challenges to investigating sexual assault and so I will also rely on this community to partner with my administration to develop strong practices and also work on prevention.

**12. There has been an alarming rise of domestic violence shootings and homicides in the last two years. Research shows that these specifically are impacting younger Black Chicagoans. Anecdotally, we have found they have some nexus relationship to community violence. How will your administration address the intersection of community and domestic violence?**

There are multiple strategies that we will be implementing to address the crisis of domestic violence, community violence and the connection between the two. There are laws that have been passed, such as the firearm restraining act that has not really gained traction yet and I want to support the use of that law, which requires key partnership with law enforcement. In addition, I want to utilize specific gun investigation and seizure teams within CPD to work more closely with domestic violence cases and agencies to go after guns while ensuring victim safety. However, we also need extensive outreach and education into the communities about the services and support that all of this community provides, particularly for those who do not call law enforcement. I will ensure city departments are working to move funding quickly but also support in any other ways possible to contribute to prevention efforts.

I have a multi-faceted strategy to address community violence issues, including a “Violence Reduction and Targeted Outreach Center” that will be a collaboration with city and county agencies, leveraging data from court system to improve safety, get illegal firearms off our streets, and identify those who may be in need of care. We need a

proactive, collaborative approach, as well as swift and certain accountability for acts of violence, if we want to restore trust and interdict violence.