Chicago Community Sentiment Survey on Crime and Gunshot Detection

City of Chicago, IL — October 2022

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With consultation from:
Introduction

Given the debate over the use of gunshot detection in the city of Chicago, the study was designed to better understand attitudes of Chicagoans across the entire city in a quantitative manner.

This community sentiment study focused on resident attitudes toward public safety and a gunshot detection technology the Chicago Police department has utilized since 2015. The study was conducted by Fallon Research, an opinion research and polling firm in operation since 2001. The National Policing Institute, a non-partisan, non-profit research and policy organization based in Arlington, VA reviewed, advised, and concurred with the overall design of this study, the development of the research survey, the data collections plan, and the results/interpretations that were produced by Fallon Research. The Institute applauds ShotSpotter for commissioning Fallon Research to engage the citizens of Chicago in better understanding their views related to community safety and the use of gunshot detection technology by the Chicago Police Department. The survey was funded by ShotSpotter, the company providing gunshot detection services to the city of Chicago.

Methodology

Data were gathered through a combination of secure SMS/text-to-web surveys and telephone interviews performed by trained opinion research interviewers. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish languages with stratified and randomly selected sample of 801 adults 18 years of age or older residing within the City of Chicago, Illinois. Phone numbers were sourced from a combination of valid residential, VOIP and cellular telephone listings. There was a +/- 3.46% overall estimated margin of error producing a confidence interval of 6.92%.

Interviews were conducted between May 2 – May 8, 2022 across all Chicago districts (referred to as Northwest Side, North Side, South Side, Southwest Side, and West Side). Results were weighted so that differences in vital characteristics (e.g., sex, age) were represented in proportion to their estimated percentages of the population. Due to rounding, not all results add up to 100 percent. Unless otherwise noted, only statistically-significant differences that were outside the confidence interval for the overall estimated margin of sampling error have been reported in this presentation of key findings.
Executive Summary

The survey consisted of two sections. Section One focused on opinions related to crime in Chicago. Section Two focused on opinions related to gunshot detection.

The survey showed that in May of 2022, the prevalence of crime was viewed as high across all districts with 42% indicating it was a “very big problem” and 38% saying it was “somewhat of a problem.” Perceptions varied by location; crime was viewed as a “very big problem” from a low of 35% in the Northwest Side to a high of 55% on the West Side. Gun crime was considered more of a problem (47% rated as a “very big problem”) as compared to youth crime at 42%.

A large majority of participants supported the use of gunshot detection in Chicago (72%). Participants were more likely to support the use of gunshot detection technology to respond to victims in need of help (84%) compared to using the technology for making more arrests (74%). 63% of participants agreed that funding gunshot detection technology was a good use of resources. Demographically, Hispanic/Latinos supported use of funding for the technology at 73%, with African Americans at 64% and Whites at 59%.

Among all participants, 51% reported feeling safer knowing that a gunshot detection system was being used. There were some differences based on participant demographics. Respondents that indicated they were Hispanics or Latino (65%) and those 65 and older (58%) were more likely to indicate the technology made them feel safer.

Among respondents who were aware of ShotSpotter as a provider of gunshot detection services (40%), there was strong support with 63% having a favorable opinion of it. Favorability varied across districts but the differences were not significant. There were some differences in favorability assessment between demographic groups. Participants that reported being Hispanic or Latino (79%) were most likely to have a favorable view of ShotSpotter compared to Blacks or African Americans (67%) or Whites (55%). Participants who reported having been victimized by crime in the past tended to be more favorable (72%) of ShotSpotter compared to those who did not report a history of victimization.
Detailed Findings for Section One - Crime in Chicago

Crime Prevalence Recap

How much of a problem would you say that crime is in the area where you live in Chicago?

- Very big problem: 42%
- Somewhat of a problem: 36%
- Not much of a problem: 17%
- Not a problem: 1%
- Unsure: 1%

How much of a problem would you say that youth and juvenile crime is in the area where you live in Chicago?

- Very big problem: 38%
- Somewhat of a problem: 30%
- Not much of a problem: 21%
- Not a problem: 7%
- Unsure: 2%

How much of a problem would you say that crimes involving guns are in the area where you live in Chicago?

- Very big problem: 47%
- Somewhat of a problem: 29%
- Not much of a problem: 15%
- Not a problem: 7%
- Unsure: 2%

Chart #1

Crime

How much of a problem would you say that crime is in the area where you live in Chicago?

- Overall results:
  - Very big problem: 42%
  - Somewhat of a problem: 30%
  - Not much of a problem: 17%
  - Not a problem: 4%
  - Unsure: 1%

Chart #2
Gun Crime

Q: How much of a problem would you say that crimes involving guns are in the area where you live in Chicago?

Chart #3

Youth Crime

Q: How much of a problem would you say that youth and juvenile crime is in the area where you live in Chicago?

Chart #4
Findings for Section Two - Gunshot Detection

**Awareness**

Are you aware that a gunshot sound detection system is used in the city of Chicago?

**Feel Safer**

Do you agree or disagree that you feel safer knowing that a gunshot sound detection system is being used in the city of Chicago?
Chart #6

Support Use

Overall Results

Q: Generally speaking, do you support or oppose the Chicago Police Department using gunshot sound detection technology in your city?

Chart #7

Rationales

Split Sample Testing

Q: Do you support or oppose using gunshot sound detection technology to locate where gunfire is taking place, in order to make more arrests?

Chart #8

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Use of Funds

**Q:** Do you agree or disagree that gunshot sound detection technology is a good use of city funds?

**Chart #9**

**ShotSpotter Awareness**

**Q:** Have you heard of the gunshot sound detection system called ShotSpotter?

**Chart #10**
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**Chart #11**

**How favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of the gunshot sound detection system called ShotSpotter?**

- **Overall Results**
  - Total Favorable: 63%
  - Total Unfavorable: 22%
  - Somewhat Favorable: 14%
  - Somewhat Unfavorable: 2%
  - No Opinion: 6%
  - Unsure: 1%

**SELECT SUBGROUP RESULTS**

- **Men***
  - Total Favorable: 64%
  - Total Unfavorable: 19%

- **Women***
  - Total Favorable: 61%
  - Total Unfavorable: 25%

- **18 to 44***
  - Total Favorable: 58%
  - Total Unfavorable: 24%

- **45 to 64***
  - Total Favorable: 65%
  - Total Unfavorable: 23%

- **65 and older***
  - Total Favorable: 76%
  - Total Unfavorable: 11%

- **African-Americans***
  - Total Favorable: 67%
  - Total Unfavorable: 16%

- **Hispanics/Latinos***
  - Total Favorable: 79%
  - Total Unfavorable: 12%

- **Whites***
  - Total Favorable: 55%
  - Total Unfavorable: 28%

- **Victims of crime***
  - Total Favorable: 72%
  - Total Unfavorable: 17%

- **Shotspotter wards***
  - Total Favorable: 63%
  - Total Unfavorable: 23%

- **Voters***
  - Total Favorable: 63%
  - Total Unfavorable: 21%

- **Aware of GSD system use***
  - Total Favorable: 63%
  - Total Unfavorable: 22%

* Differences are not statistically significant

**Chart #12**

**How favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of the gunshot sound detection system called ShotSpotter?**

- **EV Area***
  - Total Favorable: 64%
  - Total Unfavorable: 25%

- **SOM Area***
  - Total Favorable: 66%
  - Total Unfavorable: 17%

- **West Side***
  - Total Favorable: 64%
  - Total Unfavorable: 20%

- **North Side***
  - Total Favorable: 60%
  - Total Unfavorable: 24%

- **South Side***
  - Total Favorable: 59%
  - Total Unfavorable: 25%

* Differences are not statistically significant