

Mapping Community Defense and Care in Our Neighborhoods

Why this matters:

Trump's Pentagon is drafting plans for a military invasion of Chicago. The people most at risk—unhoused people, trans folks, Black and brown people, disabled people, and immigrants—need more than our fear and indignation. They need robust networks of care and defense in every corner of our beloved city.

This worksheet is a tool to help you and your people map existing resources and relationships in your area, identify gaps, and determine how we can reinforce the lines of care and defense our communities need.

Step 1: Who's Already Here?


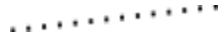

Make a list of groups, hubs, and resources in your neighborhood. Don't just think of nonprofits—include churches, mosques, barber shops, clinics, cultural centers, block clubs, food pantries, and informal networks. Note what each group or hub does, who they serve, and how they operate.

Group/Hub Questions:

- What do they do?
- Where and when do they do it?
- To whom are these services accessible?
- Do they involve police/ICE/DCFS?
- What are their safety and values practices?

Step 2: What Relationships Already Exist?

Draw a quick map. Put yourself or your group in the middle. Around you, add the groups you listed above. Connect them with lines:

-  Solid line = strong, trusted relationship
-  Dotted line = loose or potential relationship
-  Arrow = one-way flow of resources or referrals

Ask each other:

- Who trusts who?
- Who already works together?
- Who could be connected with some work?
- What conflicts or one-sided beefs can be put aside right now?
- Where can minor or old fractures be healed with a conversation?

Step 3: What Do We Value in Our Defense Work?

What values are important to you and your group? Examples:

- No police, no ICE.
- Ensuring trans and disabled people's safety includes keeping our people out of all carceral spaces—from jails and detention centers to psychiatric facilities where they may be involuntarily committed.
- Practicing accountability without punishment.
- Sharing resources without strings.

Ask each other: How will we hold ourselves to these values? How will we give and receive feedback? How will we make decisions together in stressful circumstances? As we do our defense work, are there times when we may diverge from our normal decision making process? If so, discuss those conditions and what alternative decision making pathways folks will be comfortable with.

Step 4: What Spaces Do We Need to Protect?

Identify spaces in your neighborhood that need added protection, such as vulnerable blocks, gathering spaces for day laborers/sex workers, encampments, and critical public transit hubs.

Ask each other:

- Where might an occupying force focus their repression and violence?
- What safety measures already exist for these spaces?
- How can we help protect and support people who live, work, and travel in these areas?

- Can your crew “adopt a block”—organizing to alert neighbors about ICE or police activity, meet the needs of those who can’t leave home, and respond to local safety concerns as they arise?

Step 5: Where Are the Gaps?

Look at your map and ask:

- Who’s missing?
- Which vulnerable folks in your area don’t have strong lines of care or defense?
- Who in our community has lived through militarized regimes or war zones, and may have experience to share? How can we support and learn from them?
- Where are people already stretched thin or burned out?
- What kinds of support are least available? (Consider: food, housing, medical, legal/court support, interpretation, healing, and ways to locate disappeared folks.)

Step 6: What Are Our Next Moves?

Think about strategy:

- **Rapid response:** Who can we call when there’s a raid, a sweep, or violence?
- **Information sharing:** How can we create or utilize an already-existing hub for people to send videos and other documentation of federal escalations and attacks?
- **Impacting troop morale:** How might we affect the attitudes of troops being mobilized in Chicago and potentially demoralize and/or counter-recruit them?
- **Care hubs:** Where can people go for food, shelter, or care in a crisis?
- **Communication:** What’s our plan for staying connected if phone or internet access is lost? If checkpoints are set up, how will we alert people and guide them to safer routes?
- **Roles:** Who is doing what? Do we rotate certain roles? What do we do when a role needs to change? Do we need to set agreements with other groups?
- **Funds:** If/When we need money where will we get it and how fast can we access the funds?

Step 7: Plan for conflict transformation

Ask each other:

- What will we do when we find ourselves in new conflicts with one another? What will we not do?
- What tools will ground us in our internal conflict transformation? (Examples: [The In It Together Toolkit](#) and/or [Turning Towards Each Other: a Conflict Workbook](#))
- Who can we reach out to for support in navigating conflict if we are not able to resolve it internally?

Step 8: Keep It Alive

Just as conditions on the ground will continue to change, your answers to the above questions will likely change with time as well. Make a plan to revisit this worksheet.

Ask each other:

- When will we check in and update? (Monthly? Quarterly?)
- How will we bring in new people and orient them?
- How will we fortify ourselves and each other? (Weekly sing-alongs? Dance parties? Support groups?)
- How do we pace ourselves so we don't burn out?

Remember: Building this kind of map isn't about doing everything at once. It's about clarity, connection, and care. It's about making sure that when we stumble—or when we're under attack—good people have our backs.

This worksheet features content adapted from [Interrupting Criminalization's Mapping Community Ecosystems of Collective Care toolkit](#).