The Collaboration to Action Summit (November 2014) and On the Table with AAL (May 2015) were great opportunities to lift up the work being done in our communities to create a safer city for our youth. Yet, as we expressed from the beginning, we want to move our talk into action!

Below find the key ideas and strategies generated collaboratively from the Summit and our On the Table conversations. Now it’s time for all of us to take action. AAL will be moving some of these items forward, but we also challenge you and your organizations to take up these ideas in your ongoing work. Together we will make a difference.

### Education

**What is Needed**

To connect the dots between what is happening within the Chicago Public School system and within the community to help our youth be successful in school and beyond.

**Action Steps**

- Create a forum to connect schools with community resources and businesses within the community and foster collaboration between the education system and community-based service providers.
- Encourage collaboration between organizations that are focused on improving education.
- Seek to prioritize the importance of education and capitalize on opportunities for same during the construction of the Obama Presidential Library.

### Workforce Development

**What is Needed**

A deeper understanding of the role the African American business community can play in helping to reduce youth violence.

Community input regarding workforce development needs.

Youth who envision a career, not merely a job.

**Action Steps**

- Develop workforce development training initiatives and CPS internship opportunities that include small businesses, not only corporations.
- Launch a public awareness campaign to help distinguish “jobs” from “workforce development,” the latter including professional development, career growth/direction, and cultural competencies.
- Organize a series of “business days” to connect black business owners and corporate professionals to schools and at-risk youth.
Mentoring

What is Needed
Knowledge of mentoring programs that work and intentional spaces for sharing best practices. Consistency from mentors.

Action Steps
- Identify mentoring programs that are already working and create a platform to encourage innovation and these organizations working together.
- Raise awareness amongst black professionals about the Chicago Public Schools Mentorship Program and encourage business to adopt a school to mentor.
- Coordinate monthly on the Table-type conversations with youth and AAL board members/partners.

Mental Health

What is Needed
Increased knowledge and community-wide information sharing about mental health needs in the African-American community. To reduce the stigma associated with mental health and emphasize that mental health is just as important as physical and dental health.

Action Steps
- Create a platform where people can both share services and express a need for services, including a database of providers and infrastructure for linking to services.
- Develop a curriculum for a public education campaign on mental health and the African American community. Can be rolled into a weekly forum on WVON.
- Ensure there are adequate mental health resources to address the trauma experienced by those formerly incarcerated.

Criminal Justice

What is Needed
Community-based mental health resources for those exiting the jail in an effort to reduce recidivism. More opportunities for individuals who are incarcerated to take classes and develop job skills so they are better prepared to reenter their communities upon release.

Action Steps
- Development of vocational training and job readiness skills to assist those who are formerly incarcerated in obtaining sustainable work.
- Create incentives for employers for hiring those who are formerly incarcerated.
- Redefining the title and function of the “Parole Officer” to “Career Coach,” who could serve as a positive role model.