

2019 CUE FELLOWS

**THE
EQUITY
PLAYBOOK**

THE EQUITY PLAYBOOK

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE
2019 CUE FELLOWS



No matter which corner of this city we look to, the best part of Chicago is our people.

Yet, in talking to hundreds of neighbors -- life-long residents and recent transplants, celebrated civic leaders and corner store clerks -- we hear a common refrain: Chicago is not working for all of us. And we all feel powerless to fix it.

The CUE Equity Fellowship was born from the belief that we, as the people who live in and love our city, already have the power to change our destiny. But to tap into our power, we must be willing to work across different perspectives in government, philanthropy, media, research, and organizing to tackle the most challenging inequities of our time.

To meet this vision, our 2019 Fellows committed to developing individual projects that promote racial equity at their organizations and to collaborate on at least one of our citywide projects.

In the upcoming pages, you'll find that these thirty Chicagoans aren't just leaders in their field; they are change-agents willing to imagine a world we cannot yet see. This playbook captures the first sketches of what that future could look like -- but it is an intentionally incomplete picture. That's because racial equity is not just a future state where race can no longer predict our life outcomes; it is the way we pursue that vision -- and the choices we make to shift and share power in that pursuit.

In that spirit, this playbook is not an instructional manual. It is a book of inspiration meant to start our civic dialogue. We invite you to join us in the adventure of building the path toward the equitable city we deserve.



Niketa Brar



Candace Moore

In partnership,



Niketa Brar and Candace Moore
Co-Directors of the CUE Equity Fellowship

WHAT IS AN REIA?

A Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) is a set of questions used to investigate the benefits and burdens of a policy or practice. This framework is the foundation of many of our Fellows' projects. While some have applied the REIA tool directly in their organizations, others have adapted these guiding questions to develop inclusive decision-making processes on topics broader than a single policy or practice, such as strategic planning or leadership evaluation.

STEP 1: DETERMINE OUTCOMES AND STAKEHOLDERS.

- Q1. What is the policy and what problem is it trying to solve?
- Q2. What other issues can this proposal impact?
- Q3. Who are the key groups impacted by this issue?
- Q4. How will these groups be involved in decision-making?

STEP 2: LOOK AT NUMBERS AND NARRATIVES.

- Q5. What data will we collect and look at? Why?
- Q6. Where do we see disparities in the numbers?
- Q7. What can we learn from histories and narratives to better understand these numbers?
- Q8. What questions still remain? What information do we wish we had?

STEP 3: MEASURE BENEFITS AND BURDENS.

- Q9. What are the benefits and who is most likely to receive them?
- Q10. What are the burdens and who is most likely to bear them?
- Q11. What are different options to make this policy racially equitable?

STEP 4: EVALUATE AND BE ACCOUNTABLE.

- Q12. How will we evaluate the impacts of your solution?
- Q13. How will our stakeholders engage in ensuring equitable outcomes?
- Q14. How will we report back on these outcomes?
- Q15. How will our evaluation impact improvements to the policy?

This model is inspired by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)'s toolkit; we are grateful for their guidance and support in adapting this framework to our local context.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02 WELCOME From Niketa Brar and Candace Moore, CUE Equity Fellowship

03 WHAT IS AN REIA?

06 GOVERNMENT

08 CREATING A YOUTH BILL OF RIGHTS: Shifting Power in the Cook County Juvenile Probation System By Tamela Meehan, Cook County Juvenile Probation

10 GOVERNMENT GRANTMAKING FOR RACIAL EQUITY: Building a Framework for Racial Equity By Vanessa Uribe, Cook County Bureau of Economic Development

12 ASSESSING INEQUITY IN FINES AND FEES: Collecting Numbers and Narratives to Make the Case for Reform By Dana O’Leary, Illinois Office of the Executive Inspector General

14 IN DEFENSE OF DATA: Using Data to Build Equity into Public Defense By Era Lauder milk, Cook County Public Defender’s Office

16 BUILDING EQUITY FROM INSIDE TO OUT: Unmasking hidden biases preserved in organizational policies By Tracy Bishop, City of Chicago Office of the City Clerk

18 PLANNING FOR A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT: Building Chicago’s Public Housing to Address Climate Change By Gavin Taves, Chicago Housing Authority

20 EQUITY ACROSS THE BOARD: Advancing Racial Equity within Cook County Government By Delrice Adams, Cook County Justice Advisory Council

22 CITYWIDE IMPACT: SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT

26 PHILANTHROPY

28 SHIFTING PHILANTHROPIC CULTURE: Cultivating a Community of Practice to Expand Racial Equity in Family Foundations By Leslie Ramyk, Conant Family Foundation

30 FROM GRANTMAKERS TO CHANGEMAKERS By Rachel Pate, Chicago Community Trust Foundation

32 SHIFTING FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO COMMUNITY CONSENT: Lessons from the Ogden-Jenner Merger By Lauren Burdette, Chicago Public Education Fund

34 CITYWIDE IMPACT: ENVISIONING EQUITY

38 ARTS, DESIGN & MEDIA

40 DESIGN FOR SELF-DETERMINATION: A Pathway for Redeveloping Closed Schools By Paola Aguirre, BORDERLESS

42 INCLUSIVE STORYTELLING: Whose Voice Matters in State Matters By Kacie Smith, State Matters

44 PRODUCTIVELY SPECIFIC: A Chicago Poet Distinguishes Between Diversity and Equity By Tiffanie Beatty, Chicago Humanities Festival

46 SPEAKING TRUTH WITH POWER: Got Data? Got Community? Let’s Tell a Story! By Glenance Green, Deputy Director, Free Spirit Media

48 CITYWIDE IMPACT: THE 2019 VOTE EQUITY PROJECT

50 RESEARCH & POLICY

- 52 NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US:** Community-Academic Collaboration to Grow Racial Equity in Research
By Jen Brown, Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities, Northwestern University
- 54 BUILDING WITHOUT BIAS:** Leading a Cultural Shift to Foster Equitable Development
By Kendra Freeman, Metropolitan Planning Council
- 56 JUST FOOD? :** Engaging the Field to Inform Equitable Agriculture Policy
By Imron Bhatti, Advocates for Urban Agriculture
- 58 WORKING TOWARDS EQUITY:** An Assessment for Workforce Development Organizations
By Tanvi Shah, Chicago Jobs Council
- 60 WHOSE STREETS?:** Ideas for Integrating Racial Equity into Transportation Decisions
By Jim Merrell, Active Transportation Alliance
- 62 EQUITY AS A JOURNEY:** Practicing What We Preach
By Genny Turner, Illinois Public Health Institute
- 64 CITYWIDE IMPACT: FROM MEGA-TIFS TO MEGA-EQUITY**
-
- 66 ORGANIZING & ADVOCACY**
-
- 68 BUILDING ACCOUNTABILITY TO WHOM WE SERVE:** Equipping people with lived experience to lead transformation
By Niya Kelly, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
- 70 SETTING EQUITABLE TABLES:** Evaluating partnerships through a racial equity lens
By Juanita Irizarry, Friends of the Parks

- 72 SMALL BUSINESSES, EXPENSIVE LAWYERS, AND SYSTEMIC RACISM:** Evaluating programs for structural inequity
By Clifford Helm, Community Law Project of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
- 74 FROM CLIENTS TO ADVOCATES:** A Racial Equity Approach to Housing Training & Education
By Jasemen Hatcher, Open Communities
- 76 UNTOLD DAMAGES:** The Mental and Emotional Toll of Housing Discrimination on Survivors
By Danielle McCain, Civil Rights Attorney and Educator
- 78 WE CRY IN SILENCE:** Unpacking African-American Male Mental Health
By Maurice Robinson, Rallyus.pro and QM Strategies
- 80 FROM COLOR-BLIND TO COLOR-BOLD:** An REIA at Peirce Elementary
By Megan Brand, Speak Up
- 82 WHO GETS TO WORK? WHO HAS TO LEAVE?:** Using an REIA to organize for workers' and residents' rights
By Leone Jose Bicchieri, Working Family Solidarity
- 84 ASSESSING HOUSING QUALITY:** A Racial Equity Check-Up
By Loreen Targos, Metropolitan Tenants Organization
- 86 CLOSING THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP:** An Analysis of Mortgage Lending Practices
By Isaias Solis, Latin United Community Housing Association (LUCHA)

GOVERNMENT

What does equity look like between a government and its people? In the most formal institutional power structure, what can it look like to transform a relationship to share power?

Our Fellows in government roles approached these questions by acknowledging the role of government in creating structures that produce many of the disparities we see today. Repairing this harm is government's primary obligation as it seeks to fulfill the promise of a democratic republic built by and for the people it serves.

Yet even with a commitment to this vision, the path to get there is complicated and can take many forms. Here are some strategies that Fellows explored this year:

- **Start with a concrete demonstration project** to explore what is possible when a racial equity lens is applied to government. Examples of this approach include Tamela Meehan's work to build a Youth Bill of Rights and Vanessa Uribe's evaluation of how Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding can fuel equitable economic development in Cook County's many municipalities.

T

- **Use narratives and numbers to build a baseline understanding** of complex challenges. Dana O’Leary took this approach in exploring the inequities of our city’s fines and fees structure, while Era Lauder milk’s work taps into internal data to promote equity at the Public Defender’s Office.
- **Create structures to systematically dismantle historical legacies.** Tracy Bishop built a leadership council at the County Forest Preserves to evaluate all agency policies through a racial equity lens. Gavin Taves translated his vision of equity to a long-term climate resiliency plan that centers environmental justice in the Chicago Housing Authority’s responsibilities to residents. And Delrice Adams built a wholesale approach to racial equity for all of the Office Under the President at Cook County, leveraging Vanessa Uribe’s demonstration project as a case study of what the County aims to scale in the next five years.

These projects offer a guide on how to introduce a culture shift to promote a more equitable government. For ideas on policies and practices that government decision-makers can apply, keep reading for inspiration for equitable community engagement like Paola Aguirre’s efforts to use public space design to facilitate community self-determination and building Isaias Solis’s use of the REIA tool to address structural inequities in mortgage lending. If you work in government, start in this section — but don’t let it be the only one you visit.



Tamela Meehan has been with the Office of the Chief Judge of Cook County since 1999. She currently serves as a Supervising Probation Officer with Cook County Juvenile Probation and previously served as a Clinical Coordinator with the Cook County Juvenile Court Clinic from 1999-2008. Tamela is a trained Peace Circle Keeper, Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Coordinator for Cook County and also serves on the Committee for Results for Equity.

CREATING A YOUTH BILL OF RIGHTS: Shifting Power in the Cook County Juvenile Probation System

By Tamela Meehan, Supervising Probation Officer at the Cook County Juvenile Probation



Art work created in partnership with artists and youth located in the Cook County Juvenile Center

CHALLENGE

How do we build a juvenile justice system that is just, compassionate, and restorative? Nationally, our framework for public safety emphasizes punitive practices that echo the historical systems of oppression built for slavery. Building a just system demands that we shift towards a culture of mutual respect and empower our young people to exercise self-determination, where our youth and families are partners in community transformation.

APPROACH

We are building a Bill of Rights for youth and families engaged in our county's juvenile justice system. The ultimate Bill of Rights will serve to set a standard of care across our system that hold us accountable to a shared vision for equity. It is imperative that we realize the part we play in this system and to effect change we must collectively shift our views and base our work in kinship, compassion and equity.

NEXT STEPS

In the immediate future, we are building the Bill of Rights for youth and families through these steps.

- **Youth-leadership:** It is imperative that this process include youth and family voice, input and buy in. Focus groups will be held with youth and families to determine what they feel should be included in the Youth Bill of Rights.

“It’s relationships, not programs that change children... Young people thrive when adults care about them on a one-to-one level, and when they have a sense of belonging to a caring community.”

- **Shared learning:** We will be consulting with the Juvenile Probation Department in Portland, Oregon (Multnomah County), as they were the first juvenile probation department in the county to develop a Youth Bill of Rights. We are also consulting with the Department of Children and Family Services and Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center to discuss their process in developing their Youth Bill of Rights.
- **Engaging Organizational Stakeholders:** We are engaging a team of probation officers from our department to participate in exercises that will further develop the Bill of Rights. We are also engaging upper management, leadership, and the judiciary for their review, input and buy-in. Once the BOR is established within our department, we plan to engage partners, stakeholders, and contracting agencies to shift our culture and approach in working with our youth and families. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: For more information about this project, email Tamela.meehan@cookcountyil.gov

GOVERNMENT GRANTMAKING FOR RACIAL EQUITY: Building a Framework for Racial Equity

By Vanessa Uribe, Manager at the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development

CHALLENGE

Government has historically been a perpetrator of racial inequity by implementing policies, procedures and programs that benefit some more than others. As the second largest county in the US, Cook County government is taking an active role in addressing these inequities. Under President Preckwinkle's leadership, we formalized this commitment in the Cook County Policy Roadmap, a five-year strategic plan for the Offices Under the President. As the County works to remove barriers to opportunity in our programs, we are launching an ambitious multi-year effort to embed a racial equity lens in every department's planning, priorities, and practices.

APPROACH

As part of this broader effort, my fellowship project utilizes a Racial Equity Impact Assessment in evaluating the County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which

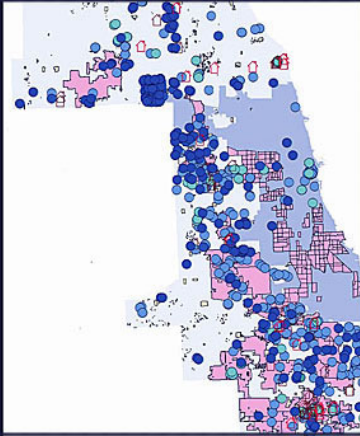
“Government tends to function on the notion that ‘it’s always been this way’ but we need to ensure we’re equitably serving all residents by asking why.”

provides grants to local municipalities and community organizations. Reviewing the program for the first time in years allows us an opportunity to assess its actual impact. As we conduct this assessment, we are looking for:

- Gaps in accessibility,
- Obstacles in application requirements, and
- Fairness in the evaluation criteria and process.

Our goal is to ensure that the limited resources we have through CDBG are reaching those most in need.

BUREAU OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOUCH POINTS ACROSS COOK COUNTY



NEXT STEPS

The CDBG program analysis will serve as a demonstration project for Cook County that will be used as a case study as we scale this approach across programs and departments. It will provide an outline for other county programs to assess whether we are truly addressing inequities. Additionally, as the two Cook County CUE Fellows this year, Delrice Adams and I are leading the Racial Equity Leadership Council, a core group of champions for racial equity within the Offices Under the President. We are tasked with leading this effort long-term and aspire to create lasting change in the way government functions and its role in society. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Interested in learning more about Cook County's Policy Roadmap? Visit <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/policy-roadmap>

ABOVE: County's Community Development Block Grant funded programs/projects



Vanessa Uribe is a program manager with the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development focusing on policy implementation and stakeholder engagement. A passionate builder of inclusive and equitable partnerships, planning processes, and programs, Vanessa is committed to implementing a racial equity framework at Cook County. A career advocate for social justice, Vanessa previously led efforts in the Midwest region for UnidosUS, a national civil rights and advocacy organization for the Latinx community in the US.

VANESSA URIBE



Dana is a government attorney with a passion for increasing trust in government through community involvement and outreach. As Assistant Chief Counsel at the City of Chicago Office of the City Clerk, she worked on several initiatives aimed at increasing government accessibility and accountability. The Clerk's Office, led by City Clerk Anna Valencia, administers the city vehicle tax ("City Stickers") and issues dog licenses and the Chicago Municipal ID ("CityKey"), among many other things. Dana recently transitioned from the Clerk's Office to the Illinois Office of Executive Inspector General, where she is the Director of External Compliance and Outreach. In her new role she is focused on designing, implementing, and overseeing ethics trainings and compliance work at state agencies and universities.

ASSESSING INEQUITY IN FINES AND FEES: Collecting Numbers and Narratives to Make the Case for Reform

By Dana O'Leary, Director of External Compliance and Outreach at the Illinois Office of the Executive Inspector General



All of the neighborhoods with the highest rates of duplicate ticketing are located in majority black and brown communities on the city's South and West sides.

Source: ProPublica

CHALLENGE

Of the 20 wards with the highest amount of ticket debt, 16 are home to majority Black or Latino populations. Of the 20 wards with the highest average ticket price, 19 are majority Black. And of the 20 wards with the highest percentage of tickets issued by the police, 16 are majority Black or Latino, with all of the top ten being majority Black communities. As WBEZ and ProPublica’s “Driven into Debt” series illustrates, the City of Chicago’s parking, red light, and speed camera ticketing and enforcement practices have a disparate impact on black and brown residents. The consequences of these policies affect these individuals’ ability to support their families, and often result in a criminal record, bankruptcy, or both.

APPROACH

Amid media reports and public outcry, the Chicago City Clerk’s Office and several community groups assembled a taskforce to study the key factors leading to inequity in the fines and fees system. Given the impact of collective storytelling and how this allows for trend analysis over time, the city is collecting stories of those who have been impacted by the city’s punitive system of financial penalties. These stories will be combined with numbers and narratives from the city’s online Fines and Fees Access Portal to help analyze the problem and develop recommendations.

“Tacking on fines and fees for nonpayment without a determination of ability-to-pay is effectively criminalizing poverty, and is driving residents into debt.”



LEFT: Both the city and the Chicago Police Department can issue tickets. The 10 wards with the most tickets issued by police officers all have majority black and brown populations. Source: ProPublica and WBEZ

NEXT STEPS

This analysis of quantitative and qualitative data will lead to a report that highlights trends, pictures, and stories, showcasing how the city’s stated policies do not always align with its actions. This report will be presented to the new mayoral administration to help foster wider engagement for ticketing reform. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Email Dmoleary3@gmail.com for updates on the July events.

IN DEFENSE OF DATA:

Using Data to Build Equity into Public Defense

By Era Lauder milk, Deputy Public Defender of Policy & Strategic Planning at the Cook County Public Defender's Office

CHALLENGE

The mission of the Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender's Office is to protect the fundamental rights, liberties and dignity of each person whose case has been entrusted to us by providing the finest legal representation. For far too long, systemic racism has plagued the people who enter the criminal system, most of whom are our clients. These inequities have been entrenched throughout the criminal justice system, challenging each system stakeholder to work together to build a more equitable criminal justice system.

APPROACH

Thanks to the support of the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge, all of the criminal justice system stakeholders in Cook County have joined together to develop and implement new policies and practices to safely reduce the county jail's population and reduce the racial and ethnic disparities (RED) of the individuals who are brought into our criminal justice system. Each of these stakehold-

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” –Nelson Mandela

ers has committed to work collaboratively to increase equity throughout the criminal justice system. .

NEXT STEPS

The Public Defender's Office is taking this work one step further by conducting an analysis of our current practices to determine whether there are any unknown equities in how we represent similarly situated clients throughout the county.

- **Examine Current Data Analysis Capabilities:** We are partnering with researchers from Loyola University, who will examine the cur-



rent data elements captured by our new case management system, eDefender.

- **Create a New Approach to Analyzing Data Through an Equity Lens:** Identify current gaps in information (aka: what questions are we unable to answer with current data elements?) and develop new data elements that will enable us to obtain a better understanding of potential disparities that exist within our Office as it relates to the legal representation of our clients and the outcomes of their criminal cases.
- **Implement Equitable, Data Driven Strategies:** Use new data categories to inform Public Defender policies through an equity lens and develop a course of action to raise awareness of and work to overcome identified inequities in legal representation. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: <https://www.cookcountypublicdefender.org/>

ABOVE: Cook County Public Defender Logo



Era Lauder milk is the Deputy Public Defender of Policy & Strategic Planning for the Cook County Public Defender's Office, which protects the fundamental rights, liberties and dignity of each person whose case has been entrusted to us by providing the finest legal representation. Era has served in numerous leadership roles in criminal justice/juvenile justice reform, implementing policies that enhance positive outcomes for justice-involved people.

Era is also an Adjunct Professor at DePaul Law School, where she teaches her students about the history of racial inequities in the criminal justice system.

ERA LAUDERMILK

TRACY BISHOP



Tracy Bishop has worked at the Forest Preserves of Cook County since 2014. As Manager of Permits & Revenue, she oversees the customer service related policies and practices that produce a welcoming experience for the millions of people who use or visit the Forest Preserves, and works to secure additional non-tax-based revenue to protect, conserve, and restore the 70,000 acres of Forest Preserve lands. Tracy also serves as co-chair of the Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee at the Cook County Forest Preserves.

BUILDING EQUITY FROM INSIDE TO OUT: Unmasking hidden biases preserved in organizational policies

By Tracy Bishop, Manager of Permits and Revenue at the Forest Preserves of Cook County

CHALLENGE

Public sector entities are especially challenged to identify the ways in which discrimination, bias, and racial prejudice emerges in the workplace, in both historical and modern contexts. As the Forest Preserves acknowledges these disparities, we are working to center equity and make our green spaces an inclusive and welcoming environment for both employees and visitors.

APPROACH

The County Forest Preserves launched our racial equity work with the creation of our Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) Committee in 2018, charged with the mission of ensuring equity in all of our policies and practices. As we launch, we have begun review in these areas:

- Hiring, discipline, promotions, trainings, and professional development opportunities,
- Internal and external communications, and
- Community engagement activities.

NEXT STEPS

REDI will work across the Forest Preserves' eleven operating departments, along with our close partners, in the development of new day-to-day operating policies and practices that will help us foster an equitable and inclusive environment and workforce. We began this work by focusing on top areas of concern, such

“The Forest Preserves of Cook County is committed to working with the REDI committee and external partners in creating consistent practices across departments by reviewing and developing an equity guideline for current and future policies.”

as hiring, community outreach, staff development and an overall level of diversity across the district. The goal is to utilize these areas of focus as a baseline to unveil any inequities and work to develop a measurable process of creating accountability in the success of staff and community partners. The REDI committee is committed to creating consistent practices across departments by reviewing and developing an equity guideline for current and future policies. ★

PLANNING FOR A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT: Building Chicago's Public Housing to address climate change

By Gavin Taves, Environmental Planner at the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA)

CHALLENGE

In 1995, a Chicago heat wave killed over 700 people, many of whom were low-income elderly residents of color who lacked air-conditioning and support networks; this is a prime example of environmental injustice. In 2014, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) developed a Climate Change Adaptation Plan to address the most severe negative consequences of climate change, acknowledging that a changing climate will have significant impact on residents who live in public housing. Despite this report, adoption of environmental policies and projects has been limited across the country's cash-strapped public housing agencies.

APPROACH

To address this concern in Chicago, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA)

“The CHA must respond to environmental threats. Housing agencies are responsible for residents’ health and safety, making it critical for CHA to plan for climate change.”

is preparing a Housing Resiliency Plan. The CHA is responsible for preparing its facilities and residents for environmental issues like heat-waves, polar vortexes, extreme storms, and flooding because of the disproportionate impact that climate change and local environmental conditions have on disenfranchised communities. In preparing for an increasing number of environmental disasters like the heat-wave of 1995, a Housing Resiliency Plan will address susceptibilities and plan for protecting public housing residents. In developing this plan, the CHA seeks to identify:

- Key environmental vulnerabilities,
- Inventory all existing resiliency efforts, and
- Identify projects and policies that will advance the agency's mission to promote environmental and climate justice for its residents.

NEXT STEPS

For equity to be realized in the end product, the CHA Housing Resilience Plan will engage residents to ensure their experiences and expertise is reflected in the future work of the agency. Ultimately, this plan will require us as an agency to mitigate our environmental impact and protect residents against a changing climate. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<http://www.peopleforcommunityrecovery.org/>



As an environmental planner for the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), Gavin develops ecologically sensitive design and policy interventions to engender environmental and climate justice.

While pursuing his degree in urban and environmental planning, Gavin fused technology and policy to predict flood inundation, generate land conservation analyses, and develop a green infrastructure plan for Philadelphia.

Gavin's fellowship with CUE inspired the development of a climate resiliency plan for the CHA, concentrated on intersectional equity issues related to climate and environmental justice.

GAVIN TAVES



Delrice Adams is the Executive Director of the Cook County Justice Advisory Council, the office charged with spearheading Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle’s criminal and juvenile justice reform agenda. She advises on policies to reduce the over reliance on detention and incarceration, manages over \$5M in grants supporting recidivism reduction, violence prevention and restorative justice, and is the primary spokesperson on behalf of the administration for matters relating to public safety. Ms. Adams has a Bachelors in Psychology from the University of California at Berkeley and holds a Masters in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago.

EQUITY ACROSS THE BOARD: Advancing Racial Equity within Cook County Government

By Delrice Adams, Executive Director at the Cook County Justice Advisory Council

CHALLENGE

Historically, government has been a driver of systemic and structural racism. Today, we have an opportunity to address these inequities. As the second-largest county in the country, Cook County is responsible for promoting health, welfare and safety of 5.2 million residents across 132 municipalities, making a focus on racial equity critically important to achieving different outcomes in our

communities. Under the leadership of Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, the Office Under the President (OUP) has implemented the Policy Roadmap, a five-year strategic plan which incorporates a racial equity lens in 6 policy areas to ensure that all Cook County residents have opportunities to prosper, participate, and reach their full potential no matter their race, gender, geography or socioeconomic status. This work begins with President Preckwinkle's call for reform across six bureaus and 34 departments.

APPROACH

My project focuses on assisting senior leadership at the Office Under the President (OUP) in developing a plan to advance racial equity through capacity building for our workforce and operationalizing the commitment to equity in all dimensions of our work. We have established a Racial Equity Leadership Council (RELC) and have begun to:

- **Socialize racial equity through a training protocol** for all employees that include topics such as Emotional Intelligence, Implicit Bias, and Cultural Competence.
- **Work with technical advisors** as we implement a Racial Equity Impact Assessment Tool to institutionalize how we make policy and budgetary decisions.
- **Utilize demonstration projects**, like that of CUE Fellow Vanessa

“Advancing equity reaches beyond just focusing on disparities. The goal is not to just eliminate the gap but increase success for all. When we all win, we ALL win!”

Uribe, to highlight how to apply a racial equity lens within operational functions as we work to scale these efforts countywide.

- **Use data to measure our progress** towards our desired outcomes.

NEXT STEPS

As we work to address historical and contemporary injustices, it will take our collective efforts to build a future where race does not predict one's success and we improve outcomes for all. Through this work, we strive to be a national leader in advancing racial equity in government. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Interested in learning more about Cook County's Policy Roadmap and work in racial equity? Visit <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/policy-roadmap>

SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT: Applying the REIA tool in Logan Square

Led by Juan Sebastian Arias, Ellie Mejia, Sara Shaw, Adam Slade, and Sindy Soto, 2018 Fellows

CHALLENGE

In 2018, the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) proposed Complete Streets project for North Milwaukee Avenue from Logan Square to Belmont. The proposed redesign includes safety spot fixes as well as the creation of significant public open space and catalytic changes to the streetscape.

As the Complete Streets initiative came to Logan Square and Avondale, its vision inspired urgent questions from residents and advocates: Who will reap the benefits of these transportation and open space improvements? What bur-

dens or unintended consequences will accompany the development? Who will bear them? In the face of investment that will increase home values, what will prevent the community from experiencing another jolt like that delivered by the 606/Bloomington Trail, an investment that displaced low and moderate-income Latinx households through higher property taxes and increased rents?

APPROACH

To answer these questions, community organizers at the Logan Square Neighborhood As-



LSNA Housing Organizer Christian Diaz with 2018 CUE Fellow Sindy Soto at one of the community REIA workshops.

sociation (LSNA) and Latin United Community Housing Association (LUCHA) invited CUE to conduct an REIA on the project. A series of REIA community meetings collectively drew interest from over 140 residents of Logan Square and Avondale, who reviewed data and development plans, reflected on neighborhood changes they've experienced, then generated recommendations to promote racial equity in this development.

KEY COMMUNITY CONCERNS:

- Residential displacement, particularly of

longtime, low-income, and/or Latinx and immigrant residents who could see housing costs rise to unaffordable levels as property values go up.

- **Weakened community institutions and social cohesion**, such as decreased enrollment in neighborhood public schools as families experience displacement. Increased over-policing and harassment of youth, especially Black and Latinx youth, also often accompanies the beautification and increased usage of public spaces by higher income residents or visitors.

- Project investments catering to higher income, White residents. Participants expressed a persistent skepticism of city decisions and investments, expressing that investment is only occurring now, after increased development in the neighborhood that has resulted in the displacement of longtime Latinx residents.

KEY PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR N. MILWAUKEE AVE. COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT:

- Explicitly include racial equity as a goal of this Complete Streets project. CDOT should name racial equity as a project goal to both begin rebuilding community trust and set up project design elements that support racial equity.
- Develop an inter-agency neighborhood preservation plan. Mitigating displacement requires a comprehensive intentional strategy, many tactics of which fall outside of the direct purview of CDOT. Relevant departments should collectively develop a neighborhood preservation plan with community groups participating and providing oversight.
- Support the creation and preservation of affordable, family-sized housing. The city should follow through on its commitment to a 100% affordable housing development with family-sized units on the Emmett St. parking lot and preserve naturally occurring affordable housing by helping mission-driven developers access capital to more competitively acquire and preserve affordable units.

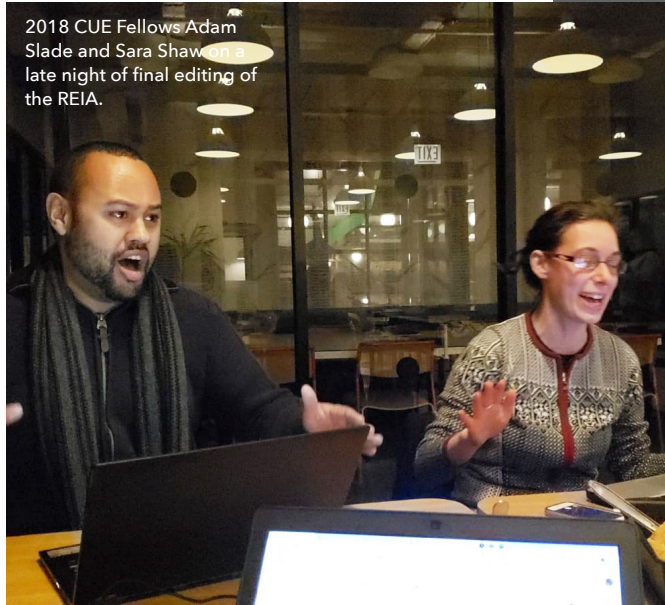
KEY PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE PROJECTS:

- Incorporate racial equity considerations into all CDOT decision-making. CDOT should adopt a practice of conducting Racial Equity Impact Assessments for all Complete Streets projects and other capital investments. CDOT should also partner with the Government Alliance of Race and Equity (GARE) to embed racial equity throughout its operations and internal infrastructure as a proactive measure to address systemic injustice.

NEXT STEPS

After this REIA was published, its findings were used to support a public push to create a 100% affordable housing development one block from the proposed development. With the efforts of local organizers, the development easily earned support from local elected officials.

For the future, this REIA illustrates how racial equity considerations need to be embedded into all government decision-making processes, including those of CDOT. As we have seen, well-intentioned investments can often have unintended negative consequences. To address this concern, we encourage government entities to use Racial Equity Impact Assessments in their work. To read the full report, go to www.ChicagoUnitedforEquity.org/reia. ★



2018 CUE Fellows Adam Slade and Sara Shaw on a late night of final editing of the REIA.



2018 CUE Fellow Ellie Mejia reflects on the role of equity in decision-making.



Fellows Adam Slade, Sara Shaw, Juan Sebastian Arias, Sendy Soto, and Ellie Mejia celebrate the conclusion of their REIA.

PHILANTHRO

If equity is not simply about outcomes but about a practice that restructures power, then what role does philanthropy play in the work of building an equitable city?

Traditionally, the structure of philanthropy centers the power of decision-making on the wealthy few or staff they designate to advise their giving. Often the fortunes they seek to distribute exist because of the inequitable system we now seek to eliminate.

Yet as many in philanthropy know, no one wins in an unjust system. Redistributing wealth in an equitable way is not just possible; it is what we must strive for to build an equitable Chicago.

PY

As our Fellows explored this topic, here are some approaches they developed:

- **Start by creating a peer learning community.** While philanthropy often collaborates on funding efforts, many work alone in exploring racial equity and how it applies to their philanthropic efforts. Leslie Ramyk explores this by building a community of practice for board members and staff at family foundations.
- **Build racial equity into the strategic plan.** The best of intentions cannot protect us from inequitable outcomes; vigilance in this vision requires us to set benchmarks, track progress, and measure our impact for equity rigorously, as Rachel Pate explores in her work at the Chicago Community Trust.
- **Investigate grantees' efforts through an equity lens.** Lauren Burdette's project explores the case study of a grant-funded merger at Chicago Public Schools and what can be learned from this project about funding equitable processes in the future.

Collectively, these strategies offer philanthropic partners a roadmap for further exploring how to infuse a racial equity lens into the work of redistributing wealth.



Leslie Ramyk, executive director of the Conant Family Foundation, has over 25 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. The Foundation includes two generations and prioritizes racial, gender and economic equity.

A granddaughter of immigrants and daughter of a proud union member, Leslie was the first in her family to graduate from college. She earned a BA in American Literature and an MA in Liberal Studies at Northwestern University. Leslie lives in a West Rogers Park historic Chicago bungalow with her 5th-grade twins and furniture-building partner, Mike Minton.

SHIFTING PHILANTHROPIC CULTURE: Cultivating a Community of Practice to Expand Racial Equity in Family Foundations

By Leslie Ramyk, Executive Director at the Conant Family Foundation

CHALLENGE

Is the notion of philanthropy inherently at odds with racial equity?

In our country, family foundations were seeded by the good intentions of wealthy families. But given our country's history, these fortunes were amassed through education, housing, employment, and tax policies that collectively created the racial wealth gap. As a result, family foundations disproportionately distribute the wealth of white families -- and given modern tax policies, these foundations control enormous wealth without any accountability to the public.

But the majority of these families seek to build a better world through their giving. It is our challenge to build a community of learning that can support a more equitable approach to philanthropy.

APPROACH

My project delved into national efforts as I worked to build a welcoming, local community with cooperative learning and constructive mutual support. As we work to establish best practices to infuse our work with a racial equity lens, we will create a new norm by reimagining:

- How we conduct site visits
- What we look for in proposals
- The types of organizations that are funded
- Who makes funding decisions

All of these steps impact racial equity (or inequity, as the case may be). Given

“There’s no better symbol of white wealth privilege than family foundations. America’s housing, education and employment systems favor white people. Tax laws reward philanthropy, assuming foundation money will benefit the public good. But how do wealthy white families know what’s good for the public?”

that wealthy white families don't inherently know what other families want or need, they must listen to and learn from the families they seek to serve in an attempt to decolonize wealth, as Edgar Villanueva puts it.

NEXT STEPS

Often, listening and learning to the communities most impacted by racial disparities is an act relegated to hired staff. In our efforts, we are creating and nurturing a community of practice where foundation staff can explore their own biases and deepen their own understanding of the systems of white supremacy first. Then, we aim to support one another to propose and implement changes within our foundations. Once experienced staff create the space to discuss and share racial equity practices, new staff will experience this as the norm. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Updates will be posted on the blog at www.conantfamilyfoundation.org

FROM GRANTMAKERS TO CHANGEMAKERS

By Rachel Pate, Impact Coordinator at the Chicago Community Trust Foundation

CHALLENGE

If we aren't grounded in racial equity, justice and anti-racist practices in our hiring practices, organizational culture, and internal policies, inequities will persist and be perpetuated in our work. As Chicago's community foundation, the power and wealth of The Chicago Community Trust has a sizable direct and indirect impact on residents' lives. This reality requires us to build equitable structures inside our organization to fully realize the positive potential of our work to promote justice and progress.

APPROACH

In January 2018, a small group of staff gathered as a place to reflect and process material presented in racial equity trainings, personal experiences, and our shared experiences at work. As the Trust leadership built a long-term focus and renewed dedication to racial equity, the group of staff expanded in size and scope to try to help ensure equity is embedded in each policy, practice and process at the Trust.

In the last year, this committee has:

- Created a space for staff to normalize conversations about structural racism,

“Colonial, white supremacist organizational practices seem inevitable because they were so universally adopted over the next centuries, and they still govern the great majority of our institutions, but they were design choices.”

**—Edgar Villanueva,
*Decolonizing Wealth***

- Created a committee charter and developed a draft Racial Equity Statement, and
- Advocated for and co-created a racial equity staff training with Race Forward.

NEXT STEPS

As our work internally continues, our committee presented future plans to our Leadership Team and will continue to move forward on the work in partnership. Our immediate next steps include a racial equity organizational assessment to provide our institution with information and an analysis that helps identify: (a) where we are in our racial equity journey (i.e. our baseline), (b) the key needs and challenges for moving forward; and (c) opportunities for action in the short- and long-term.

This will be a critical next step for the Trust in our commitment to model equity through our actions internally and externally and strive to serve as a model of how use philanthropic resources to heal, not further harm our communities. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: For more information about this project, email Rachel Pate at rpate@cct.org



Rachel Pate is Impact Coordinator at The Chicago Community Trust Foundation. In 2018, Pate co-created the Committee for Racial and Ethnic Equity with a colleague at the Trust to reflect and process new ideas learned from racial equity trainings, personal experiences, and life at work. As the Trust has deepened its focus on racial equity, the working group has expanded in size and scope, aiming to embed racial equity into each organizational process.

RACHEL PATE



Lauren Burdette is the Director of Engagement at The Chicago Public Education Fund. She manages a team of three responsible for creating and executing communications, development, and external affairs.

Lauren previously worked as an education policy adviser for the State of Illinois and the United States Senate. She worked on numerous initiatives, including Every Student Succeeds Act implementation, higher education reform and the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. She began her career teaching 7th grade math and science in Archer Heights.

Lauren received her Master of Public Policy from The University of Michigan's Ford School of Public Policy and earned her Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania.

SHIFTING FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO COMMUNITY CONSENT

Lessons from the Ogden- Jenner Merger

By Lauren Burdette, Director of Engagement at the Chicago Public Education Fund

CHALLENGE

Chicago's education sector faces two significant and interconnected problems: segregation between schools and declining student enrollment citywide. Chicago's intensely segregated housing market means over half of Chicago's public schools have a student population of 90% or more of a single racial group. At the same time, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has seen an enrollment drop of almost 50,000 students in just ten years. While Chicago's overall population decline – particularly in majority Black neighborhoods - is one element of this lower student enrollment, a large driver is the overall decline in Kindergarten enrollments. Today, there are almost 6,000 fewer Kindergartners entering CPS than in 2012. These trends mean CPS faces a

clear challenge of too many buildings and too few students. Systemwide, 34 schools are considered overcrowded and 243 are considered underutilized. While mergers may seem like a clear solution to address these challenges, community leadership is key to how school communities evolve.

APPROACH

A recent school merger between Ogden International School and Jenner Academy of the Arts offers a case study in resolving both challenges. Far from being an evaluation of the effectiveness of the merger, this project examines what lessons other schools and communities could learn from Ogden-Jenner's experience if they decide to explore a merger of their own. While the Ogden-Jenner merger was a unique situation for many reasons, it offers some strategies that other communities can apply to increase the likelihood of success:

- Ensure ownership of the merger by parents and families, not CPS
- Secure principal support
- Maintain effective and consistent communication to all stakeholders throughout the process
- Create a formal report and/or engage an external, impartial "validator"
- Acquire external funding for convenings and report writing
- Recruit expert support for diversity, equity and inclusion training

“If you decide to pursue a school merger, only do it if you have support on multiple sides. The entire process needs to be community driven and include the voice and insight of the principals.”

for adults and students, such as the National SEED project.

- Ensure financial support from CPS over multiple years post-merger

NEXT STEPS

One practice for future mergers to consider improving is intentional deep coalition building on the front-end in both schools. If there is a power imbalance between the schools, this inclusive coalition building is even more vital. Ultimately, trusting that communities can find their own solutions with external support will help the city improve its decades-long education challenges. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: For more information, please email Lauren Burdette at laurenfb@gmail.com

ENVISIONING EQUITY:

Led by Rachel Pate, Heidi Massey, and Kara Wright, 2018 Fellows

INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD:

A panel discussion about creating racially equitable organizations with people from nonprofits that were engaged in that work



Strategic Planning for Inclusive Organizations



CHALLENGE

On March 7, 2018, as part of the inaugural Chicago United for Equity Fellowship program, we were learning to apply a Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA). As we talked about our experiences working in and consulting with nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, we realized a critical need in the work -- strategic plans built through a racial equity lens. Within a few weeks, we began meeting to plan an event to do just that and recruited a talented and committed team to work with us. With this team in place, *Envisioning Equity: Strategic Planning for Inclusive Organizations* launched on March 15, 2019.



APPROACH

Why Strategic Planning Through a Racial Equity Lens?

Nonprofit organizations are at the very early stages of recognizing the need to deal with the impact of racism. However, the response to that need is frequently a one-time workshop to learn about a single issue related to racism, such as implicit bias. The learning is generally focused on racism at an individual or interpersonal level. However, in order to create real change, it is imperative for organizations to work to dismantle structural and institutional (systemic) racism that hides within an organization's systems and processes. Since a part of strategic planning is reviewing an organization's systems and processes, it is an optimal time to address these types of hidden racism.

Why A Large Conference Instead Of Working With Organizations Individually?

Many nonprofit and philanthropic professionals who are pushing their organizations forward in becoming more equitable feel isolated and unsure about who they can turn to for mentorship in their racial equity work. Furthermore, this work is challenging and complicated. And professionals in the sector don't always have the expertise or even the knowledge about where to find guidance as they navigate this challenging space. By bringing a community of people together at *Envisioning Equity*, the beginning of a support system has been established to lessen those feelings of isolation and uncertainty.

LEFT: Participant asking a question at inaugural conference.



NEXT STEPS

Since the inaugural conference, the planning team has continued to discuss what is next for Envisioning Equity. Conference attendees reported high satisfaction in conference evaluation and expressed excitement for more opportunities to come together as a community. The team is committed to creating additional learning experiences, but the format and content has yet to be determined. To learn more, check out EnvisioningEquityChi.org. And while you're there, sign up for the newsletter to hear about future Envisioning Equity happenings. ★

ABOVE: The planning team for Envisioning Equity gathered together for a celebration dinner a few weeks after the conference.

ART, DESIGN & MEDIA

How can art, design, and media address or further racial equity?

Our Fellows from the narrative-shaping sector know that they have the power to bring truth to light, to reimagine civic spaces, and invoke the moral imperative for our city to embrace change.

& MEDIA

These Fellows have worked to tap into the power they hold and to wield it thoughtfully in these ways:

- **Use design for the social good.** Paola Aguirre's project explores who has the right to define public space from her vantage point as an architect and designer.
- **Consider the story, the impact, and the messenger.** Kacie Smith's start-up organization presents a unique opportunity to explore how to engage many voices in the

work of telling authentically diverse stories.

- **Use the power of language to spur change.** Tiff Beatty's work at the Chicago Humanities Festival explores the difference between diversity and equity, using precision in language to spur a process of organization-wide reflection.

These themes weave the power of language, message, and connection throughout the work of building equity in our city — making these projects a critical read for everyone in the civic sector.



Paola Aguirre Serrano is founder of BORDERLESS — Chicago-based urban design and research practice focused on cultivating collaborative design agency through interdisciplinary projects. With emphasis on exchange and communication across disciplines, Borderless explores creative civic design and engagement interventions that address the complexity of urban systems and social equity by looking at intersections between architecture, urban design, infrastructure, landscape, planning and community participatory processes. Paola is an active educator, and currently teaches architecture The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

DESIGN FOR SELF-DETERMINATION: A Pathway for Redeveloping Closed Schools

By Paola Aguirre, Founder of BORDERLESS; Educator



CHALLENGE

In 2013, the unprecedented closure of 50 Chicago Public Schools left more than 3 million square feet of existing building space and hundreds of acres of outdoor space in 25 neighborhoods to be reimaged. Despite the potential for community self-determination, the repurposing process of closed schools has been short sighted, leading to tremendous missed opportunities in imagining new ways of collective city-building rooted in values of equity, transparency and inclusion. These public amenities are multi-dimensional assets, with invaluable physical and emotional connections to their communities and their histories. Foremost, they are public buildings built with public resources. With the current redevelopment process, their social value has been undermined, reduced to a business-as-usual real estate transaction.

APPROACH

This project emerged in the summer of 2016 to bring awareness about school closures, enable inclusive and open dialogues, and spark collective imagination about the future of social infrastructure in Chicago. Creative Grounds emerged as a platform to prototype collective processes in which creative approaches could create a more inclusive and equitable approach for repurposing closed public schools – one school at the time. This prototyping started with Anthony Overton Elementary School in Bronzeville hosting community gatherings using arts and de-

“Chicago has one critical deficit in schools repurposing process – imagination. While financial resources might be limited or misaligned, there is a wealth of partnership possibilities and creative approaches to collectively imagine an equitable future.”

sign methods to collectively imagine – how does equitable social infrastructure look like in the future for Chicagoans?

NEXT STEPS

This project has deepened research to expand understanding of school closures in the context of inequities in the education and urban development systems. Through this fellowship, I’ve sought to position the “in between” timeline of the redevelopment process as a “time asset” – and propose expanded program opportunities and partnership with cultural and education organizations to keep the school active and connected to its community while it awaits the full physical rehabilitation process and capital investment assembly. As a next step of this effort, I seek to build a development approach that encapsulates strategic investment in community engagement -- or the fallout from avoiding engagement efforts -- to better inform the development decisions made about our communities. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: www.creativegrounds.org

INCLUSIVE STORYTELLING: Whose Voice Matters in State Matters

By Kacie Smith, Co-Founder and Executive Director of State Matters

CHALLENGE

With all the stressors of a new start-up, it is easy to take the path more frequently tread. Extremely limited resources combined with a mission-driven team willing to do what's necessary for the organization, creates a lot of opportunities for unintended inequities and easy excuses for those inequities. We undertook an internal assessment this past year, focusing first on our hiring practices to address current disparities and preempt future inequities before they become part of the fabric of the organization.

APPROACH: THE MESSENGER MATTERS

Our desire for race equity internally does not only come from a belief that it is the right thing to do; we see it as a necessity for achieving our overall goals. We want to reach folks most impacted by the disparities created by state and local government, who tend to be lower-income and communities of color. When we work with artists and writers from a range of backgrounds, we see the demographics of our audi-



State Matters event at
Sleeping Village
Photo by Alan Epstein



Ricardo Gamboa (left),
Melissa DuPrey (right),
State Matters video shoot
Photo by Kacie Smith

“State Matters is a young organization which offers unique challenges, but also unique opportunities to address race equity at the ground floor.”

ence shift. When we employ Latinx millennial artists from the west side, we see increased engagement from Latinx millennials on the west side. The messenger matters.

NEXT STEPS

As a result of our initial assessment (using a race equity organization assessment tool and working in collaboration with our board of directors), we set three immediate goals for 2019:

- Translation of video/written content and budgeting for Spanish-language graphic designers.
- Creatives + Community Supper Club. Creative work is subjective, so creating effective equity-based hiring practices can be difficult. As part of our solution, we are creating a monthly, unimimidating space, hosted across the city for us to meet and recruit creatives with less traditional training and backgrounds, as well as workshop new ideas.
- Resources for new collaborators to use race equity as a lens in their work with State Matters and think critically about distribution plans, language, visuals, historical context and recognizing current inequities within a government system.

The work is ongoing, and there is a long way to go. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Follow State Matters on social media to see more of our work or visit statematters.org. If you would like to connect directly with me: kacie@statematters.org



Kacie Smith is an artist, director and producer here in Chicago. Her primary interest is in good government, and how art and shared cultural experiences can be a mechanism for civic engagement and discourse. She is a co-founder and the executive director of State Matters, a nonprofit that works with artists to explain how state and local government works. State Matters began in January 2018 with a mission to make government more understandable, accessible, and accountable. More info at statematters.org.

KACIE SMITH



Tiffanie (Tiff) Beatty, Associate Director of Programming at Chicago Humanities Festival, is the primary programmer assigned to more than 30 programs annually. Tiff is CHF's lead programmer for audiences in their 20s and 30s. Tiffanie also manages all programming partnerships, including dozens of cultural, civic, and academic institutions, and leads the diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative at CHF. Tiff is a recipient of the 2019 Chicago United for Equity Fellowship and Field Foundation's Field Leader Award. In addition to her work at CHF, she writes and performs original spoken word poetry and hosts *Art Is Bonfire* under the name Pyro Poet.

PRODUCTIVELY SPECIFIC: A Chicago Poet Distinguishes Between Diversity and Equity

By Tiffanie Beatty, Associate Director of Programming at Chicago Humanities Festival



Folded Map Project at South Shore Cultural Center Photo by Ben Gonzales

CHALLENGE

The humanities is the study of how people process and document the human experience. Since humans have been able, we have used philosophy, literature, religion, art, music, history and language to understand and record our world. For thirty years, the Chicago Humanities Festival (CHF) has engaged people in discussions about ideas that matter. I am a Black queer feminist performance poet and I create programs for CHF.

APPROACH

As attention turned to me in a staff meeting, I shouted in my most authentic voice: “This goes out to all you amateurs...” successfully shocking the room to attention. “Now, they’re listening,” I thought, as my piece transitioned into my co-worker (also a person of color) and I translating our experience attending a soon-to-be mandatory anti-racism and systemic oppression training to a room of mostly white folks.

Since that ancestor-assisted staff meeting, I’ve begun exploring how CHF stakeholders can deepen and formalize our organization’s commitment to equity and inclusion, including co-planning Envisioning Equity, a regional conference and, internally, a leadership committee, people of color caucus, and a racial equity impact assessment. But first, I did my research. In 2015, Arts Administration and Policy, School of the Art Institute of Chicago graduate fellows Ryan Blocker and

“The words loved me and I loved them in return.”

—Sonia Sanchez

Raquel Iglesias investigated strategies to “build diversity as a sustainable, embedded part of the organization.” Ryan and Raquel began with a pivotal question, “how useful is a word like “diversity?” Following leaders in the cultural sector, they recommended moving away from diversity to terms like race, inclusion, difference, and Black, Latino, Asian, and Indigenous. “These words have a productiveness to their specificity,” they noted. While diversity is a worthy goal in building audience and revenue strategies, using the term “race equity” considers a range of barriers to achieving diversity and inclusion, including procedural, economic, cultural, linguistic, technological, and practical factors.

NEXT STEPS

As CHF’s 2023 Strategic Plan seeks to “expand and deepen connections with more diverse audiences and new revenue streams,” CHF staff must challenge leadership to go beyond diversity quotas, leveraging our own stories and identities to distinguish between diversity and equity in our work and lives. As staff lead CHF’s strategic planning process from a racial equity lens, our language, like great poetry, must be incisive, intentional, and human-centered to understand and record our impact. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: <https://www.chicagohumanities.org/about/>

SPEAKING TRUTH WITH POWER: Got Data? Got Community? Let's Tell a Story!

By Glenance Green, Deputy Director at Free Spirit Media

CHALLENGE

We are only as strong as our community partners and the youth and young adults that we serve. Free Spirit Media's efforts to strengthen our pipelines from entry to the media industry are deeply influenced by our partners. Leveraging the assets of those partners to better support our ecosystem in service of our missions will come as a result of intentional collective system building at the grassroots level.

APPROACH

Our first collective system building effort includes a Racial Equity Data Forum focused on the following areas below:

- **Identifying Workforce Competencies:** What are the core competencies that industries (media and beyond) are seeking/employing? How are we preparing our demographic to be successful?

“When I dare to be powerful – to use my strength in the service of my vision, it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.” –Audre Lorde

- **Understanding the Measures and Metrics:** What do we need? How do we know?
- **Examination of Data / Identifying the Gaps:** What goals are we setting? What are the targets? What are the benchmarks?
- **Data Visualization:** How do you use what you have? How do you use what you have to tell a story?

NEXT STEPS

Since we are focused on strengthening the work of the North Lawndale community, our target audience includes service providers, media partners, and foundations deeply invested in the work of Westside community organizations. This is the first of many initiatives helping to reshape both our organization and community approaches to addressing the needs concerning racial equity in the North Lawndale community. It is our hope that all participating partners can use the information gained to enhance their work. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Website: www.freespiritmedia.org
 FB: FreeSpirit Chi
 IG: @freespiritchi
 Twitter: @FreeSpiritMedia



Glenance Green is a researcher, scholar, content creator, and artist who uses various art forms as tools of healing and liberation. She is the Deputy Director of Free Spirit Media, a media arts and education organization in the North Lawndale community that transforms media and society by providing opportunities for emerging creators, primarily from communities of color, to produce and distribute original content and to pursue artistic, personal and professional aspirations. For more information on Free Spirit Media, visit www.freespiritmedia.org.

GLENANCE GREEN

CHICAGO IMPACT PROJECT

THE 2019 VOTE EQUITY PROJECT

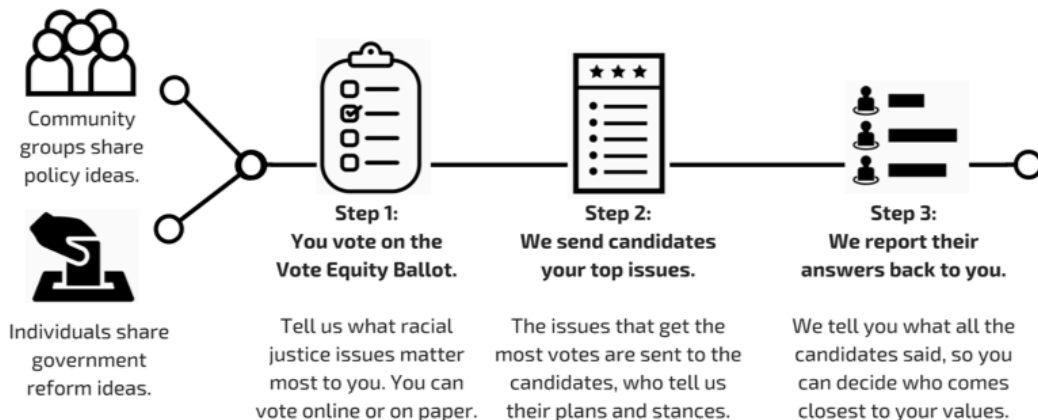
CHALLENGE

What does it mean to vote for racial justice? How do we build a vision for a Chicago that serves all of our communities? And how can we do this together, by centering and amplifying the voices of the communities who have been most harmed by structural racism?

In the summer of 2018, CUE started working with community organizers, researchers, civic engagement advocates, and local funders who were interested in exploring these questions. Over a six month planning phase, we debated many ways to bring a nonpartisan platform to engage Chicagoans in building a shared vision for our city's future. While we were committed to nonpartisanship, we were dedicated to one clear goal: engaging everyday residents in a conversation about how to build a Chicago where race cannot predict our life outcomes.

We decided on a multi-step process that was led by the voices of everyday people at every stage. We knew that people plug into politics at different times in a election cycle. We wanted to build a process that ensured that no matter

HOW DOES IT WORK?





when voters got engaged, racial equity was on their mind before they headed to the voting booth.

APPROACH

We began by asking: How can we make Chicago work for all of us? Chicagoans submitted 262 ideas, scrawled on paper forms at events or submitted online. Of these, 186 unique concepts moved to the next round, to be voted on by residents. We engaged a prioritization vote that paired two randomly selected ideas at a time and asked people to make a choice between them. Over hundreds of votes, this method reveals the group’s collective priorities.

By enlisting dozens of residents across the city to launch a citywide community dialogue process, in-person voting occurred throughout the city in both English and Spanish. Community members also used these discussions to develop a personal vision for equity and lobby each other to prioritize issues that they felt passionate about. All in all, 2,152 Chicagoans voted either in-person or online in 52,271 match-ups.

Since we heard from multiple voters in every ward in Chicago, we invited candidates from every ward to state their position on the top-voted issues. The result became the Voter Guide for Racial Equity, shared on VoteEquity.org and in

English and Spanish paper guides disseminated at voter forums and schools through a civic engagement bus designed by youth organizers.

NEXT STEPS

Moving forward, we see the Vote Equity Project as a model for future civic engagement efforts that aim to engage everyday people and the voices of residents who are too often excluded in political decision-making. To use this process in your community, reach out to us at information@chicagounitedforequity.org or visit VoteEquity.org to learn more. ★

PARTNERS:

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
 Generation All
 Grassroots Collaborative
 Metropolitan Planning Council
 Reform for Illinois
 UIC’s Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement

FUNDERS:

Chicago Community Trust
 Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation
 Greater Chicago
 Woods Fund
 Individual Donors at \$10-\$500 levels

RESEARCH &

What does ethical and equitable research require? How can respected research and policy/advocacy organizations use their platforms to center communities in decisions being made about their future?

Fellows in this sector recognize the power of numbers well — and the need to contextualize this work with authentic narratives. In the pursuit of this balanced approach, they explored the following strategies:

- **Share power in the research process.** Jen Brown kicks off this section by sharing how Northwestern University's School of Medicine is grounding its practices in sharing power with communities represented in its research.

POLICY

- **Build structures for collective learning.**

Kendra Freeman explores how to build a shared learning community for professionals in the field of community development to deepen their understanding of equity in their work, while Tanvi Shah develops a racial equity training protocol that offers workforce development organizations a framework to review their internal practices. Genese Turner's project explores how to apply an equity lens within a single organization to distill lessons for the field.

- **Developing advocacy and action plans co-created with community stakeholders.**

Imron Bhatti explores how equity must be centered in coalition and umbrella organizations for equitable advocacy, while Jim Merrell's project focuses on building a community process for mobility planning.

These projects are seeding a powerful philosophy of research and policy advocacy that is accountable to the communities most impacted by our current and historic inequities.



Jen Brown is Director and Co-Founder of the Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (www.ARCCOnline.net) at Northwestern University. She's passionate about ARCC's mission to grow equitable research partnerships between Chicago communities and Northwestern to improve health equity. She is faculty at Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine. Jen serves as co-chair of the Chicago Consortium for Community Engagement, co-chair of Chicago Department of Public Health's Healthy Chicago 2.0 Data & Research Team and Partnership for Healthy Chicago, associate editor of Progress in Community Health Partnerships journal, and member of Chicago Ideas Radical Creators.

NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US!: Community-Academic Collaboration to Grow Racial Equity in Research

By Jen Brown, Director and Co-Founder at the Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities, Northwestern University



Community & academic partners collaborating to ensure research is driven by those most impacted by health inequities.

CHALLENGE

Communities of color experience higher rates of most preventable and chronic diseases. Mistrust resulting from a history of unethical biomedical research and racism and bias in research has led to underrepresentation of communities of color in research participation and design and findings that are less likely to be relevant or impactful for decreasing health inequities. Community–academic partnerships that authentically elevate voices and leadership of communities aim to ensure research is community driven, trustworthy, and focused on impact. In community-engaged research, communities are partners, not just participants.

APPROACH

Led by diverse community stakeholders and academic researchers, the Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (ARCC) at Northwestern University are working to collaboratively develop recommendations for applying a racial equity lens in health research and community engagement. ARCC is participating in foundational training on core components of racism, white supremacy, and bias. ARCC will build on an 11-year history of supporting engaged research partnerships and diverse community relationships to explore specific ways that health research institutions, projects, and partnerships perpetuate racism and deepen racial and health inequities, to consider:

“Research culture and practice must center community leadership and actively ensure research addresses racial and health inequities and doesn’t just document or perpetuate them.”

- How research topics and ‘target populations’ are chosen and framed,
- Racial representation and cultural humility of research faculty and staff,
- Research language that perpetuates stereotypes or dehumanizes, and
- Scarcity of research on impacts of and interventions to address structural inequities.

NEXT STEPS

Recommendations for change and sustained support for applying a racial equity lens in research will be shared with leadership at Northwestern, community stakeholders, and other academic institutions. Recommendations may include proposed policy and practices changes and training resources (e.g. storytelling, case studies, discussion guides, checklists, videos). Research must intentionally strive for projects and partnerships that work towards health justice in both their practice *and* outcome. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: www.ARCConline.net & www.ARCCresources.net & ARCC@northwestern.edu

BUILDING WITHOUT BIAS: Leading a Cultural Shift to Foster Equitable Development

By Kendra J. Freeman, Director of Community Engagement at the Metropolitan Planning Council

CHALLENGE

A history of structurally racist policies that guide how we invest in people and places is hurting the Chicago region. Planning and development as a field lacks racial diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Decision-makers in this space are not trained in equity principles and lack a shared framework, resulting in decision making that fails to acknowledge historical inequities or take action to dismantle them. When policies and process are colorblind, they maintain the status quo and perpetuate disparities regardless of intent.

APPROACH

Professionals in the development community must understand the impact of structural racism on the built environment and develop competency in DEI concepts and tools in order to shift the conditions that hold inequities in place. This project aimed to address this need by piloting a targeted peer learning community that

“If we can change the framework for planning and development, centering racial equity in the process, we will begin to see investments that yield better outcomes for individuals, organizations, and our region.”

incorporates the practical application of racial equity assessments and tools as an effective approach for skill building and fostering a culture of change among leaders in the field of community development. By building the capacity of leadership to assess their working environment and decision making utilizing a racial equity framework, this approach provides opportunity to correct biased practices and enables systems change. If we can change the framework for planning and development by centering equity in process, we will begin to see investments that yield better outcomes for individuals, organizations and our region.

NEXT STEPS

As we look towards the future, we aim to launch a multi-sector cohort of leaders in planning and development to address structural racism and how to undo it. Our aim is to build the capacity across professions that impact the built environment to foster a culture that promotes equitable development. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:
Kfreeman@metroplanning.org



Kendra Freeman has held leadership positions in the private and nonprofit sector with a focus on investing in people and places. She works to elevate the voice of underrepresented communities in community development, public policy, and civic engagement.

KENDRA FREEMAN



Imron serves on the Board of Directors of Advocates for Urban Agriculture, a coalition of Chicago land urban farms, community gardens, individuals, and businesses working towards a food system where urban agriculture is an integral part of community economic development, food security, environmental sustainability and overall quality of life for all. Imron is an attorney working for more equitable cities through better transportation, land use and housing policy. He currently works in the Office of Fair Housing at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

JUST FOOD?: Engaging the Field to Inform Equitable Agriculture Policy

By Imron Bhatti, Board of Directors, Advocates for Urban Agriculture

CHALLENGE

Racial equity isn't just about better outcomes; it's about transforming who has the power to determine the path towards this vision. Urban agriculture is an important part of building a more sustainable and equitable local food system, but urban agriculture is not innately sustainable or equitable.

As an umbrella advocacy organization, Advocates for Urban Agriculture realized that while we were calling for a more sustainable and equitable local food system, we had to do more to ensure our advocacy centers and reflects the leadership of Chicago communities most impacted by urban agriculture.

Advocates for Urban Agriculture (AUA) is developing tools and processes to ensure that the orga-

nizations, programs, and policies we champion are contributing to a more equitable food system and not reinforcing existing patterns of injustice.

APPROACH

At AUA, we are conducting a foundational analysis of the benefits, burdens, and inequities in the current urban agriculture landscape using existing data, and developing a survey to fill gaps in our understanding of urban agriculture in the region. For example, we know that most farms are located in community areas with the greatest concentrations of Chicagoans experiencing food insecurity, but we do not have reliable data to understand whether these farms are improving healthy food access in those neighborhoods. While the USDA's Census of Agriculture indicates that Cook County's farms are disproportionately owned and operated by white growers, we know less about the relationships between these operations and the largely Black and Latino communities in which they're located.

NEXT STEPS

The results of this analysis will inform targeted outreach, leveraging AUA's citywide network of advocates to understand the priorities, opportunities, and needs of existing growers as well as individuals and community groups facing barriers to growing. AUA will also engage the communities surrounding growing operations, focusing on the residents of neighborhoods with the greatest concentrations of com-

“Agriculture’s growth is intimately tied to land ownership and access to capital, so we have to be proactive to avoid replicating Chicago’s inequities - especially with marijuana’s legalization on the horizon.”

mercial growing operations, the greatest concentrations of the harms we believe urban agriculture can address, and the greatest capacity to support future agriculture.

Through this outreach, AUA will formalize a transparent, inclusive process for members, community organizations working on related policy issues, and impacted communities to inform our programs, advocacy priorities, and metrics to assess whether AUA is contributing towards an economically and socially inclusive food system that lifts up the foodways and histories of people of color. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Sign up for updates and learn about how to get involved with AUA at auachicago.org.

WORKING TOWARDS EQUITY: An Assessment for Workforce Development Organizations

By Tanvi Shah, Program Manager at the Frontline Focus Training Institute at the Chicago Jobs Council

CHALLENGE

What does an equitable workforce development organization look like? How do we build workforce training programs that honor the unique skills and assets of our people? A few years ago, the Chicago Jobs Council began the process of reflecting on our culture and work to promote racial equity. This work is critically important, but finding time and resources to lead it and make it a priority can feel daunting and expensive. Often, there is a willingness to engage in the work, but a need for support to get started.

Given our position as a capacity-building organization in the field of workforce development, we sought to address the need for training and support for workforce organizations that are seeking to address racial equity in their work.

APPROACH

We are working to develop a racial equity organizational assessment for the workforce development field that

will allow community-based workforce agencies to evaluate their programs, policies, and practices in order to identify strengths and areas for growth in their equity work. The tool will include concrete examples of racially equitable policies and practices that are tailored to workforce development programs and agencies. These on-the-ground examples and best practices will be a resource to frontline workforce agencies, allowing them to evaluate their current efforts and strategize how to move their equity work forward.

NEXT STEPS

Structural racism is at the root of racialized disparities in the labor market. To fulfill our mission of employment as a pathway out of poverty, the Jobs Council must work to dismantle these entrenched and systemic barriers. The racial equity assessment for the workforce development field will allow organizations to assess their current orientation towards racial equity and

“By uplifting racially equitable practices, we hope to increase the capacity of the workforce development field to impact employment disparities that affect people of color.”

identify specific strategies they can implement to address sector-wide structural challenges. This project will give us a way to more intentionally support community-based workforce organizations that are also committed to racial equity and reducing the structural barriers disproportionately affecting job seekers of color. By working together, we hope to amplify our collective impact and achieve more equitable outcomes for all. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Want to learn more about the Jobs Council's racial equity work? Visit: <https://cjc.net/racial-equity/>



Tanvi Shah currently serves as a Program Manager with the Frontline Focus Training Institute at the Chicago Jobs Council. She previously worked at the Indo-American Center, as the Workforce Development Manager, where she gained extensive experience in program design, implementation, and management. She has a strong background of curriculum development and facilitation as she has designed multiple job readiness curriculums and served as a job readiness trainer. In her current role, she is overseeing a new initiative to build a universal career readiness framework for the workforce development field.

TANVI SHAH



Jim Merrell works as Advocacy Director at Active Transportation Alliance, an organization that advocates for better walking, biking and public transit across Chicagoland. Jim leverages a decade of issue advocacy experience to engage thousands of Active Trans members and supporters in strategic advocacy campaigns designed to bring more equitable transportation options to the region.

WHOSE STREETS? Ideas for Integrating Racial Equity into Transportation Decisions

By Jim Merrell, Advocacy Director at the Active Transportation Alliance

CHALLENGE

Decisions about how we invest public dollars in our transportation system generate a variety of benefits and burdens for residents. We must ensure these investments are channeled in support of goals and projects that lead us towards an equitable city. Examples of equitable investment might look like building public transit connections between job centers and areas with high unemployment.

Decisions must also account for how intended and unintended consequences of transportation infrastructure impact the most vulnerable members of our communities, such as low-income residents who face displacement if their rent increases as a result of new bike trail or other local amenities.

To achieve equitable outcomes from our transportation investments, we must have a community vision for transportation equity and an equitable process for deciding how and where these investments happen. However, in Chicago, racial equity has not been a part of the conversation about transportation project development and associated community engagement.

APPROACH

My approach is to start a critical conversation to develop recommended improvements to Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) policies and practices so that they directly address racial equity. To do this, I am working to:

- Conduct a review of existing policies and practices from peer cities,
- Document current practices in Chicago, and
- Interview community leaders who have recently participated in CDOT projects for their perspective.

These resources will inform a community-led process for creating recommendations. I plan to work with local leaders in the mobility justice movement to facilitate this process over the next 6 months.

The output of these efforts will produce materials that provide background information necessary to facilitate a meaningful conversation with representatives of communities most impacted. By working with leaders in the transportation and mobility justice

“Go to any public meeting on transportation and you will witness the breakdown in trust between residents and government. By exploring ways to share power in decision making over our streets, we can create more equitable communities.”

movement, this project will result in a co-created engagement process for developing community recommendations for a transportation equity vision and integrating racial equity into CDOT outreach and project development.

NEXT STEPS

I am working to develop the contextual resources and will be engaging with mobility justice advocates and community leaders to design the process for leading this conversation and converging on recommended improvements to the city’s transportation infrastructure decision making. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Stay tuned to www.activetrans.org for updates. Moving forward, we will work with leaders in the mobility justice movement and other allies to facilitate a conversation about what a community vision for transportation equity looks like in Chicago and how engagement practices at CDOT can be reimaged to place racial equity at the center of the conversation.

EQUITY AS A JOURNEY: Practicing What We Preach

By Genese Turner, MIPS, MCPM, Program Manager, Illinois Public Health Institute

CHALLENGE

In Chicago, data shows a few miles can equate to a 15+ year difference in life expectancy (Chicago Health Atlas). Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI) recognizes that social and structural determinants of health – like education, housing, food security, and racism – greatly impact health for individuals and communities.

While striving to be in the forefront of the health equity landscape, we found it requires intention, self-reflection, and strategic effort to consistently use a health equity and racial equity lens in daily practice. Engaging new programs and partners requires us to be more explicit in ensuring projects are addressing key points of health equity such as structural racism, gender inequality, and classicism. There is difficulty in encouraging partners to engage in equity activities that we have not engaged in ourselves.

APPROACH

Our journey began with a three-day workshop on racial equity followed by the formation of an internal equity committee that includes staff from all levels. IPHI is piloting three equity-focused processes that we are

“There is difficulty in encouraging partners to engage in equity activities that we have not engaged in ourselves.”

evaluating through an equity lens so that we can learn, retool, and scale our efforts. IPHI’s Center for Capacity Development is prioritizing equity in our work with hospital partners on assessment and planning via the Alliance for Health Equity. Specifically, IPHI prioritized input and engagement by communities most impacted by inequities, and we used data analysis methods to emphasize health and racial equity needs across the City and County. A key outcome will be understanding how partners received the equity data and how internal staff viewed the process. We

are documenting lessons learned and “tough points” to inform continued equity work across the organization.

NEXT STEPS

During the 2019 CUE fellowship, deliverables expanded to include a formal framework for using a health equity lens in daily and institutional practices, recommended techniques to discuss structural racism and equity internally and with external partners, and a draft plan for how we are bringing our partners along this path with us. This journey is far from over. It may take us down paths we never imagined. However, the destination will forever remain to help create a more equitable life for our communities. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: For more information, please find us online at <https://iphionline.org> and <http://allhealthequity.org>



Genese (Genny) Turner, MIPH, MCPM, hails from 15 years in corporate America before following her passion to the nonprofit sector. As a Program Manager with the Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI), Genny is committed to fighting health inequities through reducing structural racism and violence, increasing community safety and community development, and other initiatives that allow people to lead healthy and happy lives. IPHI leads action to promote prevention and improve public health systems in order to maximize health, health equity and quality of life for the people of Illinois.

GENESE TURNER

FROM MEGA-TIFS TO MEGA-EQUITY: Applying the REIA tool to Tax-Increment Financing projects

CHALLENGE

In April 2019, Chicago City Council members approved public tax subsidies to redevelop two significant parcels of land. The first has been dubbed Lincoln Yards, with over 50 acres of riverfront property between Lincoln Park, Bucktown, and Wicker Park. Developer Sterling Bay cast the vision of this massive new development, calling on Chicago to provide \$900 million in public subsidies from a newly created Tax-Increment Financing district that will redirect newly captured tax revenue from this development to the developer.

The second development earned the nickname “The 78,” stating its intention to build Chicago’s “next great neighborhood” on 62 acres on the riverfront between Pilsen, Chinatown, and the South Loop. Related Midwest, the developer seeking to build this new neighborhood, called on the City to contribute \$551 of tax revenue to offset development costs.

Critics of both deals decry a lack of public process and the transfer of public dollars to pri-

vate corporations for profitable deals that will benefit investors without the public subsidy. Advocates have also expressed concerns about the lack of public dollars for education investments, questions of equitable investments in green space, and concerns about displacement for local residents and locally-owned businesses. Officials in the outgoing Emanuel administration argue that these deals benefit the city’s shared financial future, spurring longer term economic development.

APPROACH

As City Council voted to approve the TIF investments, CUE was asked to facilitate a Racial Equity Impact Assessment by a coalition of organizers, faith leaders, and business owners. The TIF Equity Coalition quickly amassed nearly 1,500 signatures in support of the REIA. Fellows from both cohorts have been working to develop this process, which will launch in fall 2019.

This work will be driven by engaging community stakeholders in reviewing data and

participating in civic dialogues. The following stakeholder categories were established to promote equity in whose voices are centered in this engagement:

TIER 1	Residents near the two new mega-TIF geographies who are historically most impacted by inequity (both displacement risk and inequitable investment in public services/ amenities)
TIER 2	Small businesses near these mega-TIF geographies who are historically most impacted by inequity
TIER 3	Residents in neighborhoods with underfunded TIFs and historically low capital investment.
TIER 4	Businesses in neighborhoods with underfunded TIFs and historically low capital investment.
TIER 5	All residents and business owners in the City of Chicago not captured in the categories above.

NEXT STEPS

Throughout June and July, CUE will host REIA training events across the city to introduce Chicagoans to the key components of a REIA, share opportunities for them to get involved with this REIA, and model how to apply the tool in their own communities. This will set up wider spread REIA engagements for this report throughout the fall. The entire project is estimated to take approximately seven months, given the size and scale of this issue. We aim to publish recommendations in January 2020. ★



'The Rich Get Richer': Will Public Money For Projects Like Lincoln Yards Deepen Racial And Economic Inequity In Chicago?

The area between Bucktown and Lincoln Park slated to become Lincoln Yards is 'hardly blighted and not in need of a city subsidy,' one pastor said.

MAR 20, 2019 5:11PM CDT | LINCOLN PARK, OLD TOWN

Heather Cherone @HeatherCherone

Credibility Indicators
These are selected by the writer and confirmed by the editor.

Get more in-depth, daily coverage of Chicago politics at [The Daily Line](#).

Original Reporting — CHICAGO — A coalition of groups Tuesday called for city officials to delay plans to fuel massive developments that will transform Chicago's landscape.

ABOVE: News Article on Lincoln Yards Development

ORGANIZING

In many ways, grassroots organizing and advocacy efforts seem undeniably rooted in equity work. But how do the stories we amplify, the coalitions we build, and the problems we choose to address impact the entire sector of organizers and advocates?

Fellows who work in organizing and advocacy know that the choices they make impact an ecosystem built on structural racism. The way they engage their power can build movements with impact across generations.

Fellows in this sector collectively developed the following key strategies to heighten their impact:

- **Ensure that advocacy tables are accountable to the communities they serve.** Niya Kelly explores how the REIA tool can make her legislative advocacy more accountable to the leaders she serves at the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, while Juanita Irizarry iterates on this model to guide which coalitions and advocacy partnerships Friends of the Parks will join.

& ADVOCACY

- **Restructure advocacy by challenging traditional roles.** Cliff Helm evaluates how to use a legal framework to challenge the structural inequities emerging small businesses face, expanding advocacy beyond a case-by-case basis. Jasemen Hatcher reimagines how power flows in legal aid organizations by focusing on partnerships that equip clients to become community advocates.
- **Engage authentic storytelling for healing and advocacy.** Systemic change can be fueled by powerful individual narratives, as Danielle McCain and Maurice Robinson explore in their work to amplify and spotlight stories of trauma in housing and mental health.
- **Use Racial Equity Impact Assessments to diagnose root causes and build campaigns for reform.** Megan Brand explores the use of the REIA tool in evaluating racial disparities in an Edgewater elementary school, while Leone Jose Bicchieri considers the tool's utility in building a collective framework to advocate for Black and Latino workers and residents on the southwest side. The framework is also used to diagnose the root causes of housing quality issues and disparities in mortgage lending, as explored by Loreen Targos at Metropolitan Tenants Organization and Isaias Solis at the Latin United Community Housing Association.

Through a racial equity framework, the work of organizers and advocates can help elevate stories of impact, make advocacy authentically accountable to our communities, and transform our city.



Niya Kelly is the State Legislative Director at the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Her work focuses on the Illinois state budget and youth homelessness and housing insecurity policies.

In her work she has written and advocated several pieces of legislation. She is currently working on legislation to create a youth homelessness task force; a bill that will permit people with disabilities, the elderly, and folks experiencing homelessness on SNAP to buy prepared meals; a homelessness prevention program expansion and eliminating the TANF full family sanction.

BUILDING ACCOUNTABIL- ITY TO WHOM WE SERVE: Equipping people with lived experience to lead transformation

By Niya Kelly, State Legislative Director at the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

CHALLENGE

At the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, the community we serve are our leaders who have experienced homelessness. In Chicago, we know that our issues with housing instability and homelessness are rooted in systemic racism. Yet our leaders have not been afforded the opportunity to learn about these root causes, leading them to internalize some personal failing when talking about homelessness. As we seek to amplify our leaders' roles as self-advocates, our leaders must be equipped with access to the historical context, policies, practices, and structures that have fueled homelessness.

Most importantly, for our work to be truly leader-driven, our leaders must have the tools to hold us accountable to their vision as we engage in a true partnership in our advocacy work.

APPROACH

To build a future where we are authentically accountable to the leaders we serve, this project requires two key steps:

- Engage a group of CCH leaders in a foundational racial equity training, then
- These leaders will use this training and the Racial Equity Impact Assessment tool to evaluate each state initiative CCH puts forth in Springfield during the legislative session.



“We must simultaneously step up and step back to ensure our leaders understand and have a stake in racial equity work to reach the broader goal of ending homelessness.”

NEXT STEPS

As we move forward, we are developing out our training facilitation plan, practicing the training with CCH's organizing department, and engaging the group of CCH leaders who will attend the training. After completing the training, we will work together to adapt the Racial Equity Impact Assessment and receive feedback from colleagues and leaders who will be using it annually. The REIA tool and process REIA will help us evaluate the legislation we propose each legislative session. ★

SETTING EQUITABLE TABLES: Evaluating partnerships through a racial equity lens

By Juanita Irizarry, Executive Director, Friends of the Parks

CHALLENGE

Good park policy and design cannot be developed without including the voices of those most impacted by the decisions. Appropriate park investments must respond to local residents' needs, prioritizing voices who have been historically ignored in park decisions.

Guided by a revised mission that speaks to ensuring an equitable park system in Chicago, Friends of the Parks (FOTP) is applying an equity lens to our organization. As we work toward institutionalizing equity-focused processes, procedures, and frameworks, we are also working to raise the standard for equitable advocacy and ensure that our advocacy efforts amplify the diverse communities that are most impacted by disparities in access to green spaces.

APPROACH

As we more fully prioritize the empowerment of park partners in underinvested communities, we have created



a formal process for deciding which organizations we will create strategic alliances. This builds upon articulating a new theory of change more focused on community engagement and new program logic models. We are now completing an equity-informed framework of questions to consider as we decide who to invite to our tables and whose tables to sit at as we develop advocacy positions.

ABOVE: FOTP 2019 State of the Parks Summit

“...all men are created equal...” That statement was inauthentic then, and it doesn’t play out well now. Similarly, Chicago’s parks manifest the misapplication of the term “equal” in so many ways.”

NEXT STEPS

Our goal is for Chicago’s most under-invested parks to benefit from this project. Other parks and open space organizations may choose to adopt this protocol as well. Ultimately, we hope to see the Chicago Park District evaluate their resource distribution through this racial equity lens, as we recently highlighted in our 2018 State of the Parks report. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: You can read Friends of the Parks’ 2018 State of the Parks report here: <https://fotp.org/state-of-the-parks-2018/>



Juanita Irizarry grew up and has lived her lifetime in Logan Square and Humboldt Park along what is now The 606/ Bloomingdale Trail. She studied urban planning and policy, with an emphasis in housing and community development, inspired by her curiosities about her context of parks and boulevards in periods of decline and then gentrification. Having worked and volunteered for many years in community-based, non-profit organizing and advocacy, she currently leads Friends of the Parks, a fierce park advocacy organization fighting for “Healthy Parks for a Healthy Chicago.”

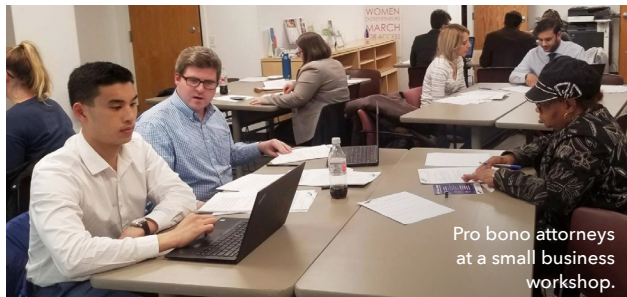
JUANITA IRIZARRY



Clifford Helm is a Staff Attorney for the Community Law Project of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights. He works with community organizations, coalitions, non-profits, and cooperatives across Chicago on drafting community benefits agreements and developing strategies and policies to support equitable development. Previously, Clifford ran his own law practice with the support of the Justice Entrepreneurs Project, providing legal services to business, social enterprises, non-profits, and cooperatives in Chicago. Clifford received his law degree from the University of Michigan.

SMALL BUSINESSES, EXPENSIVE LAWYERS, AND SYSTEMIC RACISM: Evaluating programs for structural inequity

By Clifford Helm, Staff Attorney at the Community Law Project of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights



Pro bono attorneys at a small business workshop.

CHALLENGE

Small businesses create and retain community wealth, employ residents and build long-term economic benefits for a community. But new small businesses, particularly in historically disinvested communities of color, face numerous barriers to success.

How can legal support for small businesses advance racial equity and economic justice? The Community Law Project is asking itself this question as it goes through a strategic planning process to re-center our work, including our small business work, on racial equity and economic justice. As attorneys, we support small businesses with legal services. But many of these barriers are not legal in nature – leading us to question what impact we were really having.

APPROACH

Using a race equity lens, we are changing our focus in working with small businesses to increase our impact in historically disinvested communities of color. Our historic eligibility guidelines frequently resulted in our support for businesses that were not getting the financial, educational, or other support they needed to succeed. Without these other supports in place, the businesses had very low success rates, and we questioned whether or not we were advancing an equitable mission by simply serving as legal advisers. Many of the other barriers entrepreneurs face are systemic, and we should realign our services to

chip away at those systems.

We are exploring some shifts in our work, focusing on partnerships with agencies providing the holistic support services needed to ensure that businesses are successful and leveraging funding that focuses on developing disinvested commercial corridors. In addition, we are exploring a focus on industry specific programming to address deep issues of race and economic equity, such as food justice.

“All of us knew we needed to take a step back to question our effectiveness – and our decades of doing this work.”

NEXT STEPS

In the next few months, we will continue to engage community members to reassess where we should be allocating our resources, how to train our volunteers, how to align our programming with our strategic plan, and how to evaluate the standards we should set for ourselves. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: www.clccrul.org/community-law-project

FROM CLIENTS TO ADVOCATES: A Racial Equity Approach to Housing Training & Education

By Jasemen Hatcher, Senior Housing Counselor/Landlord Tenant Liaison at Open Communities

CHALLENGE

The Summer Project of 1965 saw Dr. Martin Luther King speak on Winnetka's Village Green through the efforts of Interfaith Housing. This pivotal moment helped shape the services of what is now known as Open Communities. As the agency transforms its programs to address the needs of communities, we realize the dream we had for housing justice and racial equity has been deferred.

Open Communities has sought to understand how the principles of racial equity can increase the effectiveness of trainings and workshops in the fight for housing justice. Our goal is to create advocates that will fight against discriminatory policies, gentrification, and evictions in the communities where they reside. According to Princeton University's Eviction Lab, 6,300 people are evicted across the nation each day. These evictions disproportionately impact African American women, and single mothers. Within the City of Chi-

“Today’s residential segregation ...is not the unintended consequence of individual choices and of otherwise well-meaning law or regulation but unhidden public policy that explicitly segregated every metropolitan city.

—Richard Rothstein

chicago, the Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing found that landlords are 4 times more likely file for an eviction within African American communities. The impact of evictions keeps communities and people of color in a cycle of poverty and furthers the inequity of voice and self-determination, as residents rely on legal support in advocating for their future.

APPROACH

Open Communities has created a series of four workshops integrating the principle of racial equity in 5 housing areas. These workshops aim to empower individuals and communities impacted by discriminatory housing policies to become community advocates and leaders. By increasing advocacy, we will reduce the number of evictions in Cook County, decrease housing voucher discrimination, improve access to sustainable housing, and support community asset building.

NEXT STEPS

Over the next year, Open Communities will host housing equity trainings that have a racial equity lens every quarter. Participants will complete all 17 sessions offered by Open Communities. At the end of the trainings, participants will be able to advocate independently or assist Open Communities fight for racial equity and housing justice in their communities. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Open Communities will host trainings in Chicago, and throughout the North Shore. If you are interested in having us host a training, or learning more about the project contact jasemen@open-communities.org.



Jasemen Hatcher is the Senior Housing Counselor/ Landlord Tenant Liaison at Open Communities. At Open Communities, she works alongside the dedicated staff fighting for affordable and equitable housing. Open Communities' mission is to educate, advocate and organize to promote just and inclusive communities. We seek to eradicate housing discrimination, in all of its forms and against all persons, because of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, disability, familial status, or source of income. Quality housing is a human right; fair housing is the law.

JASEMEN HATCHER



Danielle McCain has proudly dedicated her career to fighting for and giving voice to underserved and marginalized individuals and communities. Her remarkable work as a civil rights lawyer and social justice advocate spans law firms, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions. With visionary leadership and her trademark versatility, McCain strategically navigates places and spaces with the imperative of leaving them more diverse, inclusive, equitable, and just. She is currently an adjunct professor at John Marshall Law School and is developing research on housing discrimination with the Fair Housing Legal Support Center.

UNTOLD DAMAGES: The Mental and Emotional Toll of Housing Discrimination on Survivors

By Danielle McCain, Civil Rights Attorney and Educator

CHALLENGE

In 2015, my family experienced racial discrimination in our search for a single family home. The ways, mentally and emotionally, that we experienced housing discrimination made me a more convicted, determined, and passionate advocate. It also planted the seeds for this project.

Chicago has a well-documented history of segregation. Fifty years after the Fair Housing Act and despite efforts by various organizations, Chicago continues to experience high rates of housing discrimination (with most discriminatory cases being based on race, source of income, and disability), there have only been negligible shifts in our neighborhoods.

The stronghold of segregation in Chicago is deeply rooted in its long history of housing discrimination and limiting the freedom of movement for people of color, the disabled, voucher holders and other marginalized communities. Despite this, research about the negative impact of racism and

discrimination generally on mental and emotional health that has been conducted over the years has focused broadly on major-events (ex. loss of a job) and more recently in the context of daily life (ex. micro-aggressions). However, this project concentrates specifically on housing discrimination and looks directly into its impact on mental and emotional health.

APPROACH

This project explores the narratives of individuals and families that have experienced housing discrimination in Chicago. In this project we:

- Collaborate with fair housing organizations to identify housing discrimination survivors and conduct interviews with them
- Collect qualitative data during the interviews with a particular emphasis on the mental and emotional aspect of their injuries
- Use the qualitative data as the launching point for further research and gathering of quantitative data

As a result, we are comprehensively documenting and providing evidence of the depth of mental and emotional injuries suffered by housing discrimination victims. We want to use this project and further research as a resource that can be used by legal advocates to support higher settlements and damage awards in fair housing cases.

NEXT STEPS

Findings from this project will first raise

“Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God’s children.”

**–Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
1966, Chicago Solider Field Stadium as part of the Chicago Open Housing Movement**

awareness, and second, provide evidence to begin translating the mental health consequences of housing discrimination for application in actual cases. Traditionally damage awards in fair housing cases have been low comparative to damage awards in other areas of tort law. One of the intended outcomes of this project is to build a body of research that supports greater damages for victims. Therefore, evidence from this study will provide the information needed to inform the fair housing community, the legal community, including courts and juries, and the general public about the detrimental effects of housing discrimination on health. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: untolddamages@gmail.com

WE CRY IN SILENCE:

Unpacking African-American Male Mental Health

By Maurice Robinson, Co-Founder & CEO at Rallyus.pro, and Principal of QM Strategies

CHALLENGE

Here's what we know: African-American men are the most incarcerated demographic in the United States. There are a number of programs for returning male citizens, but where are the readily accessible safe spaces and preventive initiatives for African-American men who have experienced trauma? Many African-American men have witnessed or been the victim of some type of recurring violence. Many have experienced sexual abuse, which is often unreported due to family dynamics, potential public shame, social constructs and/or personal conflicts.

APPROACH

First I'd like to make the distinction between Black and African-American males. I am using the term "African-American" specifically referring to American descendants of slaves or #ADOS. The term Black can be designated for those of darker hue regardless of race, nationality or country of origin. Many studies find

“African-American men are often socially overlooked in terms of mental health. How does the mental health of African-American men impact African-American communities?”

that most men who are abused become abusers themselves. In the African-American community, however, it is believed that rather than becoming sexual predators, men who have been abused tend to project their hurt with violence, homophobia, anti-social behavior, and misogyny. When it comes to gun, emotional, or physical vio-

lence, African-American men are often the victim AND the perpetrator. Those behaviors cause a domino effect that leads to depression and anxiety. The result, murder rates, depressed housing markets, absence and lack of resources, skewed statistics, and even the suicide rates, may be the result of generational, untreated traumas experienced by African-American men.

African-American children commit suicide twice as much as white children. Moreover, of the all suicides across demographics within the African-American community, men accounted for 80% of all suicide cases between 2012 and 2018. What other conditions in the last ten years have contributed to this outcome? There are many factors that contribute to this disparity. Most importantly, we have to redefine the meaning and perception of depression in African-American communities and how lack of services contribute to these statistics. Beyond suicide and depression, the outward social behaviors have lasting generational consequences and often go unexplored and under-treated.

NEXT STEPS

We will examine many factors that are triggers for African-American men via a series of discussions culminating with a live radio discussion with mental health professionals, and survivors sharing their experiences. A live radio experience lends a voice to those willing to share their experience comfortably without being seen. As a simulcast, we are able to reach a wider audience and collect questions from the internet. We hope this leads to legislation, outreach, and more awareness regarding African-American mental health. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: domesticabuse.org, Sarah's Inn, The Resilience, suicidology.org



Maurice Robinson is the Co-Founder & CEO of Rally-us.pro, and Principal of QM Strategies. A native of the Austin community on Chicago's West Side, Maurice has been an active figure in social activism via the arts for over 10 years. As a member of the ensemble cast of the R.E.D.I Foundation (redifoundation.org) for 6 years, 70,000 youth have been impacted by their work related to mental health.



Megan Brand, MS Ed, NBCT is an educator, organizer, parent, and community builder. She has spent 20 years working alongside children and families from all walks of life, through both schools and community organizations. Megan currently serves as co-founder of Speak Up, a non-profit working to mobilize schools and families to disrupt systemic racism and white supremacy by talking explicitly with children about race. Speak Up provides teacher professional development, parent education, and consulting focused on racial equity and anti-bias education. Connect with Megan and learn more at chicagospreakup.org.

FROM “COLOR-BLIND” TO COLOR-BOLD: An REIA at Peirce Elementary

By Megan Brand, Co-founder of Speak Up



CHALLENGE

Like many other schools in Chicago, Peirce Elementary School is experiencing significant racial inequities. Located in Andersonville, Peirce’s student population is 44% Hispanic, 33% White, 11% Black, 6% Asian, and 6% other. While the school excels on the citywide schools report card, leaders at the school are deeply concerned that Black and Latino students are scoring 30-50 percentile points lower

on math and reading tests than White and Asian students at the school.

APPROACH

I partnered with Peirce Elementary School to conduct a Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) to ensure that students of color receive an excellent education and experience. We want to shift the school culture, policies, and practices from being “color-blind” to being color-bold by naming our country’s history of racism, reflecting on racial identities and experiences, and prioritizing racial equity. Our goal is for Peirce to become a model for effectively disrupting racism and eliminating school-based racial inequities. The REIA process included 20 one-on-ones, 6 Parent Race & Culture Group meetings, a parent survey, 3 committee meetings, 5 focus groups for parents of students of color, 3 rounds of Speak Up’s 7-week anti-racism course, and an all-staff survey. Over 150 stakeholders contributed and we had a total of over 400 points of contact.

Over 80% of both families and staff reported a positive overall experience at Peirce. However, families of color also reported experiencing exclusionary practices, inadequate responses to concerns, stereotyped curriculum, weekly micro-aggressions, teachers dismissing students’ questions or disciplining students unfairly, and racial slurs and bullying. Some teachers and staff shared these concerns, although many did not notice a problem. Both

“The white kids ask my Hispanic looking girl how she is getting A’s if she (the white girl) did not do that well. They are saying that she doesn’t deserve to get good grades because of her color.” –Latina Parent

parents and some teachers emphasized the need for more teacher and parent training on bias and race, fairer discipline, racially representative curriculum, consistent reporting and responses to racial incidents, and continuing this process of examining racial inequities.

NEXT STEPS

Peirce will now launch an intensive long-term Racial Equity Initiative driven by an interdisciplinary Racial Equity Team that includes administrator, teacher, staff, parent, and student representatives. As part of the launch, parents of color want to create a video about their experiences at Peirce to share with teachers, parents, and students the beginning of next year with the intent of starting wider community dialogue. The administration, local school council, and various parent committees will also begin to implement specific school policy recommendations in collaboration with the community. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: chicagospeakup.org, peirce.cps.edu, www.facebook.com/chicagospeakup, antibiaseducator@gmail.com

WHO GETS TO WORK? WHO HAS TO LEAVE?

Using an REIA to organize for workers' and residents' rights

By Leone Jose Bicchieri, Founder and Executive Director at Working Family Solidarity

CHALLENGE

In Chicago, low and moderate-income families, especially African American and Latin@, face unemployment, underemployment, and lack of affordable housing. These demons cause hardship and displacement of families, and they disproportionately impact families of color. Thousands of Latin@ families have been pushed out of Pilsen over the years, and overall in Chicago, over 200,000 African Americans have been forced to leave the city in the past decade and-a-half. This push often happens in areas with empty buildings and empty lots, which are then turned into either exploitative factories, or upscale establishments—neither of which help local working families to secure good jobs.

APPROACH

The geographic area impacted by this project are the communities of Pilsen



and Little Village, where most residents are low and moderate income Latin@s, and North Lawndale, where the majority of residents are low and moderate income African Americans. At 19th & Washtenaw, where these three communities meet, workers began fighting for decent wages & better working conditions in 2018. This campaign accelerated when local

ABOVE: Workers outside one factory at 19th & Washtenaw, after talking with other workers and community members about our campaign for racial equity and economic justice.

In Chicago, families of color are being forced out of our homes, our neighborhoods, our city. At 19th & Washtenaw, where three neighborhoods meet, we began to fight back.

residents began pushing back against the local factory's emission of toxic chemicals.

As workers, ex-workers, and community members began to unite, the Community-Labor Justice Campaign was born to fight for good and accessible jobs, environmental safety, and to reduce housing displacement. Since the SW corner of the City's Planned Manufacturing District #7 is attracting new companies to the empty buildings and lots, we are working to ensure that these are good jobs, but also that protect against discrimination in the hiring process. We are using the Racial Equity Impact Assessment as a tool to support organizing and to find solutions that prioritize equitable development.

NEXT STEPS

We have begun to meet with the local Alderperson alongside groups fighting for good local jobs like the Manufacturing Renaissance, and to reach out to businesses who are coming to the area. As we work to finish the REIA this summer, we will begin to promote the idea of a Community Benefits Agreement for this area. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: www.workingfamilysolidarity.org;
Facebook: Working Family Solidarity



Leone Jose Bicchieri is the Founding Executive Director of Working Family Solidarity (WFS), a non-profit organization based in Chicago, working to unite low & moderate income families, especially African American and Latin@, in several neighborhoods of Chicago. Leone has 30 years of experience organizing for racial and economic justice in various parts of the U.S., and in other countries, and he has coordinated both local and national-level campaigns. WFS carries out Racial Unity Dialogues, Know Your Rights workshops (on labor, housing, and related issues), and organizes specific Community Justice Campaigns.

LEONE JOSE BICCHIERI



Loreen became a Healthy Homes Organizer with the Metropolitan Tenants Organization in 2007 to pilot Chicago's first primary prevention lead poisoning program. She has since earned a Masters of Science in Public Health and now chairs the MTO Board of Directors. Loreen currently works as a scientist at the US EPA, is co-chair of the South Side branch of the Chicago Democratic Socialists of America, and is an ensemble member of PREACH, an all-POC spoken-word/improv group.

ASSESSING HOUSING QUALITY: A Racial Equity Check-Up

By Loreen Targos, Board Chair at the Metropolitan Tenants Organization



MTO tenant leaders celebrate organizing successes in their building

CHALLENGE

Chicago faces an ongoing housing crisis – not only in areas of accessibility & affordability, but habitability and stability. The Metropolitan Tenants Organization (MTO) receives thousands of phone calls a year from tenants who face dangerous and unhealthy housing conditions, and tenants who face tremendous obstacles simply trying to ensure their homes have the met the most basic housing standards. These disparities are stark across racial groups, with Black and Latino communities disproportionately bearing the burden of these inequities. As such, any policy solution to address the quality of housing should center racial equity to ensure these disparities do not persist in the reforms we seek.

APPROACH

MTO is working in coalition with stakeholders to create policy that aims to eliminate disparities in the housing quality renters face, called the Chicago Healthy Homes Check-Up Program. The goal of this policy would be to address the quality of housing in a way that decreases racial disparities in access to quality housing. Given this goal, we are working to center the tenants most likely to be impacted by this legislation by conducting a Racial Equity Impact Assessment. By engaging voices often marginalized when it comes to having a say in the state of their housing, we plan for this REIA to:

- Identify current vulnerabilities that allow housing disparities in rental housing to persist, and
- How those vulnerabilities will be diminished or exacerbated by this policy proposal.

“A just city is a city with the political courage to ensure everyone has a place that is safe, decent, and healthy to call home.”

NEXT STEPS

As a result of this work, we will complete a Racial Equity Impact Assessment that identifies the complexities that have allowed these disparities in housing quality to persist and worsen, and provide clarity in the ways in which this policy may affect these disparities. Positive outcomes of the REIA can inform policy makers not only in Chicago, but across the nation as we see divestment from housing stock for working class people and families. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: tenants-rights.org

CLOSING THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP: An Analysis of Mortgage Lending Practices

By Isaias Solis, Director of Programs at the Latin United Community Housing Association (LUCHA)

CHALLENGE

Fifty years after the federal Fair Housing Act banned racial discrimination in lending, African-Americans and Latinos continue to be routinely denied conventional mortgage loans at rates far higher than their white counterparts. This modern-day redlining persisted in 61 metro areas even when controlling for applicants' income, loan amount and neighborhood, according to millions of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act records analyzed by The Center for Investigative Reporting. Additionally, an Institute for Policy Studies recent report showed that between 1983 and 2013, the wealth of the median black household declined 75 percent (from \$6,800 to \$1,700), and the median Latino household declined 50 percent (from \$4,000 to \$2,000). At the same time, wealth for the median white household increased 14 percent from \$102,000 to \$116,800.



APPROACH

LUCHA works to address the racial wealth gap by increasing home ownership in the geographic communities of Chicago and the outer suburbs. We know from both the quantitative data above and the lived experiences of many of our clients that mortgage lending practices have significantly transformed since redlining was a formal practice. To address this, LUCHA will conduct a Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) of mortgage lending practices, as well as local lender overall approach to lending and community investment. This REIA will compile expert insights, community input, and data into a comprehensive report with recommendations to lenders, lender regulators, and the general public.

“The deep and persistent racial wealth divide will not close without bold, structural reform. It has been created and held in place by public policies that have evolved with time including slavery, Jim Crow, red lining, mass incarceration, among many others.”

– Institute for Policy Studies

NEXT STEPS

By July 2019, LUCHA will convene a steering committee, which at a minimum will consist of experts in mortgage lending, affordable housing, community and economic development, finance, community reinvestment, and real estate, to explore the issues, analyze data, and generate initial thoughts and a model for broader community discussion. Throughout September 2019, LUCHA will host community conversations throughout Chicago to introduce community stakeholders to the key components of the REIA and develop both short and long-term recommendations to address disparities in mortgage lending practices. ★

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA): <https://www.ffiec.gov/hmda/default.htm>
- Racial Wealth Gap Report: http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/RacialWealthGap_1.pdf



Isaias Solis currently serves as the Director of Programs for the Latin United Community Housing Association (LUCHA), a HUD-Approved Housing Counseling Agency and Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO). He possesses a combined 15 years of service in education, government, non-profit, public health and health center operations. His work can be summarized by his commitment to equity and ensuring that opportunity is afforded to members of our society who face systemic and institutional barriers to achieving self-sufficiency.

ISAIAS SOLIS

We would like to recognize JPMorgan Chase for their generous support in sponsoring the 2019 Equity Playbook and the 2019 Fellowship Showcase.

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

The CUE Fellowship is made possible with grant support from the Chicago Community Trust, Conant Family Foundation, Field Foundation, JP Morgan Chase, and individual donors like you.

Go to chicagounitedforequity.org/invest to invest in a just, equitable, and inclusive Chicago.



THE CHICAGO
COMMUNITY TRUST
AND AFFILIATES

CONANT FAMILY FOUNDATION



THE
FIELD
FOUNDATION
OF ILLINOIS

CUE partners and is also fiscally sponsored by Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights



CHICAGO
LAWYERS'
COMMITTEE
for Civil Rights

For additional resources on how to implement REIAs, run organizational assessments, and to stay updated on our progress, please visit us at chicagounitedforequity.org.



CHICAGO UNITED FOR EQUITY

