

NEW IDEAS

RECOVERY TOWARDS EQUITY



2022 CHICAGO MAYORAL FELLOWS

"I envision Chicago as a place where people, businesses, and communities thrive, and where all residents can live in healthy, safe communities and feel a sense of belonging."

MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

DIRECTORS' NOTE

Fellows,

Congratulations on working in the summer of no mandates! We are excited to have things (almost) back to normal so you can truly experience a Chicago summer. You have all done an exceptional job and have all gone beyond the extra mile. You are all brilliant, passionate, and dedicated, and we have enjoyed getting to know you this summer.

You have worked on a wide range of exciting and important projects over the past eleven weeks. You supported the implementation of the Chicago Recovery Plan and helped us move forward projects like the Chicago Resilient Communities cash assistance pilot, Community Development Grants for small businesses, and a 211 line to connect residents with social services. You contributed to the City's focus on sustainability through investigating charging stations for electric vehicles, researching sustainable practices for Chicago's film industry, and helping to effectively communicate Chicago's climate investments.

You helped make the City run better by proposing ways the Department of Streets and Sanitation could improve the snow removal process, enhancing our data and dashboards to improve transparency, and you supported the City's equity work through engaging departments in creating Equity Action Plans, conducting policy research for the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development plan, and working on equity-focused safety and violence reduction initiatives. From organizing Know Your Rights trainings for youth, to planning the Chicago Investor's Conference, to tracking federal policy, to analyzing data on youth out-of-school-time programming, to ensuring critical public health information gets communicated to the public your work has truly made a difference for Chicago's residents.

We hope that as you look back on your time in the Mayor's Office, you realize how much the many projects you worked on and the innovative ideas presented in this book will continue to move the city forward. The New Ideas Book is a culmination of your work this summer and should be considered for implementation by the City of Chicago.

We are proud of you for completing one of the most demanding programs in the country. You offered diligent and thoughtful work and were always willing to step in and help with any situation. You asked thoughtful questions throughout the Speaker Series that the Commissioners enjoyed answering. Through all the Talks and Tours, you saw firsthand how things get done in each department and how they work together.

We hope that your time here has been an experience that you will never forget. You have been an exceptional group with so much talent. We have all enjoyed having you here and working with you this summer, and we know that you will continue to excel in all that you do and succeed in your future endeavors.

MARGARET GACH

Director of Mayoral Fellows

MARGARET DECKER

Recovery Team Program Manager

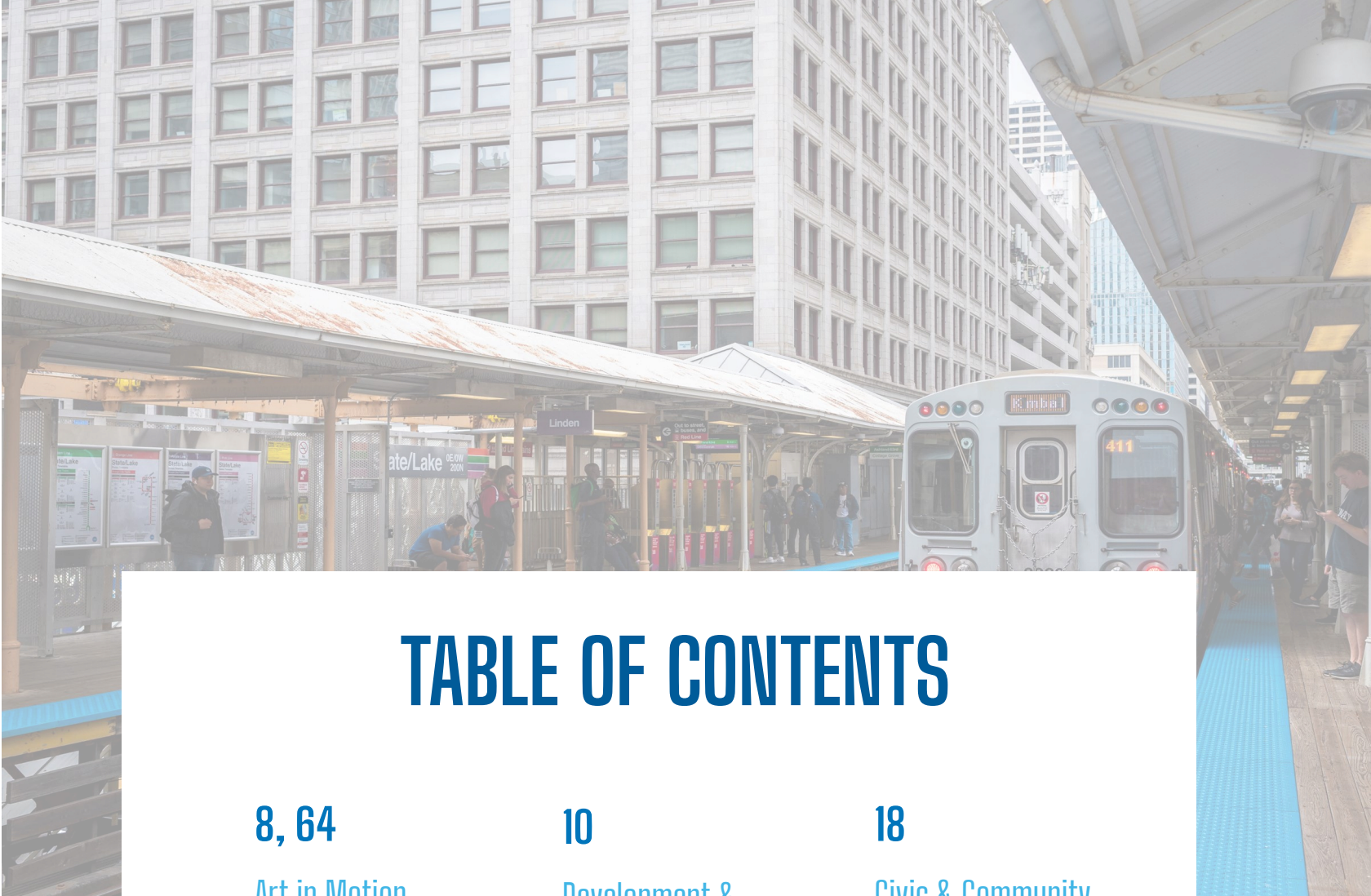


TABLE OF CONTENTS

8, 64

Art in Motion

Inspiration for the 2022 New
Ideas Book from ASM

10

Development &
Environment

18

Civic & Community
Engagement

26

Public Health &
Safety

34

Housing &
Neighborhoods

42

Arts, Culture &
Lifelong Learning

50

References &
Acknowledgements

54

Meet the Fellows!









DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT

CITY OF MORE SHOULDERS



Incentivizing Urban Density while Protecting Neighborhood Integrity

Jason Shain

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Urban density may be the world's best hope for prosperity. A 10% increase in population density is associated with a corresponding increase in technological innovation.¹ Urban compactness increases social mobility up to 41%.² High density cities also operate at a fourth of the carbon cost of lower density cities.³

Chicago's overall growth is a fifth that of the fastest growing cities⁴ driven by double-digit population loss on the South and West Sides.⁵ By addressing declining population density, Chicago can stimulate investment in the South and West Sides. At the same time, Chicago needs to protect residents in those neighborhoods. Leveraging increased density to attract needed investment in the South and West sides and using policy instruments to ensure affordability will allow new and current residents to take advantage of the benefits of living in Chicago. Failing to do so risks continual contraction and disinvestment.

HOW IT WORKS

This proposal has been tested through Tulsa Remote,⁶ a \$10K cash payment to move to Tulsa which has been repeated each year since 2019.⁷ The added spending is on pace for an estimated gain of 5,000 new full-time jobs by 2025.⁸

1. A new resident would move to Chicago and agree to stay for five years in specified community areas in return for a cash payment. Specified areas would be those with population loss, transit density, and significant vacant space.

- Chicago would need to work to combat gentrification. Some techniques include priority for former residents wanting to return; using gained density to market to grocery or retail operators; and working with neighborhood-based developers to increase supply and minimize displacement.

- Rules changes that could help include Class 7 (a) or (b) Incentives⁹ to reduce real estate tax or SBIF¹⁰ to provide building funds to current local businesses or to new residents who want to start a business in the community; property rules such as High Density Housing Overlay Zoning;¹¹ or extending the Woodlawn Preservation Ordinance¹² to keep property affordable for current residents and to discourage third-party property acquisition.

2. A workable cost to Chicago per new resident over five years is \$24.8K, derived as a five-year property tax waiver discounted for inflation.¹³ A cash payment would be \$3.2K cheaper than a property tax waiver as property taxes are outpacing inflation by .2%.¹⁴ The average Tulsa Remote resident had a salary 1.4x the Tulsa median.¹⁵ Adjusted to Chicago, a new resident would have a median salary of \$85K.¹⁶ Assuming median cost of living of \$3K and combined City tax of 10.25%, at five years per resident, the city is net negative 6K. At seven years, Chicago has more than broken even.

NEXT STEPS

- Identify contracting community areas that offer vacant space, transit density, and geographic proximity to the downtown area.
- Identify grocery and retail partners to open in chosen community areas.
- Identify private partners to share funding and open employment for new residents.
- Plan civic engagement events for new residents. Tie community development and involvement to advertising.



A SAFER COMMUTE HOME

Linking CPD to CTA ‘L’ Stations for Effective Crime Response

Maria Ralenkotter and Grant Beard

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT

Crime on the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) has worsened in recent years. Last year, there were 624 violent crimes – since last year and 39% since 2015 – on trains and buses.¹ This has ignited debate about the need for additional police oversight on the CTA, but the cost and time needed to create an agency-specific police force has made action unlikely in the short-term.² As an alternative to police presence, many college campuses have developed cell phone applications to help students report crime, thereby triggering a police response.³ However, that solution would not be useful for many riders, including tourists unfamiliar with an app and low-income or elderly residents lacking smart phones.

Instead, CTA should work with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) to adapt another safety program used across college campuses – the blue emergency light system – with the aim of increasing speed, accuracy, and effectiveness of police response to CTA crime across the system. That, in turn, should increase CTA ridership as riders feel safer at all hours of day and night.

HOW IT WORKS

Once fully implemented, there would be at least one emergency light with a direct connection to police dispatchers on each ‘L’ platform across the entire system. These emergency lights would withstand inclement weather and provide accurate location data to dispatchers when activated by riders during an emergency. Their presence would provide a quicker, more equitable response from patrol officers as the riders who contact dispatchers are able to do so without using a cell phone and can do so discreetly. It would also decrease pressure on CPD, as officer manpower can be optimized towards response instead of being deployed to monitor platforms alongside unarmed observers. Furthermore, emergency lights would be a more cost-effective

way to address crime than developing a CTA police force, as, apart from the \$7,500 cost to install each unit, each blue light costs approximately \$200 per year to maintain.⁴

NEXT STEPS

- Reach out to local universities that use emergency lights and capture best practices
- Assess existing ‘L’ platforms to determine optimal emergency light placement
- Create a priority list of ‘L’ stations based on crime trends for pilot effort
- Collaborate with CPD on process mapping and staffing to address anticipated demand for officer response
- Explore and determine best funding method (e.g., CTA, CPD, joint) for the initiative
- Assess results from pilot, make decision on initiative expansion throughout and across lines

MINORITY & WOMEN BUSINESS SURETY BONDING



Addressing Contracting and Bidding Inequities in Infrastructure

Grace Muth

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

With recent sign-off on the next installment of Chicago's Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan, additional projects planned under the Mayor's Chicago Works initiatives, and in conjunction with the federal \$1.2 trillion infrastructure law, Chicago has more access to infrastructure capital than any time in decades. These initiatives "will place a high priority on using minority, women-owned and locally owned businesses."¹ Taken together—the available capital alongside the public commitment to contracting equity—a major opportunity exists to transform the landscape of how many small and diverse construction firms access public contracts.

Chicago's Minority and Women-owned Business (M/WBE) Procurement Program, one of the oldest in the country, works to promote contracting opportunities with the city. However, despite commitments to equitable contracting policies, the City of Chicago Disparity Study for Construction Contracts finds "qualitative and quantitative evidence that race or gender continue to significantly impede M/WBEs' full and fair opportunities to compete for City construction prime contracts and associated subcontracts."²

A major obstacle that prevents M/WBE firms from seeking city contracts is a barrier to obtaining working capital. For any public construction project, firms are required to secure bonds up to \$1M, often from private banks. Specifically, "among M/WBEs, almost a third (32.1 percent) reported barriers to obtaining surety bonding services."

However, due to the lack of financial and work history in smaller firms, as well as historically discriminatory practices in financial institutions, smaller firms are often denied. This high bonding requirement prevents M/WBE companies (which are more likely to face these financial barriers) from even bidding for city projects.

HOW IT WORKS

Implement a Minority and Women Business Bonding Program to provide bid, performance, and payment surety bonds to M/WBE that are unable to

obtain bonding through standard surety companies. Other localities have implemented programs—including the Illinois Tollway, New York, and Los Angeles—creating Minority/Women bonding fund programs (or their equivalent). Los Angeles established their minority bonding program in 2005, in partnership with a private company, which develops a greater number of competitive bids and "generates significant cost savings to the City."³

Using Ohio's Minority Bonding Fund Program as a framework for Chicago's policy, a maximum bonding line prequalification limit would be imposed, with an option of requiring small premiums for each bond secured, based off the face value of the bond.⁴

In addition to the surety bonding portion of the program, resources must be made available for the technical and financial training that is currently lacking for many smaller firms. Supplemental would be the creation of a Prime Partnership Program, which would provide networking facilitation between smaller M/WBE businesses (who often serve as subcontractors) and larger, more established construction firms (often serving as the prime contractor).

NEXT STEPS

- Consult M/WBE Surety Bond programs in other localities to determine adaptability to Chicago
- Collaborate with existing organizations providing surety bond assistance to Chicagoans to determine potential for public-private partnership implementation
- Establish the legal prerequisites under city ordinances for implementation
- Explore whether current funding mechanism of the Five-Year Capital Plan, through General Obligation (GO) bonds, as well as any Federal or State funding received by the City for infrastructure projects, could apply to this project



GOING BACK TO THE SOIL

Community Hubs for Composting, Cooking and Bonding

Santiago Silva and Jason Shain

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Modern food consumption offers abundance for some, but is paired with waste and residue that we rarely see. It is estimated that 30 to 40% of the U.S.' food supply is wasted,¹ and that waste produces 170 million metric tons of carbon dioxide—equal to 42 coal-fired power plants.² This translates to a loss of millions of gallons of water, fuel, and labor. To preserve our quality of life, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and our abundance of food, we must change our relationship to the food-waste cycle as active participants. Chicago is launching a neighborhood composting pilot, by installing drop-off sites for organic residue in community gardens across the city. To ensure that all of Chicago's community areas experience the benefits of composting cost efficiency and connection to their food, it is imperative that we consider what an expanded and integrated composting system looks like. The pilot can be expanded to create full community hubs around composting, farming, and food. Community farming hubs could both provide nutritious food and foster social bonds. We believe Chicagoans can play a more active role in the cycle of food, and by providing them with proper infrastructure, the City can strengthen the sense of community, while making them more conscientious about the waste they produce, the food they eat and the soil that provides it.

HOW IT WORKS

We propose connecting the composting pilot to a more ambitious Food Community Hub pilot. Community Gardens participating in the composting pilot are already involving community in the proper management and utilization of organic waste, as well as producing food locally for the consumption of the neighbors. This could be extended to food processing by hosting Community Kitchens across the composting sites. Neighbors would sign up to participate in any part of the process: disposing their organic residue properly; using compost to

grow and farm produce in the garden; or preparing meals in the kitchen. For this purpose, the City should fund the construction and supply of community kitchens, starting with a pilot of a kitchen in one of the five composting locations in the City's pilot. The construction should be funded through a grant which would be awarded to the most compelling proposal of community kitchen among the five locations. Community kitchens should, at least once a week, serve free meals for the community, using as a primary source the harvest of the community garden. The City should provide basic supplies periodically.

In the future, we would expect to see the pilot extended to the rest of the city. Chicago has dozens of Community Gardens connected through the Chicago Parks Department. The current composting pilot should be extended to make compost available to every garden. Further, using each garden as an organic waste drop-off and compost pickup site would enable coverage of much of Chicago. Use of compost at each garden could create community hubs, where community kitchens serve as spaces for strengthening of community ties and fostering solidarity in the neighborhoods.

NEXT STEPS

- Establish a grant for the construction, adequation and equipment of a community kitchen, allowing 5 composting locations to submit proposals for community kitchens at their sites.
- Award the grant to the best proposal and start the pilot of Community Kitchens.
- Extend decentralized organic waste pick-up and drop off to each of Chicago's Community Gardens through the Chicago Parks Department.³
- Distribute organic residue bins throughout Chicago initially focusing on areas around Community Gardens.

1,000 SMALL BUSINESSES PROGRAM

Fostering Equitable Small Business Development in Chicago



Grant Beard and Sarah Figgatt

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced businesses, particularly those in heavily impacted industries, to shift their strategies to address issues like supply chain disruptions, mandatory closures, and labor shortages. Unfortunately, though billions in relief funding have been spent to assist businesses coming out of the pandemic, Black- and Latino-owned businesses have endured disproportionately negative impacts.¹ While business ownership has begun to rebound in the past year, racial disparities in investment and business vitality remain.²

Cumulatively, Black and Latino residents constitute nearly 60 percent of Chicago's population, while only owning roughly 13 percent of the city's businesses; this disparity speaks to disinvestment in those communities.³ Therefore, developing a 1,000 Small Businesses (1KSB) program – modelled after Goldman Sachs' successful 10,000 Small Businesses program – would address a significant need among the small business community within the city while working towards the equitable economic goals outlined in the We Will Chicago policy agenda.

HOW IT WORKS

Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) should build upon the success Goldman Sachs has seen with its program while narrowing the focus to equitable economic development among the Chicago small business community. Similarly, it should centralize existing City initiatives such as the COVID-19 Small Business Support Program, which awarded funding to nonprofits that provide technical support and training to small businesses, and the Vendor Impact Fund, which gives minority-owned vendors and contractors priority access to affordable financing.⁴

The 1KSB program would partner with a third-party agency to lead cohorts of small business owners through a curriculum tailored to aid in the establishment or expansion of small businesses in the city

with emphasis on those businesses in historically disinvested communities or owned and operated by those with marginalized identities. In doing so, lessons in business fundamentals and growth strategy created through partnership with local business school partners would be paired with mentorship from consultants offering pro bono services. Following the end of formal instruction, program operators would connect small business owners to the Neighborhood Business Development Centers (NBDC) for further one-on-one assistance.

NEXT STEPS

- Interview contacts with 10,000 Small Businesses Program to capture best practices
- Collaborate with Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to define criteria to prioritize and assess cohort applicants
- Determine optimal cohort size, funding structure, and program timeline to ensure sustainability as program scales
- Reach out to (local) universities to enlist support in development of program curriculum
- Launch RFP process to contract third-party agency to administer curriculum
- Connect with consulting firms and other organizations to assess feasibility of receiving pro bono mentorship services for the program
- Launch pilot effort of 15 small businesses, assess results before decision on citywide expansion



BUSINESS FRONT-END NAVIGATION REFRESH

An Interactive Permitting and Licensing Tool for Entrepreneurs

Grant Beard

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Small businesses are critical for fostering economic development across communities in Chicago. In 2021, nearly 200,000 businesses were created in Illinois,¹ and Chicago has distinguished itself as one of the country's top cities for start-ups.² Various departments are part of the City's permitting and licensing process. The Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) offers sites and support staff members to assist entrepreneurs with one element of business creation: issuing business licenses. However, the number of sites and departments involved in getting a business started in the city can feel overwhelming due to its decentralized nature.

To increase transparency and ease for entrepreneurs applying for permits and licensing while decreasing the administrative burden on City staff, BACP should launch a new comprehensive tool that provides a seamless, digital end-to-end process for launching a new business.

HOW IT WORKS

The comprehensive tool would comprise components tied to zoning, permitting, licensing, and business incentives. As entrepreneurs begin to use the tool, they would be able to view a list of properties on a citywide map (updated to reflect the latest zoning codes) in which they could start their business. After selecting a desired location – or indicating a business type without a fixed location – the entrepreneurs would then answer a series of questions and receive a full list of city, county, and/or state licensing requirements with which their business must comply.

The tool would then allow users to see the full scope and costs of business permitting and licensing, with entrepreneurs able to provide payment to the City online while following their applications' progress via an interactive dashboard. Similarly, entrepreneurs would also have access to an updat-

ed database of business incentives offered by the city, county, and/or state and be able to visualize their application progress via a separate dashboard. This tool would build upon existing examples from the State of New York and services provided by OpenCounter while being fully integrated into City systems.

NEXT STEPS

- Identify full set of permitting, licensing requirements for businesses and city, state, and federal incentives in collaboration with the Department of Buildings (DOB), Department of Planning and Development (DPD), and other stakeholder departments
- Establish baseline metrics around ease of use, City staff involvement, and time commitment for current new business launches
- Conduct user experience testing of tools among sample of small businesses
- Assess feasibility and costs of building a new comprehensive tool integrated across departments before deciding on an internal or external creation effort



CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**REGISTER
TO VOTE**

GA.ART



EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS



Reforming the Remote Public Comment Process

Clare Fisher

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

To increase equity and to create effective local policies, it should be effortless and appealing to provide public comment at government meetings. Although our democratic systems grant citizens the opportunity to voice their opinions in these meetings, our societal structures prevent the most disadvantaged from having the capacity to attend and advocate for themselves. Instead, people with more disposable time and income are often the ones able to participate in local politics.

In Chicago, the current process for making a remote public comment on City Council proceedings is burdensome for residents that have limited free time outside of work and/or caretaking.

The day before a City Council meeting, Chicagoans must call the Sergeant-at-Arms and leave a voicemail with their phone number. On the day of the meeting, “the Sergeant-at-Arms will contact each selected participant at the telephone number provided, and give them instructions to access the meeting, including a telephone number and passcode. The Sergeant-at-Arms will only make one attempt to call the selected participant; if there is no live response, the selection is forfeited [...]”¹ This is highly inefficient and too arduous of a process to promote equitable public input. Many Chicagoans are unavailable during City Council meeting times, so they are not able to participate in this process. Others who are available may take time out of their schedule to provide a comment, but in the end, are not randomly selected by the Sergeant-at-Arms to do so during the allotted 30-minute public comment period.

HOW IT WORKS

The City of Chicago should provide another format for public comment to allow more Chicagoans to have their voices heard by City Council— recorded messages. From 12:01 AM the Monday before the scheduled meeting until 8:00 AM on the day before the scheduled meeting, individuals could call the existing Sergeant-at-Arms phone number and leave

a voicemail with their comment. The voicemail length would be limited to three minutes, which is the maximum time allotted for an individual public comment according to City Council Rule 58.² The Sergeant-at-Arms can select a phone number at random from the submissions and play that voicemail recording during the City Council session. Importantly, this new feature would uphold the integrity of the Sergeant-at-Arms’ process for public comment, since recordings could be screened in advance for inappropriate content.

Recorded comments are a great option for Chicagoans with family and work commitments to provide feedback in their own words and on their own time. This change to the existing public comment process would be a small but important step to ensure that underrepresented voices are heard in Chicago city government.

NEXT STEPS

- The Mayor’s Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs consults with the City Council Sergeant-at-Arms and the Department of Assets, Information and Services to assess technology requirements for recorded public comment via voicemail.
- The Mayor’s Office meets with the City Council Sergeant-at-Arms and the Chairperson of the Committee on Committees and Rules to propose adding a recorded public comment process to Sergeant-at-Arms protocol and infrastructure. (If an official amendment to City Council Rules of Order is required, the Mayor’s Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs can liaise with a member(s) of City Council to propose an ordinance to reform the public comment process during the Committee on Committees and Rules.)
- After the Sergeant-at-Arms protocol is updated (or an ordinance is passed), the Mayor’s Office and the Chicago Office of City Clerk announce the new process and promote a step-by-step guide for recording a public comment on their social media platforms.



INTERNAL KNOWLEDGE REPOSITORY

Facilitating Knowledge Sharing Across City Departments

Shobitha Cherian and Natalie Brown

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The City of Chicago conducts all its operations through its 35 city departments and various sister agencies each of which has a wide range of projects, initiatives, and responsibilities in its purview, with several new programs being rolled out on a regular basis. With over 30,000 staff members working on unique and novel projects daily, documenting learnings, challenges and successes across departments is extremely important to help build knowledge and capacity within the city.¹ There are several benefits to fostering a practice of writing down initiatives that one has worked on. Listing the steps involved in bringing a project to fruition, helps provide clarity on progress that has been made. Promoting knowledge-sharing amongst staff, particularly for new-hires, cuts the need to re-invent the wheel. Sharing lessons learned and milestones reached increases pride and confidence in city staff's work.

HOW IT WORKS

The knowledge repository would exist as an internal staff website based on broad themes that staff encounter in their daily work. These would include data collection and analysis; public communications; project management; project planning; and technology design, with subthemes. For example, under the theme "Data collection/analysis," there would be categories like survey design, program impact evaluation, cost benefit analysis, or statistical tools. Under each of these categories, employees would be able to view projects from their peers related to the topic. Each project summary would specify the work that was undertaken, and the staff member who oversaw implementation of that project. Categories where many departments have done work would also have broad summaries of best practices. The website should be extremely easy to search, with information classified into specific categories as much as possible. To develop a habit of documentation, we would encourage that staff set aside

30-45 minutes in their calendars every week to write down what they're working on, in line with the sub-themes described above. To incentivize this, senior leadership should ensure that it is seen as a priority by sending out a city-wide weekly email blurb highlighting staff writing and contributions. Supervisors in each department should also set aside time to have quarterly reflection check-ins with all their staff, where as a group, teams would discuss what they learned from working on various projects and how they are documenting this.

NEXT STEPS

- Reach out to AIS and HR to develop a test knowledge repository.
- Hold department wide meetings with staff to identify what tasks they perform regularly that require information sharing and gathering, identifying the best ways for them to document this, in a manner that is rewarding and time-efficient.
- Pilot and test knowledge repository and reward structures for participation in a few city departments to get user feedback, develop department-based best practices, and solicit feedback on challenges with knowledge management.
- Expand website access to all city departments, continuously collect user statistics from the website, and continue to review feedback on pertinent topics.

PLAIN LANGUAGE WRITING GUIDE

Resource for Developing Clear, Readable Public Communications



Cara Bradley and Grant Beard

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Readable communications can help Chicagoans better understand how to access City resources and navigate processes. In 2015, City Council passed the Language Access Ordinance, which requires implementation of language access plans for all departments that provide direct public services as well as the use of “plain language” that does “not include arcane or technical language, unnecessary polysyllabic words, legal jargon or other text requiring an advanced reading level.”

As City employees increasingly develop content for public audiences, regularly updated readability guidelines and tools can help enable effective communication.

HOW IT WORKS

To facilitate plain language principles across departments, the City should publish a public online writing guide that provides detailed guidance on how employees create content for public audiences. The City can find inspiration for this online guide from other writing and formatting resources developed by the City of Boston¹ and the State of Colorado² while leveraging existing City of Chicago design guidelines.

The site should feature the following sections:

What is plain language writing?

- An overview of the goals of plain language writing emphasizing grammatical, style, and presentation elements
- Simple word and phrase conversion list
- Complex and/or obscure words and phrases paired with their suggested replacements
- Checklist for reviewing content
- Consolidated list of questions to ask before finalizing public communications (e.g., writing in active voice, definition of audience)

- Writing samples across languages
- Set of plain language writing samples featuring languages included within the Language Access Ordinance
- City of Chicago style guide
- Detailed guidance reflecting City-endorsed style, language and formatting standards with examples for print, online, social media, and other formats

NEXT STEPS

- Collaborate with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), Department of Assets, Information and Services (AIS), and Office of New Americans (ONA) on accessible site content development
- Coordinate with AIS to publish and maintain site and to determine optimal cadence for updates
- Publicize the site launch across all departments via the Mayor’s Office
- Determine ways to expand plain language principles throughout departments including writing workshops and incorporation into content



CIVICCHI: A VIOLENCE PREVENTION APPROACH

Preventing Violence by Promoting Civic Engagement

Sophia Eisenberg

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Levels of youth violence and youth exposure to community violence are associated with many deleterious outcomes, including adverse public health and economic outcomes. Youth civic engagement is emerging as a social determinant of health and as an intervention response to community and youth violence through an assets-based, positive youth development approach.¹ On an individual level, youth civic engagement has been found to increase prosocial behaviors and levels of resilience in response to exposure to violence, and on a community level, it has been found to build neighborhood and community cohesion by engaging youth as advocates in their community.² Despite the benefits of civic engagement, youth from underserved communities who are exposed to violence are consistently less likely to be civically engaged relative to their peers, despite having similar levels of desire for civic engagement.³ The urgent need to address youth violence and close the civic engagement gap necessitates community-based approaches in trusted community institutions, such as libraries.⁴

HOW IT WORKS

CivicCHI will complement existing initiatives in the City of Chicago geared toward place-based violence prevention efforts at the Community Safety Coordination Center (CSCC) and the promotion of positive youth development efforts through My CHI. My Future. (MCMF). CivicCHI will adopt a place-based approach by operating within the 10 YOUmedia sites within the CPL locations in the 15 community areas identified in the "Our City, Our Safety" plan.⁵ CivicCHI's hyper-local strategy will build on each library's knowledge of their community's history of civic action and civic engagement. In addition to being housed within CPL, CivicCHI will partner with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in the 15 identified neighborhoods and CPS' Social Science and Civic Engagement team to strengthen program recruitment and programmatic scope.

There are two main domains of CivicCHI: 1) Civic learning and capacity building and 2) Direct engagement. The first component, civic learning and capacity building, will focus on coordinating with community partners to host informative workshops on civic skills, such as "know your rights" workshops, how to contact local officials, media literacy workshops, and community walks/asset mapping tours. In addition to the workshops, each library will have an interactive CivicCHI space that will display the history of civic engagement and civic action in the community. The second component, direct engagement, will consist of ways that youth can act on the civic skills they've learned, such as having access to materials to contact their elected officials and helping to coordinate community roundtables on relevant community topics. As with other programs at YOUmedia, youth who participate in CivicCHI for half of a school year will be eligible to become paid CivicCHI ambassadors, who will later become mentors to incoming participants and help to run subsequent CivicCHI programming.

NEXT STEPS

- Establish a working group with community members from the 15 identified community areas to gather community input.
- Establish a steering committee of representatives from CPL, CPS, CSCC, and DFSS (MCMF and the Community Justice initiative).
- Complete a scan of relevant funding sources, such as ARPA funds, funds from the Chicago Public Library Foundation, or funds from DFSS.

CHibility – VIOLENCE PREVENTION FOR STUDENTS



Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

Sophia Eisenberg

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Students with disabilities experience many social disparities that negatively impact their education, employment and long-term health outcomes. There is a bidirectional relationship between having a disability and living in poverty, with both factors creating risks to youth wellbeing. Inequitable access to the workforce starts in high school, as evidenced by data in Chicago showing that only 27% of youth with disabilities are employed, whereas 50% of youth without disabilities are employed. These economic outcomes for youth with disabilities are compounded by other deleterious outcomes, such as being twice as likely to be suspended, being three times more likely to be arrested, and being more vulnerable to exposure and participation in violence. Building on existing Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEP) in Chicago, CHibility will support education and employment for students with disabilities and mitigate the relationship between disability, poverty, and exposure to violence.

HOW IT WORKS

To redress these disparities, CHibility will utilize a work-based learning (WBL) model that links school-based learning with on-the-job learning opportunities for students with disabilities. This initiative aligns with and augments the city's existing programs, such as One Summer Chicago (OSC) within DFSS, the new Career Center within the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), and the Community Safety Coordination Center (CSCC). Complementing CSCC's approach, CHibility will adopt both a place-based strategy (focusing on high schools in the 15 community areas identified in the "Our City, Our Safety" plan) and a people-based strategy (targeting students with disabilities in CPS). This approach is critical because on average, the CPS neighborhood high schools within the 15 designated community areas serve nearly twice the number of students with disabilities (29.2%) relative to the CPS high school district average (16.88%).

The main programmatic activities of CHibility occurs in phases, during the year and during the summer:

School year:

- School-based supports: Special education teachers will assess students' interest in post-secondary employment through their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) transition plan; Case managers will inform the family of CHibility; Special education teachers implement curriculum developed to support WBL; Students choose an industry to specialize in during the summer.
- Departmental supports: DFSS will maintain partnerships with OSC organizations that have the capacity to provide necessary supports; DFSS and MOPD provide workshops to relevant agencies on how to support students with disabilities; CPS and DFSS put on quarterly training workshops for students in the seven main apprenticeship industries.

During the summer:

- Students are employed at least 20 hours a week through OSC in specific employment opportunities that can support their needs

NEXT STEPS

- Establish a working group co-led by DFSS, MOPD, CSCC, and CPS with key stakeholders
- Establish a youth and parent advisory council comprised of community members from the 15 identified communities
- Scope out funding opportunities (i.e., ARPA funds) from each relevant agencies to see how funds can be braided to support this work

CITYKEY MOBILE STATION IN COOK COUNTY JAIL



Expanding Access to Government ID for Returning Residents

Janae Nkansah and Lauren Quattrocchi

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Owning a government ID unlocks access to employment, housing, healthcare, and much more. Obtaining an ID can be extremely difficult for the estimated 11,000 Chicago residents exiting the carceral system per year,¹ barring them from essential services and leaving them vulnerable to the desperate situations which often lead to criminal activity.

In addition to the opportunities a government ID provides, obtaining a CityKey during the release process would equip returning residents with a Ventra card, Chicago Public Library card, discounts at pharmacies, local businesses, and events around the city before they even leave the system. This allows returning residents to transition into a stable life, lowering the chances of recidivism. Lower recidivism rates also promote public safety and save taxpayer money (over \$150,000 per person who doesn't recidivate),² making it beneficial not just for the formerly incarcerated, but for Chicago as a whole.

This would advance the agenda of the new Office of Re-Entry, align with recommendations made by the Working Group on Returning Residents, and help the Clerk's Office achieve their goal of distributing 100,000 CityKey. Due to the disproportionate number of residents returning to the South and West sides, this program would primarily benefit the neighborhoods identified as top priorities for IN-VEST South/West and promote equity across the city.

HOW IT WORKS

The Clerk's Office, in partnership with the Office of Re-Entry, should use the CityKey mobile printing site to distribute CityKey to the Cook County Jail's men's division. After a successful pilot in the women's division, resulting in 700-800 new CityKey holders, the Clerk's Office's biggest challenge was staffing. This could be alleviated by collaborating with community-based organizations. Through this

initiative the CityKey mobile printing site would have a monthly cadence at Cook County Jail. Incarcerated individuals returning to Chicago would have the opportunity to obtain a CityKey (and CityKey one pager) to be distributed to them upon release.

The application process required to secure a CityKey should be waived for individuals in which the jail has the required information on file. This information can be provided by Cook County Jail. In cases where information cannot be confirmed, individuals will be provided with the CityKey one pager and application criteria (in preferred language). Additionally, they will receive directions on obtaining required documents and how they can have this process subsidized, if necessary, either through DFSS or partner organizations.

NEXT STEPS

- Apply process and lessons learned from women's pilot to men's divisions at Cook County Jail.
- Advocate for and defend CityKey funds in budget discussion.
- Dialogue with Secretary of State's office to get CityKey accepted as a form of ID for obtaining state ID.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY





CHICAGO SENIORS WEEK

EXIT
SALIDA
→

EXIT
SALIDA

OBSERVATION
AREA
AREA DE OBSERVACION

OBSERVATION
AREA
AREA DE OBSERVACION

Chicago Park District
Gymnastics
CITYVILLE 2nd PLACE TEAM
JUNE 2019

Gymnastics
CITYVILLE 3rd PLACE TEAM
JUNE 2019

HELANDE CHICAGO

Affordable Childcare for Victims of Violence



Yareqzy Munoz

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Sam, whose name has been changed to preserve her safety, is the mother of two—a toddler and a newborn. Sam's husband became physically and emotionally abusive. Because Sam's husband provided the household's sole source of income, Sam could not envision a way to secure childcare and find employment. For the safety of her children, Sam endured countless acts of interpersonal violence. Without affordable childcare, Sam and those in similar situations do not have the adequate support to leave abusive relationships. Sam's story exemplifies cycles of violence that are perpetuated by inadequate childcare services. The development of city-wide childcare services for victims of violence serves three functions: (1) reducing interpersonal and community violence, (2) enabling economic independence for victims and their families, and (3) protecting children from violence. By tackling issues of violence, employment, and youth and community well-being, Helande Chicago advances the restitching of violence-torn social fabrics across Chicago.

Violence is ubiquitous in Chicago and nationally. Close to 15.5 million children are exposed to interpersonal violence nationally.¹ In Chicago, 7 percent of children under the age of five inhabit a community where over 30 homicides occur, while 10 percent live in a community with over 10 homicides.² Without affordable childcare, youth are exposed to violence, trauma, and social isolation, which in turn foments future involvement in violence.³ For low-income families, childcare expenses comprise 35 percent of their earnings,⁴ and a recent study evidences that access to affordable childcare results in increased workforce participation and wages for women.⁵

HOW IT WORKS

Helande Chicago (HC) is a payment service for private-market childcare modeled after the Chicago Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher pro-

gram. Currently, no federal or state-wide childcare service programs exist that target the needs of victims of violence. To pilot the program, HC will work closely with victim service partners to receive 100 referrals from 10 violence-prone community areas. HC will be low-barrier and eligibility will be determined by recent experiences with violence, income level, and degree of need (as in, compounded vulnerabilities). The HC voucher will be attainable at any private, market-rate childcare facility so long as it meets the program's safety requirements. HC will allow recipients the freedom to access the childcare facility of their choice. HC will coordinate outreach and educational programming to ensure the equitable participation of childcare centers throughout the city. Depending on the applicant's income, the subsidy will vary, and it will be paid directly to the childcare center.

HC will be housed within DFSS' Division of Domestic Violence but will collaborate with the Mayor's Office of Violence Reduction and CPD's Crime Victims Unit. Funding for HC will be sourced from CDPH, the Mayor's Office of Violence Reduction, The Network, and private partnerships.

NEXT STEPS

- Propose HC to community victim service partners to gauge interest and need.
- Facilitate a roundtable discussion with key stakeholders (victims of violence, DFSS, Office of Violence Reduction, The Network, Chicago CRED, CPD, and childcare business owners) to identify values and principles undergirding HC programming.
- Using findings from the roundtable discussion, design HC by building a logic model and establishing participant criteria, terms and regulations, partner childcare facilities, payment methods, and rules for termination.



LOCAL & EQUITABLE FOOD DELIVERY

“Chive” App Drives Economic Development and Improves Food Access

Clare Fisher

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic increased food insecurity by 51% in Cook County.¹ Two years later, Chicago is still reeling from the effects of the pandemic, especially in Black and Latino communities on the South and West sides.² This disparity in food access is driven in large part by historic disinvestment in these communities, resulting in limited access to grocery stores or supermarkets. Often, small businesses like corner stores and restaurants are some of the few places at which residents can buy food in these neighborhoods.³ Since these businesses are independently owned and operate at a smaller scale than big-box chain stores, they can find it financially challenging to provide nutritious food to their community at an affordable price.

In addition to the availability of groceries, food insecurity is driven by several other factors. Time is a valuable resource that also limits one’s ability to access food. Chicagoans balancing work, family, and finances have fewer opportunities to go food shopping, especially if they are required to travel outside of their neighborhood to reach a store. Access to transportation and one’s physical ability can further prevent individuals from obtaining groceries. Black and Brown residents experience these challenges at disproportionately higher rates than white Chicagoans. Poor access to healthy food, or any food, continues to worsen health outcomes, including chronic disease and overall life expectancy. It is imperative that the City of Chicago continues its commitment to a healthy Chicago through new and innovative investments in food equity.

HOW IT WORKS

The City of Chicago and its partners should establish a local and equitable food delivery service to overcome barriers to food access in Black and Brown communities. (A suggested name for this service is “Chive,” which incorporates Chicago’s nickname into the name of a fresh food item; it also evokes positive feelings of similar-sounding words

like “thrive” and “strive.”) . The City can partner with an existing grocery or food delivery app to implement this service. “Chive” will be unique from other food delivery services because Chicagoans can use the app to buy food from small businesses, which will be delivered by drivers from the South and West side communities most affected by food insecurity. The delivery app will be updated for this initiative to allow small businesses to seamlessly join the “Chive” infrastructure at little to no cost. An important consideration will be to simplify the manual entry inventory processes so store staff can more easily add available food items to the app.

Since nearly half of SNAP recipients are food insecure, the “Chive” delivery service should be piloted and designed with those customers in mind.⁴ The app should accept SNAP benefits as payment and delivery fees should be waived for SNAP recipients to ensure equitable access. The City of Chicago can fund the “Chive” initiative through private tech partnerships, philanthropic and grant funding, as well as advertising revenue on the “Chive” app and delivery vehicles.

NEXT STEPS

- Create an internal partnership with the Chicago Food Equity Council, Chicago Digital Services Team, the Chicago Department of Public Health, and the Department of Family and Support Services to establish the “Chive” initiative.
- Consult with local, minority-owned food businesses and related stakeholders to gather feedback and input on the “Chive” initiative.
- Identify a player in the delivery service industry (such as Instacart or Chicago-based Grubhub) to provide a platform on which to host the “Chive” service— ideally on a pro-bono basis.
- Secure philanthropic and grant dollars to fund a “Chive” pilot in Invest South/West communities.

CASH TRANSFERS FOR PREGNANT CHICAGOANS



Addressing the Economic Determinants of Maternal and Infant Health

Cara Bradley

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Chicago faces critical maternal and infant health equity challenges that contribute to the life expectancy gap between Black and white Chicagoans. Black infants are almost three times as likely to die before their first birthday than non-Black infants and Black mothers are more than twice as likely to die during or after childbirth than non-Black mothers.¹ Low-income Chicagoans are also disproportionately impacted, and 44% of Black adults are living in high economic hardship.² This experience can influence birth outcomes in multiple ways, including limited resources and stress.

One way to improve financial stability is through unconditional direct cash transfers (DCTs). Compared to conditional assistance, unrestricted DCTs—like the City's "Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot"—give recipients the agency to purchase what they need to improve their wellbeing. For pregnant Chicagoans, DCTs can cover a wider range of needs not included in other assistance programs—like baby items, bills, and emergency expenses—and reduce financial stress. Importantly, this model also respects and trusts pregnant Chicagoans to know their unique needs and make their own choices during an important moment in their lives. DCT programs for pregnant people show promising results. A Canadian study found that monthly payments lowered the risk of low birth weight and preterm birth by 21% and 17.5%, respectively.³ These outcomes are the leading causes of infant mortality in Chicago, suggesting that a similar program could have a meaningful health impact.

HOW IT WORKS

The City can launch a pilot program providing unconditional DCTs to low-income pregnant Black Chicagoans. This policy could support the important work that the Chicago Department of Health (CDPH) is already doing to improve access to healthcare and social services. The program could be comprised of the following components:

- **Enrollment:** CDPH can work with participating Family Connects hospitals and Health Equity Zone partners to advertise the pilot program to eligible women in their first or second trimester. Interested pregnant women can then enter a lottery for potential selection into the program.
- **Payment disbursement:** The City can disburse the monthly payments to participants through a payment partner. "The Abundant Birth Project," launched in the City of San Francisco, provides \$1,000 monthly payments throughout pregnancy and for the first six months of the baby's life, with the goal of increasing the timespan to two years post-birth.⁴
- **Evaluation:** The City can measure impact on maternal and infant health outcomes through participant surveys, interviews, and birth records, with participants' permission.

NEXT STEPS

- Collaborate with CDPH's Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health division to develop detailed goals and components, and potential integration into existing programs like Family Connects
- Determine funding streams, including philanthropic partners
- Identify community partners to assist with participant enrollment and an academic partner for program design and evaluation
- Issue a request for proposal (RFP) for a DCT administration partner



LINK-MATCH EXPANSION

Utilizing Independent Grocers and Corner Stores to Expand LINK Utility

Adam Payter

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In 2022, 931,709 individuals in Cook County received LINK (also known as SNAP) benefits.¹ In a city where 29% of Black households and 24% of Latino households are food insecure,² LINK provides essential support. That said, LINK alone is not enough. Maximum benefit amounts are calculated based on the Thrifty Food Plan (The Thrifty), which is designed to determine the bare minimum cost of nutrition. Put bluntly, The Thrifty is unrealistic and inconsiderate of the challenges that many Chicagoans face.³ Over 500,000 Chicagoans live in “food deserts” with limited chain grocer availability that increases cost of and limits access to healthy food⁴. Unsurprisingly, those most likely to live in food deserts tend to live in historically disinvested communities on the South and West sides that have high rates of LINK utilization – for example: 50.1% of households in Englewood and 50.6% in West Garfield Park receive benefits.⁵ Nearly 40% of households receiving LINK are completely dependent on LINK to meet their nutritional needs.⁶ LINK does not go far enough to support Chicago’s food insecure population and Chicago must seek creative solutions to help folks access the nutritious food they need.

HOW IT WORKS

On February 2nd 2022, Mayor Lightfoot formalized her commitment to food equity, creating the Food Equity Council – which has a high-impact priority of “marketing and maximizing nutrition programs and benefits.”⁷ Accordingly, Chicago should further the distance individuals’ LINK benefits go by expanding the prevalence, availability and convenience of LINK -matching programs. Originally imagined in 2009 by Double Up Food Bucks in Detroit, LINK-match is simple – for each dollar spent on qualifying purchases at participating vendors, the buyer is compensated with an additional dollar to spend. Functionally, this can double the distance that LINK dollars go.

Illinois and the City already support LINKup, a non-profit LINK-matching program which gives grant funding to farmers markets, farm stands, co-ops, independent grocers and corner stores to help them implement LINK-matching. LINKup’s efforts have been inequitable, with the vast majority of grants going to farmer’s markets who serve affluent neighborhoods with low LINK utilization.⁸ To combat this, the City should issue an RFP that leverages community partnerships built during Invest South/West, to run a targeted pilot that creates LINK-matching programs which serves independent grocers and corner stores in Invest South/West’s 10 focus communities. Selected partner organizations will handle the outreach, training, and implementation of the LINK-matching program – supporting buyers, local businesses, and creating employment opportunities concurrently. This program will target underutilized corner store infrastructure to buttress scarce food networks and allow folks to better meet their nutritional needs while shopping within their neighborhoods – harnessing a hyperlocal approach to address food insecurity.

NEXT STEPS

- Secure a funding source for the pilot – potentially through philanthropic contributions or state ARPA funds.
- Draft an RFP for LINK-matching programs within target neighborhoods.
- Engage with community stakeholder partnerships established during Mayor Lightfoot’s term to gauge community capacity and drive RFP applications.
- *Future Considerations:* App integration/digital wallet (possibly using Double Up Food Bucks’ App skeleton) and LINK-match integration onto CityKey Card (would need to navigate privacy concerns).

ASKJANE – ABORTION SUPPORT SERVICES

Comprehensive App on Reproductive Healthcare Resources in Chicago

APP

Adam Payter and Rebecca Silverman



WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Since the Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022) decision functionally overturned *Roe v. Wade* (1973), Chicago has taken steps to expand infrastructure available to those seeking abortion services. Abortion is healthcare, it is the City's responsibility to protect safe and legal abortions. In 2020, 13,809 Chicagoans received abortion healthcare,¹ and abortions for those coming from out-of-state rose by 29% in 2020.² The percentage of out-of-state abortion seekers is now certain to rise,³ as abortion rights are illegal or under threat in all neighboring states.⁴ Therefore, it is vital that Chicago build partnerships while expanding its capacity to connect folks with care. Mayor Lightfoot has been vocal in her support for abortion services – pledging \$500,000 dollars as part of her Justice for All Pledge,⁵ creating an abortion health page on the City website,⁶ and signing EO 2022-2 to protect abortion seeker's privacy.⁷ Building on these efforts, Chicago must increase ease of access to the abortion services this City offers.

HOW IT WORKS

Chicago should issue an RFP seeking a nonprofit partner to oversee the design and administration of the AskJane app – a comprehensive hub for those interested in seeking abortion services in Chicago. The name pays tribute to the Jane Collective, an underground abortion network active in Chicago from 1969 to 1973. AskJane will aggregate abortion support services to streamline individuals' search for reputable care/resources – providing links to scheduling with verified providers and to abortion fund applications, while offering discounted hotel and travel deals. Additionally, the app will offer integrated support, utilizing existing helplines to direct users to 3rd party consultation. This hub of services will be complemented by an extensive FAQ, expanding the application's value and allowing it to serve as an educational tool to combat misinformation

and usage of predatory crisis pregnancy centers. An associated marketing campaign will drive uptake.

Key Considerations – The City must be wary of data collection and potential distrust City branding may reinforce. While EO 2022-2 provides some data protection, it's vital that any partnership agreement ensures that the City does not retain any app metadata and that app usage does not require identifying information. Further, it would be advantageous to allow the partner organization to operate as the app's face.

NEXT STEPS

- Leverage diverse funding sources – State ARPA funds, City ARPA funds allocated to "Access and Awareness for Public Support Services," and philanthropic donation from pro-choice companies – to secure the financial support needed for RFP.
- Draft partnership RFP which clearly lays out feature requirements, data privacy capacity, and the City's vision for the AskJane app.
- Engage with key City stakeholders (DFSS, CDPH, Mayor's Office) while reaching out to potential partner organizations (INeedAnA, Planned Parenthood, Abortionfinder.org, Pro-choice.org, and HeyJane) who may have the capacity, footprint, and public trust needed to develop and administer the app – encouraging them to apply for the RFP.
- Connect with private sector corporations who have expressed support for abortion rights and build partnerships with them to provide discounts to app users.

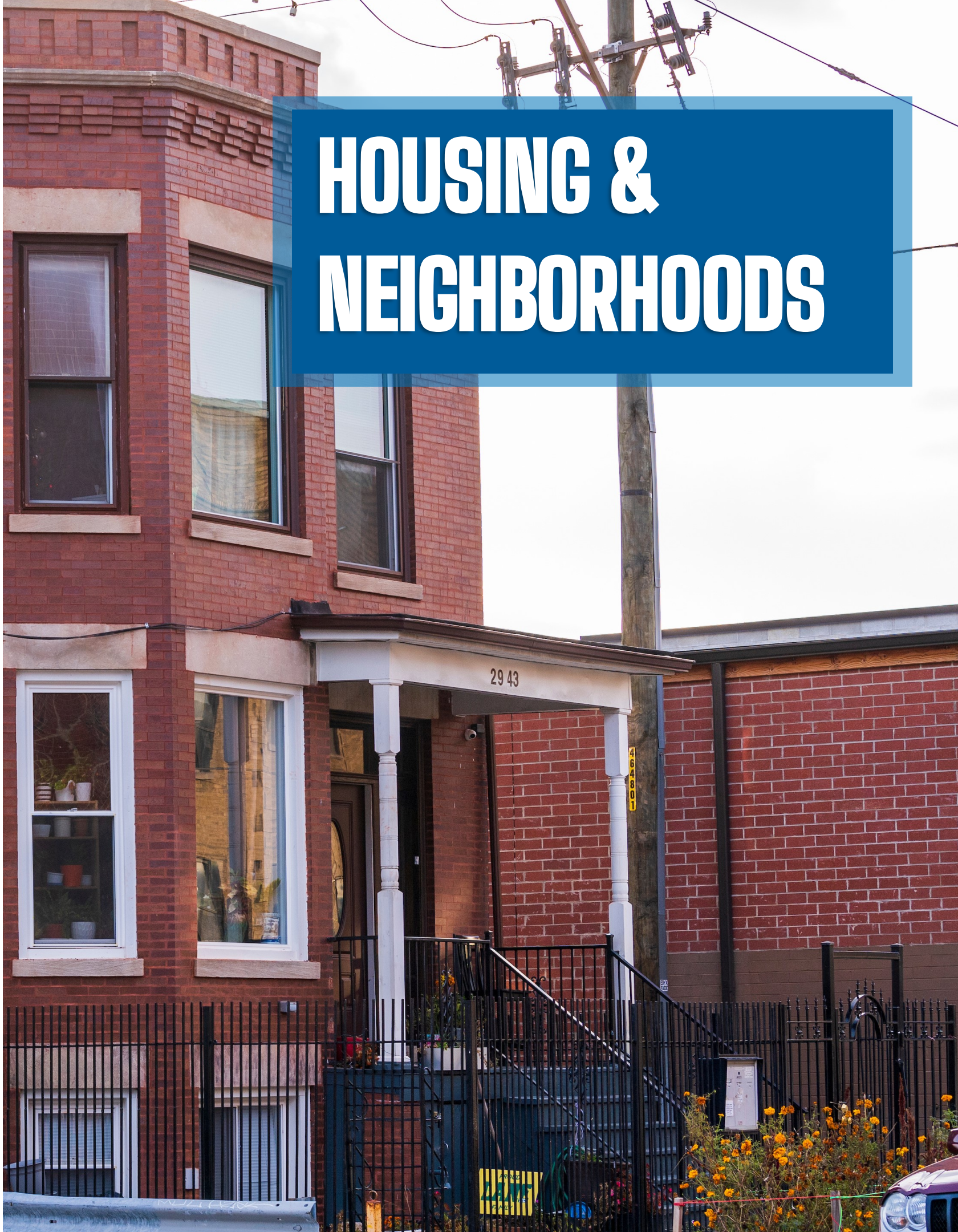
A woman with long dark hair and a young girl with curly dark hair are both wearing red shirts. They are holding a large, bright pink sign together. The sign has the text "BANS OFF OUR BODIES" written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The woman is looking down at the sign, and the girl is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. In the background, there is a blurred green wall and a person wearing a black and white patterned shirt with red text.

**BANS
OFF OUR
BODIES**



ANTHONY
BOWEN

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS



EXPANDING ZONING FOR ADU PILOT

A Political Solution for Passing Vital Legislation



Maria Ralenkotter and Ben Stock

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Accessory dwelling units are secondary apartments that share the building lot of a larger, primary home – in attics, basements, and coach houses. Since these have been shown to increase the supply of lower-cost housing while creating income and wealth-building opportunities for homeowners, the City created a pilot program in 2021 that allows homeowners in five areas to construct ADUs. Due to the success of the pilot, legislation was drafted to expand this pilot. Coined the “ACU Ordinance,” this legislation was introduced in City Council but was stalled due to Aldermanic opposition. Several Aldermen stated they would prefer to develop vacant lots and buildings before spending money on already developed properties in their Wards. This highlights that other concerns may exist around the development of ADUs discouraging Chicago residents and Aldermen from accepting their construction in their neighborhoods.

HOW IT WORKS

The Departments of Housing, Planning and Development, and Buildings should develop several listening sessions during which these departments would learn about different viewpoints around the ACU Ordinance. Areas with these sessions should be located where both demand for ADU permits and resident/Aldermanic opposition are high.

The listening sessions would invite a ward’s Alderman, community members and nonprofits with local ties like the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance. This would allow residents to share their concerns, provide ADU experts the space to address any misconceptions, and help the Departments determine how to amend their ordinance to address lingering concerns. For example, since Aldermen preferred prioritizing developed properties over vacant units, legislation could be added to create a municipal bond, the funds from which would identify vacant buildings that can be redeveloped into mixed-use apartment units. However, specific proposals would

depend on what comes out of community meetings.

NEXT STEPS

- Identify wards containing areas with high numbers of ADU permit applications but have high community/Aldermanic opposition
- Collaborate with local housing nonprofits and Aldermen in these wards to gather community members for a listening session
- Explore flexible funding mechanisms that would support additional policies required for community sign-on to the ACU ordinance (e.g., bond funding)
- Develop a public report on common findings upon the conclusion of the community meetings



TAX CREDITS FOR FULL-OCCUPANCY UNITS

Involving Property Owners in Anti-Displacement Efforts

Sarah Figgatt, Maria Ralenkotter, and Marlyn Bruno

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Despite declines in the gap between available and demanded affordable rental units over recent years, over 159,000 households remain housing cost-burdened because they cannot find an affordable unit. This gap most impacts Chicagoans living between 0 and 50% Area Median Income (AMI), of whom more than 70% are rent-burdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of their income towards housing. These households are also three times more likely to be BIPOC and four times more likely to be led by someone with a disability. The longtime lack of affordable housing has also impacted the city, contributing to the almost 50% decline in Chicago's Black population on the South and West sides since 2000. To address these inequities and make its anti-displacement and increased density goals listed in the We Will Chicago plan a reality, the City should work with small landlords to fill vacant units with low-income residents.

HOW IT WORKS

A property tax credit for residential property owners who meet certain eligibility criteria would expand the supply of affordable rental units without threatening the financial standing of small-sized residential property owners. To be eligible for this property tax incentive, owners must have rented out 100% of each property's units for at least ten months in a calendar year, and these rental units must be occupied by tenants who earn 60% of the AMI.

Additionally, residential property owners must own six or fewer rental units, all of which must be in a gentrifying neighborhood. Qualification as a gentrifying neighborhood will be based on data from DePaul University's Institute for Housing Studies, which has identified Chicago neighborhoods with high concentrations of low-income renters who are vulnerable to displacement due to increases in rental prices and a dwindling stock of affordable housing.

If the residential property owner does not meet these criteria, then they can still be eligible for the property tax incentive if they demonstrate a "good faith" advertising including: (1) listing the vacant unit(s) with at least one community-based organization, such as their local chamber of commerce; (2) advertising their vacant unit(s) to two local organizations that assist people with accessing housing, such as Chicago-based nonprofit members of Housing Action Illinois; and (3) placing a viewable advertising sign with the property owner's current contact information on the residential property. Property owners applying for a tax credit through this process bear the burden of proof that they have been actively searching for tenants who earn 60% of the AMI.

NEXT STEPS

- Consult with the Cook County Assessor's office and Department of Housing to discuss the process of creating a new property tax incentive.
- Develop a partnership with the Institute for Housing Policy at DePaul University to identify gentrifying areas in the city and establish a study investigating long-term outcomes of the policy.
- Explore potential city ordinances that can further encourage multi-unit property owners to rent to low-income residents.
- Coordinate data-sharing with the Assessor's office to analyze how existing tax reductions for vacant properties may be affecting affordable housing stock across the city.





UNIVERSAL HOMEOWNER APPLICATION

Streamlining Housing Program Applications for Expanded Access

Maria Ralenkotter and Natalie Brown

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Chicago is in the midst of a housing crisis, spurred by low supply and high demand for homeowners with the least resources. Like other cities, Chicago has a variety of programs to support residents seeking to access to safe and affordable housing, but wide range and varying qualification criteria and deadlines creates confusion and barriers to access. A similar effort to streamline applications occurred in Massachusetts, which created a universal form for its housing programs for loan agreement, mortgage, and affordability restriction information so applicants and vendors did not have to repeatedly submit this information. In the same vein, the Department of Housing can work with its program administrators to provide this same leverage and improve resource distribution.

HOW IT WORKS

Most the City's housing programs fall into two categories: those which help homeowners afford a home and those which help them repair their home. A universal application can be created that would collect information from Chicagoans applying to programs within these two categories, including:

- Neighborhood Lending Program
- Low-Income Housing Trust Fund
- City Lots for Working Families
- Building Neighborhoods and Affordable Homes
- Small Accessible Repairs for Seniors
- Emergency Heating Repair Program
- Home Repair Program

Applicants wanting to apply to any of these programs would fill out their information once, cutting back on the time needed to apply to each program and expanding access to individuals who may not be aware of programs for which they qualify. Their

information would then be automatically inputted into the Chicago Data Portal that can be accessed by program managers for any of the above programs. If an applicant is eligible for more than one program, their information would be flagged as such. Upon the deadline for the universal application, program managers can filter the applications to find those that qualify for their program and begin the process of contacting applicants. With data fully visible to all program managers, only the first program to review the application would need to conduct additional assessments like a scofflaw check, mortgage eligibility check, etc.; the results would be inputted into the portal for other programs to utilize. A universal application could also incorporate other benefits such as trackable waitlists, notifications on funding availability, and a means of identifying applications with the most needs.

NEXT STEPS

- Have program managers from the nonprofits administering each program meet to streamline the questions asked in the universal application and the timeline for accepting applications.
- Work with AIS to create a portal to collect applicant data visible to each nonprofit.
- Develop a quarterly meeting system to discuss needed tweaks to the application or portal, how to integrate new housing programs, and methods for effectively advertising the programs within the application.

UNIFIED DFSS INTAKE PROCESS



Consolidating Eligibility Verification Systems to Alleviate Burden

Marlyn Bruno

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

To access many of the public benefits and services available through the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), residents must demonstrate eligibility before receiving any benefit or assistance. The burden to demonstrate eligibility falls on residents who often must circumvent work schedule, childcare, language, and digital literacy challenges within short windows of time. During periods of crises, eligibility requirements and verification processes can act as barriers that prevent or delay the provision of services to vulnerable members of our communities who may need quick access to services.

In addition, means-tested benefits can be more expensive to provide due to the administrative support needed to vet and process applicants looking to apply for benefits and services. Currently, DFSS has seven divisions with varying eligibility assessment processes and data storage systems, which can overburden residents who must repeatedly undergo eligibility verification processes to access programs, oftentimes foregoing work opportunities to go in-person. There can be further administrative challenges if residents do not receive regular pay stubs and need to proactively gather alternative documents to demonstrate income and assets for each program they would like to access.

HOW IT WORKS

Residents would undergo one single intake process where document collection would take place. DFSS would first map out the resident experience of applying to programs from each division to gain a greater understanding of how the eligibility verification process across programs vary. DFSS would then consolidate all eligibility verification processes so that resident confidential information is collected in one single intake. Since each division requires different information from residents, the intake would be designed to verify identity, income, and residency—the most document-heavy verifications—

and each division could conduct follow-up for any additional required documentation. To simplify the process for residents further, DFSS would eventually create a single point of entry website where residents could enter preliminary personal information, set up an appointment for an intake, and review information about what kinds of documents they can bring to establish identity, income, and residency.

This idea also requires the creation of a shared secure data management system between divisions. Some divisions share information already on an ad hoc basis but having a unified system would enable employees across DFSS to access crucial information on resident eligibility and can lead to proactive referrals to existing programs across divisions. A shared database will also alleviate the administrative burden on DFSS employees and prevent the duplication of eligibility verification efforts. This administrative relief would allow DFSS staff members to regain capacity for other program management work and service provision.

NEXT STEPS

- Conduct a user experience study of DFSS processes and identify duplicative efforts for applicants of DFSS programs across divisions.
- Build a shared data management and storage system for DFSS divisions.
- Explore the possibility of a data use agreement between other departments and sister agencies (e.g. Chicago Public Schools) to further consolidate income verification and eligibility processes.



EXPANSION OF AFFORDABILITY PROTECTIONS

Amending the Woodlawn Preservation Ordinance to Prevent Displacement

Maria Ralenkotter

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In September 2021, the City of Chicago broke ground on the Obama Presidential Center as part of Mayor Lightfoot's commitment to the economic development of historically under-resourced areas. While this development promises to bring new jobs and investment to Woodlawn, it has already resulted in rising a 41% increase in home values since last year that threaten to displace low-income residents. To prevent this, the Lightfoot administration implemented several affordable housing protections through the Woodlawn Housing Preservation Ordinance (WPO). However, further protections should be added to ensure that longtime residents of Woodlawn will experience the economic benefits the Center will provide to the area.

HOW IT WORKS

The City can better protect low-income renters by adding additional supportive measures to its Tenant Right of First Refusal pilot program. With a median income of \$25,000 and a local homeownership rate of just 21.8%, it is unlikely that many residents of rental properties have the experience or funding to purchase a property. To address this, the City should create a local and flexible funding source by setting aside any fees in the Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund collected from developments within the boundaries of the WPO. The City would then partner with nonprofits in Woodlawn, who would manage the fund and use it to provide funding assistance and technical assistance through the purchase process.

While the ordinance has also set aside funding for the purchase, preservation, and construction of affordable homes, rising home values from development pressures threaten to increase property taxes to a point that is unaffordable for most low- and middle-income longtime residents. To help these homeowners stay in their homes and experience the wealth building associated with homeownership, houses benefitting from Renew Woodlawn and

the Woodlawn Protection Loan Fund (WPLF) should be automatically absorbed into the Chicago Housing Trust Fund (CHT). Since CHT homes have their property taxes frozen and are entered into affordable resale restrictions, this would ensure that homeowners would not be priced out of their homes and ensure long-term affordability for future generations of low-income families.⁴

NEXT STEPS

- Discuss amendments to the Woodlawn Housing Preservation Ordinance with the Woodlawn Community Working Group and co-draft City Council resolution to be passed.
- Designate a separate fund within the Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund for Woodlawn tenants wanting to practice their Right of First Refusal.
- Work with CHT staff to add Woodlawn homes into their portfolio upon their purchase or the completion of construction or repairs through Renew Woodlawn and WPLF.



**ARTS, CULTURE &
LIFELONG LEARNING**





ARTISTS IN TRANSIT: MOVING MURALS

Connecting Chicago Through Transit-Oriented Art and Third Spaces

Rachael Everson

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In 2015, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, arts and culture organizations in Chicago generated over \$3.2 billion in total industry expenditures and \$336 million in revenue to local and state governments.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic saw an estimated cumulative loss of \$4.7 billion to Chicago's creative industries with over 86,000 creative workers left unemployed.²

Chicago has a long legacy of creative innovation and excellence, making it an international leader in numerous artistic disciplines. The Chicago Transit Authority's public art collection features more than 80 works of art and architectural detail spanning the train system and facilities. These permanent installations enhance physical buildings and interact with commonly used 'third spaces' that communities use to navigate the city. These third spaces—those we inhabit between home and work—give Chicago its unmistakable character and help define neighborhood identity.

At a time when connecting communities and revitalizing the arts is paramount given the impact of COVID-19 on artistic communities, the Moving Murals project would use CTA train wraps designed by emerging local artists as murals to beautify public infrastructure, enrich the urban landscape, and explore a new form of civically supported creative expression through third spaces. The program creates professional opportunities for emerging, Chicago-based artists while building bridges between community areas across our city.

HOW IT WORKS

Administered by the Chicago Transit Authority's Public Art Department, and funded through corporate sponsorship opportunities, CTA trains would become a moving art exhibition. Modeled after the Folded Map Project, emerging visual artists living in neighborhoods on a shared train line would partner to collaborate on a moving mural design that would

bridge the identities of their community areas or neighborhoods. This program could be scaled as a part of the CTA extension project or the Together We Heal program.

The program would be administered on a semi-annual basis with each round of murals running on three, rotating train lines for a total of twelve weeks. Artists would submit for inclusion through an open call process. Selected participants would receive a partner artist, design prompt, schematics, and submission deadline. Artists would receive a one-time honorarium for their work. A microsite to store program information and artists bios would be inside of each mural car.

NEXT STEPS

- Secure corporate partnership(s) to fund the program through direct sponsorship.
- Design program logistics and management in partnership with CTA, who will manage the call, selection, and implementation of the program.
- Create microsite to archive program information, digital copies of the mural designs, and artists' biographies.
- Launch program through the CTA Public Art Department in partnership with the Mayor's Office and open submissions call.



REIMAGINING PrE-LEARNING

Reorganizing CPS's Remote Learning Interface to Increase Engagement

Shweta Kamath

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Chicago expanded its efforts to provide access to early learning through its PrE-Learning platform. Originally designed to provide a stopgap during school closure, the platform remains a tremendous resource for families without access to quality care, even during in-person instruction.

Currently, in the City of Chicago, only 18% of children are enrolled in preschool. Children's long-term learning outcomes are significantly improved by early education, which is proven to enhance socioemotional development, cognition, and early numeracy and literacy skills. The gap in learning outcomes between wealthy and poor families begins at this stage, with wealthier parents being more likely to read to their children, conduct cognitively challenging activities and converse using a larger range of vocabulary.

The PrE-Learning platform has instructional videos, suggestions for freely available supplementary resources and explanations behind the skills being developed. PrE-Learning can play a part in closing the learning gap by lowering the barriers for parents who want to support their child's development but lack the resources to do so. This small push can help mitigate the learning gap for students and families that need it the most.

HOW IT WORKS

To increase engagement and make it a pivotal resource in the early learning universe, the website must be revamped. The current platform lacks a way to track the user's journey including completed modules and other milestones. Without the ability to track their progress, the experience becomes burdensome for users. The platform also lacks a clear completion date or call to action which in design literature has proven that the lack of one negatively impacts engagement. A user-friendly website promotes an interactive experience and ensures long-

term engagement. Improvements can be made in the following areas:

- **Context Setting:** An introductory video to help caregivers understand the different developmental areas for their children.
- **Progress Tracking/Milestones:** Caregivers can be notified when they've completed a certain number of activities, on a weekly timeline, that are linked to standardized assessments to help parents gauge growth.
- **User Profiles:** A user account option will be provided making it easier for parents to pick up where they left off and allows the city to better track usage statistics.
- **Buddy Program:** A "buddy" option can be created where parents will be partnered with other parents who have children of similar ages to foster group learning and accountability. Ask an Expert Feature: This feature can have two sections: a FAQ section for questions around what you should expect from children at certain ages and an opt in to a Televisit feature where a licensed ECE specialist can conduct a virtual home visit.
- **Links to other platforms:** This can include links to books on YouTube, links to the closest public library's ECE resources, links to resources in parks for toddlers and children, etc.

NEXT STEPS

- Issue RFP to get tech partners to build out new version of the platform/app
- Create working group of parents, CBOs and teachers to regularly test the app and provide feedback.
- Design pilot program to test impact of the new website (Families in DoH serviced buildings, certain community areas with low access to PreK)
- Measure success from pilot and plan scale up if successful OR reiterate on design if success metrics are not met

CHICAGO CIVIC POET LAUREATE

Preserving Chicago's Literary Legacy and Connecting Communities



Ben Stock and Rachael Everson

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Standing on the shoulders of Chicago's legacy as a hub for great American poetry, the Chicago Civic Poet Laureate program will match other cities' efforts across the country to uplift the literary community. By collaborating with established organizations to further historic literary excellence in Chicago through public readings, workshops, and presentations, the Chicago Civic Poet Laureate will enrich the literary arts sector. Administered as a 2-year grant award, this program will help broadcast the importance of the literary arts and the humanities while prioritizing equity and serving the community.

HOW IT WORKS

The Chicago Civic Poet Laureate will be selected through an application process open to the public. Selection criterion will be created by literary leaders throughout the city, and a selection committee housed within the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs (DCASE) will be responsible for presenting the final slate of candidates biannually to the Mayor's Office.

The recipient of the award will receive a grant of \$25,000 and serve for a two-year term under the title. Responsibilities of the awardee include presenting four public workshops in partnership with Chicago Public Library in INVEST South/West branch locations.

Eligible recipients must have current Illinois residency, with at least 5 years living in Chicago or Cook County. They must be eligible to work in the U.S., be 18+ years of age, and have a proven body of poetic work engaging diverse audiences, along with demonstrated experience in project management and work with Chicago's diverse communities.

NEXT STEPS

- DCASE will create a final logic model and framework for the program to build an application for prospective Civic Poet Laureates, with resume, statement of interest, work samples, and proposed workshops being among the criteria.
- Partnering with literary experts in the city, DCASE will form a Literary Selection Panel. Representatives from these two bodies, as well as those from Young Chicago Authors, Chicago Public Library, and the Poetry Foundation, will form the Poet Laureate Review Board that reviews applications.
- Applications for the program will open and close during National Poetry Month in April. Upon submitting 3-4 finalists to the Mayor and selection of the Civic Poet Laureate, DCASE and the Mayor's Office will include this recommendation in a budget proposal to be passed by City Council, allocating \$12,500 per year from the CityArts program towards the incoming Chicago Civic Poet Laureate.



CHICAGO FIT

Implementing a Marketing Campaign to Support Chicago's Masterbrand

Grace Muth

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Chicago's Recovery Task Force identified branding as crucial to the City's equitable recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, historically most marketing efforts supporting the City fail to highlight the diversity of Chicago's people, neighborhoods, and often divided history. The masterbrand campaign *Chicago: City of Stories* was designed to address these issues to bolster civic pride, retain talent, and boost Chicago's national perception. Earlier campaigns under the masterbrand, including *Chicago Not In Chicago* and *Chicagwa*, generated significant local and national engagement by showcasing local artists and featuring Chicago's influence on the world.

Although tourism has returned to 60% of pre-COVID-19 levels, the City is still working to attract new visitors. More campaigns are needed to fully highlight the diversity of stories contained within the City's 77 community areas. Since 2000, Chicago is the slowest growing major city in the U.S and population loss has been seen most acutely in the South and West Sides of the city.¹ To ensure sustained growth and development in Chicago, any marketing campaign needs to speak to both diverse groups and simultaneously generate interest from three valuable population segments: residents, tourists, and talent.

HOW IT WORKS

As part of the masterbrand campaign, create a line of limited-edition City of Chicago sports merchandise (e.g. jerseys, socks, baseball caps, sneakers), designed by four local artists through an activation called Chicago Fit. (The campaign name combines a reference to both streetwear and physical activity.) Building off the success of *Chicagwa*, which tied a physical object to the representation of one of Chicago's greatest assets, the campaign will highlight both major sports franchises and hyper-local community sports teams around the city. These limited-edition goods will be available for retail sale using local manufacturing vendors; proceeds will go

to nonprofits of the artists' choosing, and designs will reflect the artists' lived experiences in Chicago.

To residents, *Chicago Fit* generates a sense of civic pride in highlighting the multitude of recreational opportunities for children in leagues and schools around the city. To college and university students—talent that Chicago hopes to retain following graduation—the campaign showcases a thriving community filled with fun activities. To tourists, sportswear represents the storied successes of our many sports teams and internationally renowned franchises.

Chicago Fit capitalizes on the thriving apparel and streetwear scene in Chicago and connects to diverse cross-sections of society. With the inclusion of local artists, the stories of many different neighborhoods can shine through the merchandise with a range of styles to represent the diversity of the city. Additionally, all four artists will be selected from different City regions and will be profile (telling their "Chicago Story") through the retail sale website.

NEXT STEPS

- Collaborate with community groups, preeminent urban streetwear creatives, and local nonprofits to scope, design, and promote the campaign
- Connect with the "By Chicago, For Chicago" coalition to develop pro-bono creative partnerships, and research other cities' activations (including New York City and Milwaukee, which both have branded city merchandise)
- In partnership with World Business Chicago and DCASE, determine the budget for the campaign and joint financing opportunities
- Tap into previous branding partnership channels for major sports teams, (ex. WeAreALLOneTeam activations) to align with teams interested in participating

A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO LITERACY



Early Prevention to Reduce Crisis Level Reading Scores

Rebecca Silverman

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

During the 2019 school year in Chicago, 77% of students performed below proficient reading level. On average, Black students scored 40 points less than their white peers, and students eligible for free lunch scored 31 points lower than their peers who were not eligible.¹ This is not a reflection of our students' potential, but rather is an indication of the glaring need for systemic change. Low literacy levels lead to adverse health outcomes and costs to both individuals and society. People with low literacy levels are less likely to be employed, use preventative health services, manage treatment plans, and are more likely to be incarcerated.²

HOW IT WORKS

Due to the public health impact, a public health approach should be implemented to improve literacy rates which would: define the problem, identify the risk factors, and implement preventive measures.

Define: Already critical reading levels were likely worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Identify: Gaps in reading levels exist by race and socioeconomic status.

Implement: Early mandatory screeners can identify student learning difficulties and ultimately disabilities. This is much more effective, productive, and successful than reading interventions later in life and avoids the 'downward spiral'; it takes four times as long to intervene in fourth grade as it does in kindergarten.³

A universal screener, or baseline reading assessment, in grades K-3 should be required for all Chicago Public Schools in order to prevent the need for remediation later, mirroring the New York City Department of Education Academic Recovery Plan.⁴ While primary teachers already assess their students' reading growth, an evidence based universal screener would promote consistency and equity across the district. The one-page screener can be added to the assessments teachers are already per-

forming and will provide teachers with more information to create individualized and differentiated learning plans for all students.⁵ Students scoring 'at risk' will receive early interventions until they are either on grade level or receive tiered support until they are identified as a diverse learner. Ensuring the proper interventions are in place early prevents over-identification, which is crucial in a system where students of color are over-represented in diverse learning.⁶ Consistent screening ensures all students receive what they need and are set up for success as early as possible.

In addition to this approach, to highlight the seriousness of current reading levels and their implications, low literacy rates should be defined by the City of Chicago and State of Illinois as a public health crisis, via executive order, just as gun violence was by Governor Pritzker in 2021.

NEXT STEPS

- Analyze CPS literacy data to identify elementary schools of need across the city to target in pilot program
- Coordinate stakeholders, including CPS, CTU, and CDPH to create a report on the current state of literacy levels and their impact on individuals and the city as well as align on a unified set of best practices for screening
- Statement by Mayor Lightfoot and Governor Pritzker defining the literacy crisis and announcing the creation of a literacy-focused strategic plan
- Use data to evaluate screener program to all elementary schools in the CPS system



ChicaGo READ

Community Based Mini Libraries

Rebecca Silverman, Adam Payter, Shweta Kamath

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Literacy access is crucial for all Chicagoans. The availability of quality and representative literature is inequitable and disproportionately impacts Chicago's low-income families and people of color. Though families across the city can visit their neighborhood Chicago Public Library, people may not utilize them for myriad reasons: lack of time, not knowing where the community library is, fear of safety due to COVID-19, or distrust in City departments. Regardless of the rationale, the perception of what a library can be must evolve. To adapt to the needs of its citizens, the City should invest in ChicaGo Read, a community book swap program. Investing in literacy access in communities matters because it leads to less spending on incarceration, healthcare, and public benefits, while injecting funds into community revitalization.

HOW IT WORKS

One of the identified 15 priority community areas will be chosen as a pilot for five ChicaGo Read mini library boxes to be placed throughout the neighborhood. Initial booklists will be curated by community members and CBOs in partnership with a neighborhood CPL librarian. The boxes will have books for all age groups (early childhood, K-12, adult).

The CPL Foundation will fund both the building materials and initial book stock. The boxes will be partially self-sustaining, with community members using them as a book swap, and additional supply being provided through donated books from local authors, local bookstore sponsorships, and philanthropic contributions. A QR code will be located on each box with information to community services and book recommendations. The code will also include a map to the local library to promote neighborhood brick-and-mortar library engagement.

NEXT STEPS

- Select pilot community
- Identify community partners to begin engagement around building a collection.
- Engage with community stakeholders and analyze population density data of specific age groups to determine optimal locations for boxes.
- Permitting requirements

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Front and Back Cover Art: Fantasia Ariel Graham, also known as Fanni, is a Chicago based fine artist. She holds a BFA from Bradley University for both drawing and painting. While creating relatable narratives with portraits, she gravitates to telling the story of people from her community. Having in depth conversations, and personally taking photos of her subjects, is a huge part of her practice. Providing a space where her audience can feel seen as well as reflected is her goal. Instagram : @justfanni

Page 8: Katherrin Billordo is 18 years old and lives in Belmont Cragin. Instagram: @kathysketchbook

Page 9: Kael Carmona is 18 years old and lives in Roscoe Village Instagram: @kcarmona.art

Page 64: Erica Obua, is 17 years old and lives in Rogers Park. Instagram: @bawdy_art.

Page 65: Joanna from After School Matters

All Additional Art from After School Matters student artists. After School Matters is a non-profit organization that provides life-changing after-school and summer program opportunities to nearly 19,000 Chicago high school teens each year. We thank them for inspiring and contributing to this book!

MEET THE FELLOWS



FELLOWS BY THE NUMBERS

20 

Mayoral Fellows

  16

Hometowns

10 

Universities across the
US and UK

 7

Degree
Programs

75 

Projects



14 

City Departments

24

Policy Focus Areas



Grant Beard

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Grant is pursuing a joint MBA / MPP degree at the University of Chicago. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations with a minor in Spanish from Stanford University. His interest in economic development policy, particularly through support of small businesses, brought him to the Mayor's Office. As a Mayoral Fellow, Grant has worked with the Mayor's Office, Department of Planning and Development, and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection on programs to support businesses across the city through the Chicago Recovery Plan. Grant is a self-described political junkie, basketball lover, and aspiring long-distance runner with access to the best pancakes in Chicago through his mother's restaurant, Sweet Maple Cafe.

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Cara is a rising second-year in the University of Michigan's Master of Public Policy program, and holds a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology and Public Health from New York University. This summer, she used her passions for urban policy, environmental health, and food equity while working with the Mayor's Office and Department of Public Health to map funding sources for BIPOC food entrepreneurs and contribute to a qualitative analysis of communities' environmental justice concerns and priorities. Including her time at NYU, Cara lived in New York City for ten years, but loves exploring the neighborhoods and food (including pizza) that Chicago has to offer.



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Natalie is pursuing a Master's in Public Policy at the University of Chicago, with a Certificate in Data Analytics. She has received a B.A. in Government from Cornell University, with Minors in Policy Analysis & Management and Law & Society. Her mission is to create better social policies supporting Black and Brown families. During her time as a Mayoral Fellow, Natalie has helped the Departments of Public Health and Family and Support Services on projects surrounding healthcare access, program capacity and non-profit capacity building. Outside of the policy world, Natalie loves lifting at the gym, French fries, and obsessively reading books in less than 24 hours.



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Marlyn is an MPP Candidate at Georgetown's McCourt School of Public Policy, and holds a B.A. in Psychology from Princeton University. Her policy interests vary from social urban policy and the criminal legal system to immigration policy and are reflected in her work this summer in the Mayor's Office – specifically with the Offices of Equity and Racial Justice and the Office of New Americans. Marlyn is a home barista and baker who often experiments with fusion flavors that she force feeds friends and family.

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Shobitha is pursuing her Master's in Computational Analysis and Public Policy at the University of Chicago. She has received her Bachelor of Science in Economics, Mathematics and Statistics from Christ University in Bangalore, India. Passionate about state and local government capacity building through technology, Shobitha worked with the Digital Services team at the Mayor's office on visualizing city data, the Department of Streets & Sanitation on Snow Removal Operations, and improving coordination amongst city departments to better ensure compliance amongst private waste haulers in the city. When not working on policy, Shobitha loves running in the park with her Labrador and Dachshund and making miniature oil paintings while listening to Lofi beats.



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Sophia is pursuing a Master of Social Work at the University of Chicago, with a Concentration in Transforming Justice. She holds B.A.s in Psychology and Political Science from the University of Michigan. Passionate about violence prevention, youth and education policy, and the criminal legal system, Sophia worked with the Department of Family and Support Services, the Mayor's Office, and CPD in violence prevention efforts. Sophia also worked with CDPH on researching funding structures and the CHAT program, as well as working with the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities. Sophia used to be a special education teacher in Chicago, and when not teaching or working on policy, she loves trying to beat



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Rachael is in University of Illinois Chicago's Master of Public Administration program, self-directing a Concentration in Community Development through Creative Placemaking. She received a Bachelor's in Theater Arts and English, with concentrations in Acting, Dramatic Writing, and Creative Writing, from Western Washington University. Rachael is passionate about community development and arts and culture policy. These areas of interests were seen in their work this summer with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), creating the CHI Film Green resource guide, assisting the Cultural Center's exhibitions team, and working alongside DCASE Senior Strategists on a creative sector field scan. Rachael is an avid reader, cat mom, performing artist, and runner addicted to the Lakeshore Trail.

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Sarah is pursuing her Master of Social Work, with a concentration in Social and Economic Development, at Washington University in St. Louis. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of Pennsylvania. Dedicated to further development of an intersectional lens in her approach to policy, Sarah spent her summer working with the Mayor's Office on projects rooted in advancing racial equity and environmental justice. Her projects included creating a strategy for institutionalizing an interdepartmental approach to equitable transit-oriented development and an examination of racial inequities in the City's waste removal strategy. In her free time, Sarah enjoys running along the lakefront, scrolling through Reddit, reading anything by Jean Rhys, and binge watching the Real Housewives of Potomac.



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Clare is pursuing a Master in Public Policy with a Certificate in Management, Leadership, and Decision Sciences at the Harvard Kennedy School. She holds a B.A. in Political Science from Northwestern University, during which time she studied abroad in Seoul, South Korea, taking classes in Korean political economy and language. Her interests in social policy, youth violence prevention, and equity led to her work with the Mayor's Office and the Department of Finance supporting the My CHI. My Future. initiative and recommending improvements for the Clear Path Debt Relief Pilot program application. Clare loves to explore different cuisines, and keeps a record of every restaurant she's ever been to or wants to go to on Google Maps.



Shweta Kamath

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Shweta is pursuing a Master's in Public Policy with a Certificate in Data Analytics at the University of Chicago. Shweta graduated from Singapore Management University with her Bachelor's in Business Management and spent 5 years working in the Non-Profit and Food Service spaces. Shweta's interest in understanding cities, having lived in 7 different ones herself, led her to the Mayoral Fellowship. Her portfolio this summer spanned 5 City Departments, and drew on her interests in social and urban policy. Her work involved proposing recommendations for a Vacant Lots Development ordinance, developing an evaluation framework for the city's Bike Distribution Program and improving the methodology for the annual PIT survey. Outside of her policy work, Shweta is an extensive reader, trained kathak dancer and an aspiring digital artist.

Yareqzy Munoz

University of Manchester

As a Marshall Scholar, Yareqzy is pursuing a Master of Science in International Development at the University of Manchester, as well as a Master of Philosophy in Planning, Growth and Regeneration at the University of Cambridge. She holds a Bachelor's in Urban Studies with minors in Latin American and Latinx Studies and Hispanic Studies from the University of Pennsylvania. This summer, she has applied her interests in social, urban, housing, and migration policy at the Mayor's Office, forming policy recommendations on climate migration, researching permanent supportive housing, and creating a marketing campaign for the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline. While Yareqzy studies cities, she prefers to spend her time in forests with her two older brothers, two younger sisters, and parents.



Grace Muth

University of Chicago

Grace is an MBA / MPP candidate at the University of Chicago and graduated with distinction from the University of Virginia with two B.A.s in Global Development Studies & English Literature. Her policy interests in economic development and civic technology, as well as prior experience in brand strategy, led her to working with the Mayor's Office this summer on projects for the Chicago Recovery Plan. She also has worked with efforts around Digital Equity and analyzed how best to communicate Chicago's climate agenda through digital dashboards. Grace loves karaoke and has a claim to fame of having gone viral for her awful singing voice.



Janae Nkansah

University of Chicago

Janae is a rising second-year in the University of Chicago's Master in Public Policy program. Prior to this, she graduated with her Bachelor's in Marketing from the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas. She is passionate about youth policy, racial justice, and transforming the criminal legal system. This led to her work this summer across City Departments helping with Juvenile Justice Summer Workshops, as well as the My Vote is My Voice initiative that encourages civic engagement among returning residents. When she's not working on policy issues, Janae balances the many TV shows she enjoys watching with daily YouTube yoga.

Adam Payter

University of Michigan

Adam is a 2nd year MPP candidate at the University of Michigan. Prior to this, he graduated "With Highest Distinction," receiving his Bachelor's with dual concentrations in Psychology and Anthropology — also at the University of Michigan. Adam is passionate about a wide array of policy areas, from youth and education policy to equity and community development. This led to his work this summer with the Department of Planning and Development and the Mayor's Office around revitalization efforts around the Maxwell Street Market, as well as supporting the We Will Chicago Community Engagement Team. In his spare time, Adam tends to his burgeoning houseplant addiction and his love of reading, all while listening to podcasts at 2.5x speed.



Lauren Quattrocchi

University of Chicago

Lauren is pursuing her Master's in Computational Analysis and Public Policy at the University of Chicago. Prior to this, Lauren graduated with her B.S. in Mathematics from St. Lawrence University, where she played on the women's basketball team. Her passions in urban policy, civic technology and equity led to her work in five City Departments this summer, with projects that analyzed data and trends and improved efficiency for hiring processes and city applications. Lauren loves the outdoors, all things sports and sun, and aspires to live on a lake one day.



Maria Ralenkotter

Duke University

Maria is pursuing their Master's in Public Policy at Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy. Prior to this, she graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Loyola University in Chicago with two Bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Economics. Her passions in affordable housing and accessible cities led to projects with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, and the Departments of Planning and Development and Family and Support Services. While not working to improve housing access for all, Maria loves challenging friends to Just Dance marathons and watching analyses of amusement park rides on YouTube.

Jason Shain

University of Chicago

Jason is pursuing his Juris Doctor and Master's of Business Administration at the University of Chicago, having also received his Bachelor's in Theater and Performance Studies there. Jason is a veteran of the United States Air Force, having served as an Air Battle Manager and Flight Commander for over 7 years. These experiences have informed his interests in city-level Federalism and effective bureaucracy. Jason worked this summer on a Veterans' Employee Resource Group and on advocating for Chicago at the Federal level within the Mayor's Office. Outside his academic and political goals, Jason tends to his 36 house plants and his 7-year-old sourdough starter he grew from a Chicoland apple.



Santiago Silva

University of California at Berkeley

Santiago is pursuing his Master's in Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley. Prior to this, he graduated from Universidad de Los Andes in Bogota with a degree in Anthropology. He is passionate about urban policy, tax policy, poverty and inequality, and has used these this summer in working with the Mayor's Office and the Department of Public Health on the Cash Transfer Policy program and analyzing equity in the We Will Chicago initiative. In his free time, Santiago loves to ride his bike, cook, and memorize lyrics in four different languages while struggling to remember friends' birthdays.



Rebecca Silverman

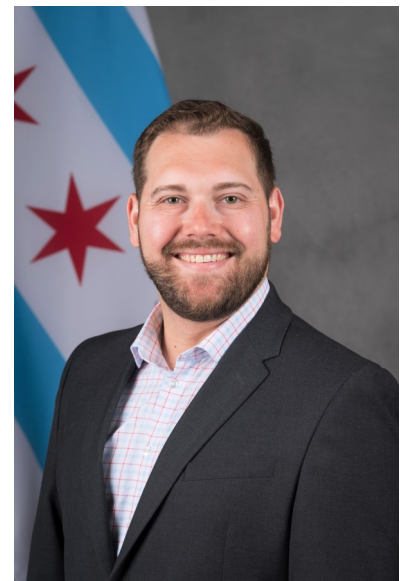
University of Chicago

Rebecca is pursuing a dual Master's degree in Public Policy and Social Work from the University of Chicago. She also holds a Bachelor's of Science in Social Welfare and Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Wisconsin – Madison and is a former elementary school teacher in Chicago. Her passions for violence prevention and educational equity led her to work with the Community Safety Coordination Center analyzing crime victim compensation policies, as well as create a Menstrual Hygiene Management Toolkit for schools with the Department of Public Health. In her spare time, Rebecca is a co-founder of a community bookstore, searches for the best deep dish pizza in Chicago, and roots for both the Cubs and the White Sox.

Ben Stock

University of Chicago

Ben is pursuing his Master's of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, with Certificates in Municipal Finance and Health Policy. Prior to this, he graduated from Oberlin College with his Bachelor's in Politics, a minor in Hispanic Studies and an International Studies Concentration. He then worked in advertising and political consulting, but returned to school due to his passion for municipal government and equitable economic development. Ben has worked with the Department of Family and Support Services this summer on a budget proposal outlining 24/7 operations among homeless youth shelters, as well as with the Mayor's Office's efforts to support small businesses as part of the Chicago Recovery Plan. Outside of academics and policy work, Ben plays 5 instruments and sings, is an avid snowboarder, and goes to as many Chicago Cubs or White Sox games as possible.



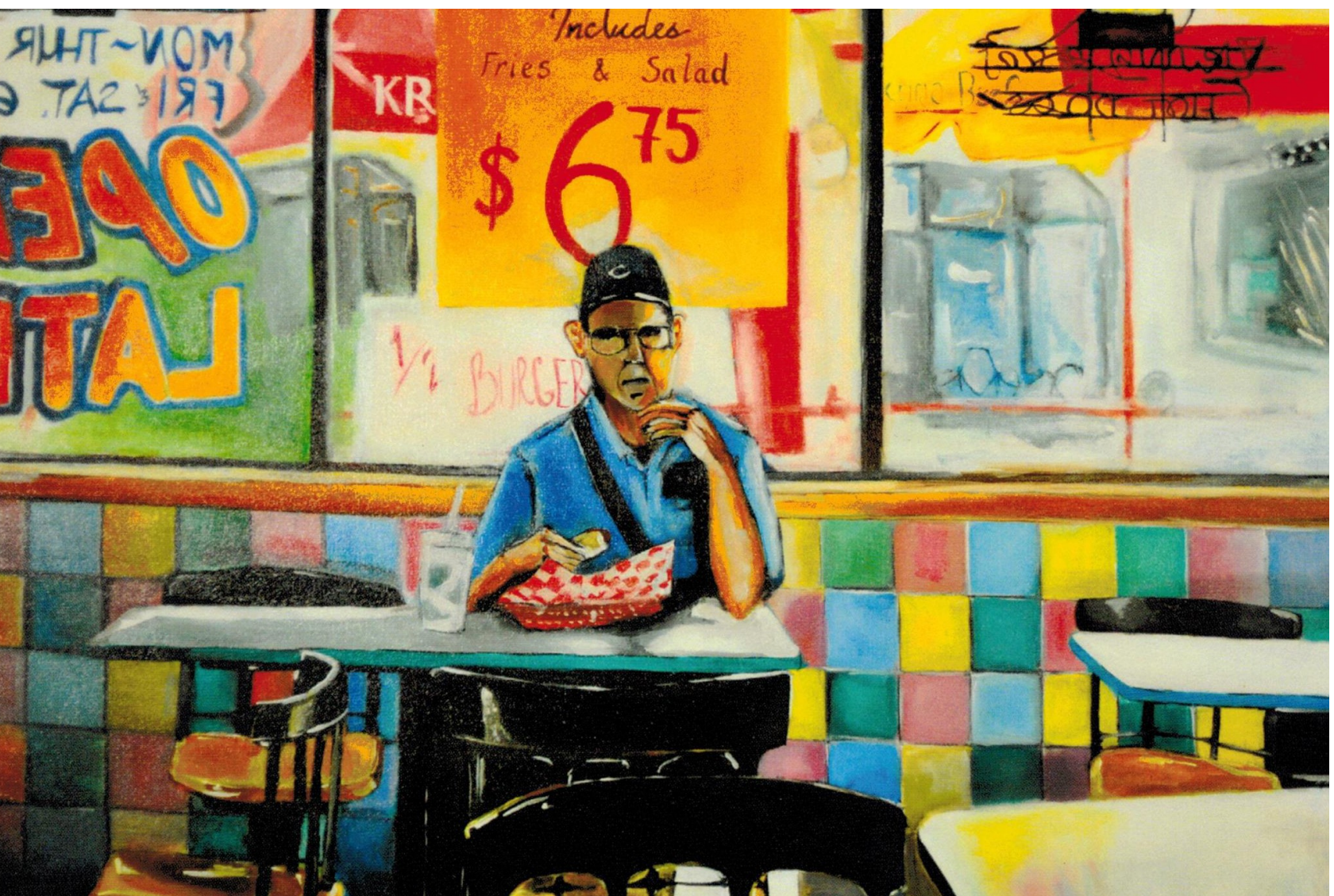


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“The way to right wrongs is to turn
the light of truth upon them.”

IDA B. WELLS