City of Chicago RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN
Department of Streets & Sanitation (DSS)

Under the City of Chicago's Municipal Code (Ch. 2-4-100), all City of Chicago departments must create and maintain Racial Equity Action Plans (REAPs) "to articulate and guide strategy aimed at advancing equity and making it a permanent pillar in all departmental workstreams." Progress on all REAPs are accounted for annually as a part of the City of Chicago's budget process. This document outlines the components of the REAP and ensures that all strategies are aligned to Chicago's citywide vision: ***All people and all communities have power, are free from oppression, and are strengthened by equitable access to resources, environments, and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being. (HC2025)***

THE CITY OF CHICAGO'S DEFINITION OF EQUITY

Equity is both an outcome and a process:

As an **outcome** equity results in fair and just access to opportunity and resources that provide everyone the ability to thrive. Acknowledging the present and historical inequality that persist in our society, equity is a future state we strive to create where identity and social status no longer predestine life outcomes.

As a **process**, equity requires a new way of doing business: one that

(1) Prioritizes access and opportunities for groups who have the greatest need.

(2) Methodically evaluates benefits and burdens produced by seemingly neutral systems and practices.

(3) Engages those most impacted by the problems we seek to address as experts in their own experiences, strategists in co-creating solutions, and evaluators of success.

Further, our focus is on evaluating our own strategies, interventions and resources in a way that prioritizes those who are most negatively impacted by current policies, procedures & practices.

Racial equity focuses on the social construction of race and how it has been used (historically and presently) to unjustly distribute opportunity and resources based on a person's skin color, heritage, ethnicity, and/or national origin. Advancing racial equity requires an analysis of systemic racism inclusive of the ways harm is created at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels. It also requires a commitment to dismantling systems that perpetuate racialized outcomes and rebuild systems that produce systemic inclusion.

The coordination of the development and implementation of City of Chicago REAPs is led by the Office of Equity and Racial Justice. For more information about REAPs and/or the work of the office visit www.chicago.gov/equity.

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #1

The City of Chicago's Vision: All people and all communities have power, are free from oppression, and are strengthened by equitable access to resources, environments, and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being. (HC2025)

★ ★ ★ ★

Citywide Priority Area & Desired Result:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: All Chicagoans have a meaningful opportunity to influence City of Chicago programs, policies, and initiatives.

Indicators Examined:

Community Data

Community trust - how often are communities being serviced and feel clean/safe (frequency); safety gap

Program/Department Data

# of 311 requests, participation in community outreach meetings, % of ward superintendents participating in community meetings

Community Feedback and Narratives

The Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) surveyed constituents and Ward Superintendents in various areas of the city. The surveys consisted of several questions surrounding 311 usage.

The Cohort group analyzed survey results which detailed the following findings:

Ward Superintendents Survey Analysis:

100% report that more outreach (advertisement) needs to happen.

42% report residents know nothing about 311.

71% feel that the 311 operators are doing a disservice to the entire process.

14% want photos to be required when using the app.

Constituent Survey Analysis:

The analysis when asked about their experience with 311.

45% found their experience favorable.

30% not favorable

25% of respondent's N/A or indifferent

311 Data Analysis

Based on the CSR codes analyzed, there is a misconception that the department focuses on northside wards but the data showed (based on the three codes) that our resources are allocated predominantly in South and West sides.

Sanitation Code Violation (SCB)

Weed Removal Request (SCP)

Clean Vacant Lot (SCT)

Further review of the data revealed the requests are generated from within the department and not from constituents. Less than 25% of requests for the aforementioned type codes reviewed were generated by constituents.

Define the Problem

The Department of Streets of Sanitation receives fewer 311 requests and calls from neighborhoods on the South and West sides of Chicago. The department analyzed data from 2022 on the following Customer Service Requests (CSR) DSS received 9,843 requests for weed removal, 9,040 for clean vacant lots, and 22,104 for sanitation code violations. These requests encompassed all neighborhoods and were generated by a combination of internal (city employees) and external (constituents) stakeholders. On the south and west sides, less than 25% of CSRs are generated by constituents.

The primary way to engage with DSS to request services outside of the built-in mechanisms (e.g., refuse collection, street cleaning, snow removal,

Department of Street & Sanitation's Racial Equity Action Plan
Department of Street & Sanitation's Racial Equity Action Plan

3

etc.) is through 311. In communities where there is lower engagement with 311, it's challenging to ensure equitable delivery of services because the department may not be aware of community needs. In addition, DSS does not have a centralized engagement process and structure to ensure staff (ward superintendents) are properly trained on 311, proactively entering requests needed and following up/responding to close requests.

Identify Root Causes to the Problem

DSS has identified that the root cause is not homogenous but very much multifaceted and complex. The department is designed as a complaint-driven department, which means that it always reacts to issues rather than being proactively driven. While the department does intend to be proactive in its initiatives, because of its design, it is forced to work in a complaint-driven silo.

This translates to the department always being behind on addressing issues, which leads to problems. Additionally, the department lacks accountability and performance management for its ward superintendents, who are the frontline representative for the department in each ward. This lack of accountability hinders the department's ability to meet its goals and objectives since there is no streamlined training program for our Ward Superintendents.

Language barriers can also make it difficult for constituents to communicate with city workers, which can lead to problems with complaints being filed and processed correctly. The lack of trust in the city government creates a barrier to the timely submission of complaints. Not knowing how to use the current 3-1-1 complaint system can make it difficult for people to file complaints and get help from the city, which means that they are not receiving the resources that they need.

By addressing these root causes, the city government can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its complaint system and better serve its citizens.

Define Your Department's Opportunity

After identifying the root causes of the problem, the department realized the potential that we have to create better opportunities to address these issues. For example, the department could provide proactive support by restructuring the scope of work of the Office of Neighborhood Services to utilize Community Outreach Personnel to initiate meetings with residents, as well as implement accountability and performance management

systems (training) to ensure city personnel is meeting the desired goals and objectives.

DSS can create a directory and publicize information that explains processes and provides accurate and concise information on our current 311 system. Residents will be informed when to expect services (i.e., street sweeping, residential snow removal, and lot cleaning), and provide feedback.

By addressing these root causes, the city can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its complaint system and better serve its constituents.

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #1

Our department will advance the following strategies:

1. Department Strategy: Create a department-wide standard operating procedure (SOP) for community engagement that centers equity and is inclusive of communities most impacted

Measures of Impact: # of new community partnerships/relationship formed; reduction in service complaints; increase in department driven requests

Actions	Implementation Plan	Timeline	Status
1.1 Assess current community engagement practices to determine opportunities to improve engagement.	1. Collaborate with the community outreach group, bureaus, and ward superintendents to identify what type of engagement is taking place currently. 2. Identify communities with lower engagement and partner with trusted community leaders (e.g., elected officials and community-based organizations, neighborhood block clubs, etc.) to facilitate community conversations. 3. Memorialize/ document information gathered from internal and external engagement to inform decision-making for SOP.	Q1 2024	
1.2 Develop a department-wide standard operating procedure to systemize equitable community engagement practices	1. Identify internal teams and consultants who can support writing this plan. 2. Write the SOP 3. Develop accountability metrics to make sure staff is carrying out the SOP 4. Pilot SOP with a bureau to assess implementation improvements needed. 5. Launch SOP department-wide	Q1 2025	

1.3 Build and facilitate department-wide training	1. Brief staff at all-staff meetings about the SOP so that everyone is informed and aware of its importance. 2. Convene bureau heads to ensure they are prepared to institute the new SOP and train respective bureau staff. 3. Offer training throughout the year to support application and implementation		
		Q2 2025	

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #1

Our department will advance the following strategies:

2. Department Strategy: Leverage city partnerships to strengthen relationships with community

Measures of Impact: # of entries in new community engagement system; # of departments engaging with the new system; # of cross-department engagements; # of new community relationships formed; # of opportunities identified using the contact list

Actions	Implementation Plan	Timeline	Status
2.1 Leverage work with CSCC to strengthen relationships with community and find additional block clubs in the communities	1. Meet with the CSCC and block club leaders to understand how they engage with the communities, what types of platforms are they using, etc. 2. Explore setting up a regular meeting cadence (e.g., monthly, quarterly, etc.) to align on strategies and better partner; build a symbiotic relationship 3. Identify opportunities for DSS to support public safety goals (e.g., vacant lot clean-ups) 4. Develop a plan and scope to address opportunities identified 5. Build and share training with CSCC and community block club leaders on DSS' processes	Q4 2023	
2.2 Identify how DSS can leverage city departments' existing community relationships to increase cross-department coordination and expand the DSS' reach	1. Meet with Infrastructure based departments (e.g., CDOT, DWM, DOB, etc.) to leverage existing community relationships and educate community on what each department does/ what services each can provide 2. Meet with social service-based departments (e.g., DFSS, CDPH) to leverage existing community relationships, capitalize on information, and strengthen opportunities for shared initiatives (trees, special populations, etc.) 3. Meet with elected officials, Finance, and related policy-based departments to leverage existing community relationships and identify ways to proactively engage residents/tenants before issuing tickets.	2024	

2.3 Compile community engagement contact list City departments can utilize and strengthen cross-department coordination around engagement	1. Collaborate with alderpersons, community outreach team, and ward superintendents to compile a list of community-based organizations that DSS works with 2. Work with a select group of City departments to compile a list of their partner organizations and to create a system for tracking contacts, outreach, and engagements. Partner with AIS/IT to create this system 3. Identify opportunities for cross-department collaboration 4. Share across participating departments and train staff on how to update this new system 5. Scale up to all departments	Q4 2023 (planning phase/ exploratory phase) - ongoing	

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #1

Our department will advance the following strategies:

3. Department Strategy: Increase transparency and opportunities for community to share feedback with DSS

Measures of Impact: # decisions informed by feedback; # of residents engaging in the feedback process; increased transparency around DSS' decision-making; % of compliance (to respond to community requests and initiatives)

Actions	Implementation Plan	Timeline	Status
3.1 Develop a process for community to share feedback on the quality, timeliness, and how services are performed overall.	1. Research who else has done something similar and apply best practices to DSS' feedback process. 2. Identify content and prompting questions to gather feedback. 3. Determine the most inclusive and accessible way to gather feedback (survey, ratings, etc.) 4. Identify DSS staff who can create the feedback process 5. Work with community partners and DSS staff to identify ways to disseminate information to the public	Q4 2023	
3.2 Review community feedback to identify opportunities to improve delivery of services	1. Identify who is compiling, reviewing, and sharing the feedback internally 2. Convene bureau heads to discuss data and opportunities for improvement 3. Create a criteria/ scoring system for what and how feedback gets implemented 4. Identify the areas that DSS can improve, implement changes, and monitor results	Q1 2024-ongoing	
3.3 Share goals, plans, and decisions informed by community feedback	1. Determine the ways DSS will share the information 2. Discuss/share what DSS has and has not implemented and why 3. Re-engage communities where improvements were made to make sure that the changes made have the desired impact 4. Partner with community to find solutions if changes are not having the desired impact	Q1 2024 - ongoing	

Department of Street & Sanitation's Racial Equity Action Plan

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #2

The City of Chicago's Vision: All people and all communities have power, are free from oppression, and are strengthened by equitable access to resources, environments, and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being. (HC2025)

★ ★ ★ ★

Citywide Priority Area & Desired Result:

EDUCATION: All Chicagoans gain meaningful knowledge and skills to thrive.

Indicators Examined:

Community Data

Recycling tonnage, yard waste, and waste diversion percentage, CSR data, tonnage

Program/Department Data

Recycling compliance: DSS serviced households (properties with 1-4 dwelling units); monthly waste, recycling, and yard waste tonnage; CSR/311 information for recycling contamination; missed recycling pick-up; requests for recycling carts.

Community Feedback and Narratives

311 Requests/Complaints - engage community members with low recycling tonnage and low diversion percentage

Define the Problem

1. Recycling and waste diversion are underperforming and need improved outreach strategies and additional collection programs- ex. yard waste, food waste, bulk materials, etc.
2. Seasonal events (ex. pumpkin smash) vs Year-round waste collection programs (ex. yard waste)

Identify Root Causes to the Problem

Chicago residents are not aware of the proper way to recycle, as indicated by low recycling tonnage and low diversion percentage. The "how to" of recycling, what is accepted in blue carts vs black carts.

Define Your Department's Opportunity

The Department of Streets and Sanitation manages the city's waste collection services, including recycling. DSS is committed to educating the public at large about the benefits of recycling and improving material management programming to increase diversion from landfill.

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #2

Our department will advance the following strategies:

1. Department Strategy: Increase compliance for recycling by educating communities with the lowest compliance.

Measures of Impact: Recycling compliance (via self-reporting), tonnage diverted, tracking of 311 requests

Actions	Implementation Plan	Timeline	Status
1. Research the types of recyclable materials and how to recycle them.	1. Hire additional staff for the Bureau of Recycling, Waste Diversion, and Material Management 2. Identify internal and external teams that can support this research 3. Review the 2021 waste study completed by Delta Institute 4. Scan local and nationwide best practices on recycling and waste diversion 5. Collaborate with administration on approval and provide recommendations	Q3 2023	
1.2 Develop training materials, infographics, and social media outlets to share information and best practices surrounding recycling.	1. Collaborate with AIS and external providers to develop infographics based on research and recommendations from 1.1 2. Work with DSS Director of Public Affairs to build social media assets 3. Share with internal and external partners such as City departments and community organizations.	Q4 2023	

1.3 Leverage community partnerships to educate the public (CPS and CPL) not only on how to recycle but also the positive environmental impacts of recycling.	1. Convene stakeholders, provide them with resources to advocate for the benefits of recycling, and provide community with the information they needed to properly recycle 2. Create target-specific training for various stakeholders (i.e., CPS, Neighborspace)	Q1 2024	

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #2

Our department will advance the following strategies:

2. Department Strategy: Increase compliance for recycling by educating and collaborating with businesses and working with legislatures to create better environmental policies around recycling

Measures of Impact: New legislation and policies introduced, number of compliance for recycling and waste diversion, number of business groups, and number of legislatures part of outreach.

Actions	Implementation Plan	Timeline	Status
2.1 Scan other cities recycling policies that have higher compliance to understand best practices.	1. Identify internal and external teams that can support this research 2. Review SB 1555/HB 2874 that was introduced into legislation in Feb 2023 3. Scan local and nationwide best practices on recycling and waste diversion 4. Collaborate with administration on approval and provide recommendations	Q1 2023 - Ongoing	
2.2 Work with Illinois Recycling Association to pass legislation that streamlines the plastic materials business manufacture.	1. Sharing local data regarding current recycling trends 2. Share opportunities to express feedback to elected officials with local community organizations 3. Collaborate with the working group to share insights on feasibility of implementing new legislation and amplify community concerns 4. Apply recommendations	Q1 2024 - Ongoing	
2.3 Assist with messaging to local businesses derived from State Legislation.	1. Identify businesses 2. Develop messaging that is clear, concise, and easy to understand based on above 3. Disseminate the messaging through a variety of media sources 4. Partner with city departments (CDPH) 5. Monitor the effectiveness of the messaging 6. Adjust the messaging where necessary	Q2 2025	

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #2

Our department will advance the following strategies:

3. Department Strategy: Pilot Program for composting to reduce contamination in other waste streams (recycling and trash)

Measures of Impact: Measure the amount of volume of organic waste and other recyclables diverted from landfills

Actions	Implementation Plan	Timeline	Status
3.1 Work with a set community organization to pilot the composting program to understand the benefits of it.	1. Identify community organizations interested in pilot program 2. Assess organization ability to be part of the program 3. Provide additional tools and equipment for a successful program	Q3 2023	
3.2 Analyze pilot program to ensure it is sustainable and to determine if improvements are necessary.	1. Develop metrics to measure the success of the program 2. Collect compost data such as collection rates, community users, and decrease in recycling contamination 3. Identify challenges or obstacles from the pilot program 4. Compare the pilot program to similar run programs 5. Adjust and make recommendations	Q2 2024	
3.3 Educate the public on the benefits of composting	1. Identify the target audience and develop visuals and success stories to share through social media and print media based on targeted audiences 2. Choose educational methods. i.e., Partner with CPS to visit schools to discuss the benefits of composting - attend science fairs 3. Attend community events throughout neighborhoods to share the benefits of composting 4. Identify organizations and individuals that can help amplify educational messages (CPL, CPS, etc.) 5. Be consistent and persistent with messaging/education.	Q3 2024 - Ongoing	

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #3

The City of Chicago's Vision: All people and all communities have power, are free from oppression, and are strengthened by equitable access to resources, environments, and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being. (HC2025)

Citywide Priority Area & Desired Result:

DATA: All Chicagoans can obtain, view, or use public facing data from the City of Chicago.

Indicators Examined:

Community Data

Community trust

Program/Department Data

Website and app hits, 311 data

Community Feedback and Narratives

Common data requested from the department are the street-sweeping schedule, tree trimming schedule, weed-cutting requests completions & tickets for sanitation code violations. Additional engagement is necessary to understand other data residents would like the department to share.

Define the Problem

The problem is that the City of Chicago does not have a comprehensive data strategy. The city has a number of different data initiatives, but they are not coordinated or aligned. This makes it difficult for the public to find and use data, which leads to residents being unable to make informed decisions and hold the city accountable, which results in a lack of trust.

Identify Root Causes to the Problem

Department resources, tools, and technologies are insufficient when it comes to cleaning and sharing usable data. In addition, DSS's staff need additional training on the benefits of transparency and on the benefits of publicly sharing data.

Define Your Department's Opportunity

The Department of Streets and Sanitation understands the importance of publicly sharing data. Furthermore, sharing data will help the Department

build accountability and foster trust with the communities we serve. DSS commits to building efficient data management systems which will help ensure collaboration and development of insights that can drive decision-making and bring attention to critical issues in the community.

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #3

Our department will advance the following strategies:

1. Department Strategy: Develop a public-facing data system (i.e., dashboard) to share microlevel department data

Measures of Impact: All staff understand what is collected, why & how it is collected and is trained to do so successfully

Actions	Implementation Plan	Timeline	Status
1.1 Create a detailed project plan that outlines test strategies, objectives, schedules, deadlines, and resources required to complete the plan.	1. Create the project management plan 2. Assign a project manager and project management team 3. Define internal stakeholder group(s) capable of writing the project plan 4. Define external stakeholders who will be using the data system (i.e., dashboard) 5. Develop the project scope, review, and analyze current data sets 6. Recommend best practices 7. Engage with internal and external stakeholders to review expectations	Q2 2024	
1.2 Design and develop a data system (i.e. dashboard) that will allow the public to view data on snow plowing, trees, sweeping, 311, weed cutting	1. Identify metrics and data types in collaboration with the community (e.g., survey community to identify wants/needs) and city departments 2. Collaborate with AIS, MO, and DSS-IT to build a data system	Q2 2025	
1.3 Test new data systems with Data Stakeholder Group (DSG)	1. Identify community stakeholders that will be in the pilot/testing group; ensuring equitable engagement tools and practices are incorporated 2. Track the use of the data to understand what data people are using, what they aren't using, and why 3. Analyze: Collect feedback from users of the data to see how it can be improved 4. Approve: Adjust the app as needed 5. Re-engage community stakeholders on a regular basis to capture any future adjustments/changes as necessary	Q4 2025	

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #3

Our department will advance the following strategies:

2. Department Strategy: Expand capabilities of the departments mobile applications to ensure all data is readily available and to increase the mechanisms the public have to access the data

Measures of Impact: Department data is publicly available, site usage (i.e., clicks and views of content)

Actions	Implementation Plan	Timeline	Status
2.1 Identify the current capabilities of DSS mobile applications such as: Snow plowing app, Weed cutting app, Street sweeping app, Rodent abatement app, Graffiti removal app, Premier One, Mets 2.0, Tree app, Turn by Turn	1. Identify an internal working group to analyze the capabilities of internal and external (CHI311) applications 2. Determine what should be optimized in order for best performance and user-friendly operation (i.e., build data feed to data system)	Q3 2023	
2.2 Develop a plan for expanding the functions of our internal DSS mobile applications	1. Define the key functions DSS wants to expand. 2. Identify the resources that you need to expand the functions and create a timeline. 3. Listen to feedback and implement where possible	Q2 2024	
2.3 Implementation process of system created	1. Integrate data feeds to the data system created (i.e., dashboard) 2. Analyze data feed to ensure it is functioning to the capabilities it was intended 3. Deploy to production and go-live	Q2 2026	

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN: Priority #3

Our department will advance the following strategies:

3. Department Strategy: Launch new data systems and apps

Measures of Impact: Utilize feedback from internal and external stakeholders, track metrics, and number of community groups we are meeting with

Actions	Implementation Plan	Timeline	Status
3.1 Create communication outreach plan to inform the public	1. Identify mediums to actively promote (i.e., social media, newsletters) 2. Actively promote new features and functions 3. Encourage users to give reviews about the app	Q1 2026	
3.2 Educate and train public/stakeholders on the capabilities of the new data system (i.e., dashboards) and mobile applications so they can further promote and train individuals in their networks to utilize them	1. Create an interactive data user (How-To-Use) guide 2. Collaborate with other agencies (e.g., CPL), alderman, community-based organizations to make user guides available and to host in-person training 3. Develop and provide access to an online training module	Q1 2026	
3.3 Review and address users' feedback	1. Examine reviews of data system (i.e., dashboard) and mobile applications and re-engage the Data Stakeholder Group (DSG) on a seasonal basis 2. Evaluate feedback to determine the effectiveness of the product 3. Integrate feedback to make sure new data systems are providing the public with the information they need	Q4 2026 - ongoing	