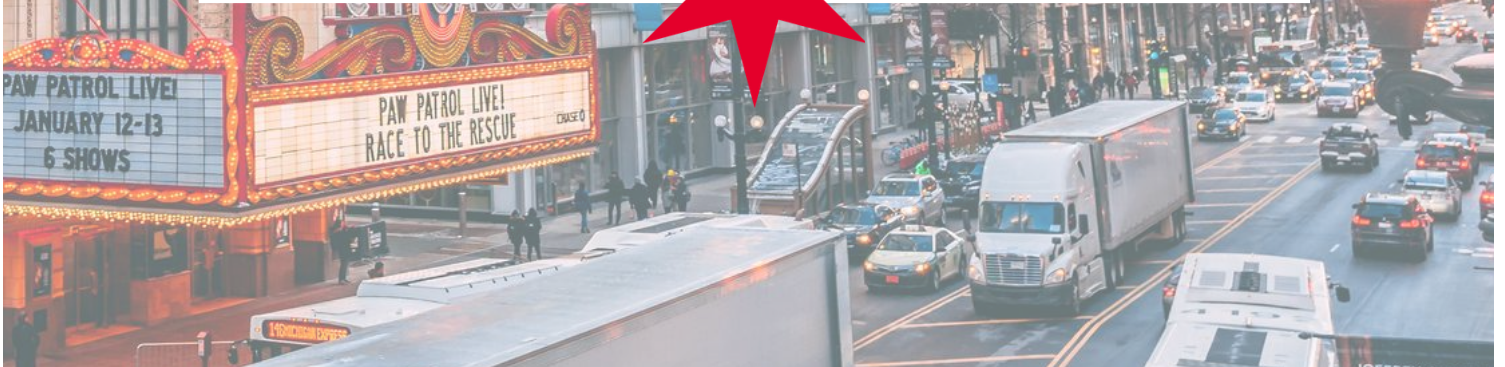
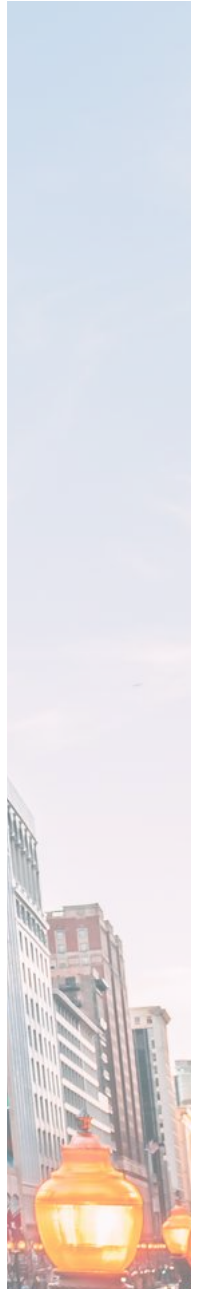


NEW IDEAS

2020 CHICAGO MAYORAL FELLOWS



"We are already doubling-down on our mission of building a new Chicago that is inclusive and accessible, and serves as the standard of how cities can not only recover from this event, but use their recovery as a driver for growth that leverages power and potential for generations to come."

MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT



DIRECTORS' NOTE

Congratulations on making it through a summer of the unknown! Working through a pandemic has truly been a challenge for all of us, but you have all done a phenomenal job navigating the fellowship this summer. Your hard work and flexibility have exceeded our expectations. You are all bright and hardworking individuals that we have so enjoyed getting to know.

Your support this summer on numerous City projects has been invaluable. Whether researching vacant lots for INVEST South/West, aiding the Department of Public Health's COVID-19 response, working with the Department of Aviation, or launching the Chicago Youth Service Corps, you have all approached your projects with a positive attitude, a willingness to learn, and a commitment to serving Chicago's residents.

Additionally, you all spent time developing the thoughtful and creative New Ideas found in this book. The collection of proposals outlined here all focus on how to further benefit the lives of Chicagoans and should be considered for implementation by the City. We are grateful for the perspective you have offered and the exciting ideas you've put forth.

Beyond your projects, you also spent quality time on Teams with many of the City of Chicago's Commissioners during our Fellows Talks Series. We hope you were able to see first-hand how departments and sister agencies keep the City running smoothly. Though the city tours were few, we are happy you got to visit Harold Washington Library, O'Hare Airport, and the Jardine Water Purification Plant.

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 new and innovative ideas presented in this book will continue to move the City forward. You should be proud of yourselves for completing one of the most demanding programs in the country. We can only hope that your time here has been an experience that you will never forget. You have been a wonderful 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.

J.D. Van Slyke
First Deputy,
Community Engagement

Margaret Gach
Director of Mayoral Fellows

Margaret Decker
Policy Advisor,
Public Safety



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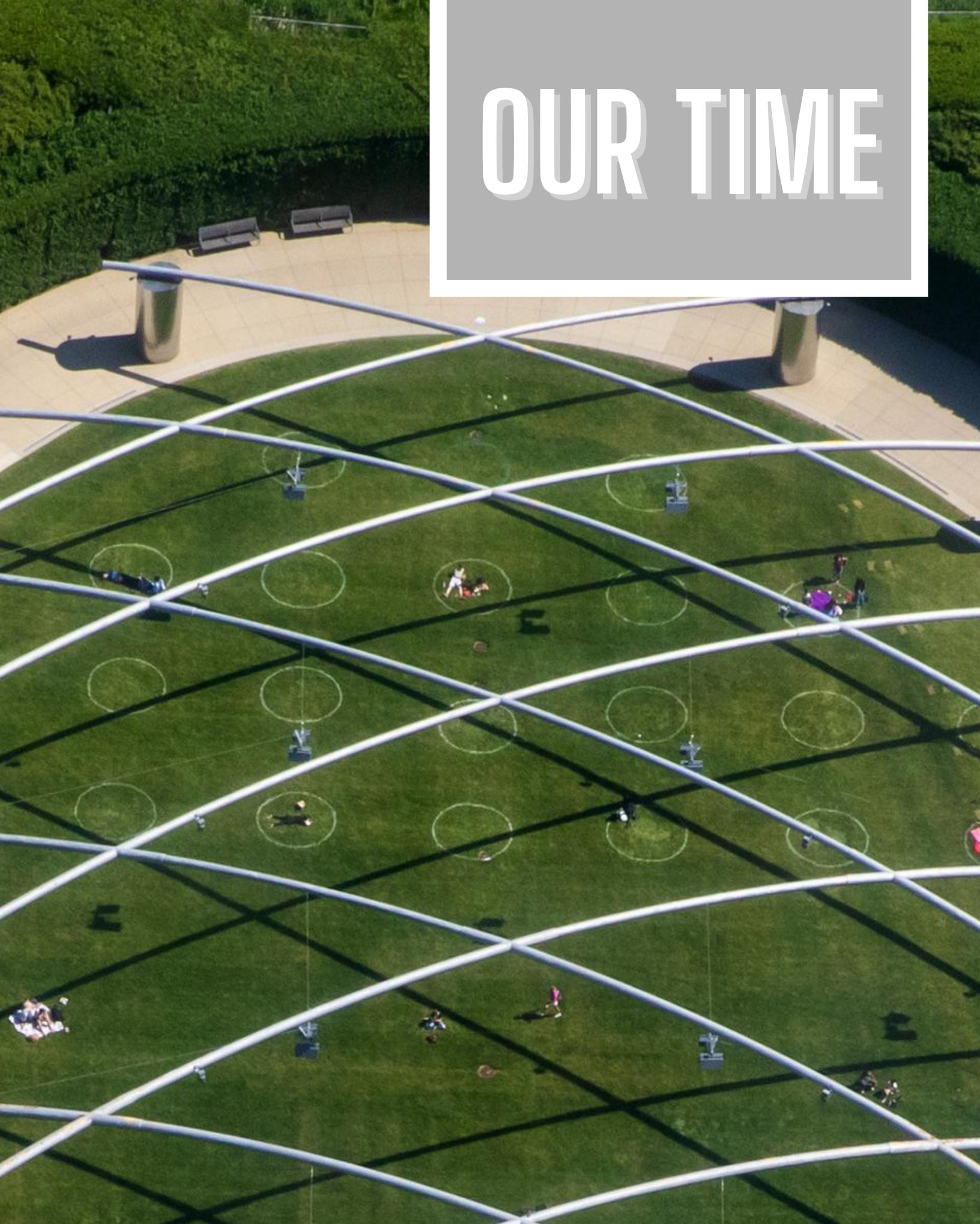
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Meet the 2020 Mayoral Fellows



OUR TIME



ANCHOR IN HISTORY

Byron Terry

What is more grounding than an anchor in time

We wanted our anchor to not only be new ideas, but a voice, our voice, our personality,
what makes us smile, what keeps us going, who we are, what we've seen, and why this matters

We wanted to be able to look back at our anchor and remember
there is beauty blossoming in the aftermath of the rubble and debris of social justice

We wanted our anchor, like every other anchor, to keep us from getting swept away in the
current of uncertain change, grounded in tradition and history, while at the same time
giving us the ability to set sail into uncharted territories full speed ahead

We wanted our anchor to show that even though we are distant, separated by six feet,
and the passion written on our faces hidden by masks,
we still came together mooring this anchor in time to make history











PUBLIC HEALTH





CREATING CPL SAFE SPACES

Safe exchanges for parents + children of domestic violence



Naveen Siddiqui

WHY IT MATTERS

According to data reported by the Chicago Department of Family Support Services, the Chicago Police Department made 10,095 arrests for domestic violence in 2019.¹ Many of these cases involved children impacted by the violence taking place in their homes. While Cook County Court provides legal remedies to survivors, such as orders of protection, children of both parties are often court-ordered to Supervised Visits and Safe Exchanges (SVSE).

SVSE services allow custodial exchanges to happen by removing the risk of the survivor interacting with the person that has caused them harm. Currently three domestic violence (DV) agencies in the City of Chicago provide free SVSE services to Chicago residents who have been court ordered. If an SVSE agency is over capacity and unable to provide services, parents then utilize fast food restaurants or police departments to hold safe exchanges, which can potentially cause further harm to the survivor and/or children.

HOW IT WORKS

Safe spaces help build a sense of safety, security, and community for individuals seeking relief. For many Chicagoans, Chicago Public Libraries (CPLs) are spaces of safety and refuge. Libraries provide support, resources, educational programming, and services to all Chicago residents. This can include offering spaces for cooling centers and helping residents research the many different programs offered throughout the city. While DV survivors utilize libraries to find resources on shelter, employment, and safety, libraries also have the capacity to offer more proactive support to DV survivors.

Public libraries can be spaces for safe exchanges to occur for parents and children involved in DV situations. If parents are unable to set an appointment with one of the three DV agencies, they can schedule an appointment with the public library to carry out a safe exchange. CPLs are better spaces for safe exchanges than fast food restaurants and the police department because they are trauma-informed spaces of care and safety for both the survivor and the children. Safe exchanges can be facilitated by DV advocates that accompany the survivor to the library and carry out the exchange. Parents who do not need the additional support of an advocate can also facilitate their own exchanges at the library. While safe exchanges at CPL are not new, they are not widely known. When judges grant parents safe exchanges, they can write in CPL on the court order as an option for parents to utilize.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Continue work with CPL to structure spaces for safe exchanges, including DV training for CPL staff.
- Work with the Department of Family Support Services and partner DV agencies to coordinate Safe Exchanges at CPLs and to place the CPL option on SVSE court orders.
- Develop internal partnerships with SVSE/DV agencies to streamline safe exchanges at CPLs.

1. "Data Report: State of Domestic Violence in Illinois." *The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence*. 2020.

ON DUTY

Supporting the continued development + health of law enforcement



Byron Terry

WHY IT MATTERS

To become an officer for the Chicago Police Department (CPD), candidates must complete a series of tests confirming that they are intellectually, physically, and mentally fit for the profession. However, once officers pass these entrance exams they are not required to continue to develop these skills or maintain a specific level of mental or physical wellness.

Due to the nature of their work, research shows first responders are a high-risk population for developing several debilitating mental health problems. When addressing these issues, CPD needs to be proactive instead of reactive: waiting until after an incident occurs or intervening only after a certain number of incidents have occurred is too late. It is important to address both of these issues.

HOW IT WORKS

Professional counselors, teachers, and social workers are required to complete a certain amount of continuing education to remain active. For example, counselors must complete 200 continuing education hours, which can include things like workshops and in-service trainings, all focused on enhancing professional knowledge and skills. This model can be used to inform a program of continuing education for law enforcement to ensure police officers are up-to-date in subjects that affect the nature of their work. This program should include mandatory wellness hours focused on maintaining and improving an officer's physical and mental health. From a mental health standpoint, implementing mandatory wellness hours could serve to decrease the stigma around mental health in law enforcement, and may potentially increase the use of mental health services by officers once they are comfortable using the services.

This policy would proactively address officer wellness by requiring participation regardless of record, removing feelings that officers are being singled out for participation. The focus is on maintaining a competent and healthy department. Implementing policies like this creates awareness for law enforcement officers of the support services available to them and to build a stronger relationships between officers and their careers. This policy also addresses community concerns for officer training and mental health, ensuring the community that any officer actively serving is up-to-date on skills training and in a state of good mental health.

This policy requires consultation with academics specializing in criminal justice and law enforcement to determine beneficial subject areas for continuing education for officers. A possible barrier for implementation is the relatively low number of CPD mental health professionals. To overcome this, CPD could allocate more personnel funds to increase the number of mental health professionals on staff, or compile a list of counseling services available to officers and covered by police insurance.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Research continuing education requirements for other professions to build guidelines for law enforcement's continuing education requirements.
- Compile a list of services already offered to law enforcement that would fulfill their continuing education requirements, and look for training gaps.
- Research current law enforcement insurance information in regards to counseling.
- Consult with a mental health professional for mental health hours.

ANTIRACIST VACCINE EDUCATION

A healing-centered approach to future vaccine campaigns



Charmaine Runes

WHY IT MATTERS

While a handful of studies are celebrating the success of early trials, recent polls have found that as few as 50% of people in the U.S. are committed to receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Among Black people, who make up over a fifth of U.S. COVID-19 deaths, 40% said they would not get a vaccine. Historical exploitation in medical research and practice (e.g., Native and Puerto Rican sterilization, the Tuskegee Study, the foundations of modern gynecology) has led to deep-seated mistrust among communities of color.¹ Additionally, many people of color face barriers and experience discrimination when they do seek out services, further driving racial disparities in preventative health care. For example, lower shares of Indigenous (38%), non-Latinx Black (39%), and Latinx (37%) adults received flu vaccinations compared to the overall average (45%) in the 2018-2019 season. Vaccinations are proven to safely prevent diseases, but public health facts alone will not be enough to address the harm communities have and continue to experience.

HOW IT WORKS

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) can commit to being not only trauma-informed, but also healing-centered,² in vaccine education and communication plans by centering the leadership of and sharing decision-making power with communities of color. A healing-centered approach “views those exposed to trauma as agents in the creation of their own well-being rather than victims of traumatic events.”² Ginwright provides direct applications of healing-centered engagement for youth development stakeholders that align well with CDPH’s Healthy Chicago 2025 plan.

CDPH and the City of Chicago can implement several internal and external strategies:

- **Begin with empathy.** Collaborate with organizers, youth-led groups, and the Racial Equity Rapid Response Team to conduct focus groups around vaccine barriers.
- **Acknowledge collective harm and injury.** Address historical wrongs and present-day concerns Chicagoans have about the structural racism embedded in the research and rollout of new vaccinations.
- **Build critical reflection and foster possibility.** Invite Chicago-based doctors, epidemiologists, and researchers within the Data for Black Lives network to co-design and participate in educational vaccine campaigns.
- **Share power and take action.** Develop anti-racist educational toolkits for partners in healthcare and medical research, and fund local community organizations promoting vaccination, among other preventative health measures, in disinvested neighborhoods.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Explore avenues for sharing design and decision-making power with youth enrolled in Chicago Public Schools and/or involved with Chicago Park District programming.
- Connect with the Census 2020 and violence prevention outreach teams to share insight and about reaching marginalized communities in trauma-informed ways.

1. Russell, Tonya. “Racism in care leads to health disparities, doctors and other experts say as they push for change.” *The Washington Post*. 2020.

2. Ginwright, Shawn. “The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement.” *Medium*. 2018.

EQUITY IN HEALTHY HOUSING

A collaborative, data-driven approach to advancing health equity



Erin M. Monforti

WHY IT MATTERS

COVID-19 has necessitated a reconsideration of how public health policy is created and evaluated in Chicago. Even absent this crisis, health outcome inequities have long been prevalent in the City—life expectancy data indicate that there was an 8.8 year life expectancy gap between non-Hispanic Black residents and white residents in 2017.¹ The most common driver of this gap is chronic disease, which can be linked to inadequate health resources and sub-optimal living conditions for many residents.² These disparities must be addressed by the City to ensure more equitable health outcomes for residents and combat systemic and environmental racism.

HOW IT WORKS

Every year, the Department of Housing (DOH) conducts a lottery to distribute funds to income-eligible homeowners for repairs to their roofs or porches.³ In the past several months, DOH has begun to rethink this program to repurpose the monies used for porch and roof repairs and advance healthy living more holistically. By conducting lead analyses on homeowners' pipes, assessing flood risks in different communities, and mitigating the spread of mold in residential buildings, DOH and its acting partners hope to improve health outcomes across the City.

In order to make healthy and sustainable home improvements available in an equitable fashion, DOH and other relevant City agencies need to adopt a graduated approach, recognizing that there are systematic health disparities between residents across different identity axes (race, ethnicity, homeownership, socioeconomic status, etc.). The current complaint-based system that triggers inspections may isolate residents who are unaware of the services available to them, as

well as those who distrust government. Furthermore, those who do apply for the current repair subsidies are only filtered by income and region within the City. The lottery system for porch and roof repairs can be transformed to improve equality of opportunity and address a wider variety of home-based health threats.

A graduated approach is the most feasible for the City to make lasting equitable change. The 2020 Census provides an opportunity for a preliminary City-wide assessment of health equity, as certain reported characteristics can be broadly associated with health outcomes. Eventually, a more targeted approach may become more salient and feasible: predictive analytics. Local zoning designation, building inspection history, and utility costs are indicators that may reflect health outcomes more directly than data provided by the Census. This incremental shift away from a lottery system for healthy home improvements will advance the Mayor's dedication to data-driven solutions for advancing equity in the City.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Consult with the Healthy Chicago 2025 team to determine what factors (drawn both from the Census and other City data) are effective indicators of health outcomes.
- Assess opportunities for expanding the funding for this effort beyond CDBG monies.
- Coordinate with various departments and environmental justice advocates across the City to determine the most efficient and equitable way to get this project started.

1. Healthy Chicago 2025 Data Compendium. 2019.

2. Sears, Margaret E. + Genuis, Stephen J. "Environmental Determinants of Chronic Disease and Medical Approaches." *Journal of Environmental and Public Health*. 2012.

3. Roof, Porch and Emergency Heating Repair Programs. 2020.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT





ME-N-U FORUM

Improving community engagement + transparency in fund allocation



Adam Roth + Nicole Shen

WHY IT MATTERS

Since 1994, all wards receive around \$1.3 million annually in Menu money, providing the aldermen opportunities to determine the optimal use of public funds. Although some aldermen provide pathways for their residents to decide where their Menu money goes, more can be done to ensure an equitable process and address residential infrastructure needs.

Furthermore, because Menu money is only intended for use within each alderman's ward, there are few opportunities for aldermen in neighboring wards to collectively launch local community projects using both wards' Menu money. This has led to strong criticism in non-participating wards accusing the aldermen of neglecting local ward issues and perpetuating a lack of transparency.

HOW IT WORKS

A streamlined public forum for all residents to express concerns and track Menu funds in their respective wards would improve transparency as well as ensure that the City is using taxpayer funds effectively and equitably.

Strategic Partnerships: The University of Illinois (UIC) at Chicago's Great Cities Institute has already launched an online platform that allows residents of participating wards to voice community issues and discuss optimal Menu money allocation. The Office of Budget and Management (OBM), City Council, as well as the Community Engagement team from the Mayor's Office can continue their partnerships with UIC in an effort to expand this platform to the entire City. In the implementation stage, OBM and the Office of Procurement can also provide residents resources and virtual workshops to actively gauge the estimated cost plans, including resources and labor.

Featured Function: A centralized message board would enable aldermen to draw quick and real-time insight on the Menu allocation and consolidate communities' voices at a budget town hall and city council meetings. The participatory budgeting platform should allow residents to propose multi-ward projects using Menu money, including ways of dividing the funding for these joint projects across wards. The platform would incorporate ward maps and resources for cost estimation.

Fosters Citizen-Alderman Knowledge and Relationships: This forum would not only give the City's residents more direct input into their community's funding, but it would also provide city government with crucial information regarding ward-by-ward needs and achievements. The forum could also provide citizens with a means of contacting their alderman to address inequities among wards.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Reach out to Aldermen currently doing participatory budgeting and brainstorm potential incentives for city-wide engagement with the public forum.
- Conduct a meeting with UIC, City Council, and OBM to determine the best method of setting up an online Menu budgeting forum.
- Reach out to OBM to help create resources for citizens to gauge/estimate the cost of such projects, so that citizens can help make informed decisions.

COMMITMENT TO REENTRY

Mayor's Office staff dedicated to formerly incarcerated individuals



Chris Hoey

WHY IT MATTERS

Currently, the City of Chicago's efforts to serve returning residents are decentralized and ineffective. With mass incarceration and institutionalized racism under heavy public criticism, now more than ever the City of Chicago needs to act. Mayor Lightfoot expresses a strong interest in establishing an Office of Reentry to provide strategic guidance for formerly incarcerated residents for easier interaction with systems and structures to reintegrate into society. Reducing recidivism rates has positive economic and social impacts that clearly align with other initiatives led by the Mayor. Research suggests the cost of one person's recidivism in Chicago costs the city \$150,000.

Given the disproportionate incarceration of Black and Brown people, this initiative to form an office must be established in racial equity. Both saving money and investing in our most marginalized residents are of the utmost importance for Chicago, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Formerly incarcerated individuals have a very specific profile of needs and the City must ensure every resident's needs are met. We need reentry woven into every conversation, at the forefront of decisions, and supported through policy and legislation. This directly aligns with the Mayor's Solutions Toward Ending Poverty (STEP) agenda, intersecting with work around gender-based violence, violence prevention, mental health, and other areas of interest.

HOW IT WORKS

The Mayor's Office of Reentry will create a strategic plan that will move the work and operationalize it. We must allocate funding for staff specifically to ensure the City's support around reentry services offered through community-based organizations working with this population.

Continuing to organize those support services through a citywide reentry coalition will convene stakeholders and identify gaps in services. This allows the City to explore more comprehensive and targeted policy measures that can greatly improve the quality of life for returning residents and reduce recidivism rates. A partnership with Intergovernmental Affairs and Cook County among others will work to identify legislation at all levels that impact this population and advocate for the stance the city will take. We will put effort forward to begin large, systematic change by weaving in reentry to all aspects of city services, advocating for this population to be included in every conversation.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Research best practices other cities have used to serve those at higher risk of recidivism.
- Develop working groups with community partners to develop a policy agenda.
- Advocate at local, state, and federal levels for appropriate funding and defend this imperative initiative in the 2021 budget process.
- Draft job description(s) for positions and begin the hiring process.

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO OPEN DATA

Partnering with CPL to provide resources for open data usage



Ella Brady

WHY IT MATTERS

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot ran on a platform of furthering transparency and accountability in the City of Chicago. In the Mayor's transition report, there is a section dedicated to the Open Data Executive Order 2012-2, which sets guidelines for the City's Open Data Program. The administration now has the opportunity to re-examine this policy and keep Chicago on par with its municipal peers by producing complete and accessible data. However, there exists a problem that may be difficult to address solely through policy language changes or codification: poor data literacy among Chicago residents.

The Open Data Executive Order 2012-2 states that the publication of public data "will empower Chicago's residents by providing them with information necessary to participate in government in a meaningful manner, to assist in identifying possible solutions to pressing governmental problems, and to promote innovative strategies for social progress and economic growth." These goals, however, cannot be realized if only select groups are repeatedly accessing and analyzing the same datasets over time. In order for the City's open data program to reach its full potential, residents of Chicago must feel comfortable with and be excited by the datasets released on the open data portal.

HOW IT WORKS

As COVID-19 presents a barrier to in-person programming, an opportunity lends itself to create lasting, accessible online open data resources. This effort would require coordination between the City's open data team, Chicago Public Libraries (CPL), and community-based organizations (CBOs):

- Community-based organizations, such as Chi Hack Night, and the City's open data team

work together to build out open source tools on the City's data portal that would allow individuals with little-to-no tech background the ability to analyze or visualize data.

- An experienced team of CBOs and city government staff can create the first round of webinars that introduce the functions and potential applications of the data portal. These organizations' capacity should be built out to produce these webinars to ultimately reach individuals in all areas of Chicago. CPL can assist by marketing workshops towards community members and library patrons. Potential workshops may include:
 - Build an App with Open Data
 - Open Data + Digital Design
 - Data for Specific Industries (e.g., public health, transportation)
 - Data for Good (civic engagement + open data)
 - Data for Students (CPS partnership)
 - Data for CPL Librarians (staff training)

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Connect with CBOs and the City's open data team to create working groups to build user-friendly open source tools for the portal.
- Assess the current staffing comfort level with open data visualization and analytics that exists in AIS, the open data team, and CBOs in order to establish the amount of training needed.
- Conduct community outreach to gauge interest in open data webinars, and specific types of webinars that would be helpful to have hosted by trained staff members.
- Connect with CPL staff to coordinate marketing efforts for data portal tools and webinars in order to reach a larger audience.

CITIZEN-DRIVEN POLICY INNOVATION

A model for civic engagement to build the communities of tomorrow



David Collier-King

WHY IT MATTERS

The process of policy development, an already tedious and contentious process, becomes more difficult in producing effective and innovative policies when you add elements such as: possible policy solutions being attached to political party factions and platforms (though as a municipality Chicago is a non-partisan jurisdiction, the people are reluctant to consider policies or positions because of their affiliation with a certain political ideology); unresponsive and unrepresentative incumbency and political agendas; lack of trust and engagement from the members of the community; and an absence of pursuing and adopting innovative ideas and approaches to build solutions.

To build and achieve forward-thinking policy solutions, a consistent and active partnership with citizens is required. Without citizens' direct engagement based on their lived experiences, our city will perpetuate policy agendas disconnected from the needs and desires of the people. To reach the Chicago of tomorrow (a community driven by citizen-government partnership, innovation, and action-driven development of solutions to community issues), we need create a standing foundation for Chicagoans to work alongside the government to provide their forward-thinking ideas that are often left untapped.

HOW IT WORKS

Paired with preparative and ongoing policy basics education training the Citizen-Driven Policy Innovation model, a non-partisan, collaborative, and action-oriented policy innovation model, actively engages citizens in solving issues based on their lived experiences. A CDPI Coordinator (identified by the City and based from the Mayor's office) coordinates implementation of

the model and identifies Community Leads/Facilitators from various communities. The model challenges citizens to think outside the box for solutions to issues. Researchers, practitioners, and graduate students will join citizens by sharing each party's expertise to develop testing and experimentation of ideas and solutions proposed by citizens. After testing, the citizens supported by local elected officials bring these ideas to life. This co-design model develops policy labs across the city to test ideas that build the communities of tomorrow. The model is flexible in implementation to be carried out in-person or virtually, with the foundational understanding that citizens bring their unique experiences and serve as brainstormers for possible solutions; researchers, practitioners, and universities support in fleshing out ideas and experimentation; and law makers support by identification of resources, needs for ordinance changes, etc., for the proposed innovative solution to be possible. Engagement methods are determined by the CDPI, but must actively engage citizens as a responsible party in the policy-making process and not just as a party providing feedback, input, and reviewing policies, but playing a role in making policy.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Build partnerships with local universities and institutions.
- Identify the Model Coordinator to implement and track model in Mayor's office; Development of initial community partnership plan (driven through revamping the way in which citizen engagement is coordinated and implemented in the policy formulation process) that identifies the path towards building trust and working partnership between citizens and city leadership.

BEYOND BOOKS: SOCIAL WORK AT CPL

Meeting Chicagoans in moments of crisis at Chicago Public Libraries



Danielle Maranion

WHY IT MATTERS

“We want to be more than a safe space.”

– CPL Commissioner Andrea Telli

Chicago Public Libraries (CPL) are invaluable centers of community connection for Chicagoans across the city. Patrons often come to libraries looking for much more than their staple services. With traumatic experiences like unemployment, domestic violence, homelessness, incarceration and more, Chicagoans come to libraries searching for support in moments of crisis. Under the current protocol, librarians provide information to these patrons about social services elsewhere.

This has two major consequences: (1) it leaves patrons to navigate the complex, social service bureaucracy independently, insufficiently supporting clients in high-crisis moments and (2) it often leaves librarians affected by vicarious trauma as they are not fully trained to address trauma and recovery. Just three library branches out of 79 have a social worker on staff. Thus, there is a widespread need for specialized staff, social workers, to be able to walk with patrons through their journeys towards safety, recovery, and healing. As CPL strives to become a center that provides collective care, social workers can act as the bridge to meet these individuals where they are.

HOW IT WORKS

CPL is on the cusp of launching their Collective Care Plan that aims to create an infrastructure of holistic support for their patrons. This proposal aims to partner with this established initiative by including social work expertise into the plan. There is an untapped network across the City of graduate-level social work students who require field internships to complete their Master of Social Work (MSW) program. In line with holistic care, this new idea calls for the development of a

partnership between CPL and citywide MSW programs, establishing libraries as a viable field practicum site for graduate-level social work students. Under the supervision of a licensed social worker, interns will be able to provide intensive case management services, de-escalation support, trauma-informed care trainings, harm-reduction services, on-site crisis counseling, mental health community trainings, and more.

This idea would create a foundation of social workers on staff and allot stipends for social work interns within the Collective Care Plan. Considering support consistency, social work staff would oversee students throughout their internship but would continue to provide services for patrons when the internship is not in service. Summer internships could also be provided to ensure service consistency and availability. This partnership not only will provide staff support as the Collective Care Plan begins, but also has the potential to solidify the school-to-career pipeline for social workers in libraries in the long run.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Conduct social services needs assessment with library patrons citywide to understand branch needs by location.
- Explore funding opportunities within the Collective Care initiative at CPL.
- Develop partnerships with citywide MSW programs to establish a pipeline of social worker interns into CPL.
- Design program elements for interns through feedback from librarians and current social workers.

ELL SUMMER PROGRAM

Helping ELL students integrate into school + community



Adam Roth

WHY IT MATTERS

Students facing English language barriers often have difficulty integrating within their school environments, particularly students approaching middle school age. According to the Chicago Consortium on School Research, English Language Learners (ELLs) who are not proficient in English by 8th grade are more likely to drop out of school than English-proficient ELLs. By middle school, ELLs proficient in English have comparable reading scores to native English speakers. This suggests that 8th grade is a crucial drop-off point for ELL students to reach English proficiency or be left behind.

While Chicago Public Schools (CPS) does offer in-school English language programs, the City can supplement their efforts by facilitating an out-of-school program that addresses both English competency issues as well as social and emotional support for students struggling to integrate into their school community.

HOW IT WORKS

Establish a summer daytime program where students receive a mixture of English education training, activities, and support groups to address issues regarding integration into and performance in school. Chances to connect with other branches of the program (including different language-based ones) will be available.

ELL students grades 6-8 at Chicago Public Schools may sign up for the program, with priority given to those with lower grades or an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Students will be matched with a nearby location, operated by a nonprofit and hosted at either a local Chicago Park District or nonprofit headquarters for summer activities during the daytime. Activities will be up to five days a week

depending on the individual organization's capacity. The program would be staffed by the nonprofit organizations' staff as well as bilingual CPS students recruited to help their ELL peers.

Funding for the program would come through increased appropriations to Chicago Public Schools' Office of Language and Cultural Education (OLCE). This may alleviate concerns that this program could be connected to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

OLCE will provide English educational materials for students. The material will focus on conversational and SAT/ACT-level English to help students reach language competency. Materials would also promote trust between ELL communities and Chicago city government.

Follow-up programs on the weekends (bi-monthly) could serve to support students during the year and keep track of their progress in school, providing extra support if needed.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Set up an RFP for non-profit organizations who could recruit for lead summer activities.
- Coordinate with the Office of New Americans and CPS to help determine the approximate amount of ELL students by region and native language.
- Reach out to bilingual students regarding how to recruit bilingual students as counsellors and discuss compensation/incentives for their assistance.

YOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTION

A partnership program that links two neighborhoods in Chicago



Kevin Badon

WHY IT MATTERS

Chicago has many distinct neighborhoods that residents of different religious, racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds call home. Small and massive contributions of residents, past and current, make Chicago the great place it is today. However, many Chicagoans don't get the opportunity to connect with neighborhoods different from their own. Many young Chicagoans are confined to their own cultural and social bubbles, unaware of the diversity and cultural differences throughout the city. This limits young Chicagoans from envisioning themselves working and living outside of their current neighborhoods. The absence of this connection opportunity contributes to a social and cultural disconnect between Chicagoans of differing communities, reinforces negative stereotypes about certain individuals, and weakens the sense of connectivity + community throughout Chicago.

HOW IT WORKS

The Mayor's Office in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events would launch a pilot neighborhood connection program to promote a stronger sense of community. By matching high school students from two neighborhoods (with differing socio-economic and ethnic/racial composition), grant funding would be used to coordinate events with local organizations in an effort to coordinate cross-community partnerships. This program provides youth education and experience with community organizing, budgeting, and project implementation. Events can include community tours, local food/cook-outs, sports, friendly competitions, music, art exchanges, and other community-led interactions.

Each neighborhood's youth will invite their matched neighborhood's youth into their community for their planned events to improve familiarity with the area. Local high schools, youth organizations, faith-based organizations, and community outreach groups, can express interest to be matched with another neighborhood to participate. The youth from the two neighborhoods will collaborate and lead the effort to organize events as a team. This program exposes young Chicagoans to different socio-economic statuses, while also exploring different areas and cultures of the city. Funding for events and transportation would be made available through a grant program similar to Let's Link Chi.

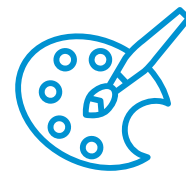
WHAT'S NEXT?

- Identify organizations to partner and secure necessary funding for the program in the structure of One Summer Chicago.¹
- Distinguish community-based organizations who would be interested in participating to gauge interest and reach out to community leaders to identify organizations.
- Identify which department in the Mayor's Office should take the lead on this project.
- Research similar community-led programs to find best practices and ways to get youth and their communities involved.
- Identify two neighborhoods to serve as the pilot for this program and begin to contact youth-centered community organizations.

1. "One Summer Chicago." My CHI. My Future. n.d.

CHICAGO SPEAKS

Reflecting, healing, + envisioning an equitable future through art



David Collier-King, Danielle Maranion, + Nicole Shen

WHY IT MATTERS

The year 2020 has introduced newfound challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Injustices such as the murder of George Floyd reverberate the historical patterns of racism and oppression that continue to affect the lives of our Black communities. As a result of nationwide civil unrest, boarded up storefronts have allowed citizens to spread messages of justice. Cities across the nation are looking for ways to respond to the surge of murals reflecting the Black Lives Matter movement. This moment has demonstrated that these calls for justice are too often silenced. This City has the opportunity to reserve a public space for Chicagoans to continue to share this narrative in the long-term. Commemorating this historic moment in history with artwork can equip our city with the space to heal and envision an equitable future.

HOW IT WORKS

The primary goal of our art initiative is to reserve public spaces for community storytelling and healing. Through the re-imagination of public spaces, the initiative will add aesthetic elements to this often-ignored realm and transform it into a place of pride for the local communities.

The Mayor's Office, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), aldermen, and art institutes have implemented a broad range of public art programs throughout the years, but the city's role is mostly as a regulatory body rather than as centralized support. Chicago Speaks will centralize the existing efforts and showcase annual achievements of local artists from many of DCASE's ongoing art projects in the form of a two-week end-of-year celebration.

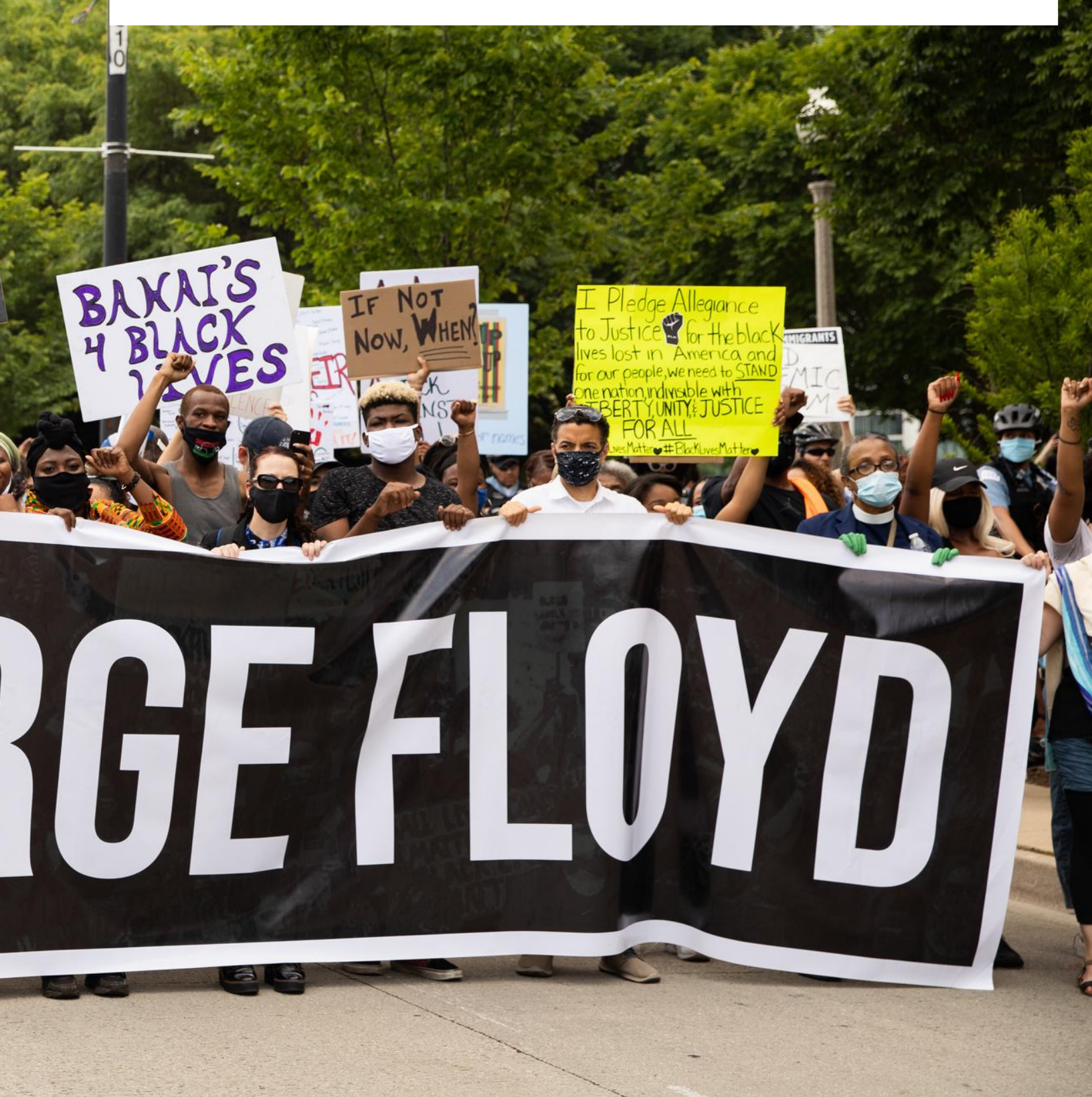
A backbone art organization will be selected each year through RFP as a leading role for implementation and oversight. It will work with DCASE and seven regions to choose the annual theme of the event, participating artists, and urban spaces. Meanwhile, a community art coalition will be created, consisting of local artists and art vendors who participated or are participating in DCASE art programs. When each term kicks off, a backbone organization will recruit a new cohort of artists from the coalition. The cohort will integrate arts into public spaces to help remove the physical and social barriers that prevent many communities from expressing their feelings through the medium of art.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Release an RFP for a backbone art organization that locates and secures space for the initiative, recruits local artists and vendors, facilitates the conversation/narrative of the City to decide a theme, carries out implementation of the program, and centralizes art efforts in the city.
- Conduct a survey to analyze community sentiment and begin to foster community buy-in.
- Engage key stakeholders (DCASE, DPD, MO, local art communities) in follow-up conversations to centralize existing resources and progress.



JUSTICE + EQUITY



ACCESSIBILITY MAPPING IN CHICAGO

Prioritizing accessibility to improve city planning efforts



Ella Brady + Erin M. Monforti

WHY IT MATTERS

In July, the City of Chicago released “Forward Together: Building a Stronger Chicago,” a report generated by the Recovery Task Force that was assembled to address the challenges the COVID-19 crisis has presented. One novel piece of the report details “We Will Chicago,” Chicago’s first true comprehensive citywide plan to incorporate public engagement and address the inequities that plague the City. In order for the plan to be inclusive, comprehensive, and equitable, the voices of individuals with disabilities and accessibility advocates must be heard and included—especially considering their historical stifling and exclusion in urban planning.¹

HOW IT WORKS

In the first weeks of Mayor Lightfoot’s administration, she articulated her goal for Chicago to be “. . . the most inclusive and accessible city in the nation². . .” In order to take steps towards reaching this important goal, the City must incorporate accessibility into the comprehensive plan from the start, increase visibility for accessibility issues, and provide incentive to improve conditions for disabled residents and visitors. However, these actions should be preceded by an effort to understand how accessible the City currently is. Creating a holistic map exhibiting the accessibility of space across the City is an informative and interactive first step toward meeting this goal.

The Accessibility Map of Chicago, as proposed, would be an iterative project reflecting the progress of “We Will Chicago.” Communication with the Department of Transportation (CDOT), Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), and Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) will be critical for first

populating a base-map that reflects the accessibility of buildings, streets, intersections, and other spaces throughout the City with pre-existing spatial data. As the comprehensive plan develops the map will incorporate self-reported and community-based data population through Bang the Table, a tool for digital civic engagement that the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has been exploring as they consider engaging in comprehensive planning. Allowing residents to contribute to the Accessibility Map will be dually beneficial: this process will increase visibility for accessibility issues across the City, which will, in turn, provide an incentive for the equitable provision of resources to address the inequities that people with disabilities often face when they are navigating Chicago.

Another critical element of the Accessibility Map is its readability—by providing a site that is built in compliance with accessibility standards for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, among other strategies for holistic engagement, the City can demonstrate its dedication to promoting accessibility in its many forms and ensure that We Will Chicago is guided by a spirit of inclusion and equity.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Connect with CDOT, MOPD, and BACP to assess the availability of data reflecting the current accessibility status of various spaces in Chicago.
- Work with DPD to embed a self-reporting accessibility mapping tool into Bang the Table as the scope of We Will Chicago’s community engagement efforts expands.
- Partner with ChiHackNight and other organizations with expertise in civic engagement and data literacy.

1. Clark, Anna. “City Planners Must Practice Everyone-Based Design.” Next City. 2015.

2. Mayor’s Press Office. 2019.

REENTRY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Building a support system for returning residents



Devon Braunstein

WHY IT MATTERS

More than 70,000 individuals are released each year from Cook County Jail and return to communities with some of the highest levels of poverty, violence, and unemployment in Chicago.¹ Time spent in jail or prison exacerbates already challenging conditions (usually tied to poverty) and drives many people into cycles of interactions with the criminal legal system. Such cycles are difficult to break. Even a few days in jail can cause lasting trauma, in addition to increasing chances of recidivism, reducing economic viability, and worsening one's health.²

Many initiatives exist to connect citizens returning from jail to employment, professional development, and housing programs. However, while earning a living, getting educated, and living with a roof over one's head are critical to success following incarceration, these programs are often focused on helping citizens achieve financial stability and may not address the extreme psychological and emotional challenges they also face.

While family members and partners provide an important sense of stability and emotional support for returning residents, they might also bring added pressures, such as earning money and caring for children. Additionally, family members or friends may be involved in criminal activity, making it difficult for those returning to avoid old habits or lifestyles.

HOW IT WORKS

This new idea establishes a mentorship program for returning residents. The program pairs Chicagoans returning from Cook County Jail with someone in their neighborhood who has also spent time in jail, including those released on electronic monitoring. The mentor shares lived

experiences and has been able to avoid recidivism in recent years. The initiative would prioritize returning residents considered at the highest risk for violence or recidivism. The program's objective is to create a space where individuals can, without any boundaries or shame, talk about challenges, goals, and fears about returning.

Success can be measured by participant rates of recidivism, as well as progress in areas critical to success post-incarceration, such as finding a job, maintaining relationships, and securing housing. Another metric of success could be participants' sense of belonging and support, which can be measured through surveys or interviews.

This program would be a partnership between the Mayor's Office and community-based organizations (CBOs). The City would set objectives and structure, source funding, and then select CBOs to manage on-the-ground cohorts of mentors. Mentors would be trained, and then compensated for their work. The program would engage with non-profits who currently connect with residents returning from Cook County Jail.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Assess interest and need among returning residents.
- Align with existing reentry efforts across City agencies and non-profits to coordinate, learn best practices, and establish referral processes.
- Explore state, federal, and private funding sources.
- Outline plans for a pilot cohort in one neighborhood.

1. "Criminal Records in Chicago Fact Sheet." *Safer Foundation*. n.d.
2. "The Challenges of Reentry." *Vera Institute of Justice*. 2016.

DECRIMINALIZING MENTAL ILLNESS

A transformative approach to mental health crises



Mayra Diaz

WHY IT MATTERS

About one third of inmates in Chicago's Cook County Jail have a mental illness, most of whom were arrested for non-violent offenses. Often, people become involved in the criminal justice system due to behaviors directly related to undiagnosed and untreated mental health conditions. In Chicago, most of these detainees are Black and Brown residents from South and West side neighborhoods, areas with a history of disinvestment, over-policing, and lack of access to mental health services. This creates a neighborhood-to-jail pipeline and exacerbates racial inequities in Chicago. Moreover, it costs three times as much to incarcerate persons with mental illness than their counterparts. Additionally, detainees often face barriers to proper resources and support after release, worsening their condition and increasing their chances of recidivism.

Currently, the city utilizes Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to help police officers respond to mental health crises. However, this approach has several disadvantages: (1) CIT is optional for police officers; (2) only 40 hours of training with 8 hours of refresher training every few years are required; (3) training is not always provided by a mental health professional; (4) officers still have the authority to employ use of force or arrest; and (5) historical trauma associated with police encounters increases fear, distrust, and psychological distress in persons experiencing a crisis. Ultimately, CIT asks that police officers perform a duty that is much better handled by mental health professionals with years of training and expertise. Thus, the city should consider piloting a mobile crisis intervention program modeled after the Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) program in Eugene, Oregon in conjunction with community diversion centers. This comprehensive program would be

implemented in Southside and Westside neighborhoods, the areas with the highest rate of behavioral health hospitalizations in Chicago.

HOW IT WORKS

Community members dial a 2-1-1 system as an alternative to 9-1-1 to request a team of mental health crisis responders. An interdisciplinary team of licensed clinical mental health professionals and healthcare workers, such as nurses, meet the client at their location and provide immediate stabilization support rooted in trauma-informed, harm reduction practices. The client is assessed for further needs and referred to resources such as social services, medical care, and long-term treatment for mental health.

A Chicago adaptation of this model takes into consideration cultural responsiveness to communities being served. Crisis teams are staffed with workers who are representative of the neighborhoods, understand the issues affecting these communities, and have an investment in the mental health of communities of color. A second adaptation pairs this program with the implementation of community mental health diversion centers similar to urgent care or respite care models. This comprehensive approach ensures that clients have a place to go for ongoing support, avoiding the costly use of hospital emergency rooms.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Consult the CAHOOTS program in Eugene on adapting the program to Chicago.
- Research how urgent/respite care models are used for mental health in other cities.
- Collaborate with residents and organizations on the South and West sides to develop a culturally responsive pilot program.

SEX WORK IS VALID WORK

Decriminalize, destigmatize, + provide protections



Chris Hoey

WHY IT MATTERS

Sex workers are often our most marginalized community members and they deserve to be protected and empowered. All sex workers, but particularly Black, transgender women are being overpoliced because their work relies on being in public spaces where they are seen as undesirable because of the negative stigma surrounding their identity and profession. The criminalization of sex work puts at-risk populations in danger. The stigma often dehumanizes the profession, fostering an environment ripe for exploitation and violence—from both those buying sex and from law enforcement—that goes unreported and without consequence.

Decriminalizing sex work would reduce police violence against sex workers, make sex workers less vulnerable to violence from clients, allow sex workers to protect their own health, advance equality for the LGBTQ community, and reduce mass incarceration and racial disparities in the criminal justice system. We must give sex workers the protections necessary to continue their work and ensure their safety in the process.

HOW IT WORKS

The selling or buying of consensual commercial sex will not be illegal or policed; this is not to be confused with sex trafficking which involves forceful coercion into sex work. Decriminalization will create a needed sense of community among sex workers that will protect them from the danger that we associate with sex work, such as drugs and violence, and other unnecessary risks. Hopefully and eventually, without the risk of being charged with a criminal offense, they will be able to rely on law

enforcement when faced with imminent danger. This will begin to eliminate the stigma against sex workers—allowing more comfort for them at health facilities, which is essential in this work, and for an easier exit transition from the profession, as they can remain employable having previously been in a legally recognized profession. Eventually, the development of regulations will promote entrepreneurial opportunities in commercial sex services that could protect sex workers and dignify the profession.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Allow for public commentary, anonymously, specifically from the sex worker community and organizations that fight for the safety and rights of sex workers to hear their needs.
- Research New Zealand's decriminalization act of 2003, and other bills that have been introduced on the municipal level in the United States which have often been supported by organizations that work with and for sex workers.
- Work with stakeholders and legislators to draft legislation that accurately and effectively addresses the decriminalization of sex work and use Intergovernmental Affairs to lobby at the state level.
- Decriminalize sex work while firmly enforcing anti-sex trafficking laws; these are distinct and can be separated under the law.

MEASURING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Using data to determine how the City can best support survivors



Aishwarya Raje

WHY IT MATTERS

There is a general lack of awareness on what human trafficking means and what it looks like, which is a cause of the dearth of comprehensive data that would help understand its full scope. Without accurate data, it is exceedingly difficult to craft policies and programs that will support and protect survivors of human trafficking. There is currently no function across any City department that focuses on collecting and analyzing trafficking-related data. While it has always been a challenge to collect data on human trafficking because that collection relies heavily on victims and survivors coming forward, there is an opportunity for the City of Chicago to make it a priority to quantify the level of trafficking in Chicago within city government. Prioritizing data analysis with the eventual goal of creating a public-facing data resource on human trafficking in the City will not only increase awareness on what it means, but it can help close the policy gap that exists on supporting victims and survivors.

HOW IT WORKS

The first step to reconciling this gap in data is to leverage existing positions within the Mayor's Office that can focus on data collection and analysis as it relates to human trafficking. There is currently work underway led by the Senior Fellow on Human Trafficking and the Chief Data Officer on tracking accurate data on human trafficking, which can set the foundation for future policy initiatives. A liaison between the Mayor's Office and non-profit organizations that collect information on specific types of trafficking should be appointed. City government entities such as the Chicago Police Department, Department of Public Health, Department of Buildings, Chicago Housing Authority, and Department of Business Affairs and Consumer

Protection must all to conduct their own analyses on human trafficking, and this position within the Mayor's Office would allow for a mechanism to consolidate those independent studies into a comprehensive data platform.

This data-driven role will focus on typology of human trafficking and how much of the City's budget should be allocated to existing programs depending on need. Plus, it will inform future policies that are better suited to address the very specific problems related to the lack of support for survivors and inconsistent legal consequences for traffickers.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Form a specific initiative focused on data within the Office of the Mayor to carry out the collection and analysis of human trafficking-related data, who will also serve as a liaison between city government and organizations engaged in combatting human trafficking.
- Create a comprehensive list of barriers to data collection to correctly identify the main problems.
- Design a plan to inform city departments on how human trafficking can permeate through every department's area of jurisdiction. Once this awareness is solidified, the City can prepare a public-facing data dashboard.



HEALING BLUE BRUISES

Resources for families of officer-involved domestic violence

Claire Cunningham

WHY IT MATTERS

Studies for decades have shown that about 40% of police families experience officer-perpetrated violence in the home. In other studies, at least 10% of police officers admit to “kicking, hitting, or shoving” their spouses.

These survivors face a unique set of challenges when trying to leave their abuser: their abuser’s position as a police officer.

Approximately 92% of reports of domestic violence by police officers are dropped. The City of Chicago needs to invest in additional programs to ensure more people feel safe leaving their abusive partners. This program for victims needs to be incorporated into the new officer-involved domestic violence protocol that is being developed in response to the Consent Decree.

HOW IT WORKS

The Chicago Police Department (CPD) currently has a program founded in 1994 that is tailored for victims of officer-involved domestic violence. The City needs to evaluate this program in order to better understand what services these victims need and what specific challenges they face trying to find safety today. Financial literacy, legal aid, medical care, shelter, and childcare are examples of resources that victims may need. An evaluation will clarify if victims know about the existence of the program, what resources are typically requested, and whether victims receive these resources from the program after requesting them.

The City also needs to house this program somewhere other than the Chicago Police Department. Due to the profession of their abuser, these victims are understandably more afraid of interacting with the police than the average citizen. Domestic violence advocates

also have higher level of confidentiality. It is less likely for a victim’s information to be shared if the program is run by advocates, and victims will feel safer asking for help. More people will take advantage of this program if falls under a different department.

Additionally, a more specific protocol must be developed within the Chicago Police Department in order to investigate claims of domestic violence against officers. Under section 434 of the Consent Decree, Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) will initiate the intake process and investigate allegations. Providing victims with resources that are specific to officer-involved domestic violence needs to be incorporated into the new official procedure. When the City invests in programs to assist families experiencing officer-involved abuse, more victims will be able to safely leave their abusers.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Conduct research to understand how Chicago Police Officers stand compared to national statistics of violence.
- Formally evaluate the current CPD program dedicated to victims of officer-involved domestic violence.
- Develop an investigation procedure for officer-involved domestic violence from CPD and COPA that involves providing resources for the victims.



TRANSPORTATION + INFRASTRUCTURE



BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION



Improving safety, equity, + public health through bicycling

Emily Souza Rutkowski

WHY IT MATTERS

While several mobility and cycling-related plans exist for Chicago, progress has been slow. Bicycle infrastructure expansion should be re-prioritized, given its importance to:

SAFETY

Chicago's bicycle infrastructure is not currently safe nor robust enough to make it a viable option for all residents. For example, an average of 5.5 cyclists are killed each year.¹

EQUITY

Increased access to safe cycling paths improves equity and economic opportunity. Biking has a low barrier to entry and improved networks make the City more accessible to all.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Biking positively contributes to public health through active transportation and reduction of vehicle emissions. Cycling offers an individualized transportation method, which is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

HOW IT WORKS

This idea proposes three main initiatives:

Bicycle Boulevards: In response to COVID-19, the Shared Streets initiative gives bicycles and pedestrians the right of way on targeted streets throughout City. This initiative should be made permanent. Creation of "Bicycle Boulevards" would close select streets to traffic; providing safe passage through neighborhoods and connecting disparate parts of the City. This initiative reduces the need for new and expanded bike lanes.

Barrier-protected Bike Lanes: Augment Bicycle Boulevards with an increased number of barrier-protected bike lanes throughout the City. Protected bike lanes help bicyclists feel more comfortable on the road, which encourages new and less experienced cyclists. A first step would be to expand existing protected bike lanes.

Cycling Safety Marketing: Create a marketing campaign targeted at drivers, which emphasizes bicyclist rights and driver responsibilities. Increased awareness of bicyclists—and their rights—will encourage more people to use this mode of transportation.

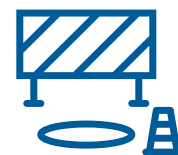
WHAT'S NEXT?

- Adopt a City-wide bike infrastructure plan that includes the proposals above, with priorities, owners, and deadlines.
- Create incentives for alderman to use yearly Aldermanic Funding to meet target deliverables in the citywide plan.
- Identify other federal, state, and local funding opportunities.

¹ CST Editorial Board. "Let's invest, Chicago, and Make our Streets Safer for Cyclists." *Chicago Sun-Times*. 2019.

POTHOLE TECHNOLOGY

Using technology to create safer streets



Teresa Rodriguez

WHY IT MATTERS

Potholes are a problem with which all Chicagoans are familiar. Not only do potholes create an unpleasant driving experience, but they can also cause damage to vehicles and, in severe cases, lead to accidents and personal injury. The American Automobile Association (AAA) estimates that American drivers pay approximately \$3 billion per year to fix car damage caused by potholes. In addition to the cost assumed by drivers, potholes often result in City claims that must be paid out in cases where vehicle damage occurs due to potholes not being addressed in a timely manner. According to Pothole.info, failure to spend \$1 in road repair typically costs \$7 five years later.

Previously, Chicago successfully implemented technology to track and map pothole complaints filed through 3-1-1. Now, new technology is needed to allow for safer streets, efficient preventative maintenance, and cost savings.

HOW IT WORKS

One potential solution is RoadBotics, recently named to the 2020 BuiltWorld's Infrastructure Tech list. Roadbotics uses smartphone cameras and algorithms to create color-coded maps of road networks, showing the relative state of repair. The company, which charges \$75 per mile, saves transportation agencies the time, effort, and cost of sending additional personnel to inspect roadways, a process that is both tedious and subjective. Smartphones can be dash-mounted on vehicles that already travel most municipality roads, such as street sweepers or garbage trucks, to take advantage of existing resources. In Savannah, Georgia, Roadbotics provided a comprehensive assessment of the entire 700-mile road network, saving the city over \$80,000.

Roadbotics' most recent development is the ability of its pavement-assessment software to flag and catalogue roadway damage, or "distresses," into specific categories: potholes, patches and sealed cracks, fatigue cracks, longitudinal and transverse cracks, and surface deterioration. A government employee can select a single 10-foot stretch of road and zoom in close enough to see this amount of detail in the road surface. They also can view historical data in the system to judge how quickly the street surface is deteriorating. The Chicago Department of Transportation could leverage this tool to start specific maintenance programs and proactively address pavement distress before it requires major intervention or causes harm to City residents.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Reach out to RoadBotics team for consultation and pricing and contact past Roadbotics clients (such as South Bend, Indiana and Savannah, Georgia) for their testimony.
- Identify several neighborhoods to pilot RoadBotics software (focusing on areas that see high numbers of pothole complaints annually).
- Analyze results of initial neighborhood pilot to determine if it should be expanded.





FREE ELECTION DAY TRANSIT

Eliminating transit costs as a barrier to voting

Sarah Richardson

WHY IT MATTERS

Transportation is consistently identified nationally and locally as a barrier to voting. A Harvard study on voting access during the 2016 general election found that 45.6% of Illinois residents who reported not voting said that transportation was a factor in their ability or decision not to vote.¹

At the same time, voter turnout remains low. While Chicago consistently records higher voter turnout for national elections than the countrywide average, only 55.7% of registered Chicago voters cast a ballot on November 6, 2018.² Lowering the transportation barrier to voting by removing the cost of transportation could help increase voter turnout and, more fundamentally, ensure that the right to vote is not determined by ability to pay or access to private transit.

HOW IT WORKS

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) can declare that transit fares need not be paid during a specified time period, as it does on New Year's Eve and the first day of school. These events are sponsored by corporate partners, who cover the approximately \$2.5 million in revenue the CTA earns on a typical weekday. With decreased ridership due to the coronavirus pandemic, the CTA would only need to find a private or nonprofit sponsor to cover approximately \$0.5 million in November 2020.

Once enacted, riders would not need to present a voter ID or proof that they are going to the polls to take advantage of the free transit. Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and Dallas are among the multiple cities that have enacted this policy. These policies were only recently implemented, so measured outcomes are unclear.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Consult the CTA Law Department to determine whether this policy would be considered political, and therefore not a viable policy option.
- Work with CTA and City Council to gauge interest in having the City mitigate the financial burden on CTA of such a policy by granting the authority to pay CTA for some or all of the cost of ridership this November.
- Convene a roundtable of possible corporate and non-profit funders to strategize about ways to raise the \$0.5 million for November 2020.
- Work with the Chicago Department of Public Health to analyze the predicted ridership increase this policy will cause to determine whether there would be social distancing concerns in 2020.

1. Stewart, Charles. "2016 Survey of the Performance of American Elections." *Harvard Dataverse*. 2017.

2. "Voter Registration and Turnout 1990-2019." Cook County Clerk's Office. n.d. "Voter Turnout." *FairVote*. n.d.





ECONOMIC + WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ENTREPRENEURIAL INCUBATOR

Providing economic opportunity + small business resources



Emily Souza Rutkowski

WHY IT MATTERS

Historic disinvestment in Chicago’s South and West sides has led to neighborhoods lacking in economic opportunity and community commercial amenities. Residents need more job opportunities, as well as places to shop and do business. For example, due to a lack of viable commercial development, “an estimated 85% of the total disposable income of Austin households is spent in neighboring Oak Park each year.”¹

This project would foster entrepreneurial enterprises, provide economic opportunity and training, and increase commercial offerings in participating communities.

HOW IT WORKS

The City would use city-owned land or a city-owned vacant property to create an “Incubator Station,” a concept similar to a food hall with business opportunities beyond food service.

This station would attract fledgling restaurant and retail enterprises, with an emphasis on minority and women-owned businesses local to the community. The City would provide them with short-term leases for available space, giving them the opportunity to test out their idea before committing to brick-and-mortar locations for the long-term.

Throughout their lease, vendors would have access to the space itself, as well as small business coaching and assistance. The Station could also include other amenities beneficial to the community, such as a fresh food market, space for community activities, and opportunities for youth engagement.

The Station would provide job opportunities and training for community members, as each fledgling company would need staff to support their concept.

The goal would be to foster and grow these businesses during the short-term lease, enabling them to move to a longer-term location, ideally located in the same community. These businesses could fold into other Invest South/West initiatives to create long-term economic development in priority areas.

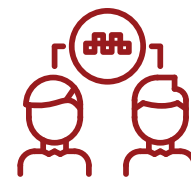
WHAT'S NEXT?

- Determine if this initiative can layer into existing Invest South/West plans.
- Determine the City’s role in this endeavor: Which services would be subsidized by the City? Which departments would be involved in the implementation and day-to-day execution? Which partnership opportunities are available?
- Bring this idea to Invest South/West Neighborhood Roundtables or other community-based meetings to determine interest.
- Identify potential location(s)—could existing vacant buildings be converted? What are the building requirements?
- Work with potential partners, such as The Hatchery, to leverage existing resources and understand how this Station could fill gaps in other related programming.
- Secure additional funding to augment City support and aid participants with start-up costs.

¹ Austin Commercial Avenue Study. 2019.

P2P KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

A powerful platform to share, replicate, + scale up what works



Nicole Shen

WHY IT MATTERS

In today's climate of shrinking budgets, NGOs provide city government with a crucial means of strengthening communities and increasing program effectiveness. Chicago has seen an increasing number of collaborative relations forged by NGOs and city government to ensure the sustainability of the City's efforts. However, a lack of opportunities and limited resources impose challenges on small-scale, under-funded non-profit organizations to commit to continuous collaborations with city government. A knowledge-exchange platform would empower and sustain the relationships between the local government and NGOs to allow for a structured, peer-to-peer support system moving forward.

HOW IT WORKS

No organization can do it alone. The goal of establishing an exchange platform is to build a self-sufficient non-profit community as a catalyst for advancing outsized social impact together with city government. As the pandemic has imposed an unprecedented challenge to keeping operations afloat, small-scale NGOs are particularly in need of help from specialists whom they can rarely afford. The knowledge exchange will function as a centralized advisory hub that helps non-profits execute sustained collaborations with the City.

The platform will be a voluntary sharing space where interested information seekers and information providers can participate through an online application. The City will play a crucial role at the initiation stage in establishing a steering committee consisting of leading NGOs who can provide support in technological development and oversight for this platform. In addition, the City will provide the committee with expertise in

NGO engagement and how to institutionalize shared knowledge. From a high-level angle, the city will utilize this platform to understand NGOs' struggles, and effectively engage them in the conversation to identify potential solutions. The exchange participants can provide or receive two types of advisory:

Peer Advisory: Under-informed and under-resourced non-profit organizations can learn from the practical experience of other organizations that have faced similar obstacles.

Professional Advisory: The knowledge exchange will also create virtual mentorships between NGO funders and legal, financial, and logistical specialists from professional associations. Experts can direct under-informed NGOs in the right direction for resources that are based on their experiences.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Reach out to the OBM, which oversees grant management, to clearly define the process and strategies to promote more parties to join the platform voluntarily.
- Develop a focus group of representatives of NGOs to brainstorm challenges that will impose barriers to this project and how shared information can be passed down for future reference.



**ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY**



SMALL BUSINESS DECARBONIZATION

Leveraging Chicago's social media to support small businesses



Chloe Bell

WHY IT MATTERS

In 2019, the City of Chicago passed a resolution known as R2019-157,¹ which committed the City to a 100% clean, renewable energy future community-wide and made Chicago the largest U.S. city to set an official goal of 100% renewable energy. However, much of the literature on the topic and guides for how to achieve this goal center around the practices of leading but large businesses, while ignoring the vast majority of organizations that make up the economy: small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

In pursuit of this goal, the City must focus on stimulating local economies and focusing on an equitable clean energy transition. With the economic struggles of SMEs heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, the City can ameliorate the situation by using social media creatively. More people now use social networking than email and almost half of Americans have a social media profile, which 39% use several times a day. The City can leverage its already prolific social media presence to empower residents to make sustainable choices; advance Chicago's position as a leader in sustainability; build relationships between the City, SMEs, and residents; and support SMEs in energy efficient improvements.

HOW IT WORKS

This program could be implemented by the City or operated in collaboration with the Smart Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC). Participation could carry the benefit of the SME receiving SEDAC's Green Business Certification,² In achieving this certification, SEDAC helps businesses implement a custom action plan. This would utilize SEDAC to assist SMEs in developing a decarbonization strategy while using the City's social media to provide incentives.

Under this program, eligible SMEs pledge a percentage of yearly or quarterly profits towards energy efficient improvements. These can be anything from small-scale efficiency swaps to high-level culture changes, including:

- Swapping out lighting and/or packaging for more efficient options;
- Paying towards a carbon offset program;
- Encouraging alternative commuting for employees with a shower or dressing room;
- Reevaluating the supply chain to find more local and sustainable options.

In return, the City of Chicago uses an existing or program-specific social media channel to promote the SMEs and their dedication to sustainability. The City would also use this relationship with SMEs to provide them with suggestions on carbon free improvements, preferably through the same social media channel. In this way, the City can support small and medium sized businesses through an accessible communication platform while encouraging Chicago businesses to make sustainable changes and increasing visibility for the City's decarbonization pledge.

WHAT'S NEXT?

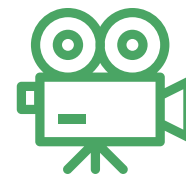
- Identify the vetting process for eligible SMEs, ensuring that those in environmental justice communities are prioritized.
- Decide what social media channels, new or existing, would be most beneficial for communication and create processes for scheduling suggestion and promotion posts.
- Develop process for tracking SME pledges and consequences for failure to meet.
- Assess the feasibility of partnering with SEDAC + utilizing the certification program.

1. "Resolution R2019-157." *Chicago Councilmatic*. 2019.

2. "Green Business Certification." *UISEAC*. n.d.

SUSTAIN CHICAGO FILM

Environmental sustainability plan for Chicago's film + TV industry



Samantha Sartori

WHY IT MATTERS

Chicago is currently capturing more film and TV production opportunities, as outlined in the *Forward Together Recovery Task Force Report*. As the City positions itself as a long-term hub for entertainment production and capitalizes on this moment, entertainment leaders must consider the environmental costs of production. A single film technician generates nearly four times more carbon emissions than the average American every year, and this problem compounds with hundreds of cast and crew members working on each new production¹. As film and TV in Illinois generate more jobs to benefit our communities, leaders must take action to mitigate the negative environmental outputs.

The City outlined specific, measurable goals through Sustain Chicago requiring all industries to take collective action and start thinking green. Now is the time for the Chicago Film Office to incorporate sustainable best practices and guidelines as the industry starts back up under the Restore Illinois Film Production Guidelines.

HOW IT WORKS

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and the Chicago Film Office would develop a designation that rewards eco-friendly productions for their efforts, as well as offer educational training and sustainable production resources for crews.

- The *Sustain Chicago Film* designation recognizes film and television productions that meet environmental best practice requirements. This creates a culture of sustainable production in the city and would assess efforts in reducing carbon emissions, diverting set waste (including food waste), minimizing single-use plastics (especially

from water bottles and catering), conserving energy from transportation and generators, and educating cast and crew. Film productions receive the designation if they satisfy requirements, and production companies would get priority and an expedited process for future permits.

- The Film Office's master class offerings would include eco-training and green production programming for film crews. This could include training for green production assistants or eco-managers to help on-set with education and implementing sustainable practices, subsequently creating new job opportunities.
- The Film Office and the Producer's Guild of America would partner to develop and offer online tools and resources to reduce environmental impact, including a searchable database of vendors, a calculator to help producers determine a production's carbon footprint, and an environmental action checklist to put plans into action.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Coordinate a meeting with the City's Chief Sustainability Officer and the Film Office's policy analyst to determine best practices for the Sustain Chicago Film designation. (*Consideration: NYC Film Green.*)
- Connect with the Producer's Guild of America to bring the Green Production Guide to Chicago and offer tools, resources, and vendors.
- Develop educational resources and programming for producers and crews to begin implementing sustainable practices.

1. "Nurturing the Greenshoots of Sustainable Filming." *Broadcast Now*. 2018.

COMPREHENSIVE COOLING PLANNING

Climate data-driven strategies for long-term city cooling



Chloe Bell + Ella Brady

WHY IT MATTERS

Excessive heat is currently the leading cause of weather-related deaths across America. Globally, the annual average temperature has been rising since the beginning of the 20th century, and temperatures are expected to continue to rise through the end of this century. Worldwide, 15 of the 16 warmest years on record have occurred since 2000, with the exception of 1998.

Climate projections indicate that it is likely that a 2003-type heat wave could occur in Chicago by mid-century and extremely likely that it would occur before the end of the century. This is especially threatening to communities of color and traditionally disinvested areas of the city who are most vulnerable to extreme heat. Therefore, the City of Chicago must develop a comprehensive, climate-focused cooling plan that includes water access, green infrastructure planning, and community-based strategies that center around these voices.¹

HOW IT WORKS

Water Access: As the likelihood of extreme heat events rises, it is imperative that the City ensure all residents have access to clean drinking water. The City would first contract with a mobile water station supplier to place mobile water stations in the most vulnerable neighborhoods of Chicago. Since the number of Chicago residents without access to water is unknown to the City, this program would help identify those areas most in need of water access and potential placement for long-term water infrastructure. Ideally, mobile water stations would serve the primary function of a research tool and short-term solution until the City could expand the lead-free pipe infrastructure to support long-term solutions.²

Green Infrastructure: Strategies for embedding green infrastructure into neighborhoods allows the City to build resiliency in the wake of extreme heat. Under this plan, the City would create a roadmap for green infrastructure that includes new street trees, green roofs, vegetated surfaces, green walls, and cool pavements³ in targeted areas. The City would also provide job training and increase the number of government jobs to install and maintain green infrastructure projects. The plan should also be mindful to consider the effects of green gentrification, and follow a “just green enough” strategy, consisting of securing the public health benefits of enhanced access to urban green infrastructure while avoiding the “green space paradox” by promoting small-scale, scattered interventions.

Community Strategy: A community-based strategy for long-term cooling that involves heat mitigation, heat adaptation and heat monitoring helps the City work towards cooling down neighborhoods while lowering long term susceptibility to the urban heat island effect. This includes creating a long-term public participation process to engage community-based organizations and providing technical and financial resources to expand community capacity for climate change planning.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Conduct a suitability analysis of community areas that have multiple extreme heat risk factors (e.g., large amounts of impervious surfaces, low income communities of color, communities without equitable access to green space/water) to target high-risk areas.
- Begin to coordinate water access, green infrastructure, and community strategy with the efforts of “We Will Chicago.”

1. “Cool Neighborhoods NYC.” City of New York. n.d.

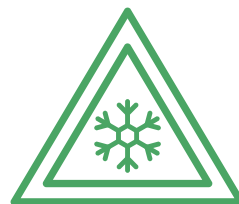
2. “Where are Illinois’ lead pipes? Chicago Water has nearly 60%, and small systems don’t know.” *Environmental Defense Fund*. 2019.

3. “Cool Pavements.” *Berkeley Lab Heat Island Group*. n.d.



ROAD DEICING ALTERNATIVES

Mitigating harmful environmental + health effects of road salt



Aishwarya Raje

WHY IT MATTERS

Decades of excessive salting during winter months in Chicago have resulted in the decimation of natural habitats and accounts for the steady increase in sodium levels in drinking water. If the levels of salting remain unchanged, it could cause serious health concerns not only for natural ecosystems but for humans as well. Excessive salting results in water pipe corrosion, which in extreme cases, can cause lead poisoning in drinking water if it is not caught early. Snow removal is one of the primary activities of the City of Chicago's Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS), as Chicago experiences one of the longest winters and periods of snowfall of any major U.S. city. Every year, an average of 350,000 tons of road salt is sprayed on city roads, making Chicago the city with the second-highest levels of road salt application in the country.¹ The City has an opportunity to curb the negative effects of this excessive salting by investing in chemical and structural alternatives.

HOW IT WORKS

The DSS previously implemented a few short-term techniques to curb the excessive usage of road salt, such as concentrating snow collection into specific areas and applying beet juice as a deicer in place of salt. These techniques were experimental, and the City has not yet implemented a long-term solution to excessive salting. While there has not yet been an alternative created that has no effects on the environment, other U.S. cities that also experience heavy annual snowfall have begun using alternate techniques that have greatly reduced the levels of road salt application without going over budget. In partnership with Chicago's Chief Sustainability Officer, the DSS can begin to prioritize sustainable solutions to its

extensive snow removal program. Liquid saltwater brine has been cited by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as a more environmentally friendly method of creating safer road conditions during winter months. While this liquid alternative does contain salt, it is a fraction of what is in standard road salt and its effects on waterways will be negligible. The saltwater brine substance is more expensive than road salt, but less of it is required to have the equivalent ice-melting effects of traditional salt, so the City would not be spending more for its snow removal budget through this alternative. One minor downside to brine is that it can create rust on vehicles parked for long periods of time, but this would not be an inhibiting factor for vehicles that are regularly in use. In addition, DSS should begin using ice breakers on their snowplows, large, spiked rollers that break up thick ice layers, which can be followed by light applications of liquid brine. Once the brine is applied, the snow can easily be scooped up by snowplows. After implementing this technique, cities in Minnesota cut their salt usage by 75% in one winter.² This is easy to implement in Chicago and would drastically cut the City's \$30 million salt budget, leaving room for investment into ice breakers.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Create a liaison position between DSS and the Chief Sustainability Officer to integrate environmental research in deicing techniques.
- Invest in liquid saltwater brine for the upcoming winter to reduce salt usage.
- Work with the Department of Procurement Services to purchase 50 ice breakers for snowplows and begin testing them throughout the City.

1. O'Connell, Patrick M. "Experts seek ways to protect environment from rising road salt runoff." *Chicago Tribune*. 2017.
 2. Anderson, Lowell. "MnDOT using spiked roller in county to remove road ice quicker." *Alexandria Echo Press*. 2020.

IMPROVE DEMOLITION, FIGHT BLIGHT

Improving vacant lot performance through clean fill standards



Martin Brown

WHY IT MATTERS

Addressing vacancy and blight is a policy challenge for cities across the Midwest. Citywide, Chicago has not been hit as hard as cities like Detroit, Michigan, or Gary, Indiana, but several neighborhoods in the city are experiencing vacancy and blight at comparable levels to those cities. Fuller Park, North Lawndale, and Woodlawn have vacancy rates above 25%. The City's highest vacancy rate is Riverdale at 44%.¹ Vacancy and blight affect our residents' quality of life, environmental quality, and the region's economic vitality. Both Chicago and the federal government have pursued reactive and proactive policy to address vacancy and blight, ranging from Chicago's Large Lot Program to the Federal Treasury's Hardest Hit Fund. One of the primary responses is to remove vacant structures through demolition. Between 2008-2018, 861 vacant structures were demolished in the Englewood community area alone.² The ways in which demolition programs are carried out and the policies that inform them can determine the program's effectiveness at addressing blight.

HOW IT WORKS

Chicago's current demolition policies could be improved to increase the effectiveness of demolition as a method for stabilizing communities. Chicago's Construction and Demolition Site Waste Recycling Ordinance requires at least 50% of demolition materials to be reused or recycled; however, on-site "reuse" of materials may include use of demolition debris as fill material. Consequently, demolition projects can comply with the ordinance without recycling or reusing any materials. The heaviest materials, including brick and concrete, are considered "reused" when they are buried on-site as fill, and because diversion percentages are calculated as weights and not volumes, this accounts for the majority of the recycled or "reused" material.

To improve the outcomes of demolitions, the City could amend the ordinance in tandem with contractor education and enforcement. The City should update the definition of "reuse" of materials generated by demolition projects to exclude the on-site reuse; demolition waste would no longer be used to fill excavations. Additionally, if the ordinance required reporting in terms of volume and not weight, contractors would not be able to achieve compliance solely through on-site reuse of debris as fill material.

This modification would increase a site's performance while it awaits redevelopment and increase the site's marketability. Alternative clean fill materials, such as engineered soils and certified clean fill material improve stormwater infiltration and reduce runoff during rain events, resulting in reduced runoff entering storm sewers.³ Additionally, debris used as fill has the potential to contain residual hazardous materials like lead or asbestos.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Collaborate with AIS, DOB, and CDPH to analyze contamination of vacant lots where demolitions have occurred within the past ten years to quantify the environmental impact of existing clean fill standards.
- Connect with Department of Water Management and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District to identify synergies between vacant lot performance and stormwater management initiatives.
- Pilot improved fill standards on ten publicly funded residential demolitions to quantify the full cost and benefits.

1. Newman, Jonah. "Not just Gary: Vacant houses plague some Chicago neighborhoods, too." *The Chicago Reporter*. 2014.

2. Ramos, Manny. "Why tearing down Englewood to save it hasn't worked." *Chicago Sun-Times*. 2019.

3. "On the Road to Reuse: Residential Demolition..." EPA. 2013.

MEET THE FELLOWS





Kevin Badon

University of Chicago | Harris
Master of Public Policy

Kevin is a lifelong Chicagoan who is passionate about urban development and violence reduction in the city. He attended DePaul University and graduated with a BA in Political Science. He also served as a Peace Corps Education Volunteer in Sierra Leone from 2017-2019. His New Idea was inspired by his desire to improve relations between neighborhoods in order to create a better sense of community, especially among youth. Kevin enjoys traveling, reading, and playing sports while supporting Liverpool FC and the Chicago Bulls.

Chloe Katherine Bell

IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law
Juris Doctor Candidate

Chloe is a second-year law student studying Environmental and Energy Law and Public Interest Law. She graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University with a BA in Environmental Studies and a minor in Theatre Dance. Chloe is passionate about environmental justice and advocacy, and spent her summer combining this passion with her interest in digital media communications while detailed to the Department of Transportation. When she's not reading for class, you can find Chloe baking with her sourdough, dancing to the Grateful Dead, or camping somewhere up north.



Ella Brady

Tufts University

MA in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning

Ella is a second-year master's student studying Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning. Ella also received her undergraduate degree from Tufts University in English Literature and Urban Studies. She has worked for the past seven years as an aide for students with disabilities, which inspired one of her New Ideas for mapping accessibility. This summer, Ella enjoyed learning more about the City's open data policy and supporting a campaign to protect domestic worker rights. Outside of planning and policy, Ella enjoys amateur improv and sketch comedy.



Devon Braunstein

University of Chicago | Harris
Master of Public Policy

Devon is a Master of Public Policy candidate originally from the Philadelphia area. Prior to starting graduate school, Devon worked for the City of New York to reduce the regulatory burden for small businesses. Previously, she was a consultant with Deloitte. This summer, she was excited to pair her belief in mentorship with her passion for criminal legal system reform to produce her New Idea. Outside of the office, Devon facilitates creative writing workshops at Cook County Jail, and she loves to hike in national parks and test out new vegan recipes.

Martin Brown

University of Chicago | Harris
Master of Public Policy

Prior to Harris, Martin worked at an environmental non-profit, Delta Institute, where he helped cities throughout the Midwest to plan various environmental initiatives. His New Idea was inspired by his experience working with communities to address blight. While at Delta, Martin worked in Gary, IN and St. Louis, MO to improve demolition standards and while at Harris, Martin works with the Office of Civic Engagement to conduct a parcel survey of the Washington Park neighborhood in Chicago. In his free time, Martin can be found making furniture with reclaimed wood.



David Collier-King

Loyola University Chicago
Master of Public Policy

David is a native of Gary, IN and a graduate of historically black college and university Alabama State University where he graduated with his BA in Political Science. He garnered inspiration for his New Idea from his love for social innovation, citizen ownership, and public policy as pathways to building communities of tomorrow. In his spare time, David enjoys building his relationship with Jesus, spending time with his wife Brenae' (married Juneteenth 2020) and his pup, Ohana, as well as traveling across the world (his favorite place is anything Disney).



Claire Cunningham

UIC John Marshall Law School
Juris Doctor Candidate

Claire is a native Chicagoan who is thrilled to be working for her hometown. Prior to law school, she attended Saint Louis University where she graduated with a BA in Political Science, Women's and Gender Studies, and Theatre. Her New Idea was inspired by the research she completed during her undergraduate studies, the current civil unrest, and her passion for ending domestic violence. When Claire has free time, she likes to read books, explore new corners of the City, and see a show at the Goodman.

Mayra Diaz

University of Illinois at Chicago
Master of Social Work | Master of Public Health

Mayra is a graduate student studying public health and social work at the University of Illinois at Chicago and has a BA in Latina/Latino Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Drawing from all three of her fields of study, Mayra hopes to use her expertise to combat health inequities in communities of color, particularly around mental healthcare access. Besides her academic interests, Mayra has a passion for dance. She was on a Latin dance team before starting school and hopes to get back to performing after graduation.



Chris Hoey

Loyola University Chicago
Master of Public Policy

Chris grew up in Las Vegas before moving to New York City to attend Manhattan College and study Electrical Engineering. After graduating, he served in the Jesuit Volunteers Corps for a year where he realized his passion for systemic change and policy work. He went on to be a Cleveland Foundation Public Service Fellow working at Cuyahoga County's Office of Reentry before moving to Chicago to pursue his Master of Public Policy degree at Loyola University Chicago. Chris can be found wherever there are dogs, drag queens, or dancefloors.



Danielle Maranion

University of Chicago | SSA
MA in Social Service Administration

Prior to graduate school, Danielle worked with children and youth in enrichment programming both in the U.S. and abroad. Throughout these experiences, she developed a passion for fostering a mindset of cultural humility and equity in program and policy design. Some of her projects this summer have focused on supporting the inaugural year of the Chicago Youth Service Corps, Healthy Chicago 2025, and Census 2020 Engagement. In her free time, you can find her enjoying a hot bowl of phở in Argyle or traveling to any green space in the Midwest.

Erin M. Monforti

IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law
Juris Doctor Candidate

Erin is a second-year law student concentrating in Public Interest Law and Labor and Employment Law. Prior to law school, Erin attended Illinois Institute of Technology, where she graduated summa cum laude with a BS in Social and Economic Development Policy and a minor in Applied Economics. Erin is passionate about equitable and sustainable land use and fair employment practices—she looks forward to being a compassionate advocate for historically underserved communities in Chicago. Erin's favorite hobbies are baking, cooking, reading, and completing crosswords.



Aishwarya Raje

University of Chicago | Harris
Master of Public Policy

Aishwarya is a Master of Public Policy candidate at the University of Chicago. Before moving to Chicago, she was a researcher at the Global Health Policy Center in the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, where her work focused on health systems capacity in fragile settings. She is interested in the intersection of health, environmental policy, and human rights. Aishwarya holds a BA from Johns Hopkins University in International Studies and Spanish.



Sarah Richardson

University of Michigan | Ford
Master of Public Policy

Sarah is a second-year Master of Public Policy candidate. Prior to graduate school she attended Davidson College and graduated with a BA in Political Science. She taught English as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Georgia and worked as a Development Assistant at USAID in Tbilisi, which allowed her to travel all over the Caucasus. Sarah also worked on drug policy in Alaska, where she developed an interest in public health while climbing glaciers and avoiding moose. When she gets a break from studying, Sarah can be found hiking, watching basketball, or baking peanut butter cookies.

Teresa Rodriguez

Northwestern University | Kellogg
Master of Business Administration

Teresa is a Kellogg MBA candidate passionate about how the built environment can enact positive change in communities. This summer, her projects have focused on real estate, diversity in construction, and transportation strategic planning. Prior to Kellogg, Teresa received a BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Notre Dame and spent four years in Deloitte Consulting's technology practice, implementing innovative technology solutions to meet business needs within the public sector and real estate industries.



Adam Roth

University of Chicago | Harris
Master of Public Policy

Adam is a second-year graduate student specializing in education policy. In addition to working in education budgeting, he spent two years as an elementary school teacher in Taiwan, where he taught special-education English. His experiences teaching and learning new languages influenced his New Idea, which is focused on helping English language learners get the tools they need to unlock their potential. When not working, Adam can be found biking, exploring the city, and practicing Chinese with anyone who will listen!



Charmaine Runes

University of Chicago | Harris

MS in Computational Analysis and Public Policy

Charmaine codes for the people. Before starting her graduate program, she spent four years as a researcher at the Urban Institute in Washington, DC, designing infographics, making maps, and asking lots of questions about structural racism in public policy. As a fellow at the Department of Public Health, she analyzed COVID-19 comorbidity conditions and developed a narrative-driven data visualization feature page. In her free time, Charmaine enjoys running, climbing, and cycling (not necessarily in that order); + trying out plant-based recipes in her tiny kitchen.

Samantha Sartori

Northwestern University

MS in Leadership for Creative Enterprises

Sam sparks change through positive storytelling. Originally from Pittsburgh, she has a BA in Journalism from Loyola University Chicago and worked professionally as a news writer/producer at WGN-TV and as a creative project manager. Focusing her graduate studies on the arts, media, and entertainment industries, Sam hopes to combine her communication skill set with her passion for environmental sustainability. In her spare time, Sam enjoys listening to musical soundtracks, practicing yoga, and searching for the best chocolate chip cookie in the city.



Nicole Shen

University of Chicago | Harris

Master of Public Policy

Nicole is a public policy student specializing in budget and health policy. Before moving to Chicago, she graduated from New York University with a degree in Economics and Mathematics, and she worked as an equity trader in Hong Kong. Her experience volunteering in a village with a high HIV/AIDS incidence rate in Cambodia in 2019 completely altered her life trajectory from finance to public health. This summer, Nicole was detailed to the Department of Public Health where she worked on budget allocation, COVID-19 contact tracing, and social media strategy.



Naveen Siddiqui

DePaul University

MS in Human-Computer Interaction

Naveen looks at how technology can be used for social good. While most of her projects at the Department of Public Health looked at expanding technical systems, Naveen also worked with the Violence Prevention team, Chicago Public Libraries, and the Department of Family Support Services on domestic violence and trauma-informed care. Previously, Naveen was a domestic violence advocate in Chicago, helping survivors navigate the legal system. In her free time, she enjoys watching specific art house films and perfecting her lentil stew recipe.

Emily Souza Rutkowski

University of Chicago | Harris

Master of Public Policy

Emily is a rising second-year at Harris, where she is pursuing a Master of Public Policy with a certificate in policy analysis. Recent work on the Invest South/West initiative inspired her New Idea for a community-based Incubator Station. Her other New Idea was shaped by her time living in the Netherlands, which sparked an interest in bicycle infrastructure and transportation policy. An avid traveler and self-described explorer, Emily has spent the summer seeking out new outdoor dining options, staying as active as possible, and spending time with her family.



Byron Terry

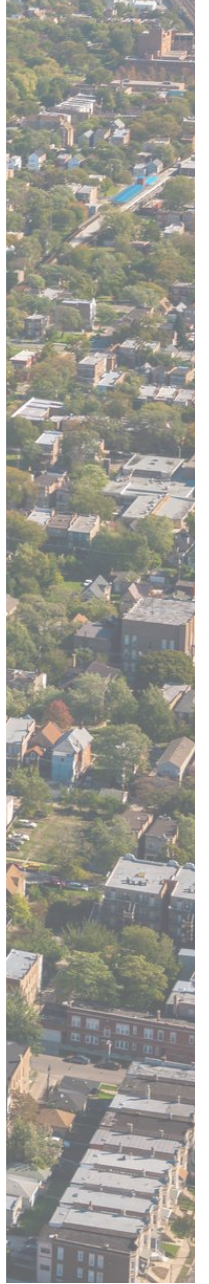
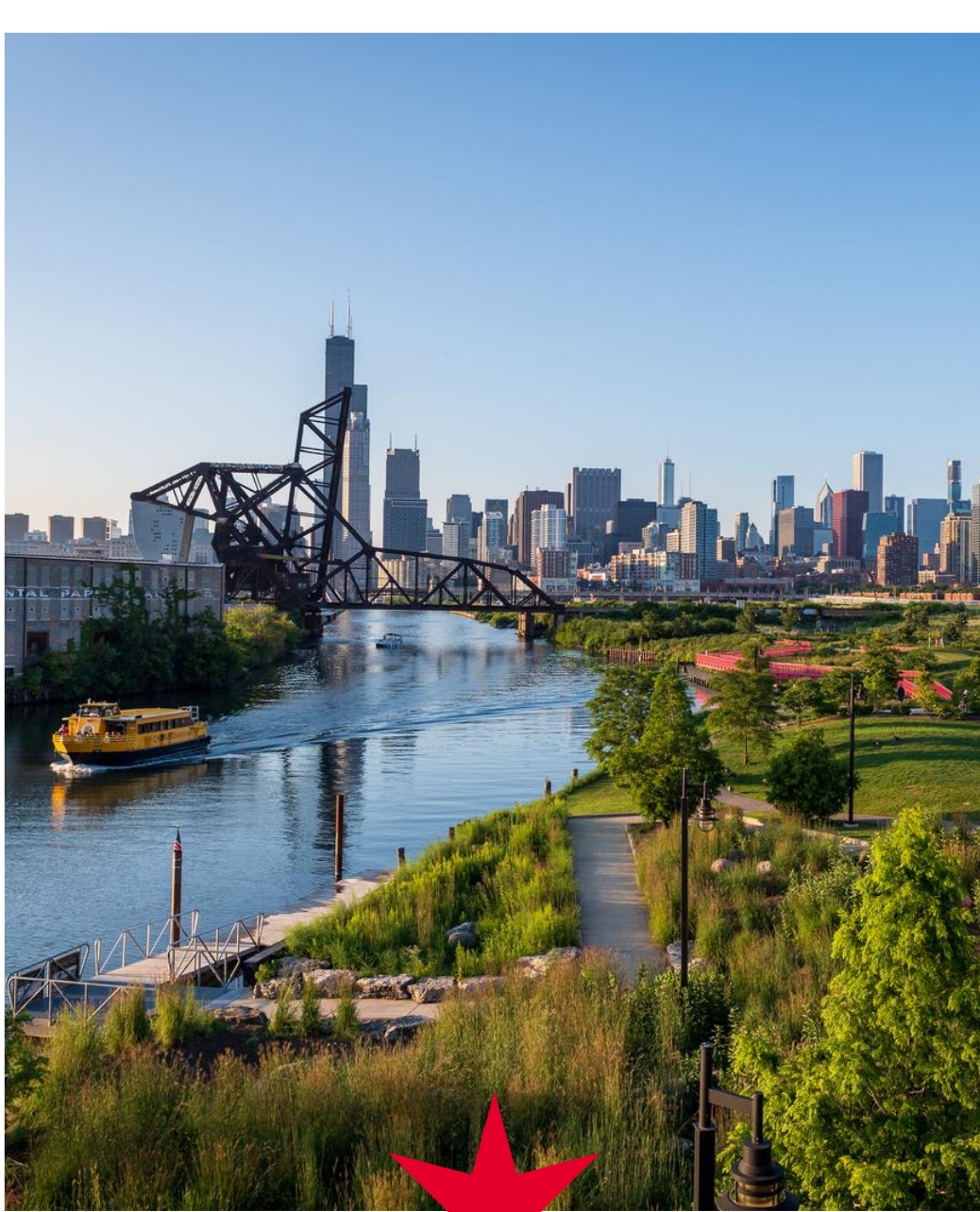
North Park University

MA in Counseling Psychology

Byron does nothing without intention. He is an aspiring counselor and an alumnus of the University of Louisville with a BA in Psychology and Communications and of Northeastern Illinois University with an MA in Inner City Studies. Byron loves to explore Instagram (@oba1911), blast the *Confessions* album, and read books such as *Assata: The Autobiography*, *Black Power: Politics of Liberation in America*, and *Produced by Faith*, which inspired him to write his own book, *52 Nights Owl: More To Life*. Byron is a thinker who fights for the progression of all.



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