



■ ★ WE WILL CHICAGO

LIFELONG LEARNING

Ensuring that learning opportunities
exist for Chicagoans at every
stage of life



LIFELONG LEARNING

Learning that lasts a lifetime helps people to continually improve themselves for work, recreation and other personal or social pursuits that contribute to strong communities.

With approximately two-thirds of Illinois jobs reportedly requiring at least some post-secondary schooling or special training, formal education is a key predictor for an individual's income potential. College graduates, for example, earn 65% more on average than high school graduates, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Education in all its forms is important to individual well-being, personal growth and mental health. Education can take place in a variety of formats and locations that cater to the unique needs of Chicago's population, especially seniors and others with physical or technological challenges that limit access to continuing education opportunities.

Lifelong learning enables Chicagoans to set and reach goals for themselves and their families, which strengthens the vitality of entire neighborhoods. Through formal and informal learning, Chicagoans can unlock talents and skills, learn from collective history and

prepare future generations to be change-makers for a more resilient and equitable world.

The Lifelong Learning pillar's goals seek to strengthen residents' pathways into the workforce and enhance educational collaborations that benefit all age groups.





KEY TERMS

Digitalization

The conversion of text, images, sound and other information into a digital format that can be processed by computers.

Formal and Informal Learning

Educational activity resulting from attendance at formal schools and institutions with established programming, as well as experiences attained through social endeavors, hobbies, activities, personal pursuits and other casual endeavors that enhance personal awareness, knowledge and ability.

Intergenerational Encounters

Opportunities for individuals of different generations or ages to come together

Postsecondary Education

All formal education including technical training and vocational programs with degree and non-degrees that lead to certificates and diplomas that foster individual growth, career pathways that reduce poverty, and increase prosperity.

“ I don’t think any positive change in the city is possible without equal, fair access to higher learning. Education is the first platform in knowing how to determine what is healthy and unhealthy. ”

— Kilroy Watkins | West Side of Chicago

GOAL 1

Support increased awareness, interest and belonging to learning resources accessible to all Chicagoans at all stages of life regardless of race, gender, income level, age, ability, citizenship status and language proficiency.

Educational services provided by Chicago's many public and private institutions would benefit from increased coordination that addresses the city's evolving workforce needs and the diverse interests of residents.

OBJECTIVES

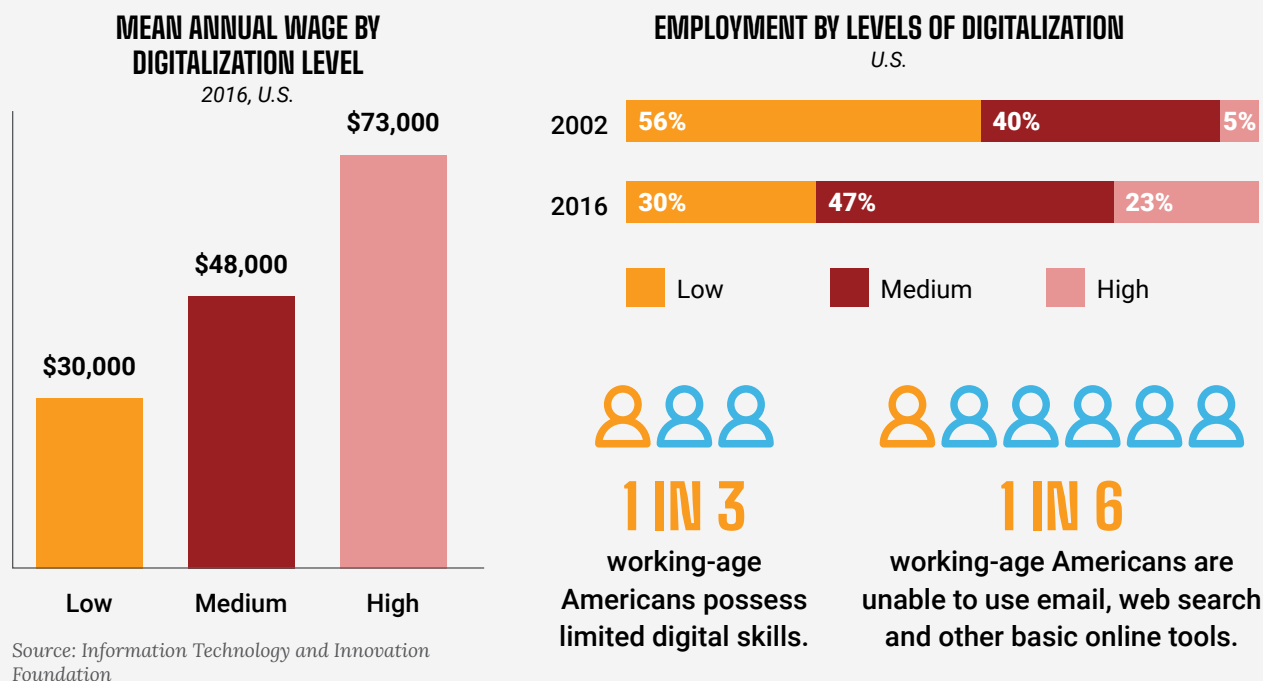
To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 1.1** Create a Department or Office of Learning within the City to improve collaboration between citywide education-focused organizations and share learning opportunities available to the public.
- 1.2** Leverage informal learning to create pathways toward more formal educational opportunities.
- 1.3** Develop an accessible citywide awareness campaign to promote the importance of and opportunities for lifelong learning.

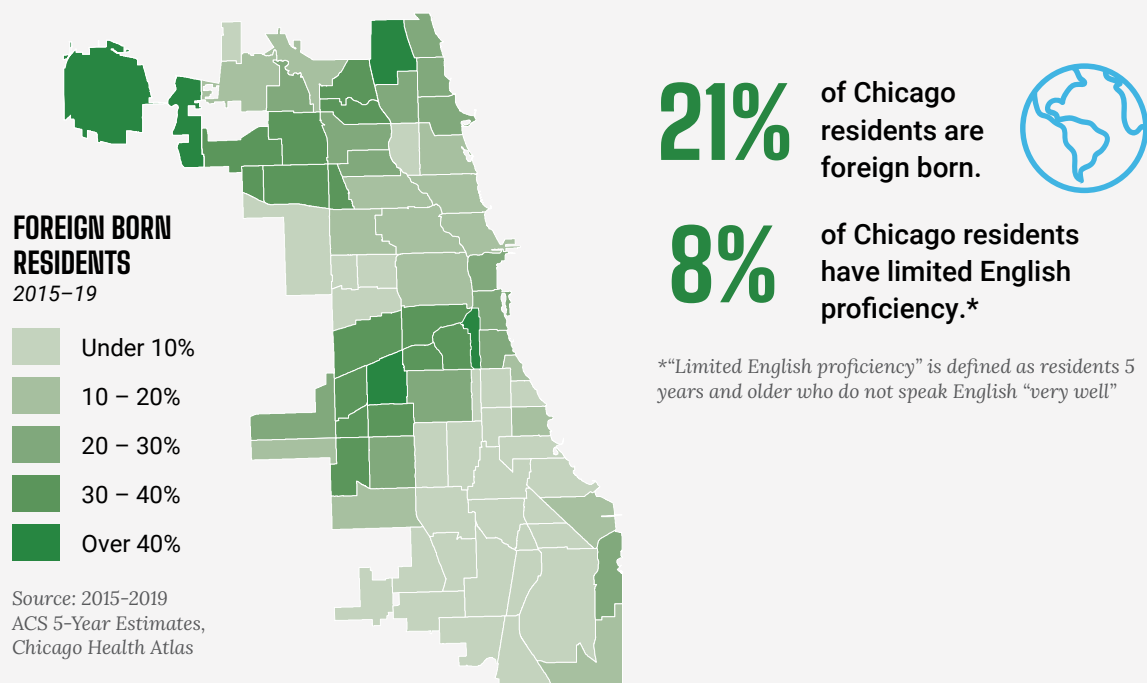


SUPPORTING DATA

Digital skills continue to correlate with expanded employment options and higher wage levels.



Many Chicagoans have limited English proficiency.





GOAL 2

Create new sustainable educational pathways to the workforce, especially for Black and Latino residents and those negatively affected by the criminal-legal system.

In 2017, more than 25% of Black youth and about 13% of Latino youth between the ages of 16-24 were out of work and out of school, compared to 5% of white youth, according to the Great Cities Institute. Unemployment rates for formerly incarcerated individuals is five times the rate of people who have never been to jail or prison, a Prison Policy Initiative report found.

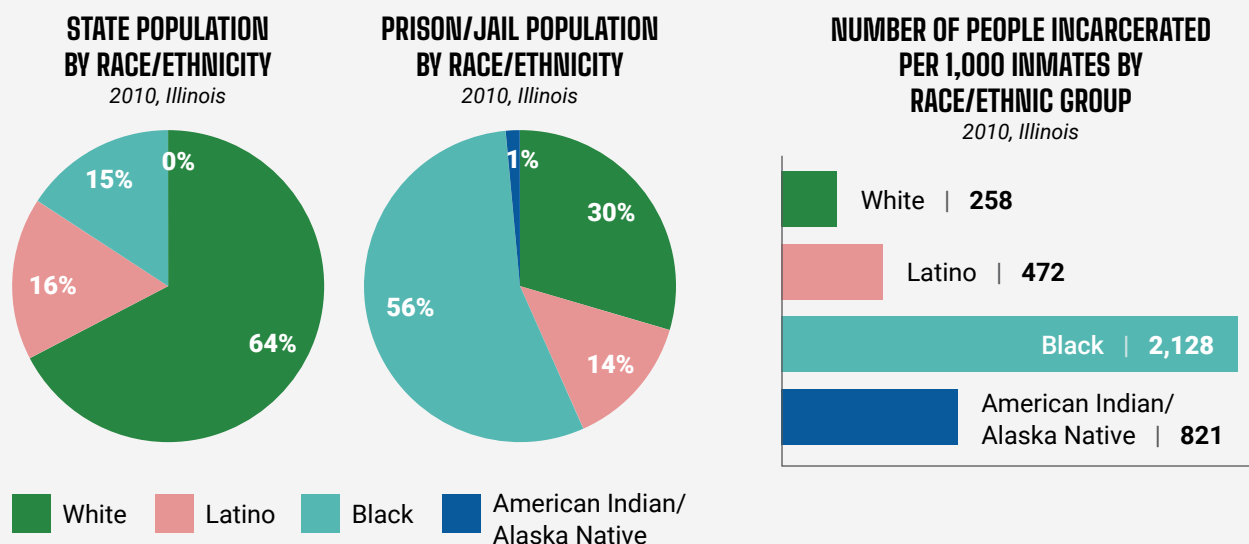
OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 2.1** Strengthen and expand job training programs that provide employment opportunities after completion.
- 2.2** Strengthen the capacity of workforce training programs and partnerships for people negatively affected by the criminal-legal system.
- 2.3** Remove barriers and constraints to participating in the workforce and accessing good quality jobs.
- 2.4** Align educational providers and key employers to create well-supported workforce pipelines.
- 2.5** Reduce the financial burden of participating in workforce training programs.
- 2.6** Expand equitable access to small business development, incubation and other business-led learning opportunities.

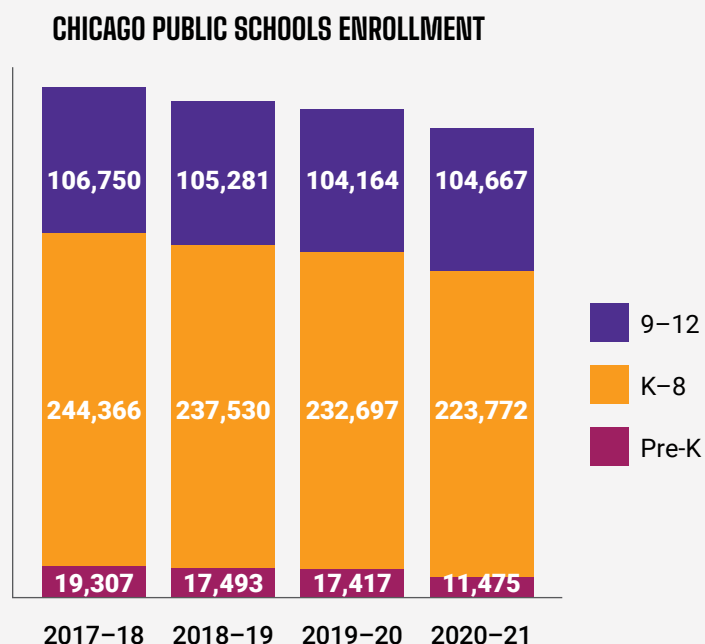
SUPPORTING DATA

Illinois prisons disproportionately house Black inmates.



Source: Prison Policy Initiative, Illinois State Profile

CPS enrollment has declined for all age levels since 2017.



Source: Chicago Public Schools ARA Dashboard

“While we are talking about job readiness and training, are we also talking about job availability, specifically those with a living wage? I’m just curious about placement and career sustainability after the formal and informal pathways have been taken.”

— *Rebecca Amato* | Illinois Humanities, Director of Teaching and Learning

GOAL 3

Build on existing programs to create opportunities for learning and personal growth.

Initiatives to support students with postsecondary educational plans can help reduce racial disparities involving high school and college graduation rates, especially through collaborations with community-based organizations that are already providing social services to future and current workforce members.

OBJECTIVES

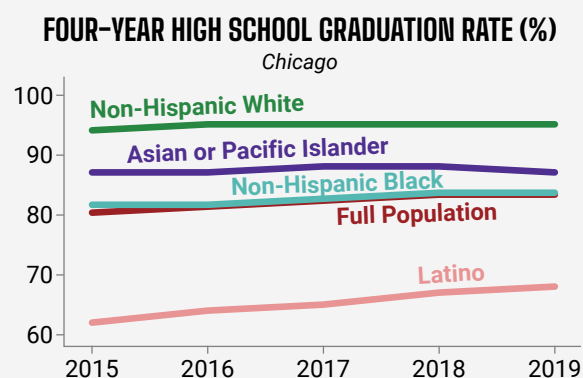
To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 3.1** Identify effective programs throughout the City and expand access to all neighborhoods.
- 3.2** Sustain and expand the work of programs and programming in Black, immigrant, Indigenous, Latino and low-income communities.
- 3.3** Expand existing programs to accommodate individuals across the lifespan and with different abilities.
- 3.4** Bridge the reach and impact of collaborations between Chicago Public Schools and higher education programs.

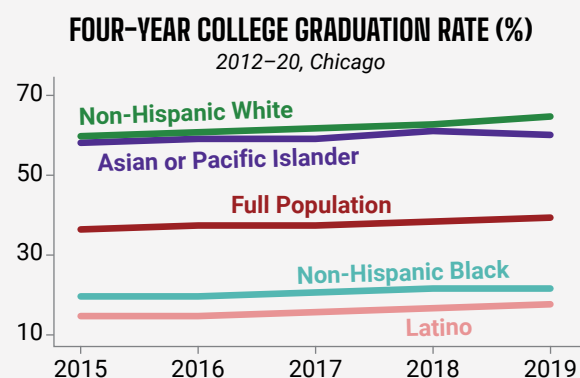


SUPPORTING DATA

The graduation rates of Chicago students decreases more than 50% between high school and college.



Source: 2015–2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

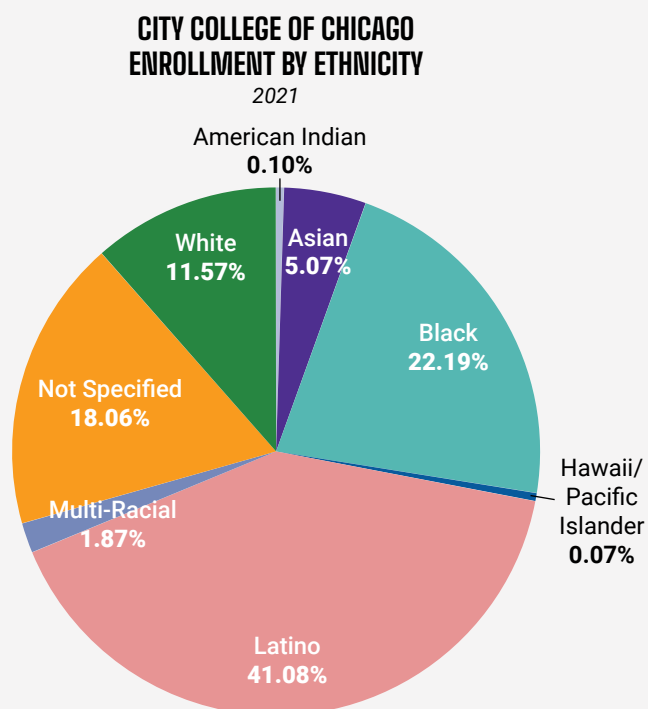


Source: 2015–2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

“ We really ought to be calling out specifically our commitment to public education in our objectives and naming CPS as a critical institution in the city as a provider of lifelong learning. ”

— Mark Potter | City Colleges of Chicago, Provost and Chief Academic Officer

Chicago City Colleges enrollment reflects the city's racial and ethnic diversity.



Source: City Colleges of Chicago

GOAL 4

Elevate existing support systems to increase formal and informal learning opportunities.

Single parents, seniors, recent immigrants and people with disabilities can all benefit from multiple supportive resources that improve their abilities to pursue education and training.

OBJECTIVES

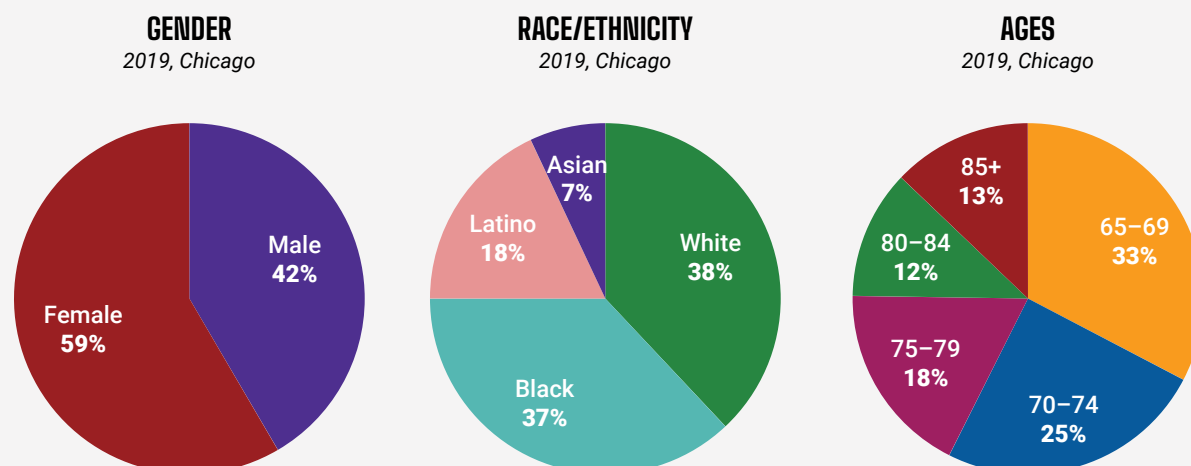
To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 4.1 Promote and strengthen opportunities for intergenerational encounters to build skills and building community.
- 4.2 Increase support for and remove barriers to accessing childcare and older adult care.
- 4.3 Address inequities in pay and resources for educators and care professionals.



SUPPORTING DATA

Demographics of Chicago residents aged 65 years or more



Source: Healthy Chicago Databook, Older Adult Health

Many communities' single-parent households are at least three times city averages.

SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS BY CITY AREA

2015-19, Chicago

AREA	SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLD (%)
Riverdale	36%
Washington Park	25%
Oakland	24%
Greater Grand Crossing	24%
South Deering	23%
West Garfield Park	22%
North Lawndale	22%
East Garfield Park	20%
Humboldt Park	17%
South Chicago	17%
City of Chicago Average	7%

Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

Select communities' preschool enrollment rates are a fraction of city averages.

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY CITY AREA

2015-19, Chicago

AREA	PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT (%)
Avalon Park	19%
West Lawn	25%
West Elsdon	27%
Hegewisch	32%
Archer Heights	34%
Gage Park	37%
Hermosa	37%
Auburn Gresham	38%
Brighton Park	40%
Englewood	40%
City of Chicago Average	58%

Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas



GOAL 5

Expand the availability and access to spaces for lifelong learning in Black, immigrant, Indigenous and Latino community areas.

Nearly 20% of Chicago's 77 community areas don't have a public high school, according to the location of current CPS schools. The collective population of the impacted neighborhoods consists of nearly a quarter million people. This lack of access is most pronounced in the West and South sides where school closures in the 2010s deepened existing inequities.

OBJECTIVES


To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 5.1** Ensure all K-12 schools can support opportunities for equitable, effective, rigorous and joyful learning, especially in communities affected by school closures.
- 5.2** Direct investments to facilities and organizations where inequitable access to lifelong learning facilities currently exist.
- 5.3** Create and support intergenerational community learning hubs in all neighborhoods.
- 5.4** Design learning environments to meet the needs of all residents, prioritizing language access and accessibility for those with disabilities.
- 5.5** Reduce financial and technology barriers to accessing community and educational programs.

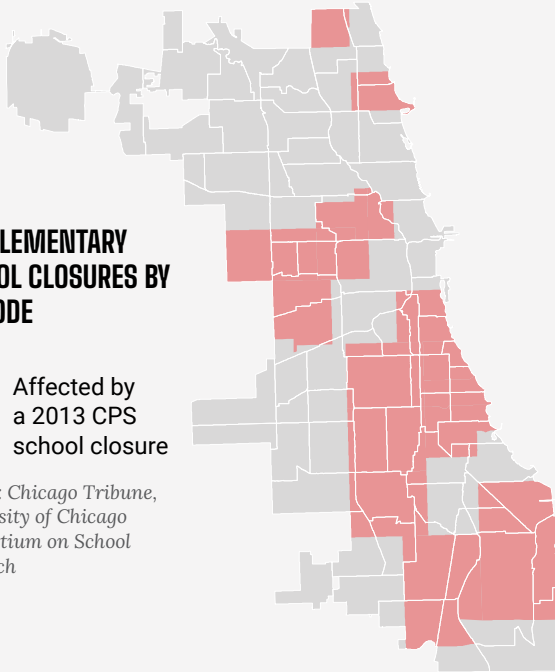
SUPPORTING DATA

49 school closures in 2013 largely occurred on the South and West sides.

CPS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLOSURES BY ZIP CODE 2013

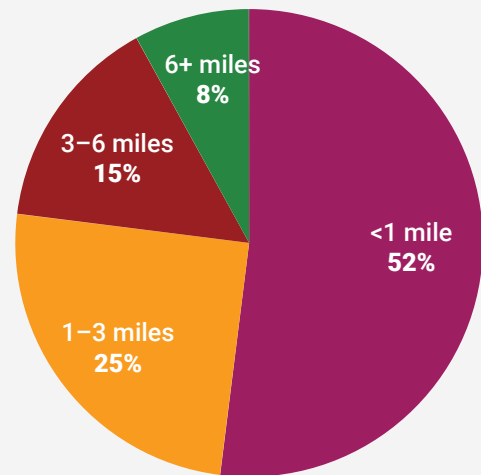
 Affected by a 2013 CPS school closure

Source: Chicago Tribune, University of Chicago Consortium on School Research



More than 25,000 public school students travel 6+ miles to attend classes.

CPS STUDENT DISTANCE TO SCHOOL 2020-21



Source: Chicago Public Schools ARA Dashboard





“ It’s not that there are no [learning] opportunities, it’s that folks don’t know how to plug in. [They] don’t know how to get connected to them. We also saw a lot that folks were not connected to each other, to other organizations, to other folks doing similar work, or that they were not being connected to civic entities or other municipality resources and opportunities. ”

— Quenna Lené Barrett | Goodman Theatre, Associate Director of Education

To see the policy ideas developed by the **Lifelong Learning** pillar team, visit www.willchicago.com

