



COMMUNITY
MEETS
GOVERNANCE

2
0
2
4

CO-GOVERNANCE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Location: Arise Chicago

Date: November 11, 2024

Steering Committee

Co-Facilitator: Adam Kader, Arise
Chicago

Chicago United for Equity /Office of Equity and Racial Justice Co-Facilitators:

Rachel Pate, Chicago United for Equity

Documentarians:

Sofia Sabates

Language: Spanish



Table of Contents

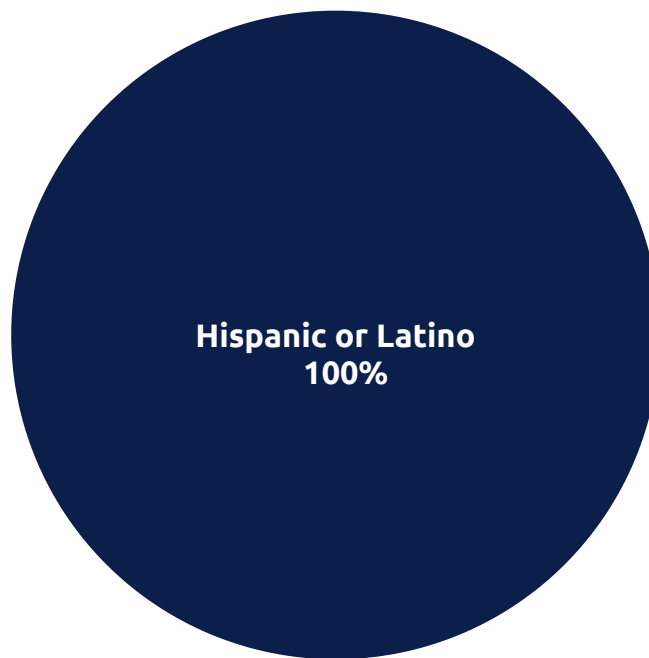
Demographics	01
Objective and Key Takeaways	05
Conversation Highlights	06
Understanding Your Experience	07
How Do You Define Co-Governance?	11

Demographics

Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 14

Race/Ethnicity

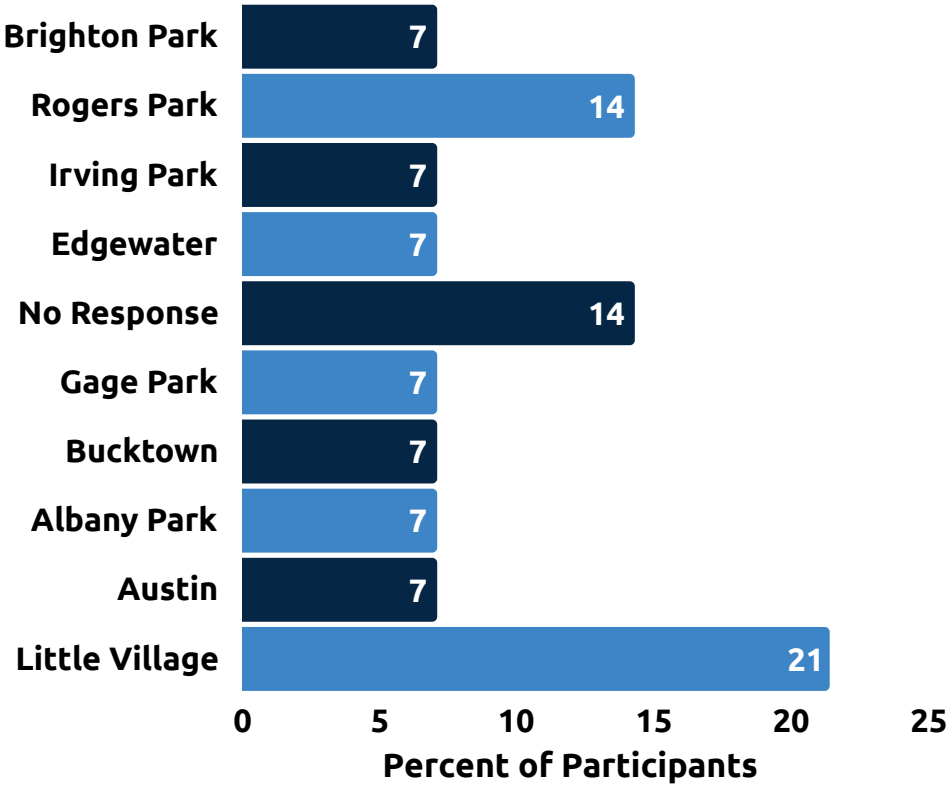


Demographics

Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 14

Neighborhoods

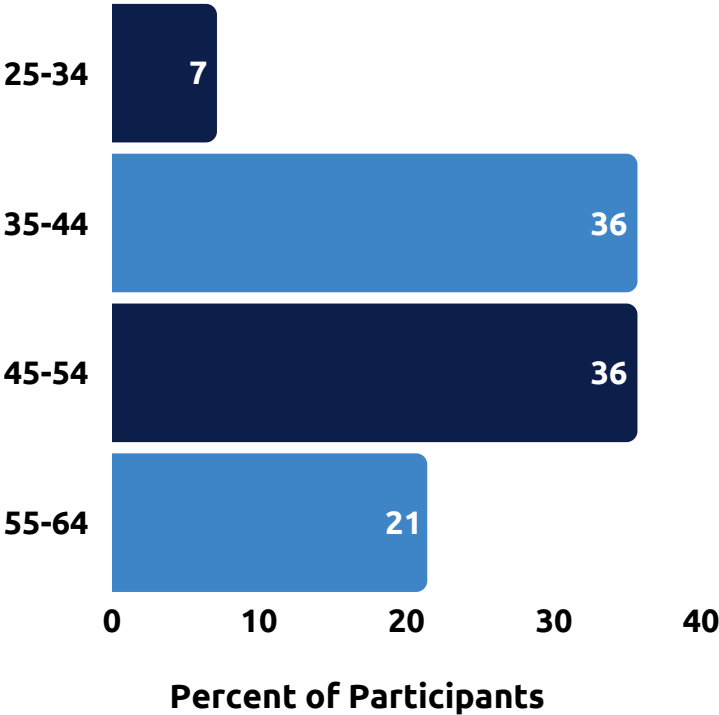


Demographics

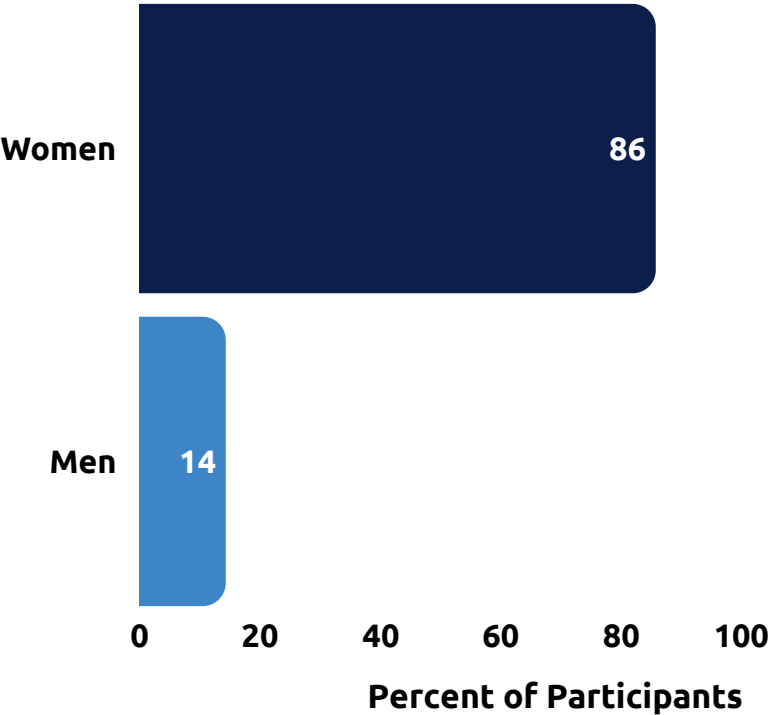
Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 14

Age



Gender Identity

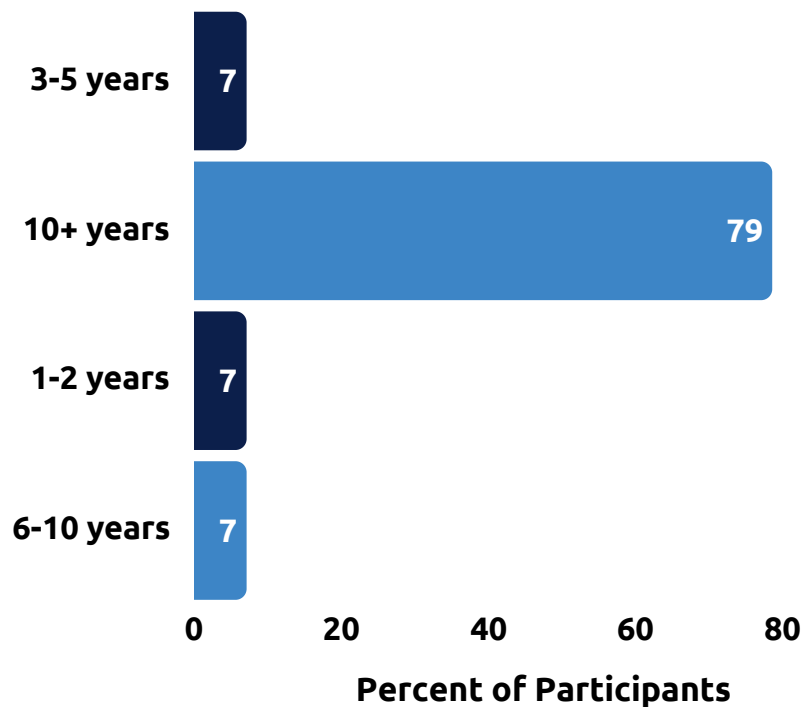


Demographics

Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 14

How long have you lived in Chicago?



Overview

The Office of Equity & Racial Justice (OERJ), Chicago United for Equity (CUE), and Chicago's Co-governance Steering Committee guided community members through a conversation to create a shared definition of co-governance that prioritizes equitable partnerships and decision-making between government and community.

Objectives

- Provide insights on current experiences with city government—highlighting both successes and challenges.
- Imagine what co-governance could look like in practice, focusing on equity, transparency, and inclusivity.

Key Takeaways

- Bilingual resources and accessible communication can reduce barriers and improve trust.
- Build programs that bridge gaps between youth and community leadership, particularly in neighborhoods facing violence and resource limitations.
- Strengthen ties between Black and Latinx communities to combat systemic racism and foster collective action.

Conversation Highlights



- "Co-governance means working actively with communities, not just for them, to create policies that reflect their lived experiences and needs."
- "We need programs that educate our communities about civic processes and involve us directly in decision-making, not just as advisors but as co-creators."
- "For co-governance to work, there must be real follow-through—communities need to see outcomes that reflect their input."
- "Unity between Latinx and Black communities is essential; co-governance should actively work to dismantle racism and foster collaboration across communities."
- "Parents and communities must be equipped with the tools to lead alongside government, particularly when it comes to youth education and safety."

Understanding Your Experience



Participants were asked to reflect on their experiences engaging with the City of Chicago, rating experiences as "Difficult," "Neutral," "Excellent," or "No Government Engagement."

Engagement Activity Results

4

"Difficult" ratings: Reported significant challenges engaging with government services and representatives.

7

"Neutral" ratings: Described interactions with government as neither overly positive nor negative.

8

"Excellent" ratings: Highlighted schools with bilingual programs as a necessary resource, though participants acknowledged their vulnerability to closures.

0

"No Engagement" ratings: No participants reported having no engagement entirely.

*** Some participants included multiple ratings.

Understanding Your Experience

Reflections

Documentarians recorded the following reflections:

- Resisting the urbanization of Bucktown and demographic changes; striving to fight discrimination and hate. Highlighting divisions within the Latinx community and the role of civic knowledge in addressing these issues.
- Worried about voices being silenced and potential regression to past hardships; emphasizing the need for strong voices to continue the fight for progress.
- Concerned about the psychological and emotional toll on DACA recipients, including personal fears over a son's citizenship status. Advocating for collective strength to face these challenges.
- The majority of immigrants are hardworking taxpayers who remain unrecognized. There needs to be systemic changes to address this.
- I haven't had any standout great experiences but also no standout difficult experiences; they've done what was asked and nothing more or less.
- I had a bad experience with Streets and Sanitation, but it was because I was young, ill-informed, and didn't have the resources from Arise that I needed.
- As immigrants, our priority is to work, work, work. We don't come in trying to learn the landscape or civics of the city we move to, and that's on us.

Understanding Your Experience

Reflections

Documentarians recorded the following reflections:

- Our race is always a factor for people not to take us seriously, such as with cops. Even when we are victims, we don't have translators or bilingual staff in these departments to help us communicate.
- We have had aldermen who ignore us or laugh at us for being Latinx. It clearly has to do with race, and we are not taken seriously.
- Streets and Sanitation has helped most of us in a positive way.
- There are a lot of crimes in my area. I've called in crimes to the cops, but when you speak in Spanish, they don't take you seriously and do not come in a timely fashion. They also report the crimes incorrectly because they do not have people who speak Spanish. There is a lot of ignoring of Latinx folks or others who don't speak the language.
- Many Latinx people have experienced police officers meeting them with guns already drawn.
- Latinx folks do not get as much attention—there are no cops where we need them, and they don't help. There is no security in our areas.
- Latinx folks do not get as much attention—there are no cops where we need them, and they don't help. There is no security in our areas.
- The police are affecting all of us. We all agree that the cops have a problem and don't protect Latinx communities.
- There is a lot of violence in La Villita. Cops take a long time to show up. This impacts all neighborhoods, regardless of whether they are school areas, residential areas, or others.

Understanding Your Experience

Reflections

Documentarians recorded the following reflections in English:

- Bureaucracy made things difficult in an experience with juvenile court.
- My niece's school is about to be closed, but we were able to get the alderman to work on the problem and try to keep the school open. My niece has learning disabilities, so it is very important to keep the school open.
- In my area, cops arrive in a timely fashion. There is a big difference because I live in Bucktown, which is mostly white.
- Schools that are primarily focused on Latinx students are being closed. These schools have bilingual programs that are necessary for immigrants and their kids.
- What we need is funding for music, sports, clubs, technology, and programs that nurture the abilities kids may have. This would help take kids off the streets.

Participants also shared the following reflections in their participant handouts:

- **Difficult:** Language barriers make it hard to communicate with city services, and there are no translators to help Spanish speakers, especially when dealing with police.
- **Difficult:** Cops don't take residents seriously when they speak Spanish, responding late or reporting issues incorrectly due to language gaps.
- **Difficult:** Some aldermen dismiss or mock Latinx residents, making them feel unheard and disrespected.

Understanding Your Experience

Reflections

Participants also shared the following reflections in their participant handouts:

- **Difficult:** Police approach Latinx neighborhoods with heightened use of force, making residents feel unsafe even when they are victims.
- **Difficult:** Police approach Latinx neighborhoods with a heightened use of force, making residents feel unsafe even when they are victims.
- **Neutral:** City services often meet basic expectations without exceeding them, offering functional but unremarkable assistance.
- **Neutral:** Residents with limited knowledge of city systems sometimes struggle to navigate processes, though they eventually get help.
- **Neutral:** Immigrant communities often prioritize work over learning about civics, limiting their engagement with local government.
- **Excellent:** Advocacy efforts, like working with aldermen to save schools, demonstrate positive collaboration and responsiveness.
- **Excellent:** In predominantly white neighborhoods, city services are timely, and police are efficient and responsive.
- **Excellent:** Bilingual school programs have been beneficial, supporting immigrant families and fostering inclusivity.

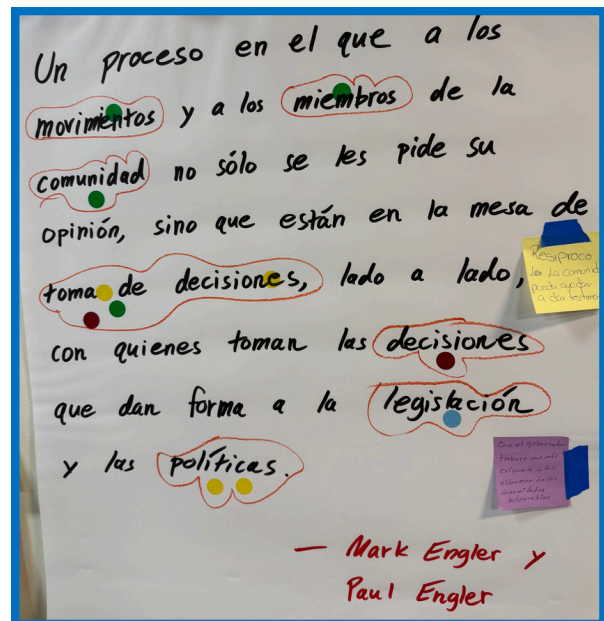
How Do You Define Co-Governance?



Facilitators shared three definitions of co-governance and asked participants to underline or verbally share phrases they would like to see reflected in Chicago's definition of co-governance.

Engagement Activity Results

- Economic and political
- Racism
- Guarantee
- Prejudices
- Working actively
- Policies
- Most harmed by structural racism
- Co-creating
- Solutions
- Community Needs
- Effective
- Equitable
- Equitable outcomes
- Disparities between racial, social, economic, and gender groups
- Racial and Partners for Dignity and Rights
- Movements and members
- Decision-making table
- Decisions
- Legislation and policies



How Do You Define Co-Governance?



Facilitators asked participants what they thought would be an effective pathway to co-governance:

Documentarians shared the following reflections in English:

- Young people are very uninformed about politics and who is running; they need more support in this area.
- Let's not allow the aldermen to divide the Latinx and Black communities.
- We need unity and the strength of all of us coming together to prevent racism from winning.
- Racism affects people from all backgrounds.
- There needs to be security for the community.
- We need to actively teach communities about politics, particularly the relationship between government and the general population.
- There are no brigades in our communities to help clean the neighborhoods.
- Can we create programs to rescue youth who are in gangs or on the streets? This situation is scary for the rest of the community.
- The government will not educate our kids; that responsibility falls on the parents. However, many parents are not educating their children, and they need to step up.
- As a community, we should support the kids who don't have families.
- We have a broken system and lack the structures to protect these kids; the city needs to address this issue.

How Do You Define Co-Governance?

Documentarians recorded the following group reflections:

- Parents need guidance and orientation on how to educate and care for their children.
- Unity between communities (e.g., Latinx and Black communities).
- Security for all neighborhoods, focusing on youth rescue programs.
- Working actively to educate communities about politics and civic participation.
- Addressing systemic racism as a critical barrier to equitable governance.
- Emphasizing parental and community roles in educating youth.
- Developing programs to address violence and provide opportunities for youth.
- Increasing bilingual resources and providing more direct civic education for marginalized communities.
- Bridging gaps between government action and real community needs by involving local voices in decision-making process

