



COMMUNITY
MEETS
GOVERNANCE

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CO-GOVERNANCE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Location: Good Neighborhood Center

Date: November 18, 2024

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Language:

English



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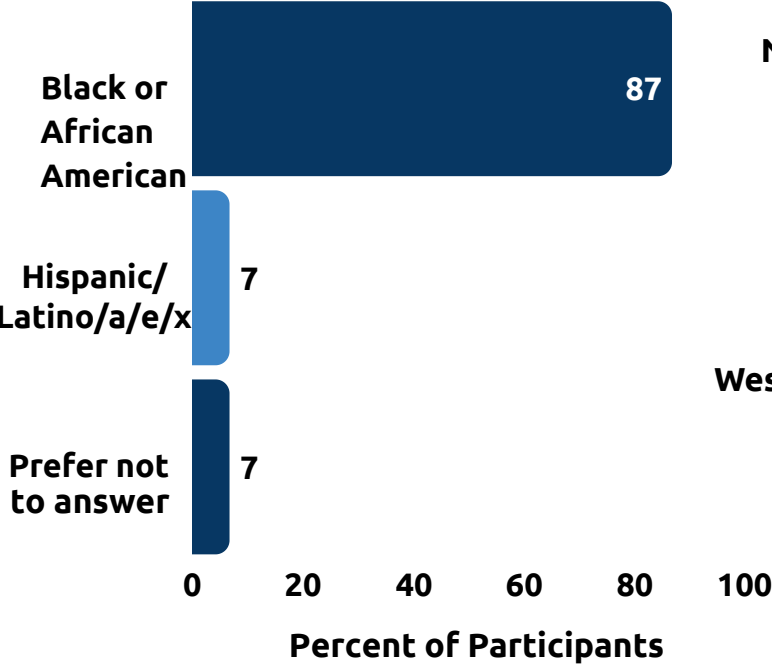
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Demographics

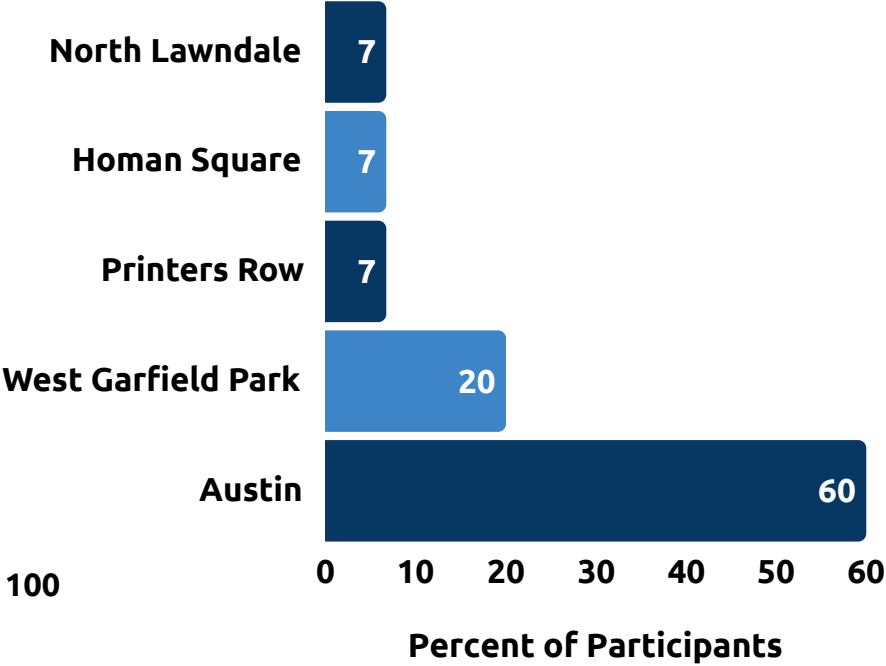
Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 15

Race/Ethnicity



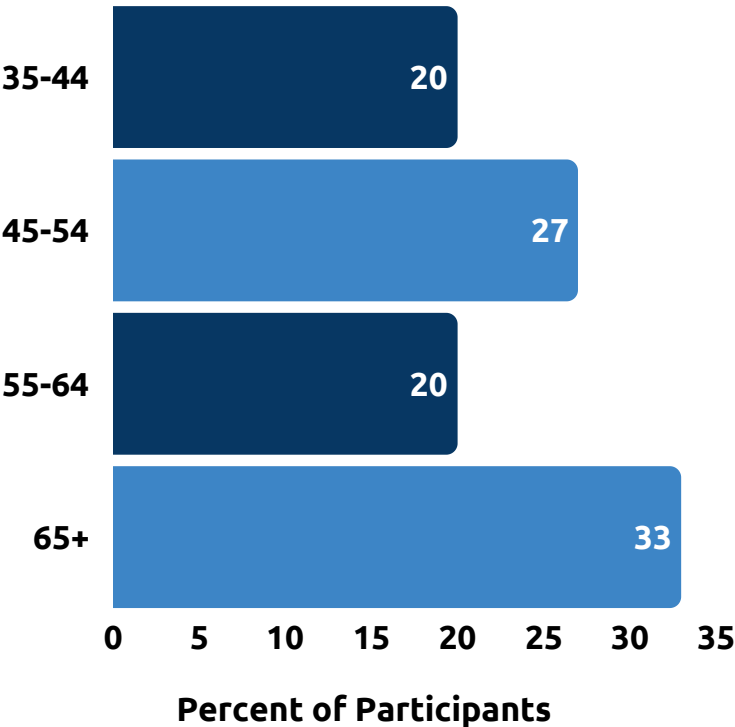
Neighborhoods



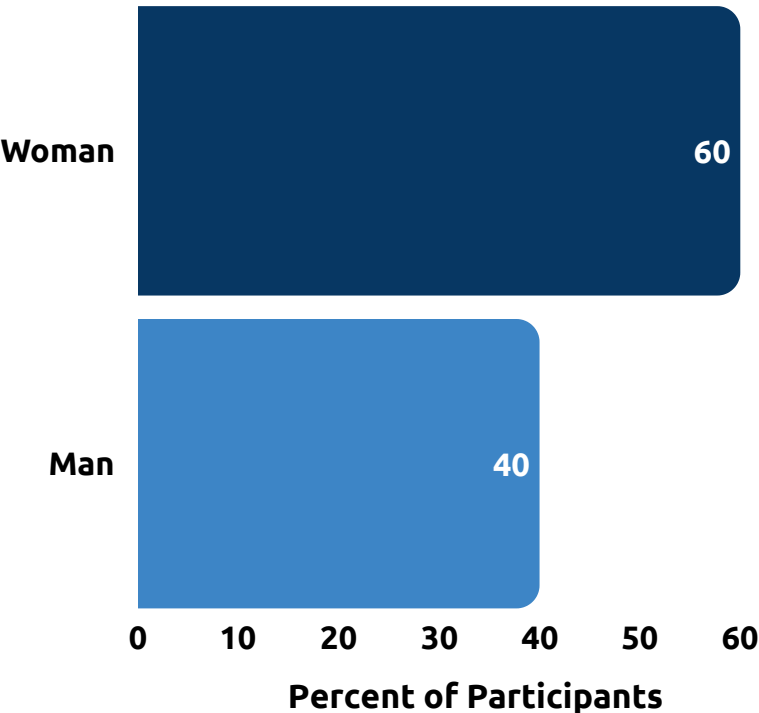
Demographics

Participant Demographics
Total Number of Participants: 15

Age



Gender Identity

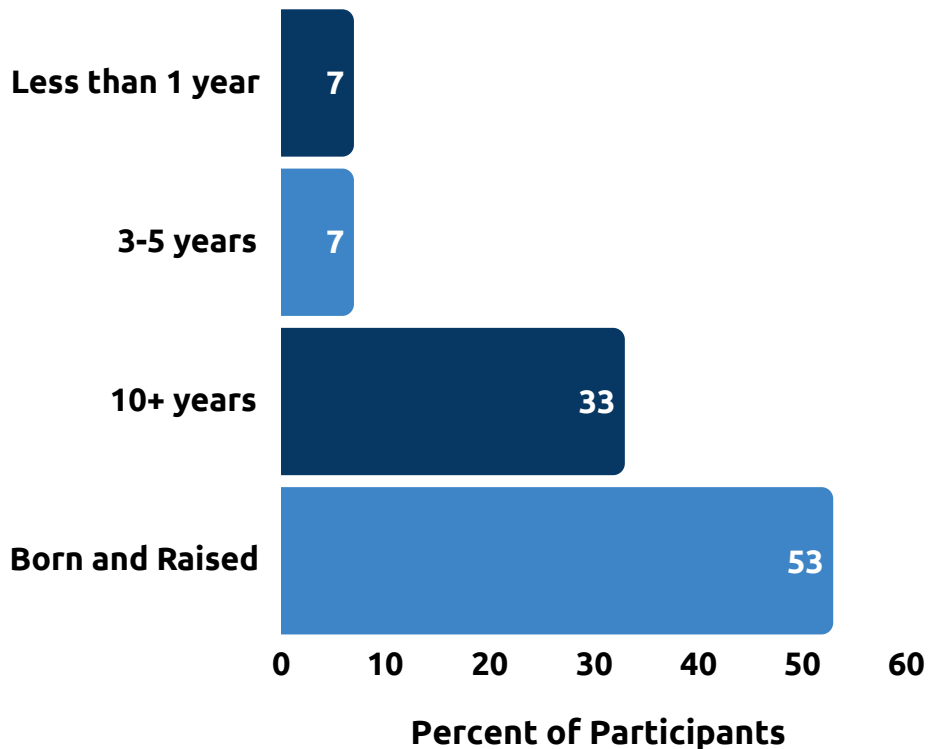


Demographics

Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 15

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

- There needs to be checks and balances; residents should have the ability to hold decision-makers accountable.
- Policies and programs should be co-designed with active community input, not imposed from the top down.
- Clear communication and follow-up as essential for trust-building between government and community.

Conversation Highlights

"We know what's best for us. Keep us informed from inception to execution and follow-up."

"Why haven't any agencies gone into inner-city communities to see for themselves what is going on? We are the government, by the people, for the people."

"Residents should vote on decisions. If they make the decisions, we need a say."

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

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"Difficult" ratings: Noted systemic racism, inequitable resource distribution, and poor emergency response times on the south and west sides.

4

"Neutral" ratings: Shared mixed interactions with city processes, citing slow or miscommunicated responses but eventual resolutions.

3

"Excellent" ratings: Reported positive outcomes because they knew how to navigate the system or had strong personal connections.

2

"No Engagement" ratings: Cited a lack of open-door policies and distrust in government processes discouraged their engagement.

Reflections

- **Difficult:** A participant shared that despite paying a moving violation ticket on time and providing proof, they were charged twice due to a system error. The resolution only came after escalating the issue to a higher level.
- **Neutral:** A participant shared that a miscommunication about street names led to delays in emergency responses, highlighting the importance of clear communication from residents and city departments.
- **Excellent:** A participant praised their ability to navigate the system effectively due to personal connections, enabling smoother interactions.
- **No Engagement:** A participant emphasized that years of empty promises and systemic barriers deterred some residents from engaging with government services.
- **Difficult:** "I reported a tree damaging my property multiple times. Only after going to the alderman's office in person and escalating the issue did it finally get resolved."
- **Difficult:** "When my daughter cut herself and we called 911, they said it would take 30 minutes. They arrived even later, and the care at the south side hospital was inadequate compared to the north side."
- **Difficult:** "I was overcharged for a ticket because the payment wasn't processed correctly. It took multiple phone calls and an in-person visit to fix, and the first staff member I dealt with was extremely rude."

Reflections

- Difficult: “City services are redlining communities. The West Side gets ignored, while other areas are prioritized for services like ambulance response and road repairs.”
- Neutral: “Sometimes things work, like when I use the 311 app, but it feels inconsistent and luck-based.”
- Neutral: “I’ve seen some improvement in how tickets are handled, but it’s still a lot of effort to get things resolved when there’s a mistake.”
- Excellent: “I had a good experience navigating the system because I knew who to call and had relationships within city departments.”
- Excellent: “We had success with a community project because the organizers and stakeholders were well-connected and persistent.”
- No Engagement: “The government doesn’t feel approachable. There’s no system that makes me feel comfortable reaching out or sharing my concerns.”
- No Engagement: “This is my first time feeling like the government is actively trying to involve people like me in decision-making processes.”

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

- "Side-by-side with decision-makers; communication is key to all decisions."
- "The definition should replace 'delegates' with 'residents or constituents' to emphasize community involvement."
- "Racism and economic systems must be explicitly addressed for equity to be achieved."
- Shared decision-making with communities actively engaged at every stage.
- Side-by-side with decision-makers; communication is key to all decisions.
- Co-governance is a strategy centered around sharing economic and political power to ensure the government actively works with communities. Those most harmed by structural racism and the economic system should be part of co-creating solutions. Racism and the economic system are important to moving toward equity.

How Do You Define Co-Governance?



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

- “Brainstorming with the community creates collaborative solutions that meet people’s needs.”
- “We know what’s best for us. Keep us informed from inception to execution and follow-up.”
- “Agencies should visit inner-city communities to understand our challenges firsthand.”
- “Cross-cultural communication is vital for leaders to effectively interact with and address the needs of diverse communities.”
- “Leaders must prioritize actionable solutions that uplift Black communities and address systemic disinvestment.”

