



COMMUNITY  
MEETS  
GOVERNANCE

2  
0  
2  
4

# CO-GOVERNANCE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

**Location:** South Shore Library

**Date:** November 24, 2024

**Steering Committee Co-Facilitator:**  
Dixon Romeo, Not Me We

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

Rachel Pate, Chicago United for Equity  
Lyric Griffin, Chicago's Office of Equity and Racial Justice

### **Documentarians:**

Gloria Pittman  
Jacqueline Brissett

### **Language:**

English



# Table of Contents

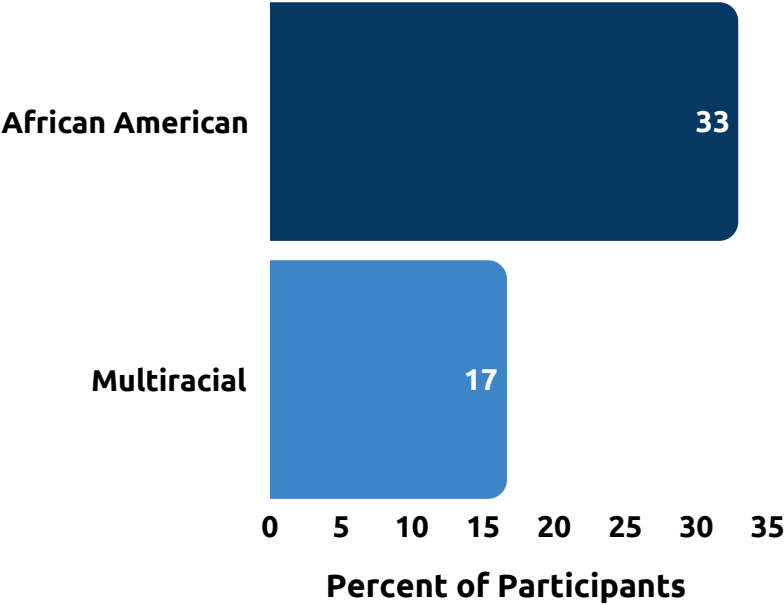
Demographics	01
Objective and Key Takeaways	04
Conversation Highlights	05
<u>Understanding Your Experience</u>	06
How Do You Define Co-Governance?	07

# Demographics

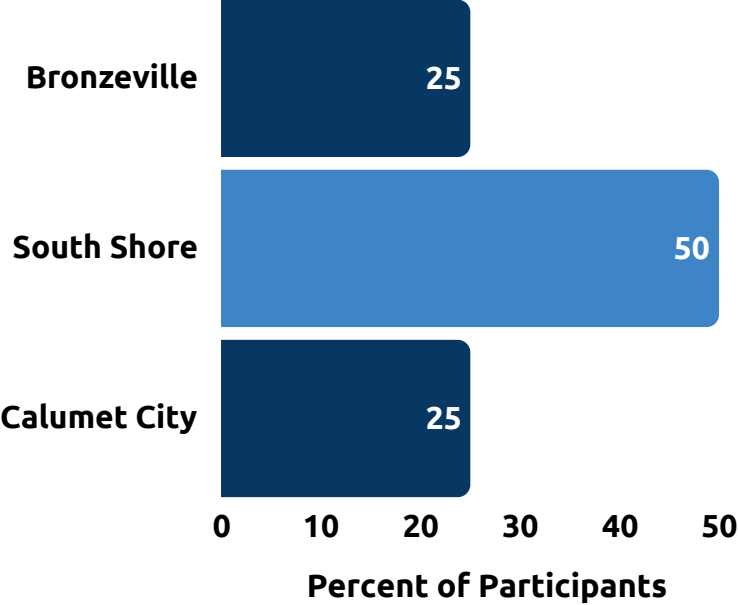
## Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 4

### Race/Ethnicity



### Neighborhoods

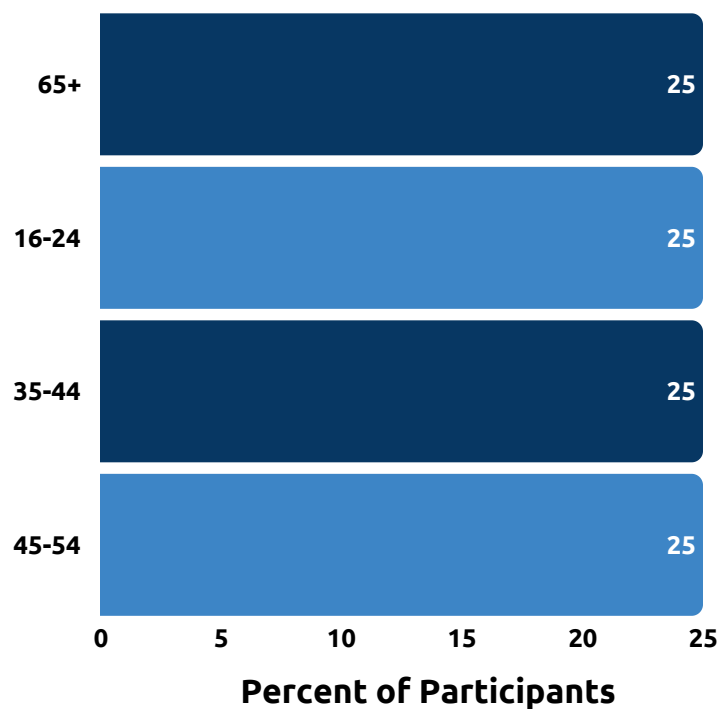


# Demographics

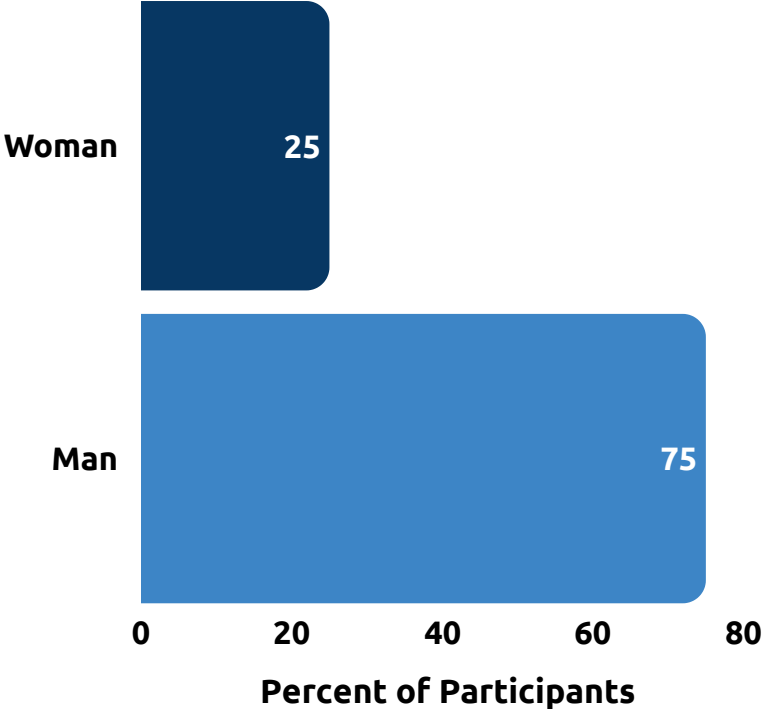
## Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 6

### Age



### Gender Identity

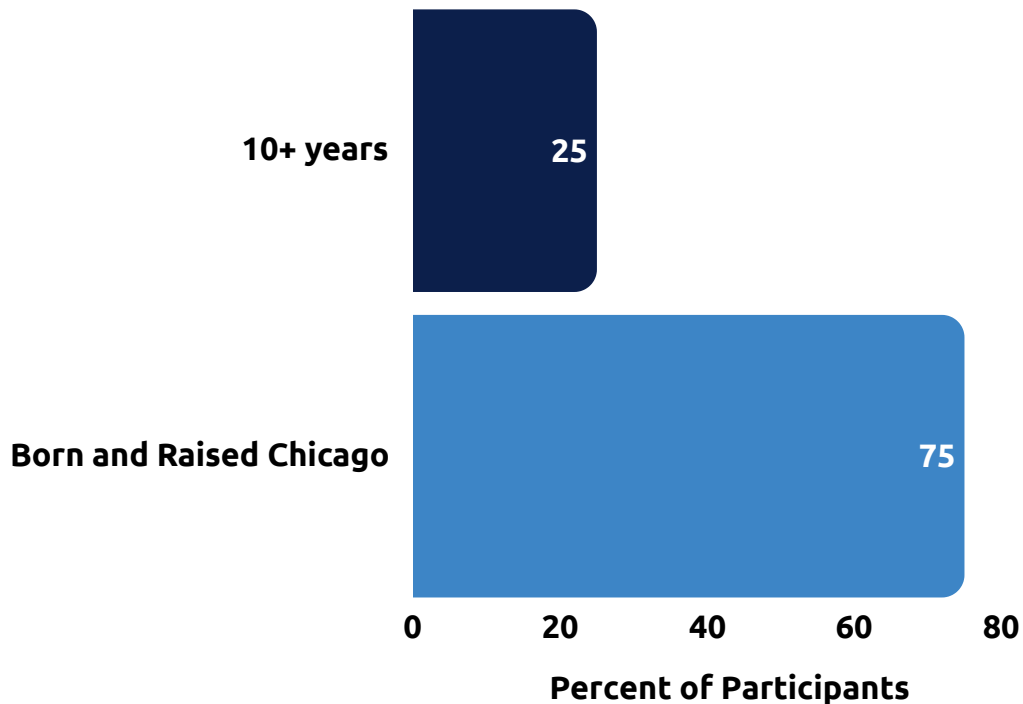


# Demographics

## Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 6

### 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

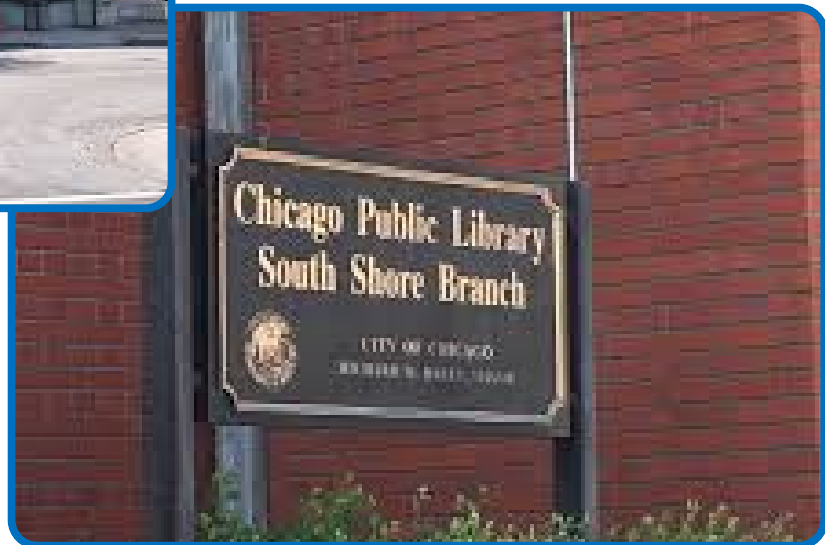
- Provide insights on current experiences with city government—highlighting both successes and challenges.
- Imagine what co-governance could look like in practice, focusing on equity, transparency, and inclusivity.

## Key Takeaways

- Co-governance should prioritize authentic power-sharing, with communities actively involved in decision-making, not just heard.
- The city government's lack of coordination and responsiveness needs to be improved with effective communication and follow-through on issues raised.
- Equity and inclusion must be central to co-governance processes to ensure all communities, especially marginalized ones, are actively engaged in decision-making.

# Conversation Highlights

- "Co-governance should mean addressing power imbalances and creating pathways for communities to not only voice their needs but actively participate in decision-making processes."
- "It's not enough to sit next to a decision-maker; we need to be decision-makers ourselves, with real accountability and transparency in the process."
- "The government says, 'We hear you,' but are they really listening? Co-governance needs to move beyond words and into actionable equity for the communities most impacted."



# 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 challenges in navigating bureaucratic systems, feeling disrespected by officials, and struggling with transparency and accountability

2

**"Neutral" ratings:** Noted limited success when navigating city resources or learning processes through personal effort

2

**"Excellent" ratings:** Shared positive experiences with city services

0

**"No Engagement" ratings:** No participants responses

# Understanding Your Experience

## Reflections

- City departments are not coordinated l one department often doesn't know what another is doing.
- Government offices often make residents feel like they are a bother when seeking assistance, treating them dismissively rather than addressing their needs.
- Difficult: A woman administrator spoke down to me when managing family properties, which led to frustration and a defensive response: "Look woman, I'm not stupid. I take care of my grandmother's stuff."
- Difficult: "The parking ticket system and the parking fines are a "setup. I'm confused over the process."
- Difficult: As a young person living in my first apartment, I was intimidated by a cop questioning my right to own two cars and questioning a sticker transfer.
- Difficult: FEMA approved only \$1,500 of a \$15,000 claim for people impacted by flooding, but there was no clear way to follow up for the remaining amount, adding that even their alderman was unsure.
- Neutral: Being treated with dignity and respect is essential for taxpayers to engage with government. I feel neutral about government interactions when this respect is afforded.
- Neutral: I reached out to my alderman's office regarding an ordinance inquiry. The response was delayed, confusing, and lacked adequate answers. I had to decipher the information on my own.

# Understanding Your Experience

## Reflections

- Excellent: As a high school camp counselor for the city, I had a positive experience - I was satisfied with the work I was able to do.
- Excellent: The city staff was friendly and helpful when there was a possum in my garage. Additionally, a senior group provided a new furnace for their grandmother.
- Difficult: The systems were created for profit and now we need to change to prioritize community needs and connectedness.
- Difficult: Rework job descriptions within government to reflect more equitable processes, similar to the reforms in the 1960s.
- Difficult: Current policies address inequities in a performative way but lack real accountability. There needs to be more meaningful change.
- Difficult: Racial parity cannot be achieved through surface-level changes. We need wealth redistribution based on need and to reject the idea of pursuing racial parity.
- Difficult: Billionaires will not help regular people. The systemic power imbalances need to be addressed.
- Difficult: The 16% who control everything are unlikely to give up their power, even though the conversation on change is ongoing.
- Neutral: The City needs to provide more transparent, accessible information rather than one-sided communications, lack of resources, and inadequate support at local meetings like the Alderman's Ward Night.

# 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

*Participants verbally shared or highlighted the following phrases from three definitions to build Chicago's definition of co-governance:*

- People who are most harmed by structural racism and economic systems are part of creating the solutions.
- *Co-creating solutions should be changed to creating. To address the inherent power dynamic take out the co*
- The decision-making table, side by side with decision-makers
- In service of equitable outcomes that correct disparities among, racial, economic, gender, and other groups

# How Do You Define Co-Governance?



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

- Co-governance should involve shared decision-making with communities actively engaged at every stage
- It is not enough to be at the decision-making table, side by side with decision-makers; there needs to be a measurable outcome attached.
- Intentionality
- Define what we mean by equity
- Funding organizers could change the balance of power
- Include questions on ballots by community
- Consciousness and connectedness to respect the person
- Provide information at city meetings and systems by sharing communication, resources, how processes work, etc.

