



COMMUNITY
MEETS
GOVERNANCE

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CO-GOVERNANCE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Location: Community Organizing & Family Issues

Date: November 30, 2024

Steering Committee

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Language: English



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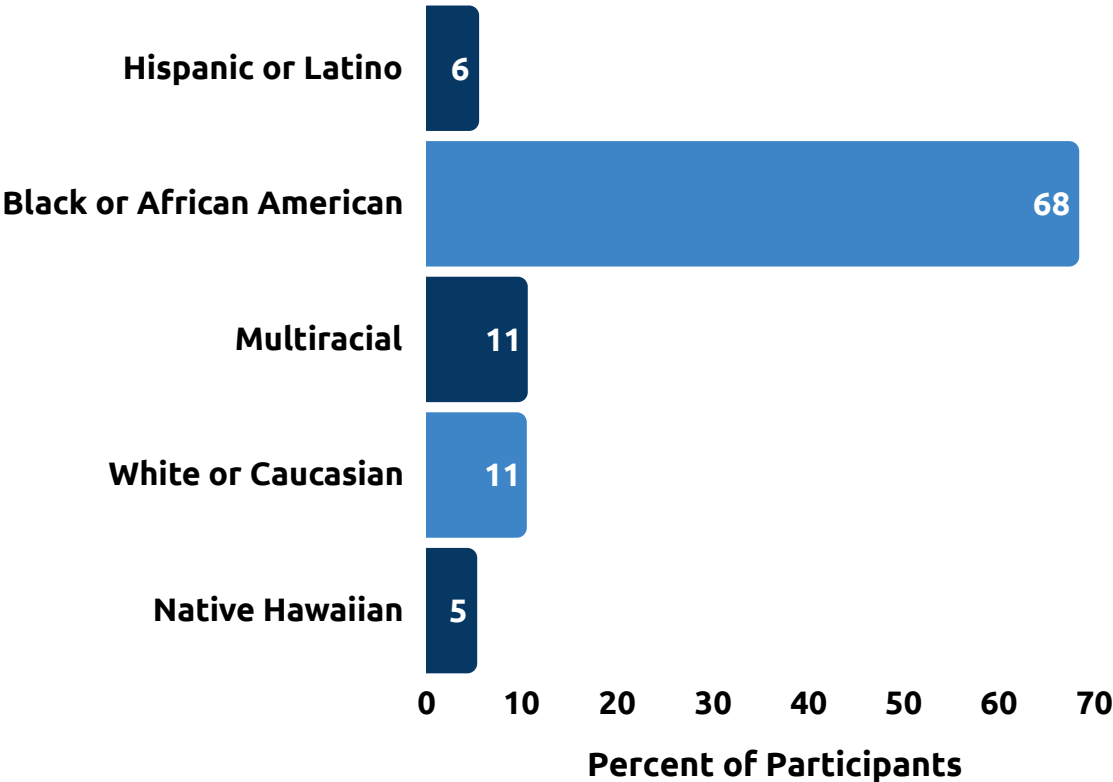
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Demographics

Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 19

Race/Ethnicity

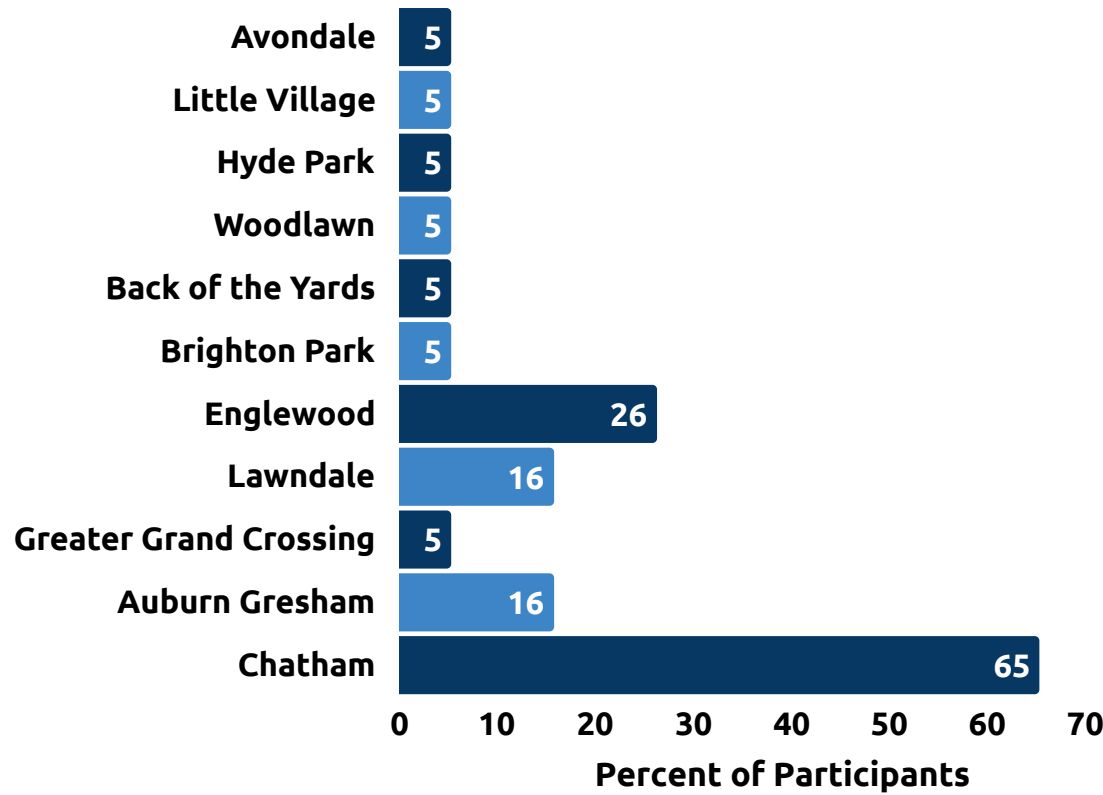


Demographics

Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 19

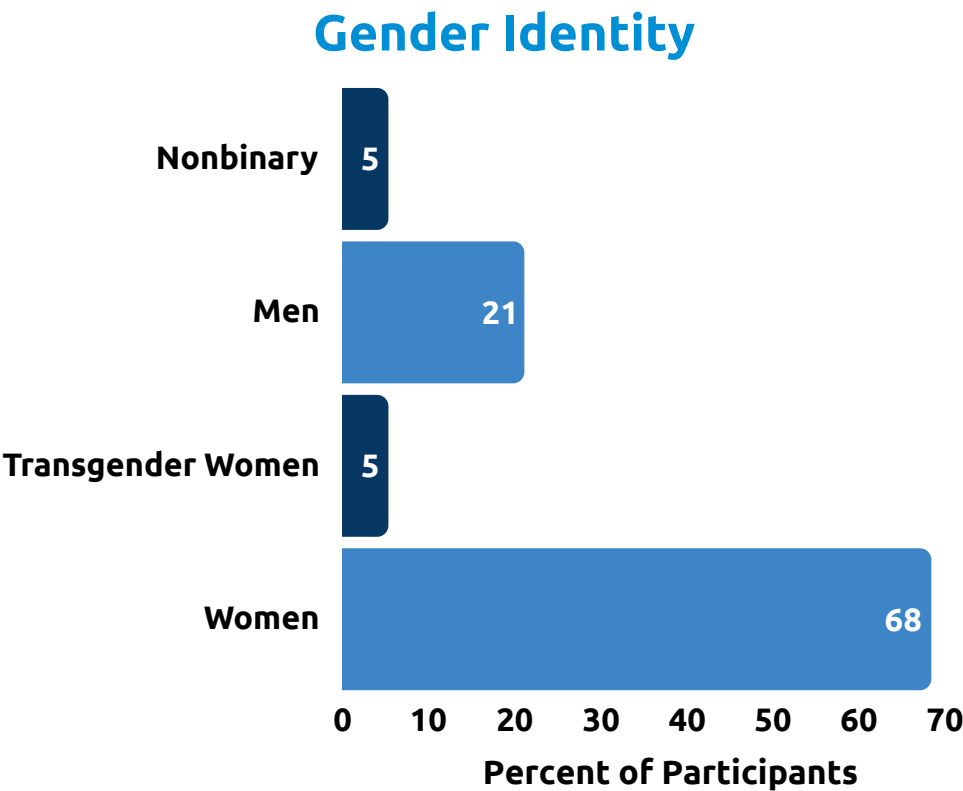
Neighborhoods



Demographics

Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 19

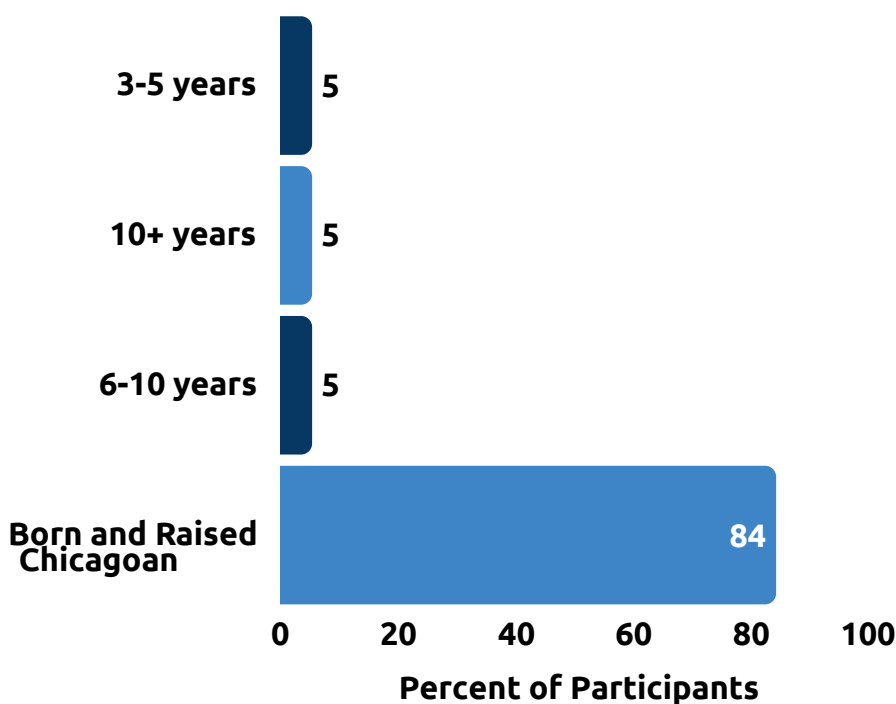


Demographics

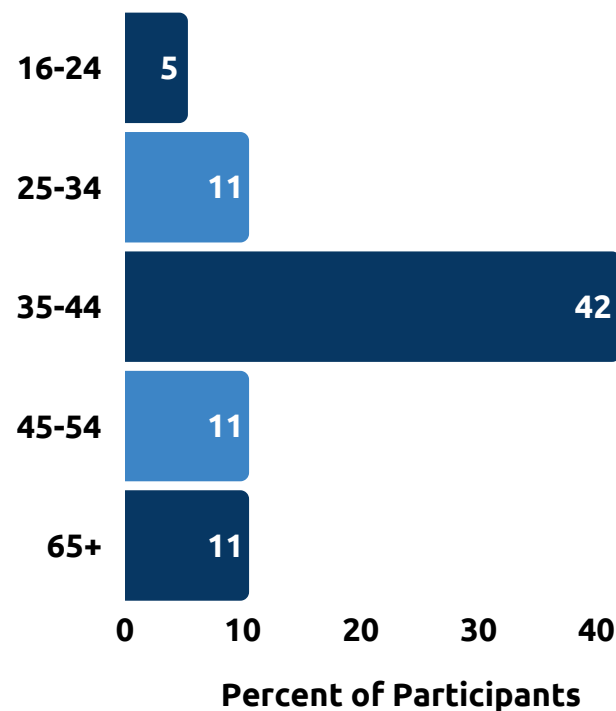
Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 19

How long have you lived in Chicago?



Age



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

- Clear, transparent communication and accessible resources should be centralized in one location to reduce confusion and inefficiencies.
- Neighborhood-specific councils or precinct captains can act as direct liaisons between residents and government.
- Involve young people in civic processes to build trust and develop future leaders.

Conversation Highlights

- "Co-governance should mean real power-sharing, where communities are not just heard but actively involved in making decisions.
- Community councils or precinct captains should act as bridges between residents and government—people who truly understand local needs.
- Transparency and accountability are essential—co-governance won't work if government doesn't follow through on promises and build trust."



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

8

"Difficult" ratings: Frequently faced unresponsive aldermanic offices, confusing processes, and inaccessible resources.

9

"Neutral" ratings: Limited successes when persistently following up with government services like 311.

4

"Excellent" ratings: Successfully navigated government processes with learned skills.

0

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

Understanding Your Experience

Reflections

- The lack of coordination among city departments is frustrating - often times one department doesn't know what another is doing.
- Accessing resources is challenging due to being directed to multiple locations without clear guidance on resolving issues.
- Campaign promises often fail to materialize, leaving communities underserved and distrustful.
- Inconsistent follow-up after engaging with government offices leads to feelings of being ignored.

Participants also shared the following reflections in their participant handouts:

- **Difficult:** Garbage and water bills are combined and confusing, with no resolution even after reaching out multiple times.
- **Difficult:** Streets and sanitation issues remain unresolved, such as standing water on blocks.
- **Difficult:** Lack of respect and empathy from city representatives when raising safety concerns.
- **Excellent:** "Working with the city taught me how to navigate apartment problems effectively."

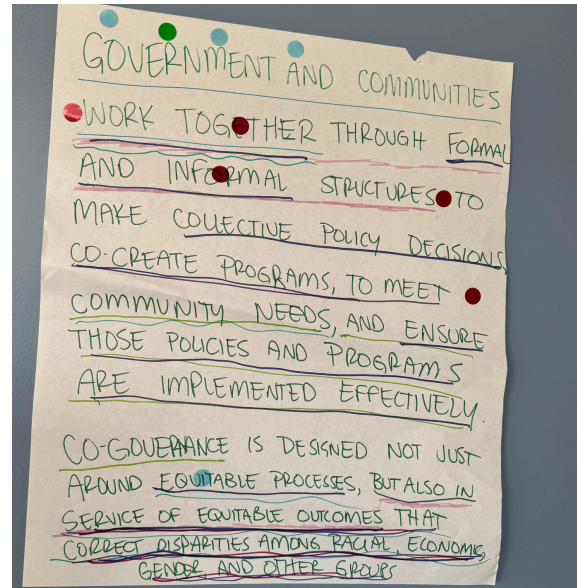
How Do You Define Co-Governance?



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

- Co-creation
- Engagement
- *Follow-through**
- *Intergenerational**
- Communication
- Inclusiveness
- Structural racism
- Government is actively working with communities to design and implement policies
- Community members aren't only asked for their input, but are at the decision-making table
- Decision makers shaping legislation and policy
- People who are most harmed by structural racism and our economic system are part of co-creating the solutions.
- Government and communities work together through formal and informal structures to make collective policy decisions, co-create programs to meet community needs, and ensure those policies and programs are implemented effectively.
- Equitable processes, but also 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:

Reflections

- We want to be at the table during decision-making, not merely consulted before or after.
- Simplified communication is preferred - "It should be simple enough for my 11-year-old to understand."
- Engagement must be early and frequent engagement.
- Develop community advisory councils or neighborhood committees to act as local representatives.
- Establish clear communication channels such as regular town halls, newsletters, and online updates.
- Include youth leadership programs to ensure generational continuity and build trust.
- Provide language translation and cultural competency training for government staff to remove barriers.
- Ensure transparency through public community directories and real-time tracking of government actions.
- Create clear accountability structures, such as regular progress reports and public audits of projects.
- Prioritize equity by prioritizing resources to historically underfunded or underserved communities.

