Stronger, more equitable neighborhoods for a stronger Chicago region
Neighborhoods, history and culture are maintained. Life isn’t just a zip code lottery. Opportunities and outcomes become more equitable. The Solution—Transform Neighborhoods from the Inside Out

At United Way, we believe the solution is to transform neighborhoods from the inside out by working alongside local neighborhood leaders to help identify community priorities and create a resident-driven neighborhood strategy. This place-based approach is led by the Community Quarterback, a role that helps bring to the table all of the people, resources, and ideas needed to execute community plans.

This “inside-out” neighborhood-led transformation is the key to maintaining the history and culture of neighborhoods while accelerating a regional recovery strategy that builds equal opportunities and access regardless of zip code.

Challenges We Face

THE DEATH GAP
Chicago life expectancies vary from 69 to 81 depending on neighborhood.

MAKING ENDS MEET
1 in 3 families in our region struggle to make ends meet and 20% of families live at such a low income level they qualify for federal benefits.

LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES
Ongoing disinvestment in low-income neighborhoods has negatively impacted access to opportunities for our Black and Brown Neighbors.

POPULATION LOSS
Chicago population dropped by 6% since 2000. In the lowest-income neighborhoods, that loss was between 17 and 26%.

The United Way Difference

Here is the unique value, resources, and vision that comes to life when you are part of the greater Neighborhood Network effort.

NO NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK

People with great energy and ideas are working in silos.

Work is duplicated; resources uneven.

Funding is spotty and unreliable; interrupts progress.

Outside organizations work in a top-down approach.

Innovation and ROI isn’t recognized or scaled.

Promising community leaders aren’t consistently identified or developed.

Action plans aren’t connected to greater Chicago vision.

Measurement is disconnected and inconsistent.

UNITED WAY NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK

Resident-led coalitions ensure agency leaders talk and coordinate their work.

Maximizes valuable resources; minimizes duplication.

Infuses steady and ongoing capital (from donors like you!) to build sustainable solutions.

Strategies and approaches are community-led.

Provides best practice training and scaling.

Offers capacity building, leadership development, and networking for community leaders.

Works with coalitions to develop bold goals and action plans—region-wide lens.

Creates shared planning and measurement.

JOIN US!
The United Way Neighborhood Network model provides the best structure to support our neighbors. Together, we can build back neighborhoods stronger and more equitably.

Direct your United Way gift to “Neighborhood Networks” to be a part of this critical strategy.

Learn more at LIVEUNITEDchicago.org/neighborhood-networks

Neighborhood Networks serve as a rapid response hub providing direct COVID-19 relief and aid through cash assistance, food distribution/pantry, and PPE supplies for residents. They were able to quickly and efficiently disburse exactly what neighbors needed when they needed it as a direct result of the infrastructure, relationships, and trust built through the Neighborhood strategy.

“...As part of the United Way Neighborhood Network Initiative, we were able to quickly mobilize and distribute critical basic needs items to our neighbors who were so negatively impacted by COVID-19.”

—Carlos Nelson, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation (GAGDC)
We are working alongside our 10 Neighborhood Network partners to build back a stronger, more equitable Chicago region.