Our Neighborhood

The Blue Island/Robbins Neighborhood Network combines two neighborhoods located about 15 miles south of downtown Chicago in the south-southwest suburban region. The neighborhoods look very different at first glance, but they share a geographic border and a population that has significant need for services, especially around food insecurity. The Network was formed in 2016 in partnership with its lead community partner, Metropolitan Family Services.

Blue Island was established in the 1830s as a way station for travelers. By the mid-19th century, European immigrants began settling in the area in part due to its proximity to stable industrial and railroad jobs. African Americans seeking these same opportunities were excluded from Blue Island, so they incorporated the neighboring village of Robbins in 1917. Robbins is one of the oldest majority-Black municipalities in the United States. The village was also home to the country's first Black-owned airport in the 1930s, Robbins Airport, used as a training ground for the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II.

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES: A DUAL APPROACH IN BLUE ISLAND/ROBBINS

- Food
- Housing Assistance
- Individual Health and Wellness
- Increase Economic Opportunity
- Decrease Health Disparities
- Eliminate Food Insecurity

Responding to Immediate Basic Needs of Blue Island/Robbins Residents

Building Neighborhood Systems Stronger and More Equitably in Blue Island/Robbins

LEAD AGENCY
Metropolitan Family Services

COMMUNITY VISION
Improving outcomes for families by addressing food insecurity and other basic needs
Neighborhood Current Day Snapshot

TOTAL POPULATION
27,187

INCOME
Median Household Income ..................... $49,220
Rate of Home Ownership .............. 51.4%
Poverty Rate .................. 21.5%

EDUCATION
Total Schools .................. 10
Students Enrolled ........... 4,161
Student Transfer Rate .... 10.8%
Adults with High School Diploma ... 77.9%
Adults with College Degree ........ 16.7%

EMLOYMENT
Unemployment Rate .... 12.5%
Top 5 Employment Sectors
Healthcare .................. 25.8%
Education .................. 15.6%
Administration ............ 14%
Manufacturing ............. 8.1%
Accommodation & Food Service .......... 7.5%

Neighborhood Network in Action

The Blue Island/Robbins Neighborhood Network is committed to creating a more vibrant community for every resident by improving household incomes, access to quality health care, and access to healthy foods.

- Blue Island/Robbins is actively promoting comprehensive health services through a collaborative of healthcare providers and partners.
- The Network is working to bring a grocery store to the area to increase the overall health and livability of Blue Island/Robbins communities.

COALITION HIGHLIGHTS

Expanded their food giveaway services to respond to the increased need of residents in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and racial unrest.

Local food pantry Blue Cap has increased its services during the pandemic, including providing PPE and other vital items residents needed.

Received family initiative grant, which has provided assistance to 50 families in the Blue Island/Robbins neighborhood.

Expanded investment in the Network through Cook County’s Transforming Places Program and with support from Nicor Gas Foundation

JOIN US! Together, we can build neighborhoods like Blue Island/Robbins 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