The Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative Neighborhood Network launched in 2022 and is a combination of two communities on Chicago’s West Side: East Garfield Park and West Garfield Park, both named for the physical park space in the community. Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative (GPRWC) serves as the “community quarterback” for the Neighborhood Network with an overarching commitment to assuring community engagement and voice. GPRWC brings together coalition partners and community members to implement a collective vision of improving quality of life and wellness for residents who have faced systemic disinvestment in their communities.

Originally called Central Park, Garfield Park was largely settled by Irish and German railroad workers. The park was renamed in honor of President James A. Garfield, and the community grew in the early 1900s due in large part to the opening of the Garfield Park Conservatory, the Lake Street El station, and commercial development. However, the construction of the Eisenhower Expressway in the late 1950s displaced many residents. Following Dr. King’s assassination and the subsequent anger and frustration with civic leaders and unjust systems, many businesses and residents left the neighborhood. In recent years, though, through the leadership of community residents and stakeholders, there is hope for a brighter future and GPRWC is working to build that future.

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH IN GARFIELD PARK

- Food
- Housing Assistance
- Individual Health and Wellness
- Violence Prevention

Responding to Immediate Needs of Garfield Park Residents

Building Stronger and More Equitable Neighborhood Systems And Resources in Garfield Park

- Resident-Driven Planning
- Economic Development
- Community Health
- Safe Spaces and Physical Improvements
Neighborhood Network in Action

In just a few years, Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative has launched numerous exciting initiatives toward its vision. Its many projects include:

- Developing the Sankofa Wellness Village, which will bring a health and wellness center, arts and advocacy education center, entrepreneurship hub, and community grocer to West Garfield Park, all with the input of community.
- Creating a comprehensive, resident-driven Quality-of-Life Plan that will form the basis for short-term and long-term projects to support a healthy Garfield Park.
- Creating a business development plan for the Madison and Pulaski Street Corridor, which will be implemented over time.
- Promoting and reinforcing healthy behavior change to enhance community health and individual wellness via the Rite To Wellness campaign.

GPRWC’s work is grounded in Black Culture Wellness, the principle that respect for the cultural values, practices, and experiences of the people of Garfield Park will contribute to their long-term health and well-being.

JOIN US! Together, we can build neighborhoods like Garfield Park 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