Our Neighborhood

The West Chicago Neighborhood Network was launched in 2014, in partnership with lead agency partner WeGo Together for Kids. West Chicago is a suburban community located 35 miles west of the city of Chicago. Nestled between numerous wealthy communities, including Wheaton and Naperville, the suburban setting creates a variety of barriers, such as limited access to public transportation and limited reliability and access to affordable housing and healthy food.

Founded in 1849, West Chicago was the first Illinois community built for travelers and rail workers. West Chicago has a long-standing history of immigrants settling in the community and has seen consistent growth since its founding. Over the past few decades, many Latiné families have settled in West Chicago, and in recent years the community has become home to resettled refugees from around the world. To this day, West Chicago remains an industrial hub with many jobs in the manufacturing sector; however, more than one-third of the population remains low income.

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES: A DUAL APPROACH IN WEST CHICAGO

- Food
- Essential Household Items
- Utility Assistance
- Individual Health and Wellness

Responding to Immediate Basic Needs of West Chicago Residents

Building Neighborhood Systems Stronger and More Equitably in West Chicago

LEAD AGENCY
WeGo Together for Kids

COMMUNITY VISION
Enhance the health, safety, and well-being of children and families to reach their full potential
Neighborhood Current Day Snapshot

**TOTAL POPULATION**
25,614

**INCOME**
Median Household Income .................... $83,379
Rate of Home Ownership ................. 70.8%
Poverty Rate ............................. 11.3%

**EDUCATION**
Total Schools ......................... 12
Students Enrolled ............... 6,053
Student Transfer Rate .......... 5.5%
Percentage of Homeless Students ... 3.2%
Adults with High School Diploma ... 80.4%
Adults with College Degree .......... 31%

**EMPLOYMENT**
Unemployment Rate ......... 10.4%
Top 5 Employment Sectors
- Manufacturing ................... 26.0%
- Administration .................. 13.6%
- Construction .................... 11.1%
- Professional ..................... 9.6%
- Wholesale ........................ 9.1%

**DEMOGRAPHICS**
- Latiné .......................... 48.9%
- White ......................... 35.7%
- Asian ......................... 8.5%
- Black .......................... 3.5%
- Other ......................... 3.4%

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Neighborhood Network in Action

With a coalition of 42 Network partners, six family liaisons, three community mental health clinicians, and six working groups, the West Chicago Neighborhood Network’s goal is to support and enhance the health, safety, and well-being of children and families through a collaborative, coordinated, and comprehensive approach from West Chicago schools and community. The Neighborhood Network’s six working groups have created a Common Agenda that includes:

- Children and families have access to and the opportunity for continual learning. (Academic Achievement)
- Community partnerships help families and children, 0-8 years old, build strong relationships through access to play and learning opportunities. (Early Childhood)
- Families will pursue and continue to improve their physical health and emotional well-being (Youth and Family Health); have a sense of belonging and are informed and invested in building their community (Community Engagement); and are economically stable (Stable Families).
- Schools and community are aware of and prepared for emergencies. (Emergency Preparedness)

JOIN US! Together, we can build neighborhoods like West Chicago 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

COALITION HIGHLIGHTS

The West Chicago Early Childhood Collaboration was reinstated with the Birth-5 Community School Coordinator as the facilitator. Joie Frankovich and Marjory Lewe-Brady’s article, “Achieving Collective Impact: Community School Strategies for a Suburban Environment,” which highlights WeGo Together’s work, was published in Children & Schools Journal. An average of 45 individuals attend monthly partnership meetings in support of WeGo Together’s strategies.

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