WE WILL CHICAGO

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Public Health + Safety Meeting #11

March 22, 2022, 06:00PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Jonah S. Nink

ATTENDEES

- Romina Castillo
- Sheri Cohen
- Victoria Barrett
- Kate McMahon
- Emily Harwell
- Nesha Breashears

- Elias Kassa
- Brianna Lawrence
- Katelyn Johnson
- Ted Wyatt
- Chloe Gurin-Sands

- Wesley Epplin

MEETING GOAL

Discuss how racial and social inequity can impact public health and local democracy, and then use that discussion as a framework to build policy.

WHERE WE ARE

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Step 1
We Are
Setting the Stage

★

Step 2
We Have and Need
Develop A Policy Toolkit

★

Step 3
We Will
Set Policy Framework

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 | Issues such as voter turnout and public health, although they seem disparate, are intertwined. It's interesting to watch the group discussion on how these issues are related.

2 | The pillar team is creating policy that will spur more local government involvement.

3 | Epplin's presentation provided useful context for many of the health issues discussed in the pillar meeting such as life expectancy and air pollution.

"I attended a community meeting in Woodlawn right before the pandemic [and] many Black/Brown community members were not present. Instead, U of C students and staff and white community members who did not make up the demographic of the community were present and making decisions regarding resources and new development in Woodlawn. It was hard experiencing this."

Brianna Lawrence | Wood Family Foundation, Director of Development & External Affairs

"We need to consider the role inequity plays in who knows about and who can participate in these [community] meetings."

Wesley Epplin | Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, Policy Director

"The city has seen [the policies], and there have been multiple people looking, and multiple groups of people at different levels, our group, the city, looking at the content, refining it and taking it to the next step."

Romina Castillo | MUSE Community & Design, Senior Associate

"I guess I spend a lot of time thinking about how to prioritize democracy, in particular around voting access as well."

Katelyn Johnson | BlackRoots Alliance, Executive Director

"I appreciate that we are using terminology like 'birthing parents,' but I think we may also be excluding other caregivers/guardians of children who would also benefit from help."

Sophie Chishty | Ginkgo Planning & Design, Intern

- Romina Castillo welcomes pillar team members and gives an overview of the meeting's agenda.

- Wesley Epplin gives a presentation on pillar metrics related to Goal #5 and Goal #6

    o To recap, Goal #5 is: *Use environmental justice principles to promote equity.*

    o A city heat map showed that there is a higher concentration of particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns per cubic meter of air throughout the city, but specifically on the South and West Sides.

    o Non-Hispanic Black Chicagoans experienced the highest rate of asthma-related ER visits in 2017. There were over 180 visits per 10,000 population.

    o Goal #6: *Implement a racial justice approach to government.*

    o A City Bureau heat map showed that voter turnout for the 2019 municipal runoff was 33%, and the 2019 municipal general was 35%.

    o 24.5% of adults who attended a neighborhood meeting were non-Hispanic white people.

    o Epplin presented a heat map of computer ownership in households throughout Chicago. South and West Side neighborhoods have a very low rate of computer ownership per household, according to the map.

    o Epplin added that racialized economic segregation is directly linked to health inequities.

    o A graph shows a 9.1-year life expectancy gap between non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic Black people.

- The pillar has a short discussion on places of interest for policy following the presentation.

    o Brianna Lawrence notes that phone coverage in some neighborhoods on the West and South Sides such as Englewood can range from unreliable to nonexistent.

    o Multiple members discuss the importance of voter turnout and participation in local community meetings.

    o Todd Wyatt notes the shift away from public safety discussion within pillar teams. Castillo responds that the team needs to be more thoughtful about public safety policy and that the city has acknowledged the lack of safety experts and professionals involved on the pillar team.

- Meeting attendees are divided into two breakout groups to discuss policy for Guiding Question #5 and #6.

    o Group A Guiding Question: How can we achieve environmental justice through equitable decision-making from planners, developers, and communities?

- - Sophie Chishty reminds the group that the city asked them to be as specific as possible when referring to specific groups, especially for communities of color.
    - Group B Guiding Question: How can we institutionalize a racial justice approach in all decision-making for legislative change with an emphasis on accountability from officials?
      - Members emphasize the importance of workforce development for race equity in city government.
      - Sheri Cohen notes that Objective #2 and Objective #5 have very similar language and application.
        - Objective #2: Make all assessments of policies, programs, and projects publicly available.
        - Objective #5: Institutionalize a public truth, reconciliation, and reparations process to establish shared truth and history, as well as racial justice.

- The pillar discusses feedback received on policies generated for Goal #1 and Goal #2. Feedback is given via a survey, and policies are flagged based on what kinds of feedback was received.
  - Pillar members choose which policies to discuss on each objective through the use of a MENTI poll.

- Goal #1 Ensure equitable, affordable healthcare services for all Chicagoans.

- Objective 1.1 A: "Expand funding and training, including anti-racism and anti-bias education, for community health worker programs working with low-income/high-hardship communities for more Chicagoans to have access to care and education about city/state/federal services."
  - Members note that the language of this policy is too vague, and does not clearly outline funding and training parameters.
  - "We were trying to pack so much in there," says Castillo.

- Objective 1.2 C: "Develop policies and fund new resources and programming to support birthing parents during pregnancy and in the early years of life."
  - Chloe Gurin-Sands speaks on all of the policies generated so far, "One thing that I feel like is missing from all of [the policies], which is why I didn't vote [in the MENTI poll] is just getting a little more specific on the 'who is doing it' part and I feel like that language is just missing from all of them."
  - Members request that 1.1 C should clarify the statement "early years of life".
  - Types of caregivers, such as grandparents, should also be specified.

- More policies were up for discussion, but the pillar ran out of time to discuss each policy thoroughly. The last minutes of the meeting are spent discussing the process of reviewing policy feedback.

- Brianna Lawrence notes that much of the feedback is based around the language of policies. She asks if there is a way that future policymaking can have an emphasis on readability.

RESOURCES

ELEVATED CHICAGO'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Elevated Chicago is an innovative collaboration of community-based and region-wide organizations working in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors who have come together to create a more racially equitable city and region.

FACILITATING POWER'S SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP
This method assesses current community engagement efforts and sets goals for how efforts can advance along the spectrum toward greater community ownership.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue to look at policy feedback that was missed at the meeting.

- Add new ideas for policy refinement when possible.