



UI Health

Office of Community Engagement and
Neighborhood Health Partnerships



The Community
Research Council 2022

Food and Housing Insecurity



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first UIC Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships (OCEAN-HP) Research Council report addressing food and housing inequity in Chicago. However, before I officially invite you to examine this report and learn more about the powerful information the Research Committee has gathered regarding food and housing inequity, I want to thank the contributors and writers of this report. Thanks to the research council co-chairs, Dr. Angela Odoms-Young, Rachelle Paul-Brutus, Deborah Williams-Thurmond, and our Healthy Cities Coordinator (HCC), Sabrina Nelson, for your hard work and dedication in bringing this report to fruition. In addition, thanks to all the individuals who participated in the surveys and meetings where this information was collected. Without each of you, none of this would be possible.

Friends, as we look at the devastation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial unrest, we continue to experience due to the unfortunate murder of George Floyd (and sadly, many others before and since Mr. Floyd). Those of us who struggle to right the wrongs and injustices know that what this report reveals will be no surprise. However, we encourage you to read this report and absorb that our work must continue, and our voices must be heard. The lives reflected in this document are real people. They are our neighbors, our friends, and our families.

This document includes the findings of three intense convenings of many Chicago individuals interested in addressing inequities and injustices. Further, this report offers key learnings, recommendations, and a call to action on how we can create a new Chicago, using research in partnership with the community to make change happen!

Food and housing are key factors contributing to a person's overall health and well-being. We can no longer ignore that communities of color continue to experience extensive gaps in addressing these contributing factors to our determinants of health. This report reveals the challenges and barriers for communities of color pre-Covid and exasperated since the Covid pandemic. Health and racial inequity should not be the status quo. We should not be happy that people are hungry and have no safe place to live. A person's zip code should not dictate how healthy they will be or their potential to live a full and long life. Yet, we know in Chicago that this is not the case. This report will provide recommendations on how we can begin to change the story, and the outcomes, for individuals and communities most affected by these disparities. Join us in the work of "being the change we want to see in the world" (Mahatma Gandhi).

We thank you for your interest and time in supporting us and the work we continue to do by being the bridge into the community and working to address the needs of our families and our city.

Should you have questions and/or suggestions, please email Sabrina Nelson, HCC Coordinator, at sabrina1@uic.edu.

Thank you, and Be Well

Sincerely,

Angela M. Ellison

Angela M. Ellison, MS. Ed
Senior Director

UIC Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships (OCEAN-HP)

Executive Summary

On May 25, 2020, amid the backdrop of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin sparked worldwide protests and raised awareness about the deep history of systemic racism and other forms of structural oppression in the lives of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). In Chicago, the effects of racial inequities run deep and contribute significantly to vast racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in physical, mental, and social well-being.

Food and housing are basic needs and essential for individuals and families to lead an active and healthy life. In Chicago, people face significant barriers to accessing affordable housing and nourishing food options. However, this burden is not shared equally across all communities but rooted in a long history of racial and economic segregation that has limited access to resources on the City's West and South sides. Housing instability and food insecurity remain critical concerns for many low-income communities.

The inequitable economic and health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the long-standing affordable housing crisis for low-income families and individuals, raising serious questions about how we change the conditions in the United States. Similarly, the pandemic made it harder for Black and Latine/x families to afford enough food to feed their families, exacerbating long-standing health inequities that have persisted over several decades.

In 2021, the University of Illinois at Chicago Office of Community Engagement & Neighborhood Health Partnerships Community Research Council, in collaboration with multiple communities, civic, and academic partners, launched an effort to gain a more in-depth understanding of gaps and opportunities related **to housing instability and food insecurity in Chicago**. The Council hosted critical conversations throughout the city to develop a community-driven research agenda to capture community perspectives around key issues. This report presents findings from a series of three convenings exploring assets, needs, and research/evaluation questions from a community lens, with a critical focus on serving as a catalyst for the development of future community/academic evaluations and/or partnerships. Community residents, community-based organizations, academic institutions, public health organizations, nonprofits, and city officials were invited to all three convenings. Each meeting had between 70-85 participants with over 100 registrants and was spread across seven local universities and over 70 organizations.

The goal of the first meeting on March 23, 2021, was to identify past and current initiatives, community assets, and gaps related to food and housing insecurity in Chicago. Genny Turner, Director of Health Equity and Strategic Partnerships in the Chicago Department of Public Health, gave a high-level overview of Healthy Chicago 2025, the current version of the City's community health improvement plan. She highlighted the themes and initiatives tied to the plan with particular attention to food access and housing inequities. The second meeting on June 8, 2021, focused on generating culturally responsive research and evaluation questions for the community research plan aligned with the gaps and concerns identified during the first meeting. The final meeting was held on October 18, 2021, and its goal was to prioritize the research questions and identify potential partnerships. A cross-cutting theme for the meeting was to emphasize the importance of community members, researchers, and other partners working together.

Key Findings:

Research Opportunities and Gaps related to food insecurity (Table 1) and housing instability (Table X) are summarized in the tables below.

Recommendations:

With these priority research questions identified, the Research Council encourages collaborative research projects and partnerships between research professionals and community members interested in similar priorities. The Council hopes that this work will impact, influence, and guide the work of future and current researchers and encourage connections between them and appropriate community-based organizations that are already doing work with the priority population.

We also hope that through this work, we can identify and address any institutional barriers and community concerns that constrain community-based participatory research and influence future policy and advocacy work. To support these aims, the Council provides the following recommendations based on its 2021 convenings:

- Provide seed grant funding to support community-academic research projects, initially prioritizing those that address the research questions identified through the Council's convenings described in this report.
- Academic centers, foundations, city governments, and others must prioritize investment in new community-academic research partnerships through specially designed seed grants that support partnership development and exploration of potential projects that aim to confront food and housing insecurity from a community-driven approach.
- Establish a dedicated platform (e.g., website) and processes to facilitate partnerships between researchers and community organizations with shared interests in Chicago.
- Create a clearinghouse for community-based organizations and advocates to connect with Chicago area researchers who study food and housing insecurity and vice-versa.
- Create a community-engaged resource repository that is continuously updated and includes resources that support community-research partnerships for food and housing. Organize resources in a user-friendly, accessible format containing information on current partnerships and projects, funding opportunities, etc. that is inter-institutional.
- Establish and implement processes (e.g., incubator sessions, technical assistance) to support the development of sustainable and high-impact partnerships between researchers and community organizations that become connected through the clearinghouse.
- Provide fiscal resources for community research infrastructure to support the implementation of the above-described recommendations. These resources should be sufficient to support necessary development work (e.g., website), ongoing staffing and programming, and other costs (e.g., seed funds) to ensure recommendations materialize and activities/resources are sustained over time.
- A convening of public and private/philanthropic funders should be held to identify opportunities for collaborative approaches to funding for optimal efficiency and sustainability.

Call to Action

Below are a few suggestions for the Chicagoland research community to leverage and, most importantly, share its power, resources, and expertise to help solve the quality-of-life alternating realities of wide-spread food and housing insecurity in our area. These points, coupled with the above recommendations, are hoped to be utilized as a touchpoint for community-academic research team engagement across the area.

1. Champion a “community in all things” approach. Community leadership and collaboration are essential to building sustainable solutions that call out root causes of food and housing insecurity in historically disenfranchised communities and aim to shift inequitable power dynamics.
 - A. Conduct a community needs assessment and an asset/capacity inventory to assess existing neighborhood and community resources supporting food and housing security. Continuously reassess neighborhood-level food and housing security needs.
 - B. Investigate opportunities to replicate actual community-driven developments in other regions of the country that can be replicated in the Chicago area.
2. Academic research centers must advocate for more wide-spread adoption and integration of community-engaged and co-led research development, design, implementation, and dissemination. The power inequities endemic in the current research enterprise must be dismantled to ensure communities have access and the ability to elicit substantive change.
3. Highlight, leverage, and generously fund solutions that already exist in communities and are supported by or align with research evidence and actively work to break down silos that impede the building of collective resources.
4. Use both existing and forthcoming research on the priority questions (and others as they are identified) to influence short-, mid-, and long-term policy and advocacy work, such as:
 - A. Identify all unenforced housing security ordinances and municipal policies and assign a task force consisting of community members, policy makers, and other experts to develop a strategic plan to execute, the outcomes of which can be evaluated by researchers.
 - B. Identify and rectify existing restrictions in the services and programs available to unstably housed folks.
 - C. Leverage existing research-supported/aligned legislation and advocacy information to protect tenants’ and homeowners’ rights.
 - D. Advocate with research support to change inequitable policies already in place.

In conclusion, the Research Council hopes that the readers of this report will incorporate the various findings and community perspectives into future collaborative research projects as well as advocacy opportunities for policy and systems change.

The Research Council is open to continuing this conversation.

Anyone interested in continuing this work with the Research Council or interested in providing feedback, please contact Sabrina Nelson at sabrina1@uic.edu or (312) 355-1844.

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The Community Research Council

A Research Agenda on Food and Housing Insecurity in Chicago

Introduction

Food and housing are basic needs and essential for individuals and families to lead an active and healthy life. In Chicago, people face significant barriers to accessing affordable housing and healthy food options. However, this burden is not shared equally across all communities. Still, it is rooted in a long history of racial and economic segregation that has limited access to resources on the City's West and South sides. Consequently, in 2021, the University of Illinois at Chicago's Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnership Community Research Council, in collaboration with multiple communities, civic, and academic partners, launched an effort to develop a community-driven research agenda to capture community perspectives about the key drivers of food and housing insecurity in Chicago and support critical conversations throughout the city. Housing instability and food insecurity remain crucial concerns for many low-income communities. The pandemic has brought to light the long-standing affordable housing crisis for low-income families and individuals, raising serious questions about how we change the conditions in the United States. Similarly, the pandemic made it harder for Black and Latine/x families to afford enough food to feed their families, exacerbating long-standing health inequities that have persisted over several decades.

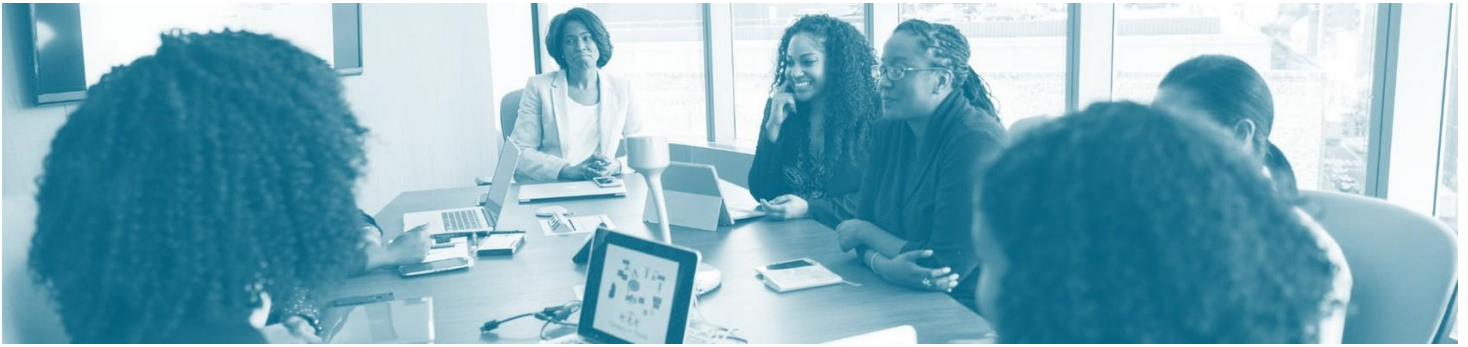
This report presents findings from a series of three convenings to inform the development of a research agenda. The convenings focused on exploring assets, needs, and research/evaluation questions from a community lens, with a critical focus on serving as a catalyst for the development of community/academic evaluation and partnership. The Research Council encourages collaborative research projects and collaborations between researchers and community members interested in similar priorities with community-based participatory research strategies.

The Research Council hopes that this work impacts, influences, and guides the outcome of future and current researchers and encourages connections between them and appropriate community-based organizations that are already doing work with the priority populations.

This report will serve as a real-time tool to help community members, advocacy groups, research entities, and decision-makers by providing a blueprint for research that many organizations may not have the capacity to create. We also hope that through this work, we can identify and address any institutional barriers and community concerns that constrain community-based participatory research and influence future policy and advocacy work. We recognize that community leadership and collaboration are essential to building sustainable solutions that address the root causes of food and housing insecurity.

Background on the Community Research Council

In 2005, the Great Cities Institute organized three research clusters to focus on research and issues of importance to the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) related to its role in the Chicago community. Under the direction of the late Dr. Cynthia Barnes-Boyd, the Healthy City Research Cluster was officially launched in 2006 as one of the clusters. The Healthy City Collaborative (HCC) was renamed in a consensus-building process.



The change in name reflects the commitment of the Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships (OCEAN-HP), which was formerly named Neighborhood Initiatives, to engage all partners in a collaborative process to guide relevant research through the stages of planning, community engagement, action synthesis of results, translation, and practical application. One of the first activities of HCC resulted in the development of the partnership's principles (see Appendix B), which are aligned with the principles of community-based research.

The HCC is an essential vehicle through which UIC researchers, community members and partners, and students learn about the resources and needs of Chicago communities, make connections to conduct responsive research, and disseminate research findings. More importantly, OCEAN-HP's focus on capacity building prepares community partners to utilize this information and generate new research questions.

Angela Ellison, the Senior Executive Director of OCEAN-HP, received an ask from Dean Giles, UIC School of Public Health, to convene a Community Research Council of community partners and research professionals to develop a community research agenda. The first meeting was held on January 31, 2019, focusing on the next steps in creating a community research agenda.

The next meeting took place on March 1, 2019. This meeting focused on introducing the Community Research Council with a different format for communicating between community partners and researchers/investigators and bringing to the research community's attention the crucial issues that need to be addressed in communities and their available resources. During the meeting, the group discussed the collaboration of internal researchers and external community partners' plans to develop the community-driven research agenda using a community-based participatory research approach. The goal is to have a community-led Community Research Council that empowers the community member-participants to lead the development and conduct research, including developing research questions and methods. UIC researchers and staff serve in the consultant capacity while communicating with community partners and providing necessary feedback on research topics and issues. The final decision-making would be at the community level.

Community members and academic institutions are tasked with developing and promoting a responsive research agenda encompassing the inter-related, individual, social, environmental, political, and economic contributors to health. In April 2020, a survey was sent out to actively engaged Council members and the general HCC listserv to gather feedback on the topics that the Research Council should focus on for the year. After dialogue around the respondents' feedback and other issues in the Chicago area, the Research Council selected housing and food security as critical areas for the 2021 Research Council meetings. In addition, to align Healthy Chicago 2025 priority areas with the work of the Research Council, the Chicago Department of Public Health's Office of Research collaborated with OCEAN-HP to prioritize developing a research agenda to address housing and food access in Black, Latine/x, and low-income Chicago neighborhoods.



The Community Research Council’s mission is to engage community members on how best to engage diverse populations in developing a community-driven research agenda and foster collaboration amongst community members and researchers interested in addressing health inequities.

The Community Research Council is charged with the following duties:

1. Work collaboratively and assist in the design and development of a community research agenda with the primary goal of impacting, influencing and guiding the work of future and current researchers.
2. Assist in the development of study proposals and study design and provide assistance to address adverse experiences associated with research involvement.
3. Help facilitate by connecting research teams with the appropriate community-based organizations, particularly those already working with the specific priority population.
4. Work collaboratively and assist with designing recruitment materials using innovative mixed method designs to explore and understand effective research capacity building.
5. Identify other community organizations and potential university partners for collaborative research projects.
6. Collaborate and communicate with groups, organizations, advisory boards, individuals, and key partners in the community to understand and identify community priorities.
7. Collaborate to address institutional barriers that constrain community-based participatory research.
8. Address community needs and restraints in the community-engaged and community-based research process.
9. Evaluate the effectiveness of projects in the community engagement process.
10. Foster co-learning, capacity building, and co-benefit of all partners.
11. Focus on local relevance and social determinants of health for involved communities.



Housing and Food Security

Housing instability and food insecurity remain critical concerns for many low-income communities. The pandemic has brought to light the long-standing affordable housing crisis for low-income families and individuals, raising serious questions about how we change the conditions in the United States. This includes discussing housing as infrastructure, critical to a healthy workforce, and looking at expanding housing assistance and types of accommodation linked to support services. Poor housing conditions are associated with a wide range of adverse health outcomes, including (but not limited to) respiratory infections, asthma, lead poisoning, injuries, and mental health illnesses.

Systemic racial segregation and the foreclosure crisis of the late 2000's created housing inequities that persist today. Chicago requires at least 119,000 additional affordable housing units to meet current needs. Almost one-third of households in the city spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs. Most of these households are in Black and Latine/x communities.

Sources: Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University, 2019;
US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018

Similarly, the pandemic made it harder for Black and Latine/x families to afford enough food to feed their families, exposing them to long-standing health challenges. There are almost a quarter-million Chicagoans who have limited food access. Low-income communities of color are less likely to have access to supermarkets and have a higher density of fast-food restaurants and other sources of unhealthy food, such as convenience stores. Many groups that have been historically marginalized and disproportionately affected are concentrated on the City's South Side, West Side, and outlying neighborhoods.

Source: Compendium p. 84, Dept. of Planning and USDA Food Access Research Atlas

Planning Committee

The Council is co-chaired by The University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), Habilitative Systems, Inc., and the Chicago Department of Public Health. The co-chairs are:

- Dr. Angela Odoms-Young, UIC Office of Community Engagement & Neighborhood Health Partnerships
- Rachelle Paul-Brutus, Chicago Department of Public Health
- Deborah Williams-Thurmond, Habilitative Systems, Inc

- The other Planning Committee Members are:
 - Emilio Carrasquillo, Spanish Coalition for Housing
 - Dr. David DuBois, UIC School of Public Health
 - Sydney Edmond, Alliance for Health Equity, Illinois Public Health Institute
 - Eva Hernandez, Healthcare Alternative Systems
 - Amena Karim, Unite Us Illinois, Feeding Chicago Families
 - Dr. Saria Lofton, UIC College of Nursing
 - Phyllis Logan, Universal Housing Solutions CDC
 - Sabrina Nelson, UIC Office of Community Engagement & Neighborhood Health Partnerships
 - Dr. Eleanor Rivera, UIC College of Nursing
 - Dr. Howard Rosing, Irwin W. Steans Center for Community-based Service, DePaul University
 - Ariel Thomas Sansing, Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities, Northwestern Medicine

Special thanks to the late Dr. Janet Smith who was co-director of the Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement at UIC.

Meetings

Having identified housing and food insecurity as priority areas, a series of three convenings was scheduled to discuss a research agenda that could inform and support community-driven approaches and solutions to address needs in these areas. Topics included evaluation, potential initiatives/projects supported by partnership development between community-based organizations and academic institutions, and research questions around housing instability and food insecurity. Community residents, community-based organizations, academic institutions, public health organizations, nonprofits, and city officials were invited to all three convenings.

A vital goal of this work was to have an equitable and inclusive engagement approach with the community throughout the development of the research agenda. This was to ensure that the community members affected by the selected topics could provide input and co-develop the community research agenda. The aim in doing so was to help amplify the community's voice in community-academic partnerships and to increase mutually beneficial outcomes through community-based participatory research.

Each meeting had 70-85 participants with over 100 registrations; participation was spread across seven local universities and over 70 organizations.

First Meeting

The goal of the first meeting on March 23, 2021, was to identify past and current initiatives, community assets, and gaps related to food and housing insecurity in Chicago. Genny Turner, Director of Health Equity and Strategic Partnerships in the Chicago Department of Public Health, gave a high-level overview of Healthy Chicago 2025, the current version of the City's community health improvement plan. She highlighted the themes and initiatives tied to the plan with particular attention to food access and housing inequities.

Attendees were split into breakout rooms to discuss food and housing insecurity. A community member and researcher facilitated each breakout room. The breakout sessions started with a quick issue update and level-setting from the community and research facilitators around the food and housing work that has been completed or is currently being worked on. The facilitators invited participants to add to the discussion by sharing their knowledge and views regarding past and current initiatives, community assets, and gaps. Attendees then switched groups and were led through a similar discussion on the other topic.

The facilitators for this meeting's breakout room were:

- Taryn McCook, Greater Chicago Food Depository
- Dr. Howard Rosing, DePaul University - Irwin W. Steans Center for Community-based Service
- Corie Darling, Heartland Human Care Services
- The Late Dr. Janet Smith, UIC - Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement

Second Meeting

The second meeting on June 8, 2021, focused on generating culturally sensitive research and evaluation questions for the community research agenda aligned with the gaps and concerns identified during the first meeting.

Sabrina Nelson provided a summary of the work of OCEAN-HP and HCC. Habilitative Systems' Executive Director, Donald Dew, highlighted work that's being done in the community regarding housing insecurity. Drs. Angela Odoms-Young and David DuBois from UIC presented research and what it encompasses, including frameworks and key principles for community-engaged and community-based participatory research. Several models and tools were provided to attendees to prepare them for the breakout discussions focused on creating research and evaluation questions.

Attendees were split into breakout rooms focused on food and housing that included facilitated discussions on how to move towards creating research questions based on key concerns that were noted in the first meeting. Each group was again co-facilitated by a community member and researcher. Attendees were able to add their research questions using Jamboard.

The facilitators for this meeting's breakout rooms were:

- Amena Karim, Founder, Feeding Chicago Families, and Feeding South Shore
- Reverend Dr. Shirley Fleming, Co-Director, Center for Faith and Community Health
- Ricardo J. Garcia, Senior Pantry Program Manager, Beyond Hunger
- Phyllis Logan, Executive Director, Universal Housing Solutions CDC
- Leila Rahravan, Deputy Director, Northwest Side Housing Center
- Emilio Carrasquillo, Program Manager, Spanish Coalition for Housing

Third Meeting

The final meeting was held on October 18, 2021, and its goal was to prioritize the research questions and identify potential partnerships. A cross-cutting theme for the meeting was to emphasize the importance of community members, researchers, and other partners working together.

Sabrina Nelson provided a summary of the work of OCEAN-HP and HCC again. There were then two partnership highlights, Raul Garcia from the Sinai Community Institute and Liz Abunaw from Forty Acres Fresh Market. Both presentations provided examples of academic-community partnerships in the Chicagoland area and described lessons learned from their projects. They emphasized the importance of leveraging the strength of the community to address significant needs. These presentations were designed intentionally to get the audience thinking about ways academic-community partnerships can be cultivated to succeed.

Attendees were then put into breakout rooms based on their selections from the registration process (food or housing). While showing the list of research questions on the screen, facilitators guided a discussion on which questions resonated with attendees and what questions should be added. Attendees had the opportunity to rank the research questions and/or add any they felt were missing. A survey was sent out towards the end of this meeting and in a follow-up email to gather input from community members on how the generated research questions should be prioritized.

The facilitators for this meeting's breakout rooms were:

- Amena Karim, Founder, Feeding Chicago Families and Feeding South Shore
- Dr. Eleanor Rivera, UIC College of Nursing
- Phyllis Logan, Executive Director, Universal Housing Solutions CDC
- Dr. David DuBois, UIC School of Public Health
- Emilio Carrasquillo, Program Manager, Spanish Coalition for Housing
- Eva Hernandez, Healthcare Alternative Systems

At the end of each meeting, participants were brought back to the main room to listen and add to brief reports from each group. The briefing session helped to emphasize how food and housing insecurities are intertwined.

Community Outreach to Latine/X Communities

There were subsequent conversations after the June 8 meeting as no participants were in the Spanish-language breakout rooms. Representatives from organizations of Latine/x communities highlighted several gaps and issues that community members face regarding food and housing insecurity. The organizations included Enlace, Telpochcalli Community Education Project (Tcep) Chicago, Universidad Popular, and Un Nuevo Despertar.

Below are the issues brought up by these organizations around the gaps Latine/x community members are facing as it relates to food insecurity:

- Accessing healthy/fresh food such as vegetables and proteins during the pandemic was difficult. Food boxes sent to communities sometimes lack good choices.
- More access is needed to culturally appropriate food. Most food choices during the pandemic were canned goods, pre-cooked meat, and processed food that the community did not eat. Boxes sent to the community do not cater to the community's needs.
- More access is needed to quality food that is closer to them (something that does not require transportation). There is no easy access to grocery stores like Mariano's, Whole Foods Market, and others.
- There are barriers to transportation or lack of it.
- There is a need for nutrition education (like what is potassium and protein).
- Resources in the community are not reliable. People/organizations offering help do not follow through, nor do they consistently have staff speaking Spanish.
- There is a feeling of being forgotten. Community members are eager to find ways/options for their voices to be heard.

Planning Committee members also led a focus group with community health workers after October 18, 2021, meeting to identify (from their perspective) community needs, strengths, and knowledge about housing and food security.

- Food and housing were impacted dramatically by the COVID-19 pandemic due to loss of jobs, lack of income, Link cards being hard to obtain, complicated systems, and unsympathetic employers.
- Community residents have difficulty accessing, navigating, and understanding existing resources.
- One of the main barriers was the requirement of a formal identification to access many resources.

Findings

Food

Meeting 1 - Existing Projects/Assets and Major Gaps

In the food breakout room, many community initiatives and assets were discussed. There has been an activation of several nutritious programs in Chicago, including SNAP, P-EBT, and after-school meal programs, to address food insecurity. Also, mutual aid groups have blossomed over the last two years. These trust groups work with each other on behalf of the community and have participated in several food distribution programs. There also have been several community garden initiatives. For example, the Chicago Botanic Garden has a gardening project to encourage home gardening, and Chicago Grows Food has initiated a container gardening program through Chicago schools.

At the same time, there are significant infrastructure challenges. Underutilized city lots and vacant storefronts throughout Chicago can be repurposed. There is also a wealth of untapped knowledge in the community that should be utilized to address food insecurity. Our current food system is set up for failure and not equipped to handle high demands for food. Concurrently, there has been low participation in nutrition programs (e.g., SNAP/WIC) even though the pandemic increased demand significantly. During this time, food pantries have also struggled for funding to support free food distribution during the pandemic. On the operating side, producers had issues connecting with individual households directly and saw increased operating expenses.

Communication within the food space can also be improved, specifically between the food workforce, producers, and customers. In addition, small food businesses need better technical support and education to navigate the food system. There is also a lack of financial support for food services, such as restaurants and catering businesses, to provide free meals. There is a need for residents to be able to access and navigate the emergency food landscape in Suburban Cook County. Therefore, there are multiple research opportunities to address food insecurity and improve access to food for all residents.



Meeting 2 - Research Questions - Brainstorming

In the second meeting, participants reviewed the findings from the first meeting and identified additional issues and opportunities related to food access and security in Chicago to generate culturally sensitive research and evaluation questions for the community research agenda. After this meeting, there was also an opportunity to speak with Latine/x community organizations to discuss food and housing issues (more details are above). An extensive list of research questions was generated, categorized, and condensed and are available in full in the Appendix. The following is a summary of those questions.

There were multiple issues, such as food waste, pandemic-related matters, access to food, and gaps in outreach to diverse communities, including the Latine/x community. The Council noted that attention must be paid to how this work will be done. This work must be efficient and done in the community. For example, video conferencing may not be the best way to communicate and engage in the community because it can be challenging to assess the needs of community members through this modality.

Food waste may influence food insecurity and access to food. Research shows that if we recover 30% of food waste, it will be enough to feed the entire population experiencing food insecurity. At a system level, it will be nice to connect consumable food surplus to needy communities. Thirteen thousand tons of food could be recovered for human consumption in Chicago. Reducing food wastage could reduce food insecurity and ensure community residents have access to more nutritious food.

Some of the questions mentioned were focused on community concerns. This included considerations of a community inventory, like knowing what food-related resources are available and understanding what support is needed for individuals to participate in food aid programs, such as WIC and SNAP. There was also a focus on factors that affect the accessibility of food resources to different communities, like creating environments where community members feel welcomed and educating the community on available services. Several attendees questioned how mutual aid efforts could be strengthened, and underutilized lots could be repurposed.

Attendees advocated for continuous needs assessments and gap analyses to determine what resources are available and what data could improve food security in Chicago. Evaluation of existing programs and other data could be used to advocate for policy implementations, address various challenges, and determine if progress is being made. Sustainability questions were also mentioned, such as deciding what is needed to address concerns beyond the pandemic once government support ends.

Meeting 3 - Research questions- Prioritizing/Coordinating

The research and evaluation suggestions from the second meeting's food breakout group were condensed to a limited number for Meeting 3's discussion (see Table 1 in Appendix A). Attendees had a chance to review the questions on food insecurity and share their thoughts and additional concerns.

The group agreed that the research and evaluation questions should be around encouraging nourishing food options, addressing chronic health conditions linked to behaviors, determining relationships between health and wellness and neighborhood food access, and finding resources for sustainability beyond the pandemic. The comments below were made as a result of the selections mentioned above.

There were a number of suggestions around diversifying the food supply and collaboration between the healthcare and food systems. Healthcare systems can also play a more vital role. There are a number of outlets you can drive through for \$2-\$3 value meals filled with sodium. The pandemic shined the light on structural inequities that have existed for decades and have a downstream impact on quality of life and life expectancy.

School-based health centers have been instrumental in reaching members of the Latine/x and Black communities. Their expansion could help get more individuals and connect them to existing resources in their communities. While these collaborations are essential, there is also a need to support mom-and-pop stores that often struggle to compete with more substantial establishments in the community while diversifying the food system.

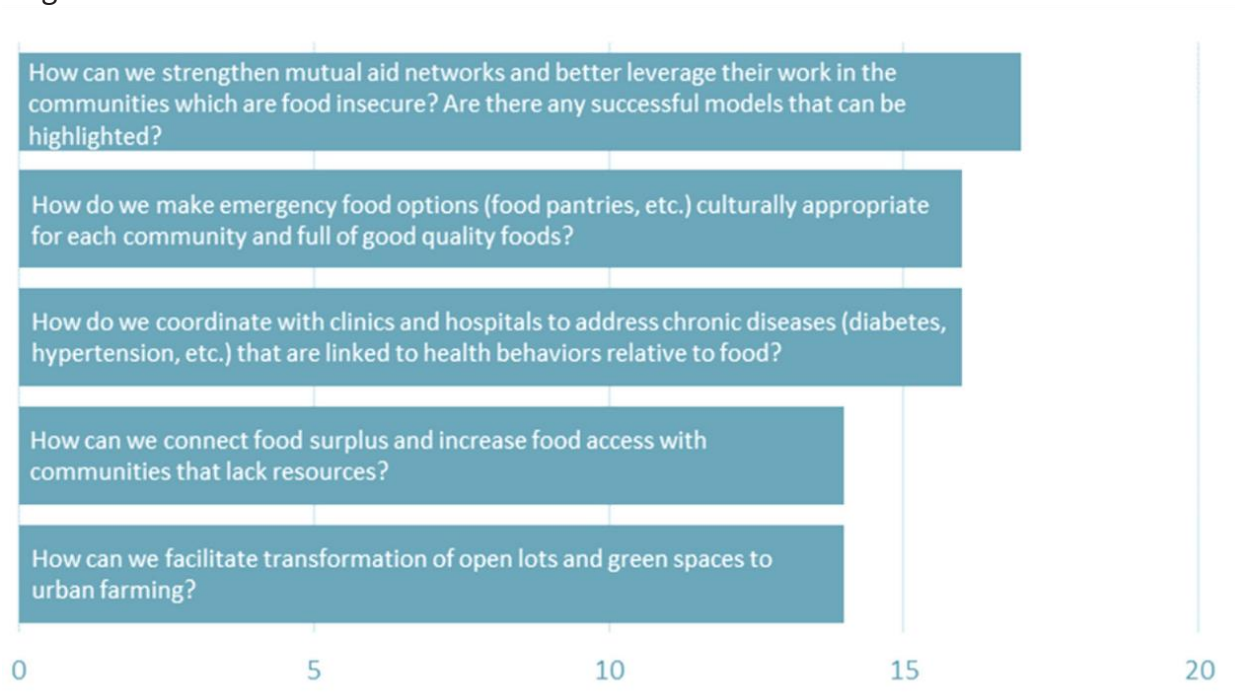


The following were other Key Suggestions:

- Opportunities for partnerships. Several organizations, such as the Chicago Botanic Garden, were already connected with the community. They created a VeggieRx program through Windy City Harvest, and a Food is Medicine initiative in partnership with Lawndale Christian Health Center. The Food Equity Council was crafted in collaboration with a cross-section of community and City representatives to transform the food system by removing barriers to urban farming, supporting people of color that are food entrepreneurs, and better connecting residents with nutrition programs and healthy, affordable food. The Food Equity Council's priorities can be found here. Unfortunately, these initiatives may be siloed or not widely disseminated for community residents to know about them and take advantage of them.
- Create a process to communicate with residents. This meeting noted that there is now an opportunity for people to connect and work together. There is a need to create a process by which community residents know what is going on in the city so people can collaborate at different levels. During the pandemic, we saw many organizations responding to the needs of their community (refer to meeting 1); however, there were some communication gaps, technology gaps, and a lack of research. We should take these lessons and strive for better coordination and collaboration.
- Also, consider creating and disseminating a form where people could share what they are interested in and what they are looking for, and then allow people to connect as a network. This is something that could be sustainable beyond the meeting. Many initiatives are taking place, but more collaboration is needed to close the gap and provide a more robust response. In addition, develop a community resources inventory. It is not always clear in these very dynamic situations what resources are available to a given community and what limits or barriers are in place for some people at a given time. We cannot always work together or even know who is doing what work in the community because everything is always siloed.
- Increase equity, diversity, and inclusion. It was also noted that, regarding people of color, it is vital to have a shared process among community residents and other affected parties to contribute to closing health equity gaps and streamline them. We can work with many existing shared resources that may be unintentionally siloed but want to come together to advance health equity.
- Create and utilize new supportive roles. Community health workers (CHWs) can help disseminate information to community residents. Many of them are from the community, and residents trust them. There is a need to include a campaign to change the food culture. It won't be easy to promote healthy food options for people of color, such as in the aforementioned fresh markets, when the food culture is such that people are inundated with messages about fast food and other no-cooking options.

Towards the end of the meeting, the previously described survey was distributed to attendees, who were then given the opportunity to vote on their top three priorities for research and evaluation questions for food insecurity in Chicago. Following the opportunity for others to complete the survey after the meeting, responses were received from a total of 63 individuals. The survey results are included in Appendix A and summarized (top five selections) in the figure below.

Figure X.



Note: Top 5 selections from the food portion of the survey

Housing

Meeting 1 - Existing Projects/Assets and Major Gaps

In the housing breakout room, many community initiatives and assets were discussed. This included rental and mortgage payment assistance, a 311-related homelessness prevention center, subsidized housing through city and community programs, funding for home repairs for older adults, tax credits for building low-income housing, anti-displacement regulations requiring affordable housing in development and building plans, funding to rehabilitate abandoned structures, and cooperative and collective alternative housing models.

However, several existing gaps and research opportunities were also identified. Despite the existing initiatives, the amount of affordable housing in Chicago does not meet the needs of residents. While some individuals have access to these resources, eligibility criteria such as income create barriers for those who need assistance. Furthermore, there is room for improvement in rent control and keeping housing affordable in the long term. While federal and state policies and funding streams are essential, there is also a need to identify more flexible funding streams for housing initiatives. This could be achieved by placing existing successful housing models in other communities to bring new ideas and partnerships.

In addition, there was much discussion of specific populations concerning housing. First, there were many suggestions about considering the role of race and racism in housing, such as known differences in property tax levels for communities of color. Another key population is families, particularly multi-generational households, and how affordable housing policies do not fully consider their unique needs. Similarly, individuals with special housing needs, such as those living with disabling chronic conditions and/or older adults often have limited access to housing that meet those needs. Also, from analytic and service access perspective, there was interest in revisiting the definition of key concepts like homelessness, housing insecurity, and affordable housing.

Meeting 2 - Research Questions - Brainstorming

In the second meeting, participants discussed additional issues related to housing. An extensive list of research questions was generated, categorized, and condensed and are available in full in the Appendix. The following is a summary of those questions and additional concerns.

Some questions surrounded issues of affordability. This included economic dynamics and policy considerations, e.g., the surging housing market and changes such as a minimum wage increase. There was also a focus on affordability and who gets to decide how to measure and define housing affordability. Other research questions were focused on community outreach. Many questions focused on best practices for community assessment and engagement for existing community-based organizations. There were also questions about what new types of innovations and organizations could be helpful to bring to Chicago. Quite a few questions pointed toward links between housing and health. Several of these questions were focused on specific disease processes such as cancer or COVID-19. However, other questions looked more broadly at the link between housing access, health, and well-being.

There was an additional category of questions about policy and funding for housing. Many questions were about specific policies, such as tax reduction or housing occupancy restrictions. On the other hand, there were questions about the different funding models for housing and how those funding streams impact policies and initiatives. Further questions delved into population-specific inequities. The most common question in this category was related to inequities related to specific racial and ethnic populations who have experienced discrimination. Other topics were discussed, including undocumented immigrants, children, and young adults, gender identity, and sexual orientation. The last category had to do with questions about property ownership and landlords. Questions about landlords and explored policies to impact and incentivize the behaviors and norms of landlords were mentioned. The questions about property ownership included alternative options and tax policies.

Meeting 3 - Research Questions - Prioritizing/Coordinating

The many research suggestions from Meeting 2 were condensed to a limited number for Meeting 3's discussion (see Tables 5 and 7 in Appendix A). Attendees had a chance to review the questions and share their thoughts. This included the acknowledgment that the questions focused more on the people affected by housing inequities than on holding accountable the actors responsible for creating and maintaining those inequities.

Furthermore, there was a question of how effective new policies would be given that it is unclear to what extent existing laws and policies are being upheld. Questions about what types of data are collected in this regard and what enforcement methods are in place were noted, as necessary. Some brought up a consistent issue throughout all three meetings - how are we defining critical terms (e.g., homeless, affordable housing), and who gets to take ownership of those definitions? What are assumptions immediately in place based on those definitions?

During the meeting, the previously described survey was distributed to meeting attendees, who were then given the opportunity to vote on their top three priorities for research questions related to housing. Following the opportunity for others to complete the survey after the meeting, responses were received from a total of 59 individuals. The results of the survey are included in full in Table 7 in Appendix A and summarized (top five selections) in the below figure.

Figure X



Note: Top five selections from the housing portion of the survey.

Recommendations and Call to Action

Recommendations

The Council intends to support recommendations based on community-derived, solution-oriented priorities identified during the three 2021 community convenings.

By coupling the inherent expertise and assets of Chicago communities with the resources and research expertise of academia, this robust coalition of advocates has the potential to transform the social services and institutional landscape as it pertains to food and housing insecurity in Chicago. The Council recognizes and appreciates the consistent and profound work by community mutual aid societies, organizations, and advocates to address gaps as institutional structures have continued to fall short in our most disenfranchised neighborhoods.

While the issue of food and housing insecurity is complex and requires a multi-faceted approach, the Council utilized the November 2021 survey results to identify the five highest-ranking priority questions to guide the Council's research agenda. Additionally, recommendations on research opportunities have been aggregated in this report to support the development of new partnerships

aligned with advancing community elevated priorities on food and housing insecurity.

The Council would like to emphasize the need for a systematic process of identifying, prioritizing, and setting a community-driven agenda in full partnership with communities in Chicago. Assessing community priorities is an ongoing process, underscoring that this information is specific to the Chicago area in 2021. This type of community assessment and prioritization of resources must be done systematically to ensure the inclusion of region-specific concerns and context.

With these priority research questions identified, the Research Council encourages collaborative research projects and partnerships between research professionals and community members interested in similar priorities. The Council hopes that this work will impact, influence, and guide the work of future and current researchers and encourage connections between them and appropriate community-based organizations that are already doing work with the priority population. We also hope that through this work, we can identify and address any institutional barriers and community concerns that constrain community-based participatory research and influence future policy and advocacy work.

To support these aims, the Council provides the following recommendations based on its 2021 convenings:

- Provide seed grant funding to support community-academic research projects, prioritizing initially those that address the research questions identified through the Council's convenings described in this report.
 - Academic centers, foundations, city governments, and others must prioritize investment in new community-academic research partnerships through mechanisms such as specially designed seed grants that support partnership development and exploration of potential projects that aim to confront food and housing insecurity from a community-driven approach.
- Establish a dedicated platform (e.g., website) and processes to facilitate partnerships between researchers and community organizations with shared interests in Chicago.
 - Create a clearinghouse for community-based organizations and advocates to connect with Chicago area researchers who study food and housing insecurity and vice-versa.
 - Create a community-engaged resource repository that is continuously updated and includes resources that support community-research partnerships for food and housing. Organize resources in a user-friendly, accessible format containing information on current partnerships and projects, funding opportunities, etc. that is inter-institutional.
 - Establish and implement processes (e.g., incubator sessions, technical assistance) to support the development of sustainable and high-impact partnerships between researchers and community organizations that become connected through the clearinghouse.

- Provide fiscal resources for community research infrastructure to support the implementation of the above-described recommendations. These resources should be sufficient to support necessary development work (e.g., website), ongoing staffing and programming, and other costs (e.g., seed funds) to ensure recommendations materialize and activities/resources are sustained over time.
 - A convening of public and private/philanthropic funders should be held to identify opportunities for collaborative approaches to funding for optimal efficiency and sustainability

Call to Action

Below are a few suggestions for the Chicagoland research community to leverage and, most importantly, share its power, resources, and expertise to help solve the quality-of-life alternating realities of wide-spread food and housing insecurity in our area. These points, coupled with the above recommendations, are hoped to be utilized as a touchpoint for community-academic research team engagement across the area.

1. Champion a “community in all things” approach. Community leadership and collaboration are essential to building sustainable solutions that call out root causes of food and housing insecurity in historically disenfranchised communities and aim to shift inequitable power dynamics.
 - A. Conduct a community needs assessment and an asset/capacity inventory to assess existing neighborhood and community resources supporting food and housing security. Continuously reassess neighborhood-level food and housing security needs.
 - B. Investigate opportunities to replicate actual community-driven developments in other regions of the country that can be replicated in the Chicago area.
2. Academic research centers must advocate for more wide-spread adoption and integration of community-engaged and co-led research development, design, implementation, and dissemination. The power inequities endemic in the current research enterprise must be dismantled to ensure communities have access and the ability to elicit substantive change.
3. Highlight, leverage, and generously fund solutions that already exist in communities and are supported by or align with research evidence and actively work to break down silos that impede the building of collective resources.
4. Use both existing and forthcoming research on the priority questions (and others as they are identified) to influence short-, mid-, and long-term policy and advocacy work, such as:

- A. Identify all unenforced housing security ordinances and municipal policies and assign a task force consisting of community members, policymakers, and other experts to develop a strategic plan to execute, the outcomes of which can be evaluated by researchers.
- B. Identify and rectify existing restrictions in the services and programs available to unstably housed folks.
- C. Leverage existing research-supported/aligned legislation and advocacy information to protect tenants' and homeowners' rights.
- D. Advocate with research support to change inequitable policies already in place.

In conclusion, the Research Council hopes that the readers of this report will incorporate the various findings and community perspectives into future collaborative research projects and advocacy opportunities for policy and systems change.

The Research Council is open to continuing this conversation. Anyone interested in continuing this work with the Research Council or interested in providing feedback, please contact Sabrina Nelson at sabrina1@uic.edu or (312)355-1844.

Appendix A

Food

Table 1. Research Opportunities for Food Insecurity	
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we define community? Communities are diverse and there are concerns that the perception is that communities are monolithic. • Gather community, household, and individual-level data on food insecurity. • How can communities work collaboratively to achieve a common goal (mutual aid network, food source, learnings gleaned, and redefining health inequities): health inequities, operational efficiencies (food storage, funding, and refrigeration)? • How can we strengthen mutual aid networks and better leverage their work in the communities which are food insecure? Are there any successful models that can be highlighted? • Do people have a different perspective now of the existing resources available in the community? • Conduct a community needs assessment and an asset/capacity inventory to assess existing neighborhood and community resources in support of food security. Need to reassess community needs and existing data around food insecurity - what is missing. What community assets exist that can support food security?

Emergency Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we make emergency food options (food pantries, etc.) culturally appropriate for each community and full of good quality foods? How do we create accessible and welcoming communities for emergency food distribution (transportation, stigma, safety, etc.)? • What factors affect the accessibility of food resources to different communities?
EBT/WIC/SNAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the barriers related to EBT usage? (Guidelines, EBT enablement, etc.) • What are the barriers related to SNAP access? (Eligibility, asset limits, etc.) • What support/ encouragement is needed for individuals to participate in food aid programs (pantry/WIC/SNAP)?
Unused/Vacant Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we repurpose underutilized/vacant lot to address community food insecurities?
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the extent of community leadership in developing and implementing food insecurity interventions?
Culturally Specific/ Appropriate Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are food boxes culturally appropriate for each community and full of good quality foods? • Specific challenges that the Latine/x community faces (e.g., staff that speaks Spanish, culturally relevant food, transportation)
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we educate the community for people to understand that services offered through food pantries are safe? • There is a need to address knowledge gaps, literacy gaps, and the technology divide in the community that can improve food insecurity.
Healthy Options in the Community/Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do people make their food choice (dietary needs) while maintaining their dignity? • How do we encourage healthy food options in disenfranchised neighborhoods? • How to promote healthy living in Chicago and healthy food options in the food insecure community. • What is the perceived accessibility and affordability of food?

<p>Welcoming Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we create an environment where people feel welcomed, and everyone understands these services are offered to anyone who are dealing with food insecurity?
<p>Food is Medicine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we coordinate with clinics to address chronic diseases (diabetes, hypertension, etc.) linked to health behaviors relative to food? • What is the link between organizations conducting food insecurity screenings (hospitals, clinics, etc.), and how do they meet the food insecurity needs they identify? • What are the relationships between health/wellness, healthy food access, and neighborhood?
<p>COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have the resources available in the community changed because of the pandemic? • What is needed to address the gaps and concerns beyond the pandemic when emergency government support ends? • Examine pre- and post-pandemic data for POC that are food insecure. What did the pandemic reveal about our communities relative to food insecurity? • Identify why people did not take advantage of charitable food access sources during the pandemic - did language, disabilities, transportation, and fear of deportation play a role.
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Good Food Purchasing Policy program implementation needs to be evaluated. • A SWOT analysis of the overall Chicago food system landscape regarding what we know, what we want, and what data are missing. • Assess what is needed to build a more resilient food system • Obtain existing data and conduct a secondary analysis to push for policy implementation to address challenges to urban agriculture development (e.g., water access challenges for community gardens in the City). • Also, examine how data is collected and how this could directly impact advocacy, policy level, and program design.

<p>Programmatic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What programs have successfully improved food insecurity that we can build upon, and for what population? • From a logistics standpoint, how do we create systems to address food waste and food insecurity and achieve three goals: Balancing efficiency, equity, and effectiveness? How do we work with food insecure communities and manage food intake? • Can we connect food surplus with communities in need? How can we put actionable strategies and data in place? • What is needed to address the gaps and concerns beyond the pandemic when government support ends? • With everything during the pandemic, did we make a difference between food insecurity and access to healthy, nutritious food? Are we moving the needle? What should be the metrics of success? • Are there healthier options in pantries as a result of the pandemic? • How can we coordinate and support efforts already underway at the local, City, and regional levels to ensure communities are being served/access healthy food? • How do we turn these problems into action-oriented questions rather than research questions? • What is the relation between increased consumption/dosage of food, health outcomes, and healthcare costs? • What is the link between who is currently doing food insecurity screenings (hospitals, FQHCs, etc.), how they meet the needs, and if health outcomes are improving? • How can we connect food surplus with communities in need? • How can we facilitate the transformation of open lots and green spaces into urban farming?
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<p>Table 2. Research Approaches in the Community for Food Insecurity</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research teams meet the community where they are and use laymen’s terms for community members to understand 2. It is important to be inclusive and build on community strengths to collect valuable information on the needs on the ground. 3. Foster genuine partnerships with the community and follow-through with research projects and their benefit.

4. Also, in the university setting, we hear a lot of deficit-based and not enough asset-based perspectives.
5. Create a balance in our approach, whereas much of the discussion amongst community residents is mostly asset-based on people but deficit-based regarding structural social determinants of health.
6. Come with more research questions about family and community resiliency.
7. People are resilient around maintaining culture or engaging in activism around the food space. It will be nice to see more research projects around some of the things that have happened historically in the different communities around food preservation or what communities (individuals) are doing for themselves (from Meeting 3)
8. We need to supplement existing data with qualitative data.
9. Food insecurity needs to be looked at with a multidimensional lens. We all need to realize that all communities are not the same. Each one is impacted differently. Some have fewer resources than others (from Meeting 3).
10. Describe ways to involve communities in research intentionally; understand community values and build on community strength. Identify ways to draw from the wealth of knowledge in the community.
11. People need to be seen; therefore, highlighting dignity for those who receive the food, and the services food pantries provide is essential. Pride has a different meaning for people. Not being seen receiving food was a deterrent for many to access free food.
12. Considerations for collecting information for accessing food from food pantries and other charitable food sources. Those who report that collecting personal information can put them at risk for deportation.
13. Roles of community members and researcher roles. Many people who engage in this work live in the community and are very serious about the work that needs to be completed on behalf of the community residents. Some people have a dual role as researchers and community residents.

Table 3: Recommendations for Food Insecurity

Diversify Food System	During the pandemic, new initiatives and programs were created, and new opportunities and organizations engaged in the food supply. Are these efforts sustainable?
Mutual Aid Networks	People work cooperatively to meet the needs of everyone in the community. Most Mutual Aid Networks are intentionally not institutional, which may have profound implications on how research is conceptualized, presented, and implemented. The issue is that people are not always aware that the networks exist in their community and of the available resources. We need to strengthen mutual aid networks in the community and help highlight successful models in the community (i.e., firefighters associations)
School-Based Health Centers	Instrumental with reaching members in all communities. Their expansion could help get more individuals and connect them to existing resources in their communities.
Building off Existing Partnerships	For example, Chicago Botanic Garden is an excellent partner to consider. They created a VeggieRx program and a Food as Medicine initiative.
Health Equity Lens	How can we close those health equity gaps and streamline them? We can work with many existing shared resources that may be unintentionally siloed but want to come together to advance health equity.
Support New Initiatives	Encourage and promote fresh markets in the community, such as Forty Acres Fresh Market and IMAN Fresh Market (63rd and Racine), which will open in February 2022.
Recognize Structural barriers	There is also a need to address structural barriers to healthy options in communities of color. There are issues around the deficit in food production.
Review Board	Develop a community review board to know what is occurring for food studies in communities

Table 4: Food Survey Results

Please select what you view as the three most important questions to address in research on food insecurity in Chicago.	Percent	Count
How do we encourage healthy food options in disenfranchised neighborhoods?	7.78%	13
What are the barriers related to EBT usage? (Guidelines, EBT enablement, etc.)	1.80%	3
How can we strengthen mutual aid networks and better leverage their work in the communities which are food insecure? Are there any successful models that can be highlighted?	10.18%	17
How do we coordinate with clinics to address chronic diseases (diabetes, hypertension, etc.) linked to health behaviors relative to food?	9.58%	16
How have the resources available in the community changed as a result of the pandemic	1.80%	3
How can we connect food surplus with communities in need?	8.38%	14
What are the barriers related to SNAP access? (Eligibility, asset limits, etc.)	5.39%	9
How do we make emergency food options (food pantries, etc.) culturally appropriate for each community and full of good quality foods?	9.58%	16
What is the link between organizations conducting food insecurity screenings (hospitals, clinics, etc.), and how do they meet the food insecurity needs they identify?	7.78%	13
What is needed to address the gaps and concerns beyond the pandemic when emergency government support ends?	7.78%	13
How can we facilitate the transformation of open lots and green spaces into urban farming?	8.38%	14
What support/ encouragement is needed for individuals to participate in food aid programs (pantry/WIC/Snap)?	1.80%	3
How do we create accessible and welcoming communities for emergency food distribution (transportation, stigma, safety, etc.)?	4.79%	8

What did the pandemic reveal about our communities relative to food insecurity?	3.59%	6
Other	4.20%	7

Note: “Other” refers to write-in responses. They include the following: 1) How have progressive opportunities such as urban farming created gentrification and pushed out underserved community members? What metrics are in place to ensure these programs remain in the community they are intended for? 2) How can we support leveraging community assets to transform Chicago’s food system? 3) What are the barriers to food retailers accepting SNAP benefits? 4) How do we enable equitable food distribution throughout the Chicago area? Including: how do we reward and incentivize affordable food from Chicago producers and processors while honoring the actual cost of production? 5) What are barriers and Facilitators to residents growing their fresh produce (soil testing, know-how, seeds, tools, etc.?) 6) How can we address and change programs that put barriers on the types of food that can be purchased, especially when organic goods are often excluded. Are processed products the sole option (WIC/pantry/etc.)? 7) What is the efficacy of community-driven solutions to address food/nutrition insecurity and poor dietary behaviors in communities of color?

Housing

Table 1. Research Opportunities for Food Insecurity	
Community	Questions
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we measure and define housing affordability? • How does the current surging housing market affect communities? • What are the barriers to affordable housing in Chicago? • What are investors’ “flipping houses” effects on affordable housing access? • What impact would a minimum wage increase have on housing affordability? • Abandoned buildings are being transformed into affordable housing – is that affordable in all communities?
Community Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the best methods for housing organizations to assess the community’s needs? • How can researchers better engage the community in work focused on housing insecurity? • What role can the AEC (architecture, engineering, and construction) community play in addressing the housing crisis?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can housing fairs in the community assess people at risk of homelessness and increase education around housing affordability? • How can Community Health Workers hired by the Chicago Department of Housing increase impact by providing community resources and prevention education? • Are there any examples of actual community-driven developments in the country that can be replicated in the Chicago area? • What are successful models of centralizing information on housing to reduce access barriers? • What are successful ways to increase awareness and education around Tenants' Rights? • Is it feasible to offer workshops focused on how to purchase a home, prepare for home ownership, or rent affordable housing in community colleges?
<p>Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the impact of COVID-19 on housing? • What are successful multi-generational housing models that did not increase COVID-19 infections? • Are there particular housing needs for special populations, such as cancer patients? • Is current affordable housing linked to unsafe living conditions? • How do restrictions in access to affordable housing (e.g., citizenship, arrest history) impact people's health outcomes? • When communities or countries approach housing as a human right, what are the effects on health and quality of life?
<p>Policy and Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do housing restrictions (e.g., single occupancy) increase stress and strain for people accessing resources? • What impact does Tax Credit Housing have on housing insecurity? • Are there flexible funding streams to support housing initiatives (Federal and State funding streams are not very flexible)? • How do funding streams restrict the types of services and programs that are available to folks who are unstably housed (i.e., funding tends to come with stipulations for who can be served and for how long)? • What are the effects of tax abatement? • Can vacant buildings be repurposed to offer shelter? • Are the current levels of emergency shelter and affordable housing adequate to meet the need of the community? How is this being assessed?

<p>Population-Specific Inequities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the impact of neighborhood gentrification on housing? • What impact does historical redlining have on patterns of housing insecurity today? • What are actionable ideas for sufficiently enforcing laws around racial discrimination? • How does racial discrimination in the housing market affect the search process, interest rates, and loans? • How is data on the risk of homeless among kids and youth being assessed? • What is causing the lack of housing options for transgender individuals? In what ways are existing housing programs built or not built for transgender individuals? • How can we reduce the barriers to housing resource access, such as identification requirements for recent or undocumented immigrants? • Are there adequate levels of non-English language support in housing assistance agencies to meet community needs?
<p>Property Ownership and Landlords</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact do “slum landlords” have on housing insecurity in Chicago? What policies can be implemented to reduce the burden put on tenants by “slum landlords”? • How is housing insecurity affected by property owners raising the rent? What is making the property owners raise the rent? • What impact do rent control policies have? • How have small landlords been impacted by increases in property taxes versus larger management companies? • What are concrete ways that the property tax system can be modernized? • How can we create processes to hold property owners, organizations, and institutions accountable for the harm they may perpetuate or cause? • What impact do state and local housing policies that allow and encourage various ownership options (like cooperatives and collectives) have on housing insecurity? • Are limited equity housing cooperatives a way to allow an ownership option that commits to an affordable community while building some personal equity? • What is the impact of strict rental requirements from landlords (e.g., 2-3 months’ rent as a deposit)?

Table 6: Additional Suggestions for Housing Insecurity from Third Meeting

- A lot of community discussion is around continuously placing the burden and ownership on people affected by inequities.
 - Start to think about policy and higher-level actionable items so that we can ensure it is not just the residents who are the ones that have to make changes/adjust.
- Affordable housing and accountability - we know there are laws and policies on having so many units affordable, but how do we hold the government or agency accountable to ensure these policies are being enforced, that many units are available, and that they are putting up enough money to make the units affordable? How can we see data on how many affordable units there are compared to the need?
- How are we helping people experiencing homelessness? Community residents are being told by nonprofit organizations that there are not enough resources.
 - We need to approach elected officials since they set aside the funding for organizations to do the footwork and provide services and resources.
 - How are people in power held accountable?
- What opportunities do we have to understand the process from the perspective of those experiencing housing challenges and those organizations working with individuals seeking stable housing?
- What opportunities can help individuals process and center their expertise in a research context?
- We need long-term solutions for housing; affordable housing units were built years ago (in the 80s), and now the 30 years are over, and they've become luxury downtown housing and student housing.
 - We need to connect research that pushes for long-term, affordable, cooperative, collective community-based housing with community-based organizations that are working on advocacy, etc., in those relevant areas (they have a lot of mechanisms to get that information/research out).
- We should pull every law/ordinance that the city/county/state has right now that has been intact for years but has never been active because we don't give it attention-research what laws are in place right now that are supposed to support the communities.

- We also need to define “homeless.” Numerous groups, such as HUD and other entities, use different definitions (e.g., living on someone’s couch versus not having a roof overhead).
- Trinity United Church of Christ-Chicago (TUCC) - TUCC joined Occupy Chicago in 2011 to clean out several abandoned houses in the Washington Heights community and allow families to “occupy” them. Look at the number of people experiencing homelessness and the number of abandoned units. Part of public policy should be accountability and a real solution to funding and rebuilding/restructuring abandoned buildings so they can be occupied. Cleaning out and occupying abandoned buildings helps to develop communities.
 - Suggestion: Find or create a list of abandoned buildings and hold landlords accountable.
- Opportunity: New MacArthur Foundation grant to train teens to be community health workers and a policy clinic; trained youth will be able to see how the lack of housing, resources, and increase in violence is affecting the community; looking to have organizations come together.
- Make-a-thon projects: any community member can submit an idea around health and wellness; it allows people to make businesses or prototypes; teams are given a certain amount of resources
- Research is needed on how to create healing, affordable housing communities. Beautiful homes can be built and include multi-use furniture inside so that homeowners can pay it off quickly and then begin to build generational wealth
 - What barriers/facilitators exist to making these designed homes available from a policy standpoint?
 - The Resurrection Project in Pilsen is beginning to build them in the Back of the Yards so that some manufacturers will do so.
 - Be careful about gentrification.
 - The city used to have a program for tiny homes that could only be resold to other low-income family.
- There is still a population of people who cannot afford to live in their long-standing homes - be sure to think about this group of people. Since taxes are increasing, they have to leave their homes because they can’t afford the taxes even though they own the home.
- We should use more strong and more explicit language to call out social injustice and “systemic racism” since this is a system issue. It shouldn’t have to be all on the community to figure this out shouldn’t have to be all on the community to figure this out.

- How does health fit into this work; how do we ensure housing solutions incorporate health? How can we utilize the Flexible Housing Pool?
- How can we help homeowners become landlords and generate income to support economic stability?
- Look into land trust properties - cap equity from sellers to ensure affordability.
- There are ordinances that try to enforce caps on the rapid conversion of multi-unit buildings into single-family homes, which eliminates housing units in each neighborhood.
- City and Cook County Housing Committee have taken issues voiced to the municipalities; advocacy is needed for banks and lending institutions to accept those liens for neighborhood affordability.
- There are also issues right now with folks using first time homeowner loans. They aren't being accepted because the market is so high, and folks are paying cash for some homes.

Table 7: Housing Survey Results		
Questions	# of selections	Percentage
What are the barriers to affordable housing for low-income people of color in Chicago?	21	13.21%
How do restrictions in access to affordable housing (citizenship/conviction or arrest history) impact people's health outcomes?	19	11.95%
Is current affordable housing linked to unsafe living conditions?	16	10.06%
Generate data to support better rent control policies and lower eligibility criteria for subsidized housing.	14	8.81%
How does racial discrimination in the housing market affect the search process, interest rates, and loans?	12	7.55%
What are successful ways to increase awareness and education around Tenants Rights?	10	6.29%
Examine how small landlords have been impacted by increases in property taxes versus larger management companies. An increase in property taxes affects rent prices.	10	6.29%

How can Community Health Workers hired by the Chicago Department of Housing increase impact through providing community resources and prevention education?	10	6.29%
How do we measure and define housing affordability?	9	5.66%
Why are prices continuing to surge in the housing market, and how does this affect communities?	8	5.03%
How can housing fairs in the community assess people at risk of homelessness and increase education around housing affordability?	8	5.03%
What are actionable ideas for sufficiently enforcing existing laws around racial discrimination?	7	4.40%
Evaluate the effects of the barriers caused by investors flipping houses and causing families to be displaced simultaneously.	4	2.52%
What concrete ways can the property tax system be modernized to be fairer?	4	2.52%
Other	7	4.40%

Note: “Other” refers to write-in responses. They include the following: 1) What and where can people find real accessible resources to find safe, affordable housing? 2) What programs are available to provide homeless sustainable housing for a minimum of 2 years? 3) How do we increase the number of affordable housing units within the city? 4) What are protections that residents/homeowners need to be able to purchase affordable and viable homes (aka, disincentivize flipping/developer purchasing)? 5) Developing a citywide definition of “homeless” - we need to all be working from the same starting point as we tackle the rest of these priorities. 6) Explore (re-) expansion of affordable housing through public institutions rather than the private market. 7) Mechanisms to hold those in power - including landlords accountable for the policies, laws, and guidelines already in place + new initiatives.

Appendix B

The Healthy City Collaborative fully embraces principles of community-based participatory research, including:

- A. Recognizing community as a unit of identity
- B. Building on strengths and resources within the community
- C. Facilitating collaborative, equitable involvement of all partners in all phases of the research
- D. Integrating knowledge and intervention for the mutual benefit of all partners

- E. Promoting a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities
- F. Involving a cyclical and iterative process
- G. Addressing health from both positive and ecological perspectives
- H. Disseminating findings and knowledge gained to all partners
- I. Fostering long-term commitment by all partners.

Appendix C

Resources Related to Racial Equity, Food Insecurity, and Housing Insecurity

- Healthy Chicago 2025
- Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (ARCC) Anti-Racist Reflective Practice Tool
- Racial Equity in Research Engagement: Resource Catalog
- The following are examples of community-research partnerships:
 - Council to examine the history, and the relationship between the University of Chicago and South Side communities
 - Rush and UChicago Health Equity Research Network
 - General description of community-based participatory research
- Food pantry locator from Greater Chicago Food Depository
- Application for SNAP
- Afterschool meal program from Chicago Public Schools
- Department of Housing resources that support homeowners, homebuyers, and renters:
 - Program booklet
- Emergency Heat Program

Eviction resources



**OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND
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