



COMMUNITY
MEETS
GOVERNANCE

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CO-GOVERNANCE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Location: Burroughs Elementary School

Date: October 23, 2024

Steering Committee

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Brighton Park Neighborhood
Council

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Language: Spanish



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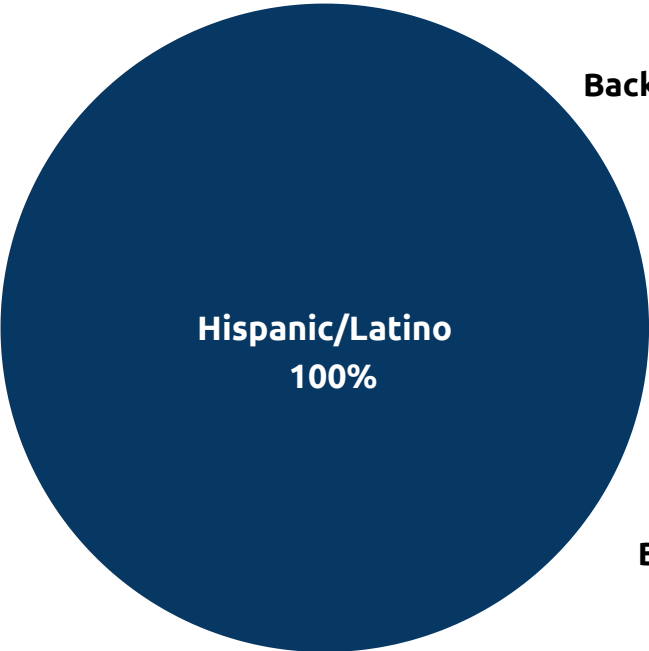
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Demographics

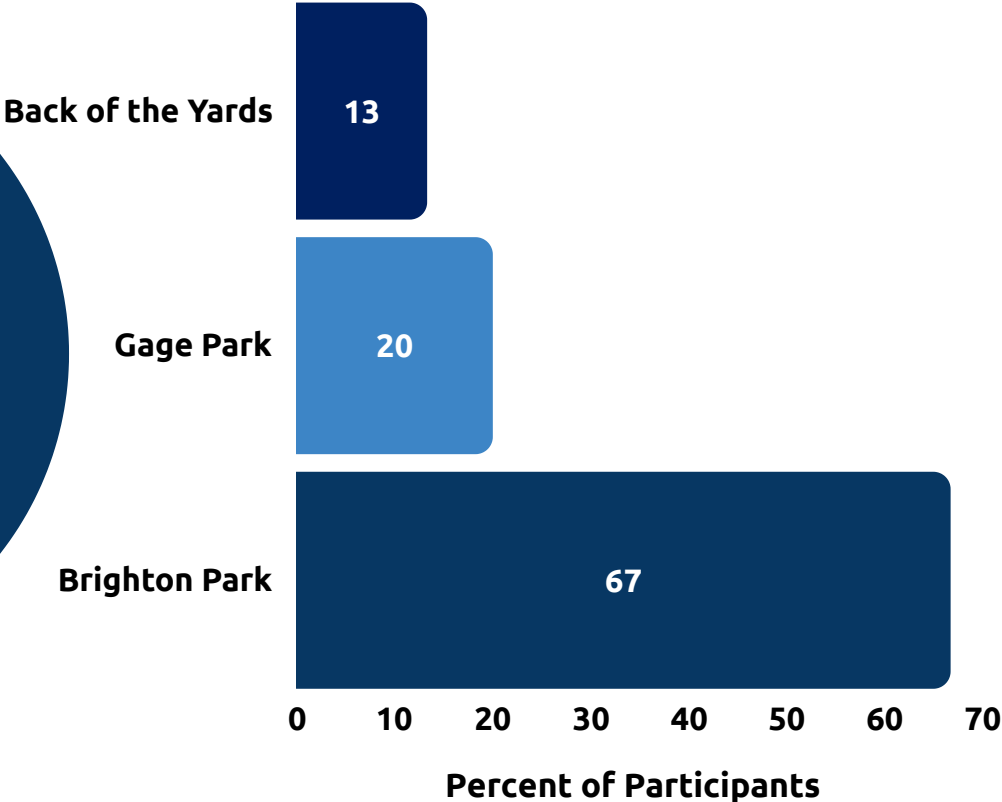
Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 15

Race/Ethnicity



Neighborhoods

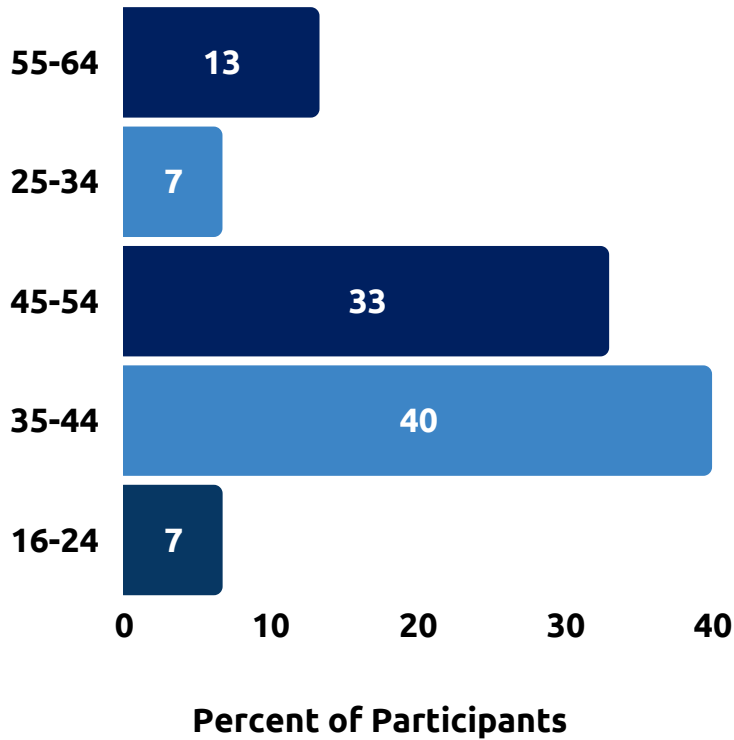


Demographics

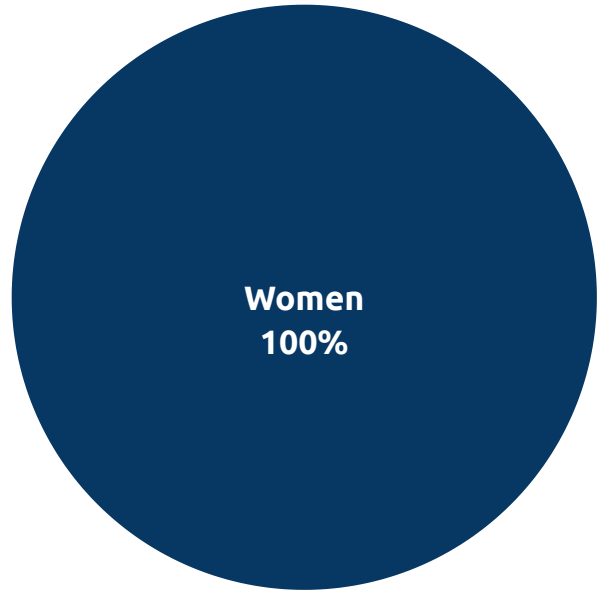
Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 15

Age



Gender Identity

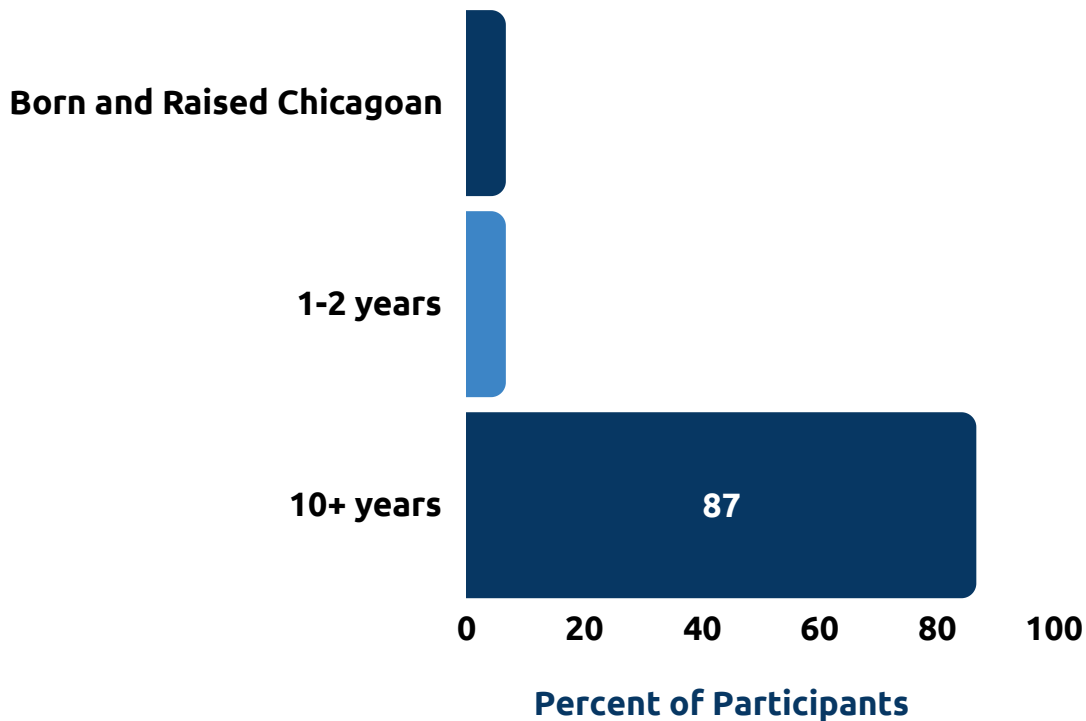


Demographics

Participant Demographics

Total Number of Participants: 15

How long have you lived in Chicago?



Overview

The Office of Equity & Racial Justice (OERJ), Chicago United for Equity (CUE), and Chicago's Co-governance Steering Committee guided community members through a conversation to create a shared definition of co-governance that prioritizes equitable partnerships and decision-making between government and community.

Objectives

- Provide insights on current experiences with city government—highlighting both successes and challenges.
- Imagine what co-governance could look like in practice, focusing on equity, transparency, and inclusivity.

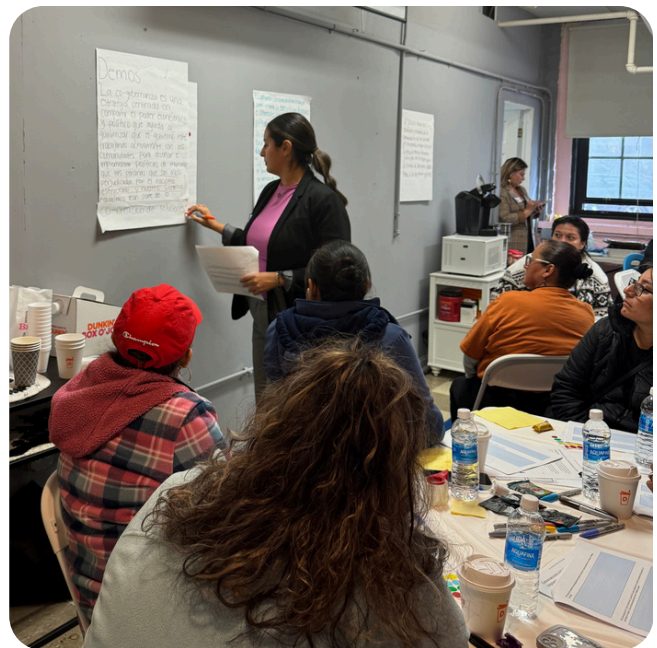
Key Takeaways

- Organizing as a group to address government is more powerful than individual efforts, as they often go unacknowledged.
- There is a disconnect between the government's responsiveness during campaigns versus daily governance - follow-through needs to be consistent.
- Implementing co-governance requires clarity in roles and processes to prevent miscommunication and disagreements, ensuring all voices are equitably represented.

Conversation Highlights

- “When [elected officials] campaign, we are acknowledged, but after they win, we are not as important.”
- “This [community conversation] is the first time in the many years that I’ve lived in Chicago where an administration listens to the community.”
- “I went to a march against school budget cuts, and it was a difficult experience because they didn’t listen to us, and I felt ignored. I have also attended council meetings where they promise to consider the community’s proposals, but once in power, they forget the community and neglect their promises.”

“This [community conversation] is the first time in the many years that I’ve lived in Chicago where an administration listens to the community.”



Understanding Your Experience



Participants were asked to reflect on their experiences engaging with the City of Chicago, rating experiences as "Difficult," "Neutral," "Excellent," or "No Government Engagement."

Engagement Activity Results

12

"Difficult" ratings: Reflected on frustrations with unaddressed issues, such as mental health center closures and limited responses to COVID-related needs.

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"Neutral" ratings: Highlighted instances where personal connections or organizational ties facilitated better government interactions.

Reflections

Documentarians translated the following reflections into English:

- The lack of alignment within city departments (e.g., City and CPS budget disagreements) makes community trust difficult to establish.
- If you are unaffiliated with organizations, you are excluded from decision-making, despite being taxpayers and active community members.
- Political representatives are disengaged post-election, reducing the credibility of early outreach efforts.

Understanding Your Experience

Reflections

Documentarians translated the following reflections into English:

- Direct, ongoing dialogue with government representatives, including personal outreach and consistent community meetings is preferred.
- Respect community expertise by working collaboratively and valuing lived experiences.
- It is difficult to connect with elected officials during visits to Springfield.
- Organized groups have better success engaging with government officials compared to individual residents.
- Parents who work collectively experience easier communication with the government than when acting alone.
- The lack of alignment between city departments and sister agencies is frustrating and complicates efforts to address community concerns.
- Mental health was not prioritized until widespread deterioration occurred across communities.
- Mental health was not prioritized until widespread deterioration occurred across communities.
- The government should listen to all individuals present in discussions, not just organized groups or those with visible affiliations.
- Elected officials are responsive during campaigns but disengaged once in office.
- The government listens when it needs the community but not when the community needs them.
- The current administration's efforts to include community voices make us grateful.

Understanding Your Experience

Reflections

Participants also shared the following reflections in Spanish in the participant handouts:

- **Difícil:** Desde que comenzaron las conferencias sobre salud mental, hemos enfrentado el cierre de 12 clínicas hace aproximadamente 12 años. Hoy, apenas están prestando atención a los problemas que afectan a todas las comunidades, como la depresión, la ansiedad, el acoso escolar y otros problemas como la violencia infantil en los hogares y las comunidades. Aunque se ha creado el programa TNT y se han reabierto dos de las clínicas cerradas, la atención sigue siendo insuficiente.
- **Difícil:** Mi experiencia fue difícil porque, aunque he asistido a varias reuniones y acciones públicas, acercarnos a los funcionarios es complicado. Siempre tienen prisa y se van antes de abordar completamente nuestras inquietudes.
- **Neutral:** Si conocías a alguien que trabajara en el sistema, las cosas se hacían mucho más fáciles. Sin embargo, CPS necesita coordinarse mejor con la ciudad sobre el manejo de los fondos.
- **Neutral:** En mi caso, fue neutral porque no me atendieron en el capitolio, pero también intenté comprender la perspectiva de la otra persona.
- **Neutral:** “Es fundamental que las escuelas públicas reciban los recursos que necesitan para garantizar una educación de calidad para los niños. El gobierno debe estar más presente en las comunidades y trabajar en conjunto para atender nuestras necesidades y devolvernos la confianza.”

Understanding Your Experience



Reflections

Participants also shared the following reflections in their participant handouts:

- **Difícil:** Es difícil que el gobierno interactúe con la comunidad. Cuando asistimos a marchas, cierran las puertas y no escuchan nuestras demandas. Además, la ciudad no se pone de acuerdo con CPS sobre lo mejor para los estudiantes, lo que complica aún más la situación.
- **Difícil:** Fui a una marcha contra los recortes escolares, y fue una experiencia difícil porque no nos escucharon y me sentí ignorada. También he asistido a reuniones de concejales donde prometen considerar las propuestas de la comunidad, pero una vez en el poder, se olvidan de la comunidad y relegan sus promesas al olvido.
- La ciudad y las autoridades educativas no logran ponerse de acuerdo sobre los fondos educativos. El gobierno debe considerar a los jóvenes en situación de riesgo y brindarles más apoyo para evitar la violencia.
- Es necesario que el gobierno sea más empático con las comunidades y restablezca la confianza para poder lograr mejoras en toda la ciudad.
- La comunidad debe ser parte de las mesas de decisión y contribuir a tomar decisiones que la beneficien. También es necesario construir una estructura que elimine el racismo y mejore la economía.

How Do You Define Co-Governance?



Facilitators shared three definitions of co-governance and asked participants to underline or verbally share phrases they would like to see reflected in Chicago's definition of co-governance.

Engagement Activity Results

- Codo a codo con los responsables de la toma de decisions.
- Co-creación de soluciones para terminar con el racismo estructural y el sistema económico desigual.
- Tener resultados positivos y verdaderos para abordar la situación económica y los problemas de grupos raciales, asegurando que todos tengamos equidad.
- Ser equitativos con todas las personas.
- Que nos escuchen y que los resultados sean visibles y positivos.
- Basta... basta de tanta violencia. Queremos caminar por nuestros barrios sin temor a la violencia por todos lados. Lo mismo aplica para la salud mental y los altos costos para obtenerla.
- La gobernanza está diseñada no solo en torno a procesos equitativos.
- La comunidad importa, no solo por los votos de los gobernantes.
- Trabajar codo a codo con la comunidad.
- Tomar las mejores decisiones.
- Que la ciudad de Chicago y la comunidad salgan beneficiadas.
- Personas perjudicadas por el racismo.
- Responsabilidades en la toma de decisiones.
- Resultados equitativos.
- La gobernanza está diseñada no solo en torno a procesos equitativos, sino también para garantizar resultados efectivos.

How Do You Define Co-Governance?



Facilitators asked participants what they thought would be an effective pathway to co-governance:

Documentarians translated the following reflections into English:

- Inclusive policies addressing racial, economic, and gender disparities.
- Co-governance should bring diverse voices together to co-create solutions.
- Focusing on those traditionally excluded from decision-making processes is central to the vision of shared power.
- Implementing co-governance faces challenges such as defining roles, resolving disagreements, and maintaining effective communication.
- Effective collaboration between the City of Chicago and community requires working as a team to address disputes.
- Working alongside government officials to ensure our community's opinions shape outcomes, not just inform discussions.
- The process must prioritize the voices of those directly impacted by policies, moving beyond tokenistic consultation.



