

Planning for Racial Equity Governance in Chicago

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chicago is in a moment of both deep crisis and opportunity. Racial disparities across all indicators – from health to housing – have persisted for decades despite public, nonprofit and philanthropic efforts otherwise. Indeed, the city’s deep racial inequality has many structural roots that programs and policies alone will not be able to fix. Instead, greater attention is needed on the various structural roots of racial inequality – including public policies, institutional practices, and cultural norms. As an institution with significant authority and influence, Chicago city government can lead the way in transformative change by committing to reorienting itself around the advancement of a racial equity agenda.

Government is needed for many reasons. Not only has it played a historic role in the creation of inequality for communities of color, it has also exacerbated these trends through the often-unintended consequences of its policies and practices. Fortunately, a movement of local governments intentionally advancing racial equity has taken root over the last decade with important lessons to offer Chicago.

With over 100 municipalities now embarking on similar journeys, a national network has emerged with a best practice framework for how government can achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all residents: by *normalizing* racial equity as a key value and goal of government, by *operationalizing* considerations of equity in the use of data and in decision-making, and by *organizing* internally and externally to ensure accountability. This report applies this framework to Chicago’s local context.

To begin, the City has several strengths to build on. In the past few years, the City has begun to more intentionally target investments in neighborhoods of color that have often been ignored by private markets and public policy, from the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund to the Mayor’s Mentoring Initiative. From a city agency perspective, the Chicago Department of Public Health is leading the way in promoting a focus on health equity and the structural roots of health disparities. Their Health in All Policies approach is especially important in pioneering a new way for how the breadth of city agencies can incorporate health equity considerations into their decision-making.

Yet the City also has substantial room for growth in how its practices and policies achieve racial equity. For one, senior leadership has yet to acknowledge or very openly discuss the challenges of structural racism and racial inequality in Chicago. This silence on issues of race dampens potential internal leadership on equity while also weakening trust with community members. The Chicago Police Department’s history of discriminatory policing and the Chicago Public School budget cuts’ disproportionate impact on Black and Latino communities both also present serious challenges that point to the need for both internal education around implicit bias and structural racism as well as the systematic consideration of racially disparate impacts of policies and programs.

Fortunately, significant momentum is building across the city for a greater focus on racial equity. At least two external efforts, the L-Evated Chicago collaborative and the Coalition Advancing Racial Equity, are taking shape to align resources and efforts around racial equity and to build the political will for an intentional citywide initiative. At a broader level, general awareness and openness to talking about race and structural racism is also growing, including a landmark study on the costs of racial segregation in Greater Chicago. Foundations are also offering increased funding to support racial equity efforts.

Several significant challenges will need to be overcome in any citywide racial equity initiative. One is a general lack of trust between community leaders and city government, including a skepticism of the City's commitment to tackling issues of structural racism head on. Challenging politics, the potential for community resistance, and the need for political will to address race were also seen as primary concerns.

For the City of Chicago to meaningfully advance a racial equity agenda, it needs to move forward on three core strategies:

- (1) **elevate racial equity as a priority** of government by passing a resolution that articulates a racial equity vision with clearly defined goals and expectations for action, by developing racial equity trainings for staff, and by producing a comprehensive report on Chicago's racial disparities.
- (2) **lay the groundwork for intentional practice and infrastructure** to advance equity by piloting the use of a racial equity impact tool, by creating a cross-departmental racial equity action team, and by establishing an Office of Racial Equity.
- (3) **rebuild trust and partner with communities**, especially communities of color, by actively listening and sharing decision-making authority with residents and by partnering more closely with existing coalitions like CARE and L-Evated Chicago.

Ultimately, strong leadership from government is needed to initiate this transformative shift in how the City of Chicago advances better outcomes for all its residents. Addressing deeply embedded racial inequality is not easy, yet it is sorely needed. Given the city's history of inequality, segregation, and racial tension, Chicago has a real opportunity to make significant progress towards racial equity by taking these intentional steps to confront these challenges directly.

INTRODUCTION

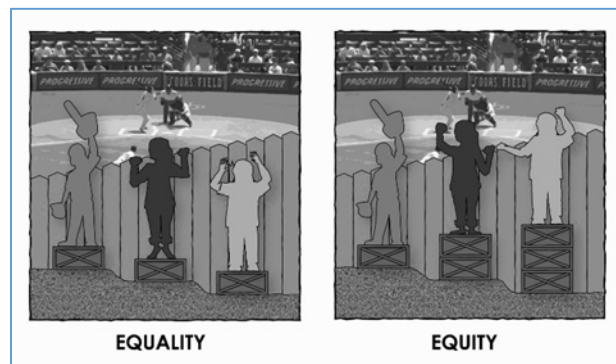
Over the last decade, a movement towards municipal governance for racial equity has taken root across the country from Seattle, WA and Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN to Boston, MA and Austin, TX. Over a hundred jurisdictions and counting have embarked on this journey. These municipal racial equity efforts have emerged in recognition that only an intentional effort to re-orient institutional practice around advancing equity will make progress at transforming the root causes of disparities and inequity: structural and institutional racism.¹

When government implements policies and programs to improve community and individual conditions without heeding or considering the structural causes of these conditions, it misses the opportunity to have a transformative effect on people and communities. A “race-blind” approach to governance that ignores these existing historic and institutional structures will do little to close disparities without a deeper re-orientation of the systems that produce and exacerbate inequality.

This professional report explores how an intentional effort to tackle the root causes of racial inequality could begin to take place in Chicago. Its goal is to explore how the City of Chicago government can join the national movement for equitable governance by centering racial equity in its institutional policies, programs and practices.

Guiding Principles

A foundational tenet of this report is the distinction between equity and equality, which are commonly misunderstood to be roughly the same. While *equity* relates to fairness, *equality* relates to sameness. *Equality* ensures access to the same resources, while *equity* ensures that the actual outcomes are fair. The image to the right is adapted from a popular illustration commonly used to make this distinction clear. As is shown, *equality* promotes the same distribution of resources regardless of historical context or existing conditions. In contrast, *equity* promotes an adequate and differentiated investment of resources to ensure individuals can all access opportunity regardless of their starting point. *Equity* does not suggest disparities be closed by lowering the standard for achievement; instead, it suggests that all individuals be supported in reaching the same level of benchmark.



Source: <http://culturalorganizing.org/the-problem-with-that-equity-vs-equality-graphic/>

¹ The Aspen Institute defines structural racism as “a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with ‘whiteness’ and disadvantages associated with ‘color’ to endure and adapt over time.” (Aspen Institute: Roundtable on Community Change)

This report is squarely centered on promoting *racial equity*, defined as when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes. Racial equity means that all systems in place - from education to housing to health – advance the bests outcomes for all city residents, regardless of their race or ethnicity. It does not simply mean closing the gaps to lower standards. It means setting universally high goals for all people, with targeted strategies to assist each group in achieving those goals.²

Research Questions & Methods.

As many municipalities have already taken steps along this path, Chicago does not need to reinvent the wheel in designing new strategies to institutionalize racial equity. Instead, the City merely needs to adapt the lessons from others. This report seeks to do just that: capture the emerging “good practice” of this growing movement and apply it to Chicago’s political, civic and cultural context. Specifically, this report seeks to answer the following primary questions:

- What strategies from other municipal racial equity efforts could apply in Chicago?
- What are the biggest challenges and the biggest opportunities to establishing a government-led racial equity effort in Chicago?
- What are the current paths of greatest opportunity to promoting racial equity as a government priority and explicit body of work?

To answer the above questions, I reviewed public documents and policy briefs as well as conducted semi-structured interviews. For the interviews, I conducted two separate sets: first, with 18 public and non-profit leaders in Chicago to understand the local context; and second, with over 25 government leaders working in racial equity efforts across the country. My analysis was also heavily informed by my time as a graduate student researcher for the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). A more detailed summary of my methods can be found in Appendix B.

² John Powell, UC Berkeley Professor of Law and Director of the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, refers to this concept as “targeted universalism.” He argues that targeted policies are needed to reach universal goals since universal policies have different impacts on different communities depending on historical and structural contexts. Instead of assuming that universal policies will impact all racial and ethnic groups the same, for example, targeted universalism argues for tailoring policies to specific communities to meet universal goals.

BACKGROUND: THE MUNICIPAL MOVEMENT FOR RACIAL EQUITY

Why Equity in Government?

Government often evolves to meet the changing needs of communities. Some recent examples include the creation of departments focused on serving immigrants and refugees (often called Office of New Americans) as well as offices or positions focused on promoting the broad concept of resilience (often backed by the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities). In the last decade, another similar trend has emerged: the intentional attention and focus of municipal government on promoting racial equity.

The City of Seattle was a pioneer in this movement through the creation of its Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI), a city-led effort with the goal of ending institutionalized racism and ending racial disparities in government. Since then, several cities have embarked on similar journeys and, beginning in 2014, the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) formed to support the development of effective municipal practice to advance racial equity.

The case for racial equity in public governance comes from several fronts. First, government has historically played a central role in crafting policies that created and maintained racial inequity: from discriminatory redlining³ to the exclusion of certain communities from the social safety net⁴ to the use of highway construction to both isolate and displace neighborhoods of color.⁵ Given this historic role, government has a responsibility to correct past wrongs and fundamentally reorient its underlying structures and systems to end racial disparities and promote success for all.

Moreover, government's immense authority and control over resources mandate its responsibility to work towards better outcomes for the entire city. Local government has the most direct contact with residents, which further elevates its responsibility to support better outcomes for everyone, especially those most historically marginalized and excluded from opportunity. Local government's direct provision of services make it an essential player in ensuring that all communities have the same high quality of service and access to fundamentals.

Finally, the movement for racial equity in municipal government acknowledges the need for structural and institutional changes over programmatic fixes. Despite national progress in addressing explicit discrimination through the Civil Rights Movement, racial inequities persist across all measures of quality of life and life outcomes. By more directly addressing the root causes of disparities instead of targeting specific symptoms, structural and cultural changes in

³ Redlining, in the housing context, was the systematic denial of mortgage loans and other financial services to households in specifically designated neighborhoods, largely those that were predominantly Black.

⁴ The original passage of the 1935 Social Security Act is known to have excluded certain occupations, like farmworkers or domestic workers, which were also predominantly Black (DeWitt 2010).

⁵ Across the country, highway construction fueled existing patterns of racial inequality by clearing entire communities of color either as "blight" removal or simply as paths of least resistance for construction (Avila 2014).

government practice have the potential to create more lasting impacts. GARE advocates for attention to be placed on policy change, systems redesign, and institutional culture change specifically.

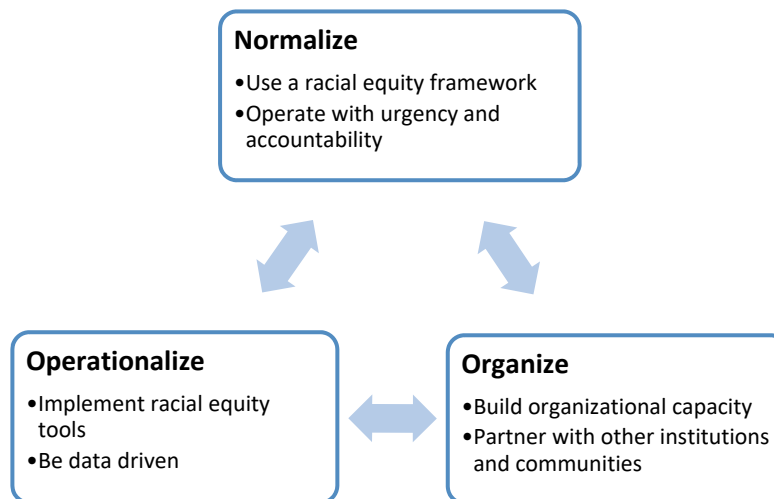
Best Practice in Governing for Racial Equity

The transformation of government into an institution that promotes and advances equity requires several related strategies. In its work with cities across the country, GARE has developed a framework for carrying out this transformative work. As described by the Center for Social Inclusion (one of GARE’s parent organizations):

“Policies alone, however, are insufficient. Employees within institutions must **normalize** racial equity as a key value and have clear understanding and shared definitions. They must **operationalize** equity via new policies and by transforming the underlying culture of government. And finally, they must **organize**, both internally and in partnership with other institutions and the community.”

GARE best practices thus focus on these three goals of *normalizing*, *operationalizing*, and *organizing*. Six related strategies, as depicted below, have consistently demonstrated to be effectively advance these goals.

Figure 4: National Best Practice for Municipal Racial Equity Efforts



Source: Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE)

A first core practice in institutionalizing racial equity in government is **normalizing** conversations about and prioritizing racial equity. Talking about race may be difficult for those who aren’t accustomed to it, though that doesn’t have to be the case. Much of the challenge exists because of a lack of a common understanding or shared language about racial equity. Normalizing conversations about racial equity help move beyond ineffective and inaccurate “color-blind” approaches. Similarly, inspiring a shared racial equity vision with specific priorities

and strategies can mobilize movements and result in structural and cultural transformations – such as marriage equality or even the sustainability and recycling movement.

One normalizing strategy is the formal prioritization of racial equity, such as through the passage of resolutions that define a racial equity vision with specific goals and clear expectations for action. An example in practice is Tacoma’s “Equity and Empowerment” framework passed in 2014. The resolution defined equity and offered a framework for the city’s work. It identified 5 goals: (1) for the city’s workforce to reflect the community, (2) for more purposeful community outreach and engagement, (3) for equitable service delivery to all residents, (4) to support human rights and opportunities for everyone to achieve their full potential, and (5) to commit to equity in local government decision-making.

Another core practice is the **operationalizing** of racial equity work such that it becomes part of institutional behavior. Research shows that all people are subject to implicit biases,⁶ regardless of intentions, which we then internalize in our beliefs and behaviors. The explicit consideration of racial impact when making policy is thus an important step in institutionalizing equity. Furthermore, collecting and analyzing data on racial inequities can track progress on racial equity efforts and help close gaps over time.

A core operationalizing strategy is the systematic consideration of potential racially disparate impacts in policy and budget making processes using racial equity tools (RETs). An example in practice is City of Madison, WI’s creation of two such racial equity analysis tools: a comprehensive version for significant decisions and a fast track version to be used for low-stakes decisions. To date, Madison’s RET has been used to inform park development, street building, hiring and promotional decisions, strategic planning, and city budgeting.

Lastly, racial equity efforts need to also **organize** internally and externally for transformational impact. To advance racial equity, it’s critical to build organizational capacity. Capacity needs to be supported by an internal infrastructure that facilitates organization-wide change. Still, government cannot solve the entire problem of structural racism on its own. To advance racial equity in communities, government must also partner with other organizations and sectors.

One organizing strategy is the creation of a supportive internal infrastructure in government. In Minneapolis-St. Paul, senior officials in the Met Council created 3 levels of internal structures: an implementation team, an equity unit, and separate change teams in each department. In this structure, each department has a change team that identifies specific equity issues and implements changes, while the equity implementation team oversees and monitors the Council’s specific equity goals in housing and transportation.

See Appendix A for a more extensive inventory of specific strategies under each component of the above framework and examples of how other cities have implemented these approaches. This inventory can serve as starting point for exploring strategies to implement.

⁶ Implicit bias refers to “the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.” These biases reside deep in the subconscious and are activated without awareness or intention (Kirwan Institute). See Harvard’s Project Implicit for more: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

CONTEXT: RACE IN CHICAGO

One of the most pressing problems facing Chicago today – as is true for almost any major U.S. city - is the persistent racial disparity that exists across almost all indicators of city residents' well-being. The city's growing inequality⁷ has its roots in a myriad of practices and policies that have offered opportunity to select groups while excluding others, often communities of color. Many of these practices have been perpetuated by government itself.

Historical Highlights

Race is deeply imbued in the development and politics of Chicago. This section provides brief highlights of local practices, policies and events that have particularly impacted communities of color in Chicago. Admittedly, it only provides a “tip of the iceberg” account of a story that could be told in perpetuity, yet offers a baseline for considering the magnitude of addressing structural racism in the city.

Beginning with the present, racial inequality has received greater attention in Chicago due to a series of milestone events. Perhaps most notably, the killing of Laquan McDonald, a Black teenager, by a white Chicago Police Officer in October 2014 brought greater attention to Chicago's tragic history of police brutality against communities of color. The protests and uprisings that followed the release of the shooting's video led to the firing of CPD Superintendent and the loss of Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez' re-election bid amid demands for her resignation. Shortly after, a mayor-appointed Police Accountability Task Force and the US Department of Justice both investigated the police department and found systematic practices of discrimination and a culture of little accountability.

On a different front, education policy has also recently revived attention on racially discriminate policy. The record high closing of over 50 Chicago Public Schools in 2013, most of which were in majority Black communities, generated further debates over the city's role in perpetuating racial inequality. While city representatives have defended their actions as in the best interests of students in failing schools, community advocates and labor leaders have remained critical.

While structural racial inequality has recently been felt most acutely on issues of public safety and education, racially disparate policy and practice – both by government and other institutions – is not new to Chicago. Over the city's history, racial tensions and discriminatory policy have long played a central role in the development (or decline) of neighborhoods and in the machinations of city politics.

For one, Chicago has a deep-rooted history of segregation and housing discrimination. Today, Black communities are heavily concentrated in the south and west sides and Latino communities in northwest, southwest and southeast. The city's racial divisions have been

⁷ Byrnes 2014

reinforced by both federal and local policy alike. At first, outright housing discrimination, racial covenants, and redlining practices all restricted the housing choices of Black families. As much as 80% of homes in Chicago are estimated to have been included in restrictive racial covenants at one point.⁸ Indeed, historians have traced the roots of racial covenants back to Chicago and the growth of the first national real estate lobby, which popularized the idea of single-use single-race communities.⁹

Yet even after Civil Rights wins nominally helped open housing markets to Black households, a contract purchasing practice emerged that systematically stripped wealth from them. As these families were coerced into paying more for their homes in the absence of federal mortgage subsidies (which were offered to similar white households), they were left vulnerable to the predatory terms of contract-purchasing agreements.¹⁰ Today, contract home buying is estimated to have stripped Black families in Chicago of \$3 billion since the practice began.¹¹

The racialized mechanics of Chicago housing further extended into public policy. The construction of public housing by the Chicago Housing Authority, for example, was largely limited to Black neighborhoods in attempts to maintain racial segregation. The opposition of white communities to any public housing construction in their neighborhoods reinforced existing racial divisions in the city.¹² Intentional decisions by the City Council, such as requiring the Chicago Housing Authority receive council approval in choosing public housing sites, ensured segregation in the city would be maintained.¹³

Racial tensions have also erupted periodically throughout the city's history, sometimes in the form of inter-group violence. In 1966, a white mob rioted against Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s march for fair housing in Chicago's southwest side, going as far as throwing rocks at the peaceful marchers.¹⁴ That same year, one

"I've been in many demonstrations all across the South, but I can say that I have never seen — even in Mississippi and Alabama — mobs as hostile and as hate-filled as I've seen here in Chicago."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

of the first Puerto Rican riots in the country manifested in the Humboldt Park neighborhood after a police officer shot a young Puerto Rican man in the leg. Half a decade earlier, in 1961, Black families who had been given temporarily shelter in a Bridgeport church after their homes caught on fire were greeted with protests and threats of violence. Even earlier, in 1919, a Black teenager, Eugene Williams, drowned on a beach in Chicago's South Side after white onlookers assailed him with rocks amid claims that he crossed into their turf. Five days of riots ensued leading to 28 deaths and 500 injured - among the deadliest episodes of racial violence in the

⁸ "Understanding Fair Housing," U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Clearinghouse Publication 42, February 1973.

⁹ Moser 2017

¹⁰ Regrettably, accounts are now reporting the return of a new form of contract selling in Chicago – this time by out of state investment funds (Burns 2017).

¹¹ Burns 2017

¹² Edstam 2016

¹³ Hirsch 1978

¹⁴ Grossman 2016

city.¹⁵ Over 1,000 Black families were also left homeless after rioters torched their homes.¹⁶ Indeed, violence itself was the primary tool employed by working class white communities in their efforts to prevent Black families from moving in from the 1940s through 1960s.¹⁷

Politics have also historically been racialized in the city. When Harold Washington was elected Mayor of Chicago in 1984, he became the first African American to hold the seat. Yet racialized political opposition severely constrained his ability to steer a citywide policy agenda. In what earned Chicago the nickname of “Beirut on the Lake,” the first term of Washington’s tenure was marked by legislative gridlock among a city council largely divided on racial lines between Mayor Washington and a council majority of white aldermen.¹⁸ As an example of this racially politicized opposition, about 1,000 white Chicagoans gathered in 1984 to demand a “white ethnic agenda” that sought to resist a court-mandated scattering of public housing across the city instead of their further concentration in Black neighborhoods.¹⁹ Among their chief demands was the creation of an insurance pool to reimburse homeowners who sold houses for less than their appraised value. The long-term policy impacts of these dynamics can be seen in the eventual state legislation that created home equity assurance programs in 3 predominantly white neighborhoods in Chicago, all of which are still exist today.²⁰

These brief points attempt to highlight the ways in which institutional policies and practices have contributed to racial inequality and how racial tensions are deeply rooted in the city’s culture. It is not a comprehensive account, but an initial peek into aspects of structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism in Chicago. The next section offers a glimpse at the current disparities that these institutional practices and policies have helped produce.

Current Disparities

The realities of how institutional policies and practices perpetuate racial inequality can be seen in the state of current racial disparities in Chicago. These disparities in themselves are particularly important as a majority of the city residents are people of color: about 32% Black, 28% Latino, and 6% Asian or Pacific Islander.²¹

Racial inequity can be easily seen in employment, with workers of different racial groups having remarkably different relationships with the economy. Most clear is the disparity in income by race: median wages in 2014 for white workers was \$28, yet \$19 for Black and \$15 for Latino workers.²² A similar inequality can be seen in general employment: whereas the white unemployment rate in 2014 was 6%, it’s more than twice as high for people of color overall at

¹⁵ Armstrong 2017 & Chicago Historical Homicide Project

¹⁶ History.com Staff 2009

¹⁷ Hirsch 1978

¹⁸ Kelly 1985

¹⁹ Shipp 1984

²⁰ Moser 2017

²¹ From 1980 to 2014, communities of color went from 56.7% to 67.48% of Chicago’s population. (National Equity Atlas)

²² National Equity Atlas by PolicyLink/USC PERE

14.4% and more than three times as high for African-Americans at 20.3%.²³ These stark inequities are even echoed among Chicago's youth, with over 23% of Black young adults classified as outside of formal employment or education, yet with only 11% of Latinos and under 3% of white youth in the same situation.²⁴

Racial inequity is also seen in housing. Though nearly half of Chicagoans are burdened by housing costs (defined as paying over 30% of income), households of color typically face higher rates of burden (58%) than white ones (40.6%). Black renters and Latino homeowners each face among the highest levels of housing burden in Chicago, at 61.7% and 56.7% respectively.

The spatial residential patterns of communities of color further reflect the racialized landscape of the city. Whereas 10.3% of all Chicago residents in 2012 lived in neighborhoods with over 40% in poverty, the same was true for over 26% of Black Chicagoans but only 1.4% of the white ones. Indeed, racial housing segregation remains entrenched both in the city and across the region. The Brookings Institute also ranks Chicago 10th in the country for Black-white segregation and 9th for Latino-white segregation.²⁵

The above disparities show how the experiences of Chicagoans vary deeply by race. Indeed, racial inequity can be seen across all measures of quality of life, including the many scores of indicators not included above. In themselves, these disparities are tragic. They are also symptomatic of the larger structures, institutions, and policies that have worked together to produce adverse outcomes for Black, Latino, Native, Asian and other communities of color. Indeed, some even argue that racial inequality may itself be at the root of violent crime rates in Chicago,²⁶ suggesting that levels of entrenched racial inequity and the intergenerational trauma it can cause have compounding negative impacts that the few statistics above fail to completely capture.

As an institution with the purpose of serving, supporting and protecting the well-being of the general public, local government has an obligation to recognize its past role in promoting racially discriminatory policies and commit to explicitly and intentionally working to advance a vision of racial equity.

²³ National Equity Atlas by PolicyLink/USC PERE

²⁴ Ross and Svajlenka 2016

²⁵ Acs et al. 2017

²⁶ Anspach 2014

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

To explore the potential creation of an intentional racial equity strategy or initiative in City of Chicago government, I interviewed 17 local stakeholders from the local public and nonprofit sectors. Drawing on these conversations and other sources of information, I organize my findings using a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) framework. I identified general perspectives on what the City of Chicago is currently doing well that supports racial equity, what the City is currently doing that may hinder progress towards equity, and what some related opportunities and challenges would be for further advancement.

STRENGTHS: What is the city currently doing well that advances racial equity?

Overall, Chicago has several promising efforts and departments underway that it can build on to advance a more comprehensive racial equity agenda. First, Mayor Rahm Emmanuel and his administration have initiated several efforts targeted at reducing geographic or neighborhood inequality by focusing investments on predominantly communities of color. Second, several city departments were highlighted either as places where equity is emerging as a priority in some form or as agencies which may be well positioned to play supportive roles. Third, in at least a few ad hoc instances, city staff have intentionally updated programs and policies in attempts to inch towards more racially equitable outcomes. Together, these findings suggest that city employees are indeed interested and attempting to change institutional practices and policies, it's just not occurring in a systematic, holistic or explicitly racial way.

(Racial) Equity by Another Name?

In response to criticism over an over-prioritization of downtown and wealthy neighborhoods in Mayor Rahm Emmanuel's first term, the City has more recently developed programs that target investments in the South and West sides, both of which are predominantly African-American. In some senses, this approach advances equity by providing resources to communities of color that have been historically ignored by public policy and private markets. Most interviewees suggested that policy discussions focus more on economic disparities or neighborhood inequality, instead of an explicit focus on race. Perhaps most emblematic of this new focus has been the recent appointment of Andrea Zopp as Deputy Mayor and Chief Neighborhood Development, charged with driving the Mayor's strategy to improve quality of life "in every corner of the city," especially the historically disinvested south and west sides.²⁷ This new position and office represent an internal structural change, which, while perhaps temporary,

"Lots of work gets done in places that are majority people of color, I just don't know if people have called it out as [racial equity]."

City employee

²⁷ "Mayor Emanuel Names Andrea Zopp Deputy Mayor, Chief Neighborhood Development Officer" Mayor's Press Office 2016

represent a shift in how the City prioritizes investment and policy towards communities of color.

At least three newer initiatives offer additional concrete examples of this recent programmatic and policy shift towards neighborhood equity. First is the recently launched Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF). The NOF seeks to leverage the demand for denser development in downtown Chicago to support commercial revitalization and economic development in the South and West Sides of Chicago. It works by having new construction in downtown zones pay a fee into the fund in exchange for greater density permissions, which then provides grant support to businesses and property owners in target neighborhoods for costs related to new construction or rehabilitation of existing buildings. While not intentionally designed to advance racial equity, the NOF does seek to ensure that historically underinvested communities receive city investments.

Like the NOF, the Retail Thrive Zones program is another example of greater investments being steered towards neighborhoods of color. This 3-year pilot program is intended to improve the economic vitality of 8 neighborhood commercial corridors in Black and Latino communities in the South, Southwest, and West Sides of Chicago. The program largely consists of coordinated financial assistance of up to \$16 million for neighborhood businesses and entrepreneurs as well as infrastructure improvements such as streetlight upgrades.

A third example is the recent Mayor's Mentoring Initiative. In Fall of 2016, Mayor Emmanuel announced an effort to provide universal mentorship programs for at-risk youth in 22 of the city's community areas with highest violence. At first, this initiative focused on expanding the well-studied and proven *Becoming a Man* program, which focuses on promoting social and emotional health in young boys of color. Like the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, this initiative does not have an explicit racial lens though each one of the 22 community areas it targets are predominantly African-American.

Given Chicago's deep history of embedded and persistent racial segregation, these targeted investments in South and West side neighborhoods do represent meaningful efforts to improve outcomes for communities of color. Yet the lack of an explicit lens around racial equity and around addressing the structural causes of neighborhood disinvestment begs the question of how these programs may have been developed differently had they had that explicit intention. Still, the targeted investments in neighborhoods that have been historically excluded from resources for decades are still a welcome and promising shift in practice.

Health and Planning are Leading the Way

Encouragingly, a few city agencies are already pioneering a movement towards greater equity. Most prominently, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) is leading in its efforts to center healthy equity and the elimination of health inequities across all its programs, policies,

and operations.²⁸ CDPH plans to achieve this through the implementation of Healthy Chicago 2.0, the City's recently formulated 4-year health improvement plan. As most interviewees pointed out, this effort and CDPH in general are likely where city policy is most explicitly centered on reducing disparities and improving outcomes for all residents. Indeed, the plan itself does name structural racism as a root cause of health inequities (even though it does not center racism and racial equity throughout).²⁹ Promisingly, Healthy Chicago 2.0 represents a shift in how a city department intentionally focuses on inequality and proposes strategies to address the root causes of disparities.

One important component to note is Healthy Chicago 2.0's commitment to institutionalizing a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach. HiAP ensures every city agency considers the health impact of policies and programs on communities, with the goal of aligning policies and programs citywide around improving health outcomes and reducing health disparities. This development shows promise for informing future efforts to operationalize racial equity in city government. As the City gains experience institutionalizing specific impact considerations across city departments, it can either apply those lessons to a future citywide "racial equity in all policies" approach or even simply incorporate racial equity considerations into the HiAP implementation.

After CDPH, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) was highlighted second most by interviewees as an agency where attention to racial equity may be taking root. Its leadership in creating geographically targeted programs like Retail Thrives and the NOF is evidence of DPD's emerging focus on steering investments to historically marginalized communities of color. That said, these programs could be strengthened with a more intentional focus on root causes of neighborhood disinvestment and through the development of a more comprehensive strategy to eliminate racial disparities in housing and economic development.

Other Departments Well-Positioned to Support

Two other city agencies were identified as potential strengths in Chicago's current approach to addressing issues of interpersonal racism and racial disparities. The first is the Commission on Human Relations (CCHR), which is tasked with enforcing Chicago's Human Rights and Fair Housing Ordinances. CCHR's mission is squarely centered on protecting people of color (as well as other protected identities) from acts of discrimination. In this sense, CCHR is one of the few agencies that specifically focuses on communities of color, even if mostly in a responsive way. With hate crimes on the rise nationally following the recent election of Donald Trump as President, the protections that CCHR offers are as critical as ever.

The Commission also goes beyond the scope of investigating and punishing discrimination and hate crimes to also proactively discourage acts of bigotry through the convening of task forces across the city to bridge racial, cultural and religious communities. One such example is a task

²⁸ Health equity is defined as when every person can attain their full health potential.

²⁹ Healthy Chicago 2.0

force created after the mass shooting of largely gay Latino men in an Orlando LGBT nightclub. This post-Pulse task force brought together all communities impacted by the violence –Muslim, LGBT, and Latino communities. This bridging role played by the commission is important for its potential role in both normalizing discussions of race and for organizing a movement in partnership with community members and allies.

The CCHR plays some additional roles that could be expanded or leveraged in a future racial equity initiative. First, the Commission at least occasionally provides educational and training assistance to other departments. One example is in its recent delivery of a diversity training on transgender individuals and communities. With increased funding or capacity, the commission could do the same to help normalize conversations on structural racism and built internal city capacity to advance equity. Second, the CCHR also coordinates and supports an official Advisory Council on Equity, comprised of mayoral appointees. Though the Equity Advisory Council is similarly focused on issues of equal access, discrimination, and hate crimes, it could be potentially grown to have a more expansive focus and decision-making authority in a future equity initiative.

Lastly, the Department of Family & Support Services (DFSS) was also identified as a potential supportive agency. It implements at least a few programs targeted towards communities of color, such as the Mayoral Mentoring Initiative and the One Summer Chicago youth employment program. It also recently launched a citywide Task Force to Reduce Homelessness. Since none of these programs have an explicit racial equity lens, they all represent potential opportunities to pilot the usage of a racial equity impact tool. As mentioned earlier, a racial equity tool offers a systematic way to consider the racial equity impacts of a policy or program in order to strengthen its effectiveness at promoting racial equity. Since DFSS already implements programs relevant to communities of color, the department could be an early leader in intentionally addressing race.

Ad Hoc Race-Intentional Efforts Exist

“[Existing racial equity efforts] feel very piecemeal, and people are starting to recognize the need to collaborate more. There’s a lot we probably don’t know of.”

City Employee

Lastly, though Chicago has no explicit or comprehensive racial equity strategy, several programs and practices have been intentionally updated in the past to either explicitly consider racialized impacts or to explicitly target efforts to communities of color.

In one case, after noticing a disparity in the recruits and new hires for Chicago Police Department Officers, a Mayor’s Office staffer reviewed the application process and noticed a fee was historically charged to take placement test – which had the impact of excluding many low-income people of color from applying. As part of an effort to improve workforce diversity, the city started conducting targeted recruitment of diverse candidates and dropped the

application fee. Another example is a recently passed City ordinance which increased incentives for the use of Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) in city contracting. The ordinance increased MBWE participation goals for construction projects by 2% in recognition of the historic exclusion of women and people of color in construction firms. Lastly, one example program that intentionally targets racial groups is the Saturday Academy effort at Malcom X College that provides mostly African American youth in middle and high school with STEM-related experiences, in an effort to connect them to STEM careers in the future.

While these are all promising bright spots of government policies or programs working to intentionally confront the challenges of structural racial inequity, they are still individualized efforts that rely more on the proactive drive of individuals rather than being bolstered by institutional practice. If the city were to build out a more comprehensive racial equity strategy, beginning to connect the dots of promising work that is already going on would surely be an important starting point. A supportive internal infrastructure can help connect these disparate efforts. A more standardized and systematic process for consideration of racially disparate impact, such as the required use of a racial equity tool, can also help move beyond a collection of individual efforts towards a transformative change in institutional practice.

WEAKNESSES. What practices undermine the city's efforts to advance racial equity?

Despite the areas where Chicago shows promise in advancing a racial equity agenda, several general practices and overarching norms may be working to undermine racial equity efforts. These range from a lack of open discussion or prioritization of structural racism to the unintended consequences of city policy. Should the city decide to take on the targeted work of advancing racial equity, it will need to seriously consider ways to overcome these weaknesses.

Public Silence on Race and Structural Racism

Broadly speaking, government leaders have yet to publicly acknowledge or initiate a conversation on structural racism. While this is not necessarily true across the entire city government (for example, Healthy Chicago 2.0 does mention structural racism as a root cause of health disparities), the general perception of most community leaders interviewed is that harmfully silent. Simply acknowledging by itself, as public acknowledgment of action would be just as discouraging for needed initial step towards promoting the

“There's this layering of a history of racism and segregation that most public officials don't want to talk about or admit. So far, there is not a culture that compels, or a moment that has compelled, the Chicago elite or political class to talk openly about this.”

Former CBO Employee

public officials remain racism is surely insufficient racism without meaningful communities. Yet it is still a needed cultural change in

government. Without a transparent and open discussion of racial equity and of the many challenges of structural racism, the city will not be able to adequately address it.

“If there are [discussions about racial equity in government], they're hidden from view. There is no public conversation... if there's anything going on in the city, it comes up dribbles and drabs. There is no real conversation.”

Nonprofit Director

Many stakeholders felt that leadership needs to come from elected officials to initiate a larger discourse on racial equity and for a reorientation of government practice to take root. While certain moments – such as the killing of Laquan MacDonald – have brought issues of structural racism into the public discourse, the conversation has ultimately still faded away. The lack of

attention to local racial disparities has been particularly evidence in recent months as nearly all attention has shifted to the current Republican presidential administration. Some fear this could distract from attention to local conditions and any meaningful attention on the internal changes needed for the city to advance equity.

The lack of a real, open conversation around race can slow down progress towards being intentional about advancing racial equity in city policy. Until more electeds raise this issue as a conversation the city needs to have, the culture of the City and the confidence of city employees interested in promoting equity will remain dampened.

Police Brutality, School Closures, and Unintended Consequences

Serious concerns were also raised about directly harmful city practices. These concerns were most consistently voiced with respect to two primary institutions: the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

With respect to the former, Chicago police have long had an antagonistic relationship with Black and Latino communities. Beyond the highly publicized recent shooting of Laquan MacDonald, CPD has been well documented to apply systematic and racially discriminatory policing strategies that largely target Black Chicagoans. As just one example, public scrutiny of Homan Square, a CPD interrogation facility in the city's West side, not only revealed possible human rights abuses, but also that over 82% of the facility's detainees between 2004 and 2015 were Black.³⁰ A full documentation of racial targeting and Chicago policing is outside the scope of this report, yet it is worth recognizing the substantial harm and trauma that the department has inflicted on communities of color – a negative impact that has itself been investigated and proven by both the City³¹ and the Department of Justice.³² The case of racially discriminatory

³⁰ Ackerman and Stafford 2015

³¹ Police Accountability Task Force 2016

³² U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and U. S. Attorney's Office Northern District of Illinois 2017

policing practices point to need for drastic reform of CPD, including the greater understanding of implicit biases and structural racism across police officers and other public employees.

Aside from the police department, the more recent impacts of school closures and CPS budget cuts have also arisen as particularly harmful to goals of racial equity. Though the disproportionate impacts of public education cuts on Black and Latino communities may be unintended consequences, their impact is still very real and points to the power imbalance between the City and communities of color in determining the fate of community institutions. The most recent CPS budget cuts, for example, were twice as large in majority Latino schools as compared to majority white ones.³³ In protest of this disproportionate impact on Latino communities, the entire CPS Latino Advisory Committee resigned.³⁴ While school budgets are symptomatic of larger structural challenges, the trend of both budget cuts and school closures bearing most of their impact on communities of color is a barrier to racial equity in education.

“When you look at school closings in mostly African American and some Latino neighborhoods, and the easiness of charter schools coming into the communities, whether you stand on either side [on charter schools], the fact is that this is only happening in Black and brown communities.”

CBO Staff person

To be sure, there are undoubtedly scores of policies and programs that have unintended negative impacts on communities of color in Chicago. One such example highlighted by community advocates is the exclusion of eligible Latinos from public housing: though Latinos make up 25% of the eligible public housing population in Chicago, they only constitute 10% of actual residents. In turn, the recent trend of public housing demolition has also had negative impacts on Black communities, serving to re-segregate the city by displacing former tenants.³⁵ These and similar examples of unintended consequences are the reason why building in a systematic consideration of racially disparate impacts is critical.

Public Sector Siloes

An additional challenge to the advancement of a racial equity agenda is the siloed nature of government bureaucracy. Comprehensive efforts towards tackling structural racism requires sufficient coordination across city agencies and departments. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the challenges of aligning individual departments and agencies with their own budgets and decision-making processes pose limits on the coordinated, collective action that city government as a whole could take. This challenge again points to the need for some intentional internal infrastructure to support this work, such as a cross-departmental task force charged with connecting the dots across various racial equity efforts. The lack of a general

³³ FitzPatrick 2017

³⁴ Tafoya 2017

³⁵ Goetz 2013

institutionalized decision-making process may also limit the city's ability to take coordinated steps towards racial equity (though Health in All Policies may be serving to address that).

Other Concerns: Workforce Hiring and Resource Limitations

Interviewees identified several additional weak spots in city policy and practice. One was a lack of transparency on diversity in the city's workforce. A commitment to publicly sharing data on racial demographics of the public employees would help measure the extent to which the city's workforce is representative of the city's demographics. Overall, a movement towards racial equity in government should include a commitment to equity in the workforce.³⁶

Another issue identified was the limitation of public resources and capacity. A concrete example is the inability of CCHR to translate its services into additional languages other than Spanish. The Commission resource limitations mean that the 30% of the city's non-English speakers (those that speak a language other than Spanish, such as Polish, Mandarin, or Tagalog) may not be able to access Civil Rights protections through the CCHR. In the context of a state budget crisis and declining federal funding (or even a hostile government environment), city government will need to think critically and creatively about how it decides to allocate and prioritize funding.

OPPORTUNITIES. What current movement in the city be leveraged?

Fortunately, a substantial amount of positive momentum exists within the city for a stronger and more intentional look at race, racial equity, and structural racism. Two separate collaboratives are currently taking shape that will help organize community and nonprofit efforts to advance racial equity, while a growing general awareness of racial inequity presents both external funding opportunities as well as new potential partners. The City and other interested stakeholders should strategically leverage these existing points of momentum to form partnerships and build the political will needed to address racial equity through government.

Local Momentum in L-Evated Chicago

One opportunity for the City to deepen its engagement with and support of community-led racial equity efforts is with a new collaborative of nonprofit, foundation and government partners that are launching an effort to address racial equity, public health, and climate change. The new 3-year initiative, known as L-Evated Chicago, is one of six recipients of a national grant program called the Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC). SPARCC will help bring national technical assistance and expertise to advance, among other goals, racial equity in Chicago.

³⁶ For more on strategies to promote workforce equity, see the related resource by GARE: <http://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/advancing-racial-equity-and-transforming-government-a-resource-guide-to-put-ideas-into-action/>

Though the Chicago Department of Public Health is already formally involved in L-Evated Chicago, additional agencies working on housing, community development, and climate efforts may also have roles to play in advancing the program’s goals. Furthermore, the momentum created by L-Evated Chicago to focus on advancing racial equity locally can serve as a catalyst for the city to deepen its partnership with relevant local nonprofit institutions while receiving support from national expertise to advance racial equity in the city. The opportunity exists to build the partnerships deeply needed for larger change to happen.

Growing Public Awareness and Focus on Race

Several interviewees also commented on a recent shift in the last couple years towards greater public awareness of issues of structural and institutional racism. This greater willingness among residents and local organizations to grapple with race is likely a result of the greater national conversation on police brutality, Ferguson, and the Black Lives Matter movement, especially in the context of the city’s own experience with the

“I’m telling you, [race] has been a taboo conversation in Chicago until the past 18 months. It was talked about, but not talked about as if we need to do something about it. It was more lamenting and looking back.”

Nonprofit Employee

shooting of Laquan MacDonald. Indeed, a national polling study in 2016 showed a significant increase in public awareness of racism – including a noticeable shift in the percent of white Americans who believe more should be done to eliminate racism, from 39% to 53% over the course of a year. This momentum has only been bolstered by widespread pushback to the current administration’s divisive rhetoric.

A similar trend has picked up with a focus on racial equity among the nonprofit and foundation sectors. Already, national and local foundations alike are centering issues of racial equity and even racial healing in their programmatic work. As just two examples of this changing tide: Living Cities, a collaborative of over 20 foundations and banks, recently launched the Racial Equity Here initiative to support 5 city governments in advancing their own racial equity work. The national W. K. Kellogg Foundation, in turn, was one of the first major foundations to publicly commit to a focus on racial equity and racial healing, which has led it to provide funding support to racial equity governance efforts in cities like New Orleans, LA, and Grand Rapids, MI. This new direction of foundation funding is especially timely for a potential Chicago racial equity effort given the current state and local budget shortfalls impacting the city.

This shift in foundation attention to racial equity can also be seen locally through the Chicago Community Trust (CCT), which recently adopted race and equity as a new strategic focus. As a part of that, the Trust is continuing its signature *On the Table* civic engagement effort of coordinated grassroots, decentralized community conversations around issues impacting the city and region. This year, the Trust is offering targeted resources and trainings to support *On the Table* conversations around equity and social inclusion, which also build on the growing

public discourse on the topic. This and other potentially related programs hosted by the Trust offer an opportunity for the City to intentionally participate in, collaborate with, and learn from the foundation's work on racial equity.

Building the Case against Segregation & Structural Racism

Racial segregation in Chicago is also now receiving significant national and local attention through a landmark study by the Urban Institute and the locally based Metropolitan Planning Council. The first phase of the research quantifies the economic costs of greater Chicago's racial and economic segregation. It finds that segregation costs the region \$8 billion in gross domestic product and that incomes of African Americans would increase by \$2,982 per person per year if segregation were eliminated.³⁷ This study and the quantified impacts of segregation offer an opportunity for the city to engage broader stakeholders, such as the business and economic development community, in a discussion of segregation and structural racism.

A second phase of the project will be focused on developing policy recommendations to accelerate the region's desegregation. As MPC continues to take a leadership and coordinating role in advancing an anti-segregation agenda, the City has an opportunity to benefit by seriously considering the proposed policies and modeling the way for regional anti-segregation efforts. In general, the heightened focus on the harms of segregation presents an enormous opportunity to further elevate the issue of structural racism by focusing discussion and attention to the root causes of these complex issues. To expand potential partnerships with new stakeholders, the City should focus on how to harness this momentum and opportunity.

Cross-Racial Organizing and Community Coalitions

The city also has an opportunity to follow the lead of grassroots community leaders who are building cross-racial alliances to promote racial equity citywide. The Coalition Advancing Racial Equity (CARE) is a coalition of faith, policy and advocacy groups with the goal of working with Chicago city government on developing a municipal initiative to tackle structural and institutional racism. Members of CARE include the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Communities United, the United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations (UCCRO), Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), and Blocks Together. Given the importance of working in close partnership with communities on racial equity, this emerging coalition is a key potential partner whose leadership the City should follow in any effort to establish a racial equity strategy.

Regional Efforts to Leverage

Fortunately, the city would not be alone in the region were it to build a strategy to intentionally address racial equity. Cook County has been pioneering a focus on health equity locally,

³⁷ Acs et al. 2017

including its involvement with the Collaborative for Health Equity (CHE) across the county. CHE has focused explicitly on tackling structural racism in health impacts as well as on building power with community residents through supporting labor and community organizers. Chicago's neighbor to the north, Evanston, has also developed its own Equity and Empowerment Plan and hired a full-time Coordinator to oversee and implement it. As Cook County continues its journey to address structural racism in health and as the City of Evanston begins its own efforts to more intentionally address issues of access, equity and empowerment, the City of Chicago can partner locally for resources or examples for how to move forward, as well as build alliances for greater regional movement on equity.

CHALLENGES: What challenges may hinder city efforts to advance racial equity?

Despite the numerous opportunities outlined above, the city also has its fair share of challenges. Trust, inter-group tension, politics, and a neighborhood-centric civic infrastructure will all need to be adequately navigated to meaningfully advance a racial equity agenda.

Politics and Lack of Political Will

“Each alderman is in fear of this powerful mayor and is, with a few exceptions, going to go along to get what [they] need in [their] ward... There's a parochial culture in politics that prevents larger conversations.”

CBO Employee

Far and above, most stakeholders identified politics, in many of its various aspects, as one of the largest challenges to advancing a racial equity agenda in government. Most pointed to the lack of political will among current city leadership to champion racial equity as a key barrier, believing that only a new administration or a groundswell of grassroots pressure would lead to the city adopting a racial

equity strategy and approach to its work. Indeed, many other cities have initially embarked on their journey towards racial equity at the leadership of individual Mayors who had the political will to do so – from Greg Nickels in Seattle, WA to Rosalyn Bliss in Grand Rapids, MI. This points to the important catalyzing force of a senior elected official leveraging their political capital to champion issues of racial equity. Similarly, several other city racial equity efforts formed in response to external demands from community coalitions. This was the case in Austin, TX where the Communities of Color United coalition worked with the city to open an Office of Equity and to pass a resolution requiring the city to develop a racial equity assessment tool.

The mayoral-centric political structure of the city was also highlighted as a challenge. As one interviewee described, the “parochial” nature of Chicago politics leads to a divided city council that is then easily swayed by the Mayor's authority and influence. While Chicago's City Council has historically acted as a rubber stamp to the Mayor's agenda, some feel this tide may be changing post-Laquan Macdonald. Still, this parochial dynamic where aldermen are each “kings of their own ward” may also prevent them from having larger conversations about structural

challenges facing the city. One effort being advanced to address this political imbalance is advocacy around the creation of a Public Advocate office, something New York City established in 1993, which acts as an ombudsman, or watchdog, for city residents.³⁸ Still, the existing Mayor-dominated political structure in Chicago suggests that a meaningful commitment to racial equity will need to come either from Mayor Emmanuel himself or from an unprecedented push from community coalitions.

Lastly, the challenge of political districting was also raised, including the reality of a city council that is not representative of the city's racial and ethnic demographics. While racially proportional representation is not the only metric for assessing whether the city's elected officials have the best interests of all city residents in mind, the imbalance of power and representation among elected officials is still an important challenge to overcome.

Chronic and Pervasive Lack of Trust

A lack of trust in government is pervasive across communities. As shared by several community leaders, communities of color especially feel betrayed by decades of City decisions. This distrust leads to a widespread skepticism in the commitment of government towards advancing equity and can even manifest itself in disengagement from the civic and political process. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most commonly identified fissure point was the recent closing of 50 public schools in majority Black and Latino communities. Challenges of distrust between communities of color, especially African-Americans, and the Chicago Police Department are also well documented and widely understood.

“Some of the challenge is in finding ways for community groups and Mayor to genuinely work together... There's a genuine distrust in the Mayor and in the City of Chicago, especially with the two big entities of CPS and CPD.”

Community Organizer

Another example of this pattern of broken city promises can be seen in the experiences of public housing residents in the Lakefront Properties development in the south lakeshore. Public housing tenants were repeatedly told over years that their homes would not be demolished without adequate replacement, yet were ultimately still displaced.³⁹ This is just one example of what surely could include many, many more. Distrust is built steadily over time and over generations of harmful policy – whether intentional or not. As distrust grows, the City will find it harder and harder to effectively partner with communities.⁴⁰

³⁸ In New York City, the Public Advocate serves as a direct link between residents and government, acts as a watchdog over City agencies, and investigates complaints about City services.

³⁹ Patillo 2007

⁴⁰ A study of school reform efforts in Chicago found that the leading cause of reform failure was lack of trust among school employees, suggesting that trust is a critical component in the success of policy or program intervention (Payne 2008).

The challenge that a lack of trust in city government poses is significant and not easily surmounted. Yet a City commitment to rebuilding trust is one path to overcoming it. While trust begins with better listening, it is reinforced when government takes what it hears and turns that into concrete action. Better yet, trust is rebuilt when government hands decision-making power over to communities directly.

Cross-Racial Tension

“We are still very segregated in Chicago. We don’t live with each other... We don’t get to know each other and learn to respect our issues.”

CBO Leader

Another layer to the challenge of distrust is the tensions that build up over time among different racial and ethnic communities themselves. Indeed, studies have shown that rising diversity can often lead to less trust.⁴¹ In Chicago, several interviewees highlighted the historic divisions between Black and Latino communities as a major obstacle to any movement towards racial equity and racial solidarity. Given the

combination of the city’s deep segregation and aldermanic⁴² political structure, divisions between Black and Latino communities may seem inevitable. The reality of a declining Black population with a growing Latino one may also bring these tensions further to light. These divisions are a common way in which structural racism plays out, by effectively engendering discord between communities of color that then fight over small pots of resources or seats at the table instead of fundamentally transforming power structures.

In other cities, community organizations and coalitions emerged to intentionally address these tensions and to build greater solidarity among communities of color, such as Voices for Racial Justice in Minneapolis and the Communities of Color Coalition in Austin. As mentioned earlier, the Coalition Advancing Racial Equity (CARE) has emerged to promote cross-racial solidarity, and the City has an opportunity to partner with and support the emerging coalition’s efforts to build trust across the city.

Racial and Cultural Anxiety

Another challenge to advancing an explicit racial equity initiative is the potential resistance from residents who are uncomfortable with such a direct focus on race. This resistance may come most strongly from working and middle class white Chicagoans, but is possible to come from other racial and ethnic groups as well. UC Berkeley Professor John Powell offers a possible explanation for this resistance as the product of increased “racial anxiety,” or a feeling of becoming a stranger in one’s community, of losing control and losing a sense of self. Yet racial anxiety is not inherently a challenge. If it is mediated negatively, it can lead to fear and anger towards the “other.” If not mediated at all, it can lead to social withdrawal. But if mediated

⁴¹ Putnam 2007; Alesina and La Ferrara 2002

⁴² For those less familiar with Chicago politics, aldermen are the locally elected representatives that constitute the Chicago City Council. There are currently 50 aldermen.

positively through leadership and organizing, it can lead to empathy and inclusion.⁴³ The challenge then falls on the City to lead residents through this anxiety in a productive way that fosters empathy across racial, ethnic and other communities.

A present-day example of the resistance that negatively mediated racial anxiety can lead to is in the case of a recently proposed mixed-income development in Jefferson Park. The 100-unit housing development, which includes 20 units set aside for people with Chicago Housing Authority vouchers,⁴⁴ inspired vocal and vitriolic opposition from a sizable number of mostly white neighborhood's residents. This resistance was often tinged with racialized language against the perceived perils of having Section 8 tenants in the community that would also bring in "every miscreant brother, nephew, cousin, son."⁴⁵ This opposition illustrates the political challenge of advancing a racial equity agenda with community members that default to fear and anger when they feel black or low-income residents may move into the neighborhood.

Indeed, the recent election of current President Donald Trump, which was fueled by similarly racist and xenophobic rhetoric, has only amplified these feelings of fear and anger towards people of color, immigrants, and many others. To face this growing challenge, it is incumbent on the City to work towards bridging these divides to both advance racial reconciliation and re-establish compassion and empathy among its diverse residents. One potential example to learn from is in the City of New Orleans' targeted racial reconciliation efforts that convened small groups of community residents and leaders in conversations about racialized experiences to foster empathy and increased trust between city residents. Fortunately, the work of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations can also serve as a strength to build on for this work.

Lack of a Shared Racial Equity Vision

A common challenge in advancing racial equity work is the lack of a shared understanding across people, institutions, and communities of what racial equity itself means and includes. Different organizations may define racial equity in different ways. The growing popularity of the term represents a welcome shift in public discourse, though it also risks its meaning being slowly watered down.

"I don't know that everyone uses the same definition [of racial equity] or is on the same page. I'll go to these meetings sometimes and think that people all know what racial equity is, but you actually get a wide variety about what that is and what should be done to achieve it"

Policy Advocate

Without a clearly and collectively defined vision, any government effort to explicitly advance a racial equity agenda will struggle to gain momentum or widespread buy-in. Other cities have addressed this challenge by defining explicit racial equity visions with specific goals and

⁴³ powell 2017

⁴⁴ Byrne 2017

⁴⁵ Dukmasova 2017

outcomes that are then formalized. Many cities have also developed and deployed trainings on core concepts of racial equity (such as implicit and explicit bias or structural, institutional and interpersonal racism) to help advance a constructive conversation through a common understanding of the challenges and concepts of racial equity and structural racism.

Decentralized and Disparate Community Organizations

One last challenge identified is the existence of a decentralized – though robust – community organization landscape. Several stakeholders pointed to the tendency of community organizing and nonprofit efforts to be focused on the neighborhood level, which can become a challenge when advancing a city-wide effort. Though the presence of many disparate efforts is in some senses a great opportunity for the City’s potential partnerships, the challenge is that there is no matching infrastructure, coalition or effort centered on racial equity that can help align these various efforts. Moreover, because of the city’s deeply entrenched segregation, neighborhood based community efforts also often end up being racially isolated. The collective impact framework for rigorous cross-sector partnerships may be a useful starting point as one approach to help bridge and align a multitude of efforts around a common goal.⁴⁶

This decentralized nature of the community-based organizations in Chicago further points to the importance of the City taking an active role to support coalitions, like the Coalition Advancing Racial Equity (CARE), that are already doing the hard work of bringing together communities around common values and shared beliefs. It also suggests that the City will need to actively build a supportive infrastructure or institutional mechanisms to bring together the many community voices across the city in the advancement of a racial equity agenda.

TABLE: SWOC Summary for Racial Equity Governance in Chicago

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emerging neighborhood equity focus, especially in DPD ○ CDPH and Healthy Chicago 2.0 focusing on health equity and tackling disparities ○ CCHR and DFSS potential allies and supports 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public silence on race and structural racism ○ Police brutality, school closures, and unintended consequences ○ Public sector siloes ○ Unclear workforce equity ○ Resource limitations
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local collaborative forming to advance racial equity ○ Growing awareness of structural racism ○ Growing potential funding sources ○ New study on costs of segregation ○ Cross-racial organizing and coalitions ○ Regional efforts to leverage 	<p>CHALLENGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deep mistrust of government ○ Cross-racial tensions and racial anxiety ○ Lack of a common vision for racial equity ○ Challenging politics and lack of political will ○ Decentralized community organization landscape

⁴⁶ For more on collective impact, see Kania & Kramer 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the various strengths, challenges, and opportunities identified, the City should consider taking the following initial steps towards institutionalizing racial equity in government practice and towards signaling the cultural changes needed to make progress on intentionally promoting equity. Following these broad recommendations, I include a list of specific actions that the City can explore for further consideration.

ELEVATE A CONVERSATION AROUND RACIAL EQUITY AND STRUCTURAL RACISM

To meaningfully tackle a problem, we must first be able to talk about it. While this is certainly true in almost any situation, it is especially important in issues of racial equity. Not only is racial equity often defined differently by different people, it may also raise internal tensions and emotions for many. To be sure, simply talking about structural racism will not solve the problem. Still, only by normalizing racial equity as a primary issue of concern will the city be able to make lasting progress in removing implicit bias from its actions and explicitly advancing equitable outcomes. Important ways to do this are to:

- **Formally and publicly prioritize racial equity as a core goal of city government**, potentially in the form of a City Council resolution that articulates a racial equity vision with related goals. As the public conversation on race and racism continues to grow, the City will benefit by keeping up with changing attitudes and greater awareness of race among residents. A formal resolution that defines racial equity and prioritizes it as a key city principle will provide a clear north star for future government efforts. Granted, a statement alone will not lead to transformative change, and so clear expectations are needed to ensure meaningful action follows the formal prioritization.
- **Develop and deliver an introductory racial equity training to staff** that includes the definitions of racial equity and inequity, implicit and explicit bias, and individual, institutional, and structural racism. Several local organizations offer racial equity training packages, including the United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations (UCCRO), which the City can partner with to help provide or develop initial trainings. GARE also provides racial equity training curriculum to its members, including a train-the-trainer model for lasting capacity.
- **Produce a comprehensive report on racial disparities** in partnership with local institutions and community organizations as a call to action for the entire city. Such a report should focus on the institutional and structural barriers that have created racial inequities. Otherwise, it may unintentionally imply that people and communities of color are “problems to be fixed.” Examples to learn from include efforts in Dane County, WI and Dubuque, IA.

LAY GROUNDWORK FOR INTERNAL REORIENTATION TOWARDS RACIAL EQUITY

At the same time as it promotes a broader cultural change around intentionally addressing structural racism, the City should begin to lay the groundwork for operational changes in how it intentionally and explicitly considers equity. This should include the systematic consideration of disparate impacts and the creation of a supportive internal infrastructure. Strategies to do this include:

- **Pilot the use of a Racial Equity Impact Tool** on current policies and programs to strengthen their effectiveness in reducing or eliminating racial inequalities. Fortunately, the city is already developing a similar process and framework for standardizing decision-making across agencies through its emerging Health in All Policies (HiAP) policy. A low hanging fruit may be to either incorporate racial equity impact considerations into HiAP or to model a similar “racial equity in all policies” process based on the HiAP experience. The City can also pilot racial equity impact analysis tools developed by other cities on select policies before developing its own analysis toolkit.⁴⁷ Potential programs to initially focus on include the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, Retail Thrives Zones, or the new Fund 77.
- **Designate a Racial Equity Action Team** consisting of senior government officials and community leaders alike. A Racial Equity Action Team would help lead process of developing and implementing a comprehensive city-wide racial equity action plan. The team, made up of government workers from various departments, could also work to identify common opportunities and challenges to advancing racial equity internally.
- **Establish an Office of Racial Equity**, or even a Chief Equity Officer, charged with leading the co-creation of a racial equity plan, supporting other departments in the implementation of racial equity impact analyses, and coordinating related efforts across the city. Examples of such offices exist across the country, including Oakland’s new Department of Race and Equity, Austin’s Office of Equity, and Boston’s Office of Resiliency and Racial Equity.
- **Conduct a deep engagement process** both internally and externally to define a vision of racial equity. City employees, community leaders, and community members alike should be involved in the process. Such a vision should also include clear goals with timelines for implementation and mechanisms of accountability. For an example in practice, see King County, Washington’s long term strategic plan for racial and social justice.

⁴⁷ See appendix for examples or related report from GARE for guidance: <http://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-toolkit-opportunity-operationalize-equity/>

REBUILD TRUST AND PARTNER WITH COMMUNITIES

Chicago has a robust network of active community organizations and nonprofit institutions, several of which are working to actively advance racial equity. Yet despite the existence of these organizations and efforts, many remain disconnected from each other and many are skeptical of Chicago city government.

Rebuilding the trust that has been repeatedly ruptured by government must be a priority in any effort to build a more equitable city. The chronic lack of trust between communities and public institutions is harmful to all. As a part of this, the City would also benefit by building bridges with current community efforts – both those led by grassroots and grass tops - to effectively align efforts and resources around racial equity. Ways to do this include:

- **Commit to sharing decision-making authority with communities.** Rebuilding trust is a long and engaged process. While it may begin with more active listening, government will need to eventually change practices and policies based on community input to establish lasting trust. One way to show this commitment is to adopt policies supported by grassroots campaigns. One potential example is the amendment to the Welcoming Chicago Ordinance that strengthens the city’s sanctuary policy by expanding protections for all marginalized communities. By supporting an effort led by a cross-racial alliance, Chicago can also elevate the importance of trust and relationship building between its various communities.
- **Engage in deeper partnerships with community coalitions.** At least 2 local collaborative efforts are emerging to advance racial equity between the local SPARCC affiliate L-Evated Chicago and the local cross-racial community alliance of Coalition Advancing Racial Equity (CARE). The City should support and strengthen these programs and coalitions by giving them a voice at the table and by committing staff time to participating or working with them.

Additional Strategies to Explore

While the above general strategies emerged as needed next steps given the context of the City, the following are additional detailed recommendations meant to offer the City strategies to further explore and consider. They are categorized using the *normalizing*, *operationalizing*, and *organizing* framework for best practice promoted by GARE, though many strategies can often advance more than one goal at a time.

Normalize

In the Short Term:

- Pass a city council resolution establishing a clear vision and framework on racial equity, including clear expectations for meaningful actions
- Develop and deliver racial equity trainings for city staff, perhaps starting with one department, such as DPD, or with all senior leadership.⁴⁸
- Conduct a rigorous community-driven engagement process to define and articulate a clear vision for racial equity in Chicago
- Support or partner with local institutions to produce a “State of Racial Disparities in Chicago” that illustrates structural causes of inequalities

In the Long Term:

- Conduct annual city employee surveys about racial equity
- Partner with the Chicago Community Trust to further scale its “On the Table” civic engagement with the specific goal of promoting racial reconciliation and greater awareness of racial equity and structural racism

Operationalize

In the Short Term:

- Pilot a Racial Equity Toolkit, either in the development of a new policy or program, or in the reassessment of already existing ones.
- Develop a Racial Equity Toolkit specific to Chicago’s context in partnership with community members and leaders.
- Explore the addition of a racial equity component to the emerging Health in All Policies approach endorsed by all departments as part of Healthy Chicago 2.0.
- Commit to workforce equity goals, publish data on workforce diversity

In the Long Term:

- Establish a grant fund to support community-led efforts to tackle structural racism.
- Create a long-term strategy for Racial Equity.
- Pass a city council resolution forming a “Racial Equity in All Policies” task force to develop recommendations for citywide use of a racial equity toolkit. Such a task force should include community members and leaders.
- Assess the availability of public data disaggregated by race, and consider passing a resolution to require data by race be consistently collected

⁴⁸ One of the benefits of joining GARE is the availability of racial equity curriculum and a train-the-trainer model.

Organize

In the Short Term:

- Formally join the Collaborative for Health Equity (Cook County)
- Create a new Office of Racial Equity
- Form a Racial Equity Action Team comprised of senior government leadership as well as community members and leaders; such a team should be given the power to guide and implement the city's racial equity initiative
- Require the formation of internal change teams across departments, which would steer the internal change management process within each department's unique context

In the Long Term:

- Pass a resolution or ordinance directing city departments craft racial equity plans
- Ordinance to have each agency hire a racial equity coordinator
- Conduct a periodic community survey on racial equity

CONCLUSION

The City of Chicago is in a moment of both crisis and opportunity. Racial disparities today persist despite decades of interventions from national and local organizations both. The exodus of nearly 200,000 Black Chicagoans since 2000 points to the severity of the Black experience in the city.⁴⁹ As a community made up of a majority of people of color, persistent inequity along racial and ethnic lines means that the majority of Chicago's residents are worse off than they could be.

Indeed, government has an obligation to achieve a more equitable future for all its residents. Not only did government policy itself create and sustain inequalities, local government is also often the level of the public sector that most directly interacts with and impacts residents. To achieve a goal of racial equity, Chicago city government needs to intentionally tackle the structural roots of racial inequality.

Fortunately, recent shifts in municipal policy bode well for the City's impact on communities of color. New programs that target resources to predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods represent needed investments in historically marginalized communities of color. However, without a focus on changing the root causes of racial inequity, these new programs may do little to change the underlying dynamics that produce community disinvestment, economic disenfranchisement, and even chronic violence. Ultimately, city government needs to also focus on changing its institutional practice and cultural values, similar to what CDPH is doing to promote health equity.

To achieve racial equity in government, national best practice points to the importance of three core strategies: *normalizing* conversations of racial equity, *operationalizing* intentional actions, and *organizing* internally and externally to ensure accountability. Following that framework, Chicago can take several meaningful steps to advance a racial equity agenda. First, it must elevate and formalize racial equity as a government priority by passing a related resolution and developing racial equity trainings for all staff. Second, it should pilot the use of racial equity impact assessments and build out a "racial equity in all policies" approach that standardizes decision-making across all agencies while also building a supportive internal infrastructure. Third, it should rebuild trust with communities by partnering with existing grassroots coalitions, such as the Coalition Advancing Racial Equity, and by deepening its partnership with L-Evated Chicago and the momentum the collaborative will generate on racial equity.

Still, to begin any intentional path towards achieving racial equity in government, strong political leadership is needed from elected officials and senior government leadership. Political will is needed to take these bold and innovative steps. Chicago is already infamous for its deeply entrenched segregation and more recent chronic violence. The depth of these challenges position Chicago to be pioneer in the movement towards governing for racial equity. All it needs is the will to take on the challenge.

⁴⁹ Eltagourri 2016

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Racial Equity Governance Case Studies

Over 100 jurisdictions in 30 states are working to advance racial equity in their institutional practice and policy and to affect the needed culture change among government staff. This appendix offers a landscape overview of emerging examples of good practice from these various jurisdictions. As highlighted above, I divide these examples of good practice using GARE's framework of normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing.

Normalizing.

Normalizing strategies principally consist of making racial equity a key value and city priority as well as developing a shared understanding of racial equity with common definitions of core concepts (such as interpersonal, institutional and structural racism).

Equity as a shared value and priority.

For meaningful movement to change the underlying structures of government, a public and formal acknowledgement of racial equity as a priority is needed. Not only does it provide a signal to both city staff and community residents of the importance of equity as a government value, but it can create a clear direction for city residents and city staff alike to be proactive in their push for more equitable practice and policy. Perhaps more importantly, a formal prioritization of equity also creates a lever for community members to hold government more accountable. Examples of municipal practice to name equity as a priority and key value include:

Passing resolutions articulating racial equity as a priority, including a specific definitional framework with goals.

- *For example:* Tacoma's City Council approved an "Equity and Empowerment" framework in October 2014. The resolution defined equity and offered a clear vision for the city's equity and empowerment work. It also identified 5 specific goals: (1) For the city's workforce to better reflect the community it serves, (2) For more purposeful community outreach and engagement, (3) For equitable service delivery to all residents and visitors, (4) To support human rights and opportunities for everyone to achieve their full potential, and (5) To commit to equity in local government decision-making. For more, see: <https://cityoftacoma.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=3270290&GUID=92DD3F70-59B2-43B8-9792-83B2A32AD136>.
- *For example:* Fairfax County in Virginia recently passed a "One Fairfax" resolution that articulates a county goal of being "a community in which everyone can participate and prosper." The resolution also directed the creation of a racial and social equity policy for adoption. For more, see: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/2016/one-fairfax-resolution.pdf>

Publicly acknowledging existence of structural racism and racial inequality as a principal threat to the city, including the consideration of racial equity and justice in municipal plans and strategies.

- *For example:* New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu’s public apology for the historic role of the city in the slave trade. For more, see: <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/mitch-landrieu-nola-slave-apology>
- *For example:* Boston built its entire resilience strategy around the threat of systemic racial inequity, formalizing a resiliency blueprint based on the principles of racial equity, social justice, and social cohesion. For more, see: https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/document-file-11-2016/kskd_100rc_boston_theblueprint_v4.pdf
- *For example:* New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu also called for the city’s need to address local racial tensions through targeted healing and reconciliation efforts. He then dedicated staff to work in partnership with the William Winter Institute at the University of Mississippi to oversee a citywide “Welcome Table” effort to bring racially diverse groups of neighborhood residents together to build social cohesion through personal reflection of experiences with race, group sharing and learning, and collective project design and implementation to advance reconciliation. For more, see: <http://www.welcometableneworleans.org/>

Creating a dedicated office, which signifies a level of priority as well as the dedication of staff resources to focus on racial equity.

- *For example:* Countless cities have established new departments, offices or even simply new staff positions with the sole purpose of coordinating and overseeing efforts to institutionalize racial equity. In Oakland, the leadership of Councilmember Desley Brooks led to the establishment of a Department of Race & Equity, which contributes to the normalization of equity efforts by the articulation and prioritization of specific racial equity goals. More locally, Evanston, IL also recently hired an Equity and Empowerment Coordinator to advance the city’s equity plans.

Coordinating a community engagement process to define a citywide racial equity vision.

- *For example:* The City of Louisville conducted a community-engaged visioning process (final recs/report: https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/health_and_wellness/che/healing_possible_quorum/hpq100_final_recommendations_jan_2015.pdf)

Shared understanding and definitions.

One of the biggest challenges in advancing racial equity is the challenge of communicating openly between people with a variety of experiences and understandings of concepts of racial equity, such as structural or institutional racism.

Embedding racial equity trainings for staff and department leadership.

- *For example:* the cities of Seattle and Saint Paul have implemented racial equity trainings for all staff, using a “train-the-trainer” approach, with the associated benefit of building the skill of internal staff delivering the training.
- *For example:* top management and staff from the City of Tacoma’s Human Resources department attended “Undoing Institutional Racism” workshops in 2015.
- *For example:* employees in Multnomah County’s Health Equity Initiative organized viewings and discussions of a PBS documentary, “Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?”

Organizing

Organizing strategies consist of establishing both internal infrastructure and external partnerships to create a supportive environment for government’s advancement of racial equity goals.

Internal infrastructure.

A supportive internal work environment is a critical part of transforming institutional practice. A robust internal infrastructure provides the foundational capacity and accountability needed for successful efforts.

Creating a dedicated office focused on overseeing citywide racial equity efforts, or otherwise expanding the scope of an existing agency.

- *For example:* Seattle created the nation’s first city agency focused on institutional racism in 2005, the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI). Since then, many other cities have followed suit, including Oakland’s Department of Race and Equity, Austin’s Office of Equity, and the Boston Mayor’s Office of Resiliency and Racial Equity in more recent years.

Creating dedicated teams and designating staff at all levels of government to coordinate citywide efforts.

- *For example:* the Met Council, the Minneapolis-St. Paul’s regional Metropolitan Planning Organization, created several layers of internal infrastructure to support their racial equity efforts. As the agency’s equity work evolved, senior officials created 3 levels of staffing structures: an implementation team, an equity unit, and separate change teams in each division. In this structure, each department has a change team that identifies specific equity issues and implements changes, while the equity implementation team oversees and monitors the Council’s specific equity goals in housing and transportation. On top of these teams more focused on embedding equity across government functions, the Met Council’s Equity Unit oversees progress and coordinates across teams to provide oversight and accountability
- *For example:* Saint Paul’s equity initiative created ‘change teams’ in each department to lead racial equity work with help of an Executive Sponsor and a

liaison from the institute. For more, see:

<http://racialequityalliance.org/government/saint-paul/>

Passing resolutions or executive orders requiring all city departments to establish a racial equity plan and/or a racial equity action team.

- *For example:* an executive order from Seattle's Mayor directs all city departments to complete racial equity action plans on an annual basis. A resolution from City Council further solidified the direction. For more see: <http://murray.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/RSJI-Executive-Order.pdf>

Establishing internal resources to support citywide racial equity practice.

- *For example:* The City of Seattle launched an internal Equity Lab in 2016 to serve as resource for staff in the completing various aspects of racial equity related work. The new Equity Lab includes a virtual resource library for city staff and brings together policy and project leaders with support on data analysis, inclusive engagement practice, and subject matter expertise. In this sense, the Equity Lab provides internal technical assistance on conducting racial equity analyses and acts as a hub to assist cross-departmental work on equity. (source: interviews)

Partnerships with Community.

Government is a powerful authority with control of significant resources, yet any movement to truly address systemic inequalities will need to be supported by non-government actors as well. Partnerships with community play an important role in extending government reach as well as in applying pressure and accountability to government decisions. The framework of *collective impact*, a rigorous form of cross-sector collaboration, can be useful to build effective partnerships.

Building, supporting, and participating in community partnerships to advance racial equity.

- *For example:* In Dubuque, IA, Inclusive Dubuque formed as a community network of leaders from faith, labor, education, business, nonprofit and government dedicated to advancing racial and social equity. One of Inclusive Dubuque's main roles is the production of a Community Equity Profile to provide a snapshot of the disparities among the city's residents, including quantitative population level data, community surveys, and community dialogue sessions. The network also focuses on developing resources and tools for partner organizations to use in developing and communicating their own racial equity journey, such as an organizational self-assessment tool meant to capture current state of internal practice and identify action steps to improve support of equity.

Contracting community advocates or local organizations to provide technical assistance.

- *For example:* the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) decided to contract with a local community organization, Voices for Racial Justice (VRJ), to conduct a racial equity assessment, after 30 years of VRJ's organizing from the outside to push for changes in park board and city policy.

- *For example:* In Saint Paul, the mayor's office brought in the Pacific Educational Group to lead racial equity trainings for city leadership.

Operationalizing.

Last, operationalizing strategies consist of the systematic consideration of racial equity impact and the use of disaggregated data to track progress and create accountability.

Implement racial equity impact analysis tools.

Research shows that we are all subject to implicit bias and behave in ways that reflect those biases. Since behaviors show up regardless of intentions, tools that institutionalize the consideration of racial impact when making policy are an effective intervention in standard decision-making and analysis processes. In formalizing the consideration of racially disparate burdens or benefits, equity impact analyses are similar to environmental impact reviews or health impact assessments. GARE terms these practices Racial Equity Toolkits (RETs), which are designed to integrate explicit consideration of racial equity in decisions, including policies, practices, programs, and budgets.

Developing a standard Racial Equity Toolkit appropriate for local context.

- *For Example:* When the City of Madison, WI embarked on its own journey to institutionalize a racial equity lens, it adapted lessons from other cities about the use of RETs to create its own version. City staff ultimately created two racial equity tools: a comprehensive version for significant decisions and a fast track version to be used only for low-stakes decisions. Both emphasize the need for stakeholder involvement in the toolkit's implementation. To date, Madison's RET has been used to inform community and park development, street building, hiring and promotional decisions, policy development, strategic planning, planning decisions, departmental work planning and city budgeting.

Requiring use of RETs in budgetary, programmatic or policy development.

- *For example:* The City of Portland developed a Budget Equity Assessment tool to be used by city bureaus to assess how budget requests benefit and/or burden communities differentially, with special attention paid to people of color and people with disabilities. In spring of 2015, Portland's mayor required each bureau use the tool to assess the racial impacts of their proposed cuts or additions. Assessments were reviewed by Office of Equity and Human Rights and submitted to the budget work sessions (which include council members and a budget advisory team). The City Budget Office then made recommendations. After reviewing the racial equity assessments, several budget proposals were modified by the City Budget Office due to equity concerns.

Piloting the use of a racial equity toolkit on individual projects.

- *For example:* The Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board piloted one of its first uses of an RET with the master plan redevelopment Bossen Field Park. As one of the few athletic field complexes in Minneapolis, the park is heavily used by adult athletic

teams who travel from other parts of the city and suburbs. Thus, many of these park users do not share the demographics of the neighborhood. In speaking with neighborhood groups, MPRB staff learned that many neighbors didn't feel welcome in the park and felt that it is only available for use by athletic leagues. Neighborhood residents playing pick-up soccer games reported being "kicked out" when softball players would arrive and explain that they had reserved the field. Through the RET engagement process, staff learned that there were areas of common interest between athletic leagues and neighborhood residents: the softball teams didn't like kicking neighborhood kids off the fields any more than the kids enjoy getting kicked off, and both groups wanted picnic facilities, more walking paths through the park, improved parking facilities to minimize parking on neighborhood streets, and free space for neighborhood use. As a result, the master plan addressed parking, pathways and picnic areas and placed open, flexible field space for soccer games near the high-density housing.

Implementation of a Racial Equity Action Plan.

Developing department-specific racial equity action plans with timelines for implementation and designation of accountability for advancing racial equity within each department is fundamental to the success of government equity efforts.

Developing a multi-year strategy with clear outcome areas and accountability measures.

- *For example:* King County in Washington State recently released a multi-year equity strategy. Their Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan for 2016-2022 is the jurisdiction's first long-term strategic plan centered on promoting equity internally and the community. The overall strategies are to invest upstream and where needs are greatest and in employees and communities, and to do this with transparent and accountable leadership. The plan itself has three elements. First is the County's Pro-Equity Policy Agenda covering 8 different areas such as housing, transportation, health and human services, the justice system and the environment. Second, the plan calls for a Regional Equity Collaborative acknowledging the need for increased coordination and cross-sector collaboration at the regional level, picking up on the idea that individual actors are stronger together. Third, the plan identifies six internally focused goal areas such as leadership and operations or policies and budgets with specific equity-related goals and objectives for each. For more, see: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/strategic-plan.aspx>

Data to evaluate and understand.

Disaggregated data on racial inequities also need to be collected to assess and track progress on racial equity efforts over time. Data serves multiple purposes. It sheds light on the current state of inequity and serves as a call to action, but it also allows racial equity work to be held accountable to progress. Data on current disparities also serves as a starting point to inform deeper public engagement to understand root causes and residents' lived experiences. Accountability through data is critical to successfully operationalizing racial equity initiatives.

Publish or partner with organizations on data reports establishing current condition on racial inequity across life outcome areas.

- *For example:* In Madison, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families coordinated and published a Race to Equity report which established a baseline of data on local disparities. For more, see: <http://racetoequity.net/dev/wp-content/uploads/WCCF-R2E-Report.pdf>
- *For example:* as mentioned earlier, the Inclusive Dubuque partnership in Iowa produced a Community Equity Profile in 2015 to establish a baseline report on local disparities. Inclusive Dubuque collected data from local, state and federal sources for the profile, as well as incorporated findings from conversations with over 600 community residents and over 2,000 survey responses. For more, see: <http://inclusivedbq.org/community-equity-profile/>

Appendix B: Methodology

To answer this report’s research questions, I applied a mixed-methods approach of document review and semi-structured interviews, specifically:

- Thorough document review of current Chicago policy and programs, of materials from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), and of relevant policies, ordinances, and other documents on racial equity governance produced by peer jurisdictions.
- Literature review on the current and historic racial disparities in Chicago as well as the historic policy and practice roots of these inequities.
- Semi-structured interviews to identify common practices in the growth of an initiative & to identify important considerations of Chicago’s local context - from potential departmental contacts to background on current political dynamics and potential openings for a racial equity effort.

TABLE: Methods Summary

Research Question	Methods
What lessons can Chicago apply from the experience of other municipal governments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Racial Equity leaders outside of Chicago • Resources and documents from GARE • Other article and document review
What are the challenges and opportunities to establishing a government-led racial equity effort?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with City of Chicago workers • Interviews with non-City workers in Chicago • Resources and documents from the City of Chicago • Other article and document review
What are the current paths of greatest opportunity to promoting racial equity as a government priority and focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with City of Chicago workers • Interviews with non-City workers in Chicago • Resources and documents from the City of Chicago • Other article and document review

With respect to the interviews, I conducted two separate sets of semi-structured interviews to support the insights and recommendations made in this report. First, I interviewed 18 public and non-profit leaders in Chicago to understand the various roles played by different institutions as well as to get a pulse for the local political and civic context that would shape a racial equity effort. Second, I interviewed over 20 mostly government leaders working in racial equity efforts across the country to learn about their motivations and experiences in advancing institutional racial equity efforts in government. These interviews were conducted as part of a separate research project for the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, through which I produced periodic interview profiles of racial equity leaders. I also draw on other tangential research projects and interviews I’ve conducted for various GARE work products.

Local Stakeholder Interviews:

City of Chicago:

- Cara Bader, Mayor's Office
- Tonanztin Carmona, Chicago City Clerk
- Sheri Cohen, Chicago Department of Public Health
- Megan Cunningham, Chicago Department of Public Health
- Tiffany Hamel-Johnson, Mayor's Office
- Roderick Hawkins, Mayor's Office
- Adamma May-Lostsu, Chicago Community Colleges
- Commissioner Mona Noriega, Chicago Commission on Human Relations
- Anne Posner, Chicago Department of Public Health,
- Sadie Stockdale, (former) Mayor's Office

Other institutions:

- Jim Boyd, Cook County Health
- Jacky Grimshaw, Center for Neighborhood Technology
- Meghan Harte, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Alheli Irizarry, United Congress of Community & Religious Organizations
- Juan Carlos Linares, LUCHA
- John McDermott, (former) Logan Square Neighborhood Association
- Sylvia Puente, Latino Policy Forum
- Dr. Stephanie Schmitz Bechteler, Chicago Urban League

National Expert Interviews:

- Julie Nelson, Senior Vice President of Center for Social Inclusion & Director of Government Alliance on Race and Equity

- Nora Liu, Project Manager, Center for Social Innovation

Other Municipality Interviews:

- Patricia Lally, City of Seattle, WA
- Elizabeth Tolzmann, City of Bloomington, MN
- Joy M. Stephens, City of Minneapolis, MN
- Diana Falchuk, City of Seattle, WA
- Michael Davis, City of Seattle, WA
- Jane Eastwood, City of St. Paul, MN
- Nancy Locke, City of Seattle, WA
- Kevin Frazell, League of Minnesota Cities
- Jason Sole, Minneapolis-St. Paul
- Vina Kay, Voices for Racial Justice (Minnesota)
- Desiree Williams-Rajee, City of Portland, OR
- Paul Schnell, City of Maplewood, MN

- Benjamin Duncan, Multnomah County, WA
- Sarah Rudolf, Minnesota DOT
- Aaron Perry, Madison, WI
- Judith Mowry, City of Portland, OR
- Sudha Nandangopol, City of Seattle, WA
- Jessica Kingston, City of St. Paul, MN
- Corey Cooper, City of Albuquerque, NM
- Mayor Fisher, City of Louisville, KY
- Mayor Rosalyn Bliss, City of Grand Rapids, MI
- T Benicio Gonzales, City of Louisville, KY
- Aja Barber, City of Louisville, KY
- Brandy N. Kelly-Pryor, City of Louisville, KY
- Brion Oaks, City of Austin, TX
- Matias Valenzuela, King County, WA

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