WEST SIDE UNITED

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

2023
LETTERS

FROM EVE SHAPIRO, SR. DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS & EVALUATION

2023 was a year of deliberation and refocusing. Over the past year, WSU has continued to push resources into and build up our core programming of anchor mission, hypertension, maternal and child health, food access, and community engagement.

We completed our 1,000 day strategic plan in June and have since been preparing for the work that will carry us through the next phase. Staff have each developed strategic plans to guide their initiatives and have been circulating those with partners and workgroup members to begin implementation. We brought on experts from Hansra to guide us through deeper strategy resets for our workforce development and local hiring initiatives and are working with McKinsey in 2024 to refresh our Nutritious Food Access programming. As we embark on our sixth year, we look forward to a new phase of work that aligns with community needs, utilizes the strength of our partners, and demonstrates impact.

In June, we held our Annual Convening, bringing together community members, West Side organizations, residents, and hospital staff to review our accomplishments of the previous year and costly our revised mission. Prior, WSU convened a North Star Advisory Group to review population health data, consider the trends of life expectancy post-COVID, and respond to community feedback that WSU should eliminate the life expectancy gap between the West Side and downtown, not merely shorten it. Our road ahead to health equity is even steeper than in years past, but we feel readied for the journey and hope you will travel with us.

FROM AYESHA JACO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on 2023, three words come to mind: Magnify. Align. Measure. I am inspired by the shared commitment of our staff, healthcare partners, funders, and community partners. Collectively, we are committed to eliminating the life expectancy gap between Chicago’s Loop and the West Side. Our audacious stance requires multi-pronged, sustainable, and measurable solutions that are community driven. I am proud of our work in the pre-launch phase of the Sankofa Wellness Village. The Village is slated to open in 2025 and is rooted in community ownership, multisector partnerships, and a promise to honor and amplify the visions of residents and their ability to live long vibrant lives in Garfield Park. In this year’s report, we highlight the expansion of our One West Side partnership with Blackhawks Charities. We were awarded $50,000 for a Village early activation effort which included the expansion of pop-grocery stores curated by the Garfield Park Community Council. Behind the scenes, our team worked with Kearney, residents and local leaders to analyze the feasibility of a grocer option to replace the former Aldi’s at Madison and Hamlin.

As a convenor of 6 health systems, we aim to magnify, measure, and align our efforts to address Maternal Health, Hypertension and access to care disparities. This year’s report provides a snapshot of our health and healthcare work across the region and our continued partnerships with Wellness West and the Chicago Department of Public Health.

The first visual that outlined our problem statement was a map designed by Rush University Medical Center outlining the life expectancy along train lines that operate from the Loop to Oak Park. This year’s report highlights a train design created by West Side Resident and Internationally renowned Artist Steph Skills. I view it as a freedom train that unloads and picks up everyone who has committed to supporting West Side residents on their journey to increased health and wealth. Our community impact maps highlight how each of our strategies canvases the entire region. All aboard. Next stop 2024!
Our mission is to improve neighborhood health by addressing inequities in healthcare, education, economic vitality and the physical environment using cross-sector, place-based strategies. Partners include healthcare providers, education providers, the faith community, business, government and others working together to coordinate services and share outcomes.

**OUR MISSION**

**ELIMINATE THE LIFE EXPECTANCY GAP**

BETWEEN CHICAGO’S WEST SIDE NEIGHBORHOODS AND DOWNTOWN
Executive Leadership Council

Chair | Vice Chair | Secretary
--- | --- | ---
ANGELA TAYLOR | MARCUS BETTS | JULIE MIROSTAW
Garfield Park Community Council | UI Health | Ascension

Community Advisory Council

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) is a 17-member committee whose primary role is to track the pulse of the West Side community as it relates to WSU initiatives and strategic plans. The CAC functions as a major channel for the community’s input and works closely with WSU staff to integrate community feedback into planned or proposed initiatives. The CAC also ensures that community voices are embedded at all levels of WSU’s governance structure—from Leadership Council to Working Group.

AISHA OLIVER | JOSE PORTILLO | NANCY VALENTIN
N & PE, Health & Healthcare | Economic Vitality, Data | Health & Healthcare

CAROL WASHINGTON | KELI STEWART | RICCADONNA CHAIDEZ
Economic Vitality | N & PE | Health & Healthcare, Data

CAROL WASHINGTON | KIMBERLY RICHARDSON | TINA GULLEY-AUGUSTUS
Economic Vitality | Health & Healthcare | Economic Vitality

GARNETT BLAIR | LUCIA FLORES | TRINISA WILLIAMS
Economic Vitality | Health & Healthcare | N & PE, Health & Healthcare

JASMINE GRAHAM | MELISSA CHRUSFIELD | TYRINA NEWKIRK
Health & Healthcare | Health & Healthcare | Economic Vitality, Policy

JERMAINE HARRIS | MIGUEL BLANCARTE JR. | HEALTH & PHYSICAL ENV.
Economic Vitality, N & PE | Health & Healthcare, Policy | Neighborhood & Physical Environment

FOUNGING HOSPITALS

- Illinois Medical District
- JPMorgan Chase

MISSION PARTNERS

American Medical Association

ECONOMIC VITALITY

- Allies for Community Business
- American Medical Association
- Austin African American Business Networking Association
- Austin Coming Together
- Chicago Community Learning Center
- Chicago Community Loan Fund
- Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership
- Chicago Food Policy Action Council
- Chicago Inclusive Growth Coalition
- Chicago Urban League
- Chicago Neighborhood Healthcare Workforce Collaborative
- City Colleges of Chicago
- Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection
- Economic Strategies Development Corporation
- FFF

NEIGHBORHOOD & PHYSICAL ENV.

- Alliance for Health Equity (AHEE)
- Beyond Hunger
- Catholic Charities
- Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)
- Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC)
- Chicago Partnership for Health Promotion (CPHP)
- Chicago Westside Branch of the NAACP
- Chicago Urban Ministries
- City of Chicago Food Equity Council
- El Mercado Nourishing Hope
- European American Business Association (EABA)
- Forty Acres Fresh Market
- Garfield Park Community Council (GPCC)
- Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative (GPRWC)
- Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation
- Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCDF)
- Harmony Church Community
- Hope Community Church
- Iglesia Evangelica Emmanuel
- Mariah: House Food Pantry
- Marshall Square Resource Network (MSRN)
- Mission of Our Lady of the Angels
- Nation Builders
- New Life Centers of Chicago
- New Mount Pilgrim Church
- North Lawndale Community Coordination Council (NLCCC)
- The Community Builders
- University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)
- USDA Midwest Health Care Partners
- Yellow Banana
- YMCA of Metro Chicago

EDUCATION

- Horace Mann School of Excellence
- Illinois Medical District
- Malcolm X College
- UCAN

Our Partners

- ACCESS Community Health Network
- American Heart Association (AMA)
- American Medical Association (AMA)
- Austin Coming Together
- Better New Life
- Best Babies Zone
- Breakthrough
- Chicago Chronic Condition Equity Network
- Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)
- Chicago Office of the Mayor
- Chicago Park District
- Chicago Police Department
- Chicago Public Library
- Congressmen Danny K. Davis
- Elsah Florida
- Enlace Chicago
- Equal Hope
- Erie Family Health Center
- Erie Neighborhood House
- Esperanza Health Centers
- Fathers Who Care
- Family Connects Chicago
- Forty Acres Fresh Market
- God’s Hill Council
- Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative (GPRWC)
- Garfield Park Community Council (GPCC)
- Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation
- Health Care Council of Chicago
- Healthy Hood
- Healthcare Transformation Network (NLEN)
- Humboldt Park Health (HambHealth)
- I am ABLE
- Institute of Translational Medicine
- Lawrence Christian Health Center
- Kearney
- MAAPA Redemption Project
- Medical Home Network (MHN)
- Mount Sinai Hospital
- New Life Church
- New Moms
- North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN)
- Northwest Center
- PCC Wellness
- Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC)
- Sinal Community Institute
- Southwest Organizing Project
- United Coalition for Housing
- St. Anthony Hospital
- Stone Temple Missionary Baptist Church
- Swedish Covenant Hospital
- Tallar do Jese
- Thresholds
- UCAN
- Urban Beauty
- University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)
- Wellness West
- Westside Health Authority

Our Funders

- A Better Chicago
- Alfa Futures
- American Medical Association
- Anonymous Family Foundation
- Boeing
- Chicago Blackhawks Foundation
- Chicago Community Trust
- Chicago Regional Food System Fund
- Education Family Foundation
- Healthcare Transformation Network
- Collaborative Wellness West
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- JPMorgan Chase Foundation
- Molson Coors Beverage Company
- Polk Bros. Foundation
- Searls Family Foundation
- Thorley Family Foundation
- United Way
- Wintrust
LOCAL PROCUREMENT
WSU partners with local hospitals to increase hospitals’ spending with West Side businesses.
• WSU partners collectively spent more than over $200M with West Side vendors since 2018, representing almost 1% of their collective overall spend
• In 2023, WSU partners spent over $43M with West Side vendors, supporting approximately 300 businesses

LOCAL HIRING
WSU convenes hospitals to improve recruitment, hiring, and retention of West Side residents.
• Since 2018, WSU partners have hired over 7,000 West Side residents
• 1,091 West Side residents were hired in 2023

IMPACT INVESTMENTS
WSU impact investing initiative connects organizations with investable dollars to community development financial institutions (CDFIs) to fund loans and provide training and technical assistance to borrowers on the West Side. Our CDFI partners include Allies for Community Business, Chicago Community Loan Fund, and IFF.
• WSU investing partners contributed $2.85M in 2023, bringing the collective total active investment amount to $10.5M. These dollars have been loaned and reloaned to community projects to support $16.2M in loans since 2017
• 101 loans in 2023, facilitated by Allies for Community Business, Chicago Community Loan Fund, and IFF, span a comprehensive portfolio supporting community development including small business loans, nonprofit capital projects, and affordable housing

Maleya Edwards, Contract Compliance Officer at Cook County Health, and Jacoby Radford, Director of Supply Chain Management and Contracts at CCH at WSU’s Local Procurement-Vendor Registration Event in June 2023.

WSU Local Procurement Program Manager, Ricardo Saucedo, participating in the A4CB Business Connect event.
SANKOFA WELLNESS VILLAGE

WSU continued to support The Sankofa Wellness Village development in West Garfield Park as a member of the Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative, along with key partners New Mount Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church and The Community Builders. This is the first significant investment in West Garfield Park in over 50 years, and will provide residents with health care and wellness programs, before- and after-school care, and will deliver comprehensive health care services to more than 6,000 patients annually.

CATALYZING INVESTMENTS

THE GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY GROCER INITIATIVE

The Community Grocer Initiative (CGI) is co-chaired by Garfield Park Community Council and aims to address barriers to food access and economic opportunity facing West Garfield Park residents, recognizing that grocers could represent notable household spend, workforce potential, and economic activity generation. WSU supports the capacity of this initiative by bringing in key partners like Kearney, a consulting firm with in-depth retail grocery and operations expertise, to conduct research on community-led grocer models; conducting community engagement and outreach; and securing resources for interim food access solutions, like the Garfield Park pop up grocery, funded through a $50,000 grant from the Blackhawks Foundation.

PROPOSAL FOR THE CITY’S MADISON/HAMLIN SITE REDEVELOPMENT

WSU has worked with the Community Grocer Initiative (CGI) to engage prospective developers for the City’s request for proposal to develop the prospective site at Madison Street and Hamlin Boulevard. The land is the site of the former Aldi grocery store, and the City issued an RFP for a new development with a grocery-anchored, mixed-use complex that includes affordable housing. WSU’s convening effort aims to ensure the investment reflects community priorities with long term partnerships between prospective developers, CGI, and other community partners.

A COMMUNITY WEALTH-BUILDING EMPLOYMENT ENGINE & LAUNDRY LINEN VENDOR

WSU has convened several organizations in Chicago, including the Steans Family Foundation, to support a local healthcare laundry linen service entity for hospitals to shift their business to and as a model to create meaningful local jobs. The project will create jobs, activate an underutilized space, and support underrepresented local entrepreneurs. Central to this initiative, the Fillmore Center is a 168,000 square foot industrial building that is the Foundation’s current hub of business attraction and job development in North Lawndale. As the Employer and Community Engagement lead for the Fillmore Economic Development initiative, WSU will provide strategic direction and operational oversight, providing a long-term recruitment and retention plan for North Lawndale and surrounding West Side communities in partnership with Skills for Chicagoland’s Future, North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN) and others.

WSU has catalyzed additional resources and partners, and advocated for the West Side with the City of Chicago, business and funder communities. WSU has also supported various community partnerships by convening and consulting with technical support to increase the capacity and impacts of community-based efforts. WSU’s support of catalytic investments across the West Side builds upon WSU’s existing partnerships with health care institutions, anchor mission partners, public and private entities, and community organizations.

"Kearney’s partnership with CGI and WSU enables the firm to make a greater impact in our community, building off our experience with Go Green on Racine, a community-led grocer in Englewood, and represents opportunities for communities to enact their vision for agency, sustained food access, and economic investment."

- KAREN YOCKY, MANAGER AT KEARNEY
WEST SIDE HEALTHY PARENTS AND BABIES

In collaboration with Lurie Children’s Hospital, the program launched in June 2023 and is designed for Black and Brown birthing parents and their babies. Enrolled families are assigned a support staff member from pregnancy through the first year postpartum to ensure access to care, educational resources, and other support services to help navigate the healthcare system and to aid and model behavior to empower self-advocacy for families and their loved ones.

- Program launched in June 2023. Since July 2023 we have engaged over 50 families and enrolled 16 families in the program.

WELLNESS WEST

The Wellness West collaborative addresses needs of Medicaid insured and medically uninsured patients residing in Chicago West Side zip codes and with one or more of the following medical and behavioral health conditions: Severe Mental Illness, Substance Use Disorder, Mild to Moderate Depression, Adverse Childhood Experience, Hypertension, and Diabetes Mellitus. Wellness West’s innovative approach connects un- and under-insured eligible residents with the care they need to manage and treat their condition as well as connection to social services through community based organizations. As part of the collaborative, WSU provides technical assistance to participating community organizations and community health workers.

- 199K PEOPLE SERVED (4,400 UNINSURED)
- 21,662 HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENTS
- 150+ COMMUNITY LEADERS RECRUITED
- 260 COMMUNITY MEMBERS TRAINED

HEALTHY CHICAGO EQUITY ZONES

The Healthy Chicago Equity Zones initiative deploys hyper-local strategies to confront the social and environmental factors that contribute to health and racial inequities – with the ultimate goal of closing Chicago’s racial life expectancy gap. In 2023, as the Regional Lead for the West Region, WSU led an Assessment Working Group to provide training and technical assistance to our seven Community Leads: Sinai Community Institute, Esperanza, Enlace Chicago, Equal Hope, Erie Family Health, Erie Neighborhood House, and Breakthrough. WSU delivered capacity-building support through educational speakers, connecting Community Leads to resources and trainings.

Wellness West CBO Meeting
COMMUNITY IMPACT MAP

**AUSTIN**
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
WSU actively engages organizations and residents across our ten communities. We have been holding synergy sessions, hosted by our Community Advisory Council members, with community leaders across the West Side. Our synergy session in Austin focused on community needs related to youth engagement, mental health support, and addressing drug use.

**WEST GARFIELD PARK**
GROCERY POP-UP
As part of its longer term support of bringing grocery access to West Garfield Park, WSU secured a $50,000 grant from the Blackhawks Foundation to support a temporary pop-up grocery store that ran for six weeks. The store served the interim food needs of residents while a local grocery is undergoing renovations.

**SOUTH LAWNDALE**
HEALTHY CHICAGO EQUITY ZONES
As the Region Lead for the West Region, WSU led Community Lead partners in a community health assessment to understand health and community priorities in each West Side neighborhood. WSU worked closely with Enlace to develop the assessment and they were able to collect over 100 responses from residents.

**BELMONT CRAGIN**
TRAUMA INFORMED TRAINING
WSU participated in Northwest Center’s Trauma Informed Training. We were glad to have the opportunity to learn more about challenges our community members face and how to be excellent partners to them through our programs. Our partners at Northwest Side Community Development Corporation actively participate as selection committee members in the review and selection of WSU small business grant applicants.

**WEST TOWN**
BUILDING CAPACITY IN LOCAL PANTRIES
WSU’s hospital-food pantry support program pairs West Side serving food pantries with our anchor hospitals to increase their ability to provide nutritious emergency food support. Ascension partners with the European American Association pantry to help promote pantry services and explore resource funding opportunities.

**LOWER WEST SIDE**
SMALL BUSINESS GRANT
In 2023, WSU awarded $10,000 grants to 40 small business owners. One business that we supported was Leavitt Laundry in Pilsen.

In our neighborhood, Pilsen, the population is mainly Mexican immigrants living in rental units. Landlords in our neighborhood do not provide laundry facilities, or really any amenities at all. Many immigrant families are quite large and have a lot of laundry. We have been working since 2016 to make our store a welcoming and quality community amenity.

Richard
Owner

Please note that the markers indicate the general program site but may not reflect the precise location.
COMMUNITY IMPACT MAP

EAST GARFIELD PARK
LOCAL PROCUREMENT
WSU supports our hospital partners to spend more with West Side Businesses. One example is the partnership between Lurie Children’s and Trini’s Tasty Pastries, located in The Hatchery in East Garfield Park.

“As an economic anchor in Chicago, we have a significant procurement budget, and a responsibility to advance equity and support local business growth where we can. Working with local businesses like Trini’s is just one of the ways we invest back into the communities we serve.”
Kelli Day
Director of Operations at Lurie Children’s Hospital

HUMBOLDT PARK
IMPACT INVESTING
As part of WSU’s Impact Investing initiative, one of WSU’s Community Development Financial Institution Partners, IFF, financed a nearly $1.5 million loan for Humboldt Park Passive Living, located on Chicago Ave. The newly designed space will include approximately 80 mixed-income residential units, 9,000 sq ft of commercial and community space and art; and provide an atmosphere where residents and members of the surrounding communities can live, work, shop, and play.

“Partnering with West Side United enables IFF to further invest in West Side communities, recognizing that increased access to capital has ripple effects on the economic ecosystem - from nonprofits’ social services to safe and affordable housing to creating family sustaining jobs.”
Vickie Lakes Battle
IFF, Executive Director for Chicago Region

NORTH LAWNDALE
BLOOD PRESSURE CUFF DISTRIBUTION
Through a grant from Boeing, WSU provided 718 Self Monitored Blood Pressure devices to clinicians working with pregnant and postpartum birthing parents on the West Side. The largest number of cuffs went to pregnant residents of North and South Lawndale.

NEAR WEST SIDE
EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS
WSU partnered with Malcolm X College to implement our Medical Assistant Pathway Program. WSU supported training costs and provided support services and resources for WS students enrolled in the program.
ASCENSION

Ascension Saint Mary-Chicago has hired 127 associates from West Side neighborhoods through the collaboration with WSU.

Thanks to these programs, Marcia Green has had a positive experience in her new career with the hospital. “I immediately felt welcomed and everyone has been very helpful and informative as I’ve learned the job,” Marcia said of her first few weeks at Ascension Saint Mary-Chicago.

“I have met some good people here, and I look forward to growing within Ascension... We became a WSU anchor hospital to improve social determinants of health and positively impact our community, one person at a time, the associates we’re hiring are a testament to progress toward that goal,” said Rosa Perez-Cuevas, VP Operations, Ascension Saint Mary-Chicago.

ANN & ROBERT H. LURIE CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL OF CHICAGO

Thanks to Congressionally Directed Spending championed by Senator Durbin, Lurie Children’s celebrated the arrival of a new mobile health unit in August 2023. The new unit has running water, bathroom facilities, a wheelchair ramp, internet access, multiple clinic rooms and other enhanced features, allowing Lurie Children’s to increase access to a broader range of care to children and adolescents. In 2023, Lurie Children’s provided care to new arrival migrant children living in police stations and temporary shelters, as well as youth who needed school/sports physicals, immunizations, adolescent medicine community health services, and asthma care.

We are grateful to West Side partners, including schools, childcare centers, Iglesia Evangelica Emanuel Church, Metropolitan Family Services, Onward House, Bethel New Life and others who partner with us to bring these services to the community.
SINAI CHICAGO
Population Health Career Pathways

In 2023, Sinai celebrated the graduation of 106 Community Health Workers who completed one of our specialty pathways in behavioral health, health education, or system navigation, each earning at least one industry-recognized credential such as the Mental Health First Aid certification. To enhance their job marketability, we extended our program to 12 weeks and added digital exploration classes and an in-house job readiness curriculum. All graduates obtained credentials in motivational interviewing and CPR/AED/First Aid, and behavioral health students also received a Mental Health First Aid certificate.

Congratulations to all our graduates! We extend a heartfelt thank you to our funders, advisory board, partners, employers, mentors, instructors, and all contributors for their invaluable support in shaping the success and growth of this program.

“...Our hard work, dedication, and perseverance in taking this class has brought us to this very special moment. Let’s not end our educational journey here; let’s continue learning and gaining the knowledge to be whatever is it each one of us want to be professionally in life.”

5,345
COMMUNITY RESIDENTS SERVED

RUSH UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER
RUSH has contributed to many projects supporting West Side communities. Some of the impacts include:

- **Food is Medicine** connected 5,345 community residents with healthy meals and facilitated over 1,400 patients in receiving three home deliveries of healthy meals.

12,409
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

- **REACH** served 12,400 participants across its pipeline programs and provided over 409 students with over 20,000 paid learning hours.

$9M+
SPENT IN TOTAL

- Spent over $9 million in purchased services with West Side vendors.

18%
NEW HIRES FROM WS COMMUNITIES

- Participated in over 30 hiring events and an average of 18% of new hires came from anchor mission communities.

363
CAREER PATHWAYS PARTICIPANTS

- A total number of 363 participants were served in career pathways programs.

& COORDINATION OF PARTNERS FOR SANKOFA WELLNESS VILLAGE
We are relaunching Live Healthy West Side, our health and healthcare strategies for hypertension, maternal and child health, and food access.

We have reconvened workgroups for the hypertension strategy and will also continue to build impacts in the Healthy Chicago Equity Zone and Wellness West projects.

We will continue to guide our anchor partners toward increasing their local purchases, hires, and investments across the West Side.

WSU remains committed to supporting the growth and resilience of small businesses in our community, expanding access to capital through impact investing, reducing structural barriers to employment and contracts, and introducing innovative opportunities for West Side small businesses to confidently connect with anchor partner procurement teams.

We look forward to breaking ground at our future headquarters in West Garfield Park at the Sankofa Wellness Village.

We are excited to continue to support the build-out of two major place-based investments—the Fillmore Center and Fillmore Linen Service and the Sankofa Wellness Village—and ensure that community benefits are foremost in the design.

The community engagement team will ensure resident input is incorporated into new opportunities and developments that we support on the West Side, as well as enhance capacity for deeper engagement across WSU staff and projects.
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