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New Community Mapping Project Links Historic Disinvestments Behind Disparate COVID-19 Impact, Seeks to Guide Future Investments

Effort brings together 25 foundations and public and private sector entities to share data aimed at rectifying history rather than repeating it

CHICAGO – As Chicago works to equitably distribute vaccines against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic that has disproportionately impacted Black and Latinx communities in the city, community-based maps released today reveal new data illustrating the historic disinvestments and structural racism that drove these disparities. The maps also provide guidance for where future public, private, and philanthropic sector investment should be targeted to rebuild stronger communities.

The ***Mapping COVID-19 Recovery Project*** reveals why the unequal outcomes of the pandemic did not happen by chance—including the fact that Black people have been dying at the highest rates, and Latinx people have been infected with COVID-19 at the highest levels. Decades of inequitable public policies and investment patterns created a tinderbox of vulnerability, which was ignited by the COVID-19 pandemic. The data, presented in [publicly-accessible, downloadable maps](#) includes economic, health, and public and private investment indicators such as private mortgage investment rates, public school closures, incarceration, access to healthcare and pharmacies, and rates of small business relief funds.

“To create an equitable future, we need to build awareness and understanding of our past,” said **Field Foundation President Angelique Power**. She adapted the idea for the collaborative project from the Field Foundation’s use of heat maps in its funding structure to illustrate geographic divestment of resources and funding gaps in Black and Latinx communities with the goal of shifting resources to BIPOC-led (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) organizations.

“These maps help illustrate how decades of inequitable public policies and structural racism led to lack of investment and opportunity. As Chicago rebuilds following the pandemic, we need to commit to long-term funding and aiming our policies towards empowering and uplifting BIPOC people and organizations to ensure an equitable future.”

This work is a groundbreaking collaborative of philanthropic stakeholders and researchers representing 25 major Chicago foundations, nonprofits, public agencies and private sector entities that voluntarily shared data about how investments have been shifting to respond to the pandemic, and what more needs to be done. This data illustrates investments from each sector, including PPP and CARES Act dollars, and can be used to center equity in the Chicago area's roadmap to recovery.

The study area includes Chicago communities and Cook County municipalities on the West and South Sides including Auburn Gresham, Austin, Brighton Park, Chicago Lawn, Englewood, Humboldt Park, New City, North Lawndale, Roseland, South Chicago, South Lawndale, South Shore, West Englewood, Cicero, Markham, Maywood, Harvey, and Robbins.

Among other findings, the data revealed that in the year prior to the pandemic, foundations were funding more downtown Chicago organizations than organizations in predominantly BIPOC communities on the South and West Sides. Since the pandemic began, more dollars have been invested in BIPOC communities and with BIPOC-led organizations, but there is vast opportunity for more to be done.

“The pandemic underscored what many of us already knew—that historic disinvestment has dire consequences for health, wealth, and opportunity,” **said Luis Guitierrez, CEO of Latinos Progresando**, a Little Village-based community advocacy organization. “We'll need deep, multi-sector collaboration to build a renewed future, and this tool will be so important for nonprofits as they design programming and pursue funding, and for the private and public sectors as they determine where resources will be invested.”

This mapping project is intended to help all audiences—organizers, policymakers, and investors from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors—understand current conditions. The goal is to provide an accessible tool to help these audiences invest in and rebuild post-COVID Chicago communities. By standardizing data about where public, private, and philanthropic investments are going, the maps offer a framework for shifting essential resources to BIPOC communities and BIPOC-led organizations. The data is meant to be shared widely and is available for public use.

For more information regarding the Mapping COVID-19 Equity Project and to access the community-based maps, visit www.mappingCovid19equity.org.

About the Mapping COVID-19 Recovery Project

The **Mapping COVID-19 Recovery Project** standardizes data through a series of accessible, downloadable maps to illustrate where public, private, and philanthropic sector investments are going in communities of color devastated by the pandemic, and guiding recovery through strategic reinvestment, eliminating historic funding gaps and rebuilding stronger communities. To learn more and explore the maps, visit www.mappingCOVID19equity.org.

Mapping COVID-19 Recovery Project members include The Field Foundation of Illinois, A Better Chicago, Chicago Beyond, Civic Consulting Alliance, The Chicago Community Trust, Grand

Victoria Foundation, Healthy Communities Foundation, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, MacArthur Foundation, University of Illinois Chicago, the Chicago Office of Equity and Racial Justice, United Way, Metropolitan Planning Council, New America and the Woods Fund Chicago.

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