



**Great Cities  
Institute**

**THE  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ILLINOIS  
AT  
CHICAGO**



## Research Projects

Peoria Police Chief Jerry Mitchell participates in a working group with citizens to reduce violent crime  
Source: Great Cities Institute



### ***Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) Partnerships and Strategies to Reduce Violent Crime***

The Peoria Police Department, Center for Public Safety and Justice, and Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) collaborated on a project focused on crime, causes of crime, and policing in Peoria. Great Cities Institute provided socio-economic research, cross-sector analysis, deployed a community survey to gather public perception of crime and policing, and made organizational and training recommendations to a team of multi-disciplinary stakeholders. The purpose of the project is to analyze the crime that occurs in Peoria and assess community perceptions of police to make recommendations about how to improve community-police relations, improve services, and lead to a reduction of violent crime in Peoria.

### ***The Latino Neighborhoods Report***

Great Cities Institute collaborated with the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy (IRRPP) in 2017 to produce *The Latino Neighborhoods Report: Issues and Prospects for Chicago*.

The report, based primarily on U.S. Census data, focused on twelve neighborhoods with at least 25,000 Latino residents where they are the largest single group. Findings include that the Latino population has increased substantially and is widely distributed throughout Chicago neighborhoods and current levels of education and income for Latinos lag behind non-Hispanic White and Black populations citywide.



but Latinos have higher median household incomes in 5 of 12 predominantly Latino neighborhoods.

The report was produced for Metropolitan Family Services to assist them in their delivery of social services. The full report is available on our website.

### ***Abandoned in their Neighborhoods: Youth Joblessness amidst the Flight of Industry and Opportunity; and The High Costs of Out of School and Jobless Youth in Chicago and Cook County***

In 2017, GCI continued its focus on joblessness among young people, preparing additional reports that provide longitudinal employment figures dating back to 1960 demonstrating the flight of jobs from Chicago neighborhoods. The reports show tax contributions by levels of educational attainment, public transit connectivity to jobs, and connections between joblessness and violence and education and earnings. The reports were released at events for elected and appointed government officials, members of the business community, and community stakeholders.

The reports have generated extensive local and national media coverage. At a time when violence and economic uncertainty have dominated the public discourse, GCI is working with strategic partners to promote solutions to address challenges facing Chicago and its young people.

### ***Community Building Projects Participatory Budgeting***

Since its inception, Participatory Budgeting Chicago (PB Chicago) has engaged over 25,000 residents in 12 different community areas to directly decide how to spend over \$31 million in public dollars. In 2009, Chicago 49th Ward Alderman Joe Moore became the first U.S. elected official to use participatory budgeting to allocate public money. Residents of the 49th Ward democratically decided how to spend \$1 million of the Ward's annual discretionary capital budget. Residents identified hundreds of project ideas, developed dozens of these ideas into full proposals, and then voted to fund street and sidewalk repairs, bike lanes, playground and park improvements, street lights, one hundred new trees, murals, and many more community projects.

In February 2012, Great Cities Institute partnered with the Participatory Budgeting Project and a coalition of aldermen, citywide institutions, and community-based organizations to launch PB Chicago, an initiative that aims to implement and expand PB processes and direct democracy throughout Chicago. Working hand in hand with community members, PB Chicago allows citizens to have a voice in how public money is spent.

### ***Our Great Rivers / Calumet Connect***

In partnership with Alliance for the Great Lakes and numerous community organizations, Great Cities Institute

has begun facilitating community engagement around the Calumet River, with the goal of integrating sustainable economic and recreational opportunities desired by local residents and businesses. Calumet Connect is a community-led capacity building and planning project that will capture the vision of Chicago's Southeast Side residents, businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders.

Engagement and planning will focus on building bridges among residents, commerce, recreation, environmental stewardship, and developing new river access. This process will also seek to build capacity among residents for engaging in anticipated City efforts to reconfigure the planned manufacturing district along the Calumet River. In the 21st century, the Calumet River should continue to serve its historic economic role, while also bringing opportunities for connecting communities to nature, developing the role of water culturally, and offering opportunities for improved public health.

#### **Pilsen Quality of Life Plan**

In collaboration with the Pilsen Planning Committee, GCI engaged in a multi-year planning process to create a new Quality-of-Life plan for Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood.

Several projects that came out of the planning process have been implemented, including the establishment of a local business council and the opening of a new community education center at the repurposed Kominsky Building that includes early childhood education and a parent learning center.

#### **South Chicago Commercial Avenue Corridor Plan**

In collaboration with the South Chicago Chamber of Commerce and Special Service Area (SSA) #5, GCI embarked on a twelve-month community-based planning process with key neighborhood stakeholders including residents, business owners, community organizations, service providers, and elected officials.

The resulting plan is having a direct effect on the Commercial Avenue corridor by creating a focus on the importance of the corridor and by creating a framework for future developments along the corridor. The result will be a stronger economy, more jobs, and access to the goods and services that neighborhood residents need.

### **Evaluations**

#### **Inherit Chicago**

GCI partnered with the Chicago Cultural Alliance to perform an evaluation of Inherit Chicago – a citywide, intercultural festival of art, ideas, and performance at many of Chicago's neighborhood cultural heritage centers. To evaluate Inherit Chicago, GCI compared the goals of Inherit Chicago to event outcomes measured through surveying Inherit Chicago event attendees, and surveying and conducting focus groups with representatives of organizations who participated in Inherit Chicago. GCI

produced a final evaluation report that presents analysis of data collected during the evaluation process and provides recommendations for future Inherit Chicago festivals.

### **Events**



#### **Commemorating the 1968**

##### **Release of the Kerner Report**

In Spring 2018, Great Cities Institute hosted a week of activities to commemorate the February 29, 1968 release of the report of The National Commission on Civil Disorders, known as the Kerner Report. The events discussed the report's findings and their continuing relevance for today's urban issues.

The keynote presentation on March 1, 2018 featured the last remaining member of the Kerner Commission, former U.S. Senator Dr. Fred Harris. A panel discussion followed with noted historian and Chicago civil rights activist Timuel Black, former mayor of Berkeley and human rights activist Eugene "Gus" Newport and former vice president of the W K Kellogg Foundation, Dr. Gail Christopher. Also included on the panel were local activists and community builders: José Lopez of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Willie J.R. Fleming of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, and Anthony Lowery of the Safer Foundation.

#### **Real Time Chicago Lecture Series**

Each year, Great Cities Institute sponsors lecture series and special events, including *Real Time Chicago*. In Spring 2017, this series brought together an array of speakers on the topic of social innovation and entrepreneurship. In Fall 2017, the focus was on building infrastructure and in Spring 2018, we showcased examples of environmental activism over the span of Chicago's 185-year history.

#### **The Whole World is Still Watching**

On the night of August 28, 1968, thousands of young activists headed for the Democratic National Convention in downtown Chicago, intent on protesting the Vietnam War. Activists appealing for peace were greeted by nightsticks and tear gas. The debacle was televised and triggered outrage around the nation. The protestors chanted: "*The Whole World is Watching*."

On August 28, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the Student Center East, GCI will host an event to discuss the role of social protest, 50 years after the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

# About Great Cities Institute

## Serving UIC's Great Cities Commitment: Solutions for Today's Urban Challenges

### *The Power of Research:*

***GCI offers bold solutions for urban problems to improve the quality of life in our cities & regions***

UIC's Great Cities Institute is a research hub for scholars, policymakers, and stakeholders who share an interest in finding answers to the question, "What can cities and regions do to make themselves into great places?"

The Great Cities Institute (GCI) represents UIC's commitment to "engaged research" while contributing to its stature as a Research One University thereby highlighting the value of quality research for addressing today's urban challenges.

By ***harnessing the power of engaged research***, Great Cities Institute:

- Advances conversations on key issues
- Promotes community economic development strategies
- Produces, with neighborhoods, commercial revitalization and quality of life plans
- Provides data and technical assistance
- Facilitates collaboration and public engagement
- Assists with mentorship, training and capacity building
- Conducts policy and impact analysis
- Convenes local, national and international scholars

**Our Goal:** *Improve the quality of life of residents living and working in Chicago, its metropolitan region, and cities throughout the world.*

### **Our Strategic Focus**

GCI's work focuses on *employment and economic development, local and regional governance, dynamics of global mobility, energy and the environment and community wellbeing*. GCI's develops strategic partnerships that leverage the intellectual capital of the university with the local knowledge of neighborhood residents, government and non-profit, foundation, business and civic organizations. GCI is home to the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative, a university-community partnership with neighborhoods both adjacent to the UIC campus and in the Chicagoland area.

### **Our Vision**

Formulate solutions to tackle the multi-dimensional challenges of the changing socio-political economy of cities and their metropolitan regions.

### **Our Mission**

The Mission of the UIC Great Cities Institute is to link its academic resources with a range of partners to address urban issues by providing research, policy analysis and program development. Tied to the University of Illinois at Chicago *Great Cities Commitment*, GCI seeks to improve quality of life in Chicago, its metropolitan region and cities throughout the world.



# Great Cities Institute

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