Dear Partners,

In April, it was my honor to join the University of Chicago, my alma mater, as Vice President for Civic Engagement. I’ve been proud to watch the University deepen its commitment to neighboring communities in the years since I was a student on campus and I’m eager to build on that momentum and create even more meaningful local impact in the years ahead. In my first months on the job, I’ve been inspired to see the many ways the Office of Civic Engagement works alongside campus and community partners to engage with and invest in our nine-neighborhood focus area on the South Side and beyond.

The multifaceted challenges facing our city don’t have tidy solutions. As the largest anchor institution and employer on the South Side, we recognize that while we certainly don’t have all the answers, we do have a lot to contribute toward addressing the issues that matter most to local residents—including access to good jobs and high-quality pre-K to 12 education.

The team at the Office of Civic Engagement is committed to listening to, convening, and working collectively with our neighbors to move our shared community forward. We’ve benefited, for instance, from input from the local business, workforce development, and housing organizations convened through our Community Development Working Group to advise the University on how to support more equitable development and economic inclusion on the South Side.

Over the past several years, the group has recommended additional investments in preparing local youth for the jobs of the future, clearer pathways to University employment for local residents, and a reimagined effort to incentivize University employees to buy homes in neighboring communities that would benefit from more investment. As you’ll see in these pages, over the course of the past year, the Office of Civic Engagement has advanced initiatives that put this feedback into action.

We’re also proud to have made a positive impact with our work supporting small business owners, nonprofit leaders, and perhaps most importantly, investing in South Side youth, who will play an outsized role in driving our shared community’s future.

This work would not be possible without the community partners working by our side and we are immensely grateful for your collaboration.

As our office finalizes a new strategic plan in the coming months—one that reflects UChicago’s campus-wide commitment to civic engagement and President Paul Alivisatos’ dedication to community wealth creation—I’ll be drawing on my years as a Chicago community organizer and my team’s years of forging deep community relationships. I look forward to the work ahead—to more listening, learning, and ensuring the University’s priorities align with our neighbors’ so we can continue to build a stronger South Side, and a stronger Chicago, together.

Sincerely,

Christian Mitchell
Vice President for Civic Engagement
The University of Chicago

Table of Contents

2 Office of Civic Engagement
3 College and Career Readiness
6 Economic Inclusion
9 Student Civic Engagement
11 Academic Partnerships
14 Nonprofit Capacity Building
16 Civic Leadership
17 Civic Relations
OFFICE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

OUR MISSION
The mission of the Office of Civic Engagement (OCE) is to strengthen the University’s impact on the lives of people living in Chicago and demonstrate the transformative civic role leading urban research institutions can have in cities around the world.

OUR PURPOSE
OCE serves a dual purpose for the University. First, we steward the University’s commitment to the city, supporting other academic and administrative units as they develop and advance their distinct civic priorities. We also lead areas of strategic work that extend the University’s reach and impact citywide and on the South Side.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FY21 TO FY23

SUPPORT ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Promote the capacity of local small businesses, nonprofits, and South Side residents to participate in and benefit from the anchor functions and educational mission of the University.

EXTEND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY
Connect Chicago Public School students to University resources that provide pre-K-12 classroom enrichment and increase STEM preparedness, arts education, and college readiness and access.

INCREASE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION
Increase faculty, student, staff, and alumni engagement with local schools and organizations, while also expanding civic leadership education and networks.

ADVANCE CIVIC AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
Foster relationships with civic and community leaders, and build support for the University’s activities and priorities with public officials and policymakers.

OUR AREAS OF WORK

- Economic Inclusion
- Nonprofit Capacity Building
- Student Civic Engagement
- College Readiness and Access
- Civic Leadership
- Civic Relations
- Academic Partnerships
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

OCE College and Career Readiness programs help prepare Chicago high school students to gain admission to, pay for, and thrive in college and excel in future careers. They provide Chicago Public Schools students with a broad range of academic advising, college preparation, career exploration, leadership development, and cultural enrichment over the course of several years in the programs.

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<tr>
<th>FY23 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>218</strong> Chicago Public Schools students were enrolled in OCE college readiness and access programs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>$9.22M</strong> in financial aid was awarded to graduates from OCE college readiness and access programs*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>66%</strong> of participants will be the first in their family to attend college</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>66%</strong> of program participants were from low-income households</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>100%</strong> of Chicago Public Schools seniors in OCE college readiness and access programs graduated from high school and were admitted to colleges and universities*</td>
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*Based on 96.4% reply rate to senior survey/program exit survey across programs.

FATIMA PEREZ, COLLEGIATE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

When Fatima Perez was applying to what felt like “long shot” colleges, she drew on her experience in the Collegiate Scholars Program (CSP) for encouragement. As a student of color from a low-income background, Perez says she often battles Imposter Syndrome, but CSP helped close that self-doubt gap.

This fall, Perez, a first-generation college student who lives in the West Lawn neighborhood, will attend Yale University on a full scholarship.

CSP’s early emphasis on college readiness gave Perez a head start on navigating the application process, she says, which was particularly valuable for her as the first member of her family to do so. Financial aid checklists, essay-writing practice, and a tour of colleges in Washington, D.C., among other CSP program elements, further positioned her for success.

Read the full story.
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

UCHICAGO YOUTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The University of Chicago Youth Internship Program is a paid summer employment opportunity for Chicago Public Schools students who live or attend school on the South Side. In addition to providing interns with meaningful work experience in STEM fields, the program also offers weekly professional development workshops, career exploration activities, and college readiness and access programming.

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<th>FY23 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>76</strong> local high school students from 23 South Side Chicago Public Schools participated in the Youth Internship Program</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>27</strong> students served as interns placed across 19 University departments</td>
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DONOVAN PRYOR, UCHICAGO YOUTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Donovan Pryor wants to be a doctor. So, when the rising Kenwood Academy senior and Chatham resident got a chance to work in UChicago Medicine’s gastroenterology department through UChicago’s Youth Internship Program, he was thrilled.

In partnership with One Summer Chicago, the paid employment opportunity for South Side Chicago Public high school students provides interns like Pryor with meaningful work experience in health sciences, computer sciences, or IT services while also offering professional development workshops, career exploration activities, and college readiness programming.

Pryor and his fellow intern sat in on colonoscopies, endoscopies, and other procedures; got to work closely with medical personnel from different departments; and even joined their supervisor in treating clinic patients.

“That was probably my favorite part of the program,” Pryor said. “It was just super cool to connect with people on that level.”

Read the full story.
On a summer Friday, Chicago public high school students from the South Side gathered on UChicago’s campus to gain new insights on their future professional options and opportunities at the 11th annual Peter and Judy Kovler Career Conference. Students had the opportunity to learn about and plan for career paths including policy and social impact, science and innovation, education, engineering, business, and computer science, among other fields.

Logan Leflore, a soon-to-be first-generation college student from Woodlawn, spent his morning at the conference learning about computer science and innovation.

“Through events like this,” Leflore said, “I was able to see all these different fields and options and explore something new.”

Read the full story.
ECONOMIC INCLUSION

UCHICAGO LOCAL

UChicago Local is an economic inclusion initiative, led by OCE, that leverages the University’s role as the largest private employer and purchaser of goods and services on the South Side to create economic opportunities for local businesses and residents. The initiative supports growth for small businesses, career pathways for residents, and community-focused economic development in the University’s nine-neighborhood focus area on the South Side.

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<tr>
<th>FY23 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>$23.95M</strong> channeled to local South Side vendors through targeted purchasing goals*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>$35.06M</strong> channeled to minority business enterprise (MBE) vendors</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>400+ South Side vendors</strong> doing business with members of the University community*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4,500+ local residents</strong> employed by the University of Chicago, 31.2% of employees*</td>
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*Data refers to zip codes 60609, 60615, 60616, 60619, 60621, 60637, 60649, and 60653.

EMPLOYER ASSISTED HOUSING PROGRAM

In FY23, OCE’s Economic Inclusion team revived and reimagined the University’s Employer Assisted Housing Program (EAHP) to better align with community development goals and participant needs after pausing a previous iteration due to pandemic budget constraints. Dating back to 2003, the program aims to serve as a bridge to homeownership for moderate income employees, boost housing stability in neighboring communities, and to improve work/life balance for employees. More than 300 employees have tapped EAHP to help them purchase nearby homes over the past 20 years.

The updated program addresses previous challenges by offering down-payment assistance as a grant instead of a forgivable loan (making it easier for employees to secure additional financing), incorporating income caps and grant amounts for specific neighborhoods which better reflect current market conditions, and tapping funding from the benefits pool.

The new program incorporates input from the University’s Community Development Working Group, a group of community partners that OCE has convened since 2019 to explore how the University can help to support more equitable development and economic inclusion on the South Side.
ECONOMIC INCLUSION

UCHICAGO LOCAL

INCLUSIVE HIRING WORKSHOP SERIES

After participating in an inclusive hiring training offered by Cara Plus last year, OCE’s economic inclusion team partnered with the local workforce organization to bring a customized version to the University. The series was inspired in part by recommendations from the University’s Community Development Working Group which had advocated for more inclusive hiring practices in an effort to meet UChicago’s local hiring goals.

In addition to editing job descriptions to better attract diverse candidates, the group evaluated education requirements, and shared best practices for engaging community partners.

Employees representing Alumni Relations and Development, Campus and Student Life, Library Services, the Physical Sciences Division, and UChicago Press participated in the pilot.

“It was a good reminder for us that not everybody is in the same boat,” Angela Jacobs, Alumni Relations and Development’s senior director of human resources and recruiting, said.

OCE plans to offer the series again in Spring 2024.

Read the full story.

FAIR CHANCE HIRING

In April, the Corporate Coalition of Chicago profiled the OCE Economic Inclusion team’s work to build awareness of the University’s Fair Chance hiring policy internally and externally. Responding to workforce partner feedback that potential South Side candidates believed criminal records precluded them from University employment, OCE worked with the Human Resources and Legal departments to draft Fair Chance hiring policy language and integrate it into every job posting. The feature cites UChicago as a model for companies and institutions also looking to reduce barriers to employment.

Read the full story.
ECONOMIC INCLUSION

POLSKY CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

As part of the University’s UChicago Local commitment, the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation provides intensive support for local entrepreneurs through the Polsky Exchange in the form of free workspace, workshops, and mentoring from industry experts.

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<th>FY23 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>22 women-, minority-, or veteran-owned small businesses</strong> supported through the Polsky Small Business Growth Program and Small Business Financial Fundamentals Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>33 students</strong> served as consultants through Polsky’s community-facing programs</td>
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POLSKY SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH PROGRAM

WATCHEN NYANUE, I CHOOSE THE LADDER

Entrepreneur Watchen Nyanue has a long history with The Polsky Center, attending lectures there as a Booth School student and making use of the office space for meetings when her employee management consulting business, I Choose the Ladder, was just starting out. Today, she and her team work with Fortune 500 companies on employee development and retention, with a focus on Black female talent. After landing clients like Nike, McDonald’s, and Best Buy, Nyanue is interested in proactively cultivating more and is working with The Polsky Center’s Small Business Growth program to create a business development plan.

“I want to make sure that I have the right partners and right staff in place and that I’ve built a solid foundation,” said Nyanue, who plans to hire two additional employees this year. “I want the business that I’m building to be one that I’m going to enjoy and that my team is going to enjoy.”

Read the full story.
STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Neighborhood Schools Program (NSP) has been providing direct education and enrichment to pre-K to 12th grade students in their local schools and in their communities since 1976. University students add critical capacity to local schools and community sites, working in a variety of classroom and administrative support roles. They also offer one-on-one, individualized tutoring and support preschool students and teachers by leading language, literacy, and social-emotional programming.

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<th>FY23 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>300+ UChicago students</strong> supported local schools and students through Neighborhood Schools Program initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>95 families</strong>, including 80 from the South Side, received 4,260 hours of 1:1 tutoring, with 40 families receiving support free of cost</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6,700+ hours of support</strong> delivered to local schools and nonprofits</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>270 Woodlawn pre-K students</strong> received 1,540 hours of support from 22 UChicago students through Jumpstart</td>
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[The tutors are] passionate about helping the students in our school community and they’re willing to assist wherever, whether it’s in the classroom or helping out in the main office or a service project. It’s just a tremendous help for us and our school.”

—Mellodie Brown, principal at Ludwig Van Beethoven Elementary School in Bronzeville

Read the full story.

“[It is kind of a magical experience to get to spend time in those classrooms. I didn’t necessarily enter college wanting to be a teacher but my experience with Jumpstart really did influence that. Getting to be a consistent figure in students’ lives and see them grow up is something that’s really going to stick with me.”

—Zoe Benjamin, a fourth-year UChicago College student who supports preschoolers at Emmett Till Math and Science Academy in Woodlawn through NSP’s Jumpstart initiative

Read the full story.
STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER

The University Community Service Center (UCSC) connects students to civic engagement opportunities, on and off campus, that complement the University’s rigorous academic experience. UCSC provides a range of resources that contribute to student civic learning and impact across Chicago, helping students make meaningful connections with the city’s diverse communities and preparing them to become leaders in their civic, academic, and professional lives.

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<th>FY23 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>280</strong> civic engagement advising sessions provided to UChicago students</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>140</strong> unique community partners engaged with the UCSC</td>
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<td><strong>10,000+</strong> hours of service and engagement from 3,000+ students in UCSC programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100+</strong> trainings and workshops facilitated by UCSC staff to program participants, community service recognized student organizations, and other campus partners</td>
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“I’ve enjoyed speaking to community members who have been here for decades and just hearing about how the community has changed. I don’t want to just live here. I want this to be my home. I want to feel connected to the people around me, so it’s really important to understand that history.”

—**Brooke Davis**, a College fourth-year and co-president of Tech-Savvy Friends, a technology support group for local older adults and one of more than 40 community service-focused Registered Student Organizations UCSC supports

Read the full story.

ENGAGE CHICAGO

“The opportunity that UChicago students have to make an impact on the South Side is significant because there is a wealth of resources here and to be able to connect resources to good work equals big impact.”

—**Andrew DeMuro**, regional director for the Pilsen-based musical mentoring nonprofit Guitars Over Guns and one of more than 60 community partners to share their experiences with groups of all incoming UChicago College students as part of the annual UCSC-led Engage Chicago orientation event in September

Read the full story.
ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

OCE supports academic units as they develop and advance their distinct civic priorities. Whether connecting University researchers to community-based organizations to strengthen the broader impacts of University scholarship or partnering with faculty members to enhance our community-facing programs, OCE’s broad spectrum of engagement with UChicago’s faculty and academic appointees strengthens the impact we can have together at the University and in our neighboring communities.

FY23 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

73 faculty and 24 academic appointees engaged by OCE, including 19 new connections

11 divisions and professional schools and the College, plus 26 academic centers and institutes engaged by OCE staff

ASHLYN SPARROW, WESTON GAME LAB

As the Assistant Director of the Weston Game Lab at UChicago, Ashlyn Sparrow is always eager to show young people, particularly those from marginalized communities, that they too can turn their personal interests into fulfilling careers.

Through an ongoing partnership with OCE, Sparrow often hosts local Chicago Public high school student groups, giving them tours and leading workshops in Crerar Library’s Media Arts, Data, and Design Center and sharing her work as a game designer.

Sparrow says these interactions and others OCE has helped facilitate make boundaries between UChicago’s campus and neighboring communities “more permeable.” By connecting with South Side students over shared interests like video games, Sparrow aims to create more authentic community networks: “Just beyond the education—it's how can we build a relationship? We’re working together to build up the pipelines and pathways to universities and careers in a way that feels culturally relevant.”

Read the full story.
ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

The Inclusive Innovation initiative, a partnership between UChicago, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Argonne National Laboratory, and Fermilab, aims to engage local students, educators, and workers and connect them to several growing scientific domains in order to generate a diverse talent pipeline in the sciences and spur economic growth on the South Side. The initiative is led jointly by the Office of Civic Engagement and the Office of Science, Innovation, National Labs, and Global Initiatives.

INCLUSIVE INNOVATION FUND

At UChicago Charter Schools’ Woodlawn campus, 20 rising 6th and 7th grade girls from the South Side recently wrapped up a two-week STEM camp. Campers practiced quantum computing, learned the fundamentals of cryptography, applied algebraic reasoning, and taste tested astronaut ice cream, among other STEM-centric activities. The experience and several others like it were made possible, in part, by a new fund and a broader UChicago effort to make the sciences more inclusive.

The annual $150,000 Inclusive Innovation Fund is one way the broader Inclusive Innovation initiative is starting to lay a foundation for positive impact.

Other fund recipients are putting their grants toward everything from encouraging healthcare careers for underrepresented youth, to hosting an on-campus science fair for South Side middle schoolers and teachers, to organizing college tours at STEM-focused colleges and universities. In total, nine programs were awarded funding.

Read the full story.
ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO PARTNERSHIP

After a decade working in retail management, North Austin resident Vanessa Martin was taking cybersecurity classes at City Colleges of Chicago’s (CCC) Wilbur Wright College when her daughter encouraged her to apply to a summer internship in UChicago’s IT Services department.

Martin got the job, and her supervisors were so impressed with her work, what was supposed to be a six-week internship grew into a year-long apprenticeship. This spring, Martin was offered a full-time role at the University.

Martin is one of several CCC student interns who has forged a unique career opportunity in IT through the internship program IT Services developed with support from CCC and OCE and one of two interns-turned-apprentices to secure a job with UChicago so far. As part of a broader Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions to create a more diverse field of professionals entering the sciences, the IT internship aims to carve new pathways for CCC students and connect UChicago to underrepresented talent.

“This has been an amazing opportunity,” Martin said. “It opens doors for students.”

Read the full story.
I founded West Point with five instruments and seven kids. Today we have a budget of $2 million, a staff of 14, our own instrument repair shop, a steel drum manufacturing plant, and we partner with 10 CPS schools serving 500 students a week. A lot of this growth can be tied directly to our affiliation with the Accelerator.”

—Julian Champion, founder of the West Point School of Music, a free music school for Chicago youth in underserved communities

See the full video.

SOUTH SIDE STRONG SUMMIT

More than 130 South Side nonprofit leaders gathered at UChicago’s Rubenstein Forum in May to connect, collaborate, and share best practices at the second annual South Side Strong Summit, hosted by OCE’s Community Programs Accelerator.

Participants embraced this year’s theme of “Cultivating Collaborative Communities” through sessions on everything from creating an effective community needs assessment to financial management essentials.
NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS ACCELERATOR
CERTIFICATE IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A joint initiative of the Community Programs Accelerator and the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice, the Certificate in Nonprofit Management program equips early- to mid-stage nonprofit professionals working on Chicago’s South Side to create, grow, and operate sustainable, effective community-based organizations.

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<td><strong>9</strong> participants granted certificates following completion of the program</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>22</strong> courses, workshops, presentations and other convenings held for participating leaders</td>
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“Some folks had been leading nonprofits for years, some were just starting, and in every class, every instructor valued participants’ experiences. My voice was valued in that space and now I have not just colleagues but professors that I can lean on as I do this work.”

—Annette Moore Dowd, an early-stage nonprofit leader and Nonprofit Certificate Program graduate. Dowd used what she learned through the program to build on a women’s mentoring nonprofit pilot she launched in the Roseland neighborhood last year.
CIVIC LEADERSHIP

OCE’s Civic Leadership Initiatives team stewards the University of Chicago’s commitment to the scholarship, teaching, and practice of civic leadership, helping to cultivate civic leaders who think critically, imagine new systems, and build resilient communities. OCE leads programs that help strengthen the ability of emerging and experienced civic leaders on the South Side and throughout Chicago to become more effective leaders and better serve their communities.

FY23 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

| **South Side community leaders** from 34 unique organizations participated in the Civic Actor Studio | **leadership programs** from across the city represented in Civic Leadership Development Exchange |
| **Civic Actor Studio participants** returned to co-facilitate the program | **convenings of The Loom programming**, including Poetry in Public, Phenomenal Women Retreats, and Global Voices, engaged 475 participants |

CIVIC ACTOR STUDIO

After participating in the third cohort of the Civic Actor Studio—which uses theater techniques to help strengthen South Side community leaders’ effectiveness—Senyah Haynes was so moved by her experience that she asked to serve as a facilitator. Haynes was one of seven Civic Actor Studio alums to return as a co-facilitator over the past year. The structure encourages exponential impact—more returning co-facilitators allows for more new program participants.

The Civic Actor Studio helped Haynes build long-term trusting relationships with fellow leaders and think about the various roles she plays in her work as an artist and educator in schools and non-profits in Greater Grand Crossing and across the city. As a co-facilitator, Haynes interviewed potential participants, selected readings and activities for the retreat, and helped to create community among the group. Haynes loved welcoming new participants to spark collective local action.
CIVIC RELATIONS

OCE makes connections, builds relationships, engages diverse stakeholders, and listens to our neighbors to understand their priorities. We ensure these relationships inform the University’s civic engagement work and lead to the identification of shared interests and the creation of sustainable partnerships.

WOODLAWN COMMUNITY SUMMIT

Now in its 14th year, the South East Chicago Commission’s annual Woodlawn Community Summit brings together hundreds of neighbors, youth groups, elected officials, business owners, and community stakeholders in order to promote the growth and well-being of the Woodlawn community.

OCE has served as the event’s primary financial sponsor since its inception in 2009 and provided staff support for the Summit’s planning.

The 2023 event—held at the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice—focused on exploring how past and present quality-of-life plans will shape Woodlawn’s future. This year’s attendees heard from a plenary panel of community leaders discussing visions for Woodlawn’s 63rd Street before choosing between breakout sessions focused on economic development, health, housing, safety, sustainability, and the work of the Cook County Tax Assessor’s office. A bus tour of the housing landscape in the community concluded the event.
THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Partnerships and collaborations are central to our approach and are critical to helping us make a positive impact on the South Side and across the city. OCE extends our appreciation and thanks to our community partners and generous donors for supporting advancement of our shared work to increase civic participation, expand educational access, and create economic and social opportunity throughout FY23.