

A BOLD NEW FUTURE

CHICAGO COMMONS FY2020-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JUNE 2019



ABOUT CHICAGO COMMONS

For Chicago to truly thrive, its neighborhoods must thrive too. That's why Chicago Commons has spent 125 years working inside Chicago's most vulnerable neighborhoods, providing services to lift up families, communities, and the city as a whole.

Founded in 1894, Chicago Commons began as a settlement home for immigrants on the near Northwest side looking to build a life for their families. Over the years, Chicago Commons has evolved alongside the communities we serve as their needs have changed. Today, Chicago Commons is a cornerstone in some of the city's most under-resourced neighborhoods, providing innovative Early Childhood Education, Family Hub services, and Senior Services. Working in West Humboldt Park, Pilsen, Bronzeville and Back of the Yards, Chicago Commons directly serves families with a median household annual income of \$16,938. Our programs reach nearly 1,200 children, 400 parents, and 1,500 seniors.

Chicago Commons strives to ensure that low-income children start kindergarten ready to succeed and are as well-prepared as their more affluent peers. Since 1992, we have done this using the Reggio Emilia educational pedagogy, which empowers children to author their own learning processes through self-directed, experiential learning. Our four Early Childhood Education centers are unique in utilizing the Reggio Emilia approach in the West Humboldt Park, Pilsen, and Back of the Yards communities. We also partner with eleven Community Partner sites extending our reach to six additional Chicago neighborhoods.

In our Early Childhood Education centers, we use Teaching Strategies GOLD and CLASS assessment tools to evaluate our academic impact and classroom quality. Through CLASS, we know that between 85% to 99% of our children are meeting or exceeding widely-held expectations across the various educational domains. By using CLASS, we also know that Chicago Commons' centers consistently outperform local and national averages for teaching quality.

Chicago Commons' Family Hub provides families with a full range of wraparound support to increase economic mobility, kindergarten readiness, and the social-emotional connections that spark lifelong success. The Family Hub model operates out of the four Chicago Commons centers. A total of 392 individuals participate in this comprehensive program, which provides services that help parents gain employment, manage their finances, improve their health, increase their digital literacy and improve their English proficiency.

Our Senior Services supports 1,450 seniors and adults with disabilities, providing them with a life of independence, dignity and respect. Seniors can receive individualized therapy, socialize with others, and get a nutritious meal through our Adult Day Service program. Home Care Aides are available 24 hours a day to help homebound seniors with daily activities, provide personal care, or simply offer a friendly ear. Our programs help seniors and disabled adults stay in their homes, preventing or delaying the need for costly institutional care.

Chicago Commons' three core activity areas – early childhood education, family-centered adult services, and senior services – work together to create opportunities and move families toward educational success, economic security, and health and well-being. When Chicago Commons identifies a neighborhood in need, it commits to building up those families and that neighborhood until the need is met. In these neighborhoods, Chicago Commons is more than an idea, but a place where families can go for support, strength, and guidance.

CHICAGO COMMONS

FY2020–2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

In early 2019, Chicago Commons embarked on a new three-year strategic planning process, engaging stakeholders, staff, funders, and families in thoughts and conversations about the strategic pillars that will help guide our leadership through Fiscal Years 2020 to 2023.

The Chicago Commons board and leadership team reflected on the organization's history, strengths, and areas for improvement, while developing an understanding of emerging trends and stakeholders' viewpoints. During this process, we took a fresh look at our vision and mission and updated them to reflect a focus on empowerment and generational impact in the communities that we serve.

OUR VISION

We envision a future where all children, families, and seniors have equitable opportunities for success, generation after generation.



OUR MISSION

To empower individuals, families, and communities to overcome poverty and systemic barriers, embrace opportunities, and thrive across generations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

to drive greater impact and grow existing programs



1. Remain a leader in high-quality Early Childhood Education, while expanding Chicago Commons' programming, increasing mixed-income classrooms, and exploring private-pay centers.

With only 22% of children in Chicago prepared for kindergarten, we must expand services to reach more children. Chicago Commons' centers score much higher than city averages across all kindergarten readiness domains.*



2. Become known as a premier two-generation provider by expanding and enhancing the Family Hub.

By integrating high-quality early education for children with intensive human capital investments across education and career training for parents, the 2Gen approach is a promising anti-poverty strategy. Bringing the 2Gen lens to working with seniors and their adult children is a new frontier.



3. Expand Senior Services to reach a broader segment of the Chicago metropolitan region's aging market through both subsidized and private-pay models.

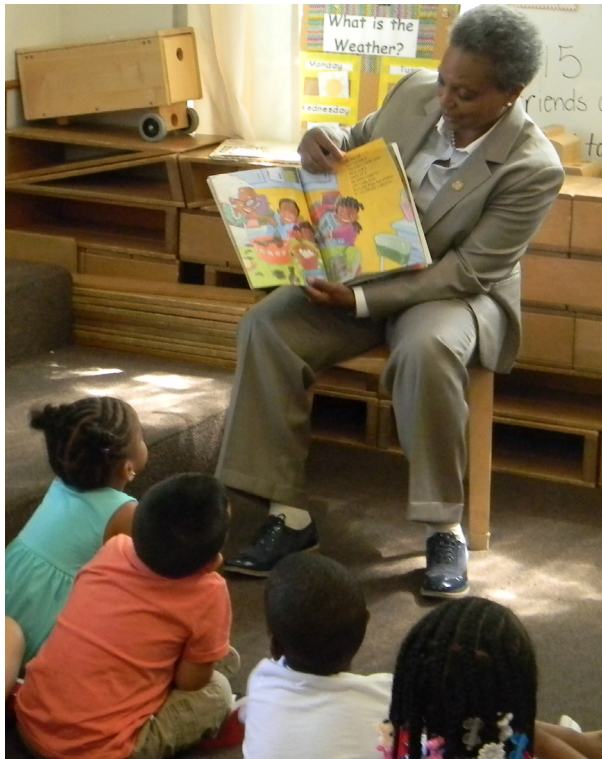
Longer life expectancies are contributing to a growing demand for senior care services. About 10,000 baby boomers are turning 65 each day until 2020. By 2040, the number of Chicagoland residents ages 65-84 is projected to double.

* Illinois State Board of Education study 2019

STRATEGIC LEVERS

that will drive investment to successfully achieve
our strategic priorities

- A.** Become one of the “Best Places to Work” among social service providers by creating a strong employer brand that attracts and retains top talent.
- B.** Build resource development capacity to realize strategic priorities and become a preferred charitable cause for donors and funders who want to invest in high-impact programs and services.
- C.** Strengthen Chicago Commons’ market identity and brand recognition.
- D.** Drive efficiencies and measure impact with stronger IT systems and data performance.
- E.** Raise quality through continuous process improvement.
- F.** Strengthen and retain staff through training and professional development.



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*To achieve our next phase
of growth, we will build on our
strong foundation and history
while remaining adaptable
to market realities.*

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Based on these strategic priorities and levers, we developed a set of goals for each year that are necessary for us to undertake in order to achieve our strategic vision.

While we recognize that some of the strategic priorities and levers are closely related and interdependent, we believe that each area deserves an intentional focus and energy for Chicago Commons to continue to expand and deepen our impact with a sustainable operating model. Our board and staff are committed to overseeing and executing these strategic priorities and levers in FY2020, FY2021, and FY2022 so that Chicago Commons will continue to be positioned as a leader and innovator in Early Childhood Education, multi-generational Family Hub programs, and Senior Services.



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