

Evaluation and Learning Partner Request for Proposal



**CORPORATE
COALITION**
* * of CHICAGO * *

NOVEMBER 2022

Executive Summary	3
Background and Context	4
Mission, Vision, and Theory of Change	4
Key Functions and Strategic Initiatives	5
Project Scope and Anticipated Deliverables	9
Scope Summary	9
Anticipated Deliverables	10
Quantitative Overview on the “Culture of Doing Business”	10
Review and Evaluation of Corporate Coalition Key Operations	10
Documentation, Review and Evaluation of Corporate Coalition External Initiatives	10
Role and Expectations for Prospective Learning Partners	11
Potential Evaluation & Learning Activities	12
Information Collected to Date	13
Audiences and Intended Use	13
Requested Information	14
Timeline	15
Appendices	16
Overview on the “Culture of Doing Business”	17
Review and Evaluation of Corporate Coalition Key <i>Activities</i>	19
Coalition Initiative: Corporate Connector	20
Coalition Initiative: Chicago Resiliency Network (CRN)	22
Coalition Initiative: 5/25 Move to Action	24
Coalition Initiative: Fair Chance Hiring	25

Executive Summary

The [Corporate Coalition of Chicago](#) is an alliance of companies whose mission is to reduce historic and ongoing racial and economic inequities in the region by deploying their capital, capabilities, and employee enthusiasm in new ways. Members share a vision of a new culture of doing business in Chicago where leaders understand that reducing inequities is essential to their business success and to a thriving regional economy, leading them to challenge business as usual in the way they invest, operate, and govern.

To that end, the Coalition is seeking a learning partner to lead its data collection, dissemination, evaluation, and learning strategy in three areas:

- I. A baseline of perspectives from a diverse set of regional stakeholders on the role of the business community in addressing racial and economic inequity
- II. Data collection, analysis, and reporting of design and implementation metrics for Coalition internal operations (e.g., communications, membership)
- III. Data collection, analysis, and reporting of design and implementation and outcome metrics for Coalition external initiatives, including documentation of rationale, operating principles, and over time, outcomes.

In keeping with its mission, the Coalition is asking that respondents ensure that their work is fully informed by the perspectives and lived experience of those that reside, work, and serve in the neighborhoods negatively impacted by the racial and economic inequities the Coalition was formed to reduce. To help meet that goal, prospective partners will be expected to demonstrate the capacity and desire to work with a racially and economically diverse set of stakeholders. **In particular, the Coalition seeks to engage learning partner teams and firms that are led by people of color, or that can field diverse teams or partners for the assignment.**

Respondents are encouraged to share examples of their past work approach and proposed timelines. Partners will be expected and encouraged to work closely with Coalition staff and its affiliates across all aspects of the strategy, with an eye on rigorous design and fidelity of implementation. The Coalition anticipates that multiple learning partners might be necessary to respond to the full scope of work; however, we are seeking a primary or lead partner who can manage as many additional learning partners as determined helpful to fulfill the proposed scope.

This document is a request for proposal for potential learning and evaluation partners to inform ongoing development, implementation and evolution of the Corporate Coalition. The following pages provide background on the Corporate Coalition, the scope and anticipated deliverables, our perspective on the role of the learning partner and potential deliverables, and requested deliverables and timeline for this RFP.

Background and Context

Mission, Vision, and Theory of Change

The Corporate Coalition of Chicago is an alliance of companies whose mission is to reduce historic and ongoing racial and economic inequities in the region by deploying their capital, capabilities, and employee enthusiasm in new ways.

Members share a vision of a new culture – the shared beliefs and behavioral norms – of doing business in Chicago where leaders understand that reducing inequities is essential to their business success and to a thriving regional economy, leading them to challenge business as usual in the way they invest, operate, and govern. The “culture of doing business”, in this context, refers to prevalent attitudes and behaviors governing how corporations interact with each other and with the broader Chicago community. This is different from “corporate culture”, i.e., prevalent attitudes and beliefs that govern a given firm.

The Coalition’s theory of change identifies the high-level activities the Coalition is pursuing (i.e., fostering community and providing pathways to actions), and the expected outcomes (i.e., individual and collective corporate action in the near term, and greater regional vitality and equity in the long-term).

Corporate Coalition Theory of Change

IF We foster a community of business leaders who:

- *share a vision of the importance of reducing racial and economic inequities to their businesses and a thriving regional economy, and*
- *are willing to challenge “business as usual” by investing their assets, capabilities and employee enthusiasm in new ways*

AND We provide pathways and support for substantive action that:

- *reflect that vision through joint initiatives, based on community input, and exposure to exemplary practices*

THEN Companies take collective and individual actions that improve individual business and local community outcomes

THAT CONTRIBUTE TO Greater regional economic vitality and equity.

Areas of Distinctiveness

Chicago has a rich mix of civic organizations and initiatives focused on creating a better region for everyone. Within this mix, the Corporate Coalition seeks to make a distinctive

contribution, and has identified several “Areas of Distinctiveness” that collectively reflect implementation of the Coalition’s Theory of Change.

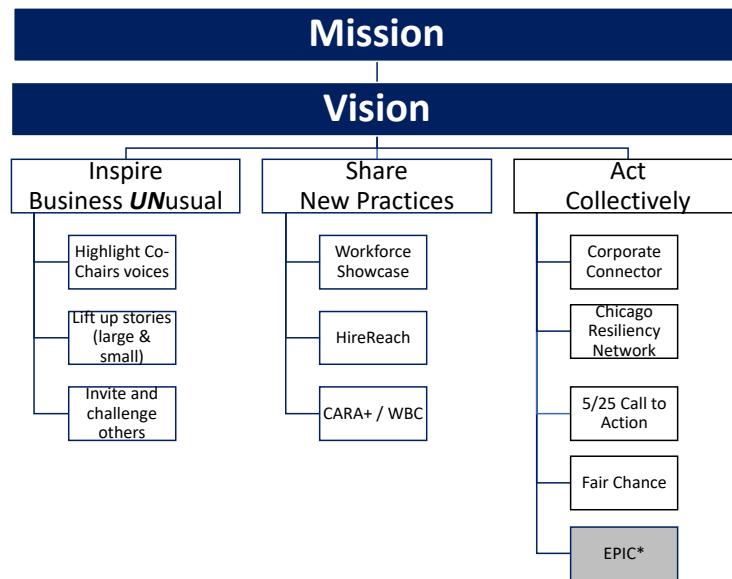
Corporate Coalition Areas of Distinctiveness

- *Members pursue the specific mission of reducing regional racial and economic inequities*
- *Members commit to use and where necessary change their firms’ business activities in pursuit of the overall goals*
- *Members commit to tracking progress, measuring outcomes, and sharing lessons learned*
- *Functions and Initiatives leverage the networks and capabilities of anchor non-profits and public sector partners*
- *Functions and Initiatives focus on action and execution*
- *Functions and Initiatives foster working relationships among businesses and community leaders*
- *Functions and Initiatives achieve greater impact from member collaboration than from companies working alone*

Key Functions and Strategic Initiatives

Key Functions

With support from its Leadership Council (effectively the operating board of the Coalition), Corporate Coalition team members lead activities to pursue the mission and vision. These activities fall into three categories: inspire Business UNusual (communications); share innovative practices and lessons learned with companies within and across industries; and act collectively, through joint initiatives, to address systemic and structural barriers to equity.



Inspire Business UNusual (Communications & Content)

The Corporate Coalition has developed a communication strategy that focuses on “Business **UN**usual”, an intentional effort to challenge the status quo of corporate processes and operations. The communications plan has three stated goals:

- To inspire companies to explore and adopt innovations that challenge their usual practices
- To highlight what Corporate Coalition members are doing to change the culture of doing business in Chicago by highlighting their experiences and impact
- To get more companies to join the Corporate Coalition and support retention

To achieve these goals, the Communications plan focuses on

- Highlighting the voice of its Co-Chairs, business leaders who are known for challenging business as usual and re-thinking business activities to address inequities
- Lifting up the actions that members have taken to address inequities, and sharing accompanying stories about the results achieved
- Inspiring others to do the same and join the Coalition

The Coalition’s communication strategy also includes curating and sharing content (e.g., data, case studies, testimonials) that reinforces the mission, vision, and goals of the Coalition.

Share New Practices (Membership & Peer Collaboration)

In addition to lifting up the stories of what members have done, the Coalition plays an active role in sharing content and practices across members (and, in some cases, non-members) so corporate leaders can learn from each other how to establish their own, internal, efforts to challenge business as usual.

Key Coalition activities to support this work have included:

- Curating, and then running a “workforce showcase” with ten civic partners who, collectively, created ten learning sessions, each describing one approach to more inclusive employment
- Hosting a learning session from HireReach on inclusive employment practices
- Convening nearly 100 (60 in person, 30 virtual) prospective and active members on location at a community-based health and call center facility, enabling first-hand accounts of the benefits, challenges, and impact experienced by employees and residents.

Act Collectively (Strategic Initiatives)

The Coalition’s strategic initiatives catalyze the collective impact of its membership. Since inception, the initiatives have been considered the primary vehicle through which the Coalition pursues its mission. To a degree, the initiatives have also been considered mechanisms for raising awareness and attracting new members into the Coalition.

The initiatives are managed by dedicated Coalition staff, with their own internal structure, goals and indicators of success. Most (but not all) Coalition members actively participate in one or more initiatives, but they are not required to do so. Conversely, there are companies who have actively supported the initiatives that are not members of the Coalition.

Initiatives are joint efforts for which companies working together have greater potential for impact than they would if each company were to work on its own.

In addition, initiatives should:

- Advance the mission of the Coalition
- Be sufficiently staffed for effective execution with a clear understanding of what resources (e.g., funding) are required
- Be distinctive and add to the region by partnering with, and leveraging, existing initiatives without duplicating ongoing efforts
- Have clearly articulated outcomes and a process for tracking progress
- Have an evaluation and learning plan

Ideally, initiatives are championed by a corporate member of the Coalition. While the potential for an initiative is being explored, the work is considered to be in the discovery phase.

To date, the Corporate Coalition has launched or sponsored five initiatives:

- The Corporate Connector facilitates connections between the developers and sponsors of community-driven development projects and Corporate Coalition members.
- The Chicago Resiliency Network works with employers across the region to create workplaces that are trauma-informed and better equipped to promote resilience and sustain high performance. The decision has been made to suspend the cohort approach and focus on supporting alumni companies in their continuing efforts.
- 5/25 Move to Action galvanizes public commitment for the private sector to adopt and achieve specific organizational goals in areas such as procurement with Black and Latinx firms, and second-chance hiring. The initiative is led in collaboration with We Rise Together, which is sponsored by the Chicago Community Trust.
- The Fair Chance initiative enables businesses to build and grow their efforts to hire individuals with criminal records, by helping companies rethink their hiring and retention strategies to better access and support this talent pool.
- The EPIC (Equity Products for Investing in Communities) Fund was initially proposed as a low-cost, patient, flexible, and risk-tolerant equity pool for supporting community development. Chicago needs a long-term solution to the systemic lack of equity capital for major real estate projects in disinvested communities, but a solution involving collective corporate action does not appear to be feasible at this time. As a result, we have suspended efforts to raise corporate capital for EPIC.

Project Scope and Anticipated Deliverables

Scope Summary

Although the Coalition has successfully embarked on its mission of reducing racial and economic inequity, it is critical to the sustainability of the effort to identify external learning partners to help document and assess activities and progress to date, to evaluate the results of current activities, and inform future actions. The Coalition is currently seeking a learning partner to lead its data collection, dissemination, and evaluation and learning strategy in three critical areas:

- I. Developing a baseline of perspectives from a diverse set of regional stakeholders for current and aspirational perspectives on the culture of doing business in Chicago, i.e., the shared beliefs and behavioral norms governing the role of Chicago's business community in reducing racial and economic inequity within the region
 - a. Corporate executives
 - b. Corporate managers
 - c. Corporate front-line workers (within / outside focus communities)
 - d. Residents, Emerging business owners
 - e. Neighborhood leaders / community-based organizations (CBOs)
 - f. Regional stakeholder institutions (government / philanthropic / large community-based organizations, CBOs)
- II. Data collection, analysis, and reporting of design and implementation metrics for the Coalition's core internal activities:
 - a. Inspiring Business UNusual (Communications & Content)
 - b. Sharing New Practices (Membership & Peer Collaboration)
 - c. Acting Collectively (Discovery and Launch of Strategic Initiatives)
- III. Data collection, analysis, and reporting of design, implementation and outcome metrics for existing external initiatives, including documentation of rationale, operating principles and, over time, outcomes
 - a. Corporate Connector
 - b. Chicago Resiliency Network
 - c. 5/25 Move to Action
 - d. Fair Chance Hiring and Retention

Anticipated Deliverables

Quantitative Overview on the “Culture of Doing Business”

- A stakeholder analysis of what local residents believe (shared beliefs) and what people do (behavioral norms) with respect to the role of corporations in reducing racial and economic inequity.
- The ability to parse the analysis by relevant stakeholder groups, such as occupation class, race, and residence (see [Scope Summary, Section I](#) for an example)
- An approach for collecting this information on a recurring basis (e.g., annually)

Review and Evaluation of Corporate Coalition Key Operations

- Conceptual Frame (e.g., Theory of Change, Logic Model (narrative), other framework) of desired outcomes, outputs, activities, and inputs
- Identification/ Expansion of relevant, accessible indicators to align with program outputs, outcomes, activities, and inputs
- Process and Support for regular collection and review of key indicators

Documentation, Review and Evaluation of Corporate Coalition External Initiatives

- A “Case for Change” that articulates the motivating regional inequity and rationale for each initiative
- Current State Assessments of Coalition Initiatives (e.g., the operating model, primary activities, and necessary resources (inputs))
- Identification/ Expansion of relevant, accessible indicators to align with program outputs, outcomes, activities, and inputs
- Process and Support for regular collection and review of key indicators

Role and Expectations for Prospective Learning Partners

We seek an Evaluation and Learning Partner who can improve the efficacy and sustainability of our efforts. We believe this can be accomplished through real-time, or close to real-time, sharing of program data and information and regular, constructive feedback about our program activities.

Respondents will be expected to demonstrate the willingness and capacity to meet these criteria:

- Support the mission and conceptual framework (e.g., theory of change) of the Corporate Coalition
- Be a “critical friend”, providing timely, constructive counsel to the Coalition team
- Coordinate / align evaluation, learning and related dissemination and communication efforts with peer organization(s), as needed
- Collect, synthesize, model, and report data from different sources
- Engage historically underserved communities in a credible, sustainable way
- Engage a variety of (potentially siloed) stakeholder groups in an inclusive manner

Prospective respondents should provide some background information regarding their team, and the collective skills and experience they would provide. In order to meet these criteria and scope, a firm may partner with other firms in a joint response. In those cases, there must be a single primary firm that will assume responsibility for managing the contract and for bringing on partners and subcontractors as needed.

Potential Evaluation & Learning Activities

We anticipate a variety of evaluation and learning activities to be included in the proposal, e.g., landscape, feedback, performance/outcome, and impact. We expect the Evaluation and Learning Partner to use the most appropriate evaluation and learning methods and tools to conduct these activities, though preference will be given to proposals that apply a mixed-methods approach. We will contract with the most qualified respondent and thus are flexible in how these methods are configured in the proposal to fully address our information needs.

We expect the following activities and methods may be among those considered:¹

- **A desk review and analysis of documents and data** relevant to the Corporate Coalition as available, including but not limited to: internal strategy documents, external communications, documents from other donors and organizations, research reports, academic journals, secondary data sources, etc.;
- **Critical reflection and learning sessions with Coalition staff** through:
 - Sharing real-time, or close to real-time, program data and information with relevant staff via email on a regular basis;
 - Providing periodic, constructive feedback to program staff on their programmatic activities via email, phone, and in-person meetings;
 - Leading formal learning events, such as presentations that can assist staff with determining areas of improvement and refinement; and
 - Updating the evaluation and learning framework; and
- **Collecting feedback and perspectives from external stakeholders**
- **Designing and conducting surveys of relevant populations**

It is important to note that the evaluation and learning activities proposed in response to this RFP will not be considered as final. The precise activities will emerge from our work together and will remain flexible, dynamic, and will be refined over time. Proposals are an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their thoughtfulness, capacity, and alignment with our evaluation and learning needs and expectations.

¹ The list of potential evaluation methods is not exhaustive and should not limit the evaluation methods proposed by applicants for this work.

Information Collected to Date

Additional background and context regarding the various elements included in the scope, including some initial perspective on prevailing attitudes and potential indicators of success for several of the initiative, can be found in the Appendix.

Audiences and Intended Use

There are multiple audiences for this work, both internal and external. Common across these audiences is our intent to share information and learnings. Internally, we will use the information to assess progress, refine approaches, and keep abreast of the work being conducted by peers and other actors in the field.

Externally, we expect to share materials produced through these evaluation and learning activities on our external website and through other dissemination activities (to be determined). External audiences include the leadership Council, current and prospective member companies, policy makers, other relevant experts, and the general public. We look forward to collaborating with our Evaluation and Learning Partner to develop these dissemination strategies.

All deliverables and data collection tools developed through this consultancy will be considered property of the Corporate Coalition.

Requested Information

For this Evaluation and Learning RFP, we request the following materials from prospective respondents. To lessen the time and expense of preparing a response, respondents are encouraged to use existing materials and their preferred document suite (MS Office, Google Docs, etc.). However, to preserve formatting, we do ask that responses are converted to PDF format before submission. We will have a staff member serve as point of contact to help prospective respondents with any questions regarding the submission.

To respond to this request for proposal, please ensure that the materials shared address the following:

- 1. Team Overview and roles:** An overview of project manager and core team members, highlighting relevant skills and experiences.
- 2. Proposed Methodology and Plan for Collaboration:** An overview of the proposed evaluation methodology and learning approach for the program, and proposed approach for working with Coalition team members
- 3. Core Evaluation and Learning Plan:** A detailed plan, highlighting an initial set of essential evaluation and learning activities, deliverables, and timeline. Ideally, this plan would fall within an initial budget of \$100,000; given the overall scope, we would appreciate your perspective on where to prioritize in the near-term.
- 4. Expanded Evaluation and Learning Plan:** A more general plan to fulfill the remainder of the scope, with approximate budget and timing.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the responses to the requested items above and evidence of the ability to meet the criteria outlined in the “Role and Expectations for Prospective Learning Partners” section of the RFP.

Timeline

The table below is a tentative timeline for selecting an evaluation and learning partner.

Date	Activity
November 30, 2022	Interested Candidates inform of the intent to submit proposals
January 15, 2023	Proposals Submitted
February 15, 2023	Selection of Evaluation and Learning Partner
March 1, 2023	Contract
March 15, 2023	Evaluation kick-off meeting

Appendices

Overview on the “Culture of Doing Business”

Review and Evaluation of Corporate Coalition Key Activities

Documentation, Review and Evaluation of Corporate Coalition External Initiatives

- Corporate Connector
- Chicago Resiliency Network
- 5/25 Move to Action
- Fair Chance Hiring

Overview on the “Culture of Doing Business”

Overview:

The purpose of collecting this information is to gather evidence of Chicago’s culture of private sector civic engagement, garner feedback on future aspirations on the culture of doing business in the region, and surface the extent to which reducing regional racial inequities (i.e., the Corporate Coalition mission) emerges as a priority. After an initial survey, the expectation is that the survey would be replicated on a regular (e.g., annual) basis to understand how the region’s culture of doing business has changed.

Collecting and reporting this information is essential for establishing both a baseline (understanding of the current state), and a barometer (for tracking progress over time) for the Coalition and its stakeholders.

Initial Hypotheses (Stakeholders):

- Within corporations, employees likely have different perceptions of culture, based on their position in the firm.
- Across corporations, perspective on culture may vary from firm to firm and depending on industry.
- Understanding the perspective of employees living in under-resourced communities vs. those in more affluent communities would be especially helpful.
- Local emerging businesses and residents are potential partners (via the Connector) and allies; however, the Coalition and some of its member institutions (e.g., large retailers and corporations) may also be viewed as a direct threat to community-based and emerging business owners.
- Emerging businesses and residents beyond the focus communities will potentially question the need and merit of an explicit focus on these communities
- There are CBOs and Government-led efforts with a similar mission; ideally, the Coalition’s efforts will be complementary with existing efforts to address regional inequity.

Initial Hypotheses (Culture of Doing Business):²

Prevailing Perspectives (Today)	Shared Aspirations (Future)
Companies should give back in some way; monetary philanthropy is sufficient	When companies operate in our region, they take on a responsibility for supporting the region through multiple avenues (philanthropy, jobs, investments in communities) that all address community needs
Inequities are part of the system	Companies can change the system by how they make decisions

² These perspectives and aspirations were compiled from a convening of Corporate Coalition staff and members.

DEIJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice) is its own area	DEIJ is a way of working
Business should stay in its lane (sector, industry, etc.) and others in their lanes	Cross-sector collaboration is central to addressing long-standing issues
Minority-owned businesses are not a valuable asset to larger companies	Minority-owned businesses can be significant assets, and should be invested in to grow

Prevailing Perspectives (Today)	Shared Aspirations (Future)
Companies make an impact by looking outwards (to non-profits, public sector, etc.)	Companies make an impact by looking inward, for example through internal policies on hiring and procurement
Companies make ESG ³ decisions to build brand awareness, garner press coverage	Companies make ESG decisions to impact the people and communities in which they operate
Companies avoid external accountability for ESG goals	Companies are transparent and share data to create individual and collective accountability
Individuals interact very little with those from other neighborhoods outside of work; low cultural competency	Individuals have and take opportunities to learn about the cultures of their co-workers and others in the region by engaging outside of the workplace across the city
Business investments are focused in the Central Business District	Business investments are made across the region, including in particular historically underserved communities

Expected Outcomes and Milestones

- A stakeholder analysis of what local residents believe (shared beliefs) and what people do (behavioral norms) with respect to the role of corporations in reducing racial and economic inequity.
- The ability to parse the analysis by relevant stakeholder groups, such as occupation class, race, and residence (see [Project Scope Summary, Section I](#) for an example)
- An approach for collecting this information on a recurring basis (e.g., annually)

³ ESG stands for **E**nvironmental, **S**ocial, and (Corporate) **G**overnance. ESG, at its core, is a means by which companies can be evaluated with respect to a broad range of socially desirable ends. (Bergman et al., HLS Forum on Corporate Governance, 8/1/2020)

Review and Evaluation of Corporate Coalition Key Activities

Overview:

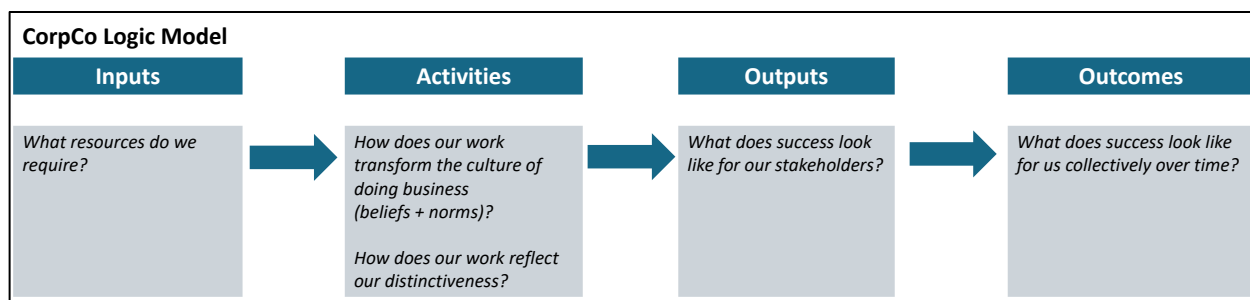
The purpose of this review is to gauge implementation and design effectiveness across several key activities including:

- Inspiring Business UNusual (Communications & Content)
- Sharing New Practices (Membership & Peer Collaboration)
- Acting Collectively (Discovery and Launch of Strategic Initiatives)

Hypothesis:

Engaging the team in developing a logic model for these respective functions will help connect the desired (long-term) **outcomes** and (near-term) **outputs**, to the current **activities** underway, and the **resources** invested to conduct these activities. The inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes inform potential indicators to capture over time as a gauge of effectiveness.

The logic model process can also help refine current activities to ensure that the Coalition is choosing actions that highlight its distinctiveness and maximize impact. By mapping current activities to desired outcomes and outputs, the logic model can help identify areas where alternative approaches and resources may be needed. Applying the logic model across Coalition activities can help align the efforts of the team, and surface common goals and indicators.



Coalition Initiative: Corporate Connector

Overview (*The Challenge and The Opportunity*)

While a lack of equity capital is a well-known gap in the financing marketplace for community-led catalytic real estate projects and related businesses, these efforts have other critical needs. Both experienced and emerging for-profit and nonprofit developers are active in disinvested neighborhoods, but those with more limited experience or an episodic or part-time engagement in real estate development may face significant barriers, such as:

- Lack of staff in the many disciplines required for project success
- Limited access to specific industry expertise
- Few relationships with professionals who can help reduce costs and overcome bureaucratic barriers
- Limited connections to potential business partners and customers

The Corporate Connector was created to facilitate connections between the developers and sponsors of community-driven development projects and Corporate Coalition members. The objective is to increase the likelihood that catalytic real estate projects will succeed. The Connector taps into the skills and technical expertise of businesses in the Chicago region and makes connections that can result in business and partnership opportunities.

Sourcing	Inventory	Eligibility
Projects come to the Corporate Connector primarily through established relationships with Community Development Financial Institution partners, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local CDFIs (CCLF, IFF, LISC Chicago)• Chicago Prize• Community Desk Chicago,• Invest South/West program• Cook County Bureau of Economic Development.	Conversations with Corporate Coalition members and other interested companies are yielding an inventory of resources, skills, expertise, and connections that companies have and are eager to share.	Projects eligible for Corporate Connector support are located in Chicago-area low- to moderate-income census tracts. In alignment with City of Chicago and Cook County priorities, priority is given to projects in communities that are the focus of the Invest South/West program and in the south suburbs of Cook County.

Proposed Metrics

The Corporate Connector has developed longer-term broad goals and shorter-term specific objectives, as summarized below. The longer-term goals will likely require narrative assessment, while the shorter-term objectives may lend themselves to quantitative assessment.

Long term Goals

- Leverage the corporate community to support more community development projects and the businesses within them and ensure they are completed
- Help corporations find ways to engage with the community in more tangible ways – leveraging their employees, expertise, and/or purchasing power
- Create long term human relationships between businesses and the community
- Help Chicago's business community serve as and be seen as anchors in previously underinvested area

Objectives for the rest of the calendar year to support long term goals

- Stable portfolio with 15 – 25 active projects at any time; assume there will be a natural influx of projects that come in and move out after completion
- Twenty companies that continue to support these projects after Connector project
- Recruit five new Coalition members via work with Corporate Connector
- Develop marketing materials (see above for learning approach): What we've done, how it works, what others can learn from us, etc. Likely 1 page marketing version and 6-page white paper version
- Talking in webinars / seminars to broader audiences
- Create a scalable model that is documented and known
- Create demand: people calling us to get involved

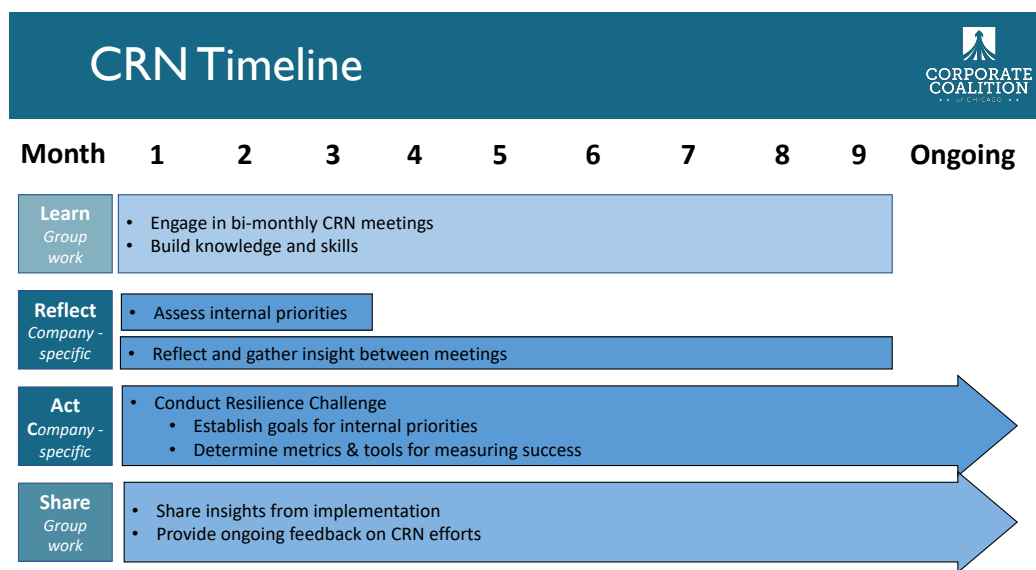
Coalition Initiative: Chicago Resiliency Network (CRN)

Overview

Not everyone has a diagnosed mental health condition, but virtually every person has mental or emotional health needs that their employers can help address. In Chicago, there are notable levels of financial distress and food insecurity, both of which heighten symptoms of chronic stress and trauma. Moreover, there is evidence that some residents are especially vulnerable; for example, life expectancy for residents who live on the South Side can be up to thirty years lower than the life expectancy of residents living downtown.

The Chicago Resiliency Network is working with employers across the region to create workplaces that are better for employees and better for business. Through our cohort-based program, employers are creating trauma-informed cultures that promote resilience and sustain high performance.

Together, cohort members explore the root causes of trauma and toxic stress and learn the fundamentals of resiliency. Participants engage in a virtuous cycle of learning, doing, and sharing, with the goal of continuing individual and organizational growth beyond the formal program. Armed with new knowledge and skills, member firms implement training and resiliency practices in ways that suit their businesses. As they test approaches and reflect on what they are learning, cohort members share insights with one another.



Proposed Indicators

Number of employees exposed to trauma-informed practices

- C-suite leaders coached (measured by attendees and coaching hours)
- Managers trained (measured by attendees and training hours)
- Employees attending peer groups

- Firms attending learning communities
- Policies changed

Level of support employees feel or perceive

- Benchmarking survey results with aggregated, anonymous feedback
- Progress through the trauma-informed journey compared to peer firms

Cohort member satisfaction with experience and impact (via Participant Survey) e.g.,

- Cohort members defining their experience in the cohort as a meet or exceed (95% but expect at least 80%)
- Cohort members can identify a meaningful change that has been implemented within their team or organization
- Cohort members willing to offer a recommendation for CRN to professional colleagues.
- Cohort members describing training as a meet or exceed
- Cohort members describe CRN resources (assessment, catalog etc) as meet or exceed

Coalition Initiative: 5/25 Move to Action

Overview

The May 25, 2020 murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer cast global attention on the ongoing presence of systemic racism in America and renewed calls for corporate and political leaders to take meaningful action to acknowledge and dismantle long-standing racial inequities.

On May 25, 2021, the anniversary of Floyd's murder, We Rise Together (an initiative of the Chicago Community Trust) partnered with the Corporate Coalition to launch "5/25 Move to Action", an initiative to galvanize private sector actions that will have real impact on an equitable economic recovery in Chicago.

By the following month, 25 firms had made public commitments to take action in one or more of three categories: increasing and diversifying pathways to employment and retention for underrepresented workers, strengthening businesses of color, and investing in disinvested neighborhoods.

Based on interviews, convenings, and surveys conducted in April 2022, most participating companies reported signs of progress regarding their commitments. For example:

- six companies were taking actions to grow diverse supplier spending;
- five were investing in local community development and capacity building;
- eight were focused on inclusive workforce strategies and providing equitable access to internal, high-quality opportunities; and
- five were taking internal actions to shift culture, such as enhancing their mission and/or vision and board engagement on DEI.

Although launched as a joint initiative, the Coalition had assumed primary management of 5/25 Move to Action going forward, with We Rise Together providing ongoing advisory and operational support.

Coalition Initiative: Fair Chance Hiring

Overview

Nearly one in three U.S. adults is effectively cut out of the labor market or has severe limitations on their ability to gain family-supportive employment because of a criminal record. The damage done to individuals, to society, and our economy by excluding a large swath of the population has received significant attention in recent years, and will likely receive increasing attention in the years to come, as demographic trends suggest that the need to bring re-engage all potential workers into the economy will continue to grow.

In collaboration with the Chicago Workforce Funder Alliance, the Coalition has launched a local fair chance hiring initiative that aims to expand significantly the number of companies successfully implementing fair chance hiring strategies in the Chicago region, leading to an increase in the number of individuals with criminal records that attain stable, family-supportive employment.

The cohort model will start with seven companies and then, over the course of the 2-year pilot, expand either the number of employers in the cohort or the number of cohorts, with the goal of growing the impact of second- chance hiring across the region and providing a model that other regions can emulate.

Goals and Measures of Impact

Goal 1: Demonstrate and then promote local models of successful second-chance hiring, with a focus on the internal change employers need to and can make. Potential measures of impact include:

- Number of local media references to the importance of fair chance hiring
- CEO commitments
- Public discussion of ways to overcome barriers by cohort participants
- Attendance by non-cohort members at events that showcase innovations and expert experience

Goal 2: Create a model for implementing the national discussion at a local level.

Potential measures of impact include:

- Number of process changes participating firms make
- Number of new partnerships/collaborations with service providers, legal experts, re-entry experts
- Number of companies seeking to join on-going or successive cohorts

Goal 3: Grow a cross-sector cohort of local champions for fair chance hiring to help scale the effort. Potential measures of impact include:

- Number of firms that commit publicly to hiring employees with criminal records
- Number of firms participating in pilot cohort(s)

Goal 4: Increase the number of those with criminal records gaining productive, family-supportive employment. Potential measures of impact include:

- TBD