



CORPORATE COALITION YEAR IN REVIEW

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

Members share a vision of a corporate culture in Chicago in which 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 pursue this vision, members are stretching beyond their critical philanthropic contributions and efforts to help the public and non-profit sectors succeed. They are working together, based on community input, where collective action holds the promise of greater impact than companies working alone.



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



A NECESSITY FOR CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

In early 2019, corporate leaders began to explore what role Chicago's business community might play in addressing the root causes of longstanding regional challenges. It quickly became clear that to grow our economy, fuel inclusive opportunity, and tackle the root causes of violence, the business community needed to play a greater role.

CONSIDER THAT:

- More than 60,000 Chicagoans in the 15 communities with the greatest gun violence need work; nearly 90 percent of jobs in the region are in the private sector.
- Private-sector real estate investment totaled \$67 billion (in 2017 dollars) from 2011 to 2017 in Chicago, more than 15 times the investment from the public sector and mission-driven investors.
- Every year, Chicago-based companies spend more than a trillion dollars globally buying goods and services. Of that, a very small portion (less than 3 percent in information technology, for example) goes to minority-owned companies.

Clearly, employment initiatives need to scale to tens of thousands of employees, capital investment to hundreds of million dollars, and procurement opportunities to billions. Making change at this scale requires the private sector to play a leading role through their business operations and investments.

This was the premise – that companies need to re-think business as usual and adopt what we call Business UNusual – that launched the Corporate Coalition in 2019 and continues to inspire us today.

AN AMBITIOUS ASPIRATION

Regions with greater equity grow more sustainably over time. They invest more assets in growth, are more efficient and productive, and reduce the costs associated with poverty.

The public, philanthropic, and non-profit sectors play critical roles, but sustainable success for our businesses and region depends on each company's commitment to challenging its usual practices and embracing new approaches that address the root causes of slow growth, disinvestment, and violence.

Since 2019, many corporate leaders in Chicago have done this. Discover built a new call center in Chatham, bringing high-quality jobs to a historically disinvested community. Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC) has opened Blue Door Centers in Morgan Park, Pullman, and Little Village



“The Corporate Coalition is Chicago at its best: community matters, equity matters, and collaboration makes a difference. The Corporate Coalition brings the Chicago’s business leaders together to share ideas, share solutions, and work for a better Chicago.”

to be closer to customers and improve community health. Northern Trust is implementing a new approach to procurement diversity, bringing significant business opportunities to minority-led companies. JPMorgan Chase changed long-standing internal policies, and as a result nearly 10 percent of the bank’s new hires last year were individuals with criminal records, a segment of talent that in the past was automatically denied employment in the financial services industry.

Each of these companies and others are reinforcing the business community’s commitment to Chicago and to the future of our region. But more needs to be done. And more can be accomplished if we work together. That is the Corporate Coalition’s ambitious aspiration.

OUR UNIQUE APPROACH

THE CORPORATE COALITION PURSUES ITS MISSION IN THREE WAYS:

- Develop, launch, and run initiatives, through which we help companies change business policies and practices with the goal of reducing longstanding inequities
- Share innovative practices through large convenings, private meetings, and workshops
- Highlight, inspire, and challenge Chicago’s business community to rethink business as usual – to create Business UNusual – in pursuit of a faster-growing, opportunity-rich, safe region

No other organization in Chicago shares both our mission and our approach.



2023

The past year has been one of growth, deepening impact, and learning for the Corporate Coalition.

MEMBERSHIP

Bringing companies into the Corporate Coalition is central to our work and impact. In addition to providing the resources that enable the Coalition to do its work, members participate in initiatives, develop Business UNusual strategies that we share, and bring creative energy to new approaches. Our membership grew to 43 companies in 2023, and every 2022 member renewed in 2023.



2023 CORPORATE MEMBERS

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Accenture | Mars Wrigley |
| Advocate Aurora Health | Microsoft |
| Allstate | NORC |
| Amazon | Northern Trust |
| Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago | Northwestern Medicine |
| Ariel Investments | Protiviti |
| AT&T | Rudd Resources LLC |
| Boston Consulting Group | Rush University Medical Center |
| Comcast | RW Ventures LLC |
| ComEd | Salesforce |
| Discover | SDI Presence LLC |
| DL3 Realty | Sidley Austin LLP |
| Edelman | SomerCor |
| EY | Starbucks |
| Fifth Third Bank | Third Horizon Strategies |
| First Women's Bank | UChicago Medicine |
| Freedman Seating Company | United Airlines |
| Google | University of Chicago |
| Health Care Service Corporation | Verizon |
| Hyatt Hotels Corporation | Wintrust Financial Corporation |
| JPMorgan Chase & Co. | Zeno Group |



“We know that in order to make real transformational change in Chicago – to attack the inequities we see all across the city – the business community has to play in a significant role.”

“As a relatively new member of the Coalition, we’ve learned here that a lot of other companies are invested and interested in advancing our great city.”

“The Corporate Coalition offers opportunities for business leaders in Chicago to connect with other leaders, share best practices, and be on the leading edge. These opportunities allow organizations to understand what works and be even better.”

“I am a member of the Leadership Council because I believe in the mission of the Corporate Coalition. Looking at ways not only to reduce inequities, but also to do so collectively, with other organizations.”

LEADERSHIP

The Corporate Coalition is led by our Co-Chairs and our Leadership Council. Co-Chairs are the face of the Corporate Coalition, promoting our mission in the business community and to the public. Members of the Leadership Council share personal and organizational commitments to the Corporate Coalition and guide our work. Over the past year, Leadership Council membership grew from 12 to 14 companies.

Roger Hochschild, Co-Chair
Discover

Eileen Mitchell, Co-Chair
AT&T

Tom Andreesen
Protiviti

Brenda Battle
UChicago Medicine

Michael Davidson
The Chicago Community Trust

Sean Garrett
United Way Metro Chicago

Matt Johanson
Discover

Rob McGhee
Fifth Third Bank

Linda Nolan
Northern Trust

Matthew Primack
Advocate Aurora Health

Curtis Reed, Jr.
JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Clarita Santos
Health Care Service Corporation

Julia Stasch
Lever for Change, University of Chicago Rustandy Center for Social Sector Innovation

Anne Vela-Wagner
Mars Wrigley

Leon Walker
DL3 Realty

Audrey Williams-Lee
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago



From inception, we have been committed to action through corporate practice and policy change. This work is done primarily through our initiatives, several of which have grown significantly in impact over the past year.

CHICAGO RESILIENCY NETWORK / GENERATION WORK

The Chicago Resiliency Network (CRN), one of the Corporate Coalition's first initiatives, helps employers build trauma-informed, resilient workplaces so that employees, employers, and communities thrive. In 2023, the CRN teamed up with Cara Plus and the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance to create Generation Work, a merged, cohort-based learning program that expands the strategies participating companies can employ. With a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, employers participate free of charge in Generation Work.

Generation Work graduated two cohorts this year and plans to launch its third cohort in early 2024. CRN and Generation Work alumni continue to be engaged through quarterly gatherings, and past participants have presented at conferences and meetings, including a special convening with the U.S. Surgeon General.

BY THE NUMBERS:

- CRN Cohort 3: **5 companies** and **29 participants**
- Generation Work Cohort 1: **6 companies** and **25 participants**
- Launched Generation Work 2: **9 companies** and **34 participants**

CORPORATE CONNECTOR

Tapping the skills and technical expertise of Chicago-area businesses, the Corporate Connector increases the likelihood of success for catalytic real estate projects and small businesses in Chicago neighborhoods. Connector partnerships strengthen capacity and build business connections between project leaders and members of the corporate community.

BY THE NUMBERS:

- Supported **10 new community-driven projects**, bringing the total to **46 projects** since inception
- Made **13 new connections** to establish partnerships
- **13 Connector engagements** completed
- **9 projects** have started brick and mortar development since inception
- **8 projects** have opened their doors since inception

COLLECTIVELY THE 46 PROJECTS THE CORPORATE CONNECTOR HAS SUPPORTED EXPECT TO GENERATE:

- **\$423 million of investments** across South and West side neighborhoods
- **More than 1,600 jobs**



FAIR CHANCE HIRING

Nearly one in three working-age adults in the U.S. has a prior arrest or conviction, and as a result, faces significant barriers to employment. As companies assess their staffing needs, a growing number are eager to access this untapped pool of nearly 80 million individuals.

In collaboration with the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance and Cara Plus, we launched our first Fair Chance Hiring cohort in 2023, bringing together companies in the Chicago region that are dedicated to changing practices to hire individuals with records.

BY THE NUMBERS:

- Designed and completed the inaugural Fair Chance Hiring cohort's 9-month program, with **more than 45 company leaders** participating across **8 firms**
- Brought to the cohort **25 speakers** from companies that have successfully launched fair chance programs, workforce organizations, and individuals with lived experience in the criminal legal system
- Held **39 individual coaching sessions** with cohort members to develop and support their work to achieve their company's fair chance hiring goals

COMMUNICATIONS

In 2023, we expanded our work to highlight companies that are re-thinking business practices. We aim to lift up those doing the work and inspire business leaders to create a faster-growing, opportunity-rich, safe region.

BY THE NUMBERS:

- Published **5 "Business UNusual" Spotlights** on our website and LinkedIn
- Created regular LinkedIn content – **posting 148 times** and nearly doubling our followers to more than **1,300**
- Published an op-ed in the **Chicago Tribune** on the importance of hiring individuals with records
- Published regular update reports, including our **5/25 Year Two Stakeholder Report**





INNOVATIVE PRACTICE-SHARING

The Corporate Coalition regularly highlights innovative practices in a variety of formats, from peer-to-peer conversations to events featuring companies that are implementing new approaches. In these events, we aim to inspire leaders to want to change practices, provide examples of leaders who have led changes, catalyze discussions on what has and hasn't worked, and demonstrate the impact that new practices can have on employees, firms, and the broader region.

IN APRIL, more than 80 business leaders gathered at the Federal Reserve Bank to raise our collective aspirations for using business capabilities to address economic and racial inequities in the region and to work on joint strategies for advancing both business and equity goals simultaneously. Hosted by the Corporate Coalition, United Way of Metro Chicago, and the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, participants identified several promising areas of work that the sponsoring organizations and business leaders can pursue jointly. The meeting shined a spotlight on a new generation of business leaders in Chicago that understands the urgent need to think much bigger about the role of business in addressing long-standing issues of equity and inclusion.

IN SEPTEMBER, the Corporate Coalition, in partnership with 10 business-led organizations, organized Chicago's third annual Showcasing Talent Solutions event. The 2023 Showcase attracted more than 160 participants who heard from a dozen companies working on resiliency, retention, fair chance hiring, support services, and other critical talent strategies, including the emerging use of AI.

"The Corporate Coalition is helping us to advance our fair chance hiring goals both by exposing us to best practices and new policies that we had not thought of and also by giving us an accountability mechanism."

IN NOVEMBER, more than 20 members joined a member-only event to discuss the changing landscape of diversity, equity, and inclusion, including strategies to continue advancing work in the face of backlash against DEI and ESG initiatives.

THIS YEAR, more than 50 companies participated in our regular meetings of the full Coalition, in which member companies shared new approaches to supplier diversity, local decision-making, and other initiatives designed to increase equity and support business success.

LEARNING AND IMPROVING

In 2023, we took several steps to understand in more detail how the Corporate Coalition can increase the impact of our work and how we might become a more effective learning organization.

IMPACT AND LEARNING PARTNER: NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The Corporate Coalition hired NORC at the University of Chicago as our impact and learning partner. NORC conducted interviews and focus groups across a range of stakeholders, including senior executives and middle managers from our member companies, participants in our initiative cohort programs, front-line workers, and community-based organizations.

They gathered thoughts about the corporate culture in Chicago, what the Coalition should be doing, what we are doing well, and how we might deepen our impact. NORC identified several themes that will help guide our work in the year ahead:

- Convenings, both formal and informal, add significant value to our members.
- While our focus should stay on business practice change, our vision is too big for the corporate sector alone. We must work with the public and non-profit sectors to create at the level we aspire to.
- While the Corporate Coalition has been successful in bringing about change, it has been incremental, rather than systemic.
- Quantifying outcomes is a challenge. While there is not agreement on how best to do this, we need to experiment with different ways to measure progress and in doing so improve our work and deepen impact.

5/25 MOVE TO ACTION

In May 2021, to mark one year after George Floyd's murder, We Rise Together: For an Equitable & Just Recovery and the Corporate Coalition of Chicago created 5/25 Move to Action, a joint initiative to galvanize sustained action from the private sector to advance racial equity in the Chicago region.

At that time, 25 companies made commitments across several categories of action. In advance of 5/25 Move to Action's two-year anniversary, Corporate Coalition staff asked participants to share the status of their commitments and reflect on any lessons learned.

Several themes emerged from our conversations with participants:

- The power of a public commitment differs by the type of company. For several reasons, public commitments by private, Chicago-based companies appear to inspire greater practice change than those by global public companies.
- Executive-level endorsements and operational support are both required for real progress.
- Commitments are most effective when tied to business objectives.
- Collecting and using data to measure progress across firms remains challenging.

[The full report can be found here.](#)

Click, or scan the QR code.





LOOKING AHEAD

The need for the Corporate Coalition is great, our aspiration is ambitious, and our approach is unique. We have made progress in four years, but we are still a young organization and much remains to be done. With new leadership in many important organizations, we have new opportunities to expand our impact.

In the year ahead, we will continue to advance our initiatives, share promising practices, and expand our public voice. Additionally, as our organization matures, we will systematically deepen our impact through expanding the scope of current initiatives, amplifying impact through partnerships, and growing our practice-sharing activities.

EXPANDING CURRENT INITIATIVES

The insights we have gained in our existing initiatives provide a path to expand their scope and impact. For example:

FAIR CHANCE CONTRACTING: Building on what we learned in our fair chance hiring cohort, we observed barriers vendors encounter when bringing fair chance staff to client sites. Client contracts often restrict vendors from placing employees on-site who have criminal backgrounds, creating an additional hurdle for vendor companies to consider when hiring fair chance talent.

In the year ahead, we will document the practices that contribute to this problem, identify organizations and industry groups that are open to amending their contracting language, and work with those employers and groups to adopt “fair chance-friendly” contracting agreements.

EQUITY PRODUCTS FOR INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES

(EPIC): Complex community development projects that have the potential to help enhance a community’s economy, change local market dynamics, and contribute to a more prosperous region often are stymied by a missing piece in the financing marketplace—the flexible, patient, risk-tolerant equity and equity-like resources they need to unlock other capital and advance development. Although debt is generally available through Chicago’s robust CDFI industry and key bank partners, debt alone is insufficient to advance these complex community development projects.

Through EPIC, we envision a future in which local neighborhoods have access to a sustainable source of all types of financing needed to thrive and contribute to a prosperous, growing regional economy. Advancing this vision will require an evolution in the financing marketplace to make equity capital regularly available for community development projects from traditional financial institutions, corporate entities, and non-bank real estate investment entities.

Over the past year, it became clear that achieving the vision of EPIC will require a wider group of stakeholders – including both impact investors and traditional real estate equity fund managers – to play a central role in a first phase, as a step to the vision. We have expanded our planning group to include a broader group of stakeholders, and in the coming year, we will pursue new opportunities to move this vital concept to active implementation.

AMPLIFYING IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The Corporate Coalition cannot achieve its goals alone, so from the start we have worked with business and community partners to develop and implement initiatives and practice-sharing events. In the year ahead, we will expand our work with civic organizations and community-based experts to deepen the impact of our current initiatives, identify new initiatives, and engage more corporate leaders in the region to advance Business UNusual. New leadership at critical civic organizations in the region provides new opportunities for the Corporate Coalition to collaborate and amplify the impact of these efforts.

GROWING PRACTICE-SHARING

2024 NATIONAL FAIR CHANCE CONFERENCE

The work of employers, non-profits, and policymakers to expand employment for those with records is growing, yet there have been few opportunities to share effective practices, understand which public policy changes have the greatest impact, and develop a research infrastructure that can point the way to greater effectiveness in changes across sectors.

On October 7–9, 2024, the Corporate Coalition, in collaboration with the Harris School of Public Policy and NORC at the University of Chicago, will bring together corporate leaders and practitioners, nonprofit organizations, individuals with lived experience in the criminal justice system, thought leaders and scholars, government officials and philanthropic leaders from across the country to:



- Cultivate a national forum for sharing new business and non-profit support practices and their impact on fair chance hiring
- Explore the impact of public policy changes
- Generate important research questions that might be explored and how such questions might be examined (e.g., what data are necessary and where they might come from)
- Serve as a meeting point for practitioners, policy-makers, funders, and researchers.

NATIONAL CONVENING ON BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALIGNMENT

Companies across the country are moving beyond traditional corporate social responsibility and philanthropy to act on the increasing alignment of business interests with community and economic development (CED) activities. In doing so, they are discovering that their business goals related to market development, human capital, innovation, and supplier development, can be well served through CED activities. To date, however, there have been few structured, business-led opportunities for corporate leaders to discuss the common challenges and opportunities in identifying these business opportunities.

The Corporate Coalition of Chicago and RW Ventures, LLC, with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, are hosting a small, invitation-only, national convening of senior leadership from companies and corporate collaboratives implementing new approaches to business growth through alignment with CED practices.

The convening will enable participants to share promising practices, build relationships with other businesses and corporate collaboratives, and explore new opportunities.



CORPORATE COALITION

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The Corporate Coalition was convened in 2019 by business leaders who came together to find ways for the business sector to use its assets, capabilities, and employee enthusiasm in new ways to address economic and racial inequities across all neighborhoods in the Chicago region.

JOIN US _____

All companies are welcome, no matter where they are on their journey to address inequities. Members contribute \$10,000, which provides:

- Access to Corporate Coalition initiatives, offering tangible ways to engage assets, capabilities, and employee enthusiasm to address inequities in the Chicago region
- Invitations to participate in quarterly meetings, hear updates from local public sector leaders, and engage in conversations with thought leaders
- Admission to practice-sharing forums and member-only events
- Opportunities to lift up and highlight member company practices via Business UNusual spotlights

Prospective members are welcome to attend meetings before deciding whether to join. For more information on the Corporate Coalition and membership, please contact Brian Fabes at brian.fabes@corpcoalition.org.

THINK DIFFERENTLY. ACT COLLECTIVELY.