



Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning



Bringing the region together for a stronger economic recovery

LEADERS FROM ACROSS NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS HAVE JOINED EFFORTS
FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE, PROSPEROUS, AND RESILIENT REGION

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented an opportunity to address long-standing challenges in northeastern Illinois' economy. While prolonged slow growth and deep inequities have held the region back, the pandemic also highlighted the enduring value of our diverse talent, advanced industries, extensive infrastructure, high quality of life, rich natural resources, and institutions of culture and innovation. These assets — like the pandemic's far-reaching impacts — are shared by communities across our region.

In September 2020, the seven county board chairs and the mayor of Chicago called on the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and Choose Chicago to assemble the Regional Economic Recovery Task Force and pursue robust economic growth that reduces inequity. Over the past year, this group helped the region focus on priorities, collaborate on solutions, and speak as one collective voice. With the task force completing its work in November 2021, we are pursuing these initiatives as a way forward for the region's recovery — working together, for the benefit of all.

ENGAGEMENT

Equitable engagement — with partners, stakeholders, and the public — is at the heart of building an inclusive and thriving region. The pandemic underscored disparities as well as common needs across our communities.

CMAP and Choose Chicago brought together city and suburban leaders, industry experts, researchers, training and education providers, and nonprofits, among others. This included partnering with organizations whose communities face barriers to participating in the public process, including residents of color, low-income populations, people with disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency. Members shared insights through quarterly meetings, breakout discussions, small groups, surveys, and more. This process focused on immediate and long-term actions to accelerate a range of private and public initiatives already underway.

COLLABORATION

The task force included a policy committee and three working groups that were each dedicated to addressing a key issue in this crisis — economic development, workforce, and tourism. Across these conversations, members called for an equitable recovery that prioritizes those most impacted by the pandemic, like women, people of color, small businesses, and industries that can support good jobs and wealth creation. Key takeaways included:

Economic development

Greater coordination and investment in economic development can strengthen the region's competitiveness, by leveraging existing efforts to deliver more than the sum of their parts. Cooperation reduces intra-regional competition and enhances the region's global market reach, capital projects, and site readiness. New research shows the potential to sustain small- and medium-sized manufacturers by improving market growth and ecosystem initiatives across local boundaries.

Workforce

In times of crisis, access to human and social services can help workers hold on to high-quality work. COVID-19 exposed the need for reassessing support services under current funding and improving how residents connect with available resources. Northeastern Illinois can also take a data-driven approach to implement long-standing priorities like work-based training and barrier reduction for target populations — efforts that will expand opportunity while reinvesting in the region's human capital.

Tourism

Metropolitan Chicago needs to assure residents and visitors that the region is open for business with one, unified message. As public health conditions improve, regional marketing can promote customers' safe return to the small businesses in hospitality, entertainment, and the arts that make us an international destination. Renewed partnerships and sustainable funding can build on momentum out of the crisis to carrying the region's tourism sector into a stronger post-pandemic future.

INITIATIVES

Task force members identified opportunities for swift, joint action to address significant regional issues. Given the scale and scope of COVID-19's impacts, these initiatives prioritized lasting partnerships that would help to put available resources to work — both now and over the long term.

The Only Thing Missing Is You

Nine Chicagoland tourism organizations came together for the first time to launch a new, multi-channel marketing campaign, branded The Only Thing Missing is You. Targeted ads and social media outreach promoted the region's many cultural and outdoor activities to families looking to travel again. The campaign exceeded expectations, resulting in more than 17.8 million impressions across the Midwest. The group will continue to work together on building the tourism economy, but additional funding is needed to support and promote the region's small businesses.

Regional economic development collaborative

Despite our economy's metropolitan scope, local efforts to sustain growth are often disconnected and under-resourced. Spurred by discussion in the task force, several of the region's key economic development organizations are renewing their collaboration on business recruitment and retention. CMAP has launched a new project with industry experts to assess the region's most promising market opportunities. This joint effort will identify immediate actions to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness, and scale in economic development.

An inclusive growth framework for our region

Northeastern Illinois cannot thrive when it leaves people and places behind. With funding from The Chicago Community Trust, CMAP is partnering with the Brookings Institution to convene partners across the private, civic, and public sectors around the importance of taking a regional approach to achieving shared prosperity. The project will draw on national and international best practices to define a framework and action plan for restarting inclusive economic growth.

Advancing 211 services statewide

211 is a simple, easy-to-remember resource to help residents find assistance with food, housing, transportation, counseling, and more. These human and social services can be critical to helping workers gain and maintain employment. In Illinois, just 55 of 102 counties — or 36 percent of the population — had access to information and referral services in 2020. The United Way is working with state and local leaders to bring 24-hour 211 service to major population centers like Chicago and Cook, DuPage, and Will counties. Additional support is needed for sustainable funding and key operational decisions to improve access to these services.

THANK YOU

Achieving the region's goals takes working together to create lasting change. Members of the Regional Economic Recovery Task Force recognize that northeastern Illinois is stronger when we act as one. As we conclude this phase of the region's recovery, we want to thank you for your ongoing work and dedication to equitable economic progress. We look forward to continued collaboration on these regionally important issues.



*Erin Aleman, Co-Chair
Executive Director
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for
Planning*



*Paul Goodrich, Co-Chair
Chief Operating Officer
City of Chicago*

MEMBERS

1871
Aurora Area CVB
Chicago Aldermanic Ward 10
Chicago Aldermanic Ward 31
Chicago Aldermanic Ward 39
Chicago Aldermanic Ward 43
Chicago Apprentice Network
Chicago Community Loan Fund
The Chicago Community Trust
Chicago Cook Workforce
Partnership
Chicago Jobs Council
Chicago Minority Supplier
Development Council
Chicago Southland CVB
Chicago Urban League
Chicago Workforce Funders
Alliance
Chicagoland Chamber
Chicagoland Food and Beverage
Network
Chicago's North Shore CVB
Choose Chicago
Choose DuPage
City Colleges of Chicago
City of Batavia
City of Chicago
City of Palos Hills
Civic Consulting Alliance
Cook County
Corporate Coalition of Chicago
Discover DuPage
DuPage County
DuPage Workforce Innovation
Board

DuPage CVB
Elgin Community College
Explore Elgin Area
GOA Regional Business
Association
Governors State University
Greater Oak Brook Chamber
ICATT
Illinois Department of Commerce
and Economic Opportunity
Illinois Hotel & Lodging
Association
Illinois House District 33
Illinois Manufacturers' Association
Illinois Office of Tourism
Illinois Restaurant Association
Illinois Senate District 33
IMEC
Intersect Illinois
Invest Aurora
Jane Addams Resource
Corporation
Kane County
Kendall County
Lake County
Lake County Partners
Lake County Workforce
Development Board
Manufacturing Renaissance
Marcella Consulting
MATTER
McHenry County
McHenry County Economic
Development Corporation
McHenry County Workforce

Network Board
Meet Chicago Northwest
Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
mHUB
MxD
National Able Network
NIU Education Systems Center
OAI, Inc.
P33
Schaumburg Business Association
Skills for Chicagoland's Future
SomerCor
South Suburban Mayors and
Managers Association
Southland Development Authority
United Way of Metro Chicago
Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab
Voorhees Center
Village of Fox Lake
Village of Robbins
Visit McHenry County
Waubensee Community College
Will County
Will County Center for Economic
Development
Women's Business Development
Center
Workforce Investment Board of
Will County
Workforce Partners of
Metropolitan Chicago
World Business Chicago

433 West Van Buren Street
Suite 450
Chicago, IL 60607

cmap.illinois.gov
312-454-0400



Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning