



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON RELEASES FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Collaborative approach amplifies community voices to shape budgetary priorities

CHICAGO – The City of Chicago is proud to release the 2025 Budget Engagement Report, a document that highlights months of extensive community engagement and collaboration aimed at shaping a fiscally responsible and community-centered budget. The report, prepared in partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC) Great Cities Institute, reflects an extensive engagement effort to include residents, youth and community organizations in the budget process.

Mayor Brandon Johnson, Budget Director Annette Guzman and First Deputy of Community Engagement Sara Mathers led the charge in ensuring the City's commitment to transparency, equity and participatory governance.

“The City of Chicago’s 2025 budget engagement process was an unprecedented effort to bring Chicagoans to the table and ensure their voices directly assist in shaping our budgetary priorities,” said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. “This report demonstrates how collaboration with our communities can result in solutions that are fair, inclusive and focused on the long-term prosperity of our city.”

The engagement process featured three phases and multiple channels of input, including public roundtables, youth engagement events, online surveys and targeted outreach to historically underrepresented groups. The comprehensive report outlines critical findings from these activities, highlighting Chicagoans' key priorities within the areas of housing, arts and culture, economic and neighborhood development, public health, youth services, community safety, environmental justice and infrastructure.

Key highlights from the report include:

- **Extensive Reach:** More than 1,600 residents participated in public roundtables, online surveys and youth engagement activities. Special attention was given to ensuring equitable participation from historically marginalized communities.
- **Youth Engagement:** The youth engagement roundtable emphasized priorities such as youth employment opportunities, homelessness services and digital infrastructure, reflecting the unique concerns of young Chicagoans.
- **Top Public Priorities:** The expansion of homeless and mental health services, implementation of environmental response initiatives, investment in the development and revitalization of historically disinvested communities and commercial corridors, increases to the cultural grant programs and expansion of violence prevention and alternate response programs were identified as top priorities in public engagement sessions.
- **Equity-Driven Insights:** Black and Latinae residents represented a significant portion of the participants, aligning with the City's mission to amplify voices from communities disproportionately affected by systemic inequities, while there was a fairly even distribution across age ranges of the participants, ensuring perspectives from various life stages were included in the discussion.
- **Informed Recommendations:** The report integrates data and feedback to inform policy decisions for the FY2025 budget and beyond, ensuring fiscal strategies align with community needs.

"In light of the financial challenges facing the City, our budget engagement process takes on even more significance...ensuring that we are directly responding to community needs and aspirations. Our proposed investments and allocations reflect what residents have asked for," **Budget Director Annette Guzman** said. "Our process also highlights the year-long effort we've undertaken to listen, engage and ensure transparency in budgeting."

The report was created with the guidance of the UIC Great Cities Institute, whose expertise in community engagement and research design was instrumental in gathering and analyzing feedback.

"Engaging directly with residents from all walks of life and ages has enriched this process," said **First Deputy of Community Engagement Sara Mathers**. "The input received reinforces the importance of participatory governance in building trust and fostering equitable solutions."

"This year's budget engagement was extensive in engaging the community," **Thea Crum of UIC's Great Cities Institute** said. "It spanned months and engaged residents, City task forces and representatives from community organizations across three phases. It was designed to provide multiple channels for the community to give feedback and ideas about the budget, including co-designing the public roundtables with volunteer stakeholders from across the city."

The 2025 Budget Engagement Report represents a milestone in the City of Chicago's ongoing efforts to build a transparent, equitable and community-driven budgeting process. All are encouraged to review the full report, now available on the City of Chicago's Office of Budget and Management's website at: bit.ly/3ZuudME

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