

HUMAN RELATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Human Relations report was developed by the **Chicago Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law** in collaboration with an advisory committee. The report is commissioned by The Chicago Community Trust to support the 2040 comprehensive regional planning effort led by the Chicago Metropolitan for Planning.

INTRODUCTION

It is projected that by the year 2040 the Chicago metropolitan region will see significant demographic changes. Approximately 2.8 million people will be added through internal and external migration, and births. Approximately 30 percent of the residents will be Latino. Most likely the region will not have a majority sub-population. Close to 18 percent of the population will be seniors. These changes will not only affect the urban centers, but also the suburban communities.

Continued globalization of the economy will also require the region to develop close links to other countries and to work with people from different cultures, languages and faiths. Improved means of transportation and communications will allow future generations to have more global experiences and outlook. To be successful in the future, metro Chicago region residents will need to be able to live and work in a highly diverse environment.

At present, the Chicago region is known to be one of the most segregated in the country. Race, ethnic and age segregation have direct consequences not only on the quality of human relations among the region's residents but also on efforts to be equitable with resources and future plans.

An adequate assessment of the state of human relations in the Chicago region involves consideration of a number of dimensions, the most basic being the quality of relationships among individuals. Relations may manifest themselves in families, among friends, within neighborhoods, or in work, religious, educational, recreational, or other social settings. As of yet, there are no conventional measurements of the quality of human relations. Quality human relations might have a number of possible goals: for an individual to be satisfied or describe a high quality of life; for people to be supportive and helpful to one another; or for people to treat one another fairly and offer one another equal opportunities for life outcomes.

In some social settings, individuals share a common fate or have life experiences and opportunities similar to those of others who share common characteristics with them. Other social settings are marked more by differences among groups than commonalities. Such differences can be readily observed in the case of different racial, ethnic, age or language groups, among persons sharing a gender or sexual orientation, or among the disabled, to name the social groupings that seem to have the most impact on people's condition and identity.

When we speak of relations across these groupings, we might ask:

- *To what extent are the material conditions of members of these groups equal (equality of outcome)?*
- *To what extent do members of any of these groups have the same opportunities to pursue their personal preferences as members of other groups (equality of opportunity)?*
- *To what extent do members of different groups respect, value, and mix with one another?*

We might argue that human relations will become stronger as different groups approach equality of outcome, attain equality of opportunity, and either mingle, or at least avoid conflict, with one another.

INEQUALITY OF OUTCOMES

While studies have uncovered disparities in wages and opportunity across gender, older workers often face discrimination in the workplace and have a harder time finding employment than do younger job seekers. Gay, lesbian or transgender people who openly disclose their identity to current or potential employers encounter the same problem in the workplace. And persons with disabilities on average have lower incomes than persons without. The greatest amount of research, though, has taken place around racial disparities.

- In Chicago in 2003, the unemployment rate for African Americans was 16.7 percent and for Latinos was 9.2 percent, compared to 4.4 percent for whites.
- Among jobs held by professionals (in Chicago), African Americans account for only 10.7 percent and Latinos 4.9 percent, compared to 73.7 percent for whites – in spite of the fact that African Americans constitute 37 percent of the population, Latinos 26 percent, and whites 42 percent.
- African Americans are 20 percent more likely to have a low paying job than would be expected based on their proportion of all employed workers; Hispanics are almost 70 percent more likely to be low paid than would be expected.
- Thirty-five percent of Latino youth between the ages of 16 and 24 in the Chicago metropolitan area are drop-outs (including those who dropped out before coming to the U.S.), compared to 18 percent for blacks, and 5 percent for whites.

DISCRIMINATION

To a significant degree, these disparities are the legacy of discrimination and a lack of access to opportunity in previous generations. But unlike the racism of yesterday, which was characterized by legal segregation and blatant discrimination, modern racial inequality often occurs invisibly, unconsciously and unintentionally. In part because of a series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions over the past two decades, conventional civil rights legal strategies such as school integration and affirmative action are less promising strategies. But evidence exists that discriminatory behavior and practices continue:

- Substantial discrimination exists in low-income workplaces. A recurring theme of the low-wage economy is employers refusing to hire African-Americans while hiring Latinos and exposing them to dangerous and exploitative working conditions.
- While Chicago's fair housing community has been extremely active since the passage of the Fair Housing Act, Chicago remains one of the most segregated cities in the United States. The reasons are numerous – discrimination by housing providers, shortage of affordable housing, lack of consumer education, redlining, and predatory practices.

- Fair and equal access to housing remains an illusion for many families of color in Chicago, who encounter discrimination in housing transactions, whether rental, purchase, lending or insurance, as documented by tester studies. The ability to freely choose where to live is fundamental to personal and economic liberty and is the key to better schools, employment opportunities, and richer social interactions.
- Racial and income disparities continue to plague the mortgage market and limit credit access for many borrowers, with African American and Latino applicants more likely to receive high cost, subprime loans than white borrowers. Such loans have been linked to high foreclosure rates.

GROUP SEGREGATION

One of the greatest challenges the region faces is the physical integration of members of different groups. Residential racial segregation is easily observed and statistically measured, thanks to the decennial census. Across the Chicago region, African Americans and whites live almost completely separate from one another. While less separated than whites and blacks, Latinos on average live somewhat separately from whites and blacks. Less carefully documented is the separation of the older from the young and of the disabled from the non-disabled, or the residential patterns of members of the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

Segregation of the elderly can take place in at least two ways. First, as a couple ages and children leave the home not to return, the elderly can become isolated in their own homes. Second, seniors are inherently segregated when they choose to live in retirement homes or communities built for that express purpose. Older persons vary in their preferences – some preferring to remain in their homes, others to live in separate facilities. In both cases, quality of life and human relational questions are raised. These include the extent to which it is important for younger people to be exposed on an ongoing basis to people from different age cohorts and capabilities, and whether younger people have any social obligation to care for or assist their elders who may need their assistance. As the population becomes older on average, urban planners have become increasingly conscious of the need to build residential communities suitable for persons with limited mobility.

The segregation of the disabled has long been a contentious issue. For many years, institutional homes were favored by the government for low-income persons with significant developmental disabilities for whom the state provided support, and often by more affluent families who were unable or unwilling to care for them sufficiently at home. More recently, a U.S. Supreme Court case has forced states to place the disabled in their care in the least restrictive residential environments possible, often in community living settings. Illinois has lagged behind most of the rest of the nation in moving its disabled population from institutional to community residence. Several related lawsuits continue in Illinois and advocacy groups continue to press state government to move people with disabilities out of institutions.

Although Illinois became the first state in the nation to legalize private, consensual, homosexual relations in 1961, and in spite of the proliferation of “gay neighborhoods”

and gay-friendly venues in urban areas and resort towns across America, many neighborhoods and communities are still unpleasant or unsafe for LGBT people who decide to live their sexual orientation or identity openly. In many regions (Chicago is no exception), members of the LGBT community have to migrate from neighborhoods where attitudes are less tolerant and businesses do not cater to LGBT clientele, to areas where LGBT services and businesses abound and attitudes are more tolerant.

Only recently, the census has started to collect information on sexual orientation. Recent surveys show significant concentrations of same-sex couples in the Lakeview, Uptown, Edgewater and Rogers Park neighborhoods. Yet it is safe to assume that all neighborhoods and communities in the Chicago region include a significant number of more or less visible and/or organized LGBT citizens. Community groups have started to propose initiatives in neighborhoods across town offering housing, services and entertainment to LGBT people, especially youth. Yet, to date, many Chicago region residents must choose between either living their lives discreetly in their neighborhoods or communities of origin, or openly in more diverse areas with a history of LGBT acceptance.

The question of mainstream versus separate special education for children in schools has also been contended extensively over the past 30 years, with litigants and advocates arguing the relative costs and benefits to both the special education student and mainstream students.

Finally, across the region, residents remain almost as separated by income as they do by race.

HATE CRIMES

All too often the combination of lack of resources, group separation, history and discrimination contribute to violence. The Illinois Hate Crime Act protects populations targeted for crime based upon their actual or perceived race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and disability. The Chicago Police Department investigates up to 200 hate crimes each year, with surrounding districts conducting additional investigations. Thirty-nine percent of the hate crimes reported to Chicago police in 2006 were based on race, predominantly African American; 36 percent were motivated by perceived sexual orientation; 14 percent were based on ethnic origin, primarily anti-Latino, and 11 percent were motivated by religion. But victims infrequently report bias violence or report them only to community or advocacy groups, so these statistics are artificially low. Immigrants, in particular, fail to report hate crimes because of distrust of law enforcement officials and language or cultural barriers. LGBT hate crimes are frequently underreported since many victims are afraid of disclosing sexual orientation or gender identity.

CHALLENGE

Principles of equity and inclusion must be paramount in policy proposals and the policymaking process. Many seemingly neutral policies have adverse impacts on racial, gender, disability and age groups. An emerging field of knowledge about implicit bias reveals that when we are conscious of bias, we are more able to reduce it. Model policies

and initiatives demonstrate that when inequality is consciously and proactively addressed in the process of public planning, policymaking, budgeting and other actions, disparities can be reduced, eliminated and prevented.

The challenge of achieving these goals in the context of the inequalities that are part of the fabric of our current existence is daunting. Providing equal resources to disparate communities, while it would be an immense improvement of the present situation, is unlikely to lead to equal outcomes. There are communities that because of generations of neglect will need far more resources than others, if they are to operate on an equal footing.

The effort to achieve equity and inclusion for the diverse populations of the region must expansively address the root causes of inequity and exclusion in the areas of employment, education, fair and affordable housing, voting rights, intergroup relations and our sense of ourselves as part of a global community.

VISION STATEMENT

- We will have broken all the barriers of segregation, from racial, social, economic, political or any other barrier imaginable. They will no longer exist in our region.
- The region will be strengthened by taking an active approach to equity.
- The benefits and burdens caused by the region's investments and policies will be fairly distributed to all parts of the region and will be shared between groups of people, regardless of age, gender, income, race, ethnicity, culture, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or disability status.
- The region will have diverse housing, transportation, and recreation choices, and its residents will have equitable access to economic, employment, educational, health care, housing and other regional assets.
- The diversity of the region's many cultures will be celebrated as one of our strengths.
- The region will support housing that provides all residents with access to quality education, jobs, health care, cultural and social amenities, and transportation, allowing communities and businesses to attract and retain critical workers.
- Because most housing is provided by the private market, policies and programs will ensure that the private market is able to provide a full range of housing options. When the private market cannot meet the needs of all households, public programs will support housing that provides access to opportunity for all of the region's residents.
- Investments in the region's human capital will occur through workforce development programs or other training that prepares students and workers to excel in the jobs of the future.
- While celebrating the diversity of our municipalities, the region will plan collaboratively for mutual benefit to promote efficiency and equity in planning our region's economic, environmental, social, education, and infrastructure system.

- Planning processes will encourage, respect, and incorporate contributions from people of all backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and ages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve this vision, Chicago's leaders need to take action between now and 2040 to:

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF EQUITY EFFORTS

1. Institutionalize effective and ongoing efforts to advance equity, inclusion, and cohesion.
2. Adopt an Equity Mandate for public entities at all levels to eliminate racial and other forms of discrimination and inequities, promote equity and inclusion, and foster good relations across all groups.
3. Require public entities to produce and publish race and social justice strategic plans that identify clear objectives and cohesive plans, action steps and timelines for fulfilling the Equity Mandate, with ample opportunity for public participation and input from diverse sectors of the community, especially those most affected by discrimination and social injustice.
4. Institute systems for regional equity and inclusionary planning to foster coordinated and cohesive strategic planning.
5. Require human relations impact assessments for proposed policies, community development plans and budgets in order to maximize opportunities to advance equity and to anticipate and prevent adverse impacts.
6. Support community engagement, capacity-building, cross-racial partnerships and alliances among different groups to advance equity.
7. Require comprehensive data collection that can easily be disaggregated by race and other characteristics in order to monitor and evaluate progress and inform future strategies to eliminate disparities.

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSIONS

8. Develop human relations commissions in each county in the metropolitan region, with the enforcement power and resources to address human relations issues and respond to opportunities to mediate local group conflict.

EDUCATION

9. Establish active and ongoing community education and communication programs on race and social justice issues for all sectors of the communities, including within and across public entities and between government and the public.
10. Assure that all schools present a multi-cultural, developmentally appropriate curriculum with a required course on human relations, involving parents, students and educators.

11. Develop a parent leadership training program to educate parents on issues of diversity, inclusion, equity, fairness and the social and political histories of diverse groups, and train them how to reach out and inform other parents on these issues.
12. Develop a media campaign to inform the public about the value of diversity, inclusion, equity and fairness.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION GROUPS

13. Develop neighborhood/grass roots conflict resolution groups to educate people on how to deal with conflicts via conflict resolution, in order to resolve human relations issues in a less formal and less confrontational context.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

14. Promote strong social interactions between people of all different backgrounds around common interests.
15. Develop public transportation systems that make all neighborhoods accessible.
16. Promote urban planning that provides public places for people to meet.
17. Promote civic involvement of diverse populations by providing regular voter registration and voter education forums at schools, libraries, community centers and churches.
18. Promote campaign finance reforms that discourage inappropriate political influence by large donors.
19. Develop activities at schools, churches, and community centers designed to bring people together.
20. Require community service in schools so students learn the value of helping others who are less fortunate and get to know people from different backgrounds.
21. Provide opportunities in schools, libraries, churches and community centers for students to help each other.
22. Promote inclusion of stakeholders in planning meetings by opening meetings to the public and advertising meeting dates, time, and place in impacted neighborhoods.
23. Provide financial incentives to neighborhood development programs that promote inclusiveness and diverse participation.

Human Relations

LEAD AGENCY

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