

# Connecting to Communities

BENEFIT  
CHICAGO

## A Summer of Outreach

Benefit Chicago—the joint effort by The Chicago Community Trust, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Calvert Foundation to fuel nonprofits and social enterprises in the Chicago area—isn't just about investing; it's about impact. That's why representatives have been out in our communities in recent months talking to neighborhood leaders, entrepreneurs and nonprofits about the challenges they face and the opportunities they hope to create.

"It's been a wonderful way for us to more directly connect to the people and places Benefit Chicago was created to support," said Daniel Ash, chief marketing officer with Chicago Community Trust. "Would it have been easier for us to just quietly add new resources to the work we are already doing? Maybe. But we wanted something more. We wanted to engage a wide range of Chicagoans, and really understand what is needed to help our region thrive."



Benefit Chicago joined forces with neighborhood organizations this summer to host nearly a dozen community meetings across the city. Hundreds of people turned out to ask questions, make suggestions and challenge assumptions about what would and would not work in their communities.

To date, community meetings have been hosted by groups like the Chicago Urban League, The Woodlawn Organization, The Resurrection Project, Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation, The Otis Monroe Foundation, North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council and Uptown Chamber of Commerce, among others. Additional gatherings are expected in the months to come.

"We've been energized by the response, from Uptown to Roseland, and we've learned a lot in the process," noted Debra Schwartz, managing director with MacArthur. "We've been doing impact investment work all over the world for decades—including tens of millions of dollars invested right here in Chicago. But, this is different. It is an opportunity to fuel on-the-ground innovation right here in our hometown, to learn what communities need and provide the kind of capital that can help address it."

For those interested in more information but unable to attend a meeting, webinars that describe Benefit Chicago and its opportunities are also available on our web site at [www.benefitCHI.org](http://www.benefitCHI.org). To inquire about hosting a gathering in your community, email Will Towns, executive director, at [wtowns@benefitCHI.org](mailto:wtowns@benefitCHI.org).

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