

Meet our Executive Director

William W. Towns joins Benefit Chicago

William W. Towns is the new executive director for Benefit Chicago. He leads the day-to-day work of this ambitious effort to help socially motivated businesses and nonprofits access the capital they need to innovate and grow.

Will comes to Benefit Chicago from the University of Chicago, where he led the Neighborhood Initiatives team and its work to fuel economic growth, better health outcomes and increased vibrancy and sustainability in south side communities.

Prior to that, he worked on affordable housing issues related to families and communities at Mercy Portfolio Services, focusing particularly on 27 Chicago neighborhoods hit hard by the economic downturn. He administered a \$169 million federal grant for the city's Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), preserving more than 1,000 homes and, in the process, helping create 1,700 local jobs.

"Benefit Chicago is a remarkable chance for all of us to have a deep and lasting impact on the future of our city," he said, as he settled in for his first day on the job.

"There really isn't anything else like it. It builds community in the traditional sense—on the ground, in our neighborhoods, helping organizations and entrepreneurs access investment capital to grow—but also more broadly, by giving people who care about the city a way to put their capital to work right here at home. In that way, Benefit Chicago directly connects local investors to local impact."

Will currently serves on the city's Community Land Trust Board, the Cook County Economic Development Advisory Committee and PNC Bank's Community Development Advisory Board. He is also a board member of the National Children's Center, the Roseland Community Medical District and Neighborhood Housing Services.



He earned his M.B.A. from Notre Dame and his bachelor's degree in marketing from Loyola University. He has also completed multiple certifications and executive education programs—from work at the Kennedy School at Harvard to the University of Lyon in France, all focused on the development of people, places and organizations.

He is currently enrolled in the MIT Sloan School of Management Advance Management Program, focusing on strategy and innovation, and is also a Ph.D. candidate at Benedictine University where his research looks at the relationships between anchor institutions, their cities and communities.

Will can be reached at wtowns@benefitCHI.org or by calling 312.565.2503.

