

# The City of Chicago's Racial Equity Rapid Response

**W**e are all in this together. But while we are all weathering the same storm, we are not in the same boat. That is apparent when we look at the way that Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has impacted the African American and Latinx communities. Last month, Mayor Lori Lightfoot created the Racial Equity Rapid Response initiative to deliver hyper-local outreach throughout the city's South and West Sides about the impact COVID-19 is having and ways to prevent the further spread of the virus.

Three neighborhoods were initially chosen based on the number of cases and the mortality rates of COVID-19, Austin, Auburn Gresham and South Shore. The strategy is designed to address systemic health inequities within the COVID-19 crisis by taking immediate steps to minimize gaps in healthcare systems,

to create more equity in service delivery, and educate targeted populations while enhancing rapid response programs to help vulnerable populations.

The Racial Equity Rapid Response Team led by Candace Moore, the City's first Chief Equity Officer, Dr. Sybil Madison Deputy Mayor Education, Human Services, and West Side United, will partner with three anchor community organizations, Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation, Austin Coming Together, and South Shore Works to develop hyperlocal, data-informed strategies to slow the spread of the COVID-19 and improve health outcomes among communities that have been most heavily impacted in Austin, South Shore and Auburn Gresham.

The most impressive aspect of the Racial Equity Rapid Response initiative is that it is truly a partnership formed to significantly impact the city's most vulnerable communities. Members of the steering committee or the working groups meet daily to respond to the latest numbers and needs, and coordinate outreach to ensure that residents are reached every day. From social media posts to old school postcards and door hangers, to radio, tv, and print articles, to access to testing, PPE and food, the Racial Equity Rapid Response Team is working to help residents now and improve health outcomes in the future.

"We know that community leaders and organizations have been responding to COVID-19 from the start. The goal of the Racial Equity Rapid Response Team is to bring the city's efforts and resources to the work being done in a way that responds to the unique needs of each community," said Sybil Madison, Deputy Mayor, Education, Human Services. "The partnerships being built and the strategies being implemented are a foundation for the collective efforts that must continue for us to address the health inequities that existed pre-COVID-19."

## THE TEAM

West Side United is helping to lead the Racial Equity Rapid Response with the Mayor's Office. Its mission is "to build community health and economic wellness on Chicago's West Side and

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