



NORTHWEST SIDE HOUSING CENTER

2021 / COVID-19

IMPACT REPORT





We had never used Zoom

before we closed our doors on March 13, 2020. As we headed into what we thought would be a two-week lockdown to diffuse Covid-19, we weren't sure how we would convene our upcoming Monday staff meeting, let alone provide our programs and services to the 5,000 households we serve annually.

The early days of the pandemic tested our organization's values more than ever before. Being **responsive** meant forwarding a massive influx of calls to our home phones. Being **relational** and **resident-led** meant listening with sensitivity to emerging, dire needs of our community and bringing residents on board to lead new response work.

Being **innovative** meant transferring pen and paper intake forms to digital platforms and offering digital literacy education, WiFi, and devices to families. And being **data-driven**

meant paying close attention to the disparate health, financial, and social impact Covid-19 was having on our community to leverage the massive resources it would take to mitigate the fallout.

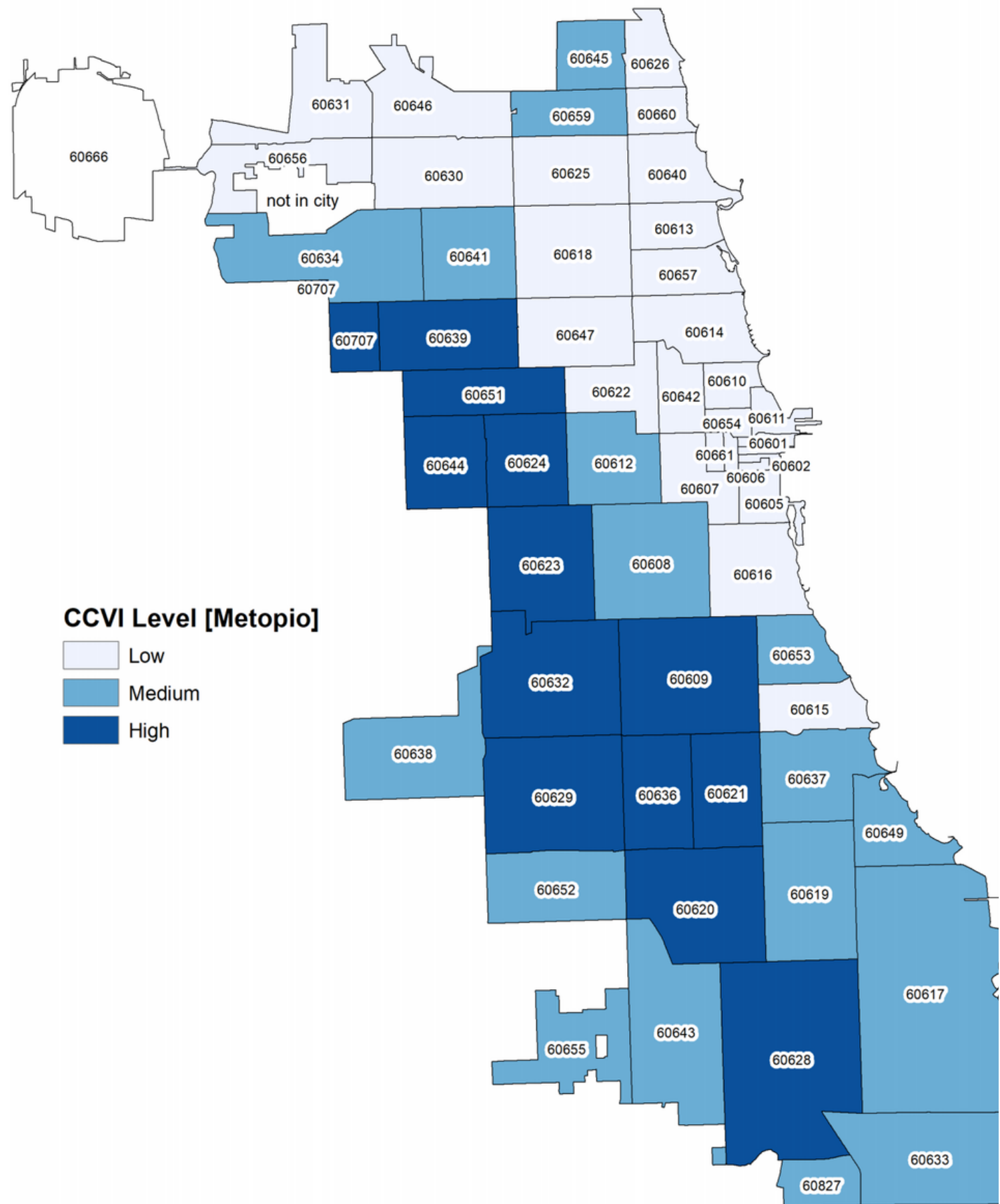
Over a year later, we may be "Zoomed out," but our team has grown in size and impact, and our mission to respond to the needs of the community has only compounded. We're proud to share with you a look back at our pandemic impact and the journey of our work through 2020-21.



From the earliest days of the pandemic,

our team could foresee that the financial fallout, Covid-19 case positivity rate, and testing access would disproportionately impact Belmont Cragin. By the second and deadliest wave, this proved true— alongside 6 other majority-Latinx neighborhoods and 8 majority-Black neighborhoods, Belmont Cragin ranked among the most vulnerable community areas in the city for Covid-19.






Vulnerability is defined as a combination of sociodemographic, epidemiological and occupational factors, plus cumulative COVID burden. As a high vulnerability index area, Belmont Cragin residents were

3 times more likely to die from Covid-19

compared to low-vulnerability neighborhoods like Lakeview, Lincoln Park, and the Loop.

SOURCE: CITY OF CHICAGO



That's why we formed our Rapid Response team in June 2020, and joined city, state, and foundation-supported initiatives to provide direct cash and rental assistance, meals, supplies, PPE, masks, testing opportunities— and as of February 2021, prioritized vaccine access.

RAPID RESPONSE

\$1,486,249

total direct cash assistance disseminated to families who experienced financial and health hardship due to Covid

\$450,000

total cash assistance disseminated specifically to undocumented community members who were excluded from the federal stimulus

\$1,378,690


total rental assistance disseminated to families

500

number of laptops given to families in need of devices for remote learning. We also helped 3,000 families access free internet service through Chicago Connected

46,784

number of masks distributed in the community alongside 24,000 hand sanitizers



"We did not have access to food prior to receiving this assistance. The cash assistance helped us feel calmer. Not having money for food and basics has been one of our main concerns since I was laid off."

LUIS

COMMUNITY MEMBER

"The cash assistance has helped me to pay my rent, to buy food, and to buy everything related to personal hygiene such as toilet paper, diapers, soap, and other things."

VICTORIA

COMMUNITY MEMBER

"Deseo manifestar mi profundo agradecimiento por la ayuda económica que me han brindado, la que sirve de mucho en mi hogar ya que desde inicio la cuarentena cuando no percibimos ingresos.

Déjeme hacerle saber que este apoyo económico no solo sirve para la compra de alimentos en este tiempo, sino también permitirá adquirir los medicamentos para mi esposo que adolece de asma y diabetes.

Es ayuda es de gran significado, en mi hogar."

MERCEDES

COMMUNITY MEMBER



1,000

families served by our 50 Parent Mentors, who quickly learned tools like Google Classroom to help families transition to remote learning

100

youth we continued to serve in virtual resiliency programs like Game Changers & Teen REACH

300

weekly calls placed to older adults in the community to provide social connection and health, financial, and nutritional resources

90

families will receive \$1,000 after we secured \$90,000 for future direct cash assistance



Learn more about the disparities in virtual learning in Belmont Cragin in this podcast we produced with the Change Agents Podcast

[Listen here](#)





In November 2020, we joined the Protect Chicago initiative with the City of Chicago and other northwest side organizations like Oak Street Health, Metropolitan Family Services, and Onward House to mitigate the second wave of the pandemic. Building off our Census outreach and Rapid Response efforts, we mobilized volunteers to knock thousands of doors in our community to provide neighbors with place-based, bilingual resources about testing, cash and rental assistance, plus PPE and sanitizer.

"James Rudyk and the Northwest Side Housing team have been at the leading edge of developing strong grassroots efforts to address COVID-19 in the community.

From providing food and cash assistance, walking block by block with information and PPE, to hosting COVID-19 testing, and ultimately convening a table of diverse stakeholders to develop data-informed strategies, this team has demonstrated that lives can be saved by targeted, collective action."

DR. SYBIL M. MADISON

CHIEF OF STAFF | CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE





1,250

In partnership with the city and state we leveraged over 1,250 tests for residents, and organized a pop-up testing site in our parking lot four days per week throughout first quarter of 2021.



25,000+

As part of the Protect Chicago Plus program, which prioritized vaccine access in high vulnerability areas, 25,000 doses and counting have gone to Belmont Cragin residents.

TESTING &
VACCINES

COVID-19 in Belmont Cragin

- 217 deaths

- 4 1/2% of total deaths in Chicago

Our equitable vaccine rollout garnered national media attention, raising the visibility of our work and the needs of our community.

Source: Chicago Dept. of Public Health

Nashville

Belmont

Belmont Cragin

Grand

Verona

94

The New York Times

MARCH 29, 2021

What's Behind the
Hispanic Vaccination Gap?

USA TODAY

FEBRUARY 12, 2021

'Just not equal at all:'
Vaccine rollout in Chicago a
microcosm of racial
disparities nationwide

CBS

FEBRUARY 12, 2021

New Chicago Program
Holds First Vaccination
Event In Largely Latino
Belmont Cragin



FEBRUARY 24, 2021

As US marks 500K COVID
deaths, Chicagoans reflect
on loss, hope

Vox

FEBRUARY 24, 2021

Black and Latino
communities are being left
behind in the vaccine rollout

Chicago Tribune

APRIL 6, 2021

Mass vaccination centers
open at Wrigley Field,
Chicago State University

While we're proud of everything we've accomplished this year,

we also recognize that there are years of financial, housing, and health recovery ahead for our community. And there's urgent systems change work to do to build back equitably from the injustices this pandemic exposed in our community.

To start, we're partnering with UpTogether to provide **50 families with one year of unconditional basic income** starting July 2021. Half will receive quarterly payments of \$550, and half will receive monthly payments of \$350.



We hope you'll continue to be an ally
in this work in the months to come.

Join us

nwshc.org | info@nwshc.org



As of June 2021, the 60639 ZIP code, which includes Belmont Cragin, has seen 14,644 cases, and has lost 245 community members to Covid.

This report and our work is in honor of those who lost their lives and loved ones to Covid-19.

