BRONZEVILLE

Between 1910 and 1920, during the period known as the “Great Migration,” Bronzeville became home to African Americans who had fled Jim Crow South in search of industrial jobs and a better life. By 1950, Bronzeville was one of the most economically integrated, culturally rich and socially exciting communities in the United States. The neighborhood also served as the launching pad for numerous notable African Americans, including Gwendolyn Brooks, Louis Armstrong and Muddy Waters.

With the rise of the civil rights movement and the dismantling of segregation in the late 1950s, many African American families left Bronzeville for less crowded neighborhoods with better housing and schools. As a result, Bronzeville’s population declined by more than 75 percent between 1950 and 2000, and much of the community’s economic base was lost.

The Bronzeville Neighborhood Network, led by Bright Star Community Outreach (BSCO), was formed in 2015 with a coalition of 10 agency partners. BSCO has since completed their “Community Action Plan,” which outlines a strategy to bring committed community stakeholders to the table in order to implement change in the area of workforce development.

LOOKING BACK

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photos courtesy of Bright Star Community Outreach
As the largest private funder of social services in the region, United Way fights for the health, education, financial stability and safety of every person in every Chicago region neighborhood.

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Looking forward

The Bronzeville Neighborhood Network lead agency Bright Star Community Outreach has implemented the foundation for strong growth. The most important part of this framework is a comprehensive community action plan, which is a commitment between all partners—including schools, social service agencies, faith community leaders, businesses, law enforcement, and political officials—to work together to address the community’s biggest problems through a multi-pronged approach by the year 2027. The community wide effort focuses on four areas: violence prevention through positive youth, family, and community development, trauma-informed care, education, and workforce development.

Bronzeville by-the-numbers

Total Population 42,696
- Adults with high school diploma: 60%
- Adults with college degree: 22%

Median Household Income (2010) $29,500
- Rate of home ownership: 22%
- Poverty Rate: 37%
- Extreme Poverty Rate: 19%

Chicago Public Schools 16
- Students enrolled: 6,378
- Student transfer rate: 16%
- Student homelessness rate: 11%

Major Healthcare Facilities 8
- Mental Health Providers: 2
- Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers: 6

Neighborhood Network Partner Agencies 10
- Focused on Education Services: 7
- Focused on Financial Stability Services: 6
- Focused on Health Services: 2
- Focused on Safety Net Services: 4

Unemployment Rate 19%
- Percent on SNAP benefits: 33%
- Percent with public assistance: 5%

Other Bronzeville Neighborhood Network highlights include:

- As a major component of their work force development program, Bronzeville launched the Access United initiative in conjunction with the Chicago Labor Union to identify residents who want to work in the construction trades.

- The network developed the Greater Bronzeville Community Action Plan handbook as an engagement framework aligning new and existing partners around network’s bold goals.