

SOUTH-SOUTHWEST SUBURBAN REGION



The South-Southwest Suburban Region, commonly known as the Southlands are comprised of more than 2.5 million residents living in 62 communities throughout Cook and Will Counties. Historically, the Southlands have been a key source of people and firms driving the regional economy.

Today, the regions remain asset-rich, housing over 20 percent of suburban Cook County's population and nearly 15 percent of its businesses. However, this region faces new challenges as they have become increasingly disconnected from the regional economy and its trajectory. This growing exclusion heightens the social, racial, fiscal, and other challenges these communities face, and undermines the long term growth of the entire metropolitan region.

THE CHALLENGE ————— INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Today, the suburbs are home to fastest growing population of people living at or below the poverty line (U.S. Census 1995–2015). The most severe poverty rate increases in Chicago occurred in the southern suburban cities of Harvey, Chicago Heights, Robbins and Calumet City. This zone of spiraling poverty is in contrast to the City of Chicago, which has seen stabilization in its low income population. The greatest need in the southern suburbs is for basic needs such as food insecurity, housing and safety from abuse.

United Way conducted a survey of the human service organizations in the state of Illinois and since 2016 91% of these agencies have had to cut the number of clients they serve due to budget restrictions. The southern suburbs are experiencing increased needs and reduced services and are poorly equipped to advocate for the resources they need to support their residents.

United Way's investment strategy identifies the most needed services in the South Suburban area and supports the best in class agencies in the region. **In total more than 95,000 people were served.**

 **South Suburban Partner Agencies 34** **Total United Way Funding \$1.9M**

Safety net (housing, food, safety and legal assistance)	28%
Education (early childhood and middle school)	24%
Health (mental and behavioral health, health access & literacy, community health)	25%
Income (career pathways, financial capability, and tax prep)	23%

 **Safety Net Services 47,000+**

Receiving food assistance	18,400 people
Emergency housing or financial assistance	17,558 people
Brief legal services	4,203 people
Safety from abuse or violence	6,809 people

Companies can **INVEST WITH CONFIDENCE** because we:

Are UNIQUELY QUALIFIED to deliver interconnected services which move families out of poverty	Have an OUTCOME-BASED INVESTMENTS and synergistic approach to working with agencies delivers high (1+1=3) ROI	Use CONVENING POWER that efficiently drives the delivery of services at the community level	Demonstrate PROVEN SUCCESS with the Neighborhood Network Initiative
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The United Way of Metro Chicago Neighborhood Network is comprised of 10 neighborhoods. Blue Island/Robbins Network is in the South-Southwest Suburban region.

BLUE ISLAND/ROBBINS

The Blue Island/Robbins Neighborhood Network combines two neighborhoods in the South Suburbs. At first glance these two neighborhoods look very different on paper—but what they do have in common is a geographic border and a population that has significant need for services, especially food insecurity. Robbins, IL is small community (pop. 5,000+) that is predominately African American and experiencing severe economic challenges with 1 in 3 of its residents living in poverty. Blue Island, IL (pop. 23,000+) is a much larger multi-cultural community (Latino, 48%; African-American 29%; White 21%) with nearly 1 in 4 people living in poverty.

	NETWORK FUND	COMMUNITY FUND	TOTAL
FY18	\$181,251	\$16,000	\$197,251
FY17	\$104,170	—	\$104,170
FY16	\$125,000	—	\$125,000

COMMON AGENDA

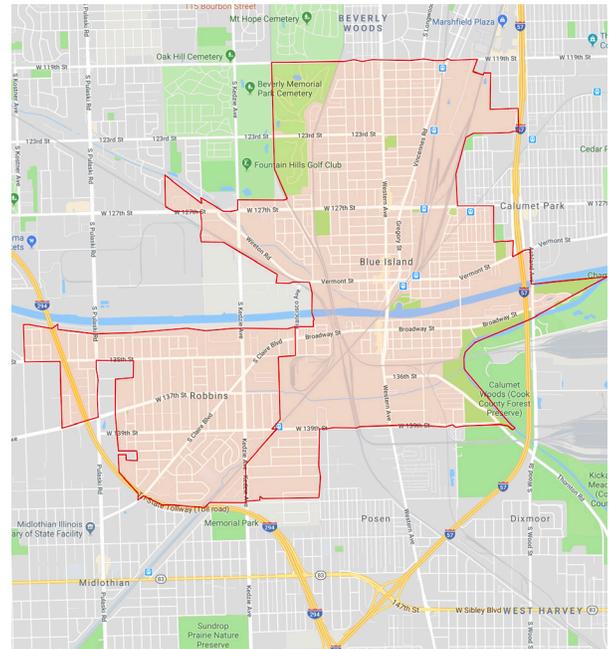
Blue Island Robbins will become financially, mentally, and physically healthy communities.

BOLD GOAL

By 2027, the Blue Island Robbins Neighborhood Network will reduce food insecurity for residents living in those communities.

LEAD AGENCY

Metropolitan Family Services



BLUE ISLAND/ROBBINS BY-THE-NUMBERS



Total Population

28,253

Adults with high school diploma..... 80%
Adults with college degree..... 40%



Median Household Income

BLUE ISLAND \$37,670
ROBBINS \$23,614

Rate of home ownership..... 41%
Poverty rate..... 29%
Extreme poverty rate..... 7%



Public Schools

10

Students enrolled..... 4,598
Student mobility rate..... 10%
Student homelessness rate..... 2%



Major Healthcare Facilities

5

Mental Health providers..... 3
Federally Qualified Health Centers..... 2



Neighborhood Network Partner Agencies

11

Focused on Education Services..... 5
Focused on Financial Stability Services..... 2
Focused on Health Services..... 5
Focused on Safety Net Services..... 2



Unemployment Rate

BLUE ISLAND 13%
ROBBINS 15.5%

Top 5 employment sectors (Blue Island)
Health care..... 15%
Retail trade..... 11%
Administration..... 11%
Food service..... 10%
Manufacturing..... 9%

Top 5 employment sectors (Robbins)
Health care..... 18%
Retail trade..... 11%
Administration..... 11%
Manufacturing..... 9%
Transportation..... 9%

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

This new coalition has just completed the planning phase and recruited agencies to participate in the network. As they start their first year of implementation they are looking to identify food insecure families and develop a plan to alleviate this issue.

- Piloted community conversations introducing the Access United program, which is a program that introduces underserved communities union apprenticeship. This program is a partnership with the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL), the Construction Industry Service Corporation (CISCO) and the Chicago Building Trades Council and United Way.
- Officially opened one school-based food pantry and have plans to open a second.
- Coalition launched new partnerships with local low-cost food providers provide healthy snacks in after school programs.