



New to accelerate 77? Learn What We Are All About!

Project Description

As a part of its Resilient Communities Program, the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) is coordinating a three-phase project, "Accelerating Sustainable Initiatives in Chicago's 77 Community Areas," (more widely known as "accelerate77.") **The goal of this project is to accelerate existing local programs and initiatives and increase the strength of their impacts on Chicago communities.** The underlying strategy is to first **IDENTIFY** sustainable initiatives currently active in all of Chicago's 77 community areas; **CONNECT** them with one another to form a network of new ideas, practices and motivation; and **ENGAGE** them in systematic learning, planning, and cooperative action. It is anticipated that the project will thereby **ACCELERATE** sustainability and community well-being through a grassroots approach driven by practical action, expanded imagination, and greater organizational capacities among local groups.

Phase I: IDENTIFY

"Listen and Learn" January 2011 - September 2012

Starting in the fall of 2011, over 200 students from 5 Chicago-based Universities began to uncover the organizations, initiatives and individuals working at the community level toward creating a more sustainable Chicago. Professors from Chicago State, DePaul, Northeastern Illinois, Loyola and Roosevelt integrated the project into their curricula as a civic engagement component to their courses. During the summer of 2012, over 40 interns from around the US continued to uncover what was taking place at the community level within Chicago. All the students were asked to use an asset-based lens when in the communities. All the initiatives uncovered by students (over 800) are currently on our [website](http://www.accelerate77.net) (www.accelerate77.net)



Phase II: CONNECT

"Sharing Approaches That Work" - September 15, 2012

The culmination of 18 months of exploring and uncovering was a Share Fair event that aimed to both showcase and connect initiatives, organizations, and individuals from each of the 77 communities. In this day-long event at Truman College, participants were able to network, learn about local and city-wide resources available to them, and learn about the city's plan to promote sustainability. Over 400 people attended the event with over 150 local organizations and initiatives showcasing their work.



Phase III: ENGAGE

"Collaboration, Training, and Planning" - 2013 - 2015

In the three years following the Share Fair, the accelerate77 team will collaborate with individuals and organizations we met in Phase I and II and facilitate networking, training workshops, local share fairs, and the building of new collaboration between neighborhood groups. The organizing sponsor (ICA) has a long history and years of experience in facilitation, consensus building, and community development. This phase will be defined through the innovations which come to light during the continued engagement of the local participants. The anticipated result will be the expansion of effective and creative community initiatives that will significantly contribute to a more sustainable Chicago. Click [here](#) to see our current ideas on Phase III.



Organizing
sponsor:





Accelerate 77 - Phase III

Goal: Build on previous project phases of Accelerate 77 and ICA's expertise in participatory facilitation and leadership development to design a framework that will allow for maximum impact on community sustainability and resiliency in Chicago neighborhoods.

Objective: Encourage and support grassroots initiatives that, in a bottom-up fashion, will work to shape a strong collective voice for community-level sustainability initiatives, accelerate existing efforts through increased collaboration and make impact city-wide

1. Create a **Chicago Sustainability Leaders Network** that facilitates increased collaboration and develops a collective voice around key sustainability issues in Chicago; provides an opportunity to share knowledge, inspire new thinking across disciplines and best sustainable practices; and, engages leaders in a shared vision and tangible goals through a full-spectrum lens of community resiliency.
2. Collaborate in the implementation of **Community-Led Sustainability Roadmap** pilot. With an emphasis on action, ICA will engage residents in identifying best practices and effective solutions to accomplish community-wide sustainability. This process, which can be replicated in other Chicago communities, will occur through an ongoing mix of participatory planning, coordinated action, and collective reflection to garner lessons learned.
3. Expand and refine the Accelerate 77 website to cultivate the **Sustainability Resources Database** organized by geography and topic and disseminate information to Chicago neighborhood communities. The Accelerate 77 **website** will assist in meeting the needs of local community organizations and leaders in sustainability seeking partnerships and resources.
4. Engage a diverse base of community leaders (not limited to those participating in the CSLN) in **facilitation and community engagement skills training** through workshops, regional forums and Sustainable "U" days. Areas of emphasis include intergenerational participation and learning and a full-spectrum approach to sustainability such as, environmental, economic, and social justice challenges in local communities.