



**Truth,
Racial Healing,
and Transformation**

Greater Chicago
Strategic Framework
Synopsis

A Collaboration of TRHT Greater
Chicago's Design Teams, Leadership
Advisory Committee, Consultant Team,
and Woods Fund Chicago

I. Leadership Advisory Committee Statement

To provide direction for the work of TRHT (Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation) Greater Chicago, the members of the Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC) are pleased to share this strategic framework.

TRHT Greater Chicago is one of a cohort of 14 sites (including 12 other cities and the state of Alaska)¹, launched and supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) as a part of its national TRHT process. It is part of an emerging movement for transformational and sustainable change to address the historic and contemporary effects of racism.

The LAC is a group of 16 individuals² working together on a community-driven plan to tell the truth about the legacy of racism, heal from the traumas of racial injustice, work with communities to learn, educate, engage, and liberate each other, and build a multi-layered racial equity action agenda. Co-led by Grace Hou (Woods Fund Chicago), Ric Estrada (Metropolitan Family Services), and Angelique Power (Field Foundation of Illinois), the remaining members of the LAC are the co-chairs of each of the four design teams: Truth and Narrative; Healing; Law and Policy; and Youth.

Over 300 individuals—a multi-racial, multi-cultural, and intergenerational group of warriors against injustice and racism—worked on the four design teams. Beginning in November 2017, they each completed 40 hours of work over the course of 17 planning meetings. The success of this planning phase is the result of their commitment, and their participation is greatly appreciated.

TRHT Greater Chicago joins many people and organizations dedicated to promoting racial equality and justice through many people and organizations. Its work intersects with theirs, helping to expand upon a common foundation for change. Ultimately, it will be the collective voices and actions of many people working together that will liberate hearts and minds and catalyze radical transformation in the narratives, laws, and policies that shape the Chicago area.

“We are each other’s harvest; we are each other’s business; we are each other’s magnitude and bond.”

- Gwendolyn Brooks
Poet and Pulitzer Prize Winner

¹ Other TRHT locations: State of Alaska; Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana; Buffalo, New York; Dallas, Texas; Los Angeles, California; Richmond, Virginia; Selma, Alabama; Saint Paul, Minnesota; and Battle Creek, Flint, Kalamazoo, and Lansing, Michigan.

² Berto Aguayo, The Resurrection Project; Darius Ballinger, Chasing23 Youth Empowerment Group; Peggy Davis, The Chicago Community Trust; Ric Estrada, Metropolitan Family Services; Rosa Esquivel, Pilsen Alliance; Cindy Eigler, Chicago Torture Justice Center; Caronina Grimble, Woods Fund Chicago; Monica Haslip, Little Black Pearl; Grace Hou, Woods Fund Chicago; Hannah Kohn student at The University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration; Jeff McCarter, Free Spirit Media; Jawanza Malone, Kenwood Oakland Community Organization; Marianne Philbin, Pierce Family Foundation; Angelique Power, Field Foundation of Illinois; Elena Quintana, Adler University; and Vanessa Westley, Chicago Police Department.

II. Synopsis

The What

Launched in 2017, Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) Greater Chicago is a cross-sector, community-driven process to plan for and bring about transformational and sustainable change and to address the historic and contemporary effects of racism. TRHT Greater Chicago is one of 14 other sites across the country, catalyzed and supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) as a part of its national TRHT initiative.

The mission of TRHT Greater Chicago is to proliferate healing and equity within individuals, neighborhoods, and communities to change the prevailing race narrative, fuel transformation, erase the belief in racial hierarchy, and drive towards racial equity.

Using the TRHT model and WKKF principles, TRHT Greater Chicago has focused planning work in four key areas: narrative change, racial healing, law and policy, and youth, creating “design teams for each. **These four areas are closely interrelated; work done in one often impacts the other.**

TRHT Greater Chicago’s future vision is of a region that holds promise for all; a region whose residents embrace racial healing and equity and reject the false construct of racial hierarchy, believing and knowing that all people have equal value and equitable policies are in place. In this new reality, the cross-generational, racially, and ethnically diverse people of greater Chicago will feel safe to enjoy the comforts of a peaceful, safe, supportive, and empowered existence.

Narrative change requires unpacking the origins and persistence of dominant narratives to create space to hear and to share counternarratives that were—and are—marginalized and silenced.

Racial healing creates opportunities for these narratives to be shared and to help heal society from past wounds fueled by false narratives.

Equitable laws and policies should reflect practices that honor both the dignity and the civil/human rights of all people.

Youth must be leaders, engaged, and committed to carrying out the work from generation to generation.

The Why

The history and legacy of racism and segregation in the Chicago region has been the focus of considerable study. From its indigenous roots and founding by the black Haitian Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable and later waves of European immigration and African-American domestic migration to redlining, police torture, and over-incarceration, this region has a deep history both of lasting challenges from racism as well as of rich organizational and individual efforts dedicated to dismantling it.

In particular, the region has a history of collective actions to call attention to and challenge discriminatory policies and exclusionary practices, including black-owned newspapers reporting on racial injustice and Jim-Crow-era violence, or the Contract Buyers League collectively renegotiating fairer home prices, to cite just a few examples. Activists and contemporary community organizers are guided and inspired by these earlier social movements in their work towards racial justice and equity.

It is within this context that TRHT Greater Chicago hopes to continue to build upon and leverage this rich history to expand partnerships while growing a broader collective effort to lift up the voices of people of color while also dismantling structural racism.

In 2017, the University of Illinois at Chicago's Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy (IRRPP) published a report called '*A Tale of Three Cities: The State of Racial Justice in Chicago*' that highlights the stark and still present realities of a racialized city.³

<http://stateofracialjusticechicago.com/a-tale-of-three-cities/>

A few of the findings include:

Racial and ethnic disparity in public schools defines the quality of educational experiences not only in the city of Chicago but also in surrounding districts and the state of Illinois as a whole.

Black and Latinx Chicagoans tend to be overrepresented on the bottom end of most every indicator or inequality available, while white Chicagoans tend to be overrepresented at the top.

Communities of color were most devastated by the mid-2000's housing collapse because of pervasive segregation, historical housing discrimination, and a biased two-tier lending market.

Levels of income inequality among blacks, Latinxs, and whites are worse in Chicago than in the nation overall—and are worsening over time.

³ Kasey Hendricks, Amanda E. Lewis, Ivan Arenas, and Deana G. Lewis, *A Tale of Three Cities: The State of Racial Justice in Chicago*. (Chicago: Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy, 2017), <http://stateofracialjusticechicago.com/>

The How

In 2016, WKKF approved funding for Woods Fund Chicago and the Chicago Community Trust (CCT) to support the planning and implementation of TRHT Greater Chicago as well as the development of a local growth fund to support future work. A Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC) was developed to guide the planning process. Over the course of almost a year, four design teams were formed as described below.



Dr. Gail Christopher, former Vice President of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, speaking at the 2017 Citywide Day of Racial Healing

Each Design Team used the following calls to action to guide their work:

Truth and Narrative

Document and distribute untold narratives that add context and address existing biased narratives so that people’s perspectives, perceptions and behaviors related to others will change and allow for more effective and productive interactions for community change.

“We need to write because so many of our stories are not being heard. Where could they be heard in this era of fear and media monopolies? Writing allows us to transform what has happened to us and to fight back against what’s hurting us. While not everyone is an author, everyone is a writer....”

Sandra Cisneros

Activist, Poet, Novelist, Essayist and Artist

Healing

Focus on ways for everyone to heal from the wounds of the past, to build mutually respectful relationships across racial and ethnic lines that honor and value each person’s humanity, and to build trusting intergenerational and diverse community relationships.

“Dr. King was right: we must discover love, the redemptive power of love. And when we do that, we will make of this old world a new world.”

Bishop Michael Curry

27th Presiding Bishop and Primate
Episcopal Church

Law and Policy

Identify opportunities to change public policy and the justice system, thereby creating space for policy analysts, community organizers, and neighborhood residents collectively to examine policies that have a negative impact on communities of color to develop and support efforts to reform these policies.

“I have had the privilege of participating in most of the great humanizing movements of the second half of the last century: peace, labor, civil rights, black power, women’s rights, Asian-American rights and environmental justice. Each was a tremendously transformative experience, expanding my understanding of what it means to be an American and a human being, challenging me to become more visionary and creative in developing strategies to bring about radical social change.”

Grace Lee Boggs

Activist, Writer and Speaker

Youth

Provide a multiracial platform for young people from all backgrounds both to build and cultivate authentic relationships among themselves and to develop leadership skills that can enable them to leverage their strengths to work on dismantling the hierarchy of human value while also informing—and participating as equals in—the work of the Healing, Law and Policy, and Truth and Narrative design teams.

“For black and brown people, caring for ourselves and each other is not a neutral act. It is a necessary and radical part of the struggle to create a more just society. Our healing and survival are essential to the fight”

Jamila Woods

Poet, Vocalist and Songwriter

Together, the collective work of the design teams forms the theory of change (see below) that articulates a high-level roadmap for the work ahead, and frames TRHT Chicago’s goals.

If TRHT Greater Chicago organizes community-wide teams rooted in relationship building that focus on:

Then together we can become a transformative collective that:

Which will lead to our ability to:

Eradicating false narratives that reinforce a city geographically and structurally divided by racism and prejudice.	Creates and disseminates authentic narratives that mitigate the racial polarization within our city that contributes to social, political and economic disparities.	Validate and be accountable to each other’s truths, craft a shared understanding of Chicago’s historical and present-day racism and create authentic, honest narratives rooted in community.
Transforming laws and policies that are imbued with racial bias.	Advocates to eliminate unjust policies and practices that inflict harm on our fellow Chicagoans.	Institute laws, policies, resources, rights and opportunities that are understood, embraced and applied equitably, justly and transparently.
Creating space and form to acknowledge pain and trauma caused by institutional and structural racism.	Provides opportunities for communities to heal, understand our need for structural and interpersonal healing, and for individuals to accept each other’s pain/hurt to begin the healing process.	Radically change how we see ourselves and how we interact with, value and support one another; as well as change the composition of Chicago neighborhoods and how we live together.
Providing a platform to amplify youth voices and develop their leadership capacity.	Fully integrates youth leadership and voice throughout our work.	Elevate youth as ambassadors for racial and societal transformation.

So that ultimately... We will activate the dismantling of the hierarchy of human value, liberate our hearts and minds, and catalyze radical transformation in the narrative, laws and policies that shape the Chicago area.

The design teams diligently worked for six months to develop vision statements and goals to guide the future work of TRHT Greater Chicago. These goals were braided to increase synergies and provide an integrated pathway to racial healing and transformation.



Braiding is the process by which the goals of individual design teams were reviewed, prioritized, and integrated.

Goals

**Learn, educate,
engage, and
liberate**

**Heal from the
traumas of racial
injustice**

**Build a multi-
layered racial equity
action agenda**

What must happen to make this work:

Boldly

challenge
the belief
in a racial
hierarchy

Courageously

champion
community-
based, anti-
racist, anti-
oppressive
methods of
transformation
and healing

Enthusiastically

communicate
transparently,
broadly, and
consistently

Intentionally

cultivate
inclusive
learning
partnerships
and
collaboration

Strategically

implement
sustainable
infrastructure
for capacity
building

The Path Forward

The late Studs Terkel once said “when you become part of something, in some way you count. It could be a march; it could be a rally, even a brief one. You’re part of something, and you suddenly realize you count. To count is very important.”


TRHT Greater Chicago seeks to be radically inclusive and strives to engage all who are interested in working to end systemic and structural racism.

There is much work ahead – the important next steps include:

- » Identifying a strategic organizational partner(s) who will assemble a dynamic team;
- » Designing operational infrastructure;
- » Developing an implementation plan;
- » Partnering with like-minded institutions to create and enhance synergies;
- » Resourcing community-based work; and
- » Reaching out to sectors currently not engaged (or less engaged) in the struggle against racism, including the corporate business community.

To join the work or learn more about TRHT Greater Chicago, please visit <https://woodsfund.org> or write to trht@woodsfund.org

Former President Barack Obama stated that “change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” The change that TRHT Greater Chicago seeks is a transformed society where structural and systemic racism has been dismantled.



Activate the dismantling of the hierarchy of human value, **liberate** our hearts and minds, and **catalyze** radical transformation in the narrative, laws and policies that shape Chicago