UNITED WAY OF METRO CHICAGO
NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK INITIATIVE

FORD HEIGHTS / CHICAGO HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Launched in 2023, The Higher Heights Initiative (HHI) is a collaborative community development effort within the Ford Heights and Chicago Heights communities. HHI currently comprises 26 community partners consisting of residents, municipalities, non-profits, organizations, businesses, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and faith-based organizations to address longstanding disparities and create resident-centered pathways to long-term community prosperity.

Once a transportation and industrial hub, Chicago Heights was known as the "Crossroads of the Nation" after the first transcontinental highway was established through the city in 1916. Known as East Chicago Heights until 1987, Ford Heights' small population, with little commercial activity, has limited the financial base for local government initiatives. While the populations of both Chicago Heights and Ford Heights have also declined since the 1980s, both communities have taken steps to strengthen their future and embrace transformative change through the Neighborhood Network. Our vision is to transform our communities.

LEAD AGENCY

The Higher Heights Initiative (HHI)

HIGHER HEIGHTS INITIATIVE
FH CH
"Transforming Our Communities"

COMMUNITY VISION

HHI empowers individuals, families, and communities by advancing equitable access to economic opportunities, education, workforce development, health and wellness resources, community engagement, and neighborhood revitalization.

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES:
A DUAL APPROACH IN FORD HEIGHTS/CHICAGO HEIGHTS



- Access to Healthy Foods
- Access to Health Care
- Workforce Development and Employment Assistance

RESPONDING TO IMMEDIATE BASIC NEEDS OF Ford Heights/Chicago Heights Residents

BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD SYSTEMS STRONGER IN Ford Heights/ Chicago Heights



Empowering
- Individuals
- Families
- Community Members

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK IN ACTION

Shortly after launching, Higher Heights Initiative Neighborhood Network surveyed both communities to inform the Network of its most pressing needs. **The top three needs became the Network's focus areas:**

- **Access to Health:** Improve the Network's physical, mental, behavioral, and emotional well-being by expanding access to quality healthcare services, preventative care, health education, and community wellness resources
- **Access to Healthy Foods:** Addressing food insecurity and promoting nutritional health through affordable access to fresh, healthy, and culturally relevant food options while strengthening local food systems.
- **Workforce Development and Employment Assistance:** Increasing economic mobility by connecting residents to skills, training, certifications, and employment opportunities needed to secure and advance in meaningful careers.



> *HHI has been designed to provide access to health & healthy foods, in addition to workforce development & employment assistance for residents of Ford Heights & Chicago Heights. HHI is proud of the recent grand opening of its Hydroponic Farm, which will be key in its efforts to provide access to healthy produce.*



ANGELIA SMITH
Executive Director,
Cornerstone Community Development Corporation

JOIN US! Together, we can build neighborhoods like Ford Heights / Chicago Heights stronger. Direct your United Way gift to **"Neighborhood Networks"** to be a part of this critical strategy. Learn more at **LIVEUNITEDchicago.org/neighborhood-networks**

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