



Impact Report

2024-2025

Reporting Period

1 July 2024 - 31 June 2025



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Introduction from our Curator

“Urbs in Horto: Creation Over Consumption”

The phrase Urbs in Horto has echoed through Chicago’s history as a vision for what our city can be. It calls us to build thoughtfully and protect what belongs to all. That spirit guided every decision this past year. We carried that tradition forward under the banner Creation over Consumption, believing that meaningful change comes from the things we create. The relationships, programs, spaces and not simply what we use or take. In a city rooted in the promise of being forever open, clear, and free, our hub sought to contribute something lasting.

Creation over Consumption challenges us to invest our time in what brings people together. It is a call to favor collaborative efforts over isolated ones, and to approach problem-solving with curiosity, consistency, and care. This theme shaped our events, our partnerships, and our internal processes. It encouraged intentional thinking and demanded action that aligned with values. It reminded us that creation is not always grand. It is the small, sustained contributions that often leave the deepest impact.

Over the course of the year, our team focused on strengthening and blending both new and long-standing relationships. We partnered with organizations working to revitalize overlooked neighborhoods, support vulnerable populations, and expand access to education, wellness, and opportunity. Internally, we encouraged shapers to experiment, to propose bold ideas, and to build together. Externally, we amplified

nonprofit initiatives, supported grassroots organizers, and incentivized civic participation by modeling consistency and shared leadership. Through clear communication, cultural alignment, and accountable benchmarking, we laid a foundation for more durable and inclusive work.

This report captures what emerged from that foundation. It details the key milestones that marked our growth, like the Spring 2025 Midwest Retreat, which brought together hubs across the North American region to reconnect, recharge, and realign. It showcases the ambition behind our 2024–2025 Shred the Debt Campaign, aimed at dismantling barriers to financial mobility. And it highlights our November 2024 policy recommendation to the Cook County Commission on Social Innovation, where we translated grassroots insights into policy frameworks with potential for long-term impact.

To every shaper who took time out of a busy life to contribute, to every partner who opened their doors, and to every community member who trusted us—thank you. This year was not just about what we accomplished. It was about the way we chose to do the work. I hope this report invites you to reflect, to be proud, and to continue building forward with us.

Let’s keep creating.



Franklin Eruo

Chicago Global Shapers
2024 - 2025 Curator



The Global Shapers Community

An Overview



Founded by the World Economic Forum in 2011, the Global Shapers Community (GSC) is a powerful, scalable solution for organizing and mobilizing the full potential of young people worldwide. With over 11,071 active members across 502 city-based hubs in 155 countries, the GSC empowers teams of Shapers to self-organize and execute impactful projects tailored to their local community's needs. These projects range from responding to disasters and combating poverty, to fighting climate change and building inclusive communities. Through regional and global connections, Shapers collaborate to address critical issues and drive positive change on a local, national, and international scale.

A Collective of Young Leaders

Our hub is powered by the energy and fresh perspectives of young professionals dedicated to making a difference.



Active Members

38



Average Age

26.7



Veteran Members

82%



Occupations & Professions:

- Finance
- Technology
- Nonprofit / NGO
- Art / Entertainment
- Professional Services Consulting
- HR Consulting
- Graduate and Professional Students



Our Impact Projects

At the heart of the Chicago Global Shapers' mission is our commitment to igniting positive change through targeted impact projects. In 2024-2025, we focused our efforts on creating lasting ripples across our city, guided by global frameworks and empowered by local partnerships.

In alignment with the initiatives of the World Economic Forum, the Chicago Hub's impact projects for the 2024-2025 year sought effect change on the future of work and education, through the lens of:

- Reskill for the Future: Education and Skills, Entrepreneurship, Workforce and Employment, Digital Transformation
- Strengthen Civic Engagement: Civic Participation, Justice
- Create Inclusive Communities: Gender Parity, Accessibility and Disability, Social Justice, Racism, LGBTI Inclusion, Migration, Human Rights

In addition, we also aligned our efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are 17 global goals and 169 targets adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 with the aim of achieving a better and more sustainable future for all.

To make our impact more immediate and substantial, the Chicago hub seeks partnerships with existing local organizations that may already have existing efforts in place or direct expertise in the areas that we strive for impact. In this capacity, the Chicago Hub can offer organizations the skills, talent, and network of Chicago Shapers, while expanding the hub's network of partner organizations.



In the 2024-2025 year, we launched 4 projects in collaboration with partner organizations including: Shred the Debt, Greater Chatham Initiative, Climate Training, and BUILD. In the following pages, you'll find spotlights for each one of our projects.

Thank you to all of our partners for making our impact projects a success!

Undue Medical Debt

Creating a future where people can access healthcare without fear by erasing medical debt and helping people pay medical bills.



The Problem

Medical debt is a pervasive crisis for many households across the United States, including the Greater Chicago area. Unpaid bills from unexpected health emergencies can quickly snowball into massive financial challenges, forcing families to make impossible choices between essential needs and escalating medical costs. These debts disproportionately affect marginalized and low-income communities, trapping them in cycles of poverty and limiting access to essential care.

Our Solution

- **Fundraising & Awareness:** We launched a crowdfunding campaign in partnership with Undue Medical Debt to eliminate medical debt across the Greater Chicago area. For every dollar donated, we could erase \$145 worth of medical debt.
- **Community Engagement:** Our efforts aimed to partner with local organizations, hospitals, and debt-relief programs to identify eligible recipients and expand the campaign's reach.

Our Impact

\$1,000,000

in local medical debt has been **forgiven**

333

individual's medical debt **eliminated**

500

volunteer hours

Greater Chatham Initiative



To revitalize Mahalia's Mile in Chicago's Chatham neighborhood by reducing vacancy rates and fostering economic development through strategic partnerships and community engagement.

The Problem

The historic Chatham neighborhood on Chicago's South Side, home to over 122,000 residents, faces significant challenges, including high poverty rates, limited access to technology, and a substantial number of vacant storefronts along its once-bustling Mahalia's Mile corridor. The Greater Chatham Initiative (GCI), a community-driven organization, aims to address these issues by fostering economic development, promoting community engagement, and preserving the area's rich cultural heritage. The primary challenge for GCI has been engaging a diverse group of property owners (international, national, and local) to collaborate on activation strategies for these vacant spaces.

Our Solution

- **Property Owner Engagement:** Developing compelling messaging and a clear vision for Mahalia's Mile to galvanize property owners and inspire them to lease their vacant storefronts.
- **Grant Process Support:** Creating comprehensive marketing materials for the Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) grant process and a grant support document for GCI to leverage when assisting property owners.
- **Data-Backed Strategy:** Driving data-backed insights using Mastercard and Placer.AI data to effectively communicate Chatham's market needs and cultural value to potential tenants.

Our Impact

\$2,500,000

in reimbursements

17

property owners were **awarded** grants

200

volunteer hours



Community Climate Training



Empowering Chicagoans with essential knowledge and tangible tools to enhance individual and community resilience against the increasing threats of severe and unexpected weather events.

The Problem

Chicago experiences a range of severe weather, from unexpected freezes to excessive heat, posing significant risks to individual and community well-being. Many residents lack immediate awareness, practical training, and tangible resources to bolster their resilience against these climate challenges. There's a critical need to equip Chicagoans with tools to prepare for and safely navigate extreme local weather.

Our Solution

- **Developing Weatherization Kits:** Researched how to build personal weatherization kits, starting with extreme heat. This included preparing a kit for extreme heat and another specifically for pets.
- **Community Training Sessions:** Designed to develop and facilitate free climate risk training sessions for the community, one in winter and one in spring/summer. These sessions would explain the materials within the kits and how attendees could replicate them at home.
- **Strategic Partnerships & Outreach:** Partnered with Urban Rivers and secured a booth at their summer Block Party to present this project and equip Chicagoans with immediate tools.
- **Future Expansion:** Applied for a local grant to maximize impact for a potential Part 2 of this project and planned to provide climate training sessions and research in Spanish.

BUILD

Empowering Chicago youth facing systemic obstacles by enhancing their financial literacy and optimizing community resource utilization, fostering long-term stability and opportunity.



The Problem

BUILD is a leading Chicago organization dedicated to gang intervention, violence prevention, and youth development, providing critical opportunities and resources to young people facing systemic obstacles. A key challenge identified was optimizing the utilization of resources at BUILD's new community center and enhancing financial literacy for their participants. There was a need to ensure the community work zone was fully utilized and to develop a tailored financial literacy program.

Our Solution

45%

- **Resource Optimization:** Conducted market research on comparable organizations renting out co-working and event spaces, assessing over 52 different event spaces. Based on this, we developed a pricing model to help BUILD determine fair and appropriate market rates for their spaces, aiming to streamline rental requests and potentially generate revenue.
- **Financial Literacy Program Development:** Researched evidence-based financial literacy programs to assist BUILD in developing a tailored curriculum for their participants.

Our Impact

Our partnership with BUILD has provided strategic insights and actionable tools, contributing to the organization's sustainability and enhancing their capacity to empower Chicago youth.



OUR ENGAGEMENT



Global Engagement



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CURATORS

July 2024 |
Geneva, Switzerland

Franklin had an amazing time attending the 2024 Annual Summit. He benefited from connecting with young leaders from over 500 different cities, which helped shift his perspective toward becoming a global citizen.

Attending the summit was an invaluable experience. It equipped Franklin with fresh ideas, renewed energy, and bold enthusiasm to bring back to the hub.



SHAPE NORTH AMERICA CONFERENCE

October 2024 |
Phoenix, Arizona

The Chicago Global Shapers journeyed to Phoenix for Shape NAC 2024, uniting under the theme "Blooming in the Desert." This pivotal conference deepened connections, showcased innovative hub projects, and inspired Shapers to cultivate lasting impact within their communities, concluding with tangible environmental action.



CHICAGO SHAPER TIA SELECTED AS GLOBAL SHAPERS FUTURE 50

October 2024 |
Phoenix, Arizona

We proudly celebrate Chicago Shaper Tia's selection for the Global Shapers Future50, a cohort of 50 young leaders collaborating with the World Economic Forum to embed intergenerational foresight into global policy and governance. This initiative empowers changemakers to connect strategic foresight with tangible action.

Midwest Retreat

April 2025 | Chicago

The Chicago Global Shapers proudly hosted the first Midwest Retreat since the pandemic from April 4-6, 2025, bringing together Shapers from across the region in the Windy City. Guided by the theme "Urbs in Horto: Creation over Consumption," which translates to "City in Garden" and speaks to Chicago's history of social collaboration, the retreat fostered meaningful relationships and community investment. By highlighting similarities and opportunities within the Midwest, this convening aimed to cultivate ideas, nurture connections, and plant the seeds of positive change that will flourish in each Shaper's home city long after the event.



CHICAGO COMMUNITY



FALL RETREAT

September 2024 | Pleasant Prairie, WI

The CGS hub kicked off the year with its annual fall retreat outside of Chicago. During this overnight gathering, members built and strengthened relationships, identified their passions, and solidified the hub's impact projects and tone for the Shaper year. The retreat concluded with the hub united and clear on its path to make a significant impact.



FOOD POLICY RECOMMENDATION

November 2024 | Cook County Commission

The Chicago Global Shapers, in collaboration with Chicago Southside Market, presented vital food policy recommendations to the Cook County Commission on Social Innovation. After extensive research into community needs, the Shapers highlighted collaborative pathways to equitable food access. This presentation aimed to strengthen the community by providing local leaders with actionable recommendations derived from grassroots insights.



SHRED: SWEAT FOR MEDICAL DEBT RELIEF

April 2025 | The Garage

To further amplify the "Shred the Debt" project, the Chicago Global Shapers hosted "Shred: Sweat for Medical Debt Relief," a fundraiser. Partnering with The Garage Chicago, this event offered simultaneous yoga and strength classes, allowing participants to transform their workout into tangible impact. Every dollar raised contributed to eliminating medical debt for local families.



THANK YOU

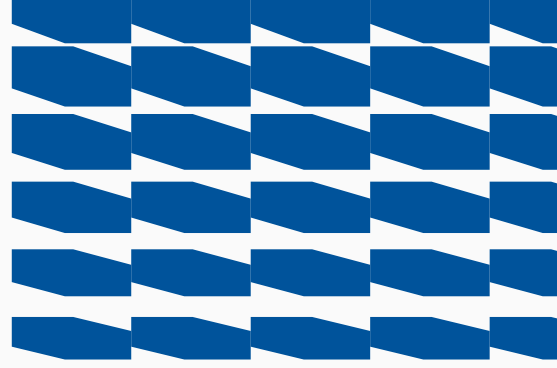


Thank you for taking the time to explore the impact created by the Chicago Global Shapers this year. Our journey, guided by the principle of "Creation over Consumption," has been a testament to the power of dedicated young leaders collaborating to foster lasting change in our community. The ripples of economic opportunity, health equity, environmental resilience, and civic engagement initiated this year will continue to expand, shaping a brighter future for Chicago.

A special thank you to our fiscal sponsor:



**URBAN
RIVERS**



The work of building a more inclusive, sustainable, and thriving Chicago is ongoing. We invite you to stay connected and be part of the continuing current of change.

Partner With Us: Have questions about our work? Interested in exploring a partnership that can create even larger ripples of impact? We look forward to hearing from you!

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