



Accelerating Green Initiatives in Chicago's 77 Neighborhoods

Community-based sustainability initiatives are taking place across the metropolitan area of Chicago. These, however, are often relatively isolated activities with limited interaction between them. Though many organizations, foundations, companies, and government agencies have programs and resources to assist local sustainability efforts, many communities are unaware of these opportunities or unfamiliar with ways to access them.

The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) is coordinating a 3-year program to accelerate green initiatives at the local level. ICA has extensive experience in community development that began nearly 50 years ago in the East Garfield Park neighborhood of Chicago. This work has since spread to 32 countries. ICA's mission is to facilitate the creation of a just and sustainable world through empowering cultural dimensions of the social process. The ICA owns and operates the largest nonprofit service center in the Midwest, an eight-story building located at the corner of Sheridan and Lawrence in Chicago. Called the **GreenRise Uptown Learning Laboratory**, this multi-use facility provides a working venue to foster local resiliency within neighborhoods across the entire metro area.

The Conference

ICA is marking its 50th Anniversary by sponsoring a 9-month initiative to research and document successful sustainable projects in each of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods and the surrounding suburbs. Follow-up work during the next two years will accelerate these initiatives through planning, training, and collaboration. The first phase will culminate with a one-day **"Sharing Approaches That Work"** conference in **September 2012** that highlights neighborhood innovations in clean energy, waste reduction, green jobs, recycling, local food production, etc. It will involve community groups, businesses, and agencies of city, state, and national government. The morning will be a "share fair" for community representatives to learn from one another while the afternoon will be a series of "connection seminars" during which support organizations will present opportunities for accelerating green initiatives through various resources available to neighborhoods. Lunch will include a keynote address from a prominent leader in the environmental movement.

Morning	Lunch	Afternoon
Sharing Approaches That Work community interaction to learn from each another's experiences	Keynote Address	Connection Seminars presentations by resource organizations on grant and program opportunities

The conference will be an opportunity for creating a path forward in Chicago's neighborhoods built upon current innovations from local residents. The conference will showcase resources from organizations like Illinois Clean Energy Community Fund, Growing Power, Faith in Place, The Delta Institute, ComEd, Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), Transition Chicago, and others, as well as the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, and the Federal Government.

A report on the 77 neighborhood sustainable initiatives will document successful local undertakings and key lessons learned in their implementation. These will be shared electronically with neighborhoods and nonprofit organizations across Chicago.

The **“Sharing Approaches that Work”** conference will help encourage and accelerate local efforts while catalyzing follow-up work in Chicago’s 77 neighborhoods during the next two years through training workshops, local share fairs, and new collaboration efforts between neighborhood groups to build a common vision. The anticipated result will be multiple local initiatives that will significantly contribute to the success of the Chicago Climate Action Plan by 2020. The ICA is the organizing sponsor with current co-sponsors Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, Millennia Consulting, LLC, Heartland Alliance, Faith in Place and Transition USA. Over the next six months we envision creating many alliances with partners in the work of building sustainable resilient Chicago communities.

