



WePLAN is the Cook County Department of Public Health's community health assessment and community health improvement plan. The following summary presents key findings from the **Community Themes and Strengths Assessment (CTSA)**. The **purpose** of the CTSA is to identify themes that engage and are of interest to the community, perceptions about the quality of life, conditions that support health and community assets. To assess the community themes, nearly 1200 residents responded to a Community Health Survey conducted August-October, 2015.

Key Findings

Overall, 50 to 75 percent of survey respondents rated suburban Cook County as a very good place to live, raise children, work and grow old. Communities rated as Fair or Poor were located primarily in the South and West suburbs.

- Survey respondents consider most community services as assets; especially recreational and religious activities and services for older adults and especially in communities in the north suburbs. Affordable health, dental, and mental health services were most likely to be rated as Fair and Poor.
- A significant number of respondents (>75 percent) are food and economically secure. In both categories, most respondents who were less secure made less than \$50,000/year and lived in the south suburban communities.
- Most residents responded to being treated fairly (80 percent) related to age, gender/sex, race/skin color, language, and sexual orientation. However, if respondents said they were treated unfairly, this was due primarily to race/skin color (NHBlack, Hispanic and NHAsian). Similarly, unfair treatment by police/courts and at work is experienced more by racial/ethnic respondents especially NHBlack.

Survey respondents rated their overall health status as Excellent, Very Good or Good (86 percent), and 92 percent rated their mental health/emotional status similarly. Of respondents rating their overall health as Fair or Poor (13.4 percent), 83 percent were lower income (\$50,000 or less/year) and 58 percent were either NHBlack, NHAsian, or Hispanic. Similarly, 69 percent of respondents who rated their mental health as fair or poor were lower income and 57 percent were racial/ethnic minority residents. Survey respondents identified:

- Leading health issues as aging; cancer; heart disease, diabetes and mental health.
- Lack of exercise, unemployment, poor diet, high blood pressure and low wages as factors needing to be addressed to improve health.
- Access to quality medical services, financial security/stable income and resources and quality environmental conditions such as air, water, food as community conditions critical to improving health.

Quality of life and conditions that support health were determined most often by where a person lived, their race/ ethnicity and income.

- More respondents from the South and West communities rate the quality of their community as Fair/Poor; especially as a place to work, raise children, grow old and as a safe place to live. Community services including affordable housing, shopping, senior services, and public transportation were also more likely rated as Fair/Poor (20-40 percent) in South and West communities.
- Nearly 20 percent of respondents believe they were treated unfairly in the past 12 months; most because of their race or skin color, but also because of the way they speak English.
- Of the 20 percent of respondents making less than \$50,000 per year: 1 in 3 could not meet basic needs and 2 in 5 did not have secure financial means to pay off a \$400 emergency expenditure. One third of those less economically secure lived in the South suburbs. Most of the respondents who were often or sometimes 'food insecure' during the past 12 months lived in the South suburbs.