CSforCHI
Strategic Plan

PREPARED BY

CSFORCHI CORE TEAM

CSforCHI

Executive Summary

Chicago is a global city with abundant opportunities to learn computer science. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, individual educational, governmental, and community-based organizations adapted and expanded innovative and engaging computer science (CS) youth programming opportunities. However, abundance is not equitably distributed and learning experiences for youth are not always as connected as they should be.

In 2019, Chicago Learning Exchange became 1 of 10 national organizations selected for the EcoSystemsforCS (E4CS), an initiative created by CSforALL with support from Schmidt Futures to promote community-led systems change in K-12 computer science education. CSforCHI, the Chicago youth computer science ecosystem, identified the need to create equity and connect resources and therefore applied for inclusion in the 2020 CSforALL E4CS cohort. CSforCHI took full advantage of E4CS financial and professional learning community resources to enhance collaborative relationships, communication, and infrastructure between core ecosystem stakeholders and to create a plan to increase efficiencies in serving youth, their families, and their communities.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE PRIMARY GOALS FOR 2021:

1. Reach and engage youth and families to build interest in CS.
2. Connect CS education and workforce opportunities by enhancing existing pathways and building those that are incomplete.
3. Promote standardized CS-related language and best practices.
4. Strengthen data and ecosystem infrastructure and transparency.

Executive Summary

This is an ambitious strategic plan that incorporates a multiple objectives and workstreams. In order to achieve all of the objectives set forth, an important part of the work for 2021 will be to support current ecosystem leads and cultivate new stakeholders who are willing to:

- invest directly toward proposed initiatives
- provide in-kind supports that are within their wheelhouse
- seek external funding support to their organizations in order to build their capacity to lead within objective areas.

The Chicago Learning Exchange has already successfully secured funding from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) Group Foundation to support the convening of the CSforCHI ecosystem meetings for 2021. This was an important achievement, as it supports the foundation of the ecosystem convening and provides an active communication channel with the wider CS community.

Chicago does not shy away from ambitious plans which is why establishing a hyperlocal connected ecosystem will enable Chicago's youth to pursue an integrated and engaging computer science pathway for both learning and careers.

CSforCHI

Mission

CSforCHI is an alliance that supports Chicago's efforts to advance equity, awareness, and access to pathways in high-quality computer science (CS) education for Chicago youth, educators, and families.
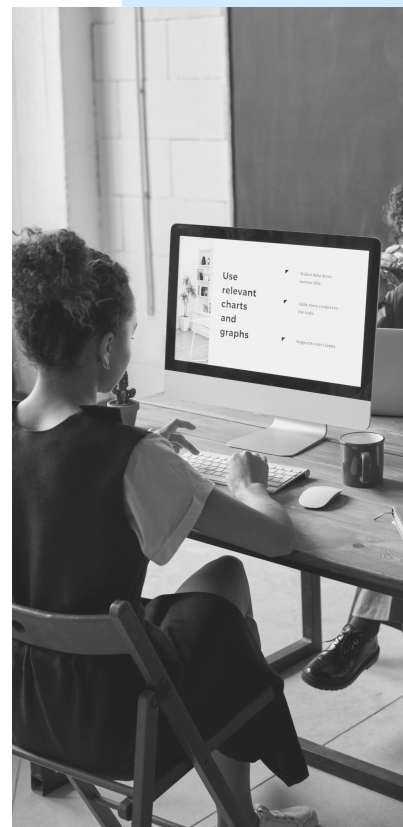
CSforCHI works to forge and develop partnerships, create greater visibility for CS, and share learnings within Chicago's in-school and out-of-school learning ecosystem so that all Chicago youth have opportunity and access to flourish in the future of both computer science and computational thinking learning and work.

Vision

CSforCHI envisions building upon Chicago's rich computer science ecosystem by connecting the in-school and out-of-school time-space, and most importantly, addressing inequities in opportunities and access within computer science.

Goals & Objectives

CSforCHI has four primary goals for 2021 and each is rooted in the development and sharing of resources in order to fortify the region's computer science ecosystem.

CSforCHI

Goal 1 - Reach & engage youth & families to build interest in CS

OBJECTIVE 1A - INCREASE CITY WIDE AWARENESS AND EXPOSURE TO CS

- Create a unifying message that can serve as an ongoing siren to youth, families, communities, and ecosystem partners.
- Coordinate formal listening sessions with stakeholders to create a shared logo design, ecosystem facts, and promotional materials that are accessible and usable by stakeholders
- Expand Remake Learning Days CHI (RLD CHI) to further engage students and their families while specifically incorporating CS activities and stakeholder opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 1B - CREATE AND SUPPORT YOUTH AMBASSADORS AND RECRUITMENT

- Build and facilitate a youth advisory board to actively incorporate youth voice into programming and recruitment.
- Incorporate development programming and learning opportunities for advisory board members

OBJECTIVE 1C - TARGET HIGH PRIORITY GROUPS

- Expand computer science learning and experiences offered to PK-2 aged youth
- Support initiatives and organizations that are expanding internet and technology access

OBJECTIVE 1D - SERVE AS A REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHICAGO'S CS ECOSYSTEM

- Create and share CSforALL commitments with city stakeholders

Goal 2 - Connect CS education with workforce opportunities by enhancing existing pathways & building those that are incomplete

OBJECTIVE 2A - INCREASE YOUTH'S EXPOSURE TO CS LEARNING AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand and support STEM/STEAM exploration activities at Chicago Public Library (CPL)
- Integrate CS coursework into Chicago Public School (CPS) elementary schools
- Further prepare and expand CS offerings at CPS high schools
- Ensure that students, families and educators are better connected to CS programs at community college and universities

OBJECTIVE 2B - EXPAND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand and include more CS opportunities in existing One Summer Chicago (OSC) through new partnerships and funding supports
- Support paid CS and CS-adjacent youth work opportunities (i.e. internships, learn+earn, job-shadowing)
- Launch post-secondary CS paid internship program

Goal 3 - Promote standardized CS-related language & best practices

OBJECTIVE 3A - DEVELOP SHARED LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY TO BE USED BY THE BROADER CS ECOSYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS

- Develop a program category list with input from stakeholders to better organize programming, learning opportunities, and pathways development
- Use the program category list to construct a CS terminology list with relevant definitions with input from stakeholders.

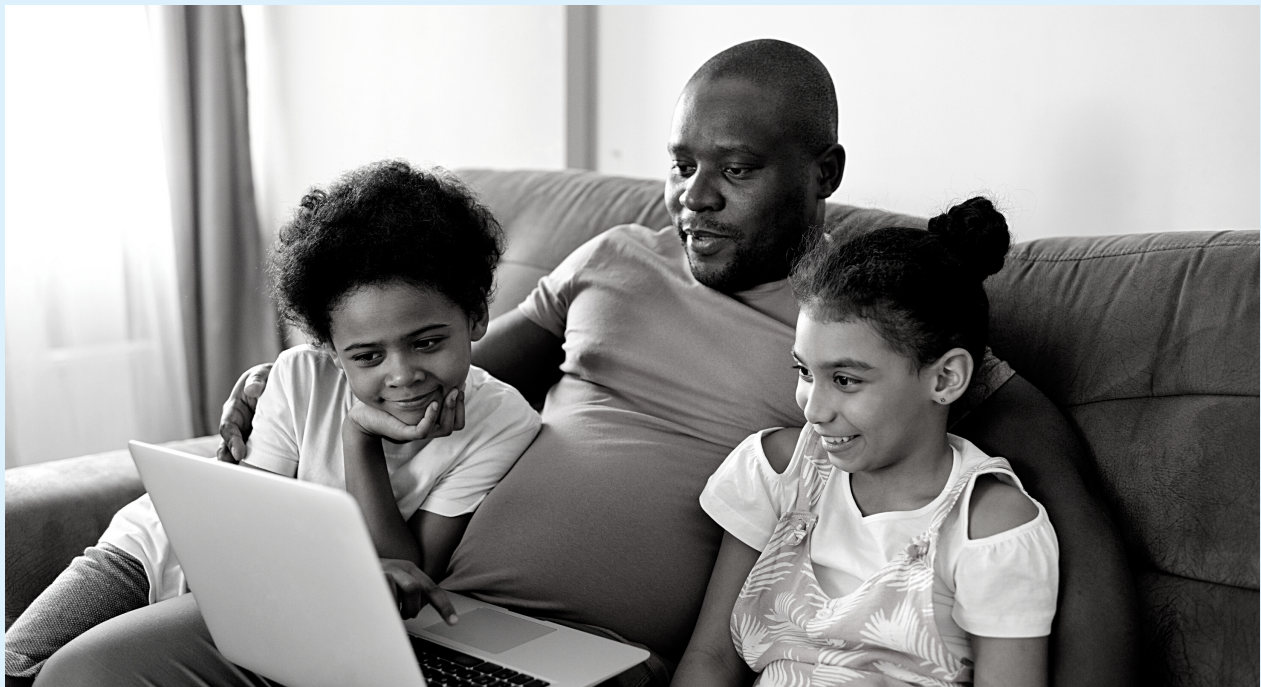**OBJECTIVE 3B -** ANALYZE AND PROMOTE BEST PRACTICES WITHIN THE CS FIELD

- Identify topic areas (i.e. CS/Virtual learning engagement, Mentor up-skilling, Teacher/facilitator credentialing) and research entities to analyze and compile best practices.
- Create mechanisms to effectively share and update stakeholders of identified best practices.

Goal 4 - Strengthen data & ecosystem infrastructure & transparency

OBJECTIVE 4A - SUPPORT DATA SHARING AND TRANSPARENCY

- Develop a program category list with input from stakeholders to better organize programming, learning opportunities, and pathways development
- Use the program category list to construct a CS terminology list with relevant definitions with input from stakeholders.
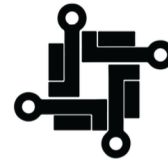
Project Timeline

RELEVANT TASKS	START DATE	END DATE
OBJECTIVE 1A COMMUNITY HALL CONVENING, BRANDING & STRATEGY FEEEDBACK	DECEMBER 2020	MARCH 2021
OBJECTIVE 1A REMAKE LEARNING DAY -CHI	JANUARY 2021	SEPTEMBER 2021
OBJECTIVE 1B YOUTH AMBASSADORSHIP RECRUITMENT	JANUARY 2021	FEBRUARY 2021
OBJECTIVE 1D SHARING CSFORALL COMMITMENT	FEBRUARY 2021	APRIL 2021
OBJECTIVE 2A PIPELINE MAPPING BETA	MARCH 2021	OCTOBER 2021
OBJECTIVE 2B 9TH-12TH GRADE WORKFORCE INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION	FEBRUARY 2021	AUGUST 2021
OBJECTIVE 2B POST-SECONDARY WORKFORCE INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION	FEBRUARY 2021	AUGUST 2021
OBJECTIVE 3A CS-RELATED PROGRAM CATEGORY LIST	FEBRUARY 2021	APRIL 2021
OBJECTIVE 3A CS-RELATED TERMINOLOGY LIST	FEBRUARY 2021	APRIL 2021
OBJECTIVE 3B BEST PRACTICES PROMOTION	JANUARY 2021	NOVEMBER 2021
OBJECTIVE 4A ECOSYSTEM DATA TRANSPARENCY RECOMMENDATIONS	JANUARY 2021	MARCH 2021

Acknowledgments

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- Eric Reyes, *Chicago Public Library*
- Gina Grant, *Chicago Learning Exchange, E4CS Project Lead*
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- Mia Harris, *Northwestern University, Center for Excellence in Computer Science Education*
- Maji Tharpe, *Chicago Learning Exchange Consultant*

Lead

Core Partners

Partners

Funders