

# EVALUATING OUR IMPACT

WE RISE

FOR AN  
EQUITABLE  
& JUST  
RECOVERY

TOGETHER

## GOALS OF THE EVALUATION

*We Rise Together: For an Equitable and Just Recovery* is evaluating the impact of our investments over time to refine our approach to local economic development and inform future philanthropic investment in Black and Latinx communities.

Our evaluation is being led by Loyola University's Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) and Quinlan School of Business in partnership with MAPSCorps at Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy. MAPSCorps employs high school and college students as community data scientists, training them to apply research methods to explore questions, develop meaningful conclusions, and advocate for community change. The evaluation also benefits from a collaboration with Mastercard Data & Services, providing real-time data on the impact our place-based investments are having on dollars spent in the surrounding communities.

## WHAT WE'RE MEASURING & WHY

To understand the impact our investments are having, we are collecting and analyzing a variety of data:

- **Self-reported data from our grant recipients** helps us understand the local effects of their real estate projects, workforce development, and small business support programs.
- **Data from Mastercard** tells us how spending patterns and transaction rates change when neighborhood anchor projects open in communities.
- **Broader economic impact metrics**, such as income and employment, provide a longer-term perspective on economic improvements.
- **Community Conversations and MAPSCorps' youth-led surveys** with residents give us a read on how community members are experiencing economic recovery—input that helps shape our grantmaking.

## DATA WE RISE TOGETHER IS TRACKING TO UNDERSTAND OUR IMPACT



### LEADING ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Mastercard data includes:

- Spend
- Transaction count
- Journey to destination
- Credit type



### SECONDARY DATA

- Unemployment
- Income
- Permits
- Sales tax revenue



### COMMUNITY DATA

Grant recipient reports

MAPSCorps:

- Small business survey
- Resident survey
- Community focus groups

## WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

### Black and Latinx communities are experiencing ongoing significant, negative economic impacts of the pandemic.

Through our Community Conversations, residents have told us that loans and grants remain difficult to “access” and “navigate.” Median household income is between \$20,000 and \$40,000 lower, and unemployment rates are up to three times higher in the neighborhoods where We Rise Together is investing in workforce solutions than in Chicago overall.

### Yet people are hopeful about their economic futures.

Forty percent of business respondents expect increased earnings over one year and 75 percent plan to grow their businesses.

### Community investments can bring immediate, significant economic benefits.

Mastercard data is available for select *We Rise Together* anchor real estate projects that have opened their doors. Data is showing:

- An increase of 1 percent in nearby spending since Esperanza 63rd Street opened in June 2022. *We Rise Together* made a \$500,000 investment in this \$2 million health center, which served more clients in its first six months of operation than it expected to serve in the first year.
- Within 14 weeks of North Austin Center opening in February 2023, nearby businesses posted 7.2 percent more transactions and saw a 14 percent lift in consumer spending. *We Rise Together* made a \$1.5 million grant to this \$33 million community center and sports facility.
- Spending went up by more than 19 percent and transactions by more than 24 percent from the time North Lawndale Employment Network opened in September 2021 through mid-April 2023. *We Rise Together* made a \$495,000 grant to this nearly \$11 million community and economic development campus, which also houses a production and retail space for NLEN’s Sweet Beginnings LLC honey products social enterprise and café.

