Community Snapshot: Oak Park
Oak Park

First settled in 1835, the village of Oak Park — located eight miles west of the Loop — grew quickly when people moved out of Chicago after being displaced by the fire of 1871. By the 1920s, Oak Park had 40,000 residents and a thriving business district.

In the 1960s, Oak Park residents and city leaders observed the white flight and subsequent resegregation that were taking place in Austin, its adjacent neighborhood to the east. To prevent the same from happening in Oak Park, the community took a number of concrete steps: implementing fair housing ordinances, creating a community relations commission devoted to preventing discrimination and establishing a Citizens Committee for Human Rights.

In addition, “village officials, often joined by clergymen, visited blocks to which families of color might move and carefully sought to control the fears and rumors generally associated with neighborhood succession... They identified white families who would welcome the newcomers. They encouraged African-American families to disperse throughout the village to counter concerns of clustering and ghetto formation. ... Leaders acted on a vision of Oak Park as a community strong enough to achieve integration, and able to challenge the Chicago pattern of block-by-block resegregation with a policy of managed integration through dispersal.”

I would say that the typical resident of Oak Park is very involved in the community: philanthropically, educationally, socially, economically. We have been able to pass referenda because the citizenry is committed to providing high-quality services across the board, once again whether it’s senior services, library services, educational services, village services.

- RUMC focus group participant from Oak Park

HIC survey participants asked how common violence is in their community: 69.9% said “not very/not at all.”
Who lives here?

- **51,902** people live in Oak Park. The average household size is **2.4** people, compared to an average Cook County household size of **2.7** people.\(^2\)
- Oak Park’s population per square mile is **11,042.2** people, as compared to **5,530** people per square mile in Cook County.\(^3\)
- Between 2000 and 2010, Oak Park’s population decreased by **1.2%**, less than the population change in Cook County overall, where the population decreased by **3.4%** during the same period.\(^4\)

**RACE AND ETHNICITY**\(^5\)
A majority of the population of Oak Park is white.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Oak Park</th>
<th>Cook County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AGE**\(^5\)
The median age in Oak Park is **38.7**, older than the Cook County median age of **35.5**.

[You’re] safe walking the streets at pretty much any time of the day or night. There’s no danger.

- RUMC focus group participant from Oak Park
What are the potential barriers to good health?

HARDSHIP INDEX

Because the hardship index referenced in this report’s other community snapshots is calculated only for community areas within the city of Chicago, Oak Park does not have a comparable index number. Its statistics in some of the areas measured by the hardship index include the following (Oak Park at left, Cook County at right):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Oak Park</th>
<th>Cook County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowded Housing</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households Below Poverty</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment for Those over Age 16</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of High School Diploma</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Under Age 18</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Over Age 65</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per-Capita Income</td>
<td>$47,573</td>
<td>$30,468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHILD OPPORTUNITY INDEX

The Child Opportunity Index (COI) assigns a “very high” ranking to Oak Park in all three opportunity areas it measures: education; health and environment; and social and economic. This gives the community an overall COI ranking of “very high.”

CRIME

Oak Park’s rate of violent crime — homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault — is less than one-third that of Cook County overall.

LACK OF HEALTH INSURANCE

Oak Park residents have health insurance at a higher rate than residents of Cook County and residents of the U.S. overall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Oak Park</th>
<th>Cook County</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HIC survey participants asked whether they had not sought medical care due to cost anytime in the past 12 months: 74.7% said “no.”

- RUMC focus group participant from Oak Park
What is the impact of the barriers?

YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST

The annual years of potential life lost per 100,000 residents aged 75 and younger due to selected causes of death in Oak Park is 4,449, approximately 47 percent lower than the annual years of potential life lost in Chicago.

What resources make life better?

COMMUNITY ASSETS

Some of Oak Park’s community assets include the following:

**Hospitals**
Rush Oak Park Hospital
West Suburban Medical Center

**Grocery store**
Pete’s Fresh Market

**Community-based health centers**
Infant Welfare Society’s Children Clinic
PCC Community Lake Street Family Health Center
PCC Community South Family Health Center

**Pharmacy clinic**
Take Care Clinic at Walgreens

**Assisted-living facilities**
Belmont Village of Oak Park
Brookdale Oak Park
Oak Park Arms

**Elderly and disabled housing**
Mills Park Tower
Ryan Farrelly Apartments
The Oaks

**Public parks**
Andersen Park
Austin Gardens
Barrie Center and Park
Barrie Park
Carroll Park
Dole Center
Euclid Square Park
Field Park
Fox Park
Lindberg Park
Longfellow Park
Mills Park
Oak Park Conservatory
Randolph Tot Lot

Rehm Pool and Park
Ridgeland Common Pool and Park
Scoville Park
Stevenson Park

**Childcare centers**
Blocks 24-Hour Child Care Center
CEDA Oak Park Head Start
Hephzibah Children’s Association
Morningside Children’s Academy
RFCC at Oak Park and River Forest High School
The Language and Music School
West Cook YMCA Child Care
West Suburban Montessori School

**Mental health facilities**
Community Care Options – Fillmore
NAMI Metro Suburban Drop-In Center
Thrive Counseling Center
Youth Services of Oak Park

**Nursing homes/skilled nursing facilities**
Belmont Village Oak Park
Berkeley Nursing and Rehab Center
Oak Park Healthcare Center

**Pharmacies**
CVS
Walgreens

**Schools**
Beye, Hatch, Holmes, Irving, Lincoln, Longfellow, Mann, Whittier (Public, K-5)
Brooks, Julian (Public, 6-8)
Oak Park and River Forest (Public, 9-12)
Fenwick (Private, 9-12)
ENDNOTES

1 www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/917.html.
3 www.towncharts.com/Illinois/Demographics/Cook-County-IL-Demographics-data.html.
4 MetroPulse Community Data Snapshot, Oak Park.
5 MetroPulse Community Data Snapshot, Oak Park.
6 MetroPulse Community Data Snapshot, Oak Park.
7 Data from US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010-14.
9 Data from www.neighborhoodscout.com/il/oak-park/crime/.
10 Data from 2010-14 American Community Survey as aggregated at assessment.communitycommons.org.
11 Oak Park data courtesy of the Cook County Department of Public Health; Chicago data from data.cityofchicago.org/Health-Human-Services/Public-Health-Statistics-Selected-underlying-cause/j6cj-r444.