

Practicing Democracy in Communities

Loyola University Chicago is applying for a grant of \$682,420 to support *Practicing Democracy in Communities* (PDC). PDC builds on the capacities and resources of our university, our community public schools, and community organizations, the Chicago Public Schools Office of Curriculum as well as our principals, teachers, students, and community leaders. PDC will strengthen civics education and US history practices and improve civic outcomes among students in our local public schools. PDC will work with 6-7 neighborhood-based public schools and 15-20 community organizations in the communities of Rogers Park, Edgewater, and Uptown (three very diverse communities in Chicago to support 7-8 school principals and 20-25 middle and high school teachers, and serve 800 students.

PDC will generate and provide resources and supports that enable principals, teachers, teacher candidates, and community partners to teach core skills of democratic citizenship. Strategic interventions will create a holistic and comprehensive approach to civics education in our communities. Our conceptual foundation for action is rooted in asset-based community development (ABCD), which grounds the work of a community in the principles of strengths-based approaches, partnership development, and local self-determination. Our framework for civic learning is *critical civic engagement*. ABCD. Critical civic engagement: 1) Engages the lived experience of students, 2) develops and encourages critical thinking, and 3) generates and supports informed civic action. Our goals, objectives, and outcomes are:

Goal #1: Build and strengthen a partnership among Loyola University, neighborhood public schools, community organizations, and museums to develop a placed-based, community-wide civic education system of learning and engaging.

Objectives: Generate, support, and sustain professional learning communities (principals) and communities of practice (teachers); build, support and sustain a PDC Advisory Council; convene and support community organizations and partners to identify and engage local issues and strategies.

Outcomes: Community stakeholders will demonstrate greater efficacy in collaboration for civic learning; our communities will generate and sustain a comprehensive approach to civic learning.

Goal #2: Provide teaching and learning supports to teachers in our schools that enable them to provide high quality, innovative civic education and instruction in US History.

Objectives: Provide multiple professional learning opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers; provide thematic instructional frameworks for US history teachers.

Outcomes: Teachers will demonstrate greater confidence and skill in civics and US history education; teachers will demonstrate greater confidence and skill in critical civic engagement.

Goal #3: Provide students with multiple civic learning opportunities that enable them to practice democracy in their communities and develop civic skills, knowledge, dispositions, habits and identities that support lifelong democratic engagement.

Objectives: Generate and sustain high quality, innovative civics education classroom pedagogy; Generate and sustain multiple civic learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

Outcomes: Students will learn and demonstrate core democratic knowledge, skills, dispositions and habits; students will develop a strong sense of civic identity.