Center for Early Learning Funding Equity
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Mapping Early Childhood Education Funding in the City of Chicago

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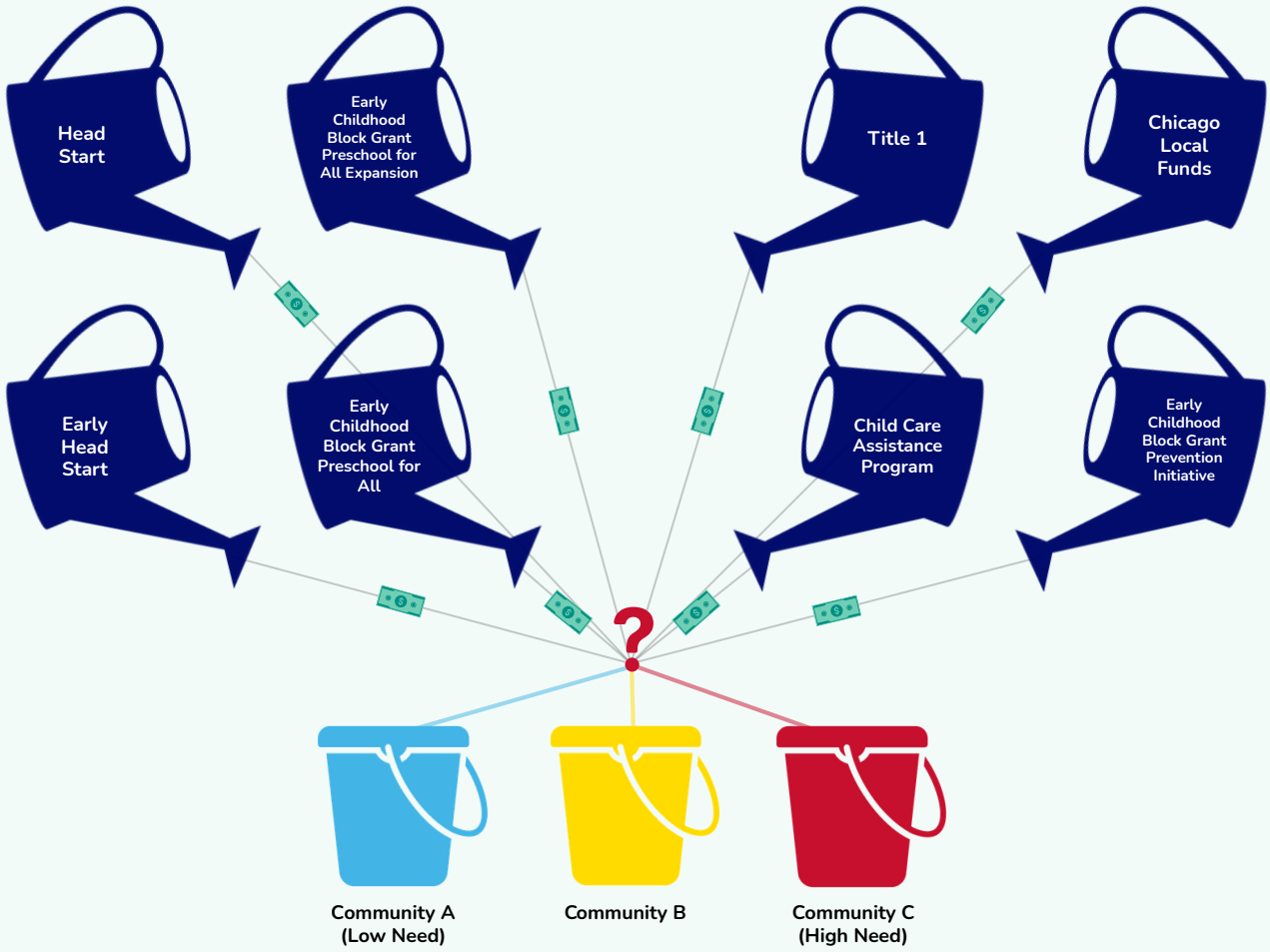
This brief from the Center for Early Learning Funding Equity (CELFE) is part of a broader analysis of ECEC funding in Chicago supported by the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. While this work is not a formal part of the City of Chicago's Early Learning Initiative, CELFE thanks the Mayor's Office, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), Chicago Public Schools (CPS), and the Every Child Ready Chicago (ECRC) Executive Committee for their thoughtful participation throughout the process.

Previously, CELFE and Afton Partners constructed the Geographic Equity and Adequacy Map (GEAM), a comprehensive analysis of statewide funding distribution compared to the populations those funds serve. In that study, all funding was mapped to the local level by school district. Because the City of Chicago is served by a single school district, the GEAM did not account for variation within the city, which is home to over 170,000 children under the age of 5. This project begins to address that gap, analyzing data by Chicago Community Area and United Way Neighborhood Networks.

Fical Mapping

A fiscal, or funding equity, map shows how effectively Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) funding matches community needs and highlights variations in funding among communities. In the fragmented ECEC funding landscape, resources flow from multiple funding streams administered by various federal, state, and local agencies.

It is only by viewing funding streams in combination that funders and policymakers can understand the choices currently available to families in a community and the changes needed to produce a simpler, fairer system that will serve them better. A fiscal map aggregates and displays data for this purpose.



Fiscal mapping includes three steps. The first is to account for all ECEC funds flowing into a community and who they are intended to serve (child age range, family income level, etc.). The second is to determine how many potential beneficiaries (eligible children) exist in a community. The third is to divide the total funding amount by the potential beneficiaries to get a dollar amount per-eligible-child.[1]

1. In a fully funded system, if the total resources were divided by the total number of eligible children, the resulting dollar amount would equal the program or school funding amount per eligible child. However, ECEC is not fully funded to reach every eligible child. Therefore, the per-child dollar amount is not the funding amount for enrolled children. It is simply a calculation that divides total resources by all eligible children in the community, whether enrolled in a program or not.

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Step 1

For this Chicago Fiscal Mapping project, CELFE totaled the funds flowing from major funding streams[2] and mapped them to individual Chicago Community Areas based on the addresses of program sites. It is important to note that families often cross community boundaries to access care, and administrative data from the various funding streams do not capture this mobility. **As a result, the project's community need calculations are imperfect and future work is needed to improve the data.** Nevertheless, the existing data provides a general picture of funding distribution at the community level.

Step 2

After mapping funds to CCAs, CELFE's next step was to determine the number of children eligible for the funded service, whether enrolled or not. All the funding streams either require or prioritize service to low-income families and those with special needs. Therefore, CELFE defined the priority-eligible child group as children living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) plus 10% of children above 200% FPL to account for higher-income children with developmental delays, disabilities, or other significant needs. This definition allowed CELFE to determine the number of priority group children living in each CCA.

Step 3

Finally, CELFE divided the funding amounts by the number of priority-eligible children. The result is a dollar amount per priority-eligible child. In an equitable system, there would not be wide variations in the level of resources per priority-eligible child across communities.

Calculating per-priority-eligible-child funding: An example

$30,000 (A) →	*Total ECEC funds flowing into the community & focused on prority group children*
÷ 3,000 (B) →	*Total priority group children in the community*
$10,000 →	*Amount per-priority-eligible-child* ***(A divded by B)***

2. These included Center-Based Prevention Initiative (PI), Preschool for All (PFA)/Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE), Early Head Start (EHS)/Head Start (HS), Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), the portion of Title I spent on children younger than kindergarten, and local Chicago funding for preschool. Funding totals did not include the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), home visiting, or funding focused on serving children with disabilities (IDEA Parts B & C).

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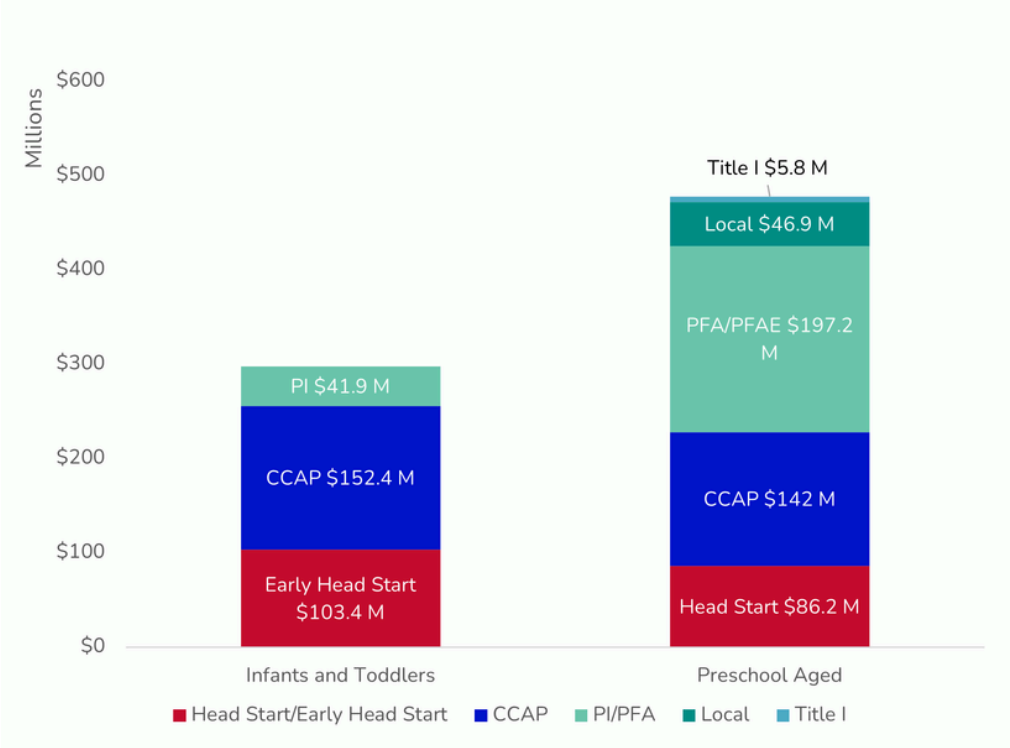
Findings

Total ECEC funding by age group

Total resources flowing to Chicago communities from the major funding streams are displayed in Figure 1. Overall, far more funding is earmarked for preschool services than for infant/toddler services, but CCAP and Early Head Start amounts are both higher for infants and toddlers.

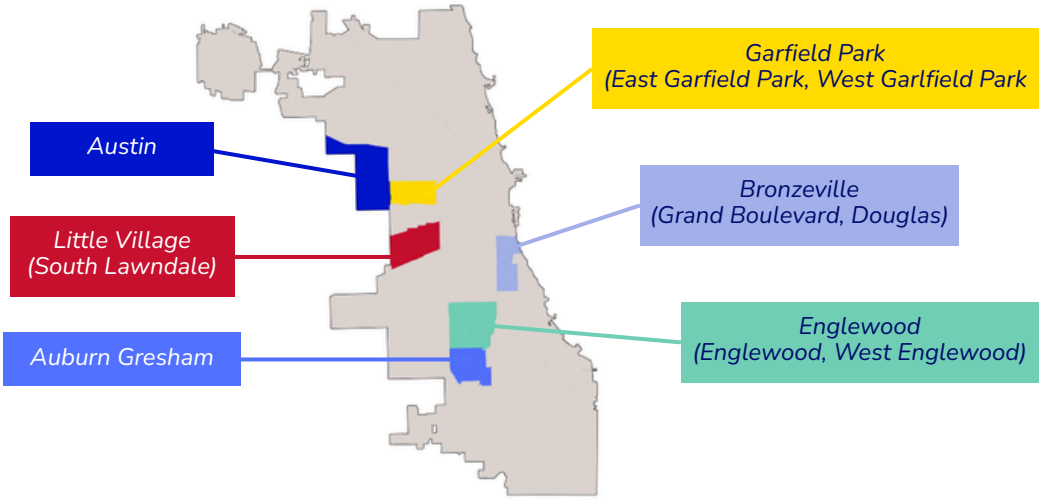
Figure 1: Total ECEC Funding Mapped



Funding by community: United Way Neighborhood Networks

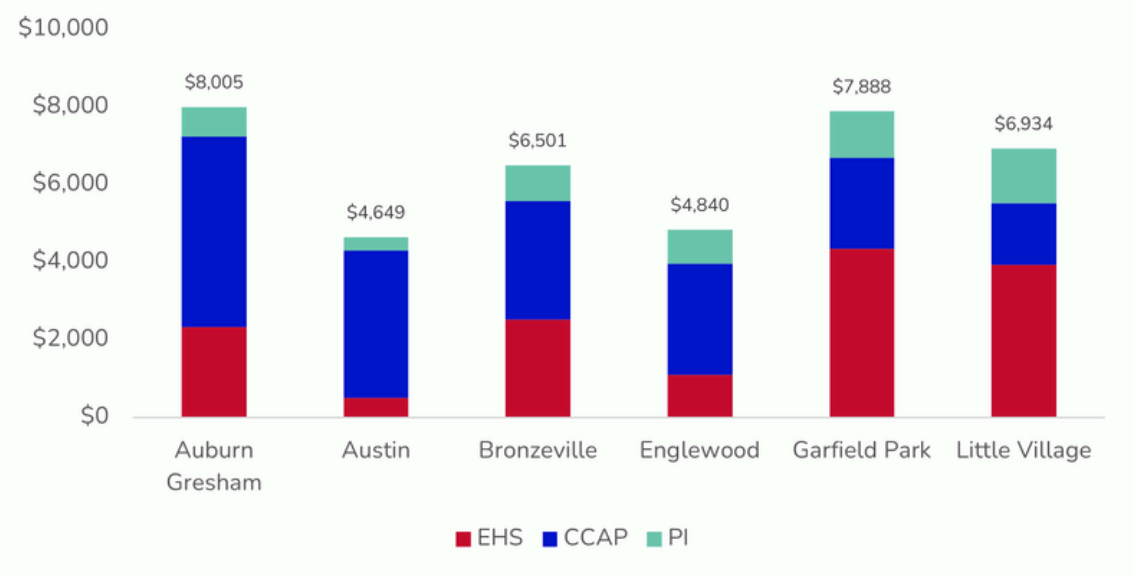
One facet of this project was to look specifically at the distribution of funds across United Way Neighborhood Network communities. This section presents the results of that analysis, illustrating the unintended consequences of fragmented funding and the need to view funding streams in combination. Because these network community boundaries do not align perfectly with CCA boundaries, CELFE approximated figures for each Neighborhood Network based on the CCAs with the greatest geographic overlap. The United Way Neighborhoods and their corresponding CCAs are shown in Figure 2

Figure 2: United Way Neighborhood Networks and Corresponding Chicago Community Areas



For each of these neighborhoods, CELFE calculated funding amounts per priority-eligible child for the infant/toddler age group and for the preschooler age group. It is important to remember that administrative data does not track whether a program in one community serves children living in other communities, so the calculated per-child amounts are imperfect. Nevertheless, Figures 3 and 4 below give a broad picture of variances across those communities.

Figure 3: Funding per priority infant/toddler, United Way Network Neighborhoods

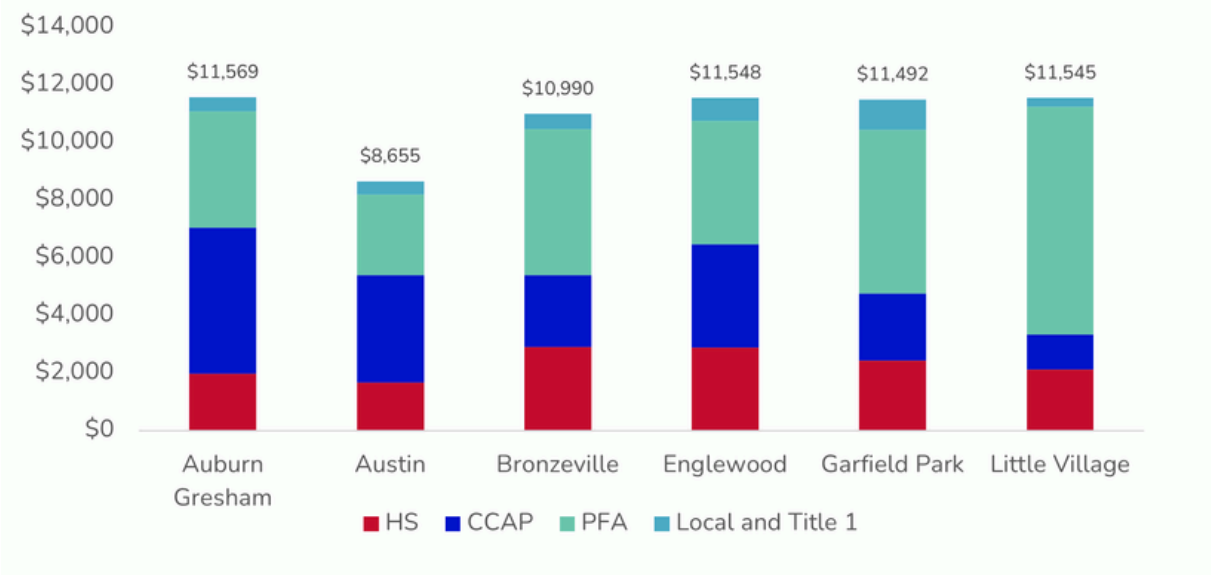


Two notable findings emerge from the analysis of infant and toddler funding:

1. Total funding per priority-eligible child varies greatly across the communities. Auburn-Gresham, for example, receives almost twice what Austin gets per eligible child.
2. Each individual funding stream provides a different amount per eligible child.[3] Garfield Park, for example, receives more than double the center-based PI funding per child than Englewood does.

These variances are largely the result of the fragmented funding landscape where each funding stream works in isolation. It is also worth noting that suitable programs and facilities are more available in some communities than in others.

Figure 4: Funding per priority preschooler, United Way Network Neighborhoods



This preschool-age graph reflects the same sort of variations found for infants and toddlers. In this graph, total funding per priority-eligible child varies moderately by community, while the individual funding stream amounts vary widely. Also note that total funding per priority-eligible preschooler is higher than that per infant/toddler, even though it costs significantly more to serve an infant or toddler. The main reason for this difference is that PFA/PFAE funding is available for preschoolers.

3. The funding amounts per **enrolled** child might all be similar, but a community with a high number of **eligible** children who are not enrolled will average less funding per eligible child.

When allocating new funds from a particular funding stream, State and City agencies often prioritize expansion in underserved communities. However, the graphs above highlight that more (or less) adequate funding from a single funding stream does not always correspond to more (or less) adequate funding when all funding streams are considered. To determine which communities are underserved, funding stream administrators must consider resources from all funding streams, not just theirs alone.

Conclusion

This analysis demonstrates both the scale of ECEC investment in Chicago and the inconsistent resource levels available to meet community needs. The City of Chicago and the State of Illinois are both committed to building a more equitable funding system that responds to strategic priorities. One key step in this direction is for every funding agency and funding stream to review total community needs and resources when developing strategy. Fiscal mapping provides essential information for that work.[4]

Final Note: Fiscal Mapping as a System-Building Tool

Fiscal mapping can support the kind of need-based funding strategy used in the K-12 system. Illinois's Evidence Based Funding formula estimates a K-12 funding adequacy level for each school district based on the characteristics of the children served. Then it considers the district's local resources and establishes a state funding amount to address the gap, sending more resources to the State's most under-resourced districts. No such system exists for ECEC funding. This Chicago fiscal map project, like the Statewide GEAM, begins to provide the data needed for a similar system of equitable distribution of public funds.

4. For a more comprehensive discussion of building a more unified funding system, see CELFE's Strategy Spotlight Series, "From Mixed Delivery Patchwork to Mixed Delivery System"