

**Cook County**  
**Environmental**  
**Justice Survey Report**



**COOK COUNTY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**Environment &**  
**Sustainability**

**Cook County Department of  
Environment and Sustainability**  
**[www.cookcountylil.gov/agency/environmental-control](http://www.cookcountylil.gov/agency/environmental-control)**  
**Email: [environment@cookcountylil.gov](mailto:environment@cookcountylil.gov)**  
**Twitter: [@CookEnviro](https://twitter.com/CookEnviro)**

# Cook County Environmental Justice Survey Report

Environmental justice is a key component of Cook County's Department of Environment and Sustainability (DES) mission. It is also one of the objectives of the Cook County Policy Roadmap and its Sustainable Communities pillar, which focuses on advancing environmental justice by means such as investing equitably across the County to address historic disinvestment and inequitable pollution overburden. Responding to the compounding effects of environmental inequities and preparing for additional challenges resulting from climate change are crucial aspects of the County's strategic plan.

In June 2024, Cook County released an environmental justice survey for those who live and work in Cook County. Responses from this survey will help the County learn more about the environmental injustices that residents are experiencing or are concerned about. The results from this survey will inform the development of the County's environmental justice policy, which is currently underway. This policy will advise and guide programming and policy decision-making across the Offices Under the President.

The County will release a public draft of the policy in 2025, followed by opportunities for public comment at town hall meetings as well as a second survey.

The survey was open from June 27 – July 17, 2024 and was completed by 1,158 people. The survey was available in English, Spanish, Polish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog and Arabic. The survey was available electronically via Microsoft Forms. It was shared through County email announcements, social media, LinkedIn and newsletters to constituents and partners. Employees and partners were asked to share with their networks.

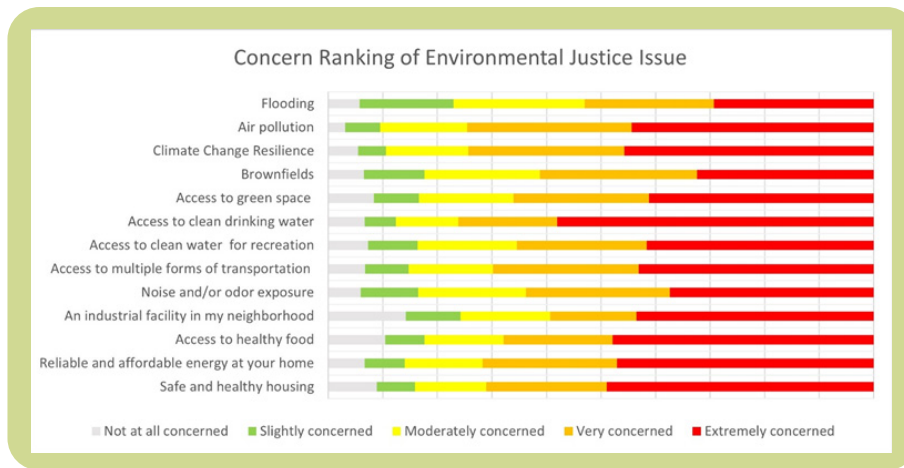
# Survey Report

Respondents were asked to rank their level of concern (not at all concerned, slightly concerned, moderately concerned, very concerned, extremely concerned) on the following issues:

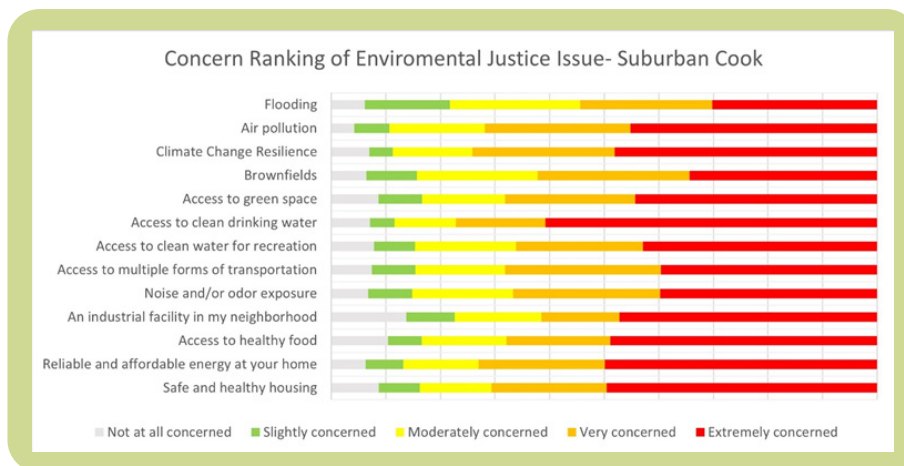
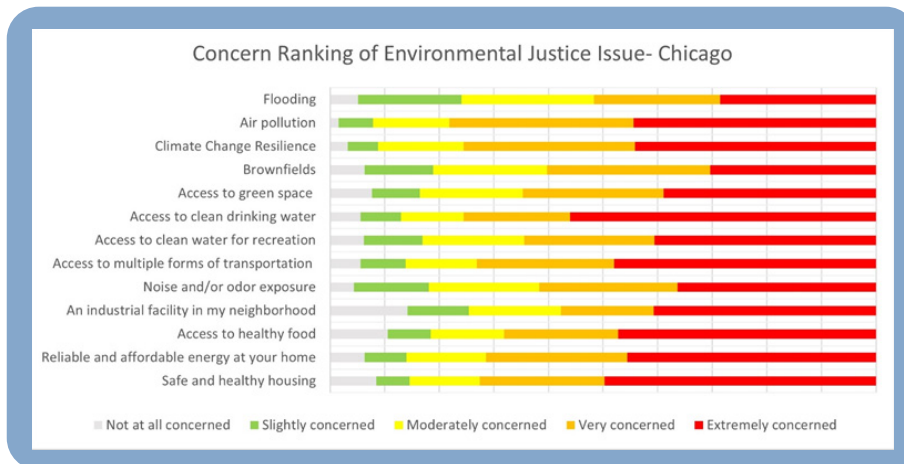
- Flooding
- Air pollution (pollutants in the air that can lead to health issues)
- Resilience to climate change (for example, increased frequency of storms, increased rainfall, extreme temperatures, neighborhood's ability to withstand flooding, sufficient tree canopy to lower temperatures, etc.)
- Brownfields (property that may be contaminated or polluted, for example current or former sites of gas stations, dry cleaning businesses or other industrial facilities)
- Access to green space such as trees, parks, community gardens and/or undeveloped land
- Access to clean drinking water
- Access to clean water to swim, fish or use for recreation
- Access to multiple forms of transportation including public transportation, safe bike path or lanes, walkable/ADA accessible neighborhoods with sidewalks in good repair
- Exposure to noise and/or odor
- An industrial facility operating or potentially operating in my neighborhood
- Access to healthy food
- Reliable and affordable energy at your home
- Safe and healthy housing
- Other



# Results for All Respondents

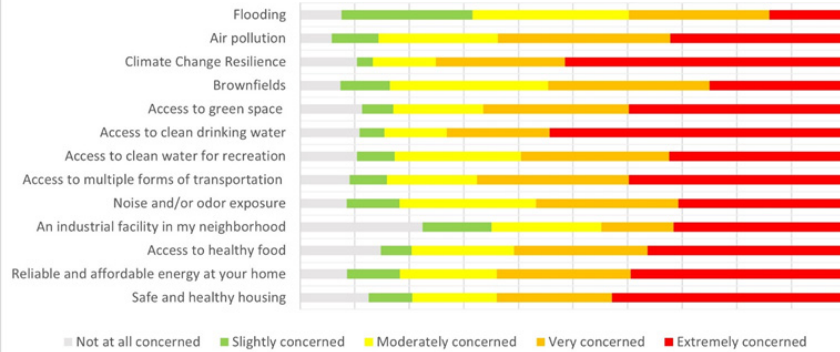


## Results Between City of Chicago and Suburban Cook County Residents

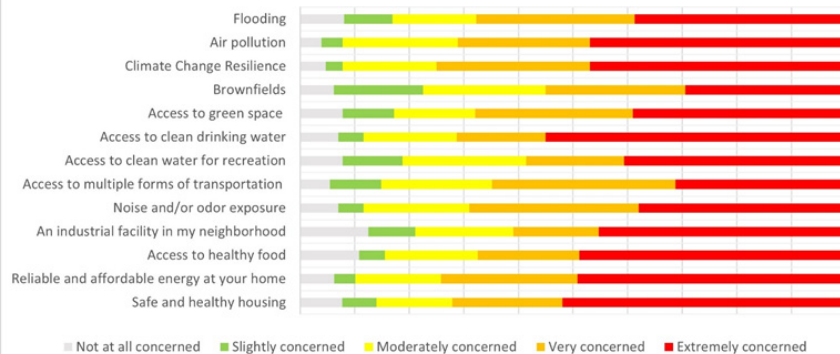


# Results for Suburban Cook County by Region

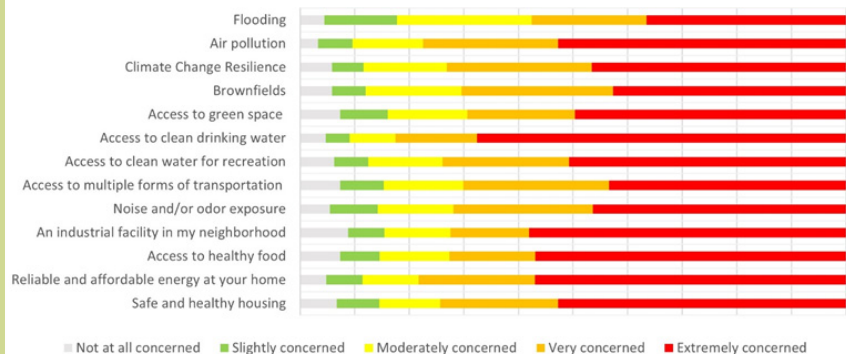
Concern Ranking of Environmental Justice Issue- North Suburban Cook



Concern Ranking of Environmental Justice Issue- West Suburban Cook



Concern Ranking of Environmental Justice Issue- South Suburban Cook



# Regional Highlight of Top Concerns

## Top 3 “Extremely Concerned” Issues by Region

All	City of Chicago	Suburbs	North Suburbs	West Suburbs	South Suburbs
Access to clean drinking water	Access to clean drinking water	Access to clean drinking water	Access to clean drinking water	Access to clean drinking water	Access to clean drinking water
Safe and healthy housing	Safe and healthy housing	Reliable and affordable energy at your home	Climate change resilience	Safe and healthy housing	Industrial facility in your neighborhood
Access to healthy food	Access to multiple forms of transportation	Safe and healthy housing	Safe and healthy housing	Reliable and affordable energy at your home	Access to healthy food

## Top 3 “Very Concerned and Extremely Concerned” Combined Issues by Region

All	City of Chicago	Suburbs	North Suburbs	West Suburbs	South Suburbs
Access to clean drinking water	Air pollution	Access to clean drinking water	Climate change resilience	Climate change resilience	Access to clean drinking water
Air pollution	Access to clean drinking water	Climate change resilience	Access to clean drinking water	Access to clean drinking water	Reliable and affordable energy at your home
Climate change resilience	Climate change resilience	Reliable and affordable energy at your home	Access to multiple forms of transportation	Safe and healthy housing	Air pollution

# Open Ended Questions

The County also collected responses from two open-ended questions. The first question was "What is your top environmental justice concern within Cook County?" The word cloud represents the concerns that were most frequently provided by 961 respondents. The larger the word, the more frequent the concern was suggested.





The second open-ended question in the survey was “What do you think Cook County should do to address these concerns?” Listed below are the categories that were most frequently expressed by 906 respondents as well as some of the top suggestions received for each of the categories.



## Regulation

- Increase fines for environmental violations
- Create new regulations to address air pollution
- Tighten and enforce laws related to pollution
- Increase pollution monitoring and air monitoring



## Industry

- Zone industrial businesses away from vulnerable communities
- Limit new industrial development on current green spaces
- Issue larger fines and sanctions on businesses found not in compliance



## Transportation

- More funding for public transit
- Run trains and buses more frequently
- More bus routes that go into areas that currently lack access to public transit
- Create bus-only lanes
- Make public transit more affordable
- Create more walking and biking infrastructure



## Trees

- Create a County plan for tree planting
- Plant more trees, focusing on historically disinvested communities with low canopy cover
- Fund more tree planting
- Provide grants to residents and municipalities to support tree planting
- Encourage municipalities to plant more trees



## Green Spaces

- Fund more green spaces and expand more green spaces, especially in historically disinvested communities
- Protect green spaces from corporate interest
- Turn vacant lots into green spaces and community gardens
- Encourage native planting



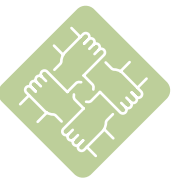
## Drinking Water

- Replace lead pipes at a faster rate
- Provide free water filters for residences who still have lead pipes
- Create fund for homeowners that can't afford to replace their own lead pipes
- Test all water for lead



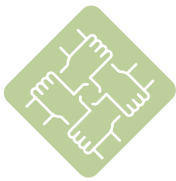
## Flooding

- Provide relief for homes and communities that repeatedly flood
- Remove concrete and put in more permeable pavement in parking lots; encourage residents to do the same
- Upgrade sewer infrastructure
- Upgrade storm water infrastructure
- Create a green infrastructure plan to help address flooding
- Educate residents on what they can be doing to reduce flooding at their homes



## Community Involvement

- Inform residents of the County's environmental justice goals and efforts in this space
- Form oversight committees that report out to the public on the status of EJ issues
- Work in collaboration with organizations, partners, municipalities in this space to address issues
- Fund community organizations that represent impacted communities who have the vision but not the resources
- Host town halls where people give input on issues
- Seek more resident input, not just input from municipal or administrative leaders



## Community Involvement

- Learn from what others have strategized and developed so that the County is not re-inventing the wheel
- Have meaningful and inclusive community engagement on these EJ issues
- Value resident input
- Establish community working groups that can give input on the permitting processes and processes that impact communities the most



## Historically Disinvested Communities

- Increase funding to communities experiencing environmental injustices
- Provide more resources to communities to combat air pollution
- Focus funding on higher need communities
- Increase clean energy opportunities in historically disinvested communities
- Provide assistance in cleaning up historical pollution and damage in impacted communities
- Support historically disinvested communities in planning for impacts of climate change



## Education

- Educate the public and residents on what can be done for climate change resilience, environmental justice issues, littering, flooding, air pollution impacts, etc.



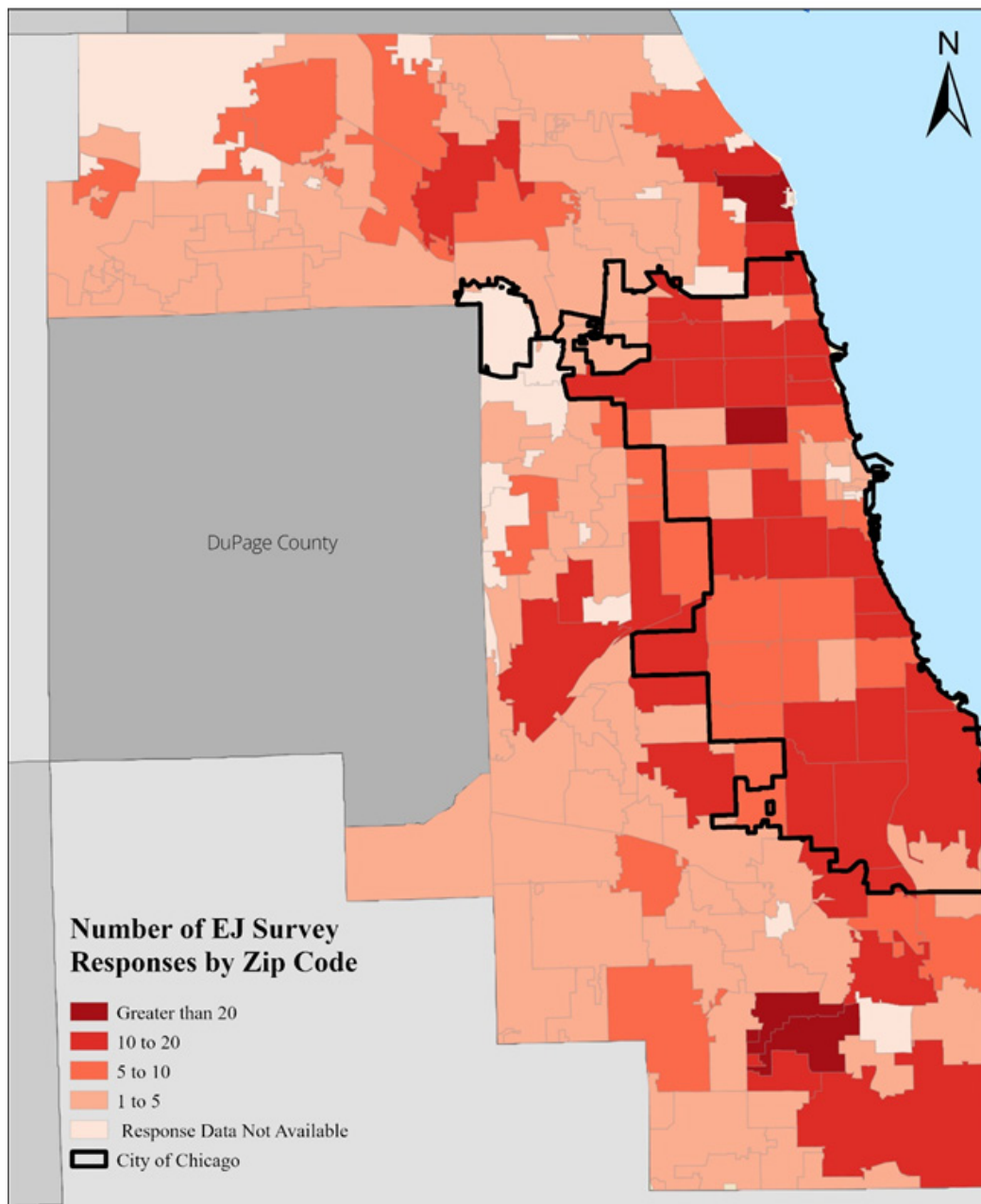
## Energy

- Subsidize utility bills to ensure people aren't suffering during times of extreme cold or heat
- Advocate for more renewable energy
- Provide assistance to weatherize homes, specifically for low-income residents
- Provide support for homeowners and renters in renewable energy and energy efficiency programs
- Streamline permitting for renewable energy

# EJ Survey Response Map by Zip Code

This map represents where survey responses originated by zip code. This represents 1,110 of the responses. The rest of the responses fell outside of Cook County, provided an invalid zip code or didn't provide a zip code when responding. The darker the color on the map, the more survey responses were received from that zip code.

**2024 Environmental Justice (EJ) Survey Responses by Zip Code**



# Demographic Information of Respondents

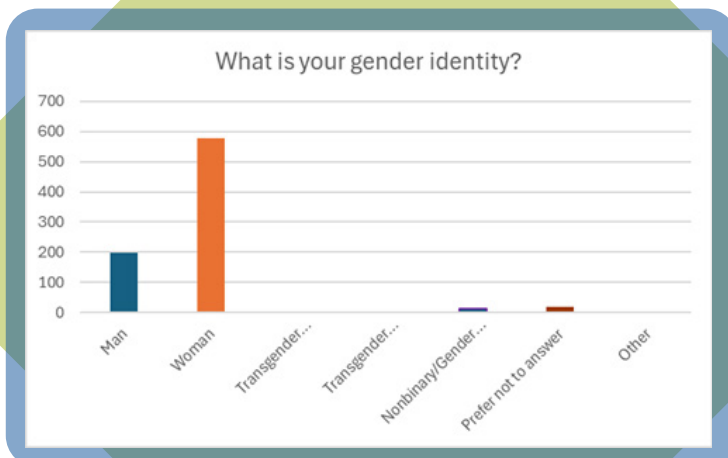
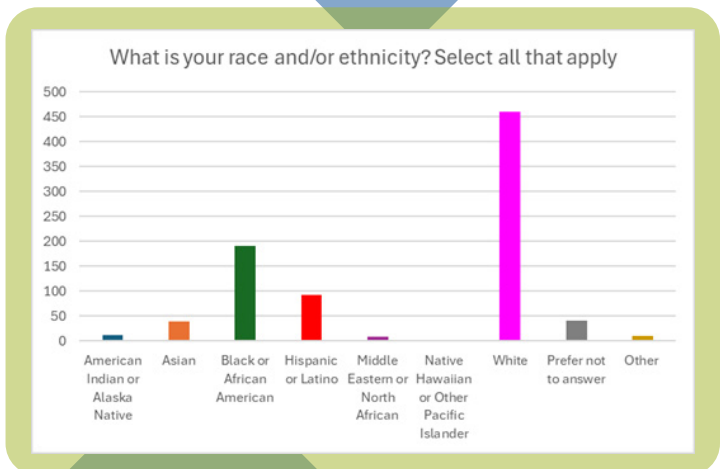
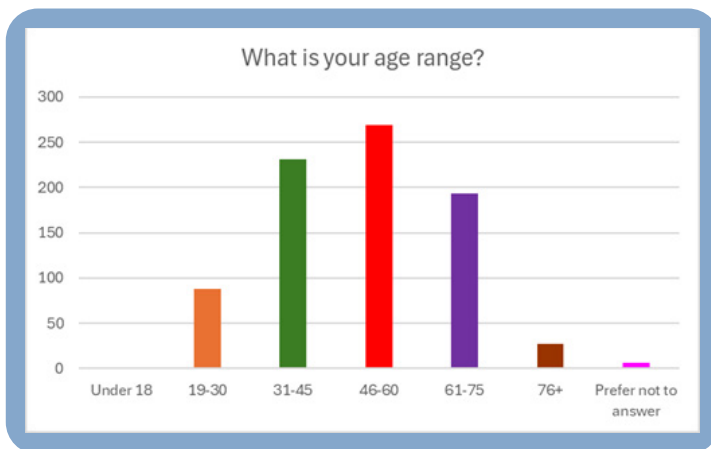
Demographic questions for the survey were optional and were completed by 72% of respondents

The questions asked were:

What is your age range?

What is your race and/or ethnicity?

What is your gender identity?



# COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**Toni Preckwinkle**  
President

**Tara Stamps**  
1<sup>st</sup> District

**Bridget Gainer**  
10<sup>th</sup> District

**Michael Scott Jr.**  
2<sup>nd</sup> District

**John P. Daley**  
11<sup>th</sup> District

**Bill Lowry**  
3<sup>rd</sup> District

**Bridget Degnen**  
12<sup>th</sup> District

**Stanley Moore**  
4<sup>th</sup> District

**Josina Morita**  
13<sup>th</sup> District

**Monica Gordon**  
5<sup>th</sup> District

**Scott R. Britton**  
14<sup>th</sup> District

**Donna Miller**  
6<sup>th</sup> District

**Kevin B. Morrison**  
15<sup>th</sup> District

**Alma E. Anaya**  
7<sup>th</sup> District

**Frank J. Aguilar**  
16<sup>th</sup> District

**Anthony Quezada**  
8<sup>th</sup> District

**Sean Morrison**  
17<sup>th</sup> District

**Maggie Trevor**  
9<sup>th</sup> District

