

A CASE FOR TRANSFORMING ENGLEWOOD TOGETHER



Reimagine | Rebuild | Reinvent



For more than 125 years, VOA Illinois has worked to correct life's greatest inequities. That's why for the last eight years, we have focused and deepened our investment in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago.

VOA Illinois serves as a catalyst for community development in Englewood, creating equitable, transformative opportunities that help move Englewood more fully into its vision for a healthy, vibrant neighborhood for all who live there.

In collaboration with residents, community organizations, local leaders, funders and donors, we are transforming the Englewood neighborhood to ensure all residents have the opportunity to rent and buy high-quality, affordable homes and enjoy important amenities and resources that support community prosperity.

Read on to learn how we can
Reimagine | Rebuild | Reinvent
in Englewood together.

Reimagine

Englewood is a historically vibrant and resilient neighborhood on the Southside of Chicago that has suffered from decades of structural racism and economic disinvestment. But this does not define Englewood.

VOA Illinois recognizes the unlimited potential of the Englewood community and we know that, despite the many challenges the community continues to face, we can help create a new reality for Englewood that is full of opportunity by:



Bringing individuals, families and businesses back to Englewood

Over the last 40 years, well-intentioned but problematic interventions have led to thousands leaving the neighborhood. A neighborhood once housing 100,000 now has less than 30,000 residents— this is a 70% loss in population in Englewood.

We need to not only support those in the community that have stayed through the difficult times, but also bring new individuals, families and businesses back to Englewood to reignite economic prosperity and opportunity in Englewood.



“VOA’s mission to transform Englewood is exactly what organizations should be doing right now. VOA had this vision many years ago, but it is more important now than ever.” – Carolyn, VOA Illinois Board Member



Rehabbing abandoned commercial buildings with community amenities and resources

Abandoned buildings diminish the physical aesthetics of a neighborhood, damage the social and emotional “psyche” of a community and pose a safety risk for those who live there.

We need to repurpose these buildings to provide high-value amenities and resources that attract and keep people in the neighborhood. These resources and amenities not only support a high-quality of life in Englewood, but they also give every individual in the community a safe, multi-purpose space.



Rehabbing abandoned residential buildings to create opportunities for homeownership

Homeownership in Englewood stands at less than 22%. In comparison, Northside homeownership rates in Chicago are over 70%.

We need to rehab abandoned and foreclosed homes to provide the neighborhood with high-quality, affordable homeownership opportunities. This not only creates opportunities for renters in Englewood to buy, but also brings more individuals and families to Englewood with opportunities for homeownership.



Repurposing vacant residential lots with high-quality, affordable rental housing

When compared to other South and Westside neighborhoods, the number of vacant lots in Englewood is disproportionately high. The current real estate vacancy rate in Englewood is nearly 30 percent, which is higher than the rate of vacancies in almost 94 percent of all U.S. neighborhoods.

We need to replace vacant residential lots with high-quality, affordable rental housing in Englewood. This bridges the gap in access to high-quality housing and fundamentally changes the infrastructure and aesthetics of the neighborhood.

VOA Illinois works with Englewood residents, community organizations, local leaders and funders to reimagine Englewood so that together we can create opportunities for Englewood residents to be stronger, more empowered and able to contribute to a more prosperous and safe community.

Rebuild

VOA Illinois began working in the Englewood neighborhood on the Southside of Chicago in 2012. While our specific focus spans a 12-block radius in Englewood, our reach and impact goes far beyond the neighborhood lines. We know that when we have stronger, safer neighborhoods, we can allocate resources more strategically and equitably.

We are focusing on three initiatives in Englewood: Hope Manor II, Hope Manor Village and Englewood 21. The relationship between each of these strategies is what makes community revitalization in Englewood so effective. Each strategy serves as a lever to deepen the success and impact of each initiative.



2014

Hope Manor II



2020

Hope Manor Village



2021

Englewood 21

“Our community truly wins, when our neighborhood blocks are developed. When we are able to welcome families - that makes us a vibrant community.”

– Englewood Community Leader

Hope Manor II

VOA Illinois’ impact in Englewood started with the three acre Hope Manor II campus, one of the first large scale, supportive housing developments in the country specifically designed for veterans and their families. Today, Hope Manor II provides homes to more than 70 veteran-headed households in Englewood.

Through our work with and in Englewood, we found that the abundance of vacant lots, abandoned homes and abandoned commercial buildings were diminishing opportunities for the community to flourish and we launched two new initiatives: Hope Manor Village and Englewood 21.

“My support of VOA’s efforts in Englewood is driven by the focus to make a difference on a block by block basis so you can see and feel the impact being made. Additionally, the support of being an anchor in the community with Hope Manor II gives support that our efforts can have long term lasting effects.”

– Dan, VOA Illinois Board Chair



Hope Manor II Veteran’s Story

In 2015, the apartments at Hope Manor II started to open and Ms. Parker was one of the first Veterans to move in. Ms. Parker formed such strong relationships with her neighbors that today she lovingly refers to one as her brother.

Over the years, Ms. Parker was able to take advantage of the many resources that Hope Manor II offered the residents including: offsite sporting events, holiday meals, cookouts, and much more. In 2020, Ms. Parker started working with a case manager on her goal of owning her own home. Thanks to the resources, staff, and community of Hope Manor II, Ms. Parker was able to take the next step in her journey and became a homeowner.

Hope Manor Village

Hope Manor Village revitalizes both the infrastructure and aesthetics of the 10 surrounding blocks of Hope Manor II. Currently, Englewood has a significant number of vacant lots and abandoned and foreclosed homes. Our plan to alleviate this challenge is simple: rebuild Englewood one block at a time.

Hope Manor Village will provide new housing opportunities to Englewood residents and individuals and families that move to the neighborhood with two initiatives to create:

High-quality, affordable rental homes

By repurposing vacant residential lots, we are beautifying the community and bridging the gap in access to high-quality affordable housing in Englewood. We've converted 16 buildings into 36 apartment homes in a series of 2 and 3-flat buildings and will be considered permanent and supportive housing.



Hope Manor Village Brings the Larson* Family Home

One of the first families to call Hope Manor Village home is the Larson Family. Robert*, an Air Force Veteran, and his daughters moved into their apartment after living with family for the past 14 years.

Robert heard about Hope Manor Village and was interested in applying but wanted to make sure the community was the right fit for him and his two daughters. When Robert visited Englewood, he instantly felt the sense of community and knew it was the right fit for him and his family. Robert is thrilled to have a newly constructed two-bedroom apartment home for his family to call home in Englewood.

Opportunities for homeownership

Our next priority is to rehab abandoned and foreclosed homes to offer high-quality, affordable homeownership opportunities to residents in Englewood. We will target abandoned properties in the surrounding blocks around Hope Manor II and create single family homes.

In addition to equitable housing opportunities in Englewood, we need to create important resources and amenities that promote community stability and economic prosperity. This is why VOA Illinois launched our third initiative: Englewood 21.

Englewood 21

Englewood 21 will repurpose an abandoned commercial building with a 10,000 square foot neighborhood hub that offers important amenities and resources that promote community integration, provide learning and enrichment opportunities for young people and support the development and acceleration of small businesses in Englewood.

The neighborhood hub will be accessible to all in Englewood and include:

- **A small business resource center** with access to conference rooms, collaboration and creativity suites, individual offices, work stations and state of the art printing, scanning, and copying equipment as well as computers and audio-visual equipment
- **Numerous flexible community spaces** for local businesses and organizations to access on a micro-leasing basis to grow and expand their impact in the community
- **Group meeting and event rooms** for community members to host events and gatherings
- **A technology-based teen collaboration center** that allows adolescents to engage in positive or group-based projects and activities surrounded by state of the art equipment, technology and mentoring support
- **A highly-interactive, indoor child enrichment center** where parents can bring their children to engage in safe gross motor play and activities – either individually or in groups

In addition to this, the second floor of Englewood 21 will house the VOA Illinois headquarters and additional service center to support individuals and families in the neighborhood. The new VOA Illinois office will serve as additional business space for the community and become the new work home for 50 VOA Illinois employees.



Over the last eight years, VOA Illinois has invested more than \$40 million of capital into the Englewood neighborhood. We know that when we reinvest now in community transformation, we build a more equitable and prosperous future for all who live there.

Together, we can:

- Reverse decades of inequity in Englewood, leading to better housing, food, healthcare and education opportunities
- Reduce the number of vacant and abandoned lots, homes and commercial buildings so that it's comparable to other Chicago neighborhoods
- Create a safe and economically vibrant community that promotes a high-quality of life for all who live there

Our work is possible through close collaboration with Englewood residents, community organizations, local leaders and funders, and now we need your support.

“In order for Chicago to thrive, we need to ensure every community thrives. VOA IL’s work in Englewood tackles this exact issue and we are proud to support them in their endeavor.”

- Capital One Funding Partner



“The work is important because while there is a lot of talk about what to do in communities like Englewood, there are not enough organizations willing to make the commitment to change. I choose to give because the work needs to be done now and it is undoubtedly the right thing to do.”

- Calvin, VOA Illinois Board Vice-Chair

VOA Illinois is raising **\$1,000,000** to support transformation in Englewood.

When you partner with VOA Illinois, your donation contributes to the:



Development of Englewood 21

Your donation supports the rehab of an abandoned commercial building into a 10,000 square foot neighborhood hub that will bring important neighborhood amenities and resources to all in Englewood.



Expansion of Hope Manor Village

Your donation supports the repurposing of vacant residential lots and abandoned homes into high-quality, affordable housing for current and future residents to rent and buy in Englewood.

When you donate to VOA Illinois, you're supporting a safer, brighter and more equitable future for every individual in Englewood.

Will you help us reach our goal?



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