

Kenwood Oakland/Little Village

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KOCO and LVDCDC Staff and Candidate representatives at the Spring 2007 GYO meeting

The Kenwood Oakland/Little Village Consortium received a planning grant in April 2006, and its first implementation grant in January 2007, creating a partnership that would form a significant bridge between these two Chicago communities.

The partner organizations are:

Chicago Public Schools
Little Village Community Development Corporation
Kenwood Oakland Community Organization
Illinois State University (ISU)
Malcolm X College (MXC) – City Colleges of Chicago

Illinois State University is the fiscal agent for the consortium.

The Cohort: The KOCO/LVDCDC cohort has 48 active participants, of whom 20% are men. Twenty-seven are African-American and 21 are Latino. Thirty are over the age of 30. Twenty-nine have dependent children living at home and 32 are employed full time.

The KOCO/LVDCDC GYO program has been a successful collaboration between two communities of color. This consortium brings together the Mexican-American community of Little Village and the African-American communities of Kenwood and Oakland. The students are learning to break down racial and cultural barriers by taking classes together and forming study groups outside of class time. They are also learning how to lean on each other and support one another during difficult times.

The KOCO and LVDCDC coordinators have done an excellent job of recruiting and retaining candidates. As they work with students and try to solve day-to-day issues and struggles, they get a better insight into the differences and commonalities of their communities and challenge themselves to continue working, united for a common goal. They have tirelessly worked at building cohort cohesion among the candidates that breaks through racial boundaries.

Currently, thirty-two students are taking classes at Malcolm X College (MXC), which has been a great partner in the GYO program. The college has hired a staff person to work specifically with our students, so they can navigate the City Colleges of Chicago system with ease. The MXC GYO coordinator assists with setting up tutorial sessions for GYO candidates and making other City Colleges services available.

Illinois State University, the largest producer of teachers in the state of Illinois, is located three hours south of Chicago but has agreed to hold the GYO classes in Chicago for the candidates. This provides GYO candidates, most of whom are working and head of households, the opportunity to graduate from one of the best teaching schools in the state without worrying about relocating or commuting.



Little Village and KOCO students engaged in a discussion about stereotypes