



2026 COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH CONFERENCE AGENDA

Tuesday, July 8, 2026

Simpson-Querrey Biomedical Research Center | 303 E Superior, Chicago IL 60611

9:30 AM

Registration, Coffee & Networking

Hughes/Baldwin Pre-Function Area

10:00 AM

Welcome & Opening Session

Hughes Auditorium

Emcee: Sherida Morrison (*Alliance for Research with Chicagoland Communities*)

We'll begin the day by welcoming attendees, introducing the Center for Community Health's community engagement initiatives, and setting the stage for a day focused on partnership, learning, and action.

10:30 AM

Panel 1 | From Participation to Leadership: Community Fellows Reimagining Translational Research
Hughes Auditorium

Moderator: Jay Brown (*Alliance for Research with Chicagoland Communities*)

Panelists: Edith Freeze (*Pachacamak Foundation*), Ann Jackson (*Center for Food Equity in Medicine*), Reyna Ortiz (*Taskforce Prevention and Community Services*), Maryam Muhammad (*Heal Thy Life Center*)

Hear directly from the inaugural Fellows of the Chicagoland Community Research Fellowship as they reflect on their first-year journey developing organizational research capacity, implementing community-driven projects, and growing as leaders in translational research. This conversation will demonstrate how investing in community leadership creates stronger partnerships, strengthens research, and advances community-driven solutions.

11:30 AM

Panel 2 | Shared Power, Shared Learning: Community–Academic Partnerships in Practice
Hughes Auditorium

Moderator: Lesli Skolarus (*Northwestern University*)

Panelists: Jhmira Alexander (*Public Narrative*), Ida Salusky (*Northwestern University*), Marquita Lewis (*Northwestern University*), Cory Bradley (*Northwestern University*)

Community and academic Fellowship facilitators will explore how reciprocal partnerships and shared learning strengthen both communities and institutions. Panelists will discuss how authentic collaboration builds trust, enhances research relevance, and creates lasting impact for both community and academic partners.

*From Partnership to Impact:
Advancing Community-Driven Solutions Together*



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12:30 PM

Lunch, Posters, and Resources

Potocsnak Family Lobby and Ryan Family Atrium

Enjoy lunch while exploring innovative posters featuring community-engaged and translational research projects from community organizations, researchers, and the inaugural Fellowship cohort. Visit the various resource tables to learn more about services within Northwestern University that support community-engaged research and opportunities to get involved.

*Don't forget to participate in our **Poster Passport Challenge** by visiting presenters, learning about their work, making new connections, and entering our conference raffle.*

2:00 PM

**Panel 3 | Funding the Future: Philanthropy, Innovation, and the Evolving Landscape of
Community-Engaged Research**

Hughes Auditorium

Moderator: Tarneka Manning (Lurie Cancer Center)

Panelists: Elizabeth Lynch (Rush University Medical Center), Inger Burnett-Ziegler (Illinois Department of Human Services), Alma Rodriguez (VNA Foundation)

Leaders from philanthropy, healthcare, and state government will discuss the evolving funding landscape, emerging opportunities, and strategies for supporting sustainable community-engaged research and collaborative partnerships.

3:00 PM

Conference Concludes

Please complete our brief evaluation form before departing. Your feedback is greatly appreciated and will help inform future programming: [2026 Community-Engaged Research Conference Evaluation](#)