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**ON THE TABLE 2016 EXPANDS IMPACT, REVEALS INSIGHTS INTO CAUSES, ISSUES  
CHICAGOANS CARE ABOUT MOST**

*The Chicago Community Trust releases findings from third year of survey results  
from On the Table 2016 participants*

**CHICAGO – September 29, 2016** – The Chicago Community Trust today released a report from the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement (IPCE) assessing the impact of the third year of [On the Table](#) conversations in 2016. The report details who participated in *On the Table* gatherings on May 10, 2016, key issues discussed, as well as where and how respondents plan to take action moving forward.

More than 55,000 people participated in 3,500 mealtime conversations as part of the civic engagement initiative – across the city and suburbs; in offices, churches, schools and homes; over breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner.

“Over the past three years, we’ve seen tens of thousands of people come together to have diverse conversations about pressing community issues and how we can collectively improve the places in which we live,” said Terry Mazany, president and CEO of The Chicago Community Trust. “IPCE has been an invaluable partner to us each year in assessing the impact of these conversations and highlighting what Chicagoland residents care about most, and where they see themselves taking action.”

According to the study, which was based on a survey of nearly 4,000 participants, when respondents were asked to name the most important issues currently facing their community, over half (53%) identified challenges associated with the judicial system and public safety, nearly half (44%) identified economic issues and poverty, one-third (33%) expressed concern about equity and social inclusion and 32 percent were troubled by problems within education and youth development.

Despite the challenging issues identified by respondents, an overwhelming amount – 81 percent – believes they have some or a great deal of power in bringing about change.

“*On the Table* participants are a highly engaged and motivated group of people,” said Mazany. “As our region’s largest community foundation, understanding what issues they care about as well as where and how they are civically involved is both interesting and imperative for the Trust.”

Other highlights from the 2016 survey results include:

- ***On the Table* increases understanding** – 74 percent of respondents have a “somewhat” to “much better” understanding of issues facing their communities.
- ***On the Table* creates new, and lasting, connections** – 68 percent of respondents spoke with one or more attendees they did not already know.

- Out of returning 2015 participants, 57 percent participated in follow-up conversations over the past year, 46 percent stayed in contact with other attendees and 24 percent worked with one or more attendees on an idea.
- ***On the Table* inspires action** – 91 percent of respondents are likely to take action regarding a new idea, concern or issue discussed in their conversation.

“We’ve had the opportunity and advantage of collecting and analyzing participant data each year of *On the Table* – and witnessing firsthand the initiative’s growth and impact,” said Joseph Hoereth, director of IPCE. “When we look at the trends across the last three years, we can see that *On the Table* is about so much more than conversations at a single moment in time. These conversations have the power to spark change – participants are clearly discussing possibilities and planning to take action themselves. “

Visit <http://www.onthetablereport.com> to download the complete IPCE report.

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#### **About The Chicago Community Trust**

[The Chicago Community Trust](#), our region’s community foundation, partners with donors to leverage their philanthropy in ways that transform lives and communities. Since our founding in 1915, the Trust has awarded approximately \$2 billion in grant funding to more than 11,000 local nonprofit organizations – including more than \$198 million in 2015. Our region is home to people passionate about their neighborhoods. People committed to making a difference. People divided by a legacy of segregation, separated by lines of class and race and opportunity – but there is much more that unites us than divides us. As the Trust continues our next century of service, we pledge to bridge these divisions and to champion the common good, creating a place where no one is left behind.

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