Q. Why Does MHIA Matter?

Mental Health Impact Assessment

There are multiple answers to this question:

A. Because every public policy affects social determinants of mental health, such as...

- Violence
- Housing
- Connectedness
- Clean Air & Water
- Green Space
- Density

...and shapes the mental health of our communities.

B. Because unemployment affects all aspects of community life in Englewood.

- In some parts of the community, the unemployment rate is greater than **20%**
- Average annual income for Englewood residents is **$19,743**
- The poverty rate is around **46%**
- It’s in the Chicago Police District with the 6th highest number of arrests in Chicago

A. Because when social determinants improve, mental health improves.

The MHIA predicts: Updates to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) policy that clarifies the appropriate use of arrest records in the hiring process could improve four social determinants of mental health. These are conditions that play a role in shaping the mental health outcomes of an individual or a community.

- Increase in employability of residents
- Decrease in crime rate
- Increase in income levels
- Decrease in self-exclusion due to arrest records

These changes will likely lead to improved mental health.

A. Because the mental health of our communities matters.

For example: The Adler School conducted an MHIA to investigate how employment discrimination based on criminal records affects residents of Englewood, a Chicago neighborhood with arrest rates well above the city average. The study indicated that when employers rely on arrest records in hiring, promoting or firing, regardless of a conviction, it can have devastating effects on the mental health of individuals and their community.

Englewood employers surveyed use background checks that include arrest records.

And, many employers knowingly or unknowingly did not distinguish between “arrests” and “convictions” in their employment decisions.

When arrest records are used in hiring decisions, are residents really innocent until proven guilty?

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7 out of 10 Englewood employers surveyed use background checks that include arrest records.

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