

## **Description of Neighborhood**

The residents of the South Lawndale neighborhood, commonly known as “Little Village,” are predominately Mexican-American. Although Native-born Americans, Germans, Dutch, and later Poles and Czechoslovakians originally settled the area, the white population of Little Village has substantially declined after a great influx Hispanics since 1970. According to the 1990 Census, 89 percent of the Little Village population of 81,155 was Hispanic.

In 1990, the median family income in Little Village was \$23,000, which was below the Chicago median of \$30,701. In Little Village, 22 percent of families live in poverty compared to Chicago’s overall poverty rate of 18 percent. Only 14 percent of Little Village residents have more than a high school education. Little Village has the lowest percentage of residents with education beyond high school in the entire city of Chicago. Most residents work in the manufacturing and service sectors. The percentage of Little Village residents who have white-collar jobs is also the lowest in the entire city.

Most of the housing structures in Little Village were built before 1940. Fewer than 10 percent were built in the last 20 years. More than 34 percent of the housing structures are overcrowded; four times the rate of overcrowding for the city as a whole. The median value of an owner-occupied housing unit in Little Village is \$48,552 and the median monthly rent is \$361, both below well-below city medians.

Little Village is home to nearly 1,000 businesses, many of which cater to its Mexican-American residents. Most businesses are situated along 26th Street. The most common ones are Mexican restaurants and dance clubs, laundromats, bakeries, clothing stores, travel agencies, and street vendors. In addition, there are industrial areas in the community south of 31<sup>st</sup> street. Most of the companies located in that area are manufacturers or steel processors.