

CASE STUDY

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**HOW CHICAGO  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SAVES \$50 MILLION  
A YEAR IN  
CUSTODIAL BUDGET  
WHILE IMPROVING  
QUALITY USING  
CROWDCOMFORT**

**CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**CrowdComfort**



**Chicago  
Public  
Schools**



## DISTRICT DATA

**Industry:** K-12 School District  
**Students Served:** 320,000+  
**Size:** 634 schools, 60+ million sq. ft.  
**Annual Custodial Budget:** ~\$160M  
**Customer Since:** 2021

## EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

**Chicago Public Schools (CPS)** - one of the nation's largest public school districts, serving more than **300,000 students across 600+ schools** - faced increasing challenges in maintaining effective, consistent custodial operations. Rising facility complaints from educators, students, and staff revealed gaps in visibility, accountability, and the ability to manage cleaning resources efficiently at scale.

At the same time, CPS was **confronting a projected \$734 million budget deficit for FY2025**, placing significant pressure on district leaders to reduce day-to-day operating costs without compromising the cleanliness, safety, and learning environments of its schools.

This case study highlights how **CPS leveraged CrowdComfort to modernize its custodial operations** - introducing real-time visibility, data-driven decision-making, and stronger accountability across its facilities. By digitizing workflows and optimizing custodial coverage, CPS improved the quality and consistency of cleaning services, supported healthier learning environments, and enabled operations teams to do more with fewer resources.

**The Result:** CPS has been able to streamline custodial operations spending **over \$50M less annually (25% reduction)** while improving custodial coverage, service reliability, and cleaning quality across schools in the district.

1 Improve Cleaning Quality → Better Academic Outcomes

2 Increase Custodial Program Efficiency to Reduce Spend

3 Drive Day-to-Day Accountability at Less Cost



## HOW IT WORKS: GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY INTO EVERYDAY CLEANING OPERATIONS

Before CrowdComfort, Chicago Public Schools relied on verbal updates, paper clipboards, and legacy tools—leaving limited visibility into daily custodial work and little historical data to guide decisions and understand if their scope of work was being done consistently.

With CrowdComfort's mobile app and analytics dashboards, CPS now has real-time insight into custodial performance and activity across all its teams and schools, including:

- **Real-Time Scheduling & Routes:** Managers assign and adjust daily cleaning schedules directly to custodians' mobile devices, clearly defining scope of work across 49,000+ daily cleaning locations.
- **Verified Daily Cleaning:** Custodians digitally confirm completed tasks with timestamps, work details, and optional photos—creating a reliable record of every cleaning.
- **Instant Issue & Work Reporting:** Custodians report additional cleaning work, equipment issues, and maintenance needs by location in real time.
- **Manager Accountability & Oversight:** Analytics dashboards give managers live visibility into completed work across their schools, enabling faster issue resolution and targeted training.
- **Data-Driven Recognition Programs:** Quarterly recognition programs reward top-performing custodians by network using objective performance data.

By providing custodians with clear expectations, real-time communication, and data-driven recognition, CrowdComfort has helped CPS strengthen accountability, improve cleaning quality across schools, and gain actionable insights to drive better decision-making both for managers and in budget discussions.



*"The key for us in using CrowdComfort is we can see there is a problem right away and we can respond to those in a timely manner. We can hold our entire team, including our custodial management, building management and facilities management team accountable."*

**Robert Christlieb, Executive Director of Facilities  
Chicago Public Schools**



## MEETING BUDGET LIMITATIONS WITH STREAMLINED OPERATIONS AND EFFICIENCY

Over the past decade, Chicago Public Schools has fundamentally transformed its custodial program by using CrowdComfort to enable strategic, system-wide decision-making around staffing, scope and performance—**resulting in better quality cleaning operations at \$50M less in cost annually.**

After relying on third-party custodial providers for over a decade, CPS lacked the centralized oversight and reliable performance data needed to ensure consistent work completion and cleaning quality across its schools. **Without clear visibility**, the district was unable to effectively evaluate vendor performance or optimize its custodial model to eliminate inefficiencies and wasted spend that impacted performance.

By deploying CrowdComfort’s data and communication platform, CPS gained objective insight into **custodial productivity** and **service quality**. These insights confirmed persistent vendor underperformance and provided the evidence needed to shift custodial operations to a hybrid model in 2024, followed by a full transition to an in-house custodial workforce in 2025—**delivering higher performance, stronger accountability, and substantial long-term savings.**

**20M**

Dollars Saved Through 2024

### Optimizing the Management Layer

With CrowdComfort, CPS was able to bring custodial management in-house, enabling managers to oversee more schools and teams daily—reducing travel, expanding coverage, and quickly identifying training needs.

- By replacing vendor managers with a smaller in-house team, CPS has been able to **increase coverage and training** while **reducing annual costs by \$20 annually.**

**30M**

Estimated Dollars Saved in 2025

### Increasing Custodial Output Per Team Member

With CrowdComfort, custodial staff are provided with clear expectations and cleaning routes to drive accountability on daily cleaning work output.

- With budget cuts dictating significant staff cuts, CrowdComfort has enabled CPS to **increase custodial output by 49%** while **reducing annual costs by \$30M annually.**

- 1 Improve Cleaning Quality → Better Academic Outcomes
- 2 Increase Custodial Program Efficiency to Reduce Spend
- 3 Drive Day-to-Day Accountability at Less Cost

**49%**

YoY Increase in Custodial Output

**24%**

Total Increase in Cleaning Quality

**20M**

Dollars Saved Through 2024

**30M**

Estimated Dollars Saved in 2025



Healthy Green Schools Certified



## RESULTS FROM CROWDCOMFORT

### CUSTODIAL MODEL TRANSFORMATION

With CrowdComfort's data foundation and real-time productivity tools, Chicago Public Schools has been able to reduce management overhead by 50% and front-line staff by 20% **representing \$50M reduction in annual costs, without a decline in cleaning performance in their schools.**

# \$50M

in annual cleaning budget reduction

# 24%

improvement in cleaning quality

### IMPROVING CLEANING QUALITY

Measured by APPA standards and supported by principal feedback, Chicago Public Schools has **seen a 24% increase in cleaning quality scores** after implementing CrowdComfort. This is due to the greater accountability and expectations set with the CrowdComfort program.

### INCREASING CUSTODIAL OUTPUT

With daily routes and responsibilities delivered directly to their mobile device, custodians know exactly what is expected every day. This communication has enabled custodians to cover more square footage, **increasing daily output by 49%.**

# 49%

YoY Increase in Custodial Output

SINCE 2023, CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAS UTILIZED CROWDCOMFORT DATA TO ESTABLISH A SUCCESSFUL CUSTODIAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM. EXAMPLE OF ONE OF THOSE PROGRAMS CAN BE SEEN IN THE VIDEO BELOW.



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)



[SCAN TO WATCH](#)

## RECOGNITION AND RESOURCES

### CPS RECOGNIZED BY HEALTHY GREEN SCHOOLS & COLLEGES



In June 2025, CPS became the first school district in the nation to be awarded the **HGSC Gold Certification**.

CrowdComfort was identified by HGSC as key in enabling CPS the ability to:

- Monitor cleaning performance in real time
- Deploy resources more strategically
- Reward personnel for consistent and improving results

[READ MORE](#)

All while aligning with the HGSC's requirements.

### CPS SHARES HOW CROWDCOMFORT HELPS ALL STAKEHOLDERS CREATE HEALTHIER, CLEANING SCHOOLS

This video shares interviews with CPS custodians, facilities leadership and principals on the impact of CrowdComfort and ***the culture of accountability and shared responsibility***.

Interviews share how the solution is used every day and the impact the data can have on ***achieving clean and healthy environments for students, teachers, staff and the community***.



[WATCH VIDEO](#)



# CrowdComfort

USE CASES OF CROWDCOMFORT DATA HAVE INCLUDED

- CLEANING VALIDATION
- WORK ORDER REQUESTS
- RETAINING EMPLOYEES
- SECURITY ROUNDING
- PEST CONTROL
- LANDSCAPING
- IT SERVICE REQUESTS
- SNOW & TRASH REMOVAL
- VENDOR ACCOUNTABILITY
- AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE TRAIL
- ROUTING / SCHEDULING
- FIRE AND EYE STATION CHECKS
- COMMUNICATION PLATFORM
- QUALITY ASSURANCE



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