The LGBT Community Fund of The Chicago Community Trust FAQs

What's the history of the Fund?
The LBGT Community Fund of The Chicago Community Trust and Affiliates (“The Fund”) was publicly launched in 2010 as a donor advised fund. The Chicago Community Trust provided $500,000 as a permanent endowment with the requirement that the LGBT Fund Steering Committee raise $1,000,000 in matching dollars to be used for grant making. The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust issued a $150,000 matching challenge to help encourage gifts. To date the fund has raised over $735,000 in addition to The Chicago Community Trust’s contribution. The Fund is not building an endowment beyond the initial The Chicago Community Trust commitment. Rather, it is raising funds in order to make grants. Funds will be awarded in three cycles in 2015/2016.

How much money will it award?
The Fund intends to award approximately $300,000 in the spring/summer of 2015, approximately $400,000 in the winter 2015/2016, and approximately $300,000 in the summer/fall 2016.

What types of grants will the Fund support?
There will be two types of grants supported.

1. Impact Grants – seed money for projects that are in their infancy or capacity building support for emerging and existing organizations. Grants will range from $10,000 to $25,000. Proposals must demonstrate the following:
   • How grant requests for project seed money will allow the applicant to start a new project and move it toward implementation.
   • How grant requests for capacity building projects will allow the applicant to carry out its mission more effectively.
   • How the grant will allow the organization(s) to reach traditionally underserved communities in addressing emerging needs.

   Collaboration among two or more organizations is encouraged but not required for Impact Grants.

2. Transformation Grants – for projects that will seek to move the broader LGBT Community significantly and profoundly towards a better quality of life. Grants will range from $50,000 to $150,000. Each proposal must demonstrate the following:
   • How the project will serve as a significant and profound change agent
   • The required collaboration among two or more organizations
• Metrics-based credible plan for goal measurement
• That it reaches traditionally underserved communities
• That it is innovative and replicable
• A communications strategy around the funded project

What are the priority areas for Fund grants?
The Fund has 4 priority areas:

1. LGBTQ young adults, 24 and younger:
   • Healthcare, including behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse services and treatment)
   • Employment training and placement
   • Homelessness
   • Age-appropriate cultural and social activities
   • Mentoring

2. Older adults, 55 and over:
   • Healthcare, including mental health and addiction
   • Employment re-training and placement
   • Housing
   • Cultural and social activities
   • Wellness, quality of life, and independent living
   • Information regarding rights and services

3. General Healthcare:
   • Equal access and treatment, regardless of orientation or gender identity
   • Mental health services
   • HIV/AIDS awareness and care

4. Community Safety:
   • Safety within lived community spaces and/or domestic partnerships/civil unions/marriage
   • Improved communication between the community and law enforcement
   • Violence prevention and promotion of safety within communities

How did the Fund decide on those priorities?
The Fund engaged the Morten Group in 2011 to conduct a needs assessment in Chicago’s LGBT community. Through a variety of data collection methods, the needs assessment identified community assets, needs and challenges. Funding priorities were established by the results of this research. View the full report here

What is the timetable?
Letters of Inquiry for Impact Grants were due on April 15, 2015 with invited full proposals due on May 15, 2015. Awards were announced in August 2015.

Transformation Grant Letters of Inquiry are due in Fall 2015 with awards announced in Spring 2016. Specifics about the third funding cycle are TBD.
How many grants can any one organization receive in a year?
Organizations may submit one Letter of Inquiry per funding cycle. Organizations may not receive more than one grant during the first two funding cycles.

The Fund encourages collaborations. Why are collaborations important to the Fund?
The Fund wants to encourage the beginning or continuation of collaborative programs and efforts across organizations – large and small, in the LGBT community and in the larger community – as one way to enhance and expand opportunities for LGBT individuals. Organizations that choose not to collaborate on Impact grants will not be penalized. Collaboration is required for Transformation grants.

May organizations participate in more than one collaborative proposal?
No. We want organizations to participate in a collaboration that demonstrates organizational priorities and capabilities.

How will decisions be made?
The Fund is governed by a Steering Committee comprised of diverse community leaders who are donors to the fund. A grants subcommittee will select organizations that will be invited to submit full proposals. The Steering Committee will approve all final grant decisions.

The Fund has engaged Marcia Lipetz to staff the grant making activities. Marcia has deep experience in Chicago’s philanthropic community and is currently a consultant with Millennia Consulting. She was the first full time executive director of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and of what is now the Alphawood Foundation. She established initial funding policies and procedures for both foundations. Marcia can be reached at CCTLGBTFund@gmail.com

Who is eligible to apply?
All nonprofit organizations in Cook County serving or intending to serve the LGBT community and/or individuals are eligible to submit Letters of Inquiry. Only those organizations that are invited to do so may submit full proposals.

May non-LGBT organizations apply?
Yes.

What are the Fund’s parameters?
The Fund will not support partisan political activities, grants to individuals, scholarships, fundraising events or activities that promote or require adherence to religious doctrine.