

Our Great Rivers
Community-Led Collaborations
2019 Funding Opportunity FAQ

How do I know if I or my organization is eligible to apply?

To be eligible for a grant award, an applicant must be:

A nonprofit organization with evidence that it (a) has been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code; (b) is fiscally sponsored by a Section 501(c)(3) organization; (c) or is a governmental unit within the meaning of Section 170(c)(1) of the Code; Described in Section 170(b)(1)(A) of the Code, other than a “disqualified supporting organization” within the meaning of Section 4966(d)(4) of the Code.

Can I apply if I am not a 501c3?

Yes, but you must have a confirmed fiscal sponsor.

Is the application process different if I am using a Fiscal Sponsor?

Sponsored organizations without 501(c)(3) status must identify their fiscal sponsor as soon as possible and ask them to complete an organization profile in GrantCentral prior to the sponsored organization’s application submission. Fiscal sponsors must log in and complete and certify an organization profile in GrantCentral at <https://cct.smartsimple.com> prior to application submission.

If I am a business owner, can I submit a proposal?

We encourage businesses interested in Our Great Rivers to reach out to nonprofits to share their ideas in response to this RFP and apply in partnership with the nonprofit as the lead applicant.

Can this grant be used for capital expenses?

This funding opportunity is open to most types of planning, programs and projects. The funding is not available for capital expenditures beyond program-related supplies and equipment. Large capital expenses such as vehicles and buildings are not eligible for funding.

What is the River Ecology and Governance Task Force Task Force?

Created in 2019, the River Task Force is charged with coordinating riverfront efforts across the City of Chicago and transforming Chicago’s waterway system into a thriving natural asset. The River Task Force includes 5 sub-committees: 1) Stewardship & Volunteers; 2) Community Connections; 3) Trails; 4) Science & Design; 5) Funding & Coordination. The Task Force’s purview includes every riverfront within Chicago city limits, including the Chicago River, North Shore Channel, Sanitary & Ship Canal, Calumet River, Little Calumet River, and Des Plaines River. The River Task Force is staffed by the Department of Planning and Development and stakeholder co-chairs. https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/river-ecology-and-governance-group.html

Can I still apply if my project aligns with the Our Great Rivers themes of Living and Inviting?

The Trust is calling for ideas to advance the [Productive Rivers](#) goals of the Our Great Rivers Vision. Proposals may incorporate elements of the Living and Inviting themes if carefully integrated with a Productive Rivers goal. Ideas with the greatest promise of attracting financial capital to communities will be most competitive.

Can I submit a proposal focused exclusively on a single topic such as arts and culture or public health?

No. We require integration across multiple topic areas. Proposals with singularity of purpose will not receive funding. For all topics, the proposal must advance the Productive Rivers goals of the Our Great Rivers Vision.

How close to a river does my project need to be?

Pretty close, though not necessarily along the riverbank. Proposals must demonstrate a direct and proximate impact on the rivers. The geographic eligibility for this funding opportunity is Chicago and suburban communities that share a land or river border with the City of Chicago and have a river or tributary identified in the Our Great Rivers Vision. A map of eligible geographies can be found [here](#).

How does the Trust define collaboration?

Structurally, collaboration can occur across the public, private and nonprofit sectors; across neighborhoods and jurisdictions; across organizations and institutions; and across topic areas and disciplines. In terms of process, collaboration is participation through which people, groups, and organizations work together to achieve desired results. Collaborations accomplish shared vision, achieve positive outcomes for the audiences they serve, and build an interdependent system to address issues and opportunities. Collaborations also involved the sharing of resources and responsibilities to jointly plan, implement and evaluate programs to achieve common goals. Members of the collaboration must be willing to share vision, mission, power, resources and goals. (National Network for Collaboration, 1995). Projects without a collaborative structure are not eligible for this funding opportunity.

Can I apply if my project is located outside of an underinvested majority Black and Latinx community?

Yes, but only if the project has potential for replication in underinvested communities or stands to tangibly benefit communities of color.

Can I apply for this funding opportunity if I am a current grantee of the Trust?

Yes, being a current grant recipient does not exclude any organization from consideration for this funding opportunity.

How can I learn more before I apply?

November 20th 2019

5:30-7:00 p.m. at Current. Hosted by Metropolitan Planning Council. *Please RSVP to Chloe Gurin-Sands at cgurinsands@metroplanning.org by Nov. 18th.*

December 11th 2019

12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. at The Chicago Community Trust. *Please RSVP to Cora Marquez cmarquez@cct.org by Dec 6th.*

Is there anyone I can reach out to if I need assistance with my application?

For technical support on GrantCentral, please email grants@cct.org. For all other questions email Cora Marquez cmarquez@cct.org.