Open Call

INVITED APPLICATION CRITERIA

The Open Call for Ideas is a multi-step process for funding. First, ideas are submitted through GrantCentral for review by Trust staff. Following that review, there are three possible outcomes: 1) ideas not aligned with the criteria will be declined, 2) applicants with ideas that are aligned but need additional development will be invited to have further conversations with Trust staff, or 3) applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal.

If Open Call ideas are invited to progress to the full proposal stage, the proposal will be evaluated using the criteria in this section. If invited to submit a full proposal, please refer to this section often. An invitation to submit a full proposal does not guarantee funding. Projects of similar topic or geographic overlap may be asked to combine efforts.

- Alignment with the Open Call Priority Strategies and Activities found on the web pages.
- Ability to launch and replicate or scale, including sustainable funding sources beyond year one.
- Firmness of partnerships. Commitments from key partners, including elected officials and public agencies, must be confirmed through letters of support.
- Financial health, leadership and governance of the lead organization or fiscal agent.
- Demonstration of a community-led structure.
- Commitment of the team to racial and ethnic diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Clearly defined outcomes that specify how the initiative will leverage partnerships to increase community wealth.

INVITED APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants include:

- Nonprofit organizations with evidence of tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Organizations with a 501(c)(3) organization acting as fiscal agent.
- Local government entities.
- Applications benefitting the residents of Cook County, including the city of Chicago. Applications with a regional focus, which may include any combination of the counties of DuPage, Lake, Kane, Kendall, McHenry and Will, are eligible when the residents of Cook County also benefit.

The following conditions make an Open Call idea ineligible for consideration:
• Ideas that do not reflect the Open Call Priority Strategies and Activities found on the [web pages](https://cct.smartsimple.com).

• Ideas that do not abide by the Grant Criteria outlined above.

• Applicants who do not meet the Eligible Applicants requirements outlined above.

• Ideas with large capital expenses (e.g., motorized vehicles, building construction, infrastructure). Equipment and supply necessities are normal expense items for most projects.

**WORKING WITH A FISCAL SPONSOR**

The full proposal process is different when working with a fiscal sponsor. As the official applicant, the fiscal sponsor will complete a brief organization profile in GrantCentral, the Trust’s online grants management system, prior to proposal submission. The organization profile includes financials and other pertinent information pertaining to the fiscal sponsor. Project partners may work with the fiscal sponsor on the content of the full proposal. Fiscal sponsors must log in and complete and certify an organization profile in GrantCentral at [https://cct.smartsimple.com](https://cct.smartsimple.com) prior to application submission.