Open Call
FAQ TO SUBMIT AN IDEA

Q: Do I need to provide a lot of organizational information when I submit an Open Call idea such as organization financials and demographic information?
   A: No. Open Call ideas are not full proposals. You will submit a brief and carefully constructed concept using a user-friendly letter of inquiry process.

Q: Can I submit an Open Call idea if I am a current grant recipient of the Trust?
   A: Yes. Being a current grant recipient does not exclude you from submitting an Open Call idea, nor does it exclude Neighborhood Investment staff from inviting a full proposal.

Q: How detailed does my Open Call idea need to be?
   A: Given the space limitations of the Open Call submission form, our goal is for clarity of the idea rather than extensive details about it. Details would come at a later stage. Provide enough information to convey the concept and anticipated impact of the idea.

Q: My idea has elements of multiple interventions in the Neighborhood Investment strategy. Is this okay?
   A: Yes. Neighborhood investment is an ecosystem. Many ideas will require the activation of multiple interventions.

Q: Can I submit an idea through the Open Call if it pertains to one of the Trust’s other strategies?
   A: No. The Open Call applies only to the Neighborhood Investment Strategy.

Q: My idea isn’t currently part of a collaboration. Can I still submit it?
   A: Yes. However, for an idea to be invited for a full proposal you will need to develop a collaboration.

Q: How does the Trust define collaboration?
   A: Working together on a shared agenda across the public, private and nonprofit sectors; across neighborhoods and jurisdictions; across organizations and institutions; or across topic areas and disciplines. Competitive ideas will involve one or more of these collaborations.

Q: My idea isn’t likely to attract private capital in the near term. Can I still submit?
   A: Yes. It can take years to bring private capital to the table. The most competitive ideas will demonstrate how public and philanthropic capital pave the way for private capital to enter.

Q: May I submit an idea if I do not work for a 501c3 nonprofit organization or a government entity?
   A: Yes. However, for an idea to be invited for a full proposal you will need a registered 501c3 nonprofit organization or a government partner to serve as applicant or fiscal sponsor. The Trust does not make grants to individuals.
Q: Can I apply if my project is located outside of an underinvested, majority Black and Latinx community?
   A: Yes. However, for an idea to be invited to a full proposal it must have the potential for replication in underinvested communities and tangibly benefit communities of color.

Q: The geographic focus of my idea is not in Cook County. Can I still submit?
   A: Ideas that benefit the residents of Cook County, including the city of Chicago, are eligible. Ideas 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. Ideas with a statewide or national focus are eligible when the residents of Cook County also benefit.

Q: Can I submit an Open Call idea for capital expenses such as vehicles, buildings and infrastructure?
   A: No. The Chicago Community Trust generally does not fund capital expenditures beyond program-related supplies and equipment.

Q: Does submitting an Open Call idea guarantee an invitation to submit a full proposal?
   A: No. For ideas that align closely with the Open Call Priorities and Strategies, the Neighborhood Investment staff may invite a conversation to talk further about the idea. This may result in the invitation of a full proposal. Non-competitive ideas will receive notification that they will not advance to a full proposal.

Q: How often will the grants be made under the Open Call program?
   A: Because the Open Call takes ideas on an ongoing basis, grants will generally be made on a bi-monthly basis provided the idea advances to the full proposal stage. The applicants invited to submit a proposal should anticipate a minimum of 4 months between submissions of idea to notification of grant decision.

Q: May I submit more than one Open Call idea per year?
   A: Yes. There is no limit to the number of ideas you’re allowed to submit.

Q: When can I expect to hear from the Trust after I submit an idea? What happens next?
   A: The Neighborhood Investment team will acknowledge receipt of the idea within 72 business hours of submission. For ideas that align closely with the Open Call Priorities and Strategies and Grant Criteria, the Neighborhood Investment staff may invite a conversation to talk further about the idea. This may result in the invitation of a full proposal, at which point full proposal criteria will apply. Non-competitive ideas will receive notification that they will not advance to a full proposal.