Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General FAQs

1. **How can I see all available funding opportunities?**
   Available and upcoming funding opportunities are listed on the Trust's website at https://www.cct.org/grants/ and on the Funding Opportunities tab in GrantCentral.

2. **Who can I speak to about the Trust's programs and grant making priorities?**
   Learn more about the Trust's new strategic plan and funding priorities at https://www.cct.org/about/strategic-plan/

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Area</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addressing Critical Needs</td>
<td>Laura Gutierrez (<a href="mailto:lgutierrez@cct.org">lgutierrez@cct.org</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Collective Power</td>
<td>Maritza Bandera (<a href="mailto:mbandera@cct.org">mbandera@cct.org</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catalyzing Neighborhood Investment</td>
<td>Cora Marquez (<a href="mailto:cmarquez@cct.org">cmarquez@cct.org</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growing Household Wealth</td>
<td>Rachel Pate (<a href="mailto:rpate@cct.org">rpate@cct.org</a>)</td>
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3. **What is GrantCentral?**
   GrantCentral is the Trust's online grant portal. You must have an account in GrantCentral in order to apply for funding opportunities and receive grants. Grantees also maintain their Organization Profiles and submit grant reports via GrantCentral. See below for additional information about GrantCentral.

4. **How do I get help with GrantCentral?**
   To request support for technical questions and issues in GrantCentral, submit a request via the Messages section of the GrantCentral home screen or email grants@cct.org, which is monitored actively during business hours. You will receive a reply within 24 hours.

Eligibility

1. **Who is eligible to receive grants from the Trust?**
   The Trust funds nonprofit agencies with evidence of tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code that are not classified as private foundations. The Trust also accepts applications from organizations that have a nonprofit fiscal sponsor. Each grant opportunity will have its own additional criteria for funding. As a community foundation, the Trust’s grants are awarded to programs that benefit residents of the Chicago region. There may on occasion be a specific initiative that awards a grant to a project which extends beyond our region, but these are rare and strategic exceptions. The Trust does not provide funding to projects or organizations outside the United States, or to individuals.

2. **Does the Trust make grants to individuals?**
   No, the Trust does not make grants to individuals. The Trust funds nonprofit organizations with evidence of tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code that are not classified as private foundations. The Trust also accepts applications from organizations that have a nonprofit fiscal sponsor.
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3. What is a fiscal sponsor? How do I apply for and receive grants if my organization uses a fiscal sponsor?
   A fiscal sponsor is a nonprofit organization that provides fiduciary oversight, financial management, and other administrative services to help build the capacity of charitable projects that do not have their own 501c3 charitable status. Organizations that do not have 501c3 status may work with a fiscal sponsor in order to receive grants from the Trust and its affiliates. Organizations that use a fiscal sponsor to receive grants must ensure that their fiscal sponsor organization has an up-to-date Organization Profile in GrantCentral at the time of application submission. LOIs and grant applications will not be accepted from organizations whose fiscal sponsor does not have an account GrantCentral.

4. How do I get a fiscal sponsor?
   The Trust does not provide recommendations regarding specific fiscal sponsors. If you need assistance regarding fiscal sponsors, we recommend you visit https://grantspace.org/resources/knowledge-base/fiscal-sponsorship/ to learn more. We also recommend reaching out to your partner and peer organizations that work with fiscal sponsors.

GrantCentral

1. What browsers are compatible with GrantCentral? Does it use pop-ups?
   GrantCentral functions best on a PC computer using Google Chrome or Firefox as the browser. GrantCentral is incompatible with Mac computers and the Safari browser. Using GrantCentral from a Mac and/or via Safari will result in error messages. GrantCentral uses pop-up boxes, so be sure to enable pop-ups when using the portal.

2. How do I create a profile in GrantCentral?
   To create a new GrantCentral account for your organization, navigate to https://cct.smartsimple.com and follow the prompts. Please reference the GrantCentral Registration instructions handout for additional guidance.

3. Can I be associated with multiple different organizations in GrantCentral?
   An individual's GrantCentral user login can only be affiliated with one organization at a time. If you are a consultant or community member who works with several different organizations that seek or receive funding from the Trust and its affiliates, you will need to use different email addresses to create different GrantCentral user logins for each organization whose GrantCentral account you would like to access.

4. How do I add/edit users for my organization in GrantCentral?
   Add or edit individuals who are affiliated with your organization on your Organization Profile in GrantCentral. On the Organization Profile, navigate to the Contacts tab. Scroll down and click the "Add New Contact" button to add a new user. They will receive an email with their GrantCentral login credentials once you submit their information. You may also remove access for anyone no longer affiliated with your organization by clicking the "Remove Access" button next to the individual's name.
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An individual may change their contact information when logged into their own GrantCentral account by clicking the “My Profile” link in the upper right corner of the GrantCentral home screen.

5. *How do I reset my password?*
   If you have forgotten your GrantCentral password, click the "Forgot Password?" link on the GrantCentral login page. If you are logged into GrantCentral and wish to change your password, click the “My Profile” link in the upper right corner of the GrantCentral home screen and then click the blue "Change Your Password" button.

6. *I didn't receive the password reset email. What do I do now?*
   If you are having trouble resetting your GrantCentral password, email grants@cct.org for assistance.

**Organization Profile**

1. *Do I need to complete an Organization Profile in order to submit an application?*
   You must complete and/or update and certify your Organization Profile each time you submit an LOI or grant application. Submissions are not considered complete unless the Organization Profile is also complete and certified at the time of submission. To access your Organization Profile, use the navigation tabs in the upper right corner of the GrantCentral home screen. Be sure to complete every section and every required question in the Organization Profile, including 501c3 status, organization contact information, description of the geographic areas and communities served by your organization, overview of your organization's history and mission, board, leadership and staff, and financial information. Please pay special attention to ensure that your organization's mailing address and signatory contact are correct. Please reference the Sample Organization Profile instructions handout for a step-by-step guide to completing your Organization Profile.

2. *What is the NTEE code? How do I find my organization's NTEE code?*
   The National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) system is used by the IRS, the National Center for Charitable Statistics and GuideStar to classify nonprofit organizations and the work that they do. To find the code(s) that classify your organization, visit https://learn.guidestar.org/help/ntee-codes.

3. *I am getting error messages when I try to submit my Organization Profile and/or grant application. How do I fix these errors?*
   If any section of your Organization Profile or grant application is incorrect or incomplete, you will receive a red error message that prevents submission of your application and provides detail on what is missing and/or incomplete. Carefully review the error message(s) and return to the section(s) that need to be corrected. You will be allowed to submit your application and/or Organization Profile once all errors have been addressed. Email grants@cct.org if you are not able to resolve the error messages on your own.
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Applications

1. When are the Trust’s grant application deadlines?
Submission deadlines vary by funding opportunity. Consult the Funding Opportunities tab in GrantCentral and/or the RFP you are applying to, or reach out to your program contact if you cannot determine the submission deadline for the opportunity you are pursuing.

2. Can I submit a late application?
Late LOI and application submissions are not accepted. If you need to request a deadline extension, reach out to your program contact. Submission of a deadline extension request does not guarantee approval.

3. Do I need to complete my grant application in one sitting?
No. You may save your work in your draft LOI, application or report form at any time. Be sure to save your work frequently and note the grant ID number of the form you are working on. The work you save in your draft forms will be stored in the system and accessible when you log back into GrantCentral to continue your work.

4. How do I complete the Activities & Milestones chart for my grant application?
Download the Activities & Milestones chart from the grant application form in GrantCentral. The template Activities & Milestones chart is filled in with sample data to help guide you as you complete the form. Consult the RFP or reach out to your program contact with specific questions about your planned activities, timeline, outputs and milestones. You can also contact learning@cct.org for additional support.

5. How do I complete the Measures of Progress chart for my grant application?
Download the Measures of Progress chart from the grant application form in GrantCentral. The template Measures of Progress chart is filled in with sample data to help guide you as you complete the form. You may also download the Measures of Progress Overview, attached to the application form, which outlines how the Trust thinks about measures of progress. Consult the RFP or reach out to your program contact with specific questions about your planned outcomes and measures of progress. You can also contact learning@cct.org for additional support.

6. How do I complete the budget form for my grant application?
Download the appropriate budget form from the grant application form in GrantCentral. Be sure to select the correct template, determined by whether you are submitting a one-year or multi-year funding request. The template budget forms are filled in with sample data to help guide you as you complete the form. Refer to the RFP or reach out to your program contact to determine the grant term and request amount. You can also contact learning@cct.org for additional support.
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7. **How do I delete document uploads from my Organization Profile and/or grant application?**
   Click the blue trash can icon next to any file upload you wish to remove from your Organization Profile. If you have uploaded a file that you wish to remove from a draft LOI, grant application or grant report, submit a request to remove the attachment via GrantCentral’s messaging function or by emailing grants@cct.org. Please provide the exact name(s) of the files you would like to be removed.

8. **How do I delete draft applications that I don’t need anymore?**
   If you have duplicate grant application drafts that you would like to remove from GrantCentral, submit a request to delete the duplicate draft(s) via GrantCentral’s messaging function or by emailing grants@cct.org. Please provide the application ID number of the drafts you would like to be deleted.

9. **When will I receive notification of the funding decision on my application?**
   The Trust and its affiliates are committed to a transparent and timely review process. Review and approval timelines vary by funding opportunity. Consult the RFP or reach out to your program contact for more details about when you can expect a decision on your request.

10. **My application has been approved for a grant! What’s next?**
    You will be notified that your application has been approved by a member of the Trust’s staff. You will receive two separate emails as part of the grant award package. The first email will come from the Trust and will contain your grant award letter. The second email will come from Signority (secure@signority.com), a secure online signature platform, and will contain your Grant Agreement form. Please read all the terms and conditions carefully and have the Signatory for your organization e-sign and return the form. Payment on your grant will only begin upon receipt of the executed Grant Agreement form.

11. **What is a Signatory?**
    Your organization’s Signatory should be the most senior executive for your organization and must be authorized by your board of directors to sign contracts for your organization. You designate the member of your staff who is the Signatory on the Contacts tab of your Organization Profile. A grant cannot be made without an up-to-date Signatory. Be sure to check and update your organization’s Signatory each time you update your Organization Profile and submit a grant application.

12. **My application was declined. Can I apply again?**
    Organizations may apply for any and all funding opportunities for which they are eligible, including opportunities for which they have applied and been declined in prior years.

**Grant Payments & Reports**

1. **How do I find out the payment schedule on my grant(s)?**
   Consult your grant agreement form to see the reporting schedule for your grant, including any contingencies that must be met in order to receive payment. You may also access the reporting
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schedule for your grant by logging into GrantCentral and either scrolling down to the To Do section of the home screen, or by navigating to the Grants tab in the upper right corner of the page. Click the blue Open button next to the grant whose details you would like to see. This will open a pop-up box that will show the schedule and status of your grant reports.

2. *How do I submit grant reports?*
Unless otherwise requested by your program contact, submit interim, progress and final reports via GrantCentral. You will see upcoming report deadlines on the home screen of your GrantCentral account under the To Do section of the page. Click the blue Open button to work on your report, save your progress, and submit when you are ready. You can also access your report forms by navigating to the Grants tab in the upper right corner of the page. Click the blue Open button next to the grant with a report due. This will open a pop-up box that will show the schedule and status of your grant reports. Click the blue Open button next to the report to work on your report, save your progress, and submit when you are ready.

3. *Can my grant report deadline be extended?*
Reach out to your program contact or submit a request via the messaging function in GrantCentral to request a deadline extension for a grant report at a minimum two months prior to the end of the grant. Submission of an extension request does not guarantee approval.

4. *Can I apply to renew my current grant?*
The Trust does not automatically renew grants. Organizations may apply for any and all funding opportunities for which they are eligible, including opportunities for which they have applied in prior years. Select organizations may also be invited by their program contact to apply for certain funding opportunities. Invitation to apply for a grant does not guarantee funding.