



Open Call for Ideas – Advancing Policy | Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to provide detailed organizational information when I submit an Open Call idea, such as organization financials and demographic information?

No. Open Call ideas are not full proposals. You will submit a brief and carefully constructed concept using a user-friendly letter of inquiry (LOI) process through the Trust's GrantCentral portal.

Can I submit an Open Call idea if I am a current grant recipient of the Trust?

Yes. Being a current grant recipient does not exclude you from submitting an Open Call idea, nor does it preclude Advocating for Policy Change staff from inviting a full proposal. However, if your organization is already receiving general operating support from the Trust, we will only be able to consider your application for project support.

How detailed does my Open Call idea need to be?

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.

My idea has elements of multiple policy issues listed under the Open Call or leverages more than one advocacy approach. Is that okay?

Yes. Systemic change doesn't happen in silos and frequently requires a multifaceted approach. Ideas that incorporate more than one policy issue or advocacy approach are welcome and encouraged.

Can I submit an idea through the Open Call if it pertains to one of the Trust's other strategies?

Ideas that address the policy priorities and approaches outlined in the Open Call, which align with the Trust's grant making priorities, are welcome.

My idea isn't currently part of a collaboration. Can I still submit it?

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.

My idea isn't likely to attract grant support from other funders. Can I still submit it?

Yes. The Trust recognizes fewer grant opportunities are available for advocacy efforts and that some policy ideas take years to reach the implementation process or demonstrate a positive impact. Ideas submitted through the Open Call also provide Trust staff with better insights into the initiatives on which grant recipients are working. These insights can help make Open Call grant recipients more competitive when applying for larger grants tied to the Trust's strategies toward closing the racial and ethnic wealth gap.

May I submit an idea if I do not work for a 501c3 nonprofit organization or a government entity?

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 an applicant or fiscal sponsor. The Trust does not make grants to individuals.

My idea requires state or federal reforms. Since the geographic focus of my idea is not Chicago or Cook County, am I still eligible to submit it?

Ideas that benefit the residents of Cook County may require intervention from city, municipal, county, state, or federal government. Such ideas that require reforms from larger jurisdictions should articulate how the reform would benefit residents of Chicago or Cook County or the geography within the region the idea aims to serve. Because federal legislation is much more complex, the idea should also include references to national organization(s) working on the reform and how this idea will contribute to achieving the collective goal.

Can I submit an Open Call idea for capital expenses such as vehicles, equipment, or buildings?

The Trust generally does not fund capital expenditures beyond program-related supplies and equipment. However, capacity investments such as staff, consultants, or contractual services would be eligible expenses through the Open Call.

Does submitting an Open Call idea guarantee an invitation to submit a full proposal?

No. For ideas that align closely with the Open Call priorities and strategies, Advocating for Policy Change staff may invite a conversation to talk further about the idea. That may or may not result in the invitation of a full proposal.

When can I expect to hear from the Trust after submitting an idea?

The Advocating for Policy Change team will acknowledge receipt of the idea within 72 business hours of submission. We will review and follow up on Open Call Ideas within two weeks of receipt.

- The Advocating for Policy Change team may invite a conversation to talk further about ideas that align closely with the Open Call priorities, strategies, and grant criteria. That 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.

How often will the grants be made under the Open Call program?

Because the Open Call takes ideas on an ongoing basis, the Trust will generally make grants on a bimonthly basis, provided the idea advances to the full proposal stage. Applicants invited to submit a proposal should anticipate a minimum of four months from submission of the idea to notification of grant decision.

May I submit more than one Open Call idea per year?

Yes. There is no limit to the number of ideas you can submit.

How detailed does my Open Call idea need to be?

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.

My idea has elements of multiple policy issues listed under the Open Call or leverages more than one advocacy approach. Is that okay?

Yes. Systemic change doesn't happen in silos and frequently requires a multifaceted approach. Ideas that incorporate more than one policy issue or advocacy approach are welcome and encouraged.

How does the Trust define collaboration?

Collaboration is defined as 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.

My idea isn't likely to attract grant support from other funders. Can I still submit it?

Yes. The Trust recognizes fewer grant opportunities are available for advocacy efforts and that some policy ideas take years to reach the implementation process or demonstrate a positive impact. Ideas submitted through the open call also provide The Trust staff with better insights into the initiatives on which grant recipients are working. These insights can help make Open Call grant recipients more competitive when applying for larger grants tied to the Trusts strategies toward closing the racial and ethnic wealth gap.

Can I apply if my idea is not centered around majority-Black and Latinx individuals or communities?

Yes. However, for an idea to be invited to a full proposal, it must demonstrate that it would contribute toward closing the racial and ethnic wealth gap.

My idea requires state or federal reforms. Since the geographic focus of my idea is not Chicago or Cook County, am I still eligible to submit it?

Ideas that benefit the residents of Cook County may require intervention from city, municipal, county, state, or federal government. Such ideas that require reforms from larger jurisdictions should articulate how the reform would benefit residents of Chicago or Cook County or the geography within the region the idea aims to serve. Since federal legislation is much more complex, the idea should also include references to national organization(s) working on the reform and how this idea will contribute to achieving the collective goal.

Does submitting an Open Call idea guarantee an invitation to submit a full proposal?

No. For ideas that align closely with the Open Call priorities and strategies, the Advocating for Policy Change staff may invite a conversation to talk further about the idea. That may or may not result in the invitation of a full proposal.