



THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST

Addressing Critical Needs – Essential Services – June 2023: Building Pathways to Stability

RFP Release Date	January 17, 2023
Virtual Information/TA Session	January 25, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. Register to Attend
LOI Deadline	February 7, 2023, at 11:59 p.m.
Virtual Information/TA Session for invited applicants	March 13, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.
Full Application Deadline	March 29, 2023, at 11:59 p.m.
Site Visits	May 1-23, 2023
Funding Decisions	June 23, 2023

Background:

For more than 100 years, The Chicago Community Trust has convened, supported, funded, and accelerated the work of community members and changemakers committed to strengthening the Chicago region. From spearheading our response to the Great Depression and Great Recession to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trust has brought our community together to face pressing challenges and seize our greatest opportunities. Today, that means confronting the region's racial and ethnic wealth gap.

The Trust believes our response to economic disparities will determine our region's future. Our vision is a thriving, equitable, and connected Chicago region where people of all races, places and identities have the opportunity to reach their potential.

While the Trust's strategic focus is on closing the racial and ethnic wealth gap, we recognize there are Chicago families facing unstable living situations or living in unsafe circumstances. This is why the Trust supports essential service organizations that are addressing the critical needs of individuals and families.

Need/Opportunity Statement:

The Chicago Community Trust recognizes that potential is everywhere; yet opportunity is not. The Trust has and will continue to invest in the region's most important asset: its residents. We support organizations that address the region's most critical needs by building pathways to stability. Funding these organizations will enable residents to participate in and contribute to the region's prosperity. The Trust is committed to working with community-based organizations that assist residents at critical moments, which puts them on a path toward wellbeing.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, health and human service organizations across the region responded with care, compassion, and urgency. They found innovative ways to pivot and provide services in new or different ways and they continue to respond even as the need for services grows.

In a new, in-depth report from the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, more than 65,000 people in Chicago experience homelessness each year. This staggering number includes not only unsheltered and sheltered people experiencing homelessness (the numbers typically counted), but also people

temporarily living with others. Statistics continue to point to the fact that Black and Latinx residents are disproportionately over-represented in unhoused populations as compared to white residents. “Black Chicagoans make up more than half (56%) of the total population experiencing homelessness. Of people staying on the street or in shelters, 75.9% are Black. In 2020, an estimated 18,272 Latinx Chicagoans experienced homelessness.”¹

Rising food costs and overall inflation also contribute to the challenges facing families that need to put food on the table and provide clothing, diapers, and other essential supplies. The Greater Chicago Food Depository reports significant increases in demand for food and a 35 percent increase in the number of people served from this time last year.² Additionally, after the overwhelming strain on the healthcare infrastructure due to the pandemic, access to healthcare continues to be a challenge. Connecting residents to medical homes, ensuring culturally responsive care is available, and providing continuing education to link families to benefits and resources is crucial. Long wait lists for mental and behavioral health professionals put children and families at risk.

Chicago families face unstable living situations—housing insecurity, barriers accessing health services and nutritious food—or are living in unsafe circumstances. That is why the Trust supports human service organizations that are addressing the critical needs of individuals and families. Resources for these health and human service organizations providing direct services to people most in need is essential and needed now more than ever.

Priority Strategies and Activities:

Building Pathways to Stability provides funding to organizations whose core work is to provide essential services in:

- Addressing housing insecurity or homelessness
 - Utilizing approaches that are Housing First³ and adopt harm-reduction models⁴, including but not exclusive to supportive housing and rapid re-housing.
 - Advancing targeted approaches to make the experience of homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring for families with children, youth, people with disabilities, veterans, and chronically homeless people.
- Decreasing food insecurity
 - Increasing access to nutritious food, including fresh produce.
 - Promoting healthy food choices in food pantries that empower people in need of emergency food to make the best choices for themselves and their families.
- Increasing access to health care to residents encountering barriers
 - Providing regular, ongoing access to health care services (physical, mental, behavioral) to residents experiencing barriers to quality, consistent health care.
 - Offering comprehensive and culturally responsive supports, including health care navigation and peer-led education.
- Responding to residents in need of emergency clothing and supplies
 - Providing quality clothing, necessary toiletries and supplies for people experiencing a crisis to improve self-confidence and promote wellbeing.

¹ [Illinois State of Homelessness Report](#)

² [WTTW](#)

³ [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

⁴ [Harm Reduction International](#)

The Chicago Community Trust seeks to fund organizations providing human services that are intersectional and based on proven models of improving access to stability. Evidence-based services must predominantly benefit residents of the Chicago metropolitan area (City of Chicago and six collar counties). These general operating grants are designed to support organizations for a three-year period.

Goals and Outcomes:

Grant recipients will help residents build pathways to stability by meeting their basic human needs of clothing, housing, food, health, and wellbeing. When those needs are met, people can move forward and increase their participation in civic action and community life. Through our support of organizations that provide direct services, we are working to ensure everyone has access to resources and opportunities that enable them to thrive.

With these general operating grants, grant recipients will be asked to track one or more organizational outcome(s) focused on:

- **Maintaining or expanding the scope, scale, or replication of services** by providing effective services to meet community needs.
- **Escalating the awareness and salience of issues** by increasing awareness of issues to inform public discussion.
- **Increasing organizational or coalition work** through changes in operational capacity and effectiveness such as staffing changes, training, recruitment of diverse leaders, member engagement and new partnerships.
- **Expand partnership opportunities** by deepening/expanding cross-organizational partnerships to increase access to resources.

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal should review the outcomes and aligned measures of progress in GrantCentral and identify 3-7 measures of progress to inform progress over the time period of the grant.

To define your measures of progress aligned to outcomes, complete the Measures of Progress section in your grant application in GrantCentral at <https://community-cct.force.com/grantcentral/s/> to select and provide the outcomes and indicators you will be tracking.

Grantmaking Criteria:

If your organization is invited to submit a full proposal, the Trust will evaluate the capacity to provide essential services using best practices based on evidence and equity. Criteria for general operating grants will include:

- Core work is in one or more of the domains: (1) addressing housing insecurity, (2) decreasing food insecurity, (3) increasing access to health care, or (4) providing emergency clothing and supplies
- Serving communities where service gaps exist
- Quality services that follow national best practices
- Organizations that can demonstrate feedback from individuals with lived experience
- Services and interventions that are intersectional in addressing critical needs (for example, access to nutritious food and mental health services, housing resources and food distribution)

- Documented history of achieving outcomes aligned with one or more of the four core mission domains listed above
- Defined and established process for collecting and using data for learning and improvement

Priority will be given to organizations led by people of color and to efforts that advance community-led solutions.

Grant Amounts Available and Grant Term:

These multi-year, general operating grants will span three years. Yearly grant amounts will be between **\$25,000** and **\$80,000**. Grant sizes will vary based on organizational size and need. The Trust estimates it will make between 25 and 35 grant awards. These grants will support **general operations**; however, grant recipients will be required to report on progress towards outcomes and related measures of progress each year of the grant. Grant recipients are expected to meet the Trust’s requirements for the submission of narrative annual reports and a final report at the end of the three-year term. The Trust values the reports as an important opportunity for mutual learning, engagement, and advocacy.

Eligible Applicants:

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; and
- Located within or primarily serving residents of the Chicago metropolitan area (City of Chicago, Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties)

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 The Chicago Community Trust’s grants management system, 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://community-cct.force.com/grantcentral/s/> prior to application submission.

Ineligible Uses:

- Applicants that do not meet the Eligible Applicants requirements outlined above
- Core work in advocacy and policy
- Lobbying activities
- Inherently religious activities

Evaluation and Learning:

Sharing successes or challenges in achieving measures of progress is critical to our collective learning, decision-making, and impact.

The Trust is committed to achieving our long-term goals and outcomes. We are developing outcome measures both internally and with our partners that inform progress towards our shared mission. Your project outcomes should be informed by why you think the project or strategy will lead to the

anticipated result or long-term change (i.e., your theory of change). After you identify those outcomes, we are asking grant applicants to develop specific, time-limited measures of progress. For shorter term grants (one year), these outcomes may not be achieved during the duration of the project. Measures of Progress provide measurable and reportable evidence that a proposed project or organization has effectively achieved – or is on the path to achieving - its objectives. These are what can be measured during the term of the grant period and contribute to your longer-term outcomes and are aligned to the Trust’s strategic priorities. We also recognize that there could be challenges to the implementation of any grant, many of which are not under the control of grant recipients, which may prevent you from achieving your targets. Learning with you about the progress made towards your outcomes and measures is part of the Trust’s evaluation and learning efforts.

For potential grant recipients for whom developing metrics or workplans is a new activity or for those individuals who would like to learn more about developing Measures of Progress, the Trust will be providing webinars, in-person sessions, and opportunities for ongoing peer learning. For specific questions, please contact learning@cct.org.

Collection of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Demographic Data:

The Trust asks that grant seekers provide demographic data on board and staff as well as clients/beneficiaries of programs and services. The Trust believes the board and staff composition of grant recipients should be inclusive and reflect the diversity of the demographics of the region and the individuals they serve. Diversity for the Trust encompasses but is not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation and identification, age, economic circumstance, class, disability, geography, or philosophy. For this reason, the Trust does take into consideration the demographic make-up of the board, staff, and clients of a grant applicant as an important proposal evaluation criterion.

Application Process:

Applicants must complete their application via GrantCentral, The Chicago Community Trust’s online grants management system. To access an application, grant seekers must log into GrantCentral at <https://community-cct.force.com/grantcentral/s/>

Applicants must complete an Organization Profile prior to application submission. If the Organization Profile was completed for a previous funding opportunity, it must be reviewed and, if needed, updated and certified prior to application submission.

The Trust will not consider late or incomplete applications. Applicants may receive a site visit, telephone call, or other communication from foundation staff as part of the application review process.

Submission Deadlines and Other Key Dates:

- The LOI deadline is February 7, 2023, at 11:59 p.m.
- The full application deadline is March 29, 2023, at 11:59 p.m.
- Funding decisions will be made by June 23, 2023

Information Sessions:

For those individuals who have questions about the request for proposal or would like to learn more about how to apply, the Trust will be providing a virtual technical assistance session on Wednesday, January 25, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. Interested applicants may register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/chicago-community-trust-addressing-critical-needs-info-session-tickets-514471838117>

For those invited to submit a full application and have questions or need assistance with completing their measures of progress in the impact framework there will be a virtual technical assistance session on Monday, March 13, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

The TA sessions **are not a mandatory requirement** to submit a LOI or application. They will be recorded and posted on our website.

Contact Information:

For technical questions regarding GrantCentral, email grants@cct.org.

For programmatic and application content questions, email Joanne Otte at jotte@cct.org