



THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST

EQUITY • OPPORTUNITY • PROSPERITY

Addressing Critical Needs – Essential Services – August 2024 – Sustainable Solutions for Housing Stability

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| RFP Release Date: | March 25 |
| Information Session: | April 4 at 3:00 p.m. |
| LOI Deadline: | April 18 at 11:59 p.m. |
| Full Application Deadline: | June 24 at 11:59 p.m. |
| Site Visits: | July 1 to July 22 |
| Funding Decisions: | Late July |
| Announcements: | Late August |

Background:

For over a century, The Chicago Community Trust has been at the forefront of convening, supporting, and accelerating the efforts of community members and changemakers dedicated to enhancing the strength of our region. From navigating through the Great Depression and Great Recession to our response during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trust has consistently rallied our community to address pressing challenges and embrace our most promising opportunities. Today, this commitment means squarely addressing the region’s racial and ethnic wealth gap.

A profound dedication to tackling economic disparities lies at the heart of the Trust’s mission, recognizing that our actions today impact our region’s future. Our vision remains steadfast: to cultivate a Chicago region that thrives with equity and connectivity, where every individual, irrespective of race, location, or identity, can realize their full potential. Central to our Addressing Critical Needs strategy is the recognition that access to stable, healthy, and secure housing is fundamental in paving the way toward stability for individuals and families. Understanding the formidable challenges confronting the Chicago region in the fight against homelessness, the Trust is offering this funding opportunity aimed at bolstering community organizations within the homeless service sector.

Our commitment extends to addressing the diverse housing needs of underserved and marginalized populations. Through a human-centered approach, we are dedicated to ensuring that communities experiencing homelessness or unstable housing receive the support and resources necessary to achieve and maintain stable housing.

Need/Opportunity Statement:

From 2008-2022, Chicago experienced a 35 percent decrease in homelessness according to the point-in-time count numbers, which measure sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on a

given day.¹ While this decrease is important to note, it also obscures forms of homelessness not included in the Point-In-Time count, particularly individuals and families living with friends and families in “doubled-up” situations. In a study done by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless² that includes this broader definition of homelessness, 68,440 people in Chicago were homeless in 2023. That report also highlights that Latinx Chicagoans, unaccompanied youth, and families are all more likely to be staying temporarily with others in doubled-up situations than to be staying in shelters or on the street. Moreover, in 2023, Chicago experienced a dramatic increase in homelessness. Comparing the point-in-time count number of total people experiencing homelessness from 2022 to 2023, there was an increase of 63 percent. This dramatic increase is primarily attributed to the more than 35,000 asylum-seekers who have come to Chicago from the southern U.S. border without sponsors. A majority of asylum-seekers experiencing homelessness were Latinx (98%) and expressed danger and persecution in their countries of origin (predominantly Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador). For non-asylum seekers experiencing homelessness, the majority were Black (69%) and continue to be over-represented, considering Chicago’s overall population is roughly one-third Black.

Suburban Cook County faces the unique challenge of converting congregate and often rotating shelters into non-congregate, fixed shelter sites that has and continues to require a great investment into capital resources while simultaneously continuing to provide the same level of services. 2-1-1 Metro Chicago, which supports the city and suburban Cook County as an information and referral resource for health and human services, has consistently reported that referral requests for housing and shelter top the list, coming in at over 30 percent of requests³ as to requests for food, utilities, healthcare, etc.

Additionally, when there is a lack of affordable housing, it contributes to homelessness. Based on a study by DePaul University’s Institute for Housing Studies, “In 2021, Chicago’s affordability gap reached a ten-year high of 119,435 units, just above previous peak levels in 2016. Since 2012, changes in Chicago’s affordability gap have largely been driven by declines in the city’s supply of affordable units.”⁴ Similarly, “In 2022, nearly 47% of Chicago renters — an estimated 600,000 people — lived in households spending more than 30% of their household income for rent and utilities according to a WBEZ analysis of census estimates.”⁵ The affordability gap intensifies pressures on low-income people to maintain their housing, increases cost-burdened households, and can lead some to eviction and homelessness over time.

¹https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/fss/supp_info/Homeless/2023PITCOUNT/2023%20PIT%20Report_FINAL.pdf

²<https://www.chicagohomeless.org/estimate/>

³<https://211metrochicago.211counts.org/>

⁴<https://www.housingstudies.org/releases/2023-state-rental-housing-city-chicago/>

⁵<https://chicago.suntimes.com/real-estate/2024/02/29/chicago-renters-spend-income-housing-utilities-budget>

In 2023, the State of Illinois increased its budget to prevent and end homelessness by \$50 million.⁶ Both the State and City of Chicago have expanded the number of dedicated leadership positions to focus and coordinate the work. Combined with dedicated resources focused on unsheltered homelessness at the federal level,⁶ this is creating momentum for coordinated learning and systems change. The Chicago Community Trust has created this Request for Proposals (RFP) to bolster the work ahead, which requires elevated levels of collaboration, creativity, and innovation to respond to both the challenges and opportunities of this moment.

Priority Strategies and Activities:

The Sustainable Solutions for Housing Stability RFP aims to allocate resources to assist individuals and families facing homelessness or unstable housing situations.

Proposed programs and initiatives may include:

- Facilitating access to safe, temporary living arrangements, like emergency shelter, that leads to permanent housing.
- Employing a housing first philosophy by providing permanent supportive housing or rapid rehousing.
- Legal services to prevent eviction and housing discrimination.
- Assisting with housing searches and application processes, with a focus on providing cultural and linguistic competency that reduces barriers to securing housing.
- Applying research and analysis on affordable housing programs and outlining potential systemic changes.
- Supporting people abruptly unhoused, who are wanting to resettle in the region due to a crisis.
- Supporting people living doubled up so that they may secure housing of their own.
- Providing gender-affirming care to homeless youth, particularly individuals from the LGBTQIA community.
- Providing access to public benefits related to housing, utility expenses, and other income supports including benefits for Veterans, older adults and undocumented immigrants.
- Building capacity to serve returning residents leaving prisons or jails with housing and wraparound supports tailored to their specific needs.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to submit proposals outlining impactful programs and innovative strategies aligned with the above objectives. The ultimate goal is to foster sustainable solutions that promote housing stability and address the root causes of homelessness within the Chicagoland region.

Goals and Outcomes:

The Sustainable Solutions for Housing Stability RFP advances the Trust's 10-year goal to increase the number of households meeting their basic human needs.

The Outcomes and Measures of Progress for applicants will be:

⁶<https://www.usich.gov/federal-strategic-plan/all-inside>

Expand or Maintain the Scope, Scale and Replication of Services

- Changes to deepen participation of underrepresented populations
- Expand enrollment in programming

Increase Organizational Effectiveness

- Change in client outcomes
- Changes in the use of culturally relevant and aligned services

Strengthen the Organizational Infrastructure to Provide Services

- Changes in services delivery methods to address evolving community needs
- Changes in connections to sector partners to build coordinated care networks

Grantmaking Criteria:

This one-year funding opportunity is for general operating support. Organizations invited to submit a full application will be evaluated based on their capacity to provide services rooted in best practices that meet the priority strategies outlined in this funding program.

Grant Amounts Available and Grant Term:

Grant recipients are expected to meet the Trust's requirements for submitting financial and narrative reports at the end of the grant cycle. The Trust will award up to 20 grants between \$75,000 and \$150,000.

Eligible Applicants:

To be eligible for a grant award, an applicant must:

- Represent that it is, and shall remain through the Grant Period, (i) an organization in good standing, (ii) either a governmental unit or an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), (iii) not a "private foundation" within the meaning of Section 509(a) of the Code, (iv) an organization exempt from taxes under 501(c) of the Code; or for purposes of this grant (v) is fiscally sponsored by a Section 501(c)(3) organization.*
- Ensure the grant does not benefit any private person or entity in violation of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.
- Be within or primarily serving residents of Cook County, Illinois
- Provide direct services to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness to advance solutions in the homeless service sector.
- Have not already received a multi-year, general operating grant from The Chicago Community Trust's Building Pathways to Stability funding program.

*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, before 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/login/> before application submission.

Ineligible Uses:

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

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 refining our outcome measures internally and with our partners to inform progress toward our shared mission of closing the racial and ethnic wealth gap. Your theory of change should inform the outcomes you select. After you identify the outcome(s), please develop specific, time-limited measures of progress. For shorter-term grants (one-year), these outcomes may not be achieved during the project's duration. Measures of progress provide measurable and reportable evidence that a proposed project has effectively achieved – or is on the path to achieving – its objectives. These are what can be measured during the grant period, contribute to your longer-term outcomes and are aligned with the Trust's strategic priorities.

Complete the Measures of Progress section of the application to select outcomes and measures of progress and to define the aligned indicators you will be tracking across the grant period. Select from the list of available outcomes and aligned MOPs. Please limit the number of submitted Measures of Progress to no more than five across outcomes.

Grant recipients will be asked to report progress by completing the Actuals Column in the Measures of Progress section of their interim and/or final reports in [GrantCentral](#).

We recognize there could be challenges to the implementation of any grant, many of which are outside the control of grant recipients and 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 applicants for whom developing metrics or workplans is a new activity and for those who want to learn more about developing Measures of Progress, the Trust provides 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 Chicago Community Trust serves a wide variety of constituents and organizations. As such, we collect organizational demographic data to inform us about the diverse, representative, and inclusive staffing practices of our potential and current grant recipients. This data helps us ensure that the organizations we fund represent the communities we serve. Therefore, we

request completion of the data on your organization's board, leadership, staff, and volunteers to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives as we work to achieve our mission of a thriving, equitable and connected Chicago region. For grant applicants requesting \$50,000 or above, at minimum, they need to include gender, race and ethnicity of senior leadership and board.

Application Process:

The application process has two steps: a letter of inquiry (LOI) phase and a full application phase. Only select LOI applicants will be invited to the full application phase. All LOI applicants will be notified whether they will be invited to the full application phase, and invited applicants will be given ample time to complete the full application.

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](#).

Applicants must complete an Organization Profile, which is on the last tab within their GrantCentral account. If the Organization Profile was completed for a previous funding opportunity, it must be reviewed and, if needed, updated and certified before application submission.

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 GrantCentral before the sponsored organization's application submission. Fiscal sponsors must log in and complete and certify an organization profile in [GrantCentral](#) before application submission.

Late or incomplete LOIs or Full Applications will not be considered. 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 **April 18, 2024**. The LOIs will be reviewed by a committee of reviewers from The Chicago Community Trust.
- Applicants will be notified by **May 29** if they are invited to submit a Full Application. Applicants not invited to submit a Full Application will also be notified by this date.
- The Full Application deadline is **June 24**. The Full Applications will be reviewed by the same review committee as the LOIs.
- Site visits will be conducted by review committee members between **July 1** and **July 22**.
- Funding decisions will be made by late July.
- Applicants will be notified of awards by late August. Those applicants who were invited to submit a Full Application but were not chosen for funding will also be notified at this time.

Information Sessions:

The first info session on April 4th will provide an overview of the Addressing Critical Needs (ACN) strategy and clarify key points in this RFP, along with information about how to access GrantCentral, our grant application portal. Please register at <https://tinyurl.com/CCTLOIHSG> to attend.

A second information session (date TBD) will be held for those invited to complete a full proposal. It will include information about creating and developing each proposal's Impact Framework, including measures of progress.

Contact Information:

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

For programmatic and application content questions, email the Addressing Critical Needs team at acn@cct.org.

Glossary:

Homelessness: Homelessness describes a situation where a person does not have a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Unaccompanied Youth: A homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

Asylum-Seeker: A person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country but has not yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting for a decision on their asylum claim.

Affordability Gap: This is calculated by comparing the demand for rental housing by lower-income households earning 150% of the Federal Poverty Level and the supply of units that would be affordable at 30% of a lower-income household's income.

Cost Burdened: A household is cost-burdened when it spends more than 30 % of its income on rent and utilities.

Housing First Philosophy: Housing First is an approach to connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness quickly and successfully to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements.

Gender-Affirming Care: Medical and psychosocial health care designed to affirm individuals' gender identities and significantly improve the mental health and overall well-being of gender-diverse, transgender, and nonbinary persons.