



Memo To:

From: Adam Ballard, Interim Co-Chair, Disabilities Fund, The Chicago Community Trust

Re: Disabilities Fund Advisory Board Nominations

Date:

The Chicago Community Trust's (CCT) Disabilities Fund (the Fund) is undergoing a transformation and renewal process. We are working with Diana Samarasan, a participatory philanthropy consultant, to support this process.

The Fund has an annual grantmaking budget of between \$200,000-400,000 and provides charitable support to groups and organizations advancing disability inclusion, rights and justice in the metropolitan Chicago area - which includes Chicago, suburban Cook County, and the Illinois counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will. Moving forward, and to align with the Trust's goal of closing the racial and ethnic wealth gap, the Fund will be prioritizing identifying and funding those groups and organizations which have historically had less access to resources.

Consistent with the slogan, "nothing about us without us" - and in furtherance of the principles and goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act of equality of opportunity, full participation in decision making, independent living and economic stability as well as the [10 principles of disability justice](#)¹ - the Fund's strategic and operational direction and grants decision-making will be led by activists representing different segments of the disability community in the metropolitan Chicago area.

All members (nine) of the Advisory Board will represent the diversity of the disabled population of metropolitan Chicago in regard to all aspects of identity, including race/ethnicity, Indigeneity, class/occupation, religion, gender, LGBTQIA+, and more.

~~The Fund is seeking support of individuals and organizations in the Chicago area to identify and nominate candidates for membership in the Advisory Board. Self nominations are encouraged.~~

¹ These principles were developed in 2015 by [Sins Invalid](#), "a disability justice based performance project that incubates and celebrates artists with disabilities, centralizing artists of color and LGBTQ / gender-variant artists as communities who have been historically marginalized."



The Disabilities Fund is seeking nominees who meet all the following descriptions:

- Are a person with disability or have personal experience with disability
- Live in the metropolitan Chicago area
- Have lived experience of marginalization due to disability and other identities, such as race/ethnicity, class/occupation, gender, LGBTQIA+, religion, and more
- Have substantial understanding or a willingness to learn about disability inclusion, rights and/or justice frameworks and movements
- Are up to date with or are willing to learn about Chicago area advocacy for and obstacles to disability inclusion, rights and justice
- Understand the principles of the ADA (see above) and reasonable accommodations processes
- Have cross-disability experience or sensitivity (see below)

Because members of the Advisory Board act in their independent capacity (and are not representing any organization), it is very important that any candidates proposed have good cross-disability knowledge and enjoy the respect of disability community members from multiple impairment groupings. Nominees do not have to come from a disability non-profit. They can come from any walk of life, profession, or socio-economic status. They can also be emerging or potential leaders.

To aid in the determination of feasibility for selection of candidates, a role Q&A document for the Advisory Board is attached.

The selection process will include review of application materials and an interview with eligible nominees. Existing Advisory Board co-chair(s), together with the PGM consultant and Trust staff, will be selecting representatives to fill the open spots on the Advisory Board.

Initial Advisory Board meetings will occur monthly as the Fund develops its new structure. Following an initial period, meetings will occur face-to-face or by video at least quarterly. Advisors may also be called for special meetings and/or asked to communicate on matters of importance to the Fund between meetings, via electronic media. Face-to-face meetings will occur in Chicago. To enable advisors to attend, the Fund will cover all costs of transport, personal assistance (as needed) during travel/meetings, and reasonable accommodations. Meeting facilities are accessible, and all effort will be taken to ensure that Board members can fully and effectively participate.



While acting as Advisory Board representatives, all conflicts of interest must be declared and members may be asked to recuse themselves from decisions, especially if members' organizations are applying for grants. **[Members of the Advisory Board participate in the Board in their independent capacity. They do not have a reporting function back to their organization or their network(s).]**

~~To fit the Disabilities Fund timeline for selection of advisors, it would be greatly appreciated if all nominations, including self nominations, could be made by **May 31**. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.~~

Nominations can be submitted [via this form](#) and should include candidate name, candidate contact information, and 1-3 narrative paragraphs (or no more than 1000 words) or a brief video or audio statement of no more than 6 minutes describing how the candidate meets the above candidate description.

Note that if you are nominating someone, it is critical to first check that they want to be nominated.

Please let us know if there are any questions or if you need more information on how to apply. You can submit nominations via the form above or questions about the process to Christine Munteanu, Affinity Funds Manager, at CMunteanu@cct.org.