



THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST®

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## ***Arts & Culture for Community Wealth* RFP**

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

This FAQ sheet provides essential information about the *Arts & Culture for Community Wealth* grant opportunity provided by the Chicago Community Trust. Please review it carefully to understand the program's focus on community engagement, economic opportunity, and public space activation.

#### **What is the primary focus of this grant opportunity?**

This RFP is best suited for projects that leverage arts and culture to build individual and community wealth. We are seeking collaborations between organizations that can demonstrate how their combined efforts will drive economic prosperity and engage community residents, particularly in underinvested communities on Chicago's south and west sides.

#### **Is this a General Operating grant?**

No, this is a **project-based grant** not intended for general operating support. Funds awarded through this RFP must be directly applied to the proposed project's activities, as outlined in your application.

#### **What kind of projects are you looking to support?**

We are looking to support projects that are in the late planning stage, with fully formed ideas and established partnerships, but require additional resources to complete. Successful submissions will activate public spaces, drive economic opportunity, and amplify community voices through arts and culture.

#### **How should the budget be structured for this grant?**

Project budgets should **reflect the total cost of the project over two years**. This grant has a two-year term, and project budgets should clearly outline how funds will be utilized throughout both the planning (Year 1) and execution (Year 2) phases of this pilot funding program.

#### **Why is collaboration so important for this grant?**

The Chicago Community Trust believes in the **collective power** of community engagement. We specifically seek organizations with established experience in collaboration and fostering community partnerships. Preferred projects will demonstrate strong partnerships between



community residents, local artists, and drivers of local commerce (e.g., small businesses, neighborhood chambers of commerce, commercial businesses, or residential developers).

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## **What is the expected grant term and amount?**

This is a two-year grant opportunity. Approximately **15-20 projects** will be awarded from a total grant budget of **\$3.9 million**. In addition to funding, grant recipients will receive technical assistance and engage in peer learning opportunities.

## **Will there be opportunities for learning and collaboration during the grant term?**

Yes, absolutely! Grant recipients will participate in semi-regular **peer-to-peer learning sessions**. These sessions are designed to foster collaboration, build connections, and increase the capacity of participating organizations. Regular attendance at these sessions is expected.

## **What kind of evaluation will be involved?**

This funding opportunity is a pilot program, and an **external evaluator** will actively engage with grant recipients throughout the two-year term. The evaluation process is designed to deepen our understanding of how arts and culture contribute to thriving communities and economic growth. The insights gained will inform future initiatives and serve as a learning tool for grant awardees.

## **What are the eligibility requirements for applying organizations?**

To be eligible, an applicant must be a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status, fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) organization, or a governmental unit. You must be located within or primarily serving residents of Chicago or Cook County. Please refer to the "Eligible Applicants" section of the RFP for full details.

## **Do we need to have our 501(c)(3) status secured before applying?**

If your organization does not have 501(c)(3) status, you must identify a fiscal sponsor before applying. Your fiscal sponsor must complete and certify an organization profile in The Chicago Community Trust's grants management system, GrantCentral, before you submit your application.

## **What is the application process?**

The application process begins with a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) submitted through The Chicago Community Trust's online grants management system, GrantCentral. Organizations invited to submit a full application will be notified on **July 17, 2025**. For technical questions regarding GrantsCentral, please email our Grants team at [grants@cct.org](mailto:grants@cct.org) or visit <https://www.cct.org/grants/how-to-apply/>.



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## What should be included in the Letter of Inquiry (LOI)?

LOI submissions must address how your project utilizes arts and culture to drive community wealth and empower communities. This includes detailing:

- The community or neighborhood where your project is located.
- How your project is a collaboration between community residents, local artists, and drivers of local commerce.
- The economic target area for your project.
- How the project contributes to the economic vitality of the community.

Successful LOIs will clearly demonstrate your organization's or collaborative's qualifications to implement the project.

## What is the timeline for this RFP?

- **RFP and LOI Release Date:** May 15, 2025
- **Information Session:** May 29, 2025 ([View the recording.](#))
- **LOI Deadline:** June 12, 2025
- **Organizations Invited to Submit Full Application:** July 17, 2025
- **Full Application Deadline:** August 14, 2025
- **Funding Decisions:** October 2025
- **Announcements:** November 2025

## Is there an information session I can attend to learn more and ask questions?

Yes, an information session was held virtually, **May 29, 2025**. To view the recording, click this [link](#) or visit <https://www.cct.org/grants/opportunities/rfp-arts-culture-for-community-wealth-collective-power/>.

## Who can I contact for questions?

For technical questions regarding GrantCentral, please email our Grants team at [grants@cct.org](mailto:grants@cct.org). For programmatic and application content questions, please email Adrianna Parker-Lang and Marcus Samuel at [collectivepower@cct.org](mailto:collectivepower@cct.org).

## Will feedback be provided if my LOI or full application is denied?

Due to the anticipated high volume of applications, feedback on why an LOI or full application was denied will **not** be provided.