



THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST®

Civic and Community Leadership RFP

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the primary focus of this grant opportunity?

This grant is intended for ***traditional leadership development programs*** with an established history of building civic and community sector leaders. For the purposes of this grant, leadership development means equipping Chicago-region residents with the tools, skills and networks necessary to affect community or systems-level change.

What type of projects are you looking to support?

This opportunity is best suited for ***established leadership development programs*** with a learning curriculum focused on cultivating ***effective community or civic leaders***. Established programs will have at least 2-3 years of impact data that demonstrates the effectiveness of the program's curricula on program participants.

Does this grant provide general operating support?

No, this is a project support grant not intended to support general operations. Funds awarded must be directly applied to the proposed projected activities, with a 15% indirect cost rate.

What is the expected grant term and amount?

Grant awards will range between **\$25,000 and \$75,000** per year for up to two years. Grant amounts and term length will be at discretion of the program team based on the project scope and details described in the proposal. This grant is not currently eligible for renewal.

What is the application process?

All applicants will be required to complete a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) to determine basic alignment with the funding opportunity. LOIs are due **February 12, 2026**. LOIs aligned with our funding priorities will be invited to complete a full application with more in-depth questions regarding project scope, goals, and outcomes. Full applications are due **March 19, 2026**. Some applicants may be asked to participate in a brief virtual site visit, scheduled for the week of **March 30, 2026**.



THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST®

How will Letters of Intent (LOIs) and full applications be evaluated?

Both LOIs and full applications will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Scope and curricula of leadership development program
- Impact measurement tools to measure participant growth throughout the program. Programs with the ability to demonstrate alumni impact not required, but highly desired
- Focus on collaborative, cross-sector leadership to drive collective action in pursuit of shared goals
- Alignment with Trust's broader strategic goal of increasing economic mobility for underinvested communities, and/or programmatic focus areas of Community Wealth, Household Wealth, or Critical Needs.

Our leadership development program isn't issue specific. Can we still apply?

Organizations that provide leadership development aligned to this funding opportunity's key priorities are welcome to apply. When drafting your proposal, consider the following:

- What are the economic inequity issues your program participants are trying to address?
- How does your leadership development program and curriculum support them in addressing those issues most effectively?
- What are the skills, tools, and networks they gain from participating in your program?

What is the timeline to apply?

- RFP and LOI Release Date: **January 13, 2026**
- LOI Deadline: **11:59 p.m. on February 12, 2026**
- Invitation to Submit Full Proposal: **February 26, 2026**
- Full Application Deadline: **11:59 p.m. on March 19, 2026**
- Virtual Site Visits: **Week of March 30, 2026**
- Announcements: **April 2026**



THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST®

Will there be an opportunity to ask questions about the full application?

Yes, if invited to submit a full proposal you will receive information around “office hours” to support applicants with programmatic and goal-related questions. Office hours will be offered on **Wednesday, March 11 from 11:00 am – 12:00 p.m.**

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 may **not be provided**.

Who do I contact for questions?

For technical questions regarding GrantCentral, please email our Grants team at grants@cct.org. For programmatic and application content questions, please contact **Adrianna Parker-Lang** and **Marcus Samuel** at collectivepower@cct.org or **Jalen Preacely**, Policy Specialist, at jpreacely@cct.org. For impact measurement questions, email learning@cct.org.