

LGBTQ Community Fund 2026 Request for Proposals

Timeline

RFP Release Date	Wednesday, August 5, 2026
Information Session (Virtual: Zoom)	Wednesday, August 19, 2026 at 12:00 PM Central Register here: https://chicagocommunitytrust.zoom.us/meeting/register/1KIFcSjaSseX6TakJ_uNvw
Application Deadline	Wednesday, September 2 at 11:59 PM Central
Site Visits	October 13 - October 30, 2026
Funding Decisions	Late November 2026
Award Notification	Mid December 2026

Background

The LGBTQ Community Fund, an initiative of The Chicago Community Trust, was founded in 2010 with the commitment to advance the Chicago region's LGBTQ community through research, connection, and focused grantmaking. LGBTQ Community Fund grants are designed to support organizations and projects that respond to identified LGBTQ community needs, and support LGBTQ leaders and communities.

Priority strategies and activities

For 2026, the Fund seeks to support organizations that serve the LGBTQ community in two areas: **basic needs**, or **civil rights and advocacy**.

- **Basic needs:** Grants in this area will support organizations working to address basic needs in the LGBTQ community, particularly **hunger and food insecurity, health care access, and housing instability**.
- **Civil rights and advocacy:** Grants in this area will support organizations working to support the civil rights of LGBTQ communities through community organizing, civic education, nonpartisan advocacy, legal aid, journalism, and civil rights law.

For more information on these two focus areas, please see our latest report, [We Are Each Other's Neighbors: LGBTQ Community Fund Stakeholder Conversations](#).

Grantmaking Criteria

Applicants will be asked to demonstrate alignment with the RFP focus areas defined above, as well as a demonstrated commitment to working with LGBTQ communities, including meaningfully incorporating the vision and voice of LGBTQ communities in their structure, operations, and/or programming.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Alignment with LGBTQ Community Fund's mission and identified RFP focus areas above
- Demonstrated commitment to and proficiency in serving LGBTQ communities and supporting LGBTQ leadership
- Focus on serving historically marginalized and underserved groups within the LGBTQ community
- Ability to demonstrate impact
- Organizational health and sustainability

Grant Amounts Available and Term

For 2026, grants may be requested for general operating support. Grant amounts will generally range from \$10,000 to \$40,000, and the Fund will award up to \$550,000 in total grants. The grant term is one year.

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for funding from the LGBTQ Community Fund, an applicant must:

- Be serving and/or engaging LGBTQ communities, including trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) communities.
- Have a current year operating budget of under \$3,500,000.00.
- Be a nonprofit organization with evidence that:
 - it has been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code; or
 - is fiscally sponsored by a Section 501(c)(3) organization; or
 - is a governmental unit within the meaning of Section 170(c)(1) of the Code.
- Be located within or primarily serving residents of the greater Chicago metropolitan area.

Applicants without 501(c)(3) status must identify a fiscal sponsor before applying and ask that sponsor to complete and certify an organization profile in The Chicago Community Trust's grants management system, GrantCentral, at <https://trust360.my.site.com/grantcentral/s/>.

Ineligible Uses

Grant funds shall not be used for:

- Electioneering or political activities
- Contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee
- Campaigning on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office
- Lobbying, including direct or grassroots attempts to influence federal, state or local legislation
- Grants to individuals
- Programs or activities that violate any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including, but not limited to any programs or activities that violate antidiscrimination laws
- Promoting or supporting terrorist activities or to promote terrorism

Collection of DEI Demographic Data

The Chicago Community Trust serves a wide variety of constituents and organizations. We do not consider demographic data when we make funding decisions and do not discriminate based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristics when making funding decisions. The demographic composition of the Trust's staff and board is available on our website [here](#).

Application Process

Applicants complete their application via GrantCentral, The Chicago Community Trust's online grants management system, at <https://trust360.my.site.com/grantcentral/s/>.

Applicants must complete and certify an Organization Profile before applying. If the Profile was completed for a previous funding opportunity, it must be reviewed, updated and certified before submitting a new application. If applicable, fiscal sponsors must also complete and certify an organization profile in GrantCentral before the grant seeker submits an application.

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered for review. Applicants may receive a site visit (in person or virtual), telephone call, or other communication from foundation staff and LGBTQ Community Fund leadership as part of the application review process.

Contact Information

For technical assistance regarding GrantCentral, please contact grants@cct.org. How-to guides and other helpful information are available at <https://www.cct.org/grants/how-to-apply>.

For programmatic and application content questions, please email lgbtq@cct.org.

The Trust is a community foundation that is dedicated to ensuring opportunity and prosperity are within reach for everyone in our region. As a charitable community, we know that many of our communities have been historically under-resourced, including philanthropy. The LGBTQ Community Fund is supported by a group of donors who seek opportunities to address those historic gaps, which will help strengthen the entire Chicago region. When our neighbors do better, we all do better.