



THE CHICAGO
COMMUNITY TRUST®

EQUITY • OPPORTUNITY • PROSPERITY

Coalitions Advancing Economic Mobility – Open RFP Information Session 8/19/2026

Agenda

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- 02 RFP Overview
- 03 Strategic and Policy Priorities
- 04 Grant Types and Support for Lobbying Activities
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The Chicago Community Trust

Background

We believe that people are our region's greatest asset and that our region will thrive when everyone is able to contribute to and benefit from our economy. We are working toward a day when everyone in the Chicago region has enough wealth to care for their family and invest in the future.

Policy Change

The Chicago Community Trust's Policy Change strategy seeks to create a more equitable and prosperous Chicago region by advancing policies, systems and practices that expand economic opportunity and increase household and community wealth to improve the well-being of financially vulnerable individuals and communities.



Policy Research
and
Development



Policy
Coalitions



Policy
Implementation

RFP Overview

By investing in the region's policy and advocacy landscape, the Trust supports and works alongside organizations advancing and defending policies and systems reforms that reduce poverty, promote economic mobility, and invest in long-underinvested communities.

- Applicants may request **up to three years** of support
- Awards will range from **\$50,000 to \$150,000** per year
- Total grant **budget is \$2,000,000 in year one**



Increase income and financial assets for low- to moderate- income Chicagoans

- *Improve systems to strengthen employee outcomes through **workforce development** and wrap around supports*
- *Reduce barriers that hinder access to and attainment of **postsecondary education and credentials***
- *Foster **employment opportunities** that enable individuals and families to achieve economic mobility, financial health, and wellbeing*
- *Strengthen the ability of individuals and families to **save and invest** to increase financial health and well-being*

Increase and preserve homeownership in underinvested communities

- *Provide individuals with the support and counseling services that **make homeownership more attainable and sustainable***
- ***Create and scale pathways towards affordable homeownership**, including shared ownership models and increasing the supply of affordable housing for homeownership*
- ***Ensure existing homeowners can keep up with associated costs**, including home repairs and property taxes.*

Increase investments in underinvested communities while minimizing displacement

- *Reduce systemic barriers* that increase the cost, complexity, or timeline of neighborhood investment and development
- Create scalable pathways for the revitalization and productive *reuse of vacant land and abandoned buildings*
- *Facilitate the creation and expansion of shared, community, and public ownership* that promote community development while offering more opportunities for long-term residents to own and/or invest in their neighborhood
- Strengthen the conditions for *inclusive neighborhood growth*, community wealth-building, and resident stability

Meet the critical needs of vulnerable Chicagoans

- *Strengthening collaborations and partnerships between government and nonprofit human services providers to ensure the needs of low-income community members are met*
- *Ensure all individuals and families have access to public benefits for which they are eligible*
- *Increase access to and supply of rental housing that is affordable to very low- and low- income residents*
- *Develop and scale interventions that increase housing stability or vulnerable households*

Strengthen Small Businesses

- Strengthen the *presence of small businesses in thriving commercial corridors* in historically underinvested communities.
- Enable small businesses to *access capital and revenue* streams that allow them to grow and thrive.

Grant Types and Terms



Restricted by Purpose

- Grants may be applied to any costs related to the grant purpose, **no lobbying activity permitted**



Project Support

- Costs must be applied to the specific project noted in the grant purpose, **lobbying activity permitted**



General Operating Support

- For orgs. whose mission and work is completely aligned with the RFP, **no lobbying activity permitted**



Guidance

- Grant type will be included in invitation to submit a full proposal



Funding Advocacy vs Lobbying

- As the region's community foundation, the Trust may fund lobbying activity
- If you are not requesting funds for lobbying, please ensure your application does not mention or imply lobbying
- In both the LOI and full application, please clarify if your scope of work includes lobbying or not

Lobbying	Advocacy	Political Activity
Call to action to support a specific legislation	Self-defense lobbying (items that are directly related to the operations and existence of The Chicago Community Trust and Foundation)	Tweeting Thank You to a Candidate for Supporting a particular legislative issue close to an election.
Meeting with elected officials to influence specific legislation (at the local, state or federal levels)	Communications in the form of non-partisan research and analysis that do not urge action on specific legislation	Hosting an event for one candidate to speak about issues that they support.
Requests to support Ballot measure initiatives	Discussion of broad areas of social policy	Holding voter education drives that highlights positions of one candidate.
Participation in Senate Confirmations	Lobbying on administrative rules such as regulations implementing a certain law	Supporting a candidate by hosting an event at the Trust offices that is open to the public.
Participating in committee to influence legislation in support of a position	Building relationships with and educating legislatures and elected officials	Publicly supporting one candidate for office over another.
Issuing a grant to an organization earmarked for support of a specific legislative issue	Working with think tanks or policy research organizations	

Decision Criteria

- In both LOI and full application phases, proposals will be evaluated by:
 - Organization's contributions to the coalition's success
 - Commitment of time and effort to advance policy change
 - Contribution to critical coalition functions
 - Engagement of those most impacted by the proposed policy or systems reform
- Competitive applications will describe:
 - The proposed policy or structural change being pursued
 - The coalition and/or collaborative landscape working on a given issue
 - A track record of advancing policy change
 - The current and anticipated policy landscape
 - How progress towards achieving policy goals is measured

How to Apply

Letter of Inquiry (LOI):

In your narrative section, please answer these six questions exactly:

- List the name(s) of the coalitions in which your organization participates and your role in each
- Briefly describe the policy your coalition(s) is working to advance
- Briefly describe how your organization has contributed to advance the policy(ies) listed to date.
- Briefly describe how your organization anticipates contributing to advance the policy(ies) listed during the grant period.
- Briefly describe how this policy aligns with the priority strategies listed in the RFP.
- Do you anticipate requesting funding to support lobbying activities?

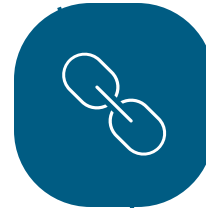


LOI Tips and Tricks



Please Be Brief

The LOI is intended to be information gathering for the Trust, and a relatively low lift for organizations.



Connect to Priority Areas

LOIs will be evaluated based on how well the proposed policy advances one of the five priority areas.



Advocacy and Lobbying

Please be clear if you plan on requesting funding to support lobbying activities. If not, ensure your application does not imply lobbying activities!



LOI Tips and Tricks

AI Guidance

- AI use is fine, but please ensure your application has a human touch!

Financial Documents

Please ensure your organizational profile is up to date with the last three years of 990s and audits uploaded.

Ask Questions

Please reach out to our team if you have any questions or need additional guidance – we are here to help!

Learning Goals

- To achieve the goals of this funding program, the Trust is interested in learning:
 - Do coalitions have the infrastructure and capacity to engage in policy advocacy?
 - Are coalitions effective in advancing, passing, and defending policy reforms and systems change?

Learning Goals Continued

Outcome: Increase Coalition, Constituent, and Organizational Power to Advance Policy Change/Implementation

	•MOP: Changes in organizational or constituent power
	•Indicator: # of coalition members engaged in grassroots or direct lobbying (Lobbying) •Indicator: # of organizational hours spent engaging in coalition activities (Advocacy) •Indicator: # of coordinated mobilization or public educational activities (Advocacy)

Outcome: Organize and Mobilize Stakeholders to Advance or Defend Policy Change

	•MOP: Changes in the level of actions taken by champions of an issue
	•Indicator: # of legislative initiatives advanced, defended, or passed (Lobbying) •Indicator: # of champions, sponsors, or co-sponsors actively advancing coalition priorities (Advocacy) •Indicator: # of activities that elevate the impact of policy reforms (Advocacy)

Next Steps

Full Application

Organizations invited to submit full applications will be notified by **September 16, 2026**. Organizations will also be informed of which grant type and funding level they were invited for.

Key Dates

- **LOI Submission Deadline: August 27th, 2026**
- **Full Proposal Invitations: September 16th, 2026**
 - Those not invited to submit a full proposal will be notified at this time
- **Site Visits: During Full Proposal Submission Period, As Needed**
- **Full Proposal Deadline: October 9th, 2026**
- **Funding Decision: November 20th, 2027**

Important!

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Contact

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GrantCentral Demo