AFRICAN AMERICAN LEGACY
An Initiative of The Chicago Community Trust

Growing Stronger, Better, Together
Our Community.  
Our Duty.  
Our Future.

Giving back, helping out, and paying it forward are at the center of African American culture. Whether it is giving to the church, volunteering through sororities and fraternities, or taking care of family, we know that we are stronger together.

That philosophy rings as true today as it did a century ago when millions of Black southerners moved north to places like Chicago, Detroit, and New York, and supported each other through great changes.

Coming together for the collective is a mainstay of African American resilience. As the home of leaders like Ida B. Wells and Harold Washington, Chicago is a reflection of that spirit.

From the very beginning, with Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, African Americans have played a prominent role in Chicago’s cultural and economic growth.

Slowly, but steadily, though, Chicago’s Black population is declining. African Americans no longer make up the city’s largest population group. The Great Migration is moving in reverse, with Black Chicagoans leaving the Windy City for places like Atlanta, Washington D.C., and Baton Rouge.

That is why in 2003, a small cadre of visionaries came together to preserve Black Chicago’s rich history, culture, and identity. They recognized what is increasingly at stake and formed a group that could make direct, meaningful investments in the community to nurture it and sustain it for a brighter future. That group became **AFRICAN AMERICAN LEGACY**.
MAKING THE CONNECTION, 
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Since its founding, African American Legacy has served as a model for innovative grant-making by working with a diverse portfolio of nonprofits—from grassroots efforts to long established organizations—to address community-wide needs. **Mutual investment and collective impact are at the core of the work, as funders and as stakeholders.**

AAL funds cohorts that work in concert to address larger, systemic challenges. Identifying that greater need, and connecting those working the hardest on comprehensive solutions to dollars makes a difference.

VOICE NOT VIOLENCE

African American Legacy recognizes the power of voice, and that power is only made impactful by action. AAL supports action by funding programs that deeply engage young people at their core; programs that boost self-esteem and remind youth of the shoulders they stand on to uncover their own great potential.

For three years, African American Legacy’s grant-making has focused on “Voice not Violence,” which supports organizations that develop youth voices as an alternative to violence. Youth use violence as a way to be heard, to protest poverty and neglect, to express anger and sadness, and to feel powerful. AAL believes that through its investment in organizations that support youth, positive futures are being ensured, which ensures the success of the entire Black community.
PROTECTING OUR YOUTH
For nearly 30 years, the Court Appointed Special Advocates of Cook County (CASA of Cook County) has been advocating for children in foster care. The organization applied for an AAL grant during the fund’s Strengthening the African American Family grant-making focus after realizing it was not fully serving the needs of its young African American clients. That awarded grant allowed CASA of Cook County to strengthen its outreach, recruit, and train Black advocates. Now, children who are already in a vulnerable, potentially traumatic position have someone who understands them and their community.

RESPECT, DISCIPLINE, OWNERSHIP, AND LOVE
These are the values Englewood youth learn at Restoring the Path. After volunteering and living in the neighborhood for years, founder Sally Hazelgrove recognized boxing as a meaningful way to motivate youth to not only stay out of trouble and avoid gangs, but also inspire them to care for their neighborhood. Through a Voice not Violence grant from AAL, Hazelgrove was able to add the “Voices of Englewood” program to her organization. When the boys aren’t boxing, they can step into a recording booth and release their frustrations and every day challenges into a microphone. For many of these young men, the opportunity to sing, rap, and learn how to produce music is the first time someone has given them the tools to express themselves positively and productively.

A POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE
In 1978, Gladys B. Simpson founded the Academy for Scholastic Achievement, an education alternative for retrieved high school drop outs. Recognizing the increasing challenges young people were facing—particularly incarceration—that could forever alter the course of their lives, Simpson and her team applied for a Voice not Violence grant. To keep students focused on their future and off the streets or in jail, ASA developed a program rooted in social and restorative justice. After school, students from Austin, and the East and West Garfield Park neighborhoods, participate in peer-led peace circles to discuss ways to curb violence, and establish healthy relationships and habits. In sharing their daily experiences navigating their neighborhood, these students not only build positive tools against conflict and temptation, they also give themselves a future.

“Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.
AAL GRANT RECIPIENTS (2005–2014)

Academy of Scholastic Achievement
Alliance For Community Peace
Austin Peoples Action Center
Beloved Community Family Services
Better Boys Foundation
Bronzeville Children’s Museum
Cara Foundation
Carole Robertson Learning Center
Center for Higher Development
Chicago Children’s Advocacy Center
The Chicago Community Trust
Chicago Legal Clinic
Developing Communities Project
Faith Organizations Committed in Unity to Serve Youth
Family Rescue
Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance
Goodcity
GRANDFamilies
Greater Roseland West Pullman Food Network
Heritage Community Development
Imagine Englewood
Inner City Computer Stars
The Inner Voice
Jane Addams Hull House
Jobs For Youth
Kids Off the Block
Kidz Express
Law Project
LeClaire Courts Community Development
Life Directions
Love To Serve
Metropolitan Area Group for Igniting Civilization (MAGIC)
MPAACT
Monroe Foundation
Neighborhood Capital Budget Group
New Direction Outreach
North Lawndale College Prep
Passages Alternative Living
Phoebe’s Place
Quinn Community Services
Saving Our Seeds
South Shore Drill Team
South Side Community Federal Credit Union
Southwest Women Working Together
Taskforce for Prevention and Community Services
Teamwork Englewood
Trinity Higher Education
University of Chicago Division of the Humanities
We The People Media
Young Men’s Educational Network

STRENGTHENING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY
Amani-Trinity United Community Health Corporation
Court Appointed Special Advocates of Cook County
GRANDFamilies
Holy Family Ministries
The Inner Voice
Passages Alternative Living Programs
Proactive Community Services
Stateway Community Partners
Young Men’s Educational Network
Youth Guidance

VOICE NOT VIOLENCE
Academy of Scholastic Achievement
Community Outreach Volunteers NFP (Cycle 1)
Institute for Positive Living
Restoring the Path
UCAN
Together, Better, Stronger.

The enduring spirit of African Americans has always been in the strength and resiliency of the community. Whether it was an individual or an institution in need, those who could give did.

**LET’S KEEP THE TRADITION ALIVE.**

A vibrant, lasting, and prosperous community is a collective effort. Pooling resources together not only makes our dollars stronger, it also allows AAL to give more, making for a greater, more impactful investment in the community.

After more than 10 years of operation, African American Legacy wants to continue to support new ideas, innovation, and creativity at a grassroots level—but that takes resources.

**Our endowment must expand and our fund must grow** so that we can support more organizations working diligently to solve important issues. That is the only way we will succeed.

**IT IS TIME TO ELEVATE OUR ACTION AND ACCELERATE OUR GIVING.**

AAL was formed because community stakeholders recognized strength in numbers. Success hinges upon everyone having opportunities and access—to a quality education, to a safe neighborhood, to a living wage, and much more. This is a group effort.

African American Legacy is driven by its mission and committed to supporting innovation that influences real change in the community—innovation that influences a positive shift toward sustainability, longevity, and prosperity of Chicago’s African American community.

**IT IS OUR DUTY.**

**INVEST IN THE COMMUNITY.**

**INVEST IN THE FUTURE.**

Since 2003, African American Legacy has raised more than $5 million to date.
ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

African American Legacy activates a diverse network of community members who share a common goal of improving the quality of life among African Americans throughout metropolitan Chicago.

The members of the Board are community and civic leaders with a keen awareness and knowledge of African American issues and needs. The committee actively participates in engagement, donor cultivation and grant making activities.

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Senior Manager, BMO Harris Bank

Andreason Brown, Vice Chair
Chief Financial Officer, Forefront

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Melody Spann-Cooper
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COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP/
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