Requests for Proposals: Match General Operating Support for Recipients of Government Grants

RFP Release Date:	Tuesday, November 5, 2024
Information Session:	Wednesday, November 13,2024
LOI Deadline:	Tuesday, November 26, 2024
Invitation for Full Proposal:	Wednesday, December 5, 2024
Full Application Deadline:	Monday, January 13, 2025
Site Visits:	January 13 to 17, 2025
Funding Decisions:	Friday, February 7, 2025
Announcements:	Friday, February 14,2025

Background:

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started in early 2020, Congress has appropriated $4.5 trillion in relief and recovery aid to address the public health emergency and the economic hardship it provoked. The final pandemic recovery bill that passed on March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act, included a historic and unprecedented appropriation of $350 billion for State and Local Fiscal Recovery (SLFRF) – discretionary funds to state and local governments to respond to their communities' unique economic and public health needs, including emergency rental assistance, support for small businesses, and piloting innovative programs like guaranteed income. The approximately $11 billion the State of Illinois, City of Chicago, and Cook County received from this package must be fully obligated by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026.

While a robust infusion of resources was and continues to be necessary to meet the immediate needs of those dealing with the economic impact of COVID-19, it is imperative to ensure these funds reach the communities and households suffering from historic disinvestment and the greatest financial hardship. Research shows that historically disinvested communities with low wealth are primarily home to Chicago's Black and Latine residents.

The Chicago Community Trust launched its *Equitable and Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy* in the fall of 2022 to ensure Black and Latine communities experience the same level and rate of economic recovery as their white counterparts and prevent further widening of the racial and ethnic wealth gap. This strategy consists of three approaches:

1. **Tracking Federal Funds:** The Trust, in partnership with Urban Institute, launched the Federal Recovery Funds Dashboard to foster greater transparency and provide a comprehensive landscape of dollars appropriated toward the following purposes: Community Investment, Community Safety, Household Supports, Housing, Workforce, and Infrastructure Investment. *Note: Due to significant lags in publishing expenditure data by the US Treasury Department, the dashboard does not provide information beyond Sept. 30, 2023.*
2. **Grantmaking:** Community-based organizations are crucial to ensure federal funds reach the communities most impacted by the pandemic. Applying for, deploying, or meeting compliance requirements of government grants can be challenging for smaller,

less-resourced organizations. The Trust has granted nearly $2 million to help organizations overcome barriers and bolster their capacity to manage government grants.

3. **Advocacy:** Based on the lessons learned from tracking federal funds and supporting organizations in overcoming challenges in the government grantmaking process, this strategy also includes advocating for reforms to government procurement and grantmaking processes to promote greater access for less-resourced organizations.

Need/Opportunity Statement:

This funding opportunity aims to ensure that the administrative, financial and compliance requirements of government grants are adequately funded and responds to a need that community serving organizations have themselves identified.

Unless otherwise negotiated, organizations applying for government grants can only use 10 percent of the awarded amount toward indirect costs. For many organizations, the actual cost of administering and complying with government grants exceeds the capped amount. By providing organizations currently managing government grants with general operating support to match the de minimis indirect cost rate, the Trust aims to contribute toward adequately funding the true administrative and compliance costs.

Goals and Outcomes:

In addition to ensuring organizations can overcome barriers and challenges to managing government funds in the short term, the Trust's longer-term goal is to advocate for reforms in government grantmaking and procurement processes to dismantle these barriers and challenges altogether. To continue learning from grant recipients and help inform future advocacy efforts, we selected the following outcomes that align with the Trust's Equitable and Inclusive Economic Recovery strategy. The outcomes selected should measure how this general operating support will strengthen the organization's administrative and financial capacity.

- **Expand Partnerships Opportunities:** Tracks the organization's ability to engage and sustain partnerships with public or private organizations.
- **Increase Organizations or Coalition Capacity:** Captures the change in organizational or coalition capacity.
- **Increase Organizational Effectiveness:** Describes changes in staffing and service provision to increase the organization's delivery of effective services.

Measures of Progress

Applicants must select and report on the outcomes that best capture the administrative, financial, or compliance barriers these funds will help them overcome and select clear Measures of Progress (MOPs).

MOPs provide measurable and reportable evidence that the organization has effectively achieved – or is on the path toward achieving- its objectives. These are what can be measured during the term of the grant period and contribute to the applicant's selected longer-term outcomes.

The Trust's Learning and Impact team is happy to support applicants as they work to identify appropriate measures and will provide information on best practices at an information session, dates provided in the information above.

Priority Strategies and Activities:

Since the Trust began grantmaking under the Equitable and Inclusive Economic Recovery strategy, we have learned that the challenges organizations face when managing government grants and contracts are not unique to ARPA or other pandemic response and recovery appropriations but rather reflective of systemic barriers and challenges associated with government grants in general, regardless of the government level which funds originate. As such, the Trust will not restrict eligibility to organizations managing ARPA-funded grants but will prioritize organizations managing these one-time funds.

Priority will be given to organizations managing government grants that fund programmatic activities that align with the following issue areas:
1. **Community Investment:** Grants that enable economic and community development, support small businesses, or invest in infrastructure projects.
2. **Community Safety:** Such grants fund organizations to engage in or promote alternative emergency response, provide support to people who have experienced violence, support returning citizens, engage in violence prevention, or reform the criminal justice system.
3. **Household Supportive Services:** These grants enable organizations to provide human services to individuals and households who need assistance meeting their basic needs, or promote access to public benefits, including direct cash assistance.
4. **Housing:** Grants enabling organizations to provide or connect residents in need to housing resources such as affordable rental housing, assistance for homeowners, rental assistance, shelter, or other supports for people experiencing or at risk of being unhoused.
5. **Workforce Development:** Grants that support organizations to connect people to employment opportunities, assist people with wraparound support to sustain employment, or provide job training. Such grants may also fund organizations to provide employment opportunities for youth.

Grantmaking Criteria:

This funding opportunity is designed to help organizations overcome barriers and challenges to administering government grants without adding to their capacity limitations. The letter of inquiry for this funding program will be evaluated on the following overarching question: *How does your organization meet the needs and opportunities defined in the RFP?*

To capture the information needed to evaluate applications, please copy and paste the questions below and provide short responses (max 100 words each) to each question in the narrative section of the LOI.

1. Name of the government grant for which you are applying to receive matching funds?
2. What government agency awarded this grant? Include the government level that houses the agency.
3. What is the total awarded amount for this grant?
4. When was the grant awarded?
5. When does this grant expire?
6. From which appropriation source is this grant funded? E.g., ARPA, CDBG, City Corporate Funds, State general revenue, etc. You may write "unknown" if you do not know.
7. Does your organization have a negotiated indirect cost rate? If so, what is it?
8. Optional: Please provide additional information or context you would like to share that was not addressed in previous questions. Max 100 words.
9. Required Document Upload: To be eligible for this funding opportunity, please upload documentation confirming your organization has been awarded the government grant listed in your Letter of Inquiry (LOI). Upload this documentation to the Uploaded Files page of your LOI form in GrantCentral.

To be eligible for this funding opportunity, organizations MUST also upload documentation confirming they have been awarded the grant listed in the LOI.

Grant awards will equal 10 percent of the total amount of the government grant for which match general operating support is requested, up to $50,000. While organizations may receive multiple government grants, match support will only be granted toward one government grant. This grant is not eligible for renewal.

Eligible Applicants:

To be eligible for a grant award, an applicant must be:
- A nonprofit organization with evidence that it (a) has been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code; (b) is fiscally sponsored by a Section 501(c)(3) organization; (c) or is a governmental unit within the meaning of Section 170(c)(1) of the Code;
- Described in Section 170(b)(1)(A) of the Code, other than a "disqualified supporting organization" within the meaning of Section 4966(d)(4) of the Code; and
- Located within and/or primarily serving residents of Cook County, Illinois.
- Provide documentation that they have been awarded a currently active government grant with priority will be given to organizations that have an active grant award funded by ARPA or another pandemic recovery appropriation funding stream.

Sponsored organizations without 501(c)(3) status must identify their fiscal sponsor as soon as possible and ask them to complete an organization profile in The Chicago Community Trust's grants management system, GrantCentral, before the sponsored organization's application submission. Fiscal sponsors must log in and complete and certify an organization profile in GrantCentral at **https://community-cct.force.com/grantcentral/s/** before application submission.

<u>Ineligible Uses</u>:

- Applicants may not currently receive capacity-building support under the Trust Equitable and Inclusive Economic Recovery strategy.
- Applicants may not currently have a general operating support grant from the Trust.
- Government grants for which applicants are requesting match general operating support must expire on or after August 31, 2025.

<u>Evaluation and Learning</u>:

The Trust is committed to achieving our long-term goals and outcomes in collaboration with stakeholders and partners. We are developing outcome measures that inform progress toward our collective mission to strengthen the Chicago region. Specifically, the outcomes track progress towards the Trust's strategic goal of increasing household wealth through building income and individual and community assets in underinvested communities. The specific outcomes you select should be based on why you think the project or strategy will lead to the anticipated result or long-term change outlined in the request for proposal (i.e., your theory of change). After you identify the aligned outcomes, you will select specific, time-limited measures of progress. These provide measurable and reportable evidence that a proposed project or organization has effectively achieved – or is on the path to achieving - its objectives. They can be measured during the grant period, contribute to your longer-term outcomes, and align with the Trust's strategic priorities. For shorter-term grants (one year), these outcomes may not be achieved during the project's duration. For each measure of progress, you will identify your baseline, target, data collection approach, and the type of data (qualitative and quantitative). If awarded a grant, you will update the information with actuals to describe progress toward your target. In addition to what you share through site visits, convenings and reporting, we will use this information to inform our collective understanding of progress and challenges to inform next steps.

We encourage grant applicants to identify a limited number of outcomes (1-2) and related measures of progress (2-3 across all outcomes) to those directly aligned with the RFP and your work.

Sharing successes or challenges in achieving measures of progress is critical to our collective learning, decision-making and impact. We recognize there could be challenges to implementing any grant, many of which are not under your control and may prevent you from achieving your targets. However, learning from these challenges and successes is an integral part of the Trust's learning and impact aims.

Potential grant recipients who are new to developing metrics or work plans or want to learn more about developing measures of progress can contact **learning@cct.org**.

Collection of Demographic Data

The Chicago Community Trust serves a wide variety of constituents and organizations. As such, we collect organizational demographic data to inform us about our potential and current grant recipients' diverse, representative and inclusive staffing practices. This data helps us ensure that the organizations we fund are representative of the communities we serve. Therefore, your Organization Profile should provide demographic data on your organization's board, leadership, staff, and volunteers to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives of impacted communities.

Application Process:

The application process will consist of the following steps:
(1) **Creating/Updating & Recertifying Organization Profile:** If this is your organization's first time applying for a grant from the Trust, you must create an organization profile in GrantCentral, the Trust's grants management portal. If you already have an organization profile, you must review, update and recertify it. Updates and recertification also require uploading updated financial documents (most recent 990 and/or financial audit), board list, and organizational budget.
(2) **Completing a Letter of Inquiry**: Please copy and paste the questions listed under grant criteria in the LOI and provide brief responses to each. Unless marked as optional, each question must be addressed to be considered for an invitation to submit a full application.
(3) **Full Application**: Due to funding constraints, not every organization will be invited to submit a full proposal. Organizations will be selected to submit full proposals based on how closely their LOIs meet the criteria listed in the Priority Strategies and Activities section of this RFP.
(4) **Site Visits**: Following submission of the full applications, applicants will be invited to participate in a site visit with Trust staff to address any additional questions and further describe the organization's work, the role government grants play in resourcing that work, and how philanthropy can be a more meaningful partner.

Sponsored organizations without 501(c)(3) status must identify their fiscal sponsor as soon as possible and ask them to complete an organization profile in GrantCentral, at https://community-cct.force.com/grantcentral/s/login/, before the sponsored organization's application submission.

Submission Deadlines and Other Key Dates:

- The LOI application deadline is November 26th, 2024.
- Applicants will be informed of their LOI advancing to the full application by December 12, 2024.
- The full application deadline is January 15, 2025.
- Site visits will take place between January 13 and 17, 2025.
- Funding decisions will be made by February 7, 2025.

- Applicants will be notified of awards by February 14, 2025. Applicants invited to submit a Full Application but not chosen for funding will also be notified by this date.

Contact Information:

For technical questions regarding GrantCentral, email grants@cct.org.

For programmatic and application content questions, email Marcus Samuel at msamuel@cct.org.