

2026 Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities

Funding Announcement

February 2, 2026

In 2026, the Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities mark its 10-year anniversary, recognizing a decade of partnership with community leaders, residents, and grassroots organizations across Chicago's South and West Sides. Over the past ten years, the Fund has supported locally led initiatives that strengthen community leadership, foster social cohesion, and advance community defined approaches to creating safe and peaceful spaces. This milestone honors the relationships, trust, and collective efforts that have shaped the Fund's work, while looking ahead to continued learning, reflection, and sustained investment in its 24 priority neighborhoods.

Recognizing the potential for a spike in violence in Chicago during the summer months, the Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities, a coalition of more than 50 funders committed to aligning their grant-making to support proven and promising approaches to reducing gun violence, will once again administer the Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities, a \$1,000,000 fund to support activities by nonprofit organizations that build community cohesion, provide safe spaces, and promote peace. A rapid response process has been established to receive and review short proposals and quickly award grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

To qualify, applicants must propose activities that adhere to the Seven Field Principles (7FP) model, an evidence-based framework that has been successful in fostering strong communities and reducing violence (outlined below). For more information, see https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314157745_7_Principles_To_Reducing_Violence_Re-Engaging_Youth_to_Society. Collaboration among community organizations is also strongly encouraged, as the 7FP model is more effective when implemented in a comprehensive and coordinated way.

The following community areas have been prioritized for support based on the number and rate of shootings and homicides: Austin, Auburn Gresham, Burnside, Chatham, Chicago Lawn, Englewood, Fuller Park, Gage Park, East Garfield Park, Greater Grand Crossing, Humboldt Park, Lower West Side (Pilsen), New City (Back of the Yards), North Lawndale, Riverdale, Roseland, South Chicago, South Lawndale (Little Village), South Shore, Washington Park, West Englewood, West Garfield Park, West Pullman, and Woodlawn.

The application for funding is available at <https://agency.e-cimpact.com/login.aspx?org=15085>.

The application deadline is March 2, 2026. Grant awards will be announced on May 1, 2026. Checks will be distributed on May 14, 2026. All activities must be completed by October 31, 2026.

Statement of Purpose

Recognizing the potential for a spike in violence in Chicago during the summer months, the Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities, a coalition of more than 50 funders committed to aligning their grant-making to support proven and promising approaches to reducing gun violence, will once again administer the Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities (Chicago Fund).

The \$1,000,000 Chicago Fund offers rapid-response grant opportunities designed to support activities by nonprofit organizations that build community cohesion, provide safe spaces, and promote peace. It has been created in direct response to the many people and grassroots organizations that are taking on-the-ground action in their neighborhoods.

While the participating philanthropic organizations are already engaged in larger, long-term efforts to help address the problem of gun violence in Chicago, the Chicago Fund is purposely intended to provide hyper-local, immediate support to smaller, neighborhood-based groups during the summer and early fall. It is not meant to be a quick fix to the broad and complex problem of gun violence, nor is it a substitute for the intensive and wide-ranging efforts already underway or planned to respond to the many root causes of the challenge.

Who is eligible?

The Chicago Fund will award grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 to nonprofit organizations with annual operating budgets no larger than \$500,000 engaging in activities that build community cohesion, provide safe spaces, and promote peace. Applicants are strongly encouraged, but not required, to propose activities that adhere to one or more of the Seven Field Principles (7FP) model, an evidence-based framework with the following components, which has been successful in fostering strong communities and reducing violence:

1. **Create a sense of community** through programs and activities based on community members' ideas for reducing violence. These programs should build relationships and networks among residents, families, schools, nonprofits, churches, businesses, etc.
2. **Share knowledge across generations** by providing models, tools, and techniques for learning. These programs, such as mentoring and leadership development, will give community members access to new skills and information.
3. **Create a sense of connectedness** by engaging large numbers of community members in group activities. These activities will allow for youth, adults, community organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, businesses, etc., to come together and collectively take part in positive, proactive community events such as back-to-school rallies, peace walks, neighborhood festivals, arts and sports activities, and prosocial youth programs.
4. **Provide opportunities to learn social and emotional skills** through activities such as leadership development workshops, peace circles, and volunteering that promote self-control, empathy, and positive communication.
5. **Improve the self-esteem and self-efficacy (sense of power) of youth** in the community by providing opportunities for leadership, employment, and skill-building.

6. **Build relationships between youth and adults through** activities that create safe spaces for youth.
7. **Minimize trauma by connecting community members with caregivers and support services** such as well-being workshops and events with community service providers.

Collaboration among community organizations is strongly recommended, as the 7FP model is more effective when implemented in a comprehensive and coordinated way. Organizations working in the prioritized areas are invited to apply.

The Chicago Fund will consider applications from groups, agencies, and organizations with a valid 501(c)(3) designation or a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor whose mission aligns with the fund's goal of supporting grassroots, community-based solutions for safer Chicago neighborhoods. Grants may not be used to support or advocate for the purchase or use of firearms as part of any response.

Eligible recipients must conduct programming and activities in prioritized communities. Criteria for funding will include the proposed activities and the degree to which they follow the 7FP framework, the record of accomplishment of the applicant, the extent of collaboration with others, and the willingness to share information and plans.

Timeline

- **February 2, 2026** - RFP Released
- **February 5, 2026** - Technical Assistance Session (12 PM)
- **February 18, 2026** - Technical Assistance Session (6 PM)
- **March 2, 2026** - Application Deadline
- **May 1, 2026** - Grant Awards Announced
- **May 14, 2026** - Checks Distributed
- **October 31, 2026** - Completion of all activities
- **November 2026** - Final Report Due

Fiscal Sponsorship

The Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities funds nonprofit organizations with evidence of tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It also accepts applications from organizations that have a nonprofit fiscal sponsor. It does not provide funding to projects or organizations outside the United States or to individuals.

A fiscal sponsor is a nonprofit organization that provides fiduciary oversight, fiscal management, and other administrative services to help build the capacity of organizations that do not have their own 501(c)(3) charitable status. These organizations may work with a fiscal sponsor to receive grants from United Way of Metro Chicago (UWMC).

Applicants may select their own fiscal sponsor or consider one of the following organizations, which has agreed to serve as fiscal sponsors:

Resilience Partners NFP

Contacts: Deirdre Bates & Brittany Blackwell
dbates@resiliencepartnersnfp.org & bblackwell@rpnfp.org
www.resiliencepartnersnfp.org
312-281-6552

The Monroe Foundation

Contact: Otis Monroe
omonroe@themonroefoundation.org
www.themonroefoundation.org
773-315-9720

Funding and Oversight

The Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities is a collaborative fund housed at The United Way of Metro Chicago. Each member funder has provided its funding in accordance with its respective processes and agreements.

Oversight: An Advisory Committee has been established to review applications and make grant recommendations. Members include:

- Anna Lee, Vice President, Initiatives and Public Programming, United Way of Metro Chicago, Co-Chair
- Anna LauBach, Program Director, Special Initiatives, McCormick Foundation, Co-Chair
- Jai Jones, The Chicago Fund Project Manager, The United Way of Metro Chicago
- Samantha Edwards, Associate Director, PSPC
- Kendyl Mathews, Associate, PSPC
- Joanne Otte, Program Manager, Chicago Community Trust
- Laura Gutierrez, Senior Associate Program Officer, Builders Initiative
- Kelsey Malnati Howell, Executive Director, Malnati Family Foundation
- Jalen Preacely, Impact Coordinator, Chicago Community Trust
- Teresa Prim, Principal, Prim Lawrence Group
- Beth Valukas, Senior Program Officer, Pritzker Pucker Foundation
- Cosette Nazon-Wilburn, Executive Director, Love, Unity & Values Institute
- Sarah Bertman, Impact Coordinator, Chicago Community Trust
- Caleb Herod, Director, Chicago Community Trust
- Michelle Agunloye, Citibank

Grant Amount: Grants from the Chicago Fund will range from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

Use of Funds: Funds may be used for activities that build community cohesion, provide safe spaces, and promote peace. The grant agreement will contain a provision that the funds will not be used to support or advocate for the purchase or use of guns as part of any activity.

Form of Proposal: Organizations requesting funds must submit a short proposal and budget through United Way's grants management system, addressing the following:

- Community(ies) to be served.
- Qualifications of the applicant, including existing programming and success to date
- Planned activities, expected participants, community partners, and anticipated outcomes.
- How the activities will contribute to building community cohesion, creating safe spaces, and/or improving relationships among children, youth, adults, and elderly people.
- Budget for requested funds.
- Total annual operating budget of requesting organization.

Funding Guidelines

- 1-day events - \$3,500 MAX
- Multi Day events \$5,000-\$7,500 MAX
- Summer Camps / multi-week programming \$5,000 - \$10,000
- Personnel allocations should not exceed 10% of grant budget

The application will be available at <https://agency.e-cimpace.com/login.aspx?org=15085>

Virtual information sessions to help guide organizations through the application process will be held on **February 5th at 12PM and February 18th at 6PM**. Attending an Information Session is not a requirement to apply for funding.

Please RSVP at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/fKlluGuPShGK1NFtfu9kig>

Reporting

Each applicant must submit an online final report with the following information:

- Who and how many were impacted?
- What was achieved?
- How were the activities aligned with the 7FP?
- What lessons were learned?
- What, if anything, did not work and why?
- How was the money spent compared to the submitted budget?

Evaluation

An independent evaluation will be conducted to assess the reach, activities, and impact of the Chicago Fund. Application and reporting materials will be shared with the evaluator. Grantees may be asked to participate in evaluation methods, including surveys, interviews, or program observations.

Funding Decisions

Funding decisions will be announced on May 1, 2026, with checks distributed on May 14, 2026.

Meetings to Network and Share Lessons Learned

Grantees will be asked to meet periodically during and at the end of the grant period to share their experiences with funders and peers. These meetings will provide opportunities to communicate lessons learned and inform future decisions about the Chicago Fund.

Contact Information

To learn more please reach out to Jai Jones, The Chicago Fund Project Manager at jai.jones@liveunitedchicago.org