



Willie's Warriors Leadership Initiative

Application DUE DATE: **Monday, September 9, 2019 at 11:59 p.m.**

Black women play key roles in every sector of our society, from government to corporate, from faith-based to community organizations. As leaders, they advocate for justice, racial and gender equity in institutions and neighborhoods, but they often experience tremendous isolation in these leadership roles.

Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) is committed to supporting Black women as leaders in making change on every front. We believe that when we invest in women and girls, we build strong families and communities for all. While the country grapples with the threats to gains made through the Civil Rights Women's Movement, and other key liberation struggles, Black women, who themselves have often experienced inequity in its harshest forms, have stepped up among the vanguard of leadership in preserving equity for all.

CFW, with support from the estate of the Reverend Willie Taplin Barrow in partnership with the African American Legacy, an initiative of the Chicago Community Trust, is building a network and pipeline of Black women leaders committed to advancing issues of equity in Chicago through the Willie's Warriors Leadership Initiative. Rev. Willie T. Barrow, a civil rights activist, minister, co-founder of Operation PUSH, and mentor to multiple generations, was committed to creating an ever-expanding pipeline of leaders. She helped build connections with others working for change, often saying, "We are not so divided as we are disconnected."

Warriors Cohort

The Willie's Warriors Leadership Initiative will be comprised of a cohort of 20-25 Black women leaders representing a diverse cross-section of the Chicago region, including socio-economic status, orientation, birth country, and professions. Willie's Warriors is open to Black women from all sectors, industries and educational levels and backgrounds.

Potential Warriors should have 10-20 years of relevant experience, including experience leading people, projects, communities, or initiatives. Potential Warriors should have demonstrated a commitment to issues of equity and justice.

Curriculum

The program's co-created curriculum will focus on systems change, economic empowerment, communications and building alliances. Warriors will gain a better sense of themselves as leaders and how best to sustain themselves while moving their communities forward. Creating a safe space, trust and learning from each other's experiences will be key components of the program.

Program Goals

Willie's Warriors aims to empower women in the cohort to realize their true leadership potential. Through Willie's Warriors and its investments in women and girls, CFW is investing in stronger, more stable families and communities for all, with the goals listed below.

Network: Advance the legacy of Reverend Willie Barrow by building a cross-sector network of Black women in the Chicagoland area

Build and Sustain Power and Leadership: Reclaim space for Black women leaders to build and sustain power

Transform Systems: Elevate the leadership of Black women to transform themselves, communities and systems

Time Commitment

The third cohort of the Willie's Warriors Leadership Initiative will meet at least monthly beginning in February 2020, through October 2020. An orientation session will be held in December 2019. The opening and closing retreats are overnight sessions that will occur on a Friday, starting as early as 10 a.m., and Saturday, ending as late as 5 p.m. Other sessions will be held on a Friday - dates and times can be found below. Cohort members will be responsible for arranging any time off from work required to attend the session.

The planned dates for the next cohort will be:

- Friday, December 6, 2019, 3 p.m. - 7 p.m. - Orientation
- Friday, February 7, – Saturday, February 8, 2020 – Opening Retreat – Redefining Leadership
- Friday, March 13, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. – Session I – Communications and Building Networks and Alliances
- Friday, April 17, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. – Session II – TBD by Warrior Interest
- Friday, May 8, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. – Session III – Economic Empowerment: Money, Entrepreneurship, Philanthropy and Wealth
- Friday, June 12, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. – Session IV – TBD by Warrior Interest
- Friday, July 10, 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. – Networking Event
- Friday, August 14, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. - Session V – Warrior Designed Session
- Friday, September 25, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. –Session VI – Structural and Systems Change
- Friday, October 23 - Saturday, October 24 – Closing Retreat – Sustaining and Transforming Ourselves

If you cannot commit to attend the pre-scheduled sessions, please apply at another time.

Program Fee

The fee for the program is \$250 for cohort members. If this fee would pose a burden to a potential Warrior, fee waivers and discounts are available.

Selection Process

This application will close, Monday, September 9 at 11:59 p.m. (CT).

A Selection Committee comprised of representatives from CFW, past Warriors, and the Willie's Warriors Advisory Board will review all applications. You may be asked to participate in an in-person interview in October, 2019.

We anticipate notifying Warrior applicants of selection results by early November.

Who was the Rev. Willie T. Barrow?

The Rev. Willie T. Barrow was a Civil Rights activist, minister, co-founder of Operation PUSH, and mentor to multiple generations. As a leader in Chicago's civil rights movement, Rev. Barrow believed in breaking barriers and challenging the status quo, mentoring an ever-expanding pipeline of leaders. She helped to build connections with others working for change, often saying, "We are not so divided as we are disconnected."

Rev. Barrow believed in bringing women together to support and learn from each other. That work continues through Willie's Warriors, a leadership development cohort of Black women in the Chicago region. Rev. Barrow's legacy and fierce commitment to justice lives on through The Willie Taplin Barrow Fund for Black Women's Leadership at Chicago Foundation for Women.

Willie's Warriors was created to honor and continue the legacy of the Reverend Willie Taplin Barrow, with support from Rev. Barrow's estate in partnership with African American Legacy (AAL) at the Chicago Community Trust.

Please be prepared to discuss how Rev. Barrow's leadership is reflected in or has impacted how you lead, should you come in for an in person interview.

Short Essay Questions

1. In 300 words or less, what would you describe as your leadership strengths and challenges?*
2. In 300 words or less, please describe your personal goal(s) for participating in Willie's Warriors?*
3. In 300 words or less, please describe what you believe you can offer by participating in Willie's Warriors?*
4. In 500 words or less, please describe how you have demonstrated a commitment to issues of equity and justice, specifically racial and/or gender.*
5. Have you participated in other leadership development programs in the last 10 years? If so, please list them, and in a sentence or two describe what you gained from your participation.
6. As mentioned in the description, a goal of the program is to create a network and a pipeline of Black women's leaders. After completion of the program, are you willing to be an engaged alumna? If yes, how will you be engaged and add value as an alumna?
7. Please attach a resume or bio of no more than two pages.

8. (Optional Question) The Selection Committee wants to afford an opportunity for potential Warriors to best represent what they have to offer or gain from the program. You may use the fields below to link to or upload additional pieces of information (maximum three) about yourself, including videos, art, media coverage, or any other materials that you wish to share with the Selection Committee.