About Chicago Foundation for Women

Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) is a public foundation working to advance gender equity, which we believe to be inherently interconnected with racial, economic and health equity. CFW envisions a world in which all women and girls, transgender, and gender non-binary people have the opportunity to thrive in safe, just and healthy communities. We celebrate the spectrum of identities and experiences of women and girls, uplift their leadership and center the voices of community to achieve true equity.

CFW looks at the broad spectrum of needs of all women. We support the areas of freedom from violence, economic security and access to health, which we see as integrally related and are paths forward toward an equitable society.

Spring 2020 Cycle Focus

We are dedicated to expanding women’s and girls’ freedom from violence in all its forms including family violence, intimate partner and community violence, child and elder abuse, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, sexual exploitation and human trafficking. These forms of violence are interconnected and often share similar root causes.

There is an epidemic of violence against women, girls, transgender and gender non-binary people of color; many have experienced harm, gone missing or been murdered across the United States and in the Chicago region. Sadly, this is not a new issue. In the spring of 2019, the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times, and Block Club Chicago published articles highlighting communities’ demand for police and government response to conduct full investigations and assign a Task Force to review cases of missing and murdered women from communities on the south and west sides of Chicago. In December, the New York Times published, “In Indian Country, a Crisis of Missing Women”. The Urban Indian Health Institute released a report, “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls”, which highlighted the difficulty in accessing data, and the limited coverage and follow-up on missing and murdered women of color in the media.

The perpetual invisibility of the lives of women and girls in our communities experiencing gender-based violence is why CFW will focus its spring grantmaking on exploring community solutions, interventions, and deeper interrogations to understand the root causes of this ongoing epidemic. We believe this is of great importance and we are extending our voice and dollars to draw sustained attention and resources to this issue.

For this cycle, we will prioritize applications that focus on the following populations:

Communities of women, girls, transgender, and gender non-binary people that have been under-invested in, particularly,

1. Missing women, girls, transgender, and gender non-binary people of color from communities on the south and west sides of Chicago

2. Transgender and/or gender non-binary individuals who have experienced violence across the Chicagoland area

We are interested in:
1. Grassroots and community-based approaches, for example: restorative practices, community- and survivor-centered initiatives, and community organizing.

2. Interventions across the prevention continuum, particularly “upstream” ideas that look at shifting social cultures and norms not only of individuals and communities, but also practices of institutions and systems in ways that are more equitable across gender and race. These can include strategies that involve men and boys.

3. An intersectional approach which reframes gender-based violence not as an issue in isolation, but as one that integrates social, health, economic, and community forces and assets as integral to defining solutions.

4. Approaches to innovatively elevate and spotlight the on-going epidemic of gender-based violence in our communities. These approaches can include research, communications/media strategies, and community organizing.