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.

Grantmaking Approach

The On the Margins: Economic Security for Women of Color Through the Coronavirus Crisis and Beyond, by Closing the Women’s Wealth Gap, stated, “Women of color—Black, Latinx, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Asian American and Pacific Islander women, non-European immigrant women, and non-white lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ) women—with low-incomes will suffer severely as a result of this crisis. Women of color are currently working on the frontlines of the coronavirus crisis as child care workers, home health and personal care aides, grocery store clerks, and registered nurses, low-paid positions that put them at risk of exposure. They are also overrepresented in occupations in industries such as restaurants, retail stores, and hotels that are being forced to eliminate workers.”

Too often the solutions and interventions that are proposed to address the health, economic, and safety impacts of COVID-19 do not consider the lives and experiences of women of color and other marginalized communities. As a result, the interventions do not provide the resources and services that women of color and their families need to survive the health and economic turmoil and uncertainty that is resulting from the on-going pandemic. CFW centers our interventions, advocacy, and grantmaking on the needs of these individuals and families.

CFW’s COVID-19 Community Response Grants made possible from the Response, Recovery and Resilience Fund

Purpose and grant type:

Grants will provide modest short term funding to organizations that are community-based and are in the position to rapidly move resources into the communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. CFW believes that these organizations will understand the needs of women, girls, transgender, and gender non-binary people of color and their families because they have deep relationships within the community. Community organizations, particularly those that include leadership from the community or are women of
Grants will fall into two categories, 1) Relief/services to address immediate or on-going needs or short term emergency advocacy activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, or 2) capacity building support to stabilize organizations that directly serve communities. These grants are time-limited and flexible to support organizations as circumstances change and new needs and challenges are identified.

1) Direct support/advocacy: Grants are intended to provide relief for the most urgent needs, such as food, housing and other supports that have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic or to provide support to manage the on-going impact of the pandemic, including PPE, technology for virtual work or education and other identified supports. Additionally, grants can be used to support short term advocacy efforts to influence relief efforts (stimulus and other emergency policies).

2) Capacity building support: These grants can be used to stabilize community organizations that directly support communities in need and are in the best position to direct COVID-19 relief resources. CFW believes it is vital that organizations that have seen an increase in demand for their services or have shifted their service delivery models are able to continue to operate and support the community. Organizations can request capacity building support in order to transition their operations to the new realities.

**Priority Communities:**
Women, girls, transgender, and gender non-binary people of color, frontline workers, single-parent headed households, immigrants, and domestic workers.

Frontline organizations, grassroots organizations, and/or women of color-led organizations that serve women, girls, transgender, and gender non-binary people of color with budgets below $4 million.

**Process:**
These are short term, one time grants to support your efforts to provide services or to influence advocacy to impact the immediate and on-going needs of the community that you serve. Grants could be used to provide direct services, short term advocacy, or to support the stability of your organization.

Grants will be up to $7,500.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. August - December due dates: Wednesday, August 26
We understand there is a high level of uncertainty in both when the crisis impact of COVID-19 will recede and what the changing needs of the community will be, so CFW grants will be flexible and we plan to keep this fund open throughout the fiscal year 2021 (June 30, 2021).

Find the short application here.

Eligible organizations must:

1. Be a 501c3 or have a fiscal agent with a 501c3

2. Provide services in the Chicagoland area (collar counties and in some cases statewide)

3. Organizational Budget under $4 million

4. Serve one or more priority communities

5. Be able to affirm CFW’s Guiding Principles:

Chicago Foundation for Women is committed to supporting basic rights and equity of women, girls, transgender, and gender non-binary people. We consider our work both in terms of the outcome as well as the process. It is not just what we are doing, but how we are doing it. The Guiding Principles provide a framework for sharing CFW’s values with the wider community, connecting its work across all issue areas and change strategies.

Our organization supports Chicago Foundation for Women's Guiding Principles of:

- The importance of a gender lens in projects and organizations, meaning it is designed to benefit women, girls, transgender, and/or gender non-binary people.
- A woman's right to reproductive justice.
- Organizational board and staff members strive to reflect the diversity of communities served.
- Increasing accessibility to persons with disabilities.
- Providing a respectful environment for LGBTQ people.

For more information about CFW’s Guiding Principles click here.

To review CFW’s Gender Equity Framework please click here.