

chicago foundation for women

2020 Catalyst Fund for Reproductive Justice Proposal - Descriptions

Arise Chicago	Current Grantee	Amount: \$20,000
<p>Project Name: General Operating Support</p> <p>Proposed Use of Funds: Arise Chicago is a 29-year old workers’ rights organization. Arise educates, organizes and develops the leadership of low-wage, primarily immigrant, majority female workers, while organizing a broad range of faith leaders to support workplace and policy campaigns.</p> <p>As a workers rights organization, Arise supports workers particularly immigrants, womyn and people of color to fight all forms of workplace exploitation, including all forms of gendered oppression at work. Covid-19 has exacerbated the devastation that many womyn are experiencing, including balancing work and e-learning, with many womyn member heads of households, single moms, and partnered womyn handling a majority of childcare. Additionally, the exploitation including sexual harassment, did not end when the pandemic began. Arise continues to support any worker wanting to take action around gender inequity issues at the workplace.</p> <p>Arise supports workers in individual workplaces, and at a systemic level to create economically stable, family-supporting jobs so that all families can thrive. From fair wages to paid sick days policies, Arise works so that workers can live and parents can parent with dignity. Arise has and will continue to support any worker wanting to take action around reproductive justice issues at the workplace. Arise supports worker campaigns that include hiring discrimination, sexual harassment, illegal firing in cases of reported or suspected abortion or pregnancy, denial of necessary adjusted work duties due to pregnancy, use of chemicals that may risk healthy pregnancies or that can impact the ability to parent or chose to become a parent with dignity.</p> <p>The workplace is a primary site of struggle for reproductive justice. Arise organizes for economic and physical security for all workers, especially for womyn of color and immigrant womyn. Arise regularly contributes to the movement through our unique approach to reproductive justice via the workplace by ensuring that workplaces are welcoming to parents; working toward jobs that provide economic stability, healthy and safe environments for womyn including during pregnancy; and advocating for family-friendly policies such as paid sick days.</p>		

Cabrini Green Legal Aid	Current Grantee	Amount: \$40,000
<p>Project Name: CGLA Advocacy Work for Women and Mothers</p> <p>Proposed Use of Funds: CGLA ensures the voices and experiences of women impacted by incarceration are at the forefront of criminal system reform conversations. It has unique experience and insight into the impact of the criminal</p>		

system on women and girls through its direct service in prisons and jails and its advocacy work led by those with lived experience.

To ensure its efforts are informed by those most affected by the justice system, it has developed several tables of justice-impacted individuals, with a focus on women and families. These tables include the Leadership Council, made up of justice-impacted individuals who advise the policy work and provide direct education to stakeholders and influencers on issues important to them; Visible Voices, a peer support group for reentering women at Grace House; and families participating in the Reunification Ride program, which supports family reunification and visitation for incarcerated mothers at Logan Correctional Facility.

In the coming year, a key Policy and Advocacy goal is to promote justice for women by ensuring implementation of laws addressing how the criminal legal system affects families and mothers, exploring new avenues to improve statewide policy, and building the capacity of its Leaders to engage in policy as it continues to expand its gender-based justice work.

Chicago Freedom School	Current Grantee	Amount: \$25,000
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Project Name: Project HealUS

Proposed Use of Funds:

Founded in 2007, Chicago Freedom School (CFS) builds intergenerational partnerships and facilitates programming for young people of color while offering training to individuals and organizations committed to movement building. It is rooted in legacies of justice and liberation, transformative and restorative justice, anti-oppression, and healing justice frameworks.

Project HealUs activates and prepares young people of color ages 14-24 from marginalized communities who identify as female/femme/trans/non-binary across Chicago to explore, engage, and expand the work of the reproductive justice movement within their communities. Project HealUs participants build leadership through political education, skill development, and youth-led action through a youth-created curriculum focused on the history of the reproductive justice movement, interrupting misogyny, reproductive planning, rape culture awareness, compassionate countering strategies, and community organizing.

The Chicago Freedom School approaches wellness as a revolutionary act. It believes that healing justice is a necessary aspect of the social justice movement and, as a result, are intentional about expanding its models and practices in this area. The goal of Project HealUs is to activate and prepare young people of color ages 14-24 from marginalized communities to explore, engage, and expand the work of the reproductive justice movement within their communities.

Building capacity within this network of diverse leaders is an intentional strategy for systems change. In addition to public protest and policy advocacy, building a network of informed, skilled individuals ensures that ongoing action for systemic change does not rely on the actions of charismatic leaders. Research and experience demonstrates that individuals feel more confident to take action for social justice when they form close relationships with peers who are passionate about the same issues; when they feel connected to history; and when they collectively plan, act, and reflect. Ultimately, Project HealUs aims to develop a resilient group who will continue to act for change in multiple ways over the long haul.

Equal Hope	Current Grantee	Amount: \$43,000
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<p>Project Name: General Operating Support</p> <p>Proposed Use of Funds:</p> <p>Equal Hope (EH) is dedicated to eliminating racial, ethnic and class disparities in health outcomes, originally through the lens of breast cancer and recently expanded to health disparities more broadly. EH supports a woman’s right to reproductive justice and autonomy and supports the fight to end oppressive policies that deny women the right to take control of their own bodies. Through the lens of breast and cervical cancer and improving access to comprehensive primary care including reproductive healthcare, Equal Hope works to meet the needs of women – most often from disenfranchised groups, including Black and Latina women, low-income people and those disconnected from the healthcare system – by connecting them to facilities that provide comprehensive services.</p> <p>EH has been engaged in advocacy and public policy since inception. The first year of activities centered around Town Halls and other community-based activities listening to the lived experience of women of color and their experiences with the breast health system. Additionally, research activities were pursued by Equal Hope, the Sinai Urban Health Institute and University of Illinois over multiple years. In the past four years, Equal Hope has worked to bring both these approaches together by adding a community driven and informed focus through an Advocacy Council - affectionately known as the "Fierce Ladies" by lawmakers in Springfield.</p> <p>EH has historically worked closely with a number of partners across its three program areas. Now that EH has expanded to address cervical cancer and health disparities more broadly, its coalition needs to grow as well. It plans to be more intentional in developing relationships with organizations in adjacent policy areas, like maternal health, reproductive justice and LGBTQI+ healthcare. The ultimate goal with this objective is to create a new, multi-dimensional Equal Voice Health Equity Coalition in the city of Chicago.</p> <p>The Equal Voice Health Equity Coalition (outlined in goals section below) will help design and launch an ambassadors program that includes a multi-part training. The Equal Voice Health Equity training program will ultimately replace its small existing Advocacy Council with a larger group of community leaders that have additional knowledge and are better equipped to address broader women’s health issues.</p>		

EverThrive Illinois	Current Grantee	Amount: \$35,000
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<p>Project Name: Community Empowerment Project</p> <p>Proposed Use of Funds:</p> <p>EverThrive Illinois works to improve the health of women, children, and families across the lifespan. The organization is guided by the following core values: health equity, diverse voices, and strong partnerships.</p> <p>Through the Community Empowerment Project, EverThrive IL increases awareness of maternal and child health issues, with an emphasis on reproductive justice, through advocacy, outreach, and education.</p> <p>(1) Facilitate collaboration to improve service delivery for women, children, and families; (2) Facilitate education and build partnerships with women and families in order to improve health outcomes for women and girls; and (3) Advance policies that increase access to, and improve quality of care for, women and girls.</p>		
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Chicago is experiencing a crisis of maternal mortality and morbidity, in which black women are 5 times more likely to die in the year after childbirth than their white counterparts. This crisis is exacerbated by the COVID19 pandemic, which has disproportionately affected black communities in Chicago and across the country. People who are pregnant and postpartum in particular are struggling to get what they need to care for themselves and their families during the pandemic. Through the Community Empowerment Project, we will promote maternal health in six priority communities and advance reproductive justice across the city by fostering collaboration to improve service delivery, educating and supporting community members, and advancing policies to create systemic change.

EverThrive IL works with communities to understand the lived experiences of those directly impacted by policies and systems. This project will be primarily focused on meeting the needs of people who are pregnant or postpartum in Chicago, especially people of color and people with low incomes as they are experiencing the most significant disparities in health and resources during the pandemic. EverThrive centers individuals' lived experiences to inform and change systems of care and policies that govern its state. To accomplish this, it facilitates expert advisory councils to support long term, collaborative relationships, and facilitate broad community outreach and public awareness campaigns to provide information and resources.

Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health	Current Grantee	Amount: \$42,000
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Project Name: General Operating Support

Proposed Use of Funds:

ICAH, educates, advocates, organizes, and shifts culture through arts-based programming, adult ally cultivation, and developing youth leaders and organizers.

ICAH's Change, Heal, Act Together (CHAT) Network engages youth through peer education, gatherings, and arts-based culture shift campaigns. Youth ages 16-22 gain expert knowledge around sexual health and reproductive justice through rigorous training and community building. They organize, educate, and advocate for more inclusive, more just ways that school, family, and health systems can serve them.

In these turbulent times, its youth-centered movement-building at the intersections of art and reproductive justice is more urgent than ever. As BIPOC youth contend with new stressors and disparities as they navigate school and life during a global pandemic, the affirming, life-giving spaces ICAH offers are crucial—especially for Black and TGNC youth who are routinely silenced and criminalized. It will continue dreaming reproductive justice through vibrant, youth-driven cultural organizing and creative production.

In partnership with youth, ICAH advocates for programs, policies, and procedures that promote a positive approach to adolescent sexual health and parenting. It believes that advocacy with and on behalf of young people will both impact policy and the direct experience that young people encounter in accessing sexuality education and sexual healthcare. At ICAH, it uses advocacy as a tool to exercise its power and influence outcomes in its world.

Much of its policy advocacy unfolds in coalition with partner organizations across Chicago and across the state. In addition to work with coalition partners on its ongoing #StopPNA campaign [stoppna.org], ICAH youth leaders and staff members currently participate in several policy-oriented coalitions, including the Reproductive Health and Access Coalition, and the Contraceptive Justice Coalition and the Reproductive Justice Policy Coalition, both of which EverThrive Illinois anchors.

At the local level, ICAH is closely connected with the Chicago Abortion Fund (CAF), a trusted thought partner that has long supported our efforts to shift language around abortion to be shame-free, youth-

centered, and trans-affirming. We also work closely with the Chicago chapter of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum. Together, we mobilized behind the groundbreaking Reproductive Health Act and continue fighting together to #StopPNA.

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum	Current Grantee	Amount: \$30,000
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Project Name: NAPAWF Chicago Reproductive Justice Organizing Project

Proposed Use of Funds:

The mission of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) is to build collective power of all Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women and girls to gain full agency over our lives, our families, and our communities. NAPAWF is the leading national multi-issue organization that advocates and organizes within a reproductive justice framework. It engages in five core strategies: base-building and leadership development, grassroots organizing, policy advocacy, research and strategic communications, and strategic coalition building. It uses research and strategic communications to raise the visibility of AAPI reproductive rights, health, and justice issues. Its base of engaged AAPI women leaders from diverse ethnicities and regions of the United States advocates for reproductive justice policy change, including opposing harmful policies like sex-selective abortion bans, which criminalize AAPI women for their pregnancy outcomes, and advancing progressive policies such as expansion of health care access for immigrant women and families.

The chapter is working on a city-level Reproductive Justice Commission composed of healthcare providers, advocates, and community members directly impacted by reproductive justice issues. The commission would improve access to reproductive and sexual healthcare through community-based research and policy recommendations. NAPAWF members worked on the resolution's language. Members met with Alderwomen Rossana Rodriguez, Maria Hadden, and Sophia King, gaining information about other alderpeople who may be allies and commitments from Aids. Hadden and Rodriguez to support our efforts.

Organizing Neighborhoods for Equality: Northside	Current Grantee	Amount: \$15,000
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Project Name: Women of Color Table

Proposed Use of Funds:

Organizing Neighborhoods for Equality (ONE): Northside is a mixed-income, multi-ethnic, intergenerational organization that unites its diverse communities. It builds collective power to eliminate injustice through bold and innovative community organizing. It accomplishes this through developing grassroots leaders and acting together to effect change.

The Women of Color Table, also called Political Healers is made up of completely Women of Color and all those that identify by this title are welcome. The strategy and community building are developed by the members. The members consist of current leaders of One Northside, Parent Mentor program participants and anyone else seeking to safely bring their full intersectional identity. The members say, "We are dissatisfied with the way society systemically remembers and forgets the events that affect us most. We believe in telling our stories of self and the story of "we" as they relate to equity, healthcare, housing, education, economic justice, not only tell of collective pain, but hold the solutions to the problems we face. We focus on political education and on providing our members with many ways to take action and bring back the learnings we collect to our personal networks. We create space for healers to come together -- to hold space, connect, and strategize! And this leadership is essential. It is IMPORTANT".

Reproductive justice is first and foremost about choice, for all people. For its members, particularly the members involved with the Women of Color Table, organizing is one definitive way to create more choices and options -- not just through the tangible results of its campaigns, but in the ways that sharing and building a strong community dedicated to achieving justice changes its personal and political lives. Though reproductive justice is valued by those involved with the women of color table, as many of them are mothers or parents that believe in the fundamental need for parents to have choices, it's clear that the process of becoming organized is an equally critical part of its members ability to choose and create options for themselves by speaking truth to power.

Through advocacy, leadership development and training, and community outreach, the Women of Color table will work to build the leadership and political analysis of women of color. This table is organized with the idea that the people most impacted by economic inequity, who are disproportionately women of color and their families, must be deeply engaged in the creation and advocacy for structural reforms that will have long term positive impacts on its community and will combat inequities. The table also is organized as a deliberate space for healing and community building.

ONE Northside is an organization that focuses on systems change. The participants in the Women of Color table are deeply embedded in that work. Once the outcome of the fair tax ballot amendment is known, the table will decide what structural campaign to focus on next. That work may include ensuring that the state budget funds programs that support the needs and healing in its communities.

Warehouse Workers for Justice	Current Grantee	Amount: \$20,000
<p>Project Name: General Operating Support: Emergency Support for Frontline Women Workers During COVID</p> <p>Proposed Use of Funds: Warehouse Workers for Justice (WWJ) was founded in 2009 to transform work in the distribution industry from poverty-level temp jobs into living wage jobs with dignity that can sustain families. Its mission is to shape policies that improve the lives of low income people, engage and activate communities to support workers taking action to resolve systemic inequities, and promote economic justice and racial and gender equality. It serves warehouse workers and their communities on the south and southwest sides of Chicago, as well as in the southwest suburbs and collar counties. Its organizing work is grounded in the concerns of workers on the ground and driven by the needs of workers and their communities.</p> <p>WWJ is intentionally integrates gender equity into its fight for justice at every level. Discrimination against women workers in the warehouse industry is prevalent. This includes the serious issue of harassment in the workplace, but also involves steering of women into lower paying positions and less desirable jobs in the industry. Moreover, women are minorities (25-30% of the workforce) who can be singled out and harassed by some of their male peers. This is why it organizes a women's committee that can specifically support women in one of the most important industries in the state's economy. Warehousing has seen significant job growth this year, even with the COVID-19 economic slowdown; its women's committee and gender lens allows it to support women who are more vulnerable than ever in today's economy.</p> <p>Over the years, WWJ has worked to partner with reproductive and gender justice groups to both be a part of the larger movement and to advance women's rights in the warehouse workforce. Some of these groups include the National Hookup for Black Women, the National Organization for Women, Women In Trades, the Will County Women's March and more. Its focus on supporting women in the workforce encompasses issues such as pregnancy discrimination, and its women's committee understands the challenges that exist</p>		

within the current political world for women. For this reason, WWJ intends to continue its leadership in women's and labor issues while also relating to the larger movement that fights for reproductive and gender justice.

COVID-19 highlights something WWJ has long understood, that warehouse workers are immensely important in the overall function of the economy. While the pandemic is an unprecedented challenge for its organization, the current situation provides an opportunity to change an industry that had many challenges before the outbreak. It believes that now is the moment for it to support this workforce during a time of great need, and that this could be the opportunity to make long-term changes in the entire industry. Its goal will be to build its largest ever base of leaders while helping thousands of workers with free legal services and providing access to PPE. Simultaneously, it will also organize workplaces for greater safety while building overall worker power. Through worker education and empowerment, WWJ not only seeks to provide women with access to the same opportunities that men currently have, but also to ensure that all warehouse workers have access to stable, well-paying, and safe work on an equitable basis, regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation.