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 – 2022 Reproductive Justice Champions

Through grant making and programming (training, convening and capacity building) Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) will support a network of WOC-led non-profits and leaders who will fight to reduce racial health disparities in Chicagoland, strengthening a movement that will fight for Reproductive Justice in the region and beyond.

As “Forward Together states in its report, A New Vision for Advancing our Movement for Reproductive Health, Reproductive Rights, and Reproductive Justice (2005), CFW believes that “reproductive justice is the complete physical, mental, spiritual, political, economic, and social well-being of women and girls, and will be achieved when women and girls have the economic, social, and political power and resources to make healthy decisions about our bodies, sexuality and reproduction for ourselves, our families, and our communities in all areas of our lives.

For reproductive justice to become a reality, we must undergo a radical transformation; change must be made on the individual, community, institutional, and societal levels to end all forms of oppression so that women and girls are able to thrive, to gain self-determination, to exercise control over our bodies, and to have a full range of reproductive choices. The control and exploitation of women and girls through our bodies, sexuality, and reproduction is a strategic pathway to regulating entire populations that is implemented by families, communities, institutions, and society. Thus, the regulation of reproduction and exploitation of women’s bodies and labor is both a tool and a result of systems of oppression based on race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, age, and immigration status. This is reproductive oppression as we use the term.

Because reproductive oppression affects women’s lives in multiple ways, a multi-dimensional approach is needed to fight this exploitation and advance the well-being of women and girls. There are three main frameworks for fighting reproductive oppression: [1] Reproductive Health, [2] Reproductive Rights, and [3] Reproductive Justice. Although the frameworks are distinct, together they provide a complementary and comprehensive solution. The Reproductive Health framework emphasizes the very necessary reproductive health services that women need. The Reproductive Rights framework is based on universal legal protections for women and sees these
protections as rights. Issues that were historically seen as private issues in the lives of women and girls have been made public and mainstream. And the Reproductive Justice framework stipulates that reproductive oppression is a result of the intersections of multiple oppressions and is inherently connected to the struggle for social justice and human rights”.

Currently, in Illinois, reproductive justice challenges include “significant barriers to accessing preferred method[s] of contraception, often because of poor or inconsistent policy enforcement and implementation, challenges faced by health care professionals seeking to fulfill the guarantees of state policy, and misinformation or lack of clarity.”¹ The challenges are even more dire for people from marginalized communities.²

CFW will expand and deepen its reproductive justice grant making, developing a cohort, and building a model that trains and encourages collaboration of WOC-led RJ organizations, thereby implementing a strategy that will lead to a region wide safe-haven for reproductive health access and improved health outcomes. This initiative will be a regional model for how to create a sanctuary while building the movement to ensure reproductive justice and access during a time of increased attack.

Priority Populations/Areas
Women, girls, transgender, and gender non-binary people of color, frontline workers, single-parent headed households, immigrants, and domestic workers.

Priority areas include Chicago South and West Side communities that are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, job loss, poverty, and community violence.

Other Priorities
Women of color-led
CFW is interested in supporting Women of color-led organizations, CEO/Executive Director that reflects the community.

Building an Equitable SHEcoveryTM
Chicago Foundation for Women’s SHEcovery report released in fall 2021 says, “For far too long women have been kept at a disadvantage in an inequitable system. The COVID-19 pandemic not only magnified the unequal treatment of women, particularly Women of Color, but it walked back decades of progress.” This spring CFW continues to be interested in funding organizations that are envisioning a recovery that centers women, in particular women of color. We are looking for innovative ways of creating a gender responsive recovery, addressing the disparate impact of the pandemic.

In the report we outline priority areas.

- Get Women Back to Work
- Address the Eviction Crisis

¹ [2019_ContraceptiveJusticePolicyandCommunityAssessmentReport.pdf (everthriveil.org)]
² [2019_ContraceptiveJusticePolicyandCommunityAssessmentReport.pdf (everthriveil.org)]
• Care for our Caregivers
• Demand an Antiracist Healthcare System

In this grant program CFW is prioritizing the “Demand and Antiracist Healthcare System” and are interested in advocacy and interventions that address reproductive health access, black maternal mortality, comprehensive sexual health education, access to contraception and environmental justice that uses a reproductive justice framework.

Community-based/led Organizations

CFW will be prioritizing community-based and led organizations. 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 color-led are best positioned to identify current needs but also to shift as needs change and to demonstrate a commitment to racial and gender equity.

COVID-19 Recovery

CFW will be prioritizing strategies and interventions that incorporate an understanding of the impact of community disinvestment that has been exacerbated by COVID-19 as well as gender responsive approaches to recovery and rebuilding after job loss, health inequities and increased violence that has disproportionately affected women of color and their families.

Adaptability and Responsiveness

Relatedly, priority will be given to applicants that demonstrate an understanding and ability to shift their approach or focus to address the needs/recovery of the community in crisis (COVID-19, State budget crisis). This includes organizations that are innovative, nimble, and willing to propose solutions that communities believe will best improve their neighborhoods and lives.

For advocacy applications, priority will be given to applications that demonstrate that women, transgender, and gender non-binary people of color are a part of the work, sharing their lived experiences, making decisions, or informing the creation of priorities and strategies of your policy/advocacy agenda.

Process

• CFW will be accepting applications for our 2022 Reproductive Justice grant making through February 26
• Applicant orientations are scheduled for Wednesday January 19 at 3:30pm and Friday January 28 at 9am. To RSVP to attend an orientation session here.
• You can find the application on CFW’s grant platform here. To apply use the “2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions – New Applicant” application.

Organizations must:
• Have a 501c3 or have a fiscal sponsor with a 501c3
• Be Women of color-led organizations
• Be community-based/grassroots organizations
Organization must meet CFW’s Staff and Board Leadership Diversity Goals

At least:

50% of Staff Leadership identify as a woman, transgender or gender non-binary person
40% of Board Members identify as a woman, transgender or gender non-binary person
33% of Staff Leadership identify as a person of color
25% of Board Members identify as a person of color

All organizations are required to consider CFW’s Guiding Principles and how their programs and organization support and affirm these values.

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.

- How is the organization and/or program intentionally designed to benefit women and/or girls?
- How does the organization support a woman’s right to reproductive justice?
- How do the organization’s board and staff members, particularly executive staff, reflect the diversity of the communities served?
- How is the organization increasing accessibility to persons with disabilities?
- How does the organization provide a respectful environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender expansive, and queer (LGBTQ+) people?

For more information about CFW’s Guiding Principles click here
To review CFW’s Gender Equity Framework please click here