

2021 Catalyst Fund for Reproductive Justice Grant Awards

Arise Chicago	Economic Security	Award: \$20,000
<p>Project Name: General Operating Support</p> <p>Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds: Arise Chicago’s mission is to improve wages, conditions and job quality for all Chicagoland workers. Celebrating 30 years as a social justice, membership-based organization, Arise builds partnerships between faith communities and workers to fight workplace injustice through education, organizing, and advocating for public policy changes. Our vision is to create economic opportunity, advancement, and justice for Chicagoland’s current low-wage workforce. Arise educates, organizes and develops the leadership of low-paid, primarily immigrant, majority female workers, while organizing a broad range of faith leaders to support workplace and policy campaigns.</p> <p>The first step to improving conditions, especially in light of the new Chi Biz Strong ordinance, is for workers to know their rights. To do this, we must provide mass levels of education and organizing of our own worker members and the broader immigrant community on the new protections. While the need for all low-wage/minimum wage earners is vast, there is particular need for education with domestic workers. Nannies, care workers, and home cleaners in Chicago now have the right to a written contract, beginning 1/1/22. This is a significant victory that will require mass worker education and 1-on-1 support for workers as they seek their first written contract. Many workers currently only have verbal agreements with their clients. In order to meet the massive need, Arise is expanding capacity for worker outreach and response through a new Domestic Worker Education & Outreach Program. Arise has designed the program to train current leaders in domestic worker outreach and contract content. Arise will run Train the Trainer classes in Spanish and Polish, training 10 worker leaders as Outreach Promotoras and Contract Specialists. The Train the Trainer program was created in partnership with UIC School of Public Health.</p> <p>In addition to directly supporting workers, Arise is committed to constantly improving the effectiveness of the OLS and other government agencies charged with protecting workers’ rights. Therefore, Arise will continue to send worker complaints, review data provided by the OLS, and advocate for increased funding for the OLS to grow its capacity, and advocate for additional improvements via the Protecting Workers Working Group. Arise has years of expertise with our members on where and how City government can better respond to workers’ needs. We stand poised to improve the effectiveness of the OLS and other government agencies charged with protecting workers’ rights. Arise Chicago is a bridge between government agencies and workers.</p>		

Cabrini Green Legal Aid	Freedom from Violence	Award: \$35,000
<p>Project Name: CGLA Advocacy Work for Women and Mothers</p> <p>Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds: Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA) was established in 1973 to serve legal needs arising from the lack of opportunity, criminalization of poverty, and racial inequity experienced within the Cabrini Green community. CGLA has since grown to become a citywide, countywide, and statewide leader in support of low-income justice-impacted individuals.</p>		

Since merging with CLAIM in 2014, CGLA has centered much of our work on how current and permanent punishments affect women and families. We built partnerships with organizations such as the Women’s Justice Institute and we offer important programming like the Reunification Program (expanded to support virtual visits). CGLA’s Policy and Advocacy Team supports women impacted by the criminal legal system through our three major work areas: 1) leadership development of advocates, 2) pushing for legislative changes, and 3) ensuring implementation of new laws.

The Leadership Council and Visible Voices inform us on issues most important to them and help develop policy responses. This includes writing legislation to address the impact of a criminal record on housing, employment, and family access, including the Child’s Best Interest Act and the Children of Incarcerated Parents Task Force.

From 2019 through the beginning of 2021, we worked closely with Representative Delia Ramirez to ensure the Children of Incarcerated Parents Task Force met, collected data, and issued Awards to the General Assembly and public at large. When Awards were published in January 2021, we moved to ensure implementation by developing a legislative policy proposal to make a permanent Commission on Children of Incarcerated Parents housed at the Illinois Department of Human Services (HB 3787). Due to the constraints of COVID, we were unable to introduce the amendment in 2021 and will work with Leader Ramirez in 2022 to see the bill’s ultimate passage.

We also promote opportunities for Leaders’ empowerment through personal and professional development. Staff facilitates training with the Leadership Council and Visible Voices helping them to acquire policy knowledge, develop analytical skills, and build confidence and public speaking skills. This gives Leaders, who are predominantly women, an avenue to exercise their voice and technical and life skills to help them be effective advocates in Springfield and in their personal lives. Many join us on trips to the Capital (currently on hold) to share their experiences with others in government, nonprofits, and their own communities. With the transition of our former Policy Associate Colette Payne to the Women’s Justice Institute, Jocie Horace-Jackson, a founder of the Leadership Council, joins CGLA as a Community Organizer. She manages Visible Voices and has brought fresh perspective to the role while using her personal experience to continue to inform the work and direction of our policy advocacy, especially for women and mothers impacted by the criminal legal system.

Chicago Freedom School	Health	Award: \$25,000
<p>Project Name: Project HealUs and Reproductive Justice Youth Leadership Development</p> <p>Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds: Founded in 2007, Chicago Freedom School builds intergenerational partnerships and facilitates programming for young people of color while offering training to individuals and organizations committed to movement building. We are rooted in legacies of justice and liberation, transformative and restorative justice, anti-oppression, and healing justice frameworks.</p> <p>The growing institutional and cultural assault on the right to live healthfully, safely, and autonomously in our bodies makes it vitally important to equip young people with knowledge, skills, and community so they can navigate systems and relationships in ways that are less harmful and emerge as reproductive justice and reproductive health leaders. We engage BIPOC youth ages 14-24 who identify as female, trans, femme, and gender non-conforming in conversation, skill-building and action around reproductive justice. Our work is rooted in harm-reduction with the intention of being liberatory.</p> <p>Project HealUs consists of the following activities:</p>		

(a) Political Education and Leadership Development: Topics include: (1) reproductive justice and the politics of the body; (2) interrupting misogyny; (3) reproductive planning; (4) rape culture knowledge and identification; (5) communication and compassionate countering techniques; and (6) organizing strategies to dismantle oppressive systems and create change. Due to COVID-19, workshops will continue to be held virtually and socially-distant in-person, in alignment with Cook County Department of Public Health guidelines.

(b) Skill development in healing practices, group facilitation, and organizing: Topics include healing justice practices, digital organizing, feminist theory, and reproductive justice frameworks.

(c) Reflection and relationship development: Youth build supportive relationships with each other and have the chance to build relationships with adult practitioners and organizations currently engaged in reproductive justice work.

(d) Youth-led action and organizing: Rooted in what they learn during the program, participants design and implement a community action project of their choice. This can include an art project, youth-led workshops, an online event, or other actions to deepen their involvement in reproductive justice movements.

Equal Hope	Health	Award: \$43,000
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Project Name: General Operating Support

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

EH's mission is to eliminate racial, ethnic and class disparities in health outcomes. EH was established in 2008 after data showed that Black women in Chicago were 62% more likely to die from breast cancer compared to white women. In response, EH developed a unique model to analyze Chicago's breast health system and its failure of Black women, guided by the understanding that structural racism is a key driver of health disparities. EH established Equal Care, a health systems quality improvement project, and Equal Hope, EH's direct service program. EH advocates for systemic changes to healthcare public policy through its Equal Voice program.

EH's programs are designed to address women's racial, ethnic and class health disparities. Equal Care's research and the lived experiences of women served by Equal Hope's outreach, education, and patient navigation programs inform Equal Voice's advocacy and community organizing work. Over the next year, Equal Care will continue its work assessing barriers to optimal healthcare for Chicago's women of color, focusing on breast and cervical cancer. We will gather mammography quality data from over 40 facilities and work with safety net providers to improve the quality of care, complete an inventory of cervical cancer primary care and diagnostic resources, and survey women about their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs regarding cervical cancer screening to improve our community health programming.

EH's community health program will reach over 20,000 women and educate over 12,000 women about preventative health care. EH will navigate 1,000 women to free breast and cervical cancer screenings. EH's medical homes project connects clients and other Chicagoans of color without a regular source of primary care to a medical home.

Equal Voice's community-driven and informed advocacy program is the Advocacy Council, known as the "Fierce Ladies in Pink." Over the past five years, EH has taken a critical look at our advocacy programming, and we are adopting new program objectives this cycle.

EH originally structured the Advocacy Council as a leadership development program, limited policy goals to breast cancer, and focused organizing activities around an annual Advocacy Day event. This grant cycle, EH will redesign the Council to organize members to fight for health equity year-round. The new

Council will train community members to become knowledgeable in health equity policy, mobilize their communities, and organize advocacy events and projects beyond Advocacy Day. The Council's policy priorities will expand to address EH's new programming, including cervical cancer, access to primary care, and disparities across the healthcare system.

EH will also grow our coalition of community partners to reflect programming expansion into cervical cancer, primary care, and general health disparities. This grant cycle, EH will develop relationships with organizations that address maternal health, reproductive justice and LGBTQI+ health. EH's goal is to create a new, multi-dimensional Equal Voice Health Equity Coalition in Metropolitan Chicago. The Coalition will set 2022 policy priorities and help design and recruit members for the expanded Advocacy Council.

EverThrive Illinois	Health	Award: \$35,000
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Project Name: Community Empowerment Project

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

EverThrive Illinois' mission is to achieve reproductive justice in the health care ecosystem through community-driven partnership, policy action, and systems change. We envision a just and affirming health care ecosystem where individuals, families, and communities can thrive. Our work is rooted in our core values of reproductive justice, anti-racism, centering the most impacted, and bold and transformative action.

We weave together advocacy, community engagement, and strategic partnerships so that every person in our state may have children if, when, and how they chose and parent the children they have in safe and sustainable communities. Our activities are organized under the following strategic priorities:

1. Achieve Birth Equity
2. Increase Vaccine Confidence
3. Advance Contraceptive Justice
4. Expand Access to Comprehensive Health Care
5. Live Our Values

The Community Empowerment Project increases awareness of maternal and child health issues, with an emphasis on reproductive justice (which is woven through all of the work that we do and is critical lens from which we approach our work); maternal and infant mortality; and vaccine education for pregnant, nursing, and child-caring people.

EverThrive, along with AllianceChicago, co-founded the CCMH, which implements a community maternal health intervention that brings together health care and community, social service providers, women and their families, and policymakers to address maternal mortality prevention in Chicago. Not only does EverThrive co-lead the collaborative, we have fostered cross-sector collaboration with state and city agencies, community groups, and health groups, and have brought together community voices to help devise community-led solutions through our expert advisory committee. We have prioritized six of the Chicago communities that are most at risk for maternal morbidity and mortality: Austin, Englewood, Chatham, Greater Grand Crossing, East Garfield Park, and West Garfield Park. By focusing our efforts on these communities, we aim to chip away at the severe racial, ethnic, and economic health disparities contributing to the maternal morbidity and mortality crisis in Chicago.

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

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

At ICAH, we educate, advocate, organize, and shift culture through arts-based programming, adult ally cultivation, and developing youth leaders and organizers.

For over three decades of our 43 year history, we’ve trained young people to organize around the reproductive justice issues impacting their lives and communities. Our powerful youth-led organizing and advocacy—including groundbreaking performances, messaging, research, and actions—have sparked important cultural shifts and policy changes that have sent ripples across the Midwest and beyond. Our work bridges youth organizing and arts-based strategies. Driven by the conviction that cultural problems demand cultural solutions, all of ICAH’s programs integrate a rigorous cultural strategy. We use art to uproot shame and stigma by infusing otherwise difficult conversations with pleasure and joy.

Across our program areas, ICAH cultivates spaces where young artists and organizers’ creativity, brilliance, and self-love can blossom. In these turbulent times, our 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. With CFW Catalyst support, we 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. We believe 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, we use advocacy as a tool to exercise our power and influence outcomes in our world.

Much of our policy advocacy unfolds in coalition with partner organizations across Chicago and across the state. In addition to work with coalition partners on our ongoing #repealPNA campaign [repealpna.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 anchor. about how the youth and adults we work with FEEL as much as we care about what they DO, we build creative spaces to support their self and community care.

National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum	Health	Award: \$30,000
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Project Name: NAPAWF Chicago Reproductive Justice Organizing Project

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

The mission of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) is to build the collective power of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women and girls to gain full agency over our lives, families, and communities. NAPAWF is the leading national multi-issue organization advocating and organizing within a reproductive justice framework. Our core strategies are base-building and leadership development, grassroots organizing, policy advocacy, research and strategic communications, and strategic coalition building. We use research and strategic communications to raise the visibility of AAPI reproductive justice issues. Our base of 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 immigrants.

NAPAWF's goal for the coming year is to increase capacity for base-building and organizing work in the metro Chicago area, through the development of new leaders in the reproductive justice movement. Through community engagement with the Chicago NAPAWF chapter, and through local and state level policy campaigns, led by NAPAWF's leaders and strategic coalition partners, NAPAWF will work to build a strong base to influence lawmakers in shaping public policy to include the interests of AAPI women.

NAPAWF will continue cultivating the Chicago chapter's Organizing Committee and working groups to drive our work. This group of emerging leaders in the AAPI community will be responsible for the strategic direction of the movement and capable of carrying out the organizing work needed after receiving NAPAWF training. Our goal is to cultivate a culture of ownership in the AAPI community and toward reproductive justice issues and action, and to begin to eliminate cultural stigmas that act as barriers to reproductive health.

Organizing Neighborhoods for Equality: Northside

Economic Security

Award: \$20,000

Project Name: Women of Color Table

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

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

ONE Northside makes change through grassroots community organizing. We believe that those affected by the issues in the community are best equipped to come together and develop solutions, create action strategies, then lead in those strategies. Our leaders make changes through local, impactful campaigns that address root causes of injustice, fighting for both immediate improvements in people's lives and long-term structural change. We work on issues including affordable housing, mental health justice and healthcare access, police accountability, and economic justice.

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 their community and will combat inequities. The table also is organized as a deliberate space for healing and community building.

Overall, ONE Northside has a long history of policy and systems change. We have accountable relationships with many elected officials and core to our work is training our leaders and members how to come together to impact those elected officials. Our leaders learn how to run campaigns to effect change, how a bill becomes a law, how to effectively share our stories, and other key topics.

Warehouse Workers for Justice

Economic Security

Award: \$20,000

Project Name: Organizing Women Warehouse Workers for Justice and Power

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

Warehouse Workers for Justice 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. Our mission is to shape

policies that improve the lives of low income people, engage communities to support workers taking action to resolve systemic inequities, and promote economic justice and racial and gender equality. We have specific programs focusing on food workers, gender justice, and environmental justice, as well as a focus on temp workers and workers with involvement in the criminal justice system. During COVID-19, we have expanded our work to encompass public health outreach and emergency eviction prevention. We serve warehouse workers and their communities on the south and southwest sides of Chicago, as well as in the southwest suburbs and collar counties. Our organizing work is grounded in the concerns of workers on the ground and driven by the needs of workers and their communities.

Sexual harassment and discrimination are widespread issues in warehouse workplaces, where women are a visible minority of workers. Women experience discrimination in many forms, including being shunted into lower-paying jobs or denied training for higher-paying positions, being discriminated against due to actual or suspected future pregnancy, and experiencing sexual harassment on the job. WWJ aims to support women worker-leaders in fighting these issues through a combination of community mobilization, workplace campaigns, legal action, and tenant organizing:

--Continued work through our Women's Committee to identify ongoing workplace issues and support workers experiencing unjust and illegal mistreatment of all kinds. Through the Women's Committee, we also plan to develop leaders who can speak comfortably to the press, lead workplace fights, and organize their coworkers around these issues.

--Hosting specific Know Your Rights workshops around gender justice issues

--Continuing to assist predominantly female tenants through our eviction prevention work to address the intersections of low-wage work and caregiving responsibilities that destabilize the lives of warehouse workers and their families.

--Continuing to educate organizing staff on these issues in order to more effectively approach all our organizing work through a gender justice lens and identify ongoing issues that women workers face.

--Organizing for fair scheduling with flexibility for workers with families and other caregiving responsibilities (per a survey WWJ conducted in December, 83% of warehouse workers have some kind of caregiving responsibility, including childcare, elder care, and care for disabled family members).