

CFTEH Housing Justice Fund Information Session Frequently Asked Questions

Definitions

1. How is homelessness defined for the purposes of this funding opportunity?
We are defining homelessness as broadly as we can, which includes people living doubled up, couch surfing, living under the threat of violence, etc.
2. What can be included in storytelling?
A storytelling project might feature first person narratives of people with lived experience of homelessness, photojournalism, public awareness campaigns, art installations, radio advertisements, social media, etc. Anything that helps elevate the importance of housing and helps change narratives about homelessness from those that are focused on choice or personal responsibility to those that are focused on structural racism and failures of systems.
3. How is collaboration defined?
We did not define collaboration, rather we defer to applicants to describe what collaboration means for their initiatives. But it is important to note that this RFP is not intended to support individual organizations but rather coalitions, partnerships, alliances, and other tables of multiple partners working together on a shared advocacy initiative.

Geography

4. Are there specific zip codes that the fund will prioritize?
No.
5. Can organizations outside of Cook County apply?
Although we are prioritizing Chicago, Cook County, and Chicago metropolitan area collar counties, we believe state-wide work is important and would fit the fund's requirements if it helps drive toward local impact in the Chicago area. Initiatives outside of the state of Illinois are not eligible to apply.
6. Would a collaborative qualify serving a specific county as "regional" or would more counties need to be involved?
Serving a specific county would fit the fund's requirements.
7. Is it worth considering applying for statewide work that is well-aligned with the RFP that would also benefit Chicago?
As a funder collaborative focused on the Chicago region, CFTEH will prioritize requests from Chicago, Cook County and other Chicago metropolitan area collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will), though we will also consider requests featuring state advocacy efforts that have a local impact.

Partnership

8. Are you only funding collaborations or networks and not individual organizations?
Yes.
9. If you are a large organization with multiple departments that work together, would this be considered a collaborative effort or a single organization?
A large institution like a health system or university with diverse stakeholders or partners within it—especially those that don't typically partner together on homelessness—would fit the fund's requirements if advancing a shared advocacy initiative that centers people with lived expertise as leaders and decision makers.
10. Does a coalition include engaging with persons with lived expertise across provider agencies or collaboration of advocate partners?
Yes, we believe it is crucial for any coalition to engage people with lived expertise in designing an advocacy initiative and making decisions.
11. For coalition-led projects – if multiple orgs are working on the same campaign, is it okay for separate organizations to apply for their role in the larger campaign?
The intention of the Housing Justice Fund is to support coalitions, campaigns, alliances, partnerships, and other collaborative efforts—in short, multiple partners working toward a shared advocacy goal. We encourage multiple organizations to work together to submit one application rather than applying as separate entities. Funds from the Housing Justice Fund may be regranted from the primary applicant to partner organizations.
12. The RFP mentions prioritizing coalition work, but \$50,000 is not a lot if split across multiple organizations. Would the fund consider a higher request?
CFTEH acknowledges that \$50,000 per year for two years may not be enough for some initiatives. CFTEH is a community of 30+ Chicago area foundations that might be able to help sustain an initiative or bridge gaps in funding. Additionally, the fund may consider requests for over \$50,000 a year, if provided with a strong rationale (this would be explored on a case by case basis with applicants).

Other

13. Can an organization submit an application to both CFTEH and Michael Reese Health Trust?
Yes, you can apply separately for funding to Michael Reese Health Trust and CFTEH. Michael Reese has recently gone through a strategic planning process and is refining its homelessness grantmaking priority and will likely make its next round of grants in spring 2023. More information will be available in the coming months on Michael Reese's website.
14. Are you only funding Black-led initiatives?
Due to the historical context and the disproportionality of Black community members experiencing homelessness, the Housing Justice Fund is prioritizing Black-led initiatives. We welcome initiatives to apply that are led by other racial/ethnic groups particularly those led by people with lived expertise. We also believe it is important that any leadership body for an advocacy or community organizing initiative reflects the intersectional identities the work seeks to address.

15. Are you looking for initiatives to be sustainable post grant period?

We recognize that advocacy to change policy, funding, and narratives takes years—often decades. We acknowledge that two years of funding might not be sufficient for an initiative. We will have a conversation with organizations to understand the full duration of your initiative.

16. Is the RFP open to existing coalitions/collaboratives or only new ones?

It is open to both existing and new coalitions/collaborations.