

**Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE)  
& the Office of Equity & Racial Justice (OERJ)**

**Together We Heal Creative Place Program Guidelines**

**Submission Deadline: Wednesday, July 20, 2022 at 5pm CST**  
Click [here](#) to submit your application through CyberGrants!

**Register for an Info Session:**  
Wednesday, June 22 @ 5pm: [Register Here](#)  
Thursday, July 7 @ 12pm: [Register Here](#)

The *Together We Heal Creative Place Program* (CPP) recognizes the importance of the arts in promoting health, healing, and safety for communities. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the systemic racism in Chicago's economic and public health system that created the underlying conditions of low-income communities experiencing a disproportionate rate of infections and mortality.

Neighborhood cultural programs including public art, activations in public spaces, and community focused arts engagement activities are proven to have a positive impact on the physical and mental health of individuals. CPP positions artists, community leaders, and organizations to identify solutions to the challenges caused by racial, health, and economic inequities in their communities. CPP believes that creative place-based solutions can play a significant role in addressing these issues.

Co-designed by the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) and the Office of Equity & Racial Justice (OERJ), applications for the *Together We Heal Creative Place* program (CPP) are currently being accepted. Artists and community organizations will create projects that activate public spaces; promote health and safety; encourage movement, dialogue, and connection; beautify communities; and celebrate local culture. This program addresses the public health and negative economic harms created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

CPP is a central component of the City's [Together We Heal Initiative](#) which aims to build racial healing and transformation in Chicago. The initiative began in fall 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and following the civil unrest and racial reckoning of the summer. In January 2022, Together We Heal began the Year of Healing 2022 which aims to advance three core goals: (1) *Reflect on our past* - Seeking to educate and engage about past and present racial injustices and structures of racial inequality; (2) *Reclaim our present* - Seeking to bring

community members together to identify lessons learned of the past that will inform new values and norms that shift power; and (3) *Reimagine our future* - Seeking to vision a more inclusive future state and design policies and practices that produce and sustain more equitable outcomes. More information on *Together We Heal* and Year of Healing 2022 can be found at: [chi.gov/TogetherWeHeal](http://chi.gov/TogetherWeHeal)

This program is part of the Chicago Recovery Plan, the City's plan to amplify once-in-a-generation federal funding to create an equity-based investment strategy to catalyze a sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. To learn more visit [chicago.gov/RecoveryPlan](http://chicago.gov/RecoveryPlan)

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## **Project Components**

As part of the pathway toward an equitable and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Together We Heal Creative Place Program will invest in projects that strengthen neighborhood environments. Projects should activate public spaces; promote health and safety; and encourage movement, recreation, dialogue, and connection. The program encourages existing and new projects that highlight a community's history, culture and assets, leveraging the creative potential present in communities, and that honors the work already taking place.

**Artistic Discipline:** Projects can be focused on any artistic discipline including architecture, culinary arts, curatorial arts, dance, design, film, literary arts, media arts, music, performance art, photography, public art, social or civic practice, theater, or visual arts.

## **Required Project Components:**

To be considered for funding, projects must be place-based and must meet the following criteria:

1. All project work and programming must be free to the public.
2. All projects must have a robust community engagement plan or strategy that outlines how residents, businesses and other local stakeholders will contribute to the vision and development of the project.
3. Projects should also result in a tangible physical improvement to a publicly accessible space like a plaza, park, vacant lot, or other underutilized community space.
4. For cultural programs that will happen in multiple neighborhoods, a tangible physical improvement is not a required component.

Where appropriate, applicants should see the supplemental City Agency Partner Guide for available opportunities and current procedures as they shape proposals and seek letters of support.

## **Other Considerations:**

Applicants are encouraged (but not required) to consider other elements in their program design:

- **Preservation of local cultural assets and sites of memory** that protect the histories, relationships, and impacts of local heritage and culture keeping practices
- **Cross Sector Initiatives** including partnerships with organizations and agencies focused on housing, environment, immigration, public safety, health, youth development, transit, etc. that activate the arts alongside other quality of life issues and sectors to propose creative solutions benefitting communities.

## **Grant Amounts**

The total budget for the CPP program is \$5,000,000. We anticipate making up to 50 grants through this program. Proposals and supporting documents should illustrate the collaborative team's capacity to accomplish the proposed project and are not dependent on the current operating budget of the applicant(s). However, applicants will need to adhere to certain City, State, and Federal requirements as a condition of accepting a grant.

Grant requests can range from \$25,000 - \$500,000 across two funding tiers:

- **Activation Grants:** \$25,000 and \$45,000 grants for neighborhood-focused projects such as walking or bike tours or performances and other activations that may result in temporary or permanent changes to the built environment or physical character of a place
- **Transformation Grants:** \$100,000, \$250,000 and \$500,000 grants represent substantial community projects that are ready for full implementation with the necessary partners, community support, and funding to complete and result in a transformative physical improvement

**Grant Distribution:** The total number of grants to be awarded at each level are as follows:

- Activation Grants: 20 – 30
- Transformation Grants: up to 20

**Learning Cohort:** Grantees will have the opportunity to participate in a range of learning cohort support activities with access to technical assistance including tactical workshops, peer exchange, and strategic guidance to support their specific project ideas.

## **Priority Communities**

Applications will be accepted from all parts of the city qualifying as disproportionately impacted (including low-income communities, qualified census tracts, and communities designated by the City of Chicago as high priority for health and safety). Priority will include communities and commercial corridors identified through the City of Chicago's [INVEST South/West](#) initiative; community areas identified through the City of Chicago's [Our City, Our Safety](#) initiative; and community areas that have not received direct funding through DCASE's other Cultural Grants Program over the past two years.

### **List of Priority Communities**

Albany Park, Archer Heights, Armour Square, Auburn Gresham, Austin, Avalon Park, Bronzeville, Burnside, Chatham, Chicago Lawn, Douglas, East Garfield Park, Englewood, Fuller Park, Gage Park, Grand Boulevard, Greater Grand Crossing, Hegewisch, Humboldt Park, Montclare, Morgan Park, New City, North Lawndale, Oakland, Pullman, Riverdale, Roseland, South Chicago, South Deering, South Lawndale, South Shore, Washington Park, West Garfield Park, West Englewood, West Pullman, Woodlawn

The City will work with selected applicants to ensure that the project meets all [American Rescue Plan requirements](#).

**\*NEWLY ADDED as of 7/21/22\***

***High need communities identified for trauma-informed centers of care expansion (Chicago Department of Public Health initiative)***

*Armour Square, Auburn Gresham, Austin, Avondale, Belmont Cragin, Brighton Park, Chatham, Chicago Lawn, East Garfield Park, East Side, Englewood, Fuller Park, Gage Park, Grand Boulevard, Greater Grand Crossing, Hermosa, Humboldt Park, Lower West Side, New City, North Lawndale, Riverdale, Rogers Park, Roseland, South Chicago, South Deering, South Lawndale, South Shore, Washington Heights, Washington Park, West Englewood, West Garfield Park, West Lawn, West Pullman, West Ridge, Woodlawn*

***NOTE: There is some overlap with priority communities listed by the other named city initiatives.***

### **Eligibility Criteria**

Only one application submission per collaborative pair (i.e., artist and community collaborator) will be accepted. To be eligible to apply, partner applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Must reside in the city of Chicago with a valid street address.
- Must reside in or show evidence of significant connection to the neighborhood/community area where the project will take place. It is preferred, but not required, that at least one member of the collaborative pair be a current resident of the neighborhood where the proposed project will take place.
- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- One of the partner applicants must be a nonprofit or the partner applicants must select a nonprofit fiscal sponsor. Fiscal sponsors must submit a copy of the signed agreement with the grantee as part of the contract paperwork.
- Projects must take place in a qualified location. The City will work with applicants to identify alternative locations if necessary due to American Rescue Plan requirements.

### **The following entities may apply:**

- Individual artists, cultural producers, or curators.
- Individuals/collectives applying with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor with 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) status.
- Any nonprofit organization, Special Service Area (SSAs) or Chamber of Commerce with 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) status, including religious institutions that provide significant services to the community that are non-religious in nature.
- National nonprofit organizations with a Chicago branch.

The following entities cannot be listed as one of the lead applicants on a proposal. However, collaborations with these entities are welcome.

- For-profit organizations.
- Municipal departments and their affiliate 501c3s, including libraries, parks, transit, and family services agencies
- Organizations and individuals receiving other forms of DCASE support remain eligible to apply; however, priority will be given to those not receiving other DCASE support.

**Funds can be used to support:**

- Program, community engagement, and other administrative expenses including venue rental, artist and participant fees, materials, supplies and other insurances, permits and fees required to implement the project.
- Costs associated with physical improvements including remediation and site cleanup of publicly owned facilities or spaces and/or publicly visible improvements to commercial properties or vacant lots.

**Funds CANNOT be used to support:**

- The purchase of land and or buildings
- The purchase of permanent, depreciable equipment valued at more than \$5,000
- Fundraising events or campaigning for a candidate or a ballot issue
- Religious education, ceremonies, or events
- Vehicle rental of any kind
- Artists or organizations with outstanding, existing debt with the City of Chicago. Debt does not need to be resolved prior to submitting an idea but will need to be in order to receive a payment from the city. Please set up payment plans or pay off any existing debt (parking tickets, utility bills, etc.) with the Department of Finance:  
[www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fin.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fin.html)

**Review Process and Criteria**

All proposals will be reviewed by an external grant review panel including residents of priority neighborhoods and subject matter experts. Consideration is given to creating review panels reflective of the city, including artistic expertise, race, gender, geographic knowledge of the city, and cultural understanding.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Strength of proposed project:** The proposed project possesses artistic merit and vision alongside quality, meaningful opportunities to engage Chicago residents in arts and culture activities over the duration of the grant (up to two years).

- **Connection to Year of Healing:** Project clearly relates to the Year of Healing core goals. Projects will create a platform for dialogue, address a community need or challenge, build social cohesion, and/or provide opportunities for engagement of historically marginalized groups.
- **Clarity & feasibility:** The proposed project has a clear timeline, goals, and objectives for the duration of the project in line with the requested budget and is inclusive of additional personnel, materials/supplies, or equipment needed. We value applicants who can show both structure and flexibility in their project planning and implementation.
- **Benefit to communities:** The project’s potential to benefit Chicago residents and strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes that respond to neighborhood priorities. We value projects that provide deep, enriching experiences for participants.
- **Community experience:** The applicant demonstrates deep relationship building and tending skills with artists and partners in communities/neighborhoods identified in the proposal. Applicants and their partners demonstrate experience working in, on behalf of, and leading communities; including outreach and engagement, strong listening skills and attention to detail.
- Additionally, the activities must meet the requirements of the [American Rescue Plan's State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds program](#). The City may request revisions in the proposed project to ensure compliance.

**Timeline \*\*\*All dates are subject to change**

Event	Dates
Application Portal opens	June 15, 2022
Online Info Session	June 22, 2022 @ 5pm <a href="#">Register Here</a>
Online Info Session	July 7, 2022 @ 12pm <a href="#">Register Here</a>
Application deadline	July 20, 2022 5:00 PM CST No Extensions will be granted
Notifications	Late August 2022
Year of Healing 2022 Summit	September 22, 2022
Payments Disbursed	October 2022 – Grant payments will be made in two annual installments
Grant Period	October 2022 – October 2024. This is the time during which grant funds must be spent.

## **How To Apply**

Click [here](#) to submit your proposal through CyberGrants!

**Video Option:** If you prefer to describe your project via a video or audio recording, you can provide abbreviated written responses and upload or provide a link to a video or audio recording of your responses to the narrative questions. **Video applications should include all of the written application components and should be a maximum of 8 minutes in length.**

**Accommodations:** If you need assistance in another language, and/or if you are an individual with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation to apply, please contact Meida McNeal, Senior Manager, Arts & Community Impact Investments, DCASE at [meida.mcneal@cityofchicago.org](mailto:meida.mcneal@cityofchicago.org)

### **Written application components include:**

- **Key Roles**
  - Artist Collaborator: Brief artist collaborator introduction and artistic history, identifying the artist's primary tasks in the project
  - Community Collaborator: Brief community collaborator introduction and programming and/or organizing history, identifying the collaborator's (or organization's) primary tasks in the project
  
- **Project Description & Overview**

Address the following:

  - Share a project description with your overview and plan.
  - Include a timeline for the project/activities for which you are requesting support. Project can last for a duration of one to two years.
  - Discuss your project's intended community impact and how you imagine these efforts will be sustained. What tangible improvements/investments will be left behind?
  - Discuss your project's ability to help communities recover from negative public health or economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
  
- **Project Rationale & Justification**

Address the following:

  - Explain how this project connects to and amplifies the goals for the Year of Healing.
  - Explain how the work of the artist and community project leads each align with the community/ies you are proposing to work with. How does the work build on revitalization efforts already in motion in the neighborhood(s)?



- What community/ies does your project seek to engage with and what potential impact(s) might this project have for them? (Please be specific. For example, Black women; LGBTQIA+ youth; immigrant communities)
- **Preparation for the Work**  
Address the following:
  - What existing relationships do you have that support this project? What new relationships will you cultivate with this project?
  - How will you intentionally integrate the public into your creative process and project over its duration?
  - What is your collaborative working style among a diverse community of stakeholders? How do you achieve consensus and investment while making sure multiple voices are heard?
- **Demographic information** about the primary collaborators and your target audience
- **Proof of Chicago residency:** A current Driver's License, State ID or Chicago CityKey showing Chicago address must be provided.
- **Bios/Resume(s):** For each lead applicant, include a current chronological artistic and/or community resume focused on artistic and/or community achievements, activity, exhibitions, performances, awards, publications, etc. If this is a collaborative project with additional key partnerships, include resumes and a statement of commitment to this project from each collaborator.
- **Project Budget:** Applicants will be required to submit a complete budget for the entire project (not just the amount of the grant requested).

Please also include financial statements from the lead applicant organization's or the fiscal sponsor's most recently completed fiscal year (FY20 financials can be accepted if your fiscal year end date is between June 30-December 31).

- Organizational budgets less than \$300,000: Please submit a copy of your Federal Form 990, 990EZ, or 990N e-postcard.
- Organizational budgets over \$300,000: Please submit a copy of your Federal Form 990 or your audited financial statement.
- If your financial statement is from FY20, or if you are submitting a 990 postcard, please also submit a year end actuals statement for FY20 or a copy of State Form AG990-IL from 2020.
- **Work Samples:** Please include recent samples of creative and/or community organizing work. Samples do not have to represent work the team has created together. Samples can come from separate works created by the artist and/or community lead. Include

one-sentence descriptions for the works and how they relate to the proposed project. We will review up to:

- 5 minutes of video/audio of performing arts or community work
  - 3 literary work samples of no more than 10 pages each
  - 6-8 images of a visual portfolio representing visual arts and/or community work
- **Letters of Support:** Two letters of support are required for Transformation Grant (\$100-\$500K) applications. One letter of support is required for Activation Grant (\$25-\$45K) applications. Letters should be from key partners who are considered essential to your project's implementation and success. Letters should reflect the writer's familiarity, support, and any role they will potentially play in the project.

Please email Meida McNeal, Senior Manager, Arts & Community Impact Investments, DCASE at [meida.mcneal@cityofchicago.org](mailto:meida.mcneal@cityofchicago.org) with questions.

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### **The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events**

The City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy by fostering independent working artists, nonprofits, and for-profit arts businesses; supporting the cultural vitality of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods via Arts77, a citywide arts recovery and reopening plan; marketing the City's cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free, and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors.

DCASE received a significant increase to the Cultural Grants Program budget in 2022. The 2022 DCASE budget provided \$26M in new arts and culture investments, signifying Mayor Lightfoot's commitment to the arts as an essential part of life for Chicago residents. The City of Chicago supports our arts and culture community by:

- Providing targeted relief focusing on artists and organizations not able to access other forms of federal economic support, such as individual artists, local museums and other art and educational organizations.
- Creating a dedicated revenue stream from the City's corporate budget to guarantee a baseline of funding for Cultural Grants, which will no longer be subject to the vagaries of the hotel tax.
- Supporting Creative Place grants for projects that utilize community engagement to produce cultural projects including community-led public art installations, historical walking tours, pop up galleries, temporary and physical improvements, and other cultural activations.

**The Office of Equity and Racial Justice**

The Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ) seeks to advance institutional change that results in an equitable transformation of how we do business across the City of Chicago enterprise. This includes the City's service delivery, resource distribution, policy creation and decision-making. OERJ will do this by supporting City departments in normalizing concepts of racial equity, organizing staff to work together for transformational change, and operationalizing new practices, policies and procedures that result in more fair and just outcomes.