



2022 GRANT GUIDELINES



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WHO WE ARE

BEING IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH PARTNERS & OUR SERVICE REGION



Des Plaines River near Riverside, Illinois
Photo Credit: Tina Ramirez Moon

As stewards of community resources within a specific geographic area, we honor our role by grounding ourselves to be in right relationship to this land. This is key for us to be in right relationship to the peoples and communities that reside here, past, present, and future. We seek to understand how individual and community health is rooted in place by recognizing how indigenous peoples and those who experience migration and displacement can have a profound sense of loss of land, language, relationships, food, and culture foundational to health and wellness.

We acknowledge ourselves as settlers – uninvited guests – on the unceded lands of the people of the Council of Three Fires – the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi – as well as other Native tribes who made their home here. Our office sits steps away from the Des Plaines River, which was a hub of travel, trade, gathering, and healing.

We often refer to our partners and communities as our local health ecosystem because we recognize our work is interdependent and interconnected with the health of all individuals, organizations, systems, and institutions. What impacts one part affects another. To borrow from the indigenous wisdom of reciprocity and mutuality, each piece is as critical as the whole.

Our region is experiencing a lot of change, representing some of the communities most deeply impacted by the pandemic: from four of the top five zip codes in Illinois experiencing the highest infection and mortality rates; to Black, Latinx, immigrant, and/or undocumented communities overrepresented in the essential workforce and gig economy; to families confronted by the digital divide, limiting access to remote learning, virtual work, and telehealth.

Yet, our region is also incredibly resilient. Collectively, we seek to rebuild towards our “next normal” – one that allows all residents to thrive. We are honored to be a trusted partner in our communities towards reimagining a just and equitable future for all.



WHO WE ARE

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

MISSION

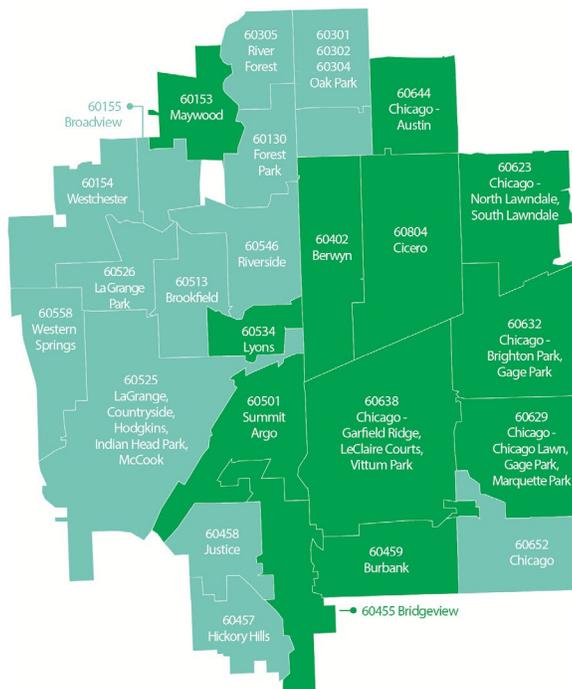
We are a community-informed grantmaking foundation that seeks to measurably improve the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities in our service region by promoting health equity, quality and access.

VISION

We envision that all residents of our communities lead full, health and happy lives and enjoy equal life expectancy.

OUR SERVICE REGION

As a health conversion foundation, we fund a geographic region defined by the service area of MacNeal Hospital, from which we received our endowment in 2000. This service region covers a five-mile radius around the hospital and is comprised of 27 zip codes in Chicago and western Cook County suburbs.



LEGACY

We make grants in the primary MacNeal Hospital service area, or what we call our “Legacy” area.

EQUITY

To achieve health equity, we allocate the majority of funding to zip codes that rank lowest in our social determinants of health study, or what we call our “Equity” area (in green).

OUR COMMITMENT TO RACIAL & ETHNIC EQUITY

All residents of our service region, particularly those who live with the greatest health inequities, should have access to resources and opportunities that improve their well-being and create a sustainable quality of life.

Systemic conditions, such as implicit bias and institutional/structural racism, impede those goals and disproportionately affect BILPOC (Black, Indigenous, Latinx, People of Color) communities. We commit to addressing these barriers by being a community-informed and embedded foundation.

Visit the [“Our Terminology” page](#) on our website to see a list of key terms and definitions that are relevant to our work and grantmaking strategy.



GRANTMAKING

2022 GRANT CYCLE

As we approach the two-year mark of the ongoing pandemic, our annual general operating support plays a critical role in our bold COVID response plan. Our annual partnerships help us stay connected to community and quickly respond to emerging needs, strategies, and crises.

The annual grant cycle helps us identify new partners and reinforce existing partnerships with organizations whose programs and services align with our grantmaking priorities and strategic plan.

ABOUT THE 2022 GRANT CYCLE

This year's competitive grant cycle is open to New and Returning Applicants who will be eligible for a one-year grant. New Applicants will go through **a two-stage application process**, starting with a Letter of Intent, and Returning Applicants can complete **a streamlined application**.

The New Applicant-LOI portal and the Returning Applicant portal open on February 7, 2022.

New Applicants, or organizations that did not receive a general operating support grant in September 2021, can submit a Letter of Intent by February 21, 2022, 11:59pm. Decisions on moving to Stage 2 will be sent by March 7, 2022.

Returning Applicants, or organizations that received a general operating support grant in September 2021, can submit a streamlined grant application by April 11, 2022, 11:59pm.

See page 8, "Grant Application Process & Important Dates", for more information about the grant cycle timeline.



WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN PARTNERS

We believe in transparency and recognize the time and resources it takes to apply for a grant. Therefore, it is important for us to be clear about what alignment to our grantmaking framework looks like.

COVID has deeply impacted communities in our region, and we recognize that organizations will continue to address its lasting impact. For the next two years, we will focus our grantmaking towards an equitable recovery. We seek grantee partners that successfully utilize **all** of the organizational strategies below:

INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES TO ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY

We recognize that health equity issues are complex. Therefore, we look for partners that approach their work with the understanding of how individuals and communities with intersecting identities across race, class, gender, age, and/or ability may experience the compounding impact of structural inequities in various ways.

Partners must demonstrate their work toward ensuring that all residents in our region can have equitable and inclusive access to leading full, happy, and healthy lives. We seek partners that also tailor their programs, services, outreach, and relationship-building in ways that reflect residents' expertise and experience in comprehensive ways.

COMMUNITY-LED

We recognize that community leadership and expertise are necessary to address health and racial inequities, as they are closest to the issues and solutions. Our most aligned partners demonstrate how they actively center the wisdom, expertise, and experience of communities to build power and influence decision-making, strategies, and/or policies.

EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STEWARDSHIP

We seek partners who use data and internal systems to foster learning and encourage accountability in pursuit of racially equitable outcomes and continuous quality improvement. Partner organizations must also demonstrate that their policies and practices reflect organizational and fiscal health.

SYSTEMS CHANGE

We seek partners with a strong understanding of how existing systems function to create and maintain existing inequities. We recognize that systems change takes time and that no single organization or strategy can entirely erase the impact of long standing structural inequities. And yet, our most aligned partners articulate how their work fits within broader efforts to address structural issues.



GRANTMAKING

OUR GRANTMAKING PRIORITIES

All partner organizations must demonstrate that their proposed work aligns with categories below and has a meaningful footprint in our region or with a core population in our region.

Current and potential partners working in this space must be able to demonstrate:

ACCESS to quality health services

High quality, comprehensive health care services are often out of reach for residents in our region due to systemic racism, high medical costs and/or lack of culturally affirming care.

Innovation to remove physical, financial, and/or cultural barriers to care while also highlighting and engaging in upstream solutions.

ADDRESS social determinants of health

The unfair and avoidable difference in health status means that where people are born, work, live, and age are stronger drivers of health outcomes than individual lifestyle choices and clinical care.

Improving community health by addressing structural and social determinants of health in ways that are racially equitable.

ADVOCATE for health policies & systems change

Policy change can address the root causes of health inequities and impact existing structures that perpetuate racism.

Proven ability to meaningfully center and cultivate the leadership, expertise, and solutions of communities and individuals that are most impacted by the inequities they seek to address. Organizations must demonstrate active partnerships in our service region.

AUGMENT knowledge through capacity building

Supporting strategies that facilitate access to relevant and usable local health data for communities and partners can enhance their capacity to make informed health-related decisions and advocate for better policies.

Intentional partnerships that ensure local and public health data reflect and can be utilized by communities. This includes facilitation and direct support of community-led inquiry, data collection, and outcomes reporting.



GRANTMAKING

GRANT ELIGIBILITY

501(c)3 nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for general operating support grants. Organizations that are not tax-exempt may apply with a fiscal sponsor.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Organizations are invited to apply for up to 10% of their operating budget (using current fiscal year expenses as a guide). Please note that more compelling and more competitive proposals will request an amount that aligns with a regional health focus and programmatic rationale rather than a straight 10% budget request.
- At least 20% of total individuals served by the applying organization must live in our service region. Organizations whose work extends beyond our service area will be considered if they demonstrate strong alignment with our grantmaking strategy and implement their work in close partnership with local communities.
- For organizations with operating budgets greater than \$20 million—including but not limited to hospitals and university systems—we will only award Project Support grants for initiatives that demonstrate strategic partnership and a strong commitment to local communities in our region.

Please refer to the FAQs on our website under section “General Operating Support vs. Project Support: Requests From Larger Institutions” for more information.

WE DO NOT FUND

- Businesses
- Capital campaigns*
- Government Entities
- Individuals
- National organizations not focused on our service region
- Operating foundations not directly connected to community-based efforts
- Partisan political activities
- Religious activities
- Scholarships
- School Districts & Individual Schools (including parent-teacher associations, charter schools and nonprofits with more than 80% of expenses for school-based operations)

*Only capital expenses for materials will be considered for funding (i.e., medical equipment, dental chairs).



GRANT APPLICATION

PROCESS & IMPORTANT DATES

We know it takes time and resources to apply for a grant. The COVID pandemic affirmed the need for us to streamline our application processes further so we can all focus on what matters most—improving our region’s health and well-being.

This year’s competitive grant cycle is open to New and Returning Applicants who will be eligible for a one-year grant. New Applicants will go through a two-stage grant application process, starting with a Letter of Intent, and Returning Applicants can complete a streamlined grant application.

NEW APPLICANTS

Organizations that did not receive a general operating support grant in September 2021

1

LETTER OF INTENT

LOI Portal Opens

February 7, 2022

LOI Due

February 21, 2022,
11:59 PM

Stage 2 Decisions

By March 7, 2022

2

FULL APP - INVITE ONLY

Full App Portal Opens

March 7, 2022

Full App Due

April 11, 2022, 11:59 PM

[Link to New App-LOI Portal](#)

Note: The New App-LOI Portal opens on February 7, 2022

RETURNING APPLICANTS

Organizations that received a general operating support grant in September 2021

RETURNING APP

Returning App Portal Opens

February 7, 2022

Returning App Due

April 11, 2022, 11:59 PM

[Link to Returning App Portal](#)

Note: The Returning App Portal opens on February 7, 2022

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

After submitting a completed grant application, all New (Stage 2) and Returning Applicants will receive a notice to set up a virtual site visit with a member of our Program team.

Virtual site visits will be conducted between April - June 2022.

Grant decisions and notifications will be released in September 2022.



MORE INFORMATION FOR YOU

QUICK TIPS WHEN USING OUR GRANTS PORTAL

- New applicants must create an organizational profile before applying.
- Returning applicants can update their organizational profile and contact information, if needed.
- We understand that staff transitions happen, however, we ask applicants to maintain only one account per organization.
- Please click “Forgot My Password” on the grants portal homepage if you need a new password.
- If you are experiencing technical issues or have questions related to the grant portal, please email us at administration@hcfdn.org or call us at (708) 443-5674. If you send an email, please allow 1-2 business days for a response.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO YOUR APPLICATION

If you have questions about the alignment of your proposal with our grantmaking framework or have questions about our guidelines, please submit your question here.

OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We want to ensure you have what you need to complete your grant application. We encourage you to access the FAQs section on the "Apply for a 2022 Grant" page on our website to help answer any questions you may have.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDED PARTNERS

We have begun implementing a Foundation-wide evaluation framework which informs our data collection and organizational learning efforts. Funded grantee partners will be notified in advance of any reporting-related requests and deadlines. We make every effort to provide ample notice of requirements and also be considerate of grantee partners' context.



APPLICATION QUESTIONS

NEW APPLICANTS

You can use this page as a guide to help draft your Letter of Intent. The following are the questions you will find in the grants portal beginning February 7, 2022.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

- Name of Organization
- Total Amount Requested
- Current FY Budget

We recognize that preparing a proposal is no small feat and word limits can be difficult to navigate. In honor of the feedback we have heard from past applicants, we suggest 350 words to 500 words maximum per response.

1. Please describe your core organizational programs and services.

Note: We seek to understand your organization's work as a whole and your specific focus in our service region. Please focus on highlights that provide a general overview of your work. It is more valuable to be clear and concise than to fulfill the word limit. We welcome "recycled language" from other proposals so long as the response adequately aligns with the question at hand.

2. Please indicate your organization's strategies to implement its core programs and services detailed above. Please select as many as apply.

- *Community Organizing*
- *Advocacy*
- *Research and Data*
- *Coalition-Building*
- *Capacity Building*
- *Leadership Development*
- *Service Provision*

3. Please describe your organization's approach(es) to advance health equity and health justice and the impact of your work to date for residents of our service region.

Note: We want to understand how your programs, policies, and strategies aim to address health equity issues for communities in our region. For more information about how we define health equity and how we determine alignment, please refer to our 2022 grant guidelines.

4. Please describe how your proposal aligns with our funding areas and priorities and its current stage (planning, implementation, expanding).

Note: For more information about how we define health equity and how we determine alignment, please refer to our 2022 grant guidelines.



APPLICATION QUESTIONS

NEW APPLICANTS (cont.)

5. Please describe how your organization is representative of the Healthy Communities Foundation service region and/or the community(ies) served.

Note: We seek to understand if and/or how your organization centers the leadership of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and/or other people of color among your staff and board. Please refer to our 2022 grant guidelines for additional guidance on this question.

6. For Project Support Grants Only - Applicable for (and required of) organizations whose annual operating budget exceeds \$20M.

Please provide a project summary, including but not limited to: the project's duration and/or life cycle (if applicable), and how your organization will utilize the requested funds. Please note that if this application advances to the next stage, our staff may reach out to request additional information.

7. Optional: Please describe a collaborative effort that has been particularly significant, useful and/or energizing to your work. Examples could include policy advocacy, community-wide multi-sector initiatives, and/or issue-specific efforts. Please include the role your organization plays. If this is not applicable, please write N/A.



APPLICATION QUESTIONS

RETURNING APPLICANTS

You can use this page as a guide to help draft your grant application. The following are the questions you will find in the grants portal beginning February 7, 2022.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

- Name of Organization
- Total Amount Requested
- Current FY Budget
- Total Number of individuals employed in 2021

1. How do you anticipate utilizing funds from this general operating support grant if awarded?

Although our general operating support grants are unrestricted and we know that budget allocation can change, we ask how you plan to utilize the funds based on what you know now. If awarded, you will not be required to adhere to the response below.

- Program expansion
- Retaining or adding staff
- Professional development (staff/board trainings, workshops, etc.)
- Essentials for Operations (rent, utilities, office equipment, etc.)
- Development infrastructure (donor management, outreach, etc.)
- Project support
- Other

2. Please indicate your organization's strategies to implement its core programs and services. Please select as many that apply.

- Community Organizing
- Advocacy
- Research and Data
- Coalition Building
- Capacity Building
- Leadership Development
- Service Provision

3. Given our commitment to advancing racial equity and racial justice in our service region, we are interested in knowing where your organization is in its racial equity journey. Please indicate which statement below best describes your organization:

Please note that we ask for your candid self-assessment. We presume organizations fall in any of the statements below, and the "best" response accurately reflects the current state of your work in this area.

- We have not yet taken this on and do not feel ready to address these issues in a systemic way.
- We have identified racial equity as a priority but have not yet conducted a formal racial equity assessment or set specific implementation goals. But we are ready to address these issues.
- We have conducted a formal assessment and are aware of the areas that need attention but have not yet begun implementing change.
- We have clear and targeted goals regarding our racial equity and/or racial justice work and have begun to work towards these goals.



APPLICATION QUESTIONS

RETURNING APPLICANTS (cont.)

3. (continued) (Optional) If applicable, please elaborate or update us on any of your racial equity/racial justice goals.

As you respond to questions 4-6, please note that we are particularly interested in better understanding any potential changes to the context of your work. The following list is not exhaustive. However, some examples to consider could include: changes in state or government funding that are significant to your organization (new, expanded, or sunset programs); expanding or shifting program reach to meet current community needs; challenges or opportunities related to staff hiring that might impact programs and/or service delivery.

4. Have you experienced, or do you anticipate, any significant leadership change(s) this year? Y/N (Optional) If yes, please describe.

5. Have you experienced, or do you anticipate, any significant change(s) from a programmatic, geographic, or staffing perspective this year? Y/N (Optional) If yes, please describe.

6. Have you experienced, or do you anticipate, any significant funding shifts this year? Y/N (Optional) If yes, please describe.

Note: We are interested in better understanding if or how recovery- and/or infrastructure-related funding might impact your work. We are also interested in whether current or anticipated changes in other public or private funding may affect your work.

7. Please list your 5 largest private grants (source, amount, and grant term (i.e. multi-year or annual)).

8. For Project Support Grants Only - Applicable to, and required of, organizations whose annual operating budget exceeds \$20M. Please provide a project summary, which includes but is not limited to, the project's duration and/or life cycle (if applicable); rationale and strategic focus in the HCF region; and how your organization plans to utilize the requested funds. Please note that if this application advances to the next stage, our staff may reach out to request additional information.

ATTACHMENTS

An audit is required for organizations with budgets larger than \$400,000. For organizations below this threshold, the submission of a board-approved organization budget will suffice (and is required for all applicants).

- Most recent audit or audited financial statement
- Board-approved organization budget (include revenue and expenses)
- Projected budget (required for organizations with budgets above \$20M only)