



**impact**  
grants  
**chicago**

*connecting women for collective impact*

# Grant Applicant Information Session

September 13, 2023

# Agenda

- Introductions
- Overview of Impact Grants Chicago process and calendar
- Tips and hints to craft your strongest application
- Q&A

A video recording of this meeting and the deck will be available on the Impact Grants Chicago website by September 14, 2023.



# 2023-24 Grant Cycle Process + Calendar

## 2023

Sept 18-Oct 27 - Grant cycle opens with Letter of Inquiry

Approximately **150 LOIs** submitted

December - Applicants notified of eligibility

Approximately **135 eligible LOIs**

## 2024

January - Grant Review Committees (7 GRCs) review LOIs

**All eligible LOIs reviewed**

February 2 - Organizations invited to submit Full Grants

**35 Full Grant Applications**

February 16 - Full Grant applications due

March 15- Applicants invited to host Insightful Visits

**21 Insightful Visits**

Apr 15-21 - Insightful Visits conducted

May 3 - Grant finalists notified; May 8 - Finalist info session

**7 finalists**

May 29 - Grant Awards Celebration. Finalists present; entire IGC membership votes for Impact and Merit Grant winners

**3-4 Impact grants**  
**3-4 Merit grants**



# 2-Step Written Application Process

*Impact Grants Chicago utilizes a 2-step written application process to vet nonprofit eligibility and assess impact.*

**Step 1 - Letter of Inquiry (LOI)**

**Step 2 - Full Grant Application (FGA)**



# Step 1- Letter of Inquiry (LOI)

- Introduce your organization to a team of volunteer reviewers with your mission and an overview of the work you do.
- Basic financial documents - most recently filed 990 and audit

## Step 2- Full Grant Application (FGA)

- Expand your story. Tell us how your organization and your services would deliver impact from a \$100,000 grant.
- Financial Documents:
  - Most recent 990
  - Audit
  - Internally prepared documents for current fiscal year





# Improving Your Letter of Inquiry and Full Grant Application



# Compelling Case Statements

*Every case statement needs to address these five questions:*

What is the need for your service?

Why is it urgent to support now?

Why is my nonprofit uniquely qualified to solve the problem?

What is the impact?

What happens if we don't act?



# 1. Eligibility Requirements

*Ensure you meet all of the eligibility requirements.*

Be classified as a “Public Charity” with tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code for a minimum of 36 months prior to applying for the grant.

Be headquartered and operate in the City of Chicago.

Provide the majority of services in the City of Chicago.

Independently file an IRS Form 990 (unless exempt by federal law).

Report total revenue for the last full fiscal year between \$650,000 and \$8 million. If exempt from filing a Form 990, the audit will be used for revenue eligibility.

Be independently and separately audited. If your nonprofit is a subsidiary or a consolidated affiliate of another entity, the audit must reflect the financials of the organization applying for the grant

Use the full amount of the grant within 24 months.

## 2. Clear and Concise Narrative

*Be sure to include a clear, concise, and compelling narrative.*

- Impact Grants Chicago (IGC) is a group of volunteers, not professional grantors. Applications that clearly communicate what the organization does and why it's work is important will have a better chance of moving forward in the process. The readability of your application is crucial.
- Succinctly describe the problem you are trying to solve and how you will do the work.
- Do not use jargon or acronyms.



## 3. Measuring Effectiveness

*Share how you define and measure impact.*

- Use stories to emotionally engage our volunteers, but amplify the impact with meaningful data and statistics.
- Random data points can cause confusion. Only use them if they advance the narrative.
- Make sure all historical data points used on the LOI match those used on the full grant application (or give an explanation if they don't).

## 4. Budget and Financial Documents

### In the LOI:

- An IRS Form 990 from 2021 or 2022 will be used to confirm revenue eligibility, \$650,000 - \$8,000,000. If you do not file a Form 990, your most recent audit will be used to confirm revenue eligibility.
- Make sure the revenue you report on the LOI (Q20) matches the revenue in your financial documents.

### In the Full Grant:

- You will be asked to resubmit your current IRS Form 990 and audit due to the length of time between the LOI and Full Grant submission dates.
- Inconsistent numbers can delay the review process.

## 5. Sustainability and Impact

*Impact Grants Chicago is interested in providing funds that will have an impact on our community – it is in our name!*

*Be sure to explain:*

- How will the impact of our grant be sustained after the grant is complete?
- By what means can the grant be leveraged to gain additional support?
- How will this grant impact your target population or the community you are serving?



## 6. Writing Applications

*Keep in mind that numerous people will be reading and discussing your application. Make sure it is the best it can be.*

- ❑ Have an outsider read the grant to ensure readability and proper grammar. Avoid typos by using spell check or Grammarly.
- ❑ If you answer a question with a single sentence rather than a full explanation, a reviewer may interpret your response as not serious.
- ❑ Draft narrative questions in Word first, rather than directly in the application. Then, cut and paste into the document.

# Grant Resources

*The following resources are available on the Impact Grants Chicago website, [www.impactgrantschicago.org](http://www.impactgrantschicago.org)*

- ✓ Eligibility Requirements
- ✓ Projects that Impact Grants Chicago will and will not fund
- ✓ Letter of Inquiry questions, in PDF format
- ✓ Full Grant Application questions, in PDF format
- ✓ Application process FAQs

Irene Goldstein, Nonprofit Relations Director

[igoldstein@impactgrantschicago.org](mailto:igoldstein@impactgrantschicago.org)

[grants@impactgrantschicago.org](mailto:grants@impactgrantschicago.org)



# Next Steps

- We will be holding 2 drop-in Q&A sessions for any questions that were not answered today
  - September 15
  - September 20
- September 18- LOI opens in Slideroom.



# Questions?

