



2024/2025 Impact Report



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Letter from Our President



Dear Impact Grants Chicago Community,

As we conclude our 8th year, I am deeply proud to share the tremendous impact we have made together. On May 28, 2025, at our annual Grant Award Ceremony, we awarded \$490,000 to some of Chicago's most inspiring nonprofits. This milestone reflects the generosity and commitment of our 443 members.

Our four \$100,000 Impact Grantees this year are truly transforming lives across the city. Because of our philanthropic members:

- Crushers Club, which supports young men in Englewood seeking alternatives to gangs and drugs, will expand their youth employment and job training programs to reduce its long waitlist.
- The People's Music School, which provides economically disadvantaged children tuition-free music lessons and instruments, will increase enrollment to 200 more South Side students.
- The Bloc offers boxing training, mentorship, and tutoring for youth often rejected elsewhere, and will now expand its proven model and path to college for youth on Chicago's West Side.
- Ignite, which provides long-term housing and support for homeless youth, will add a mobile outreach unit to close critical resource gaps on the South and West Sides.

We also proudly awarded \$30,000 Merit Grants to Esperanza, North Side Housing and Supportive Services, and VOCEL, supporting early childhood education, homeless shelter services, and programs for individuals with developmental disabilities.

JOIN US: Our model is simple yet powerful: every member contributes \$1,000, and for each 100 women who join, we award another \$100,000 grant. Because we are an all-volunteer organization, 100% of your membership donation goes directly to nonprofits. We understand that \$1,000 is a significant gift. That's why we have a sponsorship fund that offers partial and full sponsorships to women for whom the full amount may be a barrier.

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT: Every member can design her own experience. Many opportunities are available to get involved, as much or as minimally as you want. Women can join a committee to review grant applications, host a coffee or just trust the process and vote for our finalists. Our members often tell us that learning about our nonprofit applicants is eye-opening and inspiring. It's a chance to understand the vital work happening in Chicago and to be part of something meaningful and lasting.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to our caring members and our dedicated Board of Directors. Together, we are building a stronger Chicago - one grant at a time.

Warmly,
Maggie Schell
President, Impact Grants Chicago



OUR MISSION AND VALUES



Impact Grants Chicago connects, engages and empowers women to improve our community by collectively funding \$100,000 grants to Chicago nonprofits that are dedicated to addressing the challenges facing our city.

We value...

- connecting women for collective impact
- offering our members an efficient and trusted philanthropic process
- the flexibility of engagement in our process
- every woman having an equal voice in choosing our grantees
- the integrity, commitment and collective knowledge of our members
- providing our members the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of Chicago nonprofits
- our role in raising the profiles of Chicago nonprofits
- a membership that is open to anyone who identifies as a woman
- being an anti-racist organization that promotes a diversity of perspectives in our membership and in our support of the nonprofit community

2025 Impact Grantees



Crushers Club believes that every individual deserves the right to a future filled with opportunity and free from violence. Their mission is to be the strongest alternative to gangs in Chicago. They provide at-risk boys and young men the tools required to restore their lives and improve their neighborhood.



Ignite stands with youth who are experiencing homelessness on their journey to a home and a future with promise. Ignite's programs offer the opportunity for participants to build deep relationships with one another and its staff that continue to positively impact their lives long after they complete our programs.



The Bloc cultivates the love of boxing to share transformational resources with youth and communities on Chicago's West Side. They contribute to the momentum of improving Chicago's future by attracting youth least likely to join mentoring and tutoring programs - the kids who like to fight.



The People's Music School's mission is to deliver access to the benefits of high-quality, tuition-free music education. Through intensive instruction and performance, students achieve excellence in music that transfers to other areas in life. They grow musically, socially, emotionally and intellectually, and develop a foundation of responsibility, self-esteem, resilience and purpose.

2025 Merit Grantees



ESPERANZA
COMMUNITY SERVICES

Esperanza Community Services' mission is to empower people with developmental disabilities to reach their full potential and lead fulfilling, independent lives. Esperanza strive to achieve this through innovative education, effective advocacy, and compassionate support while fostering a supportive community where everyone can thrive.



NORTH SIDE HOUSING
AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

North Side Housing and Supportive Services' mission is to support adults experiencing homelessness as they start their healing journey and transition to long-term stable housing, breaking the cycle of homelessness for good.



VOCEL

VOCEL's mission is to help ensure every child has the foundation to learn, grow, and lead. VOCEL is committed to democratizing early learning in Chicago and beyond.

Our Giving Process

We are one of over 70 organizations leveraging the Impact100 Model of collective giving, which provides a structured platform for members to participate in collaborative and democratic philanthropy. The model's cornerstone is for members to pool their money in order to make larger grants for greater, transformative impact in their communities.





2025 By the Numbers

NONPROFITS

133 TOTAL APPLICATIONS

117 ELIGIBLE LETTERS OF INQUIRY

35 FULL GRANT APPLICATIONS

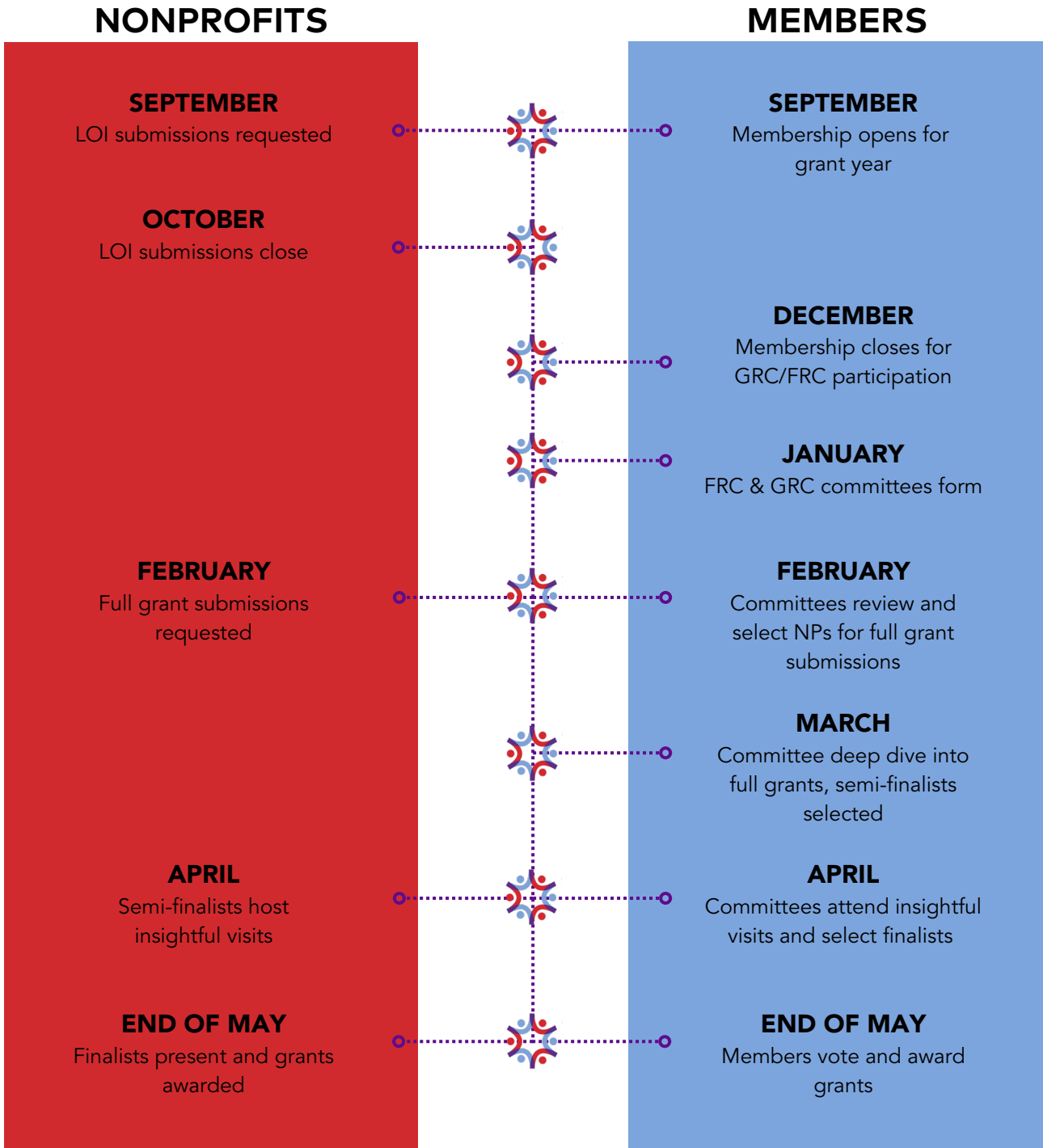
21 INSIGHTFUL VISITS

7 FINALISTS SELECTED

3 \$30,000 MERIT GRANTS AWARDED

4 \$100,000 IMPACT GRANTS AWARDED

Process Milestones



Key Leadership

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Maggie Schell, President
Erin Drury, Vice President
Jennifer Gartenberg, Treasurer
Carole Schechter, Secretary & Governance Director
Jenny Burrowes, Grantee Engagement Director
Leslie Giron, Events Director
Irene Goldstein, Nonprofit Relations Director
Jackie Lutz, Financial Review Director
Cara Pollard, Director of Member Engagement

Marnie Schwartz, Membership Director
Lara Shayne, Grant Review Director
Sue Swaringen, Financial Review Director
Ally Syperek, Marketing Director
Allison Szafranski, Events Director
Penny Turner, Communications Director
Gabrielle Vojtech, Digital Director
Meg Weltzer, Communications Director
Lisa Winger, Grant Review Director



COMMITTEE CHAIRS

GRANT REVIEW

Lisa Adams	Cynthia Shewan
Jen Avery-Emani	Bonnie Shifrin
Trish Browne	Heike Spahn
Kathryn Clarke	Toria Stender
Rachel Eichenbaum	Susan Sullivan
Nikki Nemerovski	Ann Vogl
Mary O'Connell	Joanne Volakakis
Jennifer Pinto	Liz Xilas
Jossie Prochilo	

MANAGERS

Libby Brombach, Events Manager
Stephanie Laude, Member Engagement Manager
Becca Wolfgram, Social Media Manager

2025 By the Numbers

OUR PEOPLE

442 TOTAL MEMBERS

251 MEMBERSHIP PLUS
LEVEL MEMBERS

53 SPONSORED
MEMBERS

199 GRC COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

25 FRC COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

14 MENTORS



Our Sponsors and Partners

Impact Grants Chicago is an all-volunteer organization and relies on corporate sponsorships, matching funds and additional donations from members and friends. We are grateful for their support.

IMPACT PARTNER

KATIE A. AND JASON P. ST. PETERS
AND

KIRKLAND & ELLIS

MEMBERSHIP SPONSORS



MATCHING FUNDS



Prior Year Grantee Updates



Connections for Abused Women and their Children (CAWC)

With the \$100,000 grant awarded in May, CAWC has made significant strides in advancing the development of our new shelter and supporting our life-saving programs. Your support has been instrumental in helping us refine the shelter's design to better serve survivors of domestic violence while bolstering the critical services that support their journey to safety and independence. The grant has enabled us to provide critical programs and address significant cost increases while maintaining our commitment to providing safety, dignity and hope to survivors.



New Moms

New Moms has grown our Mental Wellness program, hiring a third therapist to focus on providing Parent-Child Psychotherapy. We've received funding to train all therapists in EMDR, and we have started a partnership with RUSH Hospital system to deliver onsite medication management for participants with mental health needs. We look forward to sharing the results of our College Success pilot - contributing to the national conversations about economic mobility for single mothers. We're continuing to assess the demand for mental wellness services, and will make plans to grow that program to meet the need among our participants. We continue to amplify our work nationally via The Hub @ New Moms, our social enterprise consultancy.





St. Leonard's Ministries

The Impact Grant is supporting the Michael Barlow Education and Employment Center, which has increased enrollment by 56%. This fall, culinary students prepared lunch for the Boeing Investors Committee, catered St. Leonard's 70th Sneaker Ball, and prepared the desserts for St. Leonard's 70th anniversary event. Additionally, the Construction Skills Training Program has recently become NCCER Certified, which provides students access to module-based learning, skills-based certificates, and will now graduate from the program with both their OSHA Safety Training and NCCER certification - showing they are well-trained and prepared for roles. Satisfaction with Barlow Center programs remains extremely high with 100% of Culinary and Construction graduates reporting feeling prepared for a job in their respective industry.



Housing Opportunities & Maintenance for the Elderly (HOME)

Over the past several years, emergency repairs have consistently made up over 50% of the Upkeep and Repair Program's total repairs. H.O.M.E. utilized funding from Impact Grants to hire three part-time Home Repair Assistants. Since then, H.O.M.E. has completed 46% more repairs in 55% more homes. After receiving the grant award, Home Repair Specialists and Assistants completed 373 repairs in 48 homes. The same period the year prior, the Specialists on their own completed just 138 repairs in 14 homes. This massive increase shows the incredible impact for Chicago's senior homeowners only five months into the grant term. Additionally, H.O.M.E. was able to leverage Impact Grants' funding to secure additional dedicated funding from an anonymous foundation to cover the Assistant positions through 2025.



Impact Over the Years

\$100,000 Impact Grant Recipients

2025					
2024					
2023					
2022					
2021					
2020					
2019					
2018					

Since 2018, we have awarded over \$3.9M in total grants to Impact and Merit grantees

