

2025/2026 Impact Report



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Letter from Our President



Dear Impact Grants Chicago Community,

What happens when 486 women come together around a shared belief that collective giving strengthens our city?

This year, the answer was extraordinary: together, we awarded **\$520,000 to seven exceptional Chicago nonprofit organizations** - four \$100,000 Impact Grants and three \$40,000 Merit Grants. These grants represent lives changed and communities strengthened, and are a powerful reminder of what we can accomplish when we pool our financial resources, volunteer time, and voices.

During this ninth grant cycle, our members learned about the challenges facing communities throughout Chicago and the organizations working tirelessly to address them. At a time of increasing demand and uncertain funding, our applicants' determination, creativity, and commitment to Chicago inspired us. The decisions were difficult, but in the end, every member had a voice in determining where our collective funding could make a meaningful difference.

One of the privileges of serving as President this year has been watching our work from so many perspectives - talking with new and longtime members, attending virtual site visits, and celebrating with the nonprofits at the Grant Awards Celebration. It has given me a deeper appreciation for the many ways our members engage in and contribute to Impact Grants Chicago.

Everything you will read in this report happens because of Impact Grants Chicago members. Whether you served on a Grant or Financial Review Committee, hosted a Meet & Greet or facilitated a Book Club, mentored a new member, supported one of the many behind-the-scenes efforts that keep Impact Grants Chicago thriving, or simply cast your vote at the end of the grant cycle, **you make our impact possible**. Thank you.

And now, we welcome an exciting milestone: **Impact Grants Chicago's 10th grant cycle!** This year will be an opportunity to celebrate how far we have come while also asking what more we can accomplish together. In the year ahead, we hope to create new opportunities for members to connect and engage, introduce more women to the power of collective giving, and continue investing significant, unrestricted funding in outstanding Chicago nonprofit organizations.

Our first nine years have demonstrated the extraordinary power of collective giving. Our tenth gives us an opportunity to celebrate that impact and build on its momentum.

I hope you will join us for what comes next, and bring another woman along with you.

With gratitude,
Erin Drury
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

2026 Impact Grantees



Centro Romero's mission is to empower immigrant individuals and their families who have limited options. Through their services, Centro Romero provides the tools and resources to become self-sufficient in society. With the \$100,000 impact grant, they will focus on Immigration Legal Services, Adult Education, and Family Services.



Children's Research Triangle's mission is to provide equitable access to research-driven behavioral health services, training, research, and adaptive recreation to support the development and well-being of underserved children and youth. Their spending priorities will center on sustaining free, trauma-informed youth mental healthcare in community-based settings on Chicago's South and West sides.



Imagine Englewood If's mission is to strengthen and empower the Greater Englewood community through teaching local youth and their families healthy living, environmental awareness, and positive communication skills. With the \$100,000 impact grant, they will expand their tutoring model and build out structured career pathways, certifications, and hands-on learning, and expand their wraparound services.



Law Center for Better Housing provides free legal and supportive services to prevent evictions and improve housing stability for lower income renters while advocating for the rights of all renters until everyone in Chicago has a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home. Receiving the \$100,000 grant allows LCBH to provide flexible wraparound supportive services to their legal clients, and increase pro bono engagement.

2026 Merit Grantees



Center for Disability & Elder Law

Center for Disability & Elder Law (CDEL) provides free legal services to low-income older adults and people with disabilities throughout Cook County. They focus their efforts on matters related to financial and housing stability, estate planning including end-of-life planning, divorce, and adult guardianship. They have been expanding access to justice to persons marginalized by poverty, age and/or disability, for over forty years.



CHICAGO DEBATES

Chicago Debates is bridging the educational opportunity gap for Chicago Public School students by providing them with an after-school program that supports their academic, career, and leadership success. Their mission is to advance the educational achievement, community contributions, and life success of Chicago's youth through the transformative power of academic debate.

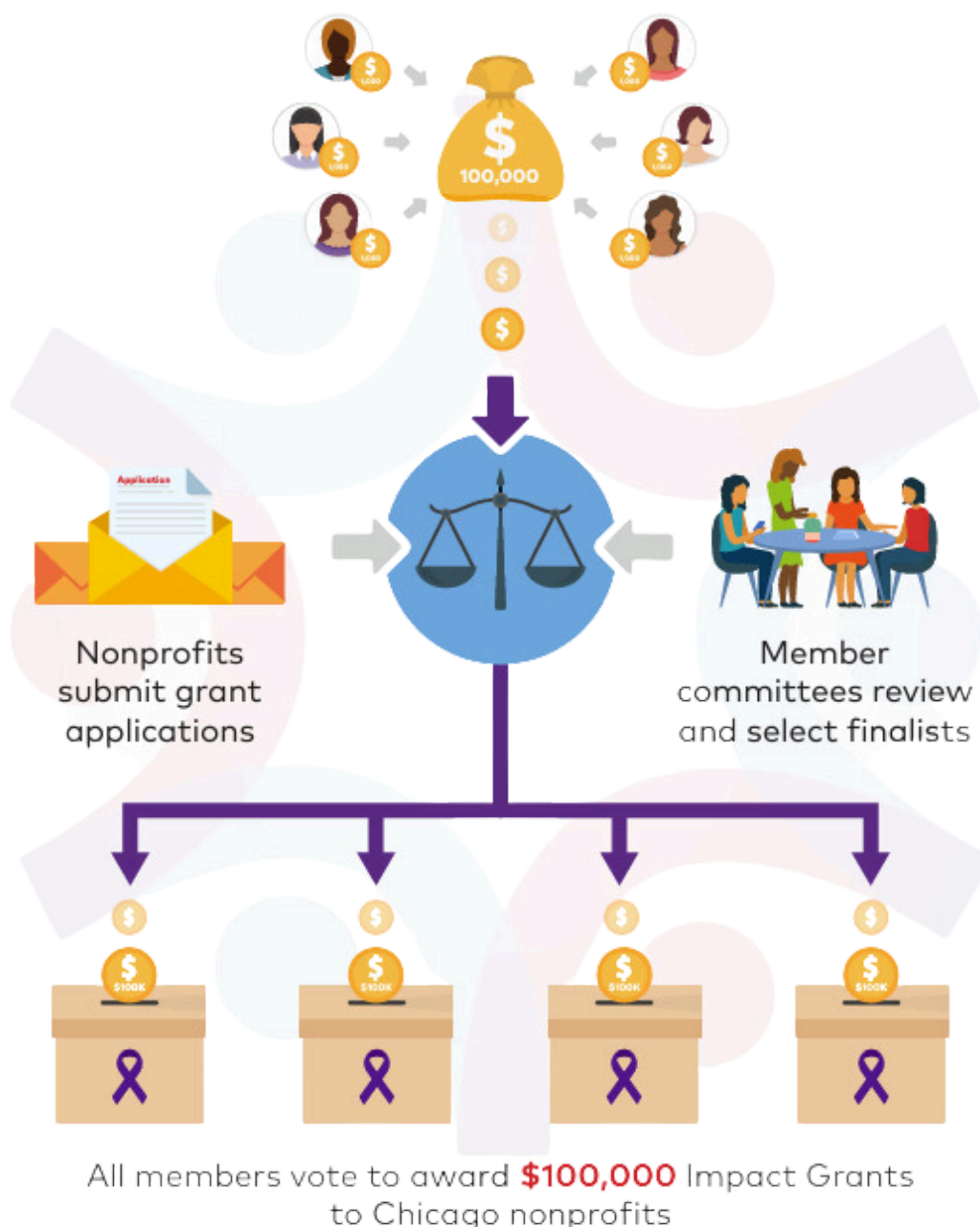


For over 100 years, ReVive Center for Housing and Healing has worked with love and compassion to end homelessness and restore hope, that all might flourish for a better Chicago. They meet people experiencing homelessness where they are, and expertly connects them with food, housing, income, healthcare, and community. We help people change their lives and end the cycle of homelessness.

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.

Each woman donates **\$1,000**
100% of donations are pooled to create **\$100,000** grants





2026 By the Numbers

NONPROFITS

163 TOTAL APPLICATIONS

133 ELIGIBLE LETTERS OF INQUIRY

35 FULL GRANT APPLICATIONS

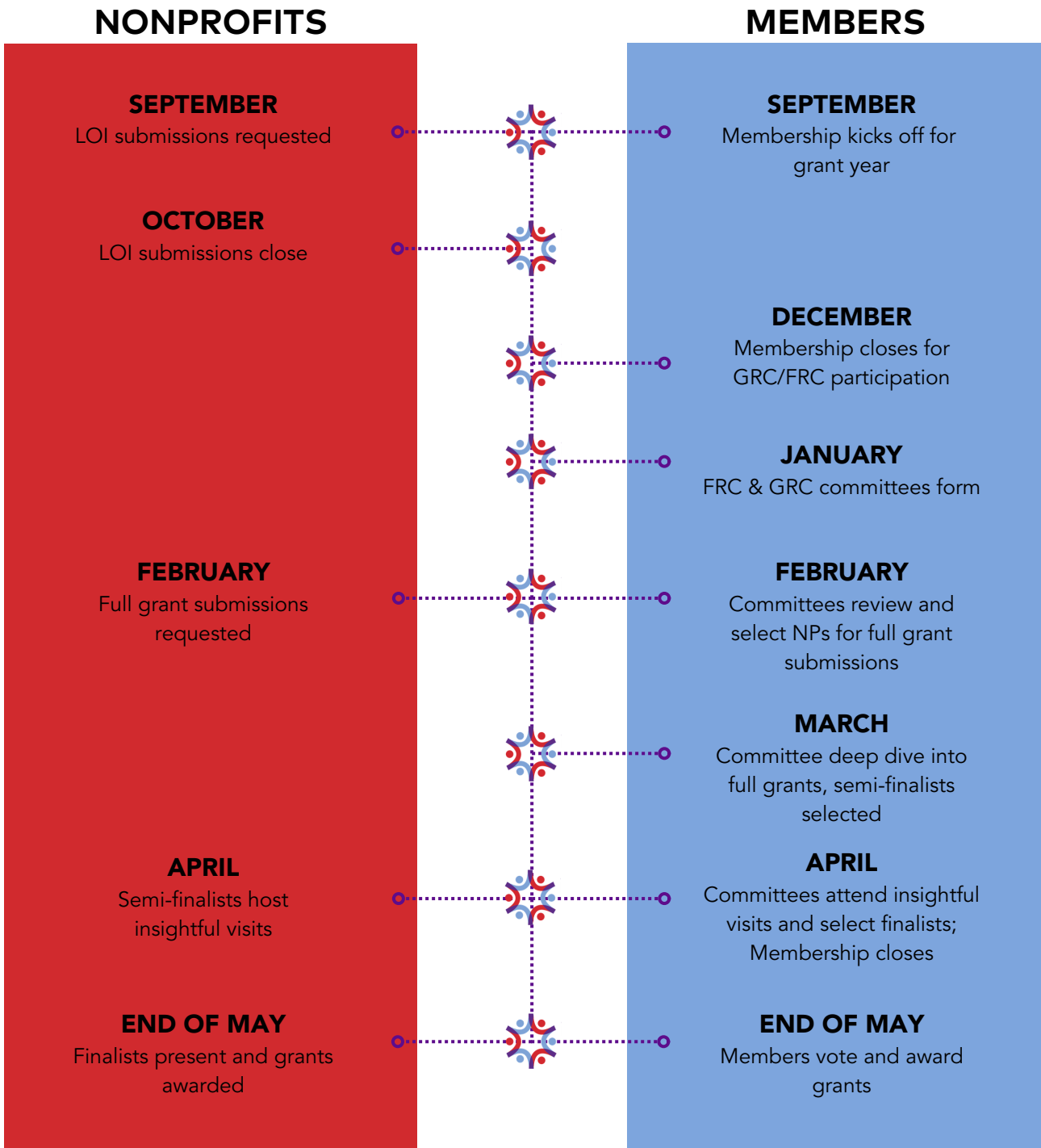
21 INSIGHTFUL VISITS

7 FINALISTS SELECTED

3 \$40,000 MERIT GRANTS AWARDED

4 \$100,000 IMPACT GRANTS AWARDED

Process Milestones



Key Leadership

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Erin Drury, President
Maggie Schell, Past President
Lisa Stadler, Treasurer
Carole Schecter, Secretary & Governance Director
Jenny Burrowes, Grantee Engagement Director
Leslie Giron, Events Director
Irene Goldstein, Nonprofit Relations Director
Erin Grodnick, Grant Review Director
Jackie Lutz, Financial Review Director
Cara Pollard, Member Engagement Director

Marnie Schwartz, Membership Director
Lara Shayne, Grant Review Director
Heike Spahn, Grant Review Director
Sue Swaringen, Financial Review Director
Ally Syperok, Marketing Director
Penny Turner, Communications Director
Gabrielle Vojtech, Digital Director
Meg Weltzer, Communications Director
Lisa Winger, VP - Grant Process



COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Lisa Adams	Jennifer Pinto
Jen Avery-Emani	Jossie Prochilo
Darien Bloom	Cynthia Shewan
Trish Browne	Bonnie Shifrin
Carla Carpenter	Margaret Steele
Kathryn Clarke	Toria Stender
Rachel Eichenbaum	Susan Sullivan
Ginger Hecht	Ann Vogl
Nikki Nemerovski	Joanne Volakakis
Mary O'Connell	Liz Xilas

MANAGERS

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

2026 By the Numbers

OUR PEOPLE

486 TOTAL MEMBERS

295 MEMBERSHIP PLUS
LEVEL MEMBERS

29 SPONSORED
MEMBERS

11 GRANTEE
FELLOWS

246 GRC COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

26 FRC COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

15 MENTORS



Our Sponsors and Partners

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

MEMBERSHIP SPONSORS



FOUNDATION PARTNERS

Steven and Elizabeth Young
Family DAF



MATCHING FUNDS



Prior Year Grantee Updates



Crushers Club

With support from Impact Grants Chicago, Crushers Club expanded its year-round violence prevention and workforce development program for high-risk Englewood youth. This year, 206 young people worked 63,000+ hours and earned a record \$1.04 million in wages while building critical job skills. IGC funding also helped double trauma-support capacity and expand career training, college and trades pathways, and hands-on employment opportunities. More than 95% of participants reported improved self-esteem and confidence each month. One graduating participant turned his experience into a paid construction job, while another moved into a Chicago Police Department youth recruitment pathway.



Ignite

Ignite, with the help of the Impact Grants Chicago grant, served 720 young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, connecting them with housing, mental health care, education and employment support, and street outreach. More than 200 youth received education and employment coaching, and 85% of young people in Ignite's care were working and/or enrolled in school. IGC funding also strengthened on-site therapy and mobile outreach across Chicago's West Side, including 2,752 street outreach engagements. Among youth who completed mental health reassessments, 80% reported decreased anxiety symptoms and 60% reported decreased depression symptoms.





The Bloc

The support from Impact Grants Chicago helped The Bloc expand its reach to more than 350 young people through its free boxing and academic program. Participants currently average a 3.09 GPA, rising from 2.37 in year one to 3.23 by year three. The grant also supported the launch of Alpha's Corner, a leadership and boxing initiative for girls and nonbinary youth, and helped strengthen school and community partnerships across the West Side. Through BlocFit, The Bloc also created paid opportunities for fighters and alumni to lead adult fitness classes while bringing a new wellness resource to the neighborhood. Bloc fighters earned three Golden Gloves championships and one Junior Olympics championship, evidence of the discipline and confidence the program is designed to build both in and out of the ring.



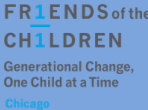
The People's Music School

The funding from Impact Grants Chicago helped The People's Music School secure a permanent home for its Greater South Side program for the first time in the organization's 50-year history. The new 10,000-square-foot Washington Park space gives the program long-term stability and room to grow after relocating four times, while serving 164 students with 23 faculty members this year. Across TPMS, 800 students received tuition-free music education, with many participating for several years. The school also continues to see strong academic and musical outcomes, including a 100% college matriculation rate among last year's graduating seniors, all of whom received scholarships for musical ability or academic merit.



Impact Over the Years

\$100,000 Impact Grant Recipients

2026					
2025					
2024					
2023					
2022					
2021					
2020					
2019					
2018					

Since 2018, we have awarded more than \$4.4M in total grants to Impact and Merit grantees.

