

Elevating Culture Near Transit – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the primary focus of this grant opportunity?

The focus is on projects that use arts and culture to **activate public spaces, advance equity in urban planning, support local creatives and small businesses, and strengthen community collaboration**—particularly in neighborhoods near Chicago’s transit stations.

Is this a general operating grant?

No. This is a **project-based grant**. Funds must be used specifically for the activities and outcomes described in your proposed project. General operating or unrestricted support is not eligible.

What kind of projects are you looking to support?

We are seeking projects that:

- Activate public spaces through arts, culture, and community programming.
 - Build equity and community power in planning and development processes.
 - Support and amplify the work of local creatives, entrepreneurs, and small businesses.
 - Foster collaborations that celebrate cultural identity and resilience.
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What are some examples of eligible project types?

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Public art installations, performances, or cultural festivals near transit.
 - Creative community engagement strategies in neighborhood planning or development.
 - Cross-sector collaborations between artists, residents, and small businesses.
 - Placekeeping initiatives that preserve and celebrate neighborhood heritage.
 - Pop-up activations, cultural markets, or artistic interventions that reimagine vacant or underutilized spaces.
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Can multiple community organizations be part of an application?

Yes. Collaboration is highly encouraged. Organizations may apply together as partners, but one lead applicant must be identified.

Can one organization apply for multiple grants?

Because these are collaborative grants, we recognize that organizations and individuals might be partners on more than one application - this is allowed under the parameters of the RFP.

However, the same organization CANNOT be the lead applicant for more than one grant under each of the grant buckets, i.e. one organization can be the lead applicant for one grant under \$10,000 and one grant between \$25,000 - \$50,000.

Note that grants for under \$10,000 are encouraged to support partnerships with new or emerging artists in the community development and creative placekeeping space.

How should the budget be structured for this grant?

Your budget should reflect the **full scope of your project**, including both planning and execution. If the project budget is greater than the grant amount, all other funding required to complete the project must be secured.

Why is collaboration so important for this grant?

Elevated Chicago and The Chicago Community Trust believe in the **collective power of partnerships**. Priority will be given to projects that show meaningful collaboration between community residents, artists, local businesses, cultural organizations, and civic or commercial partners. Strong collaborations increase community ownership and create a deeper, more lasting impact.

What is the expected grant term and amount?

- This is a **one year grant opportunity**
- Approximately **10–15 projects** will be funded.
- Total regranteeing budget: **\$350,000 annually**.

- Awarded grantees will also gain access to **light technical assistance, peer learning, and Elevated Chicago's Creatives Table network.**
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Do we need to have our 501(c)(3) status secured before applying?

Yes. Applicants must either:

- Be a registered **501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) organization**, or
- Apply with a qualified **fiscal sponsor**.

If your organization does not have 501(c)(3) status, you must identify a fiscal sponsor before applying. Your fiscal sponsor must complete and certify an organization profile in The Chicago Community Trust's grants management system, GrantCentral, before you submit your application.

What is the application process and timeline?

- **RFP Release Date:** August 29, 2025
 - **Information Session:** August 27, 2025
 - **Applications Open:** September 3, 2025
 - **Application Deadline:** October 6, 2025
 - **Funding Decisions:** December 2025
 - **Announcements:** December 2025
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Who can I contact for questions?

- For technical assistance with GrantCentral: **grants@cct.org**
 - For program questions: **Marly Schott – marly@elevatedchicago.org**
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Will feedback be provided if my application is denied?

Due to the anticipated high number of applications, **individual feedback will not be provided** for denied applications.