

Chicago Healthcare Workplace Wellbeing Fund: Request for Proposals

Led by the Sprague Foundation in partnership with peer funders throughout Chicago, the Chicago Healthcare Workplace Wellbeing Collaborative (WWC) was established to address the challenges facing employees within the healthcare safety net, particularly those tied to recent federal actions including funding cuts, executive orders, and legislative and policy shifts. Funders including the Sprague Foundation, Crown Family Philanthropies, Frechette Family Foundation, Michael Reese Health Trust, and others, have developed **a pooled fund to address such articulated challenges as burnout, fatigue, job insecurity, secondary trauma, deportation anxiety, the ongoing impacts of COVID-19**, and other factors certainly not new to sector, but exacerbated by the current climate. The end **goal is to facilitate healthier, more empowering healthcare workplaces that reduce stress, foster resiliency factors, encourage job retention, enable leaders to be more responsive to staff concerns, and encourage a work culture of equity, efficiency, performance, and balance.**

The WWC is now launching a **Request for Proposals** to support workers with increased resources during this challenging time. The Chicago Healthcare Workplace Wellbeing Fund will offer **one-time strategic grants in two tiers - \$10,000 or \$20,000 – to healthcare providers in the city of Chicago.** Organizations must directly provide primary and/or specialized healthcare¹ to the Medicaid, uninsured, and/or underinsured populations; employ community health workers² (or equivalent roles, such as community doulas, peer recovery specialists, etc); and operate within the City of Chicago. Organizations should have 501c3 status or use a 501c3 organization as a fiscal sponsor.

Funding from the WWC is intended to **generate innovative strategies** to address these challenges. This resource may prove helpful to review best practices and generate ideas:
<https://www.wpchange.org/actionable-strategies>.

Your own initiatives might include, but are by no means limited to, healing activities such as mindfulness and/or body work; converting a portion of built environment to enable workday decompression such as yoga or a massage chair; recognition and/or peer-support activities for staff members; bringing in a social worker for anxiety, depression, or grief counseling; or working with a consultant to revamp organizational PTO policies, launch a sabbatical program, or provide on-site childcare, simply to name a few. Our goal as funders is not to prescribe ideas from within philanthropy, but instead to learn from you – the caregivers - what your staff members need during these trying times. Dream big, think outside the box, and actively listen to staffing needs to generate your proposals. Rest assured that we in philanthropy are listening.

We acknowledge that these grants are insufficient to solve for the most significant factors impacting job satisfaction, such as salary and benefits that fail to compete with the private

¹ Examples include, but are not limited to, mental/behavioral healthcare, maternal/child health, chronic disease management and treatment, substance use disorder care, cardiology, oncology, respiratory health, etc.

² Community Health Workers (CHWs) are understood as a broad range of employees, hired from the local community to build trust, support care coordination, and forge cultural and linguistic connections with patients. They need not have formal CHW certification to meet this requirement. Grant awards need not be restricted solely to benefit the CHW population, but may be inclusive of staff members at large.

sector, devastating public funding cuts, and concrete threats to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, but the WWC has determined that not being able to tackle everything doesn't mean we should do nothing. WWC envisions this RFP as a one-year pilot to help us learn more from the sector in hopes of sustaining or expanding these efforts over time.

WWC will award at least \$235,000 in 2026 to respond to these opportunities. We will hold a virtual **information session** for interested organizations on **Thursday, February 12, from 2-3pm**. (Login details below). The Chicago Healthcare Workplace Wellbeing Fund will **release the RFP application questions on February 13, 2026**, and accept applications for the first round of funding through **March 9, 2026, at 11:59pm**. We expect to communicate award decisions by April 13, 2026.

Topic: Chicago Healthcare Workplace Wellbeing RFP: **Virtual Information Session for Applicants**

Time: Feb 12, 2026 02:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

<https://zoom.us/j/92645280116?pwd=uKktv34oj3LRQg5KFgqh1MqNQzTYt.1>

Meeting ID: 926 4528 0116

Passcode: 701050

One tap mobile:

+13092053325,,92645280116#,,,,*701050# US

+13126266799,,92645280116#,,,,*701050# US (Chicago)

Eligibility

Organizations to be considered by the Chicago Healthcare Workplace Wellbeing Fund must directly provide primary and/or specialized healthcare to the Medicaid, uninsured, or under-insured population; employ community health workers (or equivalent roles, such as community doulas, peer recovery specialists, etc); and operate within the City of Chicago. Organizations should have 501c3 status or use a 501c3 organization as a fiscal sponsor.

Participation Expectations

All funded grantees will be expected to engage upon request (communications will be minimized to the essentials and occur only occasionally) with the project evaluator. Emails, phone/Zoom interviews, and/or focus groups may be part of the evaluation process. In addition, two convenings – one virtual session at the 6-month mark and one in-person session at the pilot's conclusion – will be held. All grantees will be asked to send at least one project representative to these sessions. Participation will be modestly compensated.

Reporting

All grant recipients will be asked to provide a year-end report by May 1, 2027. This 2-page summary should address the following with respect to the funded project:

- 1-3 key success(es)
- 1-3 key challenge(s)
- 1-3 key learning(s)
- Inputs and/or adjustments needed to sustain and/or grow this initiative
- Reflections on the project budget: was it sufficient to meet your needs, were there other funding sources for this project, what funding would be necessary to sustain and/or scale this work, etc?

Please reach out to us with any questions to healthworkforcewellbeing@gmail.com. **The application will be available starting Friday, February 13, 2026, by noon and must be completed no later than Monday, March 9, 2026, at 11:59pm.**