COOK COUNTY
STARTING BLOCK GRANTS
Building Capacity, Supporting Growth

August 16, 2023

Pre-Submittal Conference

WELCOME

Introductions

- Avik Das — Executive Director, JAC

- Juandalynn Johnson – Grants Management Director, JAC

- Michelle Gan – Assistant Grants Management Director, JAC

- Laura Grossman – Public Information Officer, JAC

Cook County Grantmaking

- Cook County Justice Advisory Council – Avik Das

Justice Advisory Council

Promoting equitable, human-centered, community-driven justice system innovation and practice that increases community safety and reduces reliance on incarceration.

Community Engagement

Policy Work

Re-entry Services

Grants & Investment

AGENDA

- Information Session Goals

- Initiative Overview

- Application Timeline & Requirements

- What to Expect Post Award

- How to Apply

- Q & A

Questions may be submitted via the Q & A feature and will be addressed at the end of the session. Time constraints may limit the number of questions discussed in the session. The JAC cannot answer questions specific to a proposed program or organization.

GOALS

The Pre-Submittal Conference will help organizations prepare to apply for the Starting Block Grant opportunity.

- **Reiterate information** about the grant opportunity including eligibility criteria and the support offered through the initiative.

- **Answer questions** about the grant initiative, grant application and requirements.

- **Share resources** for potential applicants including recorded capacity building workshops.

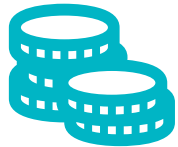- **Encourage applications** from small, community-based organizations

OVERVIEW

This grant opportunity is open to organizations in different sectors providing a variety of programs. Applications are encouraged from organizations that want to grow and strengthen their operations. Organizations that serve diverse and marginalized populations are encouraged to apply. **This grant is intended for administrative and operational support and not direct service programming.**

Background	The Starting Block Grant initiative will support small organizations to build internal capacity and develop their infrastructure to promote organizational health, growth, and sustainability.
Funding	The initiative is being funded by the Cook County Equity Fund and the Justice Advisory Council. The Equity Fund was created to address historic and continued disinvestment and inequities in Cook County. Up to $5 million in 2-year grants of up to $100,000 each will be awarded in 2023. *Note: Awardees may receive advance payment of funding within the first quarter of award of up to 25% of the first year's budget to assist with project expenses.*
Application	The 2023 application period is August 7 - September 8. *The deadline for this first round of funding is Friday, September 8th.*

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must:

1. Be a recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

2. Have an annual operating budget at or under $1 million

3. Be headquartered in Cook County, IL (operating and providing services in Chicago and/or Suburban Cook County)

4. Have at least 3 years of experience working at the local level to improve the lives of residents in historically disinvested and vulnerable communities through the provision of services and/or by addressing societal challenges in those communities

5. Provide services in a sector that supports residents and ultimately helps to build strong, safe, healthy communities

EXCLUSIONS

❌ Capacity Building Funds **cannot** support the following activities:

1 Direct service provision

Note: funds *may* be requested for the expansion of infrastructure personnel – Ex. requests to increase part time CFO to full time, hire a data analysts or program management & evaluation

2 Leasing and/or capital infrastructure projects

3 Hardware/equipment

4 Collateral materials (i.e. marketing materials, brochures, flyers, etc.)

5 Donor management software or website development

SECTORS

Grants will support organizations focused on:

- Arts and Culture
- Community & Economic Development
- Education
- Environment
- Health (public health, health equity etc.)
- Housing
- Human Rights
- Human Services
- Transportation
- Violence Prevention (Community-based violence intervention, Youth Development, etc.)
- Other

CAPACITY BUILDING

Cook County is committed to partnering with community organizations working to promote the health, safety, and success of people and communities. To structure Cook County's capacity building efforts, **7 key aspects of non-profit capacity are defined (Learning For Action, "Point the Way" Study)**:

1. **Vision and impact model** - A clear and detailed description of the impact the organization is trying to create, mapped to organizational activities (e.g., Theory of Change)
2. **Governance and leadership** - A board and staff leadership that have the skills needed to work effectively together in service of the organization's mission
3. **Program delivery** - Staff, technology, facilities, and other capabilities needed to deliver programs
4. **Resource generation** - A strong funding model and the capability to secure resources over time
5. **Internal operations and management** - Includes technical functions such as IT, financial management, communications, human resources management and strategic planning
6. **Evaluation and learning** - Tools, processes, infrastructure, and culture that support continuous improvement
7. **Strategic relationships** - The ability to nurture and maintain the external relationships necessary for success

TYPES OF SUPPORT

Starting Block Grants go beyond traditional grants for organizations to deliver services to clients, allowing them to focus on strengthening how they run. Some areas of capacity building that applicant organizations can focus on are:

Organizational Development & Adaptive Capacity such as strategic planning, financial planning, partnership development etc.

Leadership Development such as board development, transition planning, strategic professional development and staff training etc.

Management Capacity Building including development of operational procedures, management training, optimizing supervision etc.

Technical Capacity Building focused on accounting and budgeting, fundraising/development, technology or database improvement, marketing and communications strategy, development of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice and health equity plans, etc.

* Capacity Building Project Examples are provided in the [Grant Application Packet](#).

* Applicants will tailor their requests for support and funding to the specific needs of the organization.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Monday, August 7, 2023	Grant Application released on cookcountyil.gov/JACGrants
Wednesday, August 16, 2023 12-1pm	Pre-Submittal Conference
Wednesday, August 23, 2023	Application submission link and Question & Answers published on cookcountyil.gov/JACGrants
Friday, September 8, 2023	2023 Application Deadline* submit at cookcountyil.gov/JACGrants
September – October 2023	Anticipated application review period
October/November 2023	Anticipated Cook County Board Meetings to approve 2023 grant awards

*Applications received after 9/8/2023 will be considered for a planned 2024 grant award cycle, pending availability of funds.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The **Application Packet & Budget Form** are available for download at
cookcountyil.gov/JACGrants

Application packet and Budget Form are available in English & Spanish

Downloads

Starting Block Grant Application (293.36 KB)
Starting Block Grant Budget Form (34.06 KB)
Starting Block Grants Appendix: Point the Way Report (2.11 MB)
Starting Block Grants Info Sheet (156 KB)
Cook County Starting Block Grant Application in Spanish (2.66 MB)
Cook County Starting Block Grant Budget Form: Spanish (34.87 KB)

The Application Packet contains:

1. **Application Guide** - covering eligibility and types of capacity building allowed

2. **Grant Application -** detailing all required components

   *All application components including responses to application questions, completed budget form, and financial qualification documents will be submitted via an online form.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Component	Items to Include
1 – Grant Application Narrative	❑ Responses to questions in Grant Application file
2 – Budget Form	❑ Budget Form - (Excel Spreadsheet provided)- Provide a (2) year budget that should include line item expenditures and a detailed narrative for expenditure that justifies the need for the expense.
3 – Financial Qualifications Documents	❑ Organization operating budget for the current budget year ❑ An audited financial statement ❑ If an audited financial statement is not available, a statement signed by the Chair of the organization's Board of Director's indicating the organization's actual revenues and expenses, and a statement of financial position, for the most recently completed fiscal year
4 – Other Supporting Documentation	❑ Organizational chart ❑ IRS Determination Letter of 501(c)3 status ❑ Articles of Incorporation ❑ A Certificate of Good Standing with the Illinois Secretary of State
	*When you submit your application, items within each document category should be submitted together as one file

EVALUATION CRITERIA ✓

The categories and point value system that will be used to score applications for Cook County Starting Block Grants:

Category & Point Value	Description
Quality and Completeness (5 points)	Are all required application components included for sound evaluation of the application?
Budget (5 points)	Is the Budget appropriate and cost effective? Are the line items budgeted justified and aligned with the project narrative as described in question 4?
Alignment and Impact (20 Points)	Is the proposed capacity building project consistent with the intent of this grant program? Does the proposed project align with the stated challenges and needs articulated by the organization? Is the timeline and steps they have identified reasonable and well thought out? Is the proposed project likely to strengthen the organization and make it more sustainable in the future?
Narrative and Demonstration of Need (30 points)	Does the applicant clearly articulate their challenges and capacity building needs?
Community Presence (40 points)	Has the organization demonstrated that it is providing services and/or addressing the needs of residents within vulnerable or historically disinvested communities?

HOW TO APPLY

APPLICATION STEPS:

1. Download the Grant Application file at CookCountyIL.gov/JACGrants

2. Review the application instructions in the grant application file.

   - Grant applications will be submitted via an online form. It is recommended to draft responses to all application questions in a separate document as all application submissions are final.

   - Gather all required documentation

3. Visit CookCountyIL.gov/JACGrants to access the online form where you will submit your grant application.

   - Answer all application questions in the online form.

   - Upload all required documentation in the online form.

The application submission link will be posted on August 23, 2023. Submit your application by September 8, 2023 to be considered for a 2023 award.

AFTER APPLYING

Anticipated Timeline

- Grant application Review – September- October 2023

- Award & Contract Process – If awarded, the contact listed on the Grant application, will be notified of the award, which will be followed up with an official notice of award issued by the JAC. Anticipated notice of awards to be issued mid to late October

- Grant Award Payments - Awardees may receive advance payment of funding within the first quarter of award of up to 25% of the first year's budget to assist with project expenses.
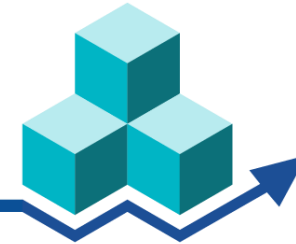
- Grant Term - November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2025

Reporting Requirements & Support

- Reporting requirements will be minimal fiscal and narrative reporting

Q & A

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Please submit questions using the Q & A chat feature.

APPLY: CookCountyIL.gov/JACGrants

CONTACT: JAC.Info@cookcountyil.gov