

**Chicago Early Learning - Enrollment Outreach and Recruitment
Community Partner Grant Opportunity Overview
Summer 2021**

About the Opportunity

Over the past four years, Chicago Public Schools has worked to establish Universal Pre-K citywide, building a system where all interested Chicago families may send their four year olds to high-quality, full day preschool. This work has been conducted in close partnership with the Department of Family and Support Services as a part of Chicago Early Learning, our shared citywide approach to prenatal to five early childhood programming. As a district, expanding access to Pre-K and establishing four as the age of entry into the district is essential to reaching our vision goals and providing all learners with a strong start to their educational journey.

While access to early learning seats has increased dramatically in recent years, enrollment in a number of communities has lagged behind expectations -- a trend made worse by the pandemic. To reverse this trend, Children First Fund - in partnership with Chicago Public School's Office of Early Childhood Education (OECE) - seeks to partner with community-serving organizations in Chicago interested in promoting enrollment in Chicago Early Learning (CEL) programs across their community and supporting families in the application process. Applicants should be rooted in one of the 26 target communities, identified on page three of this application, which have had historically low rates of enrollment in CPS early childhood programs.

Interested organizations across multiple sectors (health, social service, food pantries, mutual aid, etc.) are invited to apply for funds up to \$16,000 to implement innovative, community-level strategies to increase applications to CEL programs in their communities. CPS is particularly interested in connecting families of 4 year old children to full-day, Universal Pre-K programs in their local schools.

Support for this project has been provided by a private philanthropic funder through Children First Fund.. Applications will be reviewed on a competitive basis based on the rubric included in this application. Successful applicants will contract with the Children First Fund. CPS will work with OECE to provide resources and technical assistance for awarded organizations to support local early childhood/preschool outreach and recruitment efforts.

Anticipated Goals

Partner organizations will commit to the following goals, if awarded:

1. Partner with CFF & Chicago Public Schools to design and implement innovative strategies that:
 - a. Raise public awareness of universal preschool and the value of early learning within the community.
 - b. Engage families to enroll young children in Chicago Early Learning programs that they may be eligible for.
 - c. Support families in accessing resources and information to learn about and answer their questions regarding CEL.
2. Provide, track and document the number of weekly outreach activities, events, contacts, family engagement efforts and families program preference
3. Compile and collect relevant data regarding outreach and recruitment strategies implemented in the community. Communicate challenges and successes with CFF & OECE.

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Selected CBOs will be provided with the following:

- A robust overview of Chicago Early Learning and early education in CPS
- Community enrollment data to support CBOs with tracking community outreach and applications
- Information to be used for continuous quality improvement
- Digital materials to support outreach efforts (such as flyers)
- Ongoing support and a dedicated point of contact

Anticipated Outcomes

Cross-sector CBOs will commit to the pursuing following outcomes:

- Increased awareness of the importance of early childhood education and of Chicago Early Learning in the target community
- Increased applications from families of preschool-age children in the community
- Increased enrollment of young children in early learning programs in their community by the 20th day of the school year

Strategies and Activities for Outreach and Recruitment

We recognize that every community is unique and that the organizations committed to serving a community know how best to reach members of the community and share information. Partner organizations are encouraged to design an innovative approach, based on their knowledge of the community, to reach families with young children. In particular, organizations should focus on recruitment of families from priority populations.[1]

Below for reference is a menu of proposed strategies that organizations may use as a reference in planning:

Potential Enrollment Strategies

1. **Implement a community wide local outreach strategy** – Identify and target areas for local outreach to include priority populations. Coordinate CBO staff/members to find and enroll families in Chicago Early Learning preschool programs (in partnership with other outreach partners).
2. **Engage Parents and Community members in Outreach** – Word of mouth is often the best outreach strategy. Offer stipends or incentives for parents/community members to conduct outreach and raise awareness of early childhood programs and services. Strategies may include leveraging existing parent leaders/outreach staff/ambassadors/health navigators who already support targeted outreach efforts.
3. **Support Families with Seamless Access to Resources Needed for Enrollment** – Strategies may include financial support for families that need vital records such as birth certificates; linkages to medical homes to obtain physicals and other needed immunizations.

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Timeframe and Submission Information:

- Application opens June 17, 2021
- Applications due July 4, 2021 by 5:00 p.m.
- Awards announced July 9, 2021
- Service agreement to be completed between CBO and CFF week of July 12th
- Services implemented July 2021-September 2021

To submit your [application](#), complete [this short Google form](#) and upload your [application](#) as an attachment.

Applicant Criteria and Eligibility Requirements

This application is for CBOs that focus on outreach and recruitment strategies. Communities eligible to apply (or their chosen fiscal agent) must be:

- A 501c3 nonprofit or have a fiscal agent that can receive funds on behalf of the collaboration.
- Not currently administering a Chicago Early Learning program funded by DFSS or CPS.
- Not currently receiving funding to support Chicago Early Learning outreach/recruitment efforts.
- Have at least a two-year demonstrated history of serving and engaging families in their community.
- Have the ability to immediately implement outreach strategy upon award.
- Must serve one of the [26 targeted communities](#) identified by CPS.

Scoring Rubric

Chicago Public Schools OECE, in partnership with additional partners, will review the applications to determine eligibility. Applications will be scored in the following:

Category	Points
Currently serving one of the 26 targeted communities identified by CPS	20
Proposed outreach and recruitment strategies	50
Ability to immediately implement and scale the work	20
Budget Summary	10
Total Points	100