

Thrive Outside Chicago Fund - 2024

Thrive Outside Chicago Background

Chicago is a city with extensive green space including forest preserves, community gardens, and nearly 9,000 acres of parkland. Despite this vast network of public green space, there are still many communities in Chicago that have not been equitably connected to green spaces or programs designed to promote recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors. Historic exclusion, violence and segregation have left lasting impacts on our communities and have hindered equitable outdoor access. The barriers faced by communities attempting to access the outdoors are as diverse as the communities themselves. For some, lack of transportation becomes a barrier when outdoor programs are not offered close to home. Others may lack the gear or training to partake in new or unfamiliar activities. Lack of culturally relevant programming and lack of accessible and language-appropriate signage and communications materials compound to further the gap in access to nature for many Chicagoans, especially among communities of color, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) and people with disabilities. While there are many grassroots efforts working to improve outdoor access for historically excluded groups, organizations often operate with limited staff capacity and funding. Smaller community-based organizations have the strong local relationships and trust needed to encourage people to get outdoors in their communities, but often lack access to sustainable funding to support their efforts. Additionally, organizations need capacity-building opportunities and direct relationships with funders.

Thrive Outside Chicago was created to help address the systemic barriers faced by communities that have been historically excluded from outdoor programming. Guided by The Nature conservancy, Thrive Outside Chicago convenes a network of partners that are providing meaningful outdoor engagement opportunities for youth and adults, particularly for Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities.

Thrive Outside Chicago aspires to strengthen our network partners through capacity-building opportunities and access to funding, our communities with increased access to recreation and outdoor programming, and our city by making the outdoors part of the fabric of the lives of all Chicagoans. While Thrive Outside Chicago is currently focused on the south and west neighborhoods of Chicago, our goal is to extend our reach to other parts of the city as we move forward in the years to come.

Thrive Outside Chicago partners are focused on supporting:

- Youth-centered environmental education
- Outdoor recreation
- Growing plants within but not limited to community, educational, and school gardens
- Environmental justice
- Environmental stewardship
- Citizen science in green spaces
- Community health and wellness

Thrive Outside Chicago invites organizations that are engaging youth and families in the outdoors in the south and west neighborhoods of Chicago to become part of the Thrive Outside Chicago initiative. Please contact **cat.principe@tnc.org** for more information. **Organizations that receive a Thrive Outside Chicago Fund award will become a member of the Thrive Outside Chicago Network, which will allow you access to in-person convenings, funding opportunities, email newsletters, and more.**



Thrive Outside Chicago Fund – 2024

Application & Instructions

The goal of the Thrive Outside Chicago Fund is to provide organizations serving historically underrepresented groups in the south and west neighborhoods of Chicago with organizational support for their efforts in engaging BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ and People with Disabilities in the outdoors. The Thrive Outside Chicago Fund can be used for operational support, events, workshops and trainings, professional development, transportation costs, marketing, translations services, and more. **Organizations can request up to \$2,000 in support.** To make a request, please complete the questions on the attached application. **We will accept applications until February 23, 2024**

Applicant Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria:

- Organizations working with communities that have historically been underrepresented in the outdoors, with priority given to those organizations that are engaging Chicagoans in the South and West Side neighborhoods.
- Applications will be accepted from organizations that engage BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, and/or other groups that have been historically excluded in the outdoors.
- This is a cash award (i.e., awardees will receive a check from The Nature Conservancy), therefore applicants must be a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization or have a qualified fiscal agent (an organization that acts on behalf of your organization to manage funds). If you are having trouble finding a fiscal agent, please let us know. Applicant clearly shows that they engage historically underrepresented populations served in Chicago (i.e., BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, etc.)
- Communities served are based on the South and West sides of Chicago. Please refer to the following City of Chicago map (also featured on the last page of this application) and zip codes: 60651, 60622, 60644, 60624, 60612, 60642, 60607, 60623, 60608, 60632, 60638, 60629, 60636, 60621, 60637, 60616, 60609, 60653, 60615, 60649, 60619, 60620, 60652, 60617, 60628, 60643, 60655, 60827, 60633.
- Budget clearly matches the needs and requests of the organization.
- Applicant clearly states their intended outcomes.

You will be notified by end of March 2024 if your funding request has been approved. *We will do our best to accommodate your total request, but full request awards cannot be guaranteed.* If approved, you will receive a letter indicating the amount of funds available to your group. Eligible recipients and grantees will become a part of the Thrive Outside Chicago network. *

Examples of use for funding include but are not limited to:

Catering, food, refreshments	Prepaid Uber/Lyft gift cards
Event-related expenses	CTA or METRA passes for participants
Guest Speakers	Bike rentals
Grant-writing Workshop	Car and van rentals
Operations	Wheelchair rentals or adaptive gear rentals
Professional Development Course Fees	Marketing
Uniforms/T Shirts	Supplemental Program Support
Social Media Advertising Fees	Translation Services

Should any questions come up during the application process or if you have any barriers to completing this application (language, computer software, etc.) then please reach out to Cat Principe (cat.principe@tnc.org) for accessibility options.

*Becoming a member of the Thrive Outside Chicago Network would allow you access to in-person convenings, funding opportunities, email newsletters, and more.

Thrive Outside Fund Application 2024

Please fill out the application completely and submit it to cat.principe@tnc.org with your organization name and "Thrive Outside Chicago Fund" in the email subject line. If you need any accommodations in filling out this application, please contact cat.principe@tnc.org by February 1, 2024. **We will accept applications until February 23, 2024.**

Please provide the following information with your application:

- 1) Date of Application _____
- 2) Contact Name
- 3) Group Name
- 4) Mailing Address (including city, state, zip code)
- 5) Phone
- 6) Email
- 7) Amount of financial request (requests should not exceed \$2,000).
- 8) Organization Mission or description of your group's work (in 4-5 sentences maximum).
- 9) Fiscal Sponsor (if applicable)
 - a) Contact Name
 - b) Title
 - c) Email

10) Description of project or intended use of funds (in 6-8 sentences maximum).

11) How does your organization specifically engage BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, or other historically excluded groups? (in 6-8 sentences maximum).

12) Budget: Using the provided Budget Template below, insert detailed anticipated expenses. Budget items should reflect the need you described. Note: please limit staff time to 10% of your budget.

a) **Budget Template**

- i) You are not required to fill out every space on this template. Please itemize your budget accordingly. If you need to list more items than there is space provided, please attach a continuation of your budget to your final application in either PDF or .doc format.

Item/Description	Quantity	Intended Purpose/Project/Event	Cost (in dollars)
TOTAL			

The Outdoor Foundation's Thrive Outside Initiative awards multi-year, capacity-building grants to build and strengthen networks that provide children and families with repeat and reinforcing experiences in the outdoors. Thrive Outside Chicago, organized by The Nature Conservancy in Illinois and led by a steering committee that represents communities served, is a network of partners dedicated to reducing barriers to the outdoors by increasing meaningful outdoor engagement opportunities for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and disabled youth and adults in the south and west neighborhoods of Chicago.

**OUTDOOR
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