

Thrive Outside Chicago Gear and Supplies 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 (BIPOC), 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 Gear and Supplies Fund 2024

To help meet the needs of organizations dedicated to reducing barriers to the outdoors, the Thrive Outside Gear and Supplies Fund was created to provide outdoor recreation gear, stewardship supplies, tools, recreation equipment, adaptive gear, and other materials groups need to provide meaningful outdoor programming opportunities for communities in the South and West Sides of Chicago. **Organizations can request up to \$1,250 in gear and supplies.** To make a request, please complete the questions on the attached application. **We will accept applications until February 23, 2024**

Applicant Eligibility:

- 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. Please see below for specific geographical priorities.
- 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.

Applications will be evaluated by the following criteria:

- 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. We are focusing on the South and West Sides of Chicago due to the historical underrepresentation of residents in the outdoors. We plan to expand our range of areas served within Chicago in the future. 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.
- Items requested clearly match the needs and request of the organization.
- Applicant clearly states their intended outcomes.

You will be notified by end of March of 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. **It is important to note that the award is not a grant (you will not receive the money in advance). Either you will be reimbursed in a timely manner for expenses approved through this process or tools and supplies will be ordered and shipped to you directly.** 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:

Gardening tools & supplies for growing plants

Life vests, tools, paddles, climbing harnesses, etc.

Interpretive tools like binoculars, microscopes, guides, bird guides, magnifying glasses, etc.

Outdoor clothing and apparel

Adaptive gear purchasing or modifications

Food and refreshments for participants

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 Gear and Supplies Fund Application 2024

Please fill out the application completely and submit it to cat.principe@tnc.org with your organization name and ‘Thrive Outside Gear and Supplies 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) Preferred shipping address (if different from above).

- 6) Phone _____
- 7) Email _____

- 8) Please List the zip codes of the communities that you serve.

12) Please list your objectives and outcomes/deliverables for the gear and supplies you are requesting.

13) How does your organization specifically engage BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, or other historically excluded groups? (in 4-5 sentences maximum).

- 14) Using the following chart, please list specific items, sizes, quantities, and costs for each line item.
- a. 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 Use (i.e. Kayak Paddles, Canoe Paddles, etc).	Cost (In dollars)
Total			

Thrive Outside Chicago, guided by [The Nature Conservancy in Illinois](#), and led by a steering committee that represents the 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 Side neighborhoods of Chicago. Thrive Outside Chicago is supported by [The Outdoor Foundation](#), which through community investment and groundbreaking research, works with partners across the United States, such as The Nature Conservancy, to address equity barriers and help make the outdoors accessible for all.



