2025-2026 McDonald's Chicago Community Impact Grant Application

[TAB 1]

Our Commitment to Community

Headquartered in Chicago, McDonald's believes in the power of thriving communities—because when people flourish, so does McDonald's. That's why we embrace our responsibility to uplift and support the communities we serve. Through charitable and in-kind contributions, community engagement, and volunteer initiatives, McDonald's delivers critical resources to strengthen local programs and build resilient communities. Learn more about the ways the McDonald's system drives impact in our communities.

McDonald's has a rich legacy of helping to reduce barriers to empowerment. Our Archways to Opportunity program which recently celebrated ten years of creating a pathway to advancement both within the company and beyond for restaurant employees. Our Youth Opportunity program helps reduce barriers to employment for 2 million young people with training programs and/or employment opportunities. The inaugural Chicago Community Impact grants program, in partnership with The Chicago Community Trust, reached over 80,000 people across Chicago through charitable investments totaling over $8.5M in just three years.

Chicago Community Impact Grants

Building on this foundation of impact, we recognize that the needs facing our communities continue to grow—and so does the demand for meaningful support to help them thrive. At McDonald's, we believe one of the most powerful ways to uplift communities is by empowering young people to realize their full potential. We're proud to relaunch the Chicago Community Impact Grants, reaffirming our commitment to youth empowerment across the city.

Our goals through this initiative are to:

- **Enhance workforce readiness by removing barriers to opportunity**
- **Address food insecurity through expanded access to food and education**

This initiative will provide project-based funding to Chicago-based organizations serving young people with a focus on the following two priority areas:

1. **Fostering Communities: Pathways to Empowerment**

   As one of the world's largest employers, McDonald's recognizes that the journey to success is unique for every individual. Yet, systemic barriers often stand in the way—especially for young people in underserved communities. Through these grants, McDonald's is committed to helping communities thrive by supporting programs that take a holistic approach to reducing barriers and unlocking pathways to empowerment and opportunity for youth ages 16–24.

   These grants will fund direct services and initiatives specific to workforce readiness and development:

- Workforce development and career pathing: Apprenticeships, pre- and post-employment training, and career exposure opportunities that equip young people with the skills and experience needed to succeed.
    - You may include a request for funding for holistic support services directly related to your core workforce programming in your funding request (e.g., transportation and mobility assistance, financial literacy education, mentorship, coaching that remove obstacles and ensure fair access to opportunity).

2. **Feeding Futures: Food Access and Insecurity**

Food insecurity remains a pressing issue across the U.S. and in our own backyard. In 2023, 13.5%[1] of U.S. households—representing 18 million families—experienced food insecurity [1]. In Cook County, 1 in 5 households with children are at risk of hunger[2]. Factors like poverty, food deserts, and limited access to opportunity contribute to this crisis. As a global food business, McDonald's is committed to helping communities access the nourishment they need to thrive. Through the 2025 Chicago Community Impact Grants, we aim to support programs that address food insecurity and promote fair food access for youth ages 16–24 in underserved communities. The types of programs and initiatives include:

- Food banks and pantries
- Community gardens and urban farms
- Mobile markets in food deserts
- Community-led solutions (i.e. community-led initiatives that address food insecurity by removing systemic barriers and increasing access)

[1]2023 USDA *data*
*[2]*Greater Chicago Food Depository

Grant Criteria

Applicants must:
- Have a proven track record of demonstrating impact in communities served

Applicants will be evaluated on:
- Program alignment with the focus areas of either:
    - Fostering Communities: Pathways to Empowerment
    - Feeding Futures: Food Access and Insecurity
- Program/Project/Organization sustainability:
    - Financial stability and organization's ability to sustain the program after the conclusion of the grant.

We will prioritize organizations that:
- Take a community-based approach to supporting our communities
- Provide opportunities for corporate engagement and volunteering

Grant Awards

Funding will support project-specific programming. Each grant will range between ~$50,000-$150,000. Final award amounts will be determined by the strength and demonstrated need of the application. This

is a competitive grants process, and all applications will be reviewed, evaluated, and scored. While all applications submitted will be considered, only a limited number of grants will be awarded.

[TAB 2]

Eligibility Criteria

McDonald's supports eligible programs and organizations aligned with our impact focus areas. To ensure your organization qualifies, please answer the following eligibility questions:

- Is your organization located in the United States of America? **Yes/No**

- Is your organization located in the city of Chicago? **Yes/No**

- Would you consider your organization to be any of the following? **Choice**
    - A hospital or healthcare organization
    - A formal education institution *(*e.g., K-12, primary, secondary, college, or university)
    - A political, labor, or fraternal organization
    - An organization transferring ownership of donated software, giving computers with donated software installed, or installing donated software on refurbished computers to another organization or to individuals
    - None of the above

- Is your organization registered as a non-profit, non-governmental organization under local jurisdiction with charitable purposes and practices (e.g. U.S. 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization with a valid IRS tax ID? **Yes/No**

- Does your organization meet the following criteria:

    - Must not discriminate based on race, color, age, sex, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristics protected by law
    - Must not disparage or otherwise run contrary to the McDonald's brand image by means of adversarial or confrontational topics
    - Must not be listed on any U.S. Governmental Watch Lists such as, but not limited to The Office of Foreign Asset Control ("OFAC") or Specially Designated Nationals Lists ("SDN")
    - The organization's primary mission must be non-sectarian, non-religious, non-denominational, non-discriminatory, and non-political **Yes/No**

- Is the request to support any of the following:
    - A specific individual or person
    - Lobbying or political campaign activities
    - Religious organizations, including but not limited to churches, synagogues or mosques to promote a particular faith or creed
    - Religious training programs including but not limited to seminaries, theology schools or yeshivas
    - Fraternal organizations
    - Membership dues

- o Non-scholastic programs/organizations within an educational institution (such as athletics, arts or booster programs **Yes/No**

- Have you received funding from us in the past 12 months? **Yes/No**

This initiative will provide project-based funding to Chicago-based organizations serving young people, with a focus on the following two priority areas:

1. **Enhance workforce readiness by removing barriers to opportunity**
2. **Address food insecurity through expanded access to food and education**

1. **Fostering Communities: Pathways to Empowerment**
   Our goal is to "Enhance workforce readiness by removing barriers to opportunity." We aim to support programs that address workforce readiness and career pathing for youth ages 16–24 in underserved communities. The types of programs and initiatives include opportunities that equip young people with the skills and experience needed to succeed such as:
   - o Apprenticeships
   - o Pre- and post-employment training
   - o Career exposure
   - o Holistic Support services

   NOTE: You may include a request for funding for services directly related to your core workforce programming that remove obstacles and ensure fair access to opportunity (e.g. transportation and mobility assistance, financial literacy education, mentorship, coaching).

2. **Feeding Futures: Food Access and Insecurity**
   Our goal is to "Address food insecurity through expanded access to food and education." We aim to support programs that address food insecurity and promote fair food access for youth ages 16–24 in underserved communities. The types of programs and initiatives include:
   - o Food banks and pantries
   - o Community gardens and urban farms
   - o Mobile markets in food deserts
   - o Community-led solutions (i.e. community-led initiatives that address food insecurity by removing systemic barriers and increasing access)

- Does your funding request align with the focus areas of either **Fostering Communities: Pathways to Empowerment** or **Feeding Futures: Food Access and Insecurity? Yes/No**

- This funding initiative is focused on program support. Is your funding request program-specific? **Yes/No**

- Does the program for your specific funding request serve individuals between the ages of 16-24 years old? **Yes/No**

[TAB 3]

Organization Contact (individual open text box)
Please provide the contact information for the primary contact for this application
- First Name
- Last Name
- Title
- Phone Number
- Email Address

[TAB 4]

1. **Organization Details (individual open text box and ability to upload financial documents and W9)**
   - Name of Organization
   - In what year was your organization founded or incorporated?
   - Please provide a brief description of your organization **(max 1000 characters)**
   - Please provide your organization's mission **(max 1000 characters)**
   - When does your organization's fiscal year begin?
   - What is your organization's total annual budget?
   - Please upload your organization's annual budget or audited income statement
   - Please upload your organization's W9 or proof of charitable status

[TAB 5]

Organization Demographics
As part of McDonald's ongoing commitment to uplifting and supporting the communities we serve, we seek to understand the organizations we support through our grantmaking. Collecting information—such as the number of individuals served by an organization, geographic areas and populations served, and the demographic makeup of an organization and its leadership team—helps us understand the reach and impact of our investments and how our grants are reaching populations. Importantly, our grants are open to all eligible organizations, and we recognize that every community can benefit from the work of those applying. Demographic information shared through this application process is not used in funding decision making and is used solely to inform and strengthen our impact strategy and mission to reduce barriers to empowerment, not to exclude or limit participation. Providing demographic information is not required to be considered for funding, and applicants may choose to opt out of any question. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us at CommunityImpact@us.mcd.com.

1. Please provide the estimated total number of individuals served by your organization annually **(choice)**
   - Up to 1,000
   - 1,001 to 5,000
   - 5,001 to 10,000
   - 10,001 to 20,000

- Over 20,000

2. Please select up to 3 community regions and the specific neighborhoods in Chicago that are the primary geography of focus for the program. **(choice)**

   Please help us to further understand the population(s) your organization most directly serves

3. Race/Ethnicity **(choice)**
   a. Please choose all that apply

4. Other demographics **(choice)**
   a. Please choose all that apply

   Tell us more about your organization's workforce demographics. **(max 1000 characters)**

5. What efforts does your organization currently take to promote inclusion, fairness and equal access to opportunities for everyone within the organization, particularly for board and staff? **(Open text box - max 500 characters)**

6. Please provide demographics around your organization's executive leadership team, including race/ethnicity, gender and other demographic information you would like to disclose. **(Open text box - max 500 characters)**

[TAB 6]

Chicago Community Impact Grants

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> **Food access**: Food banks and pantries, community gardens and urban farms, mobile markets in food deserts, and community-led initiatives that address food insecurity by removing systemic barriers and increasing access."

[1]*2023* USDA *data*
[2]Greater Chicago Food Depository

Please choose if you are applying for a grant under the **Fostering Communities: Pathways to Empowerment** focus area or the **Feeding Futures: Food Access and Insecurity** focus area **(choice)**

If applicant selects "Fostering Communities: Pathways to Empowerment" :

Program/Project Description

Please provide details regarding your program or project:

1. What is the name of the program or project that you are requesting funding for?
   (Open text box)

2. Please provide contact information for the individual who oversees the program for which you are requesting funding. **(individual open text box)**
   - First Name
   - Last Name
   - Title

- Phone Number
- Email Address

3. Please describe how this program or project will specifically address the **Fostering Communities** focus area—workforce development, job training, leadership development, job coaching and mentorship—and contribute to helping Chicago communities thrive. (**Open text box - max 2500 characters)**

4. Please select the category(ies) that will capture the services and support provided through the grant. You will be asked to report on all the metrics related to that category. **(multiple parent choice)**

Workforce Development:

- Total number of youth enrolled in workforce development programs
- Total number of youth who complete the workforce development programs
- Total number of hours of workforce development

Post-Secondary Training & Education:

- Total number of youth who submitted applications to post-secondary training and certificate programs
- Total number of youth enrolled in post-secondary education or certificate programs
- Total number of youth who completed postsecondary education or certificate programs

Internships

- Total number of youth placed in paid internships
- Total wage/stipend amount provided for internships ($)

Apprenticeships

- Total number of youth placed in apprenticeships
- Total wage/stipend amount provided for apprenticeships ($)

Employment:

- Total number of youth placed in jobs
- Total number of youth retained in jobs after 90 days

Support Services:

- Total number of youth connected with mentors/coaches
- Total number of youth provided with wraparound services

Note that if you are awarded a grant, you will be required to report on the above metrics in your interim and year-end reports

5. In addition to reporting on the metrics listed above please describe up to two goals for your program, along with the related objectives and metrics you will use to measure progress. Please limit your response to no more than two objectives and four associated metrics. Programmatic goals and objectives should be specific to the priorities of the initiative. Partners will be required to submit progress toward these goals and objectives at six months and cumulatively at the end of the 12-month grant term. **(open text after example)**

Example Goal: Increase access to job training for Chicago area youth (ages 16-24) for up to 100 youth.

Example Objectives & Metrics

Objective 1: Launch inaugural youth focused program that creates training opportunities for youth

- Metric 1: Number of youth completing job training (tracked by attendance and program completion records)
- Metric 2: Number of youth reporting adequate training to prepare for employment (minimum satisfaction score of 80% via post-program survey)

Objective 2: Strong skills improvement amongst youth participants in program

- Metric 1: # of youth demonstrating improved job readiness skills coaching (measured via pre and post program assessments)
- Metric 2: Number of youth placed in internships following skills coaching (tracked via placement records and employer confirmation)

If applicant selects "Feeding Futures: Food Access and Insecurity":

Program/Project Description

Please provide details regarding your program or project

6. What is the name of the program or project that you are requesting funding for?
(Open text box)

7. Please provide contact information for the individual who oversees the program for which you are requesting funding. **(individual open text box)**
- First Name
- Last Name
- Title
- Phone Number
- Email Address

8. Please describe how this program or project will specifically address the **Feeding Futures** focus area — food insecurity and/or food access— and contribute to helping Chicago communities thrive. **(Open text box -max 2500 characters)**

9. For Feeding Futures grants, the following metrics will be used to capture the services and supports provided through the grant. Please select all metrics below: **(choice, please require all 4 choices to be selected)**

   - # of unique individuals served
   - # of volunteers
   - # of meals provided or pounds of food served/harvested
   - # of program participants if applicable (e.g., classes, workshops)

   Note that if you are awarded a grant, you will be required to report on the selected metrics above in your interim and year end reports

10. In addition to reporting on the metrics listed above please describe up to two goals for your program, along with the related objectives and metrics you will use to measure progress. Please limit your response to no more than two objectives and four associated metrics. Programmatic goals and objectives should be specific to the priorities of the initiative. Partners will be required to submit progress toward these goals and objectives at six months and cumulatively at the end of the 12-month grant term. **(open text after example)**

    Example Goal: Increase access to healthy food options for participants in the Chicago area

    Example Objectives & Metrics

    Objective 1: Provide or distribute healthy food to X number of residents residing within a food desert

    - Metric 1: Number of participants receiving meals and total number of meals served (tracked monthly).
    - Metric 2: Number of designated food desert areas reached through distribution efforts.

    Objective 2: Increase access to community-based nutrition education and hands-on cooking interventions focused on promoting healthier eating habits and local food access.

    - Metric 1: # of participants participating in cooking classes and/or community-based nutrition.
    - Metric 2: # of participants reporting increased knowledge of nutrition

Questions, no matter what focus area was chosen:

11. Based on the goals, objectives, and metrics you have outlined, please describe in detail how your organization will measure progress. **(Open text box-max 2500 characters)**
12. Please explain the impact this program or project will have in the community. **(Open text box - max 2500 characters)**

13. Please describe any anticipated challenges your organization may face in successfully implementing this program or project. **(Open text box - max 2500 characters)**
14. Please provide any additional information regarding your program or project that you believe is relevant to this request for funding and has not already been addressed elsewhere in this application. **(OPTIONAL open text box - max 2500 characters)**

Program/Project Budget (download budget template, complete, and upload)

Using the budget template provided, please provide a program or project specific budget for the grant you are applying for. Note that up to 15% of the program or project budget can support indirect costs.

Program/Project Sustainability
Please provide details regarding your organization's sustainability plans and the resources you currently have and/or are actively pursuing.

1. What specific strategies, resources, or community partnerships have you established, or will you establish to help to ensure the long-term sustainability of this program, if applicable?

   Regarding partnerships, indicate if the community partnerships are formalized (e.g. formal MOU established, funding provided) or informal (e.g. partners are leveraged as referral networks) **(Open text box - max 2500 characters)**

2. Share any additional funders you currently have or are seeking to help sustain this program or project? **(Open text box - max 2500 characters)**

Recognition and Volunteer Engagement
We value our community partnerships and prioritize deepening our engagement with our employees and the larger community through volunteerism and community service. We highly encourage our grantee partners to promote our partnership externally and provide volunteer opportunities to McDonald's employees.

1. If funded by McDonald's, please describe the way in which you will recognize McDonald's as a funder or your organization **(Open text box - max 1000 characters)**

   *Please share all external content with McDonald's **at least** 72 hours prior to publishing. All external content should include #McDPartner and tag McDonald's in the post.
   - X and Instagram: @Mcdonaldscorp
   - LinkedIn and Facebook: @McDonalds

2. Please describe the volunteering and engagement opportunities at your organization.

   *Volunteer opportunities that have worked well in the past include but are not limited to: Virtual/In Person Career Panels, Resume/Job Application Workshops/Headquarter Visits/Mentoring Support and On-Site Guest Speakers. **(Open text box - max 2500 characters)**

3. If funded by McDonald's, do you give McDonald's permission to communicate about our partnership to internal and external audiences? *Please note that McDonald's will provide opportunities for grantees to review and approve communication assets in advance.* **Yes/No**

4. Please provide your organization's website and social media information**: (Individual open text box)**
    - Organization website
    - Facebook page
    - LinkedIn page
    - X profile
    - Instagram profile
    - Please provide others social media networking sites your organization currently uses