

Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund

Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund (ICRF): Application Overview



Introduction:

The purpose of this document is to serve as an overview guide for potential applicants for the **Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund's** (ICRF) final round of funding. The information below outlines ICRF's goals and eligibility requirements for this round. Each application will be required to meet all listed eligibility requirements in order to be considered for funding.

For more information about the ICRF, please visit our [website](#). For additional information about the application, or any questions you may have, please see our [Frequently Asked Questions Document](#) or reach out to our team at icrf@cct.org.

To apply for an ICRF grant, please [click here to access the application link](#). The application will close on July 24th, 2020 at 12:00 PM CDT.

Overview of ICRF:

Founded on March 26th, 2020, the United Way of Illinois and the Alliance of Illinois Community Foundations, in collaboration with the Office of Governor JB Pritzker, established the Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund to raise funds from individual, corporate, and foundation donors to be disbursed to nonprofit organizations across the state serving individuals, families, and communities facing the greatest burden from the COVID-19 pandemic. This fund works with knowledge of other funds set up around the State ensuring that resources go where they are needed most to support Illinois residents' basic needs.

As of July 7th, 2020, we have raised over \$30.9M from 3,150+ donors. During our first four rounds of funding, we focused on quickly distributing funds to organizations with the ability to reach those most in need from the COVID-19 pandemic. With each round of funding, we have deepened our understanding regarding those communities facing a disproportionate impact from COVID-19.

As a fund dedicated to providing basic human needs to those most in need throughout the state during this time of significant crisis, we have sought to match our resources with identified needs. As we have learned more about the impacts of COVID-19, we have developed a keen focus on how systemic and endemic inequities led to disproportionate burden – and met this disproportionate need across geographic and demographic communities. And now the connection between systemic racism and health disparities has come even more sharply into view.

Given the fact that COVID-19 continues to disproportionately impact Black and Latinx communities, for our final round of funding, we seek applicants focused primarily on serving Black / Latinx communities and that are led by or are partners with organizations headed by Black / Latinx leaders. Successful applicants will have an innovative approach that provides basic needs and is designed to be sustainable.

The specific goals and criteria of this round of grants are described below.

ICRF's Final Round of Funding Goals:

ICRF's final round of funding will maintain the ICRF's mission of **meeting basic needs** of Illinois residents most heavily burdened by COVID-19, while supporting communities to **meet their needs going forward**.

The specific goals are as follows:

- **Serve basic needs:** Continue to meet the basic needs of Illinois residents as outlined in ICRF's founding principles, in line with ICRF's 'response fund' mission
- **Address issues related to COVID-19:** ICRF seeks to solve problems that are directly linked to COVID-19 (either newly emerged or magnified by the crisis)
- **Focus primarily on Black / Latinx communities:** Deepen our prioritization of communities most burdened by COVID-19 through a focus primarily but not exclusively on Black / Latinx communities
- **Support sustainable infrastructure:** Help forge new partnerships, shore up sustainable programs, and/or model new ways to address basic needs
- **Achieve state-wide reach with the entire round:** Each grantee does not need to cover the state, but the totality of the round should reflect geographic balance

Through our previous grantmaking, we have identified five potential focus areas for our funding:

- **Employment and workforce development:** Remove barriers for securing and maintaining employment (e.g. childcare) – and/or enhance 'wrap-around' services that support transitions to career (e.g. childcare providers)
- **Connectivity and technology assistance:** Provide devices and connectivity for communities in need
- **Direct cash assistance and build social capital:** Fund direct cash assistance with longer-term support (e.g. housing assistance, returning citizens support, and small business recovery)
- **Increase access to government benefits:** Leverage novel technology and/or outreach solutions to ease access to government benefits
- **Mental health and social determinants of health:** Fund projects that improve or increase access to the systems that shape conditions of daily life (e.g. eliminate food deserts)

Applicants are not restricted to these focus areas and are encouraged to submit proposals for other needs they identify.

Eligibility Requirements:

We are looking for big ideas that are aligned with our goals and fit each of the identified eligibility requirements below. Grants for this round will be between \$350,000 - \$2,000,000. (Note that a project must meet all requirements to be considered for this round of funding)

ICRF Goals:

- **Serve basic needs:** The project should meet one or more of the basic needs outlined in ICRF's founding principles (Emergency food and basic supplies; Interim housing and shelter; Primary health care services; Utility and financial assistance; Support for children and other vulnerable populations; Nonprofit safety and operations assistance)
- **Address issues related to COVID-19:** The project should aim to solve challenges that are directly linked to COVID-19 (either newly emerged or magnified by the crisis)

Population Served:

- **Focus primarily on Black / Latinx Communities:** The population served in the project must be focused primarily but not exclusively on Black / Latinx communities where the need is most critical
- **Focus outside of Cook and Collar Counties:** The funds must be used to serve outside of Cook and Collar counties (DuPage, Lake, McHenry, Will, Kane, Kendall - the project does not need to be statewide, and the organization itself can be based in Cook / Collar Counties)

Diverse Leadership:

- **Promote Diverse Leadership:** The applicant should be led by Black / Latinx leaders, or engaged in a meaningful partnership with an organization led by Black / Latinx leaders. Note that "meaningful partnership" indicates, among other things, that all partners bring value and experience to the partnership, play a meaningful role in decision making, and that each partner receives a share of funding that is proportionate to their contribution of work, knowledge, and expertise

Community Partnership:

- **Demonstrated knowledge of the geography:** The applicant or partner organization must have experience working in the specific geography in which the project will be implemented
- **Demonstrated experience working with the specified population:** The applicant or partner organization must have worked with the specific population(s) the project aims to serve

Adherence to Grant Terms:

- **Ability to deploy grant dollars:** The applicant must be able to absorb a grant of \$350,000 - \$2,000,000 (Note that there is no guarantee that applicants will get funded at the amount requested)
- **Ability to meet the grant term:** The applicant must be able to begin deploying funds within one month, and use all funds within one year of grant receipt
- **Demonstrated path to sustainability:** The applicant must be able to identify a plan to make the project sustainable, via integration into public systems, proof of concept for operating model, self-sustaining model, etc.

Applicant Next Steps:

Please review the “eligibility requirements” listed above. If you believe you are eligible to apply, please review the [FAQ document](#), and [complete the application here](#) by **Friday, July 24th at 12:00 PM CDT**.

Should you have any questions about the application functionality or content, please reach out to our team at icrf@cct.org.

We will also be holding optional, virtual Information Sessions to walk through the application and answer questions from potential applicants. The Information Sessions will include a brief presentation from the ICRF team and time for Q&A. If you are unable to attend any of the sessions, we will record the meeting and post it to our website. The date and times of these sessions can be found below. [To register for any/all of the sessions, please use this link.](#)

Friday, July 10th 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM CDT ICRF Final Round Information Session	Monday, July 13th 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM CDT ICRF Final Round Information Session	Wednesday, July 15th 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM CDT ICRF Final Round Information Session
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Timeline:

- July 8th, 2020 at 12:00 PM CDT: [Application Opens](#)
- July 24th, 2020 at 12:00 PM CDT: Application Closes; Organizations that do not submit by this deadline will not be considered for funding
- Week of August 31st, 2020 (Expected): Notification of grant awards/recipients