



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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We are thrilled to share an update on The Chicago Giving Circle's (CGC) third year of grantmaking.

Over the past three years, CGC has granted \$900,000 to five growth-stage Chicago nonprofits. In addition to funding, CGC members have provided strategic guidance, made introductions for, and volunteered with our grantees.

In 2024, we welcomed two new families to the group, bringing us to 16 families and community members. Over the course of the year, members attended and engaged in quarterly membership meetings to collectively guide the grantmaking process, volunteered together to better understand the various challenges Chicago faces, participated in learning opportunities with grantee partners, and enjoyed a summer social event.

Thank you to our members and grantee partners for their dedication and support in making this impactful work possible. As we look to the year ahead, we are excited to continue uplifting our community. Thank you for being an integral part of this journey.

Julie Hoffmann
Executive Director

Hannah Kaplan
Program Officer

About CGC

The Chicago Giving Circle is a group of service-oriented individuals and families pooling their philanthropic resources to make meaningful contributions to Chicago-area nonprofits.

Mission

To accelerate the impact of promising growth-stage Chicago-area nonprofits.

Vision

To help Chicago flourish by giving back to the city that has given us so much and has so much to offer.

Values

Seeking to understand and support the needs of our nonprofit partners and those they serve with multi-year grants and, when appropriate, our time.



Grantmaking Philosophy & Model

Philosophy

Funding provided by CGC embodies the following characteristics:

Targeted

- Focus on startup and emerging organizations or innovative programs within established organizations
- Open to taking on some risk to support nonprofits in testing something new or innovative

Nonprofit-Centered

- Work to satisfy the genuine needs of prospective grantees and those they serve
- Collaborate with prospective grantees to determine what funding is most needed
- Acknowledge and work to break down the power imbalance between the group and prospective grantees

Transparent

- Openly share grantmaking priorities, deadlines, and decision dates and remain accessible throughout the grantmaking process and beyond
- Build relationships where nonprofits feel comfortable and are encouraged to be transparent about their challenges

Multi-Year

- Provide three-year grants, contingent upon grantees meeting annual, agreed-upon goals

Model

CGC follows an annual grantmaking cycle. Each year, CGC aims to select two nonprofits to award up to a three-year, conditional, \$300,000 grant (up to \$100,000/year for three years).

Grantmaking Process

Each year, CGC follows approximately the same grantmaking process and timeline. However, in the spirit of constant learning and evolution, changes and modifications are made based on member and grantee feedback.

Q1	Impact Area Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Members decide area of focus for annual grantmaking
	Organization Sourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff sources and vets prospective grantees that fit within annual focus area
Q2	Vetting & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investment Team reviews vetted organizations, assesses against customized diligence framework, and selects semi-finalistsStaff solicits applications from semi-finalists and collects reports from prior grant cycle granteesMembers conduct site visits with finalists
	Grantee Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Members vote to determine new grantees and confirm payments for prior grant cycle grantees
Q3-Q4	Grantee Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Members participate in volunteer and learning opportunities with grantees, as appropriate

Due Diligence Framework

Once CGC members vote on and select the year's impact areas, prospective grantees are evaluated against the four key diligence criteria seen in the model to the right.

The diligence process starts with CGC staff conducting a landscape analysis to identify a broad set of organizations related to the annual focus area. Potential grantees are then assessed against this framework before a select few are invited to submit an application for deeper consideration. This process ensures that the selected organizations are aligned with CGC's priorities and are organizationally sound.



2024 Grantmaking

2024 Focus Area:

Youth Development & Violence Prevention

At the beginning of each grant cycle, CGC members agree upon an impact area of focus for that cycle. This focus area then serves as the "theme" for the year, meaning the grantees selected, as well as any volunteer activities or educational opportunities, will relate to that focus area.

Sourced 50+ youth development and violence prevention organizations

Determined 28 organizations best aligned with grantmaking priorities

Solicited applications from 9 organizations

Conducted site visits with 5 finalists

Selected 2 grantees

2024 Grantees

Both organizations received grants of \$300,00 over three-years (2024-2026) and engagement and volunteer support from CGC members.

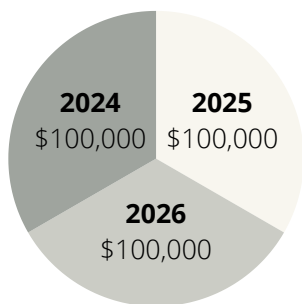


The Bloc - Philanthropy Brief



Total Grant

\$300,000



Impact Area

Youth Development
& Crime Prevention

Leadership

Jamyle Cannon
Executive Director

Carla Arias-Chavez
Director of Operations

Year Founded

2016

Overview

Since 2016, The Bloc has cultivated the love of boxing to share transformational resources with youth and communities on Chicago's West Side. The organization was founded by Jamyle Cannon, a former Chicago teacher who combined his love for youth development, boxing, and education to create The Bloc.

Today, The Bloc contributes to the momentum of improving Chicago's future by attracting the youth least likely to join mentoring and tutoring programs: "the kids who like to fight." The enrolled youth and families get connected to mentorship, academic services, and college readiness programming.

Program Model

In its programming, The Bloc emphasizes the importance of meeting fighters "where they're at" through respect and trust-based relationship building, student-led academic support, and family and community engagement.

Its programming model engages students and their families in the following ways:

- *Mentoring* - frequent check-ins from caring adults to help fighters navigate life's difficult circumstances with consistent support

- *Academic Support* - engaged volunteers devoting time to support silent study time, one-on-one tutoring, college trips, and more
- *Boxing* - character-first boxing training in a safe, warm environment led by proven trainers
- *Pantry* - a food pantry that distributes thousands of pounds of high-quality fresh produce, canned goods, and household items to fighters and their neighbors

Financial Stability

Since 2018, the Bloc's annual revenue has steadily increased with consistent and diverse sources of income. Its 2023 budget of \$1.8M was largely funded by foundation grants (54%) and individual donors (19%). The organization's growth has allowed it to sustain existing programming and expand to four West Side schools.



Leadership & Organization Health

The Bloc is run by leaders rooted in the community with award-winning expertise in education, boxing, and youth development.

Jamyle Cannon (Executive Director) founded The Bloc in 2016. Jamyle is a National Collegiate Boxing Champion and a Teach for America Alumni member. His many awards include being recognized as a CNN Hero, a 2022 Luminary Award winner, and 4-Star Chicagoan by Windy City Live, one of the Hardest Working Voices in Sports by Chicago Sun-Times, and more. Before founding The Bloc, Jamyle was a teacher with Chicago charter schools.

Carla Arias-Chavez (Director of Operations) has been with The Bloc since January 2024. She comes with an extensive background in Operations, including a specialization in scaling business. Carla is passionate about equity in the workplace and intentionally lives close to The Bloc community to ensure her work is impacting her community.

Mission Alignment

The Bloc Chicago is very aligned with the CGC mission. The organization invests solely in Chicago's West Side, and staff have deep ties to the neighborhoods and communities in which it operates. It is committed to changing the "after-school landscape" of the West Side through program expansion and increased partnerships in the neighborhood.

CGC's investment is helping expand the capacity and reach of The Bloc's programs through development into more of Chicago's West Side neighborhood schools and community partnerships.

The Bloc's dynamic programming not only addresses CGC's 2024 impact area—youth development and crime prevention—but also member interests, including mental and physical wellness, family services, K-12 education, and more.

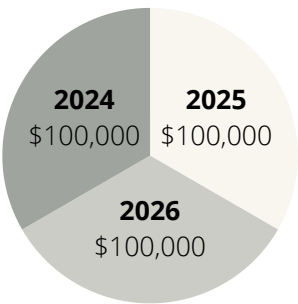
The Bloc uniquely suits CGC's commitment to growth stage organizations; it is primed for growth and will use the partnership with CGC to expand its physical reach, staffing, and programming.





Total Grant

\$300,000



Impact Area

Youth Development
& Crime Prevention

Leadership

Yolanda Fields
Executive Director

Alexandra Cesario
Chief Development
Officer

Lisa Gwin
Chief Program Officer

Year Founded

1992

Overview

Breakthrough is a faith-based nonprofit with a hyperlocal focus in Chicago's Garfield Park neighborhood. Founded in 1992 in Chicago's North Side, Breakthrough started by providing coffee and lunches to individuals experiencing homelessness. Over the years, the organization has launched employment programs, wellness and housing centers, a violence prevention initiative, and more.

The Chicago Giving Circle's investment is helping sustain the **Breakthrough Beyond** program which provides educational support for high school and post-secondary students (aged 13-21) who have been disconnected from traditional school systems.

Program Model

Within its education & youth development programming, Breakthrough Beyond offers several pathways for youth navigating traditional and non-traditional education. Often, its participants are youth who fall through the cracks, who have been absent from school and need wrap-around supports in addition to academic programming.

Beyond's program model pairs students with youth development coaches who help determine the right path towards education.

Some of the pathways and supplementary programs include:

- *Back 2 Our Future Program* - an educational alternative to the Chicago Public School (CPS) system
- *Additional Academic Support* - credit recovery programs, GED programs, support reentering a traditional school system, scholarship programs, behavioral health support
- *Events* - a family event providing incoming college Freshman the essential supplies for dorm living called the Community Trunk Party

Financial Stability

This program was initially piloted by CPS, and the partnership quickly led to inspiring results. When the CPS funding was unfortunately cut, CGC stepped in to continue the program and expand it. Several of Breakthrough's programs rely on government grants (37%), including their Head Start and violence prevention programs. Foundations and corporations (27%) are vital to continuing the impact of Breakthrough Beyond.



Leadership & Organization Health

Breakthrough's leadership team are experts in community and youth development; they prioritize integrating community voice in every program.

Yolanda Fields (Executive Director) has led Breakthrough for three years. She started her 20 year tenure at the organization as a volunteer, working her way to lead all of Breakthrough's adult programs including housing, homeless services, violence prevention, and more.

Alexandra Cesario (Chief Development Officer) oversees fundraising and communications and has worked for Breakthrough for 11 years in a development capacity. Under her leadership, Breakthrough has grown to an annual revenue of \$10 million.

Lisa Gwin (Chief Program Officer) oversees the strategic vision, program operations, and staffing of the Breakthrough Youth Network. She started with Breakthrough 20 years ago, helping found the early childhood education program.

Mission Alignment

Breakthrough's mission aligns with CGC's in its commitment to serving a Chicago community and its dedication to youth empowerment and crime prevention through the Breakthrough Beyond program.

Funding from the Chicago Giving Circle sustains the capacity and reach of the Breakthrough Beyond program through staffing and event support.

Breakthrough Beyond works to prevent students from falling through the cracks. Its programming provides students with psychological and physical safety through opportunities outside of CPS that lead to a sense of belonging.

Breakthrough prides itself on being in tune with the needs of its community; in addition to youth development and crime prevention, this organization also addresses many of CGC's other impact areas of interest through wrap-around services: housing, economic development, family services, and health and wellness.

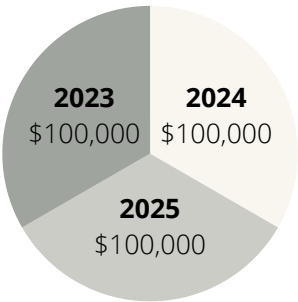


Chicago HOPES for Kids - Philanthropy Brief



Total Grant

\$300,000



Impact Area

Family Services

Leadership

Rita Kahn
Executive Director

Dajuan King
Program Director

Year Founded

2006

About Chicago HOPES

Chicago HOPES for Kids was founded in partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA members in 2006 as an alternative education program for children facing homelessness. Since then, it has grown to offer holistic services, annually supporting the education of 325 students and their families through literacy, extracurricular enrichment, and family services like events and workshops.

2024 Recap

Chicago HOPES had a successful year running its existing programming with new initiatives to improve attendance and additional partners supporting events.

CGC's grant has supported the growth and expansion of Chicago HOPES' Parent Partner program. The organization has grown to five current programs, and has increased the organization's capacity to strengthen consistent engagement for parents experiencing instability.

Additionally, Chicago HOPES enjoyed its largest collaboration to date with the Lincoln Park Zoo. With 10 buses of families and new partnerships - including Girl Scouts and Northwestern students passing out cookies and supplies, dressed as Disney characters - Chicago HOPES had the Zoo to itself for the day, enjoying everything free of charge.

CGC Support Beyond the Grant

- Contributed curriculum samples to support revamping their Literacy Readers program, which focuses on students in grades 6 - 9.
- Coordinated a location for Chicago HOPES to host a training, free of charge.

Looking Ahead

Chicago HOPES is planning to expand partnerships with local colleges to add more internships to reinforce their staffing model.

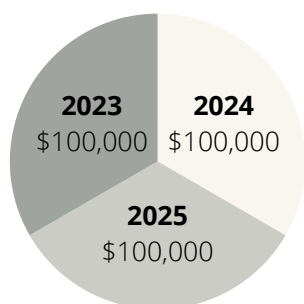


The Dovetail Project - Philanthropy Brief



Total Grant

\$300,000



Impact Area

Family Services

Leadership

Sheldon Smith
Founder & Executive Director

Vernon Owens
Director of Programs

Year Founded

2009

About Dovetail Project

The Dovetail Project provides young Black and Brown fathers between 17-24 years old the skills and support they need to be better fathers for their children and better men in their communities.

Fathers in the Dovetail Project complete a 12-week curriculum built around three modules: Parenting Skills, Life Skills, and Felony Street Law. After participants graduate from the program, they are eligible for one year of case management services, a stipend, and a network of resources.

2024 Recap

The organization's 28th cohort has over 40 young fathers enrolled (increased from 33 the previous year). Highlights from the year include:

- Participants were invited to workforce development opportunities with Mid-America Carpenters Apprentice and Training Facility as well as Northwestern Medicine.
- The Dovetail Project hosted a "Father in the Neighborhood" event with Congressman Danny K. Davis.
- In the past year, several substantial gifts were secured from new and existing partners including a \$440K grant from the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund, a \$50,000 gift from Deckers/UGG Brand, a \$200,000 gift from Blue Cross Blue Shield of IL, and a \$100,000 gift from Aetna Health.

CGC Support Beyond the Grant

- Expanded visibility of organization; grant contribution had a snowballing affect, resulting in \$2.1M fundraised in 2024.
- Increased organization network through a speaker panel opportunity and introductions to potential employers.

Looking Ahead

With the momentum created by partnerships like CGC's, Dovetail aims to significantly expand its geographical and technological reach in the next three years.

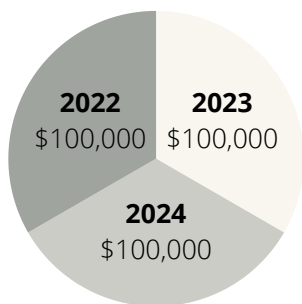


Sunshine Enterprises - Philanthropy Brief



Total Grant

\$300,000



Impact Area

Workforce
Development

Leadership

B.J. Stewart
Executive Director

Laura Lane
Managing Director
of Programs

Year Founded

2012

About Sunshine Enterprises

Sunshine Enterprises was established in 2012 with the mission of empowering high-potential entrepreneurs living in under-resourced neighborhoods to grow their business and transform the communities in which they live. Serving entrepreneurs across 138 zip codes within Chicagoland, the organization recognizes that small business owners in under-resourced communities need professional support and social networks to successfully sustain their businesses and fully unleash their potential.

2022 - 2024 Recap

With CGC's support over the past three years, Sunshine Enterprises increased the number of entrepreneurs in their program by almost 300 people, improved their graduation rate from 73% to 81%, and greatly expanded their network. Through Sunshine and CGC's partnership, entrepreneurs' credit scores were improved and coaching hours surpassed 1,000.

CGC's investment also had a snowball effect; in three years, funding has grown from just over \$2M in 2022 to a projected \$3.45M in 2025. With this growth, their staff expanded to include a Managing Director of Operations, a Program/Data Evaluation Manager, and more. These additions led to increased interdepartmental collaboration.

CGC Support Beyond the Grant

- Expanded the professional network of Sunshine participants, specifically in capital and funds focused on minority- and women-owned businesses.
- Promoted events through attendance and outreach.
- Volunteered and collaborated on Community Micro Equity Fund (CMEF) initiatives.
- Hosted and sponsored a holiday pop-up market to support 10 CBA alumni business owners selling their products and services.

Looking Ahead

In the next three years, Sunshine Enterprises plans to focus on their strategic vision to build a pipeline of profitable businesses and grow the number of entrepreneurs served.



Thank You to Our Members

The Chicago Giving Circle is fueled by the generosity of its members. Without each of you, we would not be able to partner with and invest in such critical Chicago nonprofits. Thank you for your commitment to Chicago.

- Jon & Ellenna Berger
- Andrew & Kate Bluestein
- Dan & Lori Jean Dal Degan
- Amy & Brian Hand
- Dorothy & Seth Hemming
- Eric & Kara Meizlish
- Scott Moller
- Chandni & Vijen Patel
- Paul Rand & Diane Rodriguez Rand
- Jeff, Lisa, and Ben Rosenkranz
- Mark & Tricia Rothschild
- Alex & Hannah Rothschild
- Erik Severinghaus & Dana Popish Severinghaus
- Jim & Ryan Streibich, & Lisa Carrel
- Haley & Lawrence Tanzman
- George Houlihan & Joyce Winnecke

CGC Fund Summary

Actuals as of January, 2025

Revenue	
Contributions	\$584,233.87
Investment Earnings	\$5,627.98
Total Revenue	\$589,861.85
Expenses	
Grant Payments	\$500,000
Program Management	\$50,000
Administrative Fees*	\$7,500
Total Expenses	\$557,500
Surplus	\$32,361.85

*Chicago Giving Circle is a Donor Advised Fund held at The Chicago Community Trust.



Julie Hoffmann - Executive Director
julie@chicagogivingcircle.com

Hannah Kaplan - Program Officer
hannah@chicagogivingcircle.com

To learn more about The Chicago Giving Circle, visit:
www.chicagogivingcircle.com