



## A PHILANTHROPIC COMMITMENT TO EQUITY IN OUR REGION

Far too often, small Black and Brown led non-profit organizations addressing complex and critical social sector needs are stretched thin, faced with providing day-to-day support with limited staff and resources. The United Neighborhoods Equity Fund (UNEF) seeks to support these organizations with tailored capacity and relationship building supports that meet the organization's needs and advance their long-term goals.

As a funder, United Way of Metro Chicago recognizes that a top-down approach and lack of lived experience has often led to funder-driven decision-making that lacks authentic community expertise and inclusion. New research by Echoing Green and The Bridgespan Group has shown that leaders of color face challenges connecting to funders, building rapport, and securing and sustaining support for culturally and community relevant strategies. This has led to significant disparities in investment levels, for example, Black-led organizations dedicated to improving outcomes for Black men have revenues that are 45% lower than similar organizations led by white professionals.

UNEF is a philanthropic commitment to addressing these barriers and creating a more equitable and just Chicago. This cohort based program will incorporate the following components:

- ✔ **Funding** – Two-year general operating grant award (\$50,000 total)
- ✔ **Cohort** – Leaders from 10 community-based organizations (with budgets of <\$1M) serving the communities aligned with the United Way Neighborhood Network initiative
- ✔ **Capacity Building** – Individual and group capacity building curriculum aimed to strengthen organizational infrastructure
- ✔ **Relationship Building** – Cross-sector relationship building through a peer cohort model, corporate spotlight, and networking with potential funders and investors.

Through a series of workshops and candid conversations with grantees, funders and corporate partners, we aim to create a deeper understanding of racial disparity in funding, foster change in the philanthropic sector, and address racial injustice.

## HOW CAN CORPORATE PARTNERS GET INVOLVED?

UNEF is designed to build authentic and sustainable relationships between corporate partners and community organizations. This means that in addition to an annual contribution of at least \$50,000 for two years, United Way will create opportunities for every level of staff to get involved.

### Opportunities for Corporate Senior Leadership

- ✔ **UNEF steering committee** – provides guidance for the fund, participates in selection and decision-making, and attends Quarterly Stakeholder Meetings.
- ✔ **Quarterly Stakeholder Meetings** – meeting will include updates on the Fund, grantees, highlights of the work of funded agencies, a space to have guided conversations on funding disparities in black/brown communities, and brainstorm equitable solutions. The quarterly stakeholder meeting will create a safe space for open dialogue with grantees and corporate partners.
- ✔ **Provide Mentorship** – corporate mentors would be paired with organizational Executive Directors to support tailored professional development opportunities and expertise.

### Opportunities for all corporate partner staff

- ✔ **Racial disparity workshop(s)** – addresses funding disparities and supports a change in philanthropy.
- ✔ **United Neighborhoods Equity Fund Chat** – Corporate partners will hear directly from subject matter experts in an intimate setting that centers on the Philanthropic Community and Racial Justice. Possible guest speakers include Edgar Villanueva, author of *Decolonizing Wealth*, and Tyrone Freeman of the Indiana University Lilly School of Philanthropy.



ACADEMIC PARTNER



# Program Components

## GRANTEES

### Eligible Organizations

The Fund is intended to support small organizations located on Chicago's south and west sides and south suburban region, ideally aligned with United Way of Metro Chicago's Neighborhood Network coalitions. Organizations will have Black or Brown leadership, be rooted and respected in local communities, and have an interest in building new capacity.

*Eligibility requirements include:*

- ✔ Black/Brown Leadership
- ✔ A budget of less than \$1,000,000
- ✔ Nominated by UNEF stakeholder
- ✔ Organizations located on Chicago's south and west sides and south suburban region ideally aligned with Neighborhood Network coalitions
- ✔ Grassroots organizations supporting the community work at the intersection of economic development and social service

### Selection Process

Eligible organizations must be nominated by Neighborhood Network lead agencies or Corporate Social Responsibility stakeholders.

- ✔ Leaders submit short application
- ✔ Applications reviewed and selected by the UNEF Steering Committee

## CORPORATE PARTNER COMMITMENT

- ✔ \$100,000 over 2 years (\$50K in 2021, \$50K in 2022)
- ✔ Active participation in the United Neighborhoods Equity Fund

## TWO-YEAR COHORT TIMELINE

### June 2021

- Launch RFP (invite only)

### July/August 2021

- THRT Healing Circle
- Grantee selection (10 leaders in inaugural cohort)

### September 2021

- Capacity Building (CB) workshop 1 – Board Relations and Principles of High-Performing Boards
- Granting cycle begins

### October 2021

- CB Workshop 2 – Nonprofit Financials
- Organizational Financial Assessment
- UWMC Subject Matter Expert Roundtable/Panel
- Quarterly steering committee meeting (October 22)

### November 2021

- CB Workshop 3 – Fundraising
- Organizational Fundraising Strategy
- Place-based Investment and Racial Equity Talk
- Holiday gathering

### January/February 2022

- CB Workshop 4 – Impact Measurement
- Tips and Tricks for Grant Writing
- Quarterly steering committee meeting (January 28)

### Mar 2022

- Meaningful Criminal Justice Reform in IL Panel
- Experiential Learning Opportunity

### April 2022

- Equity in Education, Healthcare & Income Panel
- Corporate Partner/Grantee Mentor event
- Quarterly steering committee meeting (April 22)

### May 2022

- CB Workshop 5 – Planning and Position/Managing Risk
- Funder Roundtable

### July 2022

- The Impact of Equity
- Closing Networking
- Quarterly steering committee meeting (July 22)

### September 2022–August 2023

In the second year, participating organizations will receive a customized capacity building program and be connected to a corporate partner for technical support and mentorship.

*\*Events and workshops listed represent a sampling of what will be provided. Exact programming is still being determined.*