



Premise

The COVID-19 crisis has catalyzed an urgent need for large-scale public health and economic re-opening and recovery initiatives, which will create thousands of new employment opportunities. At the same time, it has created unprecedented and rapid unemployment and loss of income in ways that amplify the inequities already defining our region’s labor market. It is imperative that Chicago meets these new workforce needs in a way that improves the long-term racial equity outcomes for our region’s workers by connecting them to career pathways and industry-aligned training that match current and future labor market needs.

The Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance (CWFA) and its partners across sectors are working collaboratively to create and support efforts that:

1. Meet immediate public health, economic, and workforce needs rapidly and effectively;
2. Contribute to the closing of the region’s racial employment and earnings gaps; and
3. Drive long-term economic mobility and sustained public health improvement.

CWFA and its partners aim to support more than 5,000 jobs connected to career pathways through the “Chicagoland Equitable Recovery Corps,” (Recovery Corps) and in doing so, drive lasting systems change.¹ To do so, CWFA is both raising a \$5 million Recovery Corps Fund (the Fund) to support initiatives as they emerge by co-investing and coordinating with public, private, and other philanthropic strategies to meet these objectives.

General Outline of the Recovery Corps

The “Chicagoland Equitable Recovery Corps” is an umbrella term for employment and training initiatives that are beginning to support the city and region’s public health response and economic recovery plan.

Three initial workforce development initiatives which could be considered part of this effort include:

1. *Contact Tracing Workers*: The State of Illinois estimates that 3,800 new contact tracing workers will be needed statewide for the labor-intensive process of tracking exposure to the novel

¹ Objective subject to revision based on consultation with partners.



MAY 19 DRAFT

coronavirus.² The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) are developing plans to drastically increase their contact tracing capacity. CDPH has expressed an interest in working through new community partnerships to create this new workforce, in order to ensure that residents from the communities most affected by the crisis have access to these positions (see page 6 for more detail).

2. *Community Health Workers:* CDPH and local healthcare institutions have expressed a similar need for a ramp up in other kinds of public health employment. The crisis response will require hundreds if not thousands of new community health workers, trained and empowered to advance targeted public health education campaigns, and to help meet the needs of Chicago communities, which will continue to change and evolve as the region moves through the phases of crisis and recovery.
3. *Public Sanitation and Environmental Services Workers:* The City and its partner unions are already in discussions about how they will need to ramp up hiring of workers to significantly increase the constant sanitation of public spaces and places. CTA vehicles and stations, public schools and colleges, and government offices, buildings, and facilities, all will need to put in place sanitation regimes above and beyond what has existed before. Businesses will require similar services to keep employees and customers safe. This will be necessary not just as part of the broader public health strategy, but also as an economic recovery strategy; it will be needed to inspire the public's confidence to re-engage in economic activity as the recovery progresses.

As the focus of the city, region, and state shifts from public health crisis to a concurrent economic crisis it is expected that additional workforce initiatives will emerge. For example, infrastructure spending in federal stimulus legislation may create employment opportunities on public works or public improvement projects. Social enterprises could be scaled to meet emerging public and private service needs. All of these efforts will require public/private partnership to be successful, equitable, and connected to career pathways.

Target Populations: An essential element of these workforce initiatives as they seek to advance equity will be how they target specific populations, and how they are design to ensure workers succeed during and after the initiative. Populations considered to date include:

- *Residents of Target Communities of Color:* City government has target communities on its South and West side, and County government similarly has its priority communities - both sets of communities are the epicenters of inequity, both pre- and post-crisis.

² <https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-illinois-pritzker-contact-tracing-20200501-74e5vzzj7fgzraypw5sljizvmq-story.html>



MAY 19 DRAFT

- *Returning Citizens/Victims of Mass Incarceration Policies:* Cook County and the City of Chicago have the highest concentration of these individuals in the state. These individuals are too often the first to suffer from economic crisis and the last to benefit from recovery.
- *Graduates of the Class of 2020:* Whether from high schools or colleges, individuals graduating this spring are arguably entering the worst labor market we have witnessed. Experience from past recessions indicates that this will negatively impact many of their life outcomes. This warrants explicitly targeting these individuals for inclusion in workforce initiatives.
- *Workers with Disabilities:* Some of the greatest equity gaps in the pre-COVID workforce were between workers with disabilities and the rest of the workforce. Employment initiatives should follow principles of universal design in order to maximally include workers with disabilities.
- *Immigrants and Other Populations Excluded from Federal Relief:* Unfortunately, many federal relief policies intentionally exclude some of the regional economy's most important working families. Workforce initiatives of the recovery should target these populations for inclusion, and blend their funding streams so that federal funding can still advance local priorities and values.

Core Initiative Elements: Each employment initiative that is part of the Recovery Corps should include in its design a minimum of these core program elements:

- *Outreach and Recruitment* that targets one or more of the target populations;
- *Preparation and Training* that prepares individuals to succeed in the function of their Initiative;
- *Paid Employment* that compensates individuals and builds their employment record;
- *Supportive Services* that maximizes each individual's chance of success by connecting them to benefits, and supportive guidance; and
- *Career Pathway Connectivity* that ensures participation that helps them transition to permanent employment opportunities and a career pathway after the end on the initiative.

Coordination with Broader Recovery Efforts

CWFA is already working with the Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership, the Mayor's Office of the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois, to convene a Workforce Funder Equitable Recovery Advisory Committee to guide workforce development investments and initiatives through the public health crisis and economic recovery. This group will inform the design and implementation of workforce development initiatives that are part of the Recovery Corps. It will connect with industry workforce groups, like the



Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative, with key workforce development agencies, institutions and advocates, and it will strive to center worker and community voice. The Committee will ultimately provide advice and guidance both to the public sector structures being set up to lead the workforce recovery overall, as well as to the Funder Alliance, its members, and the Recovery Corps Fund.

Each individual employment initiative will also need its own coordination effort, to connect workforce funders to the key leadership of each initiative, for example with leadership from multiple public health agencies. Indeed, one of the possible roles of the Recovery Fund Corps Fund could be to provide support for cross agency coordination. See next page for an example of the breadth of partnership that will be required in the Contact Tracing employment initiative alone.

Chicago Equitable Recovery Corps Fund Target, Structure and Governance

The Fund to support these efforts has an initial fundraising target of \$5 million of pooled or aligned philanthropic resources. This will only provide a small fraction of the budgets of the employment initiatives the Fund will seek to support, the vast majority of which the Fund expects to be paid for by public and/or private sector sources. The pooled portion of the Fund will be administered by the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance at the Chicago Community Trust. Funders that make designated grants to the pool will form an Investment Committee and direct CWFA staff as to how to lead and invest the pooled portion of the Fund. As with other CWFA-associated funds, investment and other decisions about the pool will be made through facilitated consensus building.

The Fund will strive to provide avenues and opportunities for aligned funding, and does not have a set goal for pooled vs aligned resources. Each employment initiative will cue up its own set of opportunities for aligned funding. Aligned funders will be fully included in strategy discussions about their specific employment initiative, and with permission their investments would be included in overall budgets and descriptions of the initiative and the Fund. The Funder Alliance will use the CCA-staffed structure of philanthropic coordination through the Covid crisis to help ensure any and all interested funders have exposure to opportunities for aligned investment. See page 7 for ways in which funders can engage.



Investments of the Recovery Corps Fund

To ensure Recovery Corps initiatives meet public health, equity, and economic mobility objectives, the Fund envisions that pooled and/or aligned resources could be used in a number of ways. The Fund would always strive for non-philanthropic sources to cover initiative costs first, in order to conserve the limited but flexible resources philanthropy can provide. However, it is precisely this flexibility which makes the role of the Recovery Corps Fund in these employment initiatives so essential. Philanthropic funding can often move faster, be more strategic, and take greater risk than other resources, filling essential gaps which may be critical to an Initiative's success. The following groupings of investments are all ways in which the pooled or aligned resources of the Fund might play that role (not an exhaustive list):

Project Management and/or Planning Grants – Recovery Corps Initiatives will be complex, requiring significant and ongoing collaboration across public, private, and community sectors. The Fund envisions grants or contracts with organizations with subject matter expertise and capacity to manage complex partnerships with multiple dependencies. These lead organizations would help determine how multiple public/private funding streams should blend to support a specific effort and help the Recovery Corps Fund determine where philanthropic investment would have highest impact.

Investments in technology, communication or coordination systems – Recovery Corps efforts may require new or improved technology or systems in order to coordinate new partnerships and new programs; for example technology to deliver remote training or to improve inter-agency coordination.

Pilots or Proof of Concept Projects – Recovery Corps Initiatives may start with a pilot or proof of concept project. These efforts could answer critical questions about how an employment initiative would work, thus enabling public resources to commit and bring a concept to scale.

Career Pathway Development/Alignment Investments – In order to ensure Recovery Corps employment leads to career pathways, the Fund may need to invest in things like: curriculum development and adaptation, work-based learning program model development, employer engagement to line-up post Corps employment, and special projects that assist individuals that were on a career path disrupted by the crisis, for example new ways of completing clinical hours for healthcare students.

Evaluation and Data Analysis – Recovery Corps Initiatives should be guided by data, and they should seek out learning opportunities with other cities grappling with similar challenges. The Fund may also seek to invest in an evaluation partner for the Fund and/or supported programs, to assess success in meeting short and long-term impact and equity goals.



Investments that Improve Success with Target Populations – The Fund may invest in increased capacity of community-based organizations and educational institutions to nimbly source and train workers for placement and upskilling. It may invest to improve specific outreach and recruitment of target populations. Or it may invest in ramping up supportive services and barrier reduction for participants.

Investments That Assist the Employer of Record – Every Recovery Corps employment initiative will need to solve for the employer of record challenge. In some cases the entity actually hiring individuals may have no need of assistance in executing and scaling up. But in other cases the Fund’s pooled or aligned resources may have a role to play. The design of an employment initiative may intend for the employer of record to be a small community based firm, or a social enterprise, perhaps requiring assistance in order to ensure speed and scale. The Fund would also strive to use its philanthropic relationships to connect any such efforts with Social Impact Investing, if appropriate.

Example Employment Initiative – Contact Tracing

The following outlines the first of the employment initiatives contemplated for support by the Recovery Corps Fund. The Funder Alliance is already developing and executing investments to support:

Lead Partners:	Chicago Mayor’s Office, Chicago Dept of Public Health, Cook Cty President’s Office, Cook Cty Dept of Public Health, IL Dept of Public Health/DHS
Workforce Funding Partners:	Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, IL DCEO
Fund Planning Partner	Health and Medicine Policy Research Group (grant being executed)
Other Potential Partners	West Side United, Sinai Urban Health Institute
Target Employment:	2,000 – 3,000 Contact Tracers and supporting public health workers
Potential Target Populations:	Target community residents, students on healthcare pathways, street outreach workers, Additional targets TBD
Potential Training Partners	City Colleges of Chicago/Malcolm X CC, Oakton Community College, other community colleges, Community Based Training Organizations
Potential Employers of Record	Federally Qualified Health Clinics (FQHCs), hospitals, public health institutes, community-based organizations
Potential Career Pathways	Community Health Workers, entry-level clinical healthcare positions, occupations in IT and other high need sectors where skills transfer.
Potential Fund Investments	(in addition to the Planning Grant) Contact tracing pilots, supportive services for workers, funding for career pathway training, targeted hiring campaign(s) for target populations.



Ways to Connect With or Join the Equitable Recovery Corps Fund

Any funder with any level of interest in the concepts presented here should be able to find an option that is right for them. The Equitable Recovery Corps Fund is something the Funder Alliance will execute for at least a year, possibly longer, and the philanthropic opportunities will continue to evolve over time.

1. *Make a Grant to the Equitable Recovery Corps Fund*– These grants enable the Fund overall to be responsive, strategic and flexible. The existing Funder Alliance Leadership pool will make an annual disbursement as it does with all CWFA Initiatives. Additional support to this will allow the Recovery Corps Fund to be more responsive to emerging opportunities, and more proactive with strategy. *Note: Your grant CAN be restricted to only specific employment initiatives. For example, a funder could make a grant to the pooled fund with the restriction that it only be used for Contact Tracing.*
2. *Join the Funder Alliance Itself*– Most of the Chicagoland private funders with an interest in employment and workforce development are Funder Alliance members. Their pooled investments enable funder collaboration across a range of issues from healthcare career pathways, to job quality in childcare to the empowerment of low-wage workers; and they enable the Funder Alliance to be there when new Initiatives, like the Recovery Corps, are needed.
3. *Commit to a Future Investment with a Specific Employment Initiative* – The term “commit” is used loosely here, it is more an indication of “very strong interest.” Funders that indicate such a strong interest can be invited to the planning and strategy meetings for that specific employment initiative. That way they can be there to help that initiative know the things they might be able to fund, and they may have perspective and connections to contribute. For example, some foundations have indicated a very strong interest in Contact Tracing. Even if they do not plan to contribute to the Recovery Corps Fund pool, they can still be part of the meetings planning the Contact Tracing investments, and thus can prepare to make an aligned investment if and when it materializes.
4. *Sign-Up for the Recovery Corps Funder Interest Group* – CWFA has been hosting a weekly and then bi-weekly zoom meeting for the workforce funder community since the onset of the crisis. This will continue under the Recovery Corps Fund, although the cadence may continue to adjust. These meetings, and/or the accompanying emails, will function to keep all interested funders informed about investment opportunities with the Recovery Corps. When and if an opportunity starts to emerge that meets a funder’s priorities, that funder can then move to a higher level of engagement. The Funder Alliance just asks funders in this category to have a phone call to share their priorities.

For questions about the Fund, contact any of these individuals (email in link):

Matt Bruce	Executive Director, hosted at The Chicago Community Trust
Owen Washburn	CWFA Management Committee Member – JP Morgan Chase
Molly Leonard	CWFA Management Committee Member – McCormick Foundation
Rachel Reichlin	CWFA Management Committee Member – Michael Reese Health Trust