



2025

CHICAGO UNITED FOR EQUITY FELLOWSHIP

APPLICATIONS DUE JANUARY 21, 2025

ABOUT US

CUE is a network of racial justice advocates working across diverse types of civic power as organizers, researchers, artists, storytellers, policymakers, and lawyers to redesign Chicago's civic institutions and transform Chicagoans' relationship to power.

Our community envisions a different future – and builds the blueprint to get there. Through [our Fellows'](#) work, we build models for how to shift power in government, philanthropy, research, and other civic institutions. Since 2017, we've garnered national recognition for our work developing [people-powered voter guides](#), [participatory budgets](#), and community-led policymaking strategies.

EXPERIENCE

The Chicago United for Equity (CUE) Fellowship is a yearlong experience for leaders committed to catalyzing civic change in Chicago. Each cohort of 15 - 20 Fellows serves as collective strategists for each other, sharing their diverse perspectives from working in government, media, research, advocacy, organizing, and philanthropy. Together, they build a shared analysis of the city we love, where it must grow to meet our communities' needs, and develop action plans for their own organizations informed by this wider collaboration.

At its core, CUE is a reflective learning community. Over 9 monthly workshops, each cohort explores:

Guiding Principles

Aligning language and core principles in this work, understanding historical precedents, and applying diagnostic tools for interventions.

Foundational Frameworks

For community-led policymaking, including Racial Equity Impact Assessments, decolonized research approaches, and redesigned community engagement practices.

Case Studies

And change strategies that have been successful in past work.

Equity Design Labs

Where Fellows build solutions to real civic challenges in Chicago.

APPLY NOW



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SELECTION CRITERIA

CUE Fellows are innovators, disruptors, and healers of all different kinds. Candidates are evaluated on their individual leadership, project concept, and organizational sponsor. Evaluation is conducted by CUE staff and Fellowship alumni, through a written application and Selection Day, a collaborative scenario-based interview process with other candidates.

We are looking for fellows who are...

- ★ Curious, critical thinkers
- ★ Creative, strategic problem solvers
- ★ Trusted, generative thought-partners
- ★ Receptive and self-aware
- ★ Courageous and committed to transforming systems through collective action



FELLOWSHIP PROJECT

Fellows are expected to define an **Equity Project** to reimagine a structure, policy or practice through a racial equity lens. Promising projects develop an approach that has the potential to serve as a new model for the field or sector, and addresses an equity challenge that shifts power in the civic ecosystem.

EXAMPLES OF PAST CUE FELLOW PROJECTS

Facilitating Transformational Change

The focus of Shifting Hearts and Minds LLC lies in evaluating the existing culture of the organization to uncover underlying implicit values. Subsequently, this project guides the organization in deliberately defining collective values and facilitating a transformation in organizational culture.

Liberating Community Research in Chicago Neighborhoods

This project aims to shift power, establish accountability mechanisms and foster conditions for community-led liberatory solution-focused research, thereby reducing opportunities for extractive research practices.

Cut the Tape

"Cut the Tape" is a progressive pro-growth, pro-development, pro-investment agenda that, when implemented, will allow Chicago residents to see more affordable housing and more vibrant commercial corridors in their neighborhoods more quickly!

To explore Equity Projects from previous cohorts, and browse the CUE Equity Playbook, visit chicagounitedforequity.org/projects, or scan the QR code below.



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SPONSOR ORGANIZATION & FEE

Candidates should name a sponsor organization to serve as a partner in developing and implementing their Fellowship Projects. Candidates should have a pre-existing relationship with this organization—whether as a staff member, board member, volunteer, or longstanding collaborator. Our unique approach considers sponsoring organizations as partners in the racial equity movement, where they have the opportunity to adopt Fellows' recommendations as part of their projects.

The CUE Equity Fellowship is funded in alignment with our vision for transforming power. Sponsoring organizations that have a candidate selected for the CUE Fellowship contribute to the cost of the program on a sliding scale based on the sponsoring organization's annual operating budget. Though no qualified candidate is turned away for inability to pay, all sponsoring organizations are required to commit resources to demonstrate commitment to their project.

SPONSOR ORGANIZATION ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET	SPONSOR FEE
Up to \$499,999	\$750
\$500,000 - \$999,000	\$2,000
\$1M - \$1,999,999	\$4,000
\$2M - \$2,999,999	\$5,500
\$3M - \$4,999,999	\$7,000
\$5M +	\$9,000

IMPORTANT DATES

NOVEMBER 12 Application Opens	NOVEMBER 19 Info Session (In-Person) 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	December 9 Info Session (Virtual) 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
DECEMBER 18 Info Session (In-Person) 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	JANUARY 21 Application Closes at 11:59 PM	FEBRUARY 2025 Selection Days
MARCH 2025 Finalist Notification	APRIL 2025 Fellows Onboarding & Announcement	MAY 2025 Fellowship Program Begins

To register for virtual and in-person info sessions, visit chicagounitedforequity.org/fellowship/2025, or scan the QR code below.



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