

## Giving Project Overview and FAQs

### Who Should Apply?

The Crossroads Fund's Giving Project is an innovative model for blending philanthropy and grassroots organizing. You should apply if:

- You want to build movements for racial, social, and economic justice in the Chicago area.
- You are passionate about confronting Chicago's segregation by building community across race and class, and want to learn more about each.
- You want to learn about people and organizations that are building sophisticated and savvy movements to confront systems of oppression.
- You want to learn how to fundraise, make grants, and grow your relationships with others seeking justice.
- You are open to and ready for personal transformation.
- LGBTQ-identified people, People of Color, and Giving Project alumni are especially encouraged to apply.

No prior experience with philanthropy or fundraising is needed- we will train and support you along the way!

### INTERESTED IN JOINING A GIVING PROJECT?

Questions? Please contact Lizette Garza, Program Manager at [lizette@crossroadsfund.org](mailto:lizette@crossroadsfund.org) or 773.227.7676

**“My understanding of my relationship to money has changed significantly.”  
– Giving Project Alumnus**

### What we'll ask of you:

- We need every participant to honestly, openly, and candidly engage in the process.
- Be generous and kind to your fellow participants. We all come from different places and have different experiences and have much to learn from each other.
- Commit to the entire Giving Project by attending all meetings, reading grants, participating in site visits, and fundraising.
- Make a meaningful personal financial contribution to the project.
- Fundraise from friends, family, and community.
- Be open to a process that will only be as transformative as the participants make it.

**“The process was INCREDIBLY well organized, and even though I felt as if a lot of the background material was somewhat familiar, it assumed a deeper meaning for me during the course of the Giving Project.” – Giving Project Alumnus**

## **FAQ**

### How will participants be selected?

Each interested Giving Project participant will submit an online interest form and have an in-person meeting with a Crossroads Fund staff member. We are looking for people who can: commit to attend all of the training days; review grant applications; participate in site visits; have the time and capacity to fully invest in the cohort experience; are passionate about organizing donors to fund social movements; and who meet our overall goals for cohort diversity.

### What do we mean when we say “our goals for cohort diversity” and cross-class/cross-race/intergenerational group?

We want the Giving Project to be a space that brings together people from all different identities together to move through this process of learning and action. As such, we work hard to pull together a group that represents the race, class, gender, sexuality and ability diversity of the city of Chicago. We are committed that at least 50% of the cohort will be made of up people of color, and curate a group of people that span the spectrum of many other identities. We especially encourage people of color and LGBTQ-identified people to apply, and are looking for individuals from all class backgrounds.

### I’m interested in joining the Giving Project but my organization will apply for a grant from Crossroads Fund. Can I still participate?

Yes! We’ve had many people affiliated with applicants and grantees participate in past Giving Projects. We will use our conflict-of-interest policy to ensure that anyone closely involved with an applicant organization does not participate in the decision-making process for that organization’s application.

### Is childcare available?

Yes. Crossroads Fund is committed to providing childcare, if needed, during the program. If you require childcare, please tell us when you submit your info form.

### What organizations will be funded by the Giving Project?

The Giving Project participants will use Crossroads Fund’s longstanding criteria to select grantees. We support grassroots groups working for racial, social, and economic justice in the Chicago area.

Participants will work together to make one-year general operating grants. Potential grantees will apply through the Seed Fund application, which supports new, emerging, and small community-based organizations that are actively engaged in social change work. The maximum grant in this program is \$10,000.

[Click here to learn more about the Seed Fund.](#)

I've done training on race and class before – is this for me?

The Giving Project trainings on race and class are designed to help make sure that all participants have a common knowledge and language to use before we begin evaluating applications and making site visits. For those who have previous training, some of the curriculum will be review but there is always something new to learn. Often, people have had training on race, but not class, or vice versa. This curriculum brings them together.

Additionally, this training is designed to facilitate dialogue and relationship building with a cohort of people who are intergenerational, cross-race, cross-class, and cross-identity group. Often we have these conversations in silos with other folks who share our identities.

Last, the Giving Project model combines learning and action. So often, training spaces give us frameworks but don't ask us to do anything after. By combining political education with fundraising and grantmaking, the Giving Project helps people live out what they're learning.

I'm interested but I don't know if I want to ask others for money.

Fundraising is not something that most people like to do. It feels intimidating and awkward but it is essential to supporting movements for justice.

The Giving Project is designed to help each of us become better grassroots fundraisers and explore any hesitation we have in asking for money. Crossroads Fund staff members will work with each participant on their fundraising plan, practice making “an ask”, and help troubleshoot any questions or concerns.

Each Giving Project participant will grow as a donor organizer by the end of the six month process.

What type of fundraising are we doing?

We will train participants in grassroots fundraising. This means having one-on-one conversations with people in your network about their values and making a direct ask.

We are not using online platforms like GoFundMe or crowd-sourced fundraising. The purpose of this is to build skills around relational fundraising, which is the most challenging—and yet still the most effective type of fundraising.

Wait – 20 people raising \$100,000? I know how to do math - am I responsible for raising \$5,000?

Nope, not necessarily! The overall fundraising goal for each Giving Project cohort is \$100,000 but we only ask each participant to give a gift that is meaningful for them personally and to then fundraise from their network. Each participant sets their own goal of what they can give and raise. The beauty of a cross-class cohort is that people can raise varying amounts from their networks! What's most important to us that is people

are having deep conversations with their friends/families/colleagues and making asks – all gifts are meaningful and add up.

I'm not in the Chicago area. Can I still participate in the Giving Project?

Although it might be tricky to participate in Crossroad Fund's Giving Project if you don't live in the city or suburbs, there are other options around the country! The following sister foundations are mobilizing donors through Giving Projects in their respective cities:

[Social Justice Fund Northwest \[Seattle, WA\]](#)

[Chinook Fund \[Denver, CO\]](#)

[Headwaters Foundation for Justice \[Minneapolis, MN\]](#)

[North Star Fund \[New York, NY\]](#)

[Bread & Roses Community Fund \[Philadelphia, PA\]](#)

I'm interested but I can't participate this time. How can I support?

There are many ways that you can support, even if you do not join as a participant. Here are a few:

- Tell others about the Giving Project. Please ask Crossroads Fund staff about helping you to share information about the Giving Project on social media.
- Be willing to be fundraised! We need supporters who are willing to have one-to-one conversations with our Giving Project participants that would be "easy asks." If you are interested in/willing to be fundraised, please email [lizette@crossroadsfund.org](mailto:lizette@crossroadsfund.org).
- Donate! Commit to building power and fighting for a more just Chicago by donating to the Giving Project. You may choose to donate to the current Giving Project or to the Crossroads Fund general fund, which makes this program possible.