

# Wealth Our Way W.O.W.

## CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM

INFORMATIONAL SESSION  
June 24, 2025



CITY OF CHICAGO  
**BUILD BETTER  
TOGETHER** ★  
MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON

# Agenda

Welcome + Introduction

Community Wealth Building Overview

W.O.W. Program Overview

Application Process

Questions

# Community Desk Chicago



- Community Desk Chicago (The Desk) is a 501c3 with a mission to advance equitable economic prosperity in collaboration with historically under-resourced communities.
- We serve as a **"help desk"** for community-centered real estate development projects supporting nonprofits, entrepreneurs, and community developers.
- We focus on small-scale developments on **neighborhood commercial corridors** that are under 10,000 SF and under \$10M in total development costs. These developments also **promote community wealth building** that **improves the quality of life** for residents (e.g., restaurants, gallery spaces, local boutiques).
- The Desk is a **leading thought partner** in Chicago's community wealth-building ecosystem and advocated for **commercial shared ownership models** to be included in the City of Chicago's Community Wealth Building Initiative.





# CWB History





Community Wealth Building is an approach to economic development that promotes the **local, democratic, and shared ownership and control** of community assets

# ★ The City of Chicago is currently focused on four priority CWB models:

	Member-Owned (Direct)		Community-Owned (Indirect)	
				
	1	2	3	4
Pillar	Business Ownership	Home Ownership	Land Stewardship	Commercial Property
Priority Model	Worker Cooperative	Limited-Equity Housing Cooperative	Community Land Trust	Community Investment Vehicle
Model Definition	Business owned & controlled by its employees, rather than by one owner, several partners, or outside shareholders	Housing owned & managed by a cooperative made up of low-income members who each purchase shares at below-market	Organization governed by community owns land in perpetuity while residential and commercial tenants own the structures atop the land via a 99-year ground lease	A legal investment mechanism that provides collective community investment in neighborhood assets based on shared development goals
Local Example	Chi Fresh Kitchen	Pilsen Housing Cooperative	Here to Stay CLT	E.G. Woode

# CWB Initiative Three Phases

## Phase I – Strengthen the Ecosystem

- In January 2023, City awarded ecosystem grants of up to \$300,000 each to 16 organizations to provide highly specialized CWB technical assistance in six core categories:
  - Research and Convening
  - Education and Outreach
  - Business Development
  - Legal and Governance
  - Finance and Fundraising
  - Assets and Operations

## Phase II – Building the Pipeline

- In May 2023, the City awarded planning and predevelopment grants of \$150,000 each to 25 early-stage CWB projects including: Community Investment Vehicles (CIVs), worker co-ops cooperatives, housing trusts and land trusts.
- The primary goal of this phase was to build the pipeline of shovel-ready, investment-ready community wealth building projects that meet community priorities.

## Phase III – Invest in Pilot Projects

- As a third phase of the City's CWB initiative, funding is allocated to support the physical development of real estate projects owned and operated through shared ownership models.
- Community Desk Chicago was selected as the partner to administer funding for CIVs and Worker Co-Ops.

\$4.11M Capital Grant Program  
seeded by the City of Chicago

Provides capital grants and  
technical coaching to  
commercial shared ownership  
projects in Chicago

W.O.W.  
Wealth Our Way



# Program Goals

- Increase the number of real estate projects in neighborhoods collectively owned and controlled by worker cooperatives and CIVs – shifting power dynamics in communities.
- Increase capital access for worker cooperatives and CIVs to advance their desired commercial corridor outcomes.
- Increased individual and household wealth through dividends and other profit-sharing structures, exposing residents to investment opportunities beyond traditional saving and retirement plans.
- Reduce vacancies and blighted properties along neighborhood commercial corridors.
- Create more affordable spaces for growing small businesses to lease.
- Demonstrate that commercial shared ownership models are viable strategies for wealth-building and community revitalization efforts.

# W.O.W. Project Types

## Community Investment Vehicles (CIVs)

- A legal investment mechanism that provides collective community investment in neighborhood assets based on shared development goals (e.g., community-owned mixed-use building on a commercial corridor).
- In its perfect form, a CIV is majority-controlled, majority-owned, and designed by residents or local members.

## Worker Co-Ops

- A business owned and controlled by its employees, who share in both the decision-making and the profits of the business (e.g., member-owned bakery).
- Every worker who meets the basic eligibility requirements can become a co-owner of the business including the right to vote for and serve on the board of directors.

# Project Examples

## QUALIFY

- Nonprofit acquiring a property on behalf of a new legal structure owned by the community
- A community group collectively owning a commercial property
- A commercial land trust managed by a board w/community representation
- A developer co-owning with community residents
- Multiple entrepreneurs collectively owning a property
- Employees co-owning a business

## DOES NOT QUALIFY

- Nonprofit organization developing a commercial property
- Entrepreneur purchasing a property to expand their business
- Housing development project

# W.O.W. Program Highlights

- 16-18 month capital grant program
- Direct capital to support the completion of a real estate project owned and operated by Community Investment Vehicles and Worker Co-Ops in Chicago
- Technical coaching supporting both the real estate project and the operations of each ownership model
- Capital coordination to assist with securing full development costs
- Grantee convenings and networking to build knowledge
- Access to additional resources to advance the models (e.g., investor education)



- Up to 75% of Total Project Costs
- Maximum award of \$500K (will vary based on project need)
- 8-10 projects



# Key Program Qualifications

- Site Control – Acquisition (lease option for Worker Co-Ops only)
- Shared ownership model – member or community
- Ability to be in construction by Q1-2026
- Projects completed by end of 2026
- Shared ownership structure defined and positioned to be operational by real estate project completion
- Financially feasible operating model long-term (within 5 years)
- Project located within the City of Chicago

# Key Program Requirements

- Develop a work plan to monitor progress for both the real estate project and long-term operations
- Meet monthly with technical coaches and Desk team
- Participate in grantee convenings (6 in total)
- Provide access to project financials, business plans and related model information to assess w/coaching process
- Meet City of Chicago capital grant requirements (e.g., MBE/WBE, Prevailing Wage, Scofflaw)
- Reimbursement or payment of funding via a construction escrow – payment schedule based on the needs of the project

# Scoring Criteria

- Model Design
  - Clear articulation of purpose, goals, impact and overall design; level of community involvement and status of model implementation
- Development Project
  - Status of site control; status of development efforts; project team and project funding
- Long Term Financial Feasibility
  - Feasibility of financial projects; status and structure of governance and operations team
- Community Impact
  - Model's connectivity to the community; member/community education



# Eligible Costs

- Acquisition (max of 25% of grant amount)
- Hard Costs
- Soft Costs
  - Architect
  - Engineer
  - General Contractor Overhead, Fee, General Requirements
  - Project Manager/Owner's Representative
  - Environmental Testing
  - Insurance
  - Permit Fees

# Application Process

# Application Process + Timeline

- Project Questionnaire
  - Currently open
  - Confirms proposed project meets program qualifications
- Formal Application
  - Available if approved based on questionnaire
  - Applications completed via Capital Connect (Desk's Grant Portal)
- Applications Close – July 31<sup>st</sup> at 5pm CST
- Grants Awarded – early/mid September

# Program Questionnaire



## Wealth Our Way (W.O.W.) Capital Grant Program Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions to confirm eligibility to apply for the program.

### Lead Organization

Please identify the lead organization or legal entity of the proposed project that is applying for the grant on behalf of the shared ownership model.

Organization Name (Required)

Entity Type (Required)

Address (Required)

Street Address

- Collects basic information about the project to confirm eligibility
- Lead organization/legal entity needs to complete the questionnaire.



# Program Application



Community Desk Chicago

## Wealth Our Way (W.O.W.) Capital Grant Application

### Funding Amount

Requested Funding Amount (Required)

Please enter a number less than or equal to 500000.

### Lead Organization Information

Please provide information on the lead organization or business that will manage the grant.

Organization Name (Required)

Doing Business As (DBA)

EIN (Required)

- Confirms project information and lead organization/legal entity
- Can modify initial answers from questionnaire until the application is formally submitted.
- Requests information about the specifics of the wealth-building model (e.g., governance, etc.)
- Requests detailed information about the real estate project – projects should be at least in the design phase

# Required Attachments

## Real Estate Project Documentation

Evidence of Site Control

Project Timeline

Project Financials – template provided

Funding Documentation

Project Team

Existing Condition Photos

Drawings/Design Documents

## Shared Ownership Model Documentation

Business Plan

Letters of Support

# Budget Templates – Worker Co-Ops

Project Name

Instructions

Please complete the light yellow cells.

Gray cells will self-populate based on values entered elsewhere.

Not all line items are required, but the level of information outlined in the template is beneficial, if available.

If some of the input cells are not relevant to your project, please leave blank.

Program Assumptions

Is the building currently in operation?

Do you plan on owning or leasing space for your workers cooperative?

If you plan to own the space, are any spaces being leased to others?

If Leasing Space:

Detail your real estate occupancy costs, including rent and any contributions to common area maintenance.

	SF	\$/SF	Total/Year	Lease Term (Years)
Commercial Total	-	\$ -	\$ -	
Lease Costs			\$ -	
Common Area Maintenance			\$ -	

CAM is the amount of operating expenses charged to you as a tenant.

If Owning Space and Leasing to Others:

Detail any dedicated third-party leases or real estate-related revenues.

Real estate-related expenses will be entered on the 'Operating Pro Forma' tab.

	SF	Total Rent/Year	Lease Term (Years)
Worker Co-Op Occupied Space:			
Space Leased to Others:	Commercial Use/Tenant	-	\$ -
Commercial Tenant 1			
Commercial Tenant 2			
Commercial Tenant 3			
Overall Development Program (Commercial SF)	-		

Notes

Please provide justification of inputs entered in this section.

# Budget Templates – CIVs`

Program Assumptions

Is the building currently in operation?

If yes, are there tenants that would need to be relocated?

If yes, how much are the anticipated tenant relocation expenses?

Commercial (Dedicated Leases)

Detail any dedicated leases.

Commercial Use	SF	Avg Rent/SF	Total Rent/Year	Lease Term (Years)
Commercial Total	-	\$ -	\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 1			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 2			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 3			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 4			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 5			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 6			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 7			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 8			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 9			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 10			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 11			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 12			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 13			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 14			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 15			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 16			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 17			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 18			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 19			\$ -	
Commercial Tenant 20			\$ -	

Other Commercial Revenue

Detail any commercial revenue not associated with dedicated leases.  
(Example: Membership Models, Short Term Rentals, Other Uses without Designated Leases)

Other Commercial Use	Total Rent/Year	Lease Terms
Other Commercial Total	\$ -	
Other Commercial User 1		
Other Commercial User 2		
Other Commercial User 3		
Other Commercial User 4		
Other Commercial User 5		

Residential

Detail the assumed unit mix, square footage, and rent.

Please

	# of Units	Avg SF	Avg Rent/Month (First Year of Operation)
Residential Total	-	-	\$ -
Studio			
1-Bed			
2-Bed			
3-Bed			

Parking

Detail any parking rent that would be received by tenants.

Parking Spaces	# of Spaces	Rent (\$/Month)	Annual Rent
			\$ -

Common Area Maintenance (CAM)

Detail any operating expenses that would be charged to

CAM Reimbursements	Commercial SF	\$/SF	Total/Year
	-		\$ -

Overall Development Program

Total Commercial SF

Total Residential SF

Note: Commercial SF should include dedicated leased space and shared spaces.

COMMUNITY DESK CHICAGO PRESENTATION

24



# Budget Templates – CIVs`

Enter Additional Lines Here			
Enter Additional Lines Here	If needed, insert additional lines above here.		
<b>Hard Costs</b>			
Pre-Construction General Contractor Expenses	Include items such as demolition and site prep, if applicable.		
Construction Costs - Base	Base build including core and shell, exterior, interior, landscaping, etc.		
Construction Costs - Tenant Buildout	Cost for tenant build-out beyond the base build		
Construction Costs - Residential Buildout	Cost for any housing units connected to a mixed use property		
General Conditions			
General Contractor Fee			
Payment and Performance Bonds			
Contractor's Contingency			
GC Liability Insurance			
Permits			
Utility Connections/New Services	Include items such as water and power connections.		
Owner's Hard Cost Contingency	Include any additional contingency beyond the GC contingency.		
Enter Additional Lines Here			
Enter Additional Lines Here	If needed, insert additional lines above here.		
<b>Soft Costs</b>			
Legal Fees	Include general legal fees associated with contract review, entitlements, etc.		
Environmental Studies/Testing/Remediation			
Development Consultants/Owner's Reps			
Architect and Engineering			
Construction Inspector/Plan & Cost Review	Include architect-related costs associated with entitlements, city approvals, etc.		
Survey/Zoning			
Relocation Expenses	This cell will self-populate.	N/A	\$ -
General Liability Insurance			
Builder's Risk Insurance			
Security	Security during construction		
Appraisal			
CIV Consultant Fees	Any fees associated with establishing the legal structure for the real estate		
Other Professional Fees			
Owner's Soft Cost Contingency	Include a soft cost contingency for items beyond those noted above.		
Enter Additional Lines Here			
Enter Additional Lines Here	If needed, insert additional lines above here.		
<b>Financing Costs &amp; Reserves</b>			
Legal Fees Associated w/Financing	Include only legal fees associated with financing.		

# Questions?

FAQs Posted:

July 2<sup>nd</sup>

July 17<sup>th</sup>

Please send questions to [wow@communitydeskchicago.org](mailto:wow@communitydeskchicago.org)