

Illinois Department of Human Services

JB Pritzker, Governor · Grace B. Hou, Secretary

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Governor JB Pritzker, Lt. Gov. Julianna Stratton and the Illinois Department of Human Services Launch "Healing Illinois" Initiative



Nonprofit organizations throughout Illinois can apply for up to \$50,000 in grant money, and a few may qualify for higher amounts, under a new \$4.5 million Request for Proposal issued by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to encourage activities across the state that address racial injustice. The next application deadline for the Request for Proposal, administered by The Chicago Community Trust is Oct. 30 for the second cycle of grants.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker and Lt. Gov. Julianna Stratton joined IDHS Secretary Grace Hou in launching the new statewide racial healing initiative called "Healing Illinois" earlier this month. The goal of the Healing Illinois initiative is to prompt ideas and activities that help build a bridge toward a racially equitable Illinois.

"This is the moment for Illinois to reverse the harm that's been done to people and communities that have been left behind over too many generations," said Gov. Pritzker, during the initiative's kick-off, held via a Zoom webinar. "I'm committed to building diversity and opportunity into all aspects of our state by investing in black and brown communities, by reforming our broken criminal justice system, by ensuring access to jobs and resources and healthcare for every Illinoisan and by applying an equity lens to all that we do."

Nearly 200 people viewed the Healing Illinois webinar, which also featured remarks by Lt. Gov. Stratton and Deputy Gov. Sol Flores. "This initiative presents opportunities to create community-centered, inclusive and safe spaces to talk about the impact of racism and harm in our lives and in our communities and to design local solutions," said Deputy Gov. Flores.

Lt. Gov. Stratton referenced the trauma felt in communities from a number of triggers, including COVID-19, police killings of unarmed Black men and women, including George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and immigrants being detained by ICE. "The grants provided to communities and organizations through Healing Illinois will provide proverbial tables for much needed dialogue around racial healing," said Lt. Gov. Stratton. "We know that these will never be comfortable conversations to have, but we can have them together at the table."

IDHS Secretary Grace Hou moderated a panel discussion during the event featuring social justice advocates who shared their experiences doing racial healing and racial and social justice work. Chicago photographer and visual artist Tonika Lewis Johnson spoke about her Folded Map project, which visually investigates disparities among Chicago residents while bringing them together to have conversations. Dar Bryant, center director for the Dream Center in Alton, Ill., spoke about his own experience as a former prisoner witnessing the unjust treatment of Black prisoners and his current restorative justice work for adults and youth. José A. Rico, director of Truth, Racial Health, and Transformation, Greater Chicago, spoke about the racial healing circles that he and his team of racial healing practitioners have conducted.

To encourage responses to the Healing Illinois RFP, The Chicago Community Trust set two application cycles for the grants with application deadlines of Oct. 14 and Oct. 30. Only one application will be accepted per organization, explained Daniel Ash, associate vice president of Community Impact at The Chicago Community Trust.

Three webinars were held for potential applicants, and nearly 700 people participated. While the grants are capped at \$50,000, a small number of grants above \$50,000 is available for organizations that can conduct activities in multiple locations across the state.

More information on the RFP is available at [Healing.Illinois.gov](https://healing.illinois.gov). In addition, individuals and community organizations can host discussions about racial healing by participating in The Chicago Community Trust's annual [On the Table](#) event, which kicked off on Oct. 12 and continues throughout the fall.

Important Dates for Healing Illinois

Application deadline, Second cycle: **Oct. 30**

Grant disbursements:

- Late November for the first application cycle
- Mid-December for the second application cycle