

POLK BROS. FOUNDATION | CLOSING THE LIFE EXPECTANCY GAP

Polk Bros. Foundation’s grants toward Closing the Life Expectancy Gap seek to support work that is intentionally designed to make progress toward a number of the following outcomes and to increase health equity, personal and community safety, and well-being across Chicago’s neighborhoods.

We are sharing these outcomes to provide greater clarity about what we hope our grants will collectively achieve and what we will prioritize as we review proposals. We hope this matrix also helps grantseekers and partners better understand our grantmaking goals and where their work may align.

Grantmaking Priorities – Closing the Life Expectancy Gap				
Across All Approaches	Ending Cycles of Harm		Going Deeper	
	Healing and Harm Reduction Infrastructure	Coordinated, Holistic System of Care	Family and Community Violence Prevention & Intervention	Overdose Prevention
	Reduction in Chicago’s life expectancy gap through an increase in low-barrier human services delivery grounded in supportive policies and public sector engagement Increased continuity of care and reintegration services and supports for youth and adults impacted by violence, incarceration and/or conditions of post-carceral supervision	Reduction in Chicago’s life expectancy gap through increased access to and quality of care and aligned and coordinated public systems, including public health, human services, criminal-legal, homelessness, child services, and others. Targeted interventions in neighborhoods with the highest rates of overdose, incidences of violence, incarceration, and homelessness can include improved and coordinated healthcare delivery and payment, workforce strategies, and increased access to public benefits, policy supports for outreach workers, and human services.	Reduction in Chicago’s life expectancy gap through: • Increased investments in trauma-informed services, resources, and supports that address chronic stress resulting from violence Reduced gun and domestic violence through: • Deepened community violence intervention (and survivor and child services CVI) investments, including wraparound services and activation of public spaces investments in neighborhoods impacted by high rates of gun violence • Strengthened survivor and child services resources and support	Reduction in Chicago’s life expectancy gap and reduction in opioid overdose through: • Increased infrastructure for and adoption of harm reduction practices • Increased education about overdose prevention, resources available, and outreach to schools and communities with high incidences of overdose • Development of a comprehensive and sustained continuum of services and care

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Approach: Immediate Interventions	Ending Cycles of Harm		Going Deeper	
	Healing and Harm Reduction Infrastructure	Coordinated, Holistic System of Care	Family and Community Violence Prevention & Intervention	Overdose Prevention
	- Expanded youth-based healing-centered programming through arts, sports, mentorship, and other opportunities for youth to build skills, connect with trusted adults, and contribute to community wellness - Strengthened capacity of community-based organizations whose main approach is risk reduction - Increased harm reduction practices in affordable housing, homelessness and violence prevention - Increased healing-centered services and resources for people who have exposure to trauma resulting from incarceration and violence	- Growth in number and diversity of mental health workforce - Increased social-emotional learning supports in Chicago public schools with the highest rates of violent incidences, homelessness, and overdoses - Reduced burden for people attempting to access public services through improved connectivity and data sharing within and among public systems	- Increased support for survivors of both community and domestic violence through evidence-based intervention and prevention efforts that engage people who have been exposed to violence, reduce and interrupt recurrence of violence and harm, and create the conditions for co-created community peace - Expanded workforce and career opportunities for community violence intervention (CVI) participants and domestic violence survivors - Increased trauma-informed, healing-centered programming and services for people incarcerated from communities at the highest risk for gun violence - Expanded evidence-based arts programming that focuses on youth and adults healing from exposure to gun violence in high-risk communities - Increased evidence-based programming that promotes social-emotional skills for youth from high-violence communities, including sports programming and/or mental health supports	- Reduction in overdose rates in communities with highest incidences of violence, homelessness, and overdose through programs that address root causes of trauma - Increased access to non-mandated treatment and recovery - Increased number, strength, and scope of risk-reduction organizations

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	Ending Cycles of Harm		Going Deeper	
	Healing and Harm Reduction Infrastructure	Coordinated, Holistic System of Care	Family and Community Violence Prevention & Intervention	Overdose Prevention
Approach: Community Power & Influence	• Growth in membership and diversity of coalitions with clear priorities and goals for engagement, community-building, and advocacy that center harm reduction • Creation of safe spaces in community for people to heal and recover from challenges related to substance use, including the exploration of safe use sites • Strengthened participant engagement in advocacy and sector strengthening efforts • Increased pathways for peer recovery specialists and outreach and engagement workers to pursue community health worker certification	• Increased reduction of stigma about communities with high rates of violence, homelessness, overdose, and incarceration through narrative change and storytelling • Increased opportunities for people with lived experience of homelessness, substance use, violence exposure, and trauma to provide direct feedback and guidance to public sector agencies who serve them • Expansion of educational pathways within the healthcare and human services sectors to promote upward mobility within the workforce	• Increased activation and beautification of public spaces that engage residents, alongside public sector partners in planning and implementation, leading to increased feelings of safety, belonging, and accountability to community • Increased arts and cultural assets in communities that deepen opportunities for healing and greater social cohesion • Increased pathways for the violence prevention workforce to pursue community health worker certification • Increased restorative justice approaches led by people with lived experience in both school and community settings • Increased executive-level leadership development and fellowship opportunities across public and private sectors for justice-impacted staff	• Growth of inclusive coalitions focused on reducing harm and overdose deaths that elevate organizations in the sector • Increased training to CVI outreach and engagement workforce of harm reduction tools and strategies to support people who are exposed to high rates of both violence and overdose

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	Healing and Harm Reduction Infrastructure	Coordinated, Holistic System of Care	Family and Community Violence Prevention & Intervention	Overdose Prevention
Approach: Ecosystem of Change	• Adoption of harm reduction as core approach in preventing overdose by public sector • Increased formalized partnerships between harm reduction agencies and healthcare and homelessness services organizations to ensure warm handoffs and referral follow-up • Strengthened evidence base demonstrating the efficacy of risk reduction strategies	• Stronger public/private and interagency linkages between pre-entry, reentry, and other social services, including warm handoffs and closed referral loops • Protection of Medicaid and expansion to include social determinants of health • Increased policies that remove legal barriers to employment, benefits, and housing for justice-impacted populations	• Increased access to leadership and professional development opportunities for people impacted by violence and incarceration • Increased advocacy that leads to investment in the ongoing service model, including programming for youth in under-resourced communities to build social-emotional learning skills • Increased restorative justice approaches and programs addressing gun possession charges for youth and adults aimed at preventing a criminal record • Increased public adoption of non-punitive, community-led safety plans addressing gun-violence and incarceration • Improved and effective coordination and collaboration between public, private, and CVI community organizations • Improved continuum of support for returning residents on parole through better coordination and collaboration between the Illinois Department of Corrections Parole Division and community-based organizations	• Strengthened infrastructure that supports and strengthens the overdose prevention system through thriving anchor organizations that share influence and power with other providers and program participants • Strengthened organizations that advocate for and help secure opioid settlements that reach smaller risk-reduction organizations • Increased participatory action research led by people most affected by overdose who will implement strategies developed • Improved policies that promote strategies inclusive of people who use drugs and shifted culture among healthcare and substance use providers towards the centering of harm reduction principles

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Approach: Community Innovation	- Increased technology solutions to improve community-based organization data collection and governance - Growth in partnerships among substance use, homelessness, health, and reentry organizations that provide a full spectrum of support for individuals - Scaling of effective programs, outreach and engagement strategies, and policy solutions for people who use drugs	- Increased application of evidence-based alternatives to policing, particularly in lower-acuity crisis response in which trained social workers and mental health professionals can reduce risk of harm - Expansion of embedded desistance strategies throughout program delivery - Increased policies and public investment in evidence-based restorative justice programs that provide alternatives to policing and incarceration, and connect people, especially youth, to community care, housing, and supportive services	- Greater prevalence of risk reduction strategies in community violence work, which meet people without coercion, judgement, or high barriers to entry - Increased evaluation and identification of needs of participants and their families to improve efficacy of program delivery and advocacy efforts - Increased application and evaluation of desistance-based services and programs - Advanced community-led solutions using new technology and/or tools that enhances community safety, increase neighborhood stability and promotes social cohesion for justice-impacted people to improve pro-social skills and increase choices that can improve health and extend overall life expectancy	- Establishment of coordinated, comprehensive community centers for overdose prevention that include an array of supplemental and wraparound services - Partnerships that increase attention to the intersecting needs among sectors including homelessness services, healthcare delivery, and education - Evaluation and research that builds the evidence base on the efficacy of harm reduction in reducing overdose

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CLOSING THE LIFE EXPECTANCY GAP GOAL.

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