

2025 GRANTS

NEW TO 2025 : RESILIENCE GRANTS

Be a vital part of Evanston's resilience

In response to rising uncertainty and growing community need, Evanston Community Foundation launched our new Resilience Grants in 2025. Designed to help Evanston nonprofits navigate unexpected financial hardships, these grants directly support essential services at moments when they matter most.

Resilience Grants sustain critical programs such as crisis counseling, emergency mental health care, legal assistance, and vital financial support—including resources for undocumented residents. They also empower local nonprofits to collaboratively address emerging challenges, ensuring our community remains resilient, supported, and strong.

Your partnership is more crucial than ever. With your help, We hope to raise at least \$600,000 in grantmaking partner dollars. This will significantly expand our grantmaking capacity, **meeting this extraordinary moment with extraordinary generosity.** Together, we can ensure Evanston nonprofits have the critical resources needed to sustain our community during challenging times.

TOTAL FUNDING (SPRING 2025) - \$158,000

Curt's Café

Grant Amount: \$15,000

Curt's Café supports young adults, primarily BIPOC students in Evanston, with life skills, workforce training, and wraparound social services. This grant sustains Curt's vital mental health and crisis counseling services, while also helping fund transportation, meals, and stipends so students can fully engage in their programs. The investment ensures youth facing housing insecurity, trauma, and other challenges receive consistent care and support toward long-term stability.

Evanston CASE

Grant Amount: \$15,000

Evanston CASE advocates for families of students with disabilities in Districts 65 and 202, especially those at the intersection of race, immigration status, and gender identity. With a sharp decline in funding and rising community demand, this grant supports their continued advocacy and direct support to families navigating systemic inequities and school-based challenges. The investment helps prevent service cuts and keeps CASE's vital voice in the room for Evanston's most vulnerable students.

RESILIENCE GRANTS CONTINUED

Evanston Scholars

Grant Amount: \$8,000

Evanston Scholars supports first-generation college-bound students through high school and college. In response to rising student anxiety, housing and food insecurity, and anti-DEI threats, this grant helps the organization provide emergency financial support, wellness programming, and mental health first-aid training for staff. The investment ensures students can persist and thrive in college despite rapidly changing and often hostile campus environments.

Family Promise Chicago North Shore

Grant Amount: \$15,000

Family Promise supports families experiencing housing insecurity in Evanston and the northern suburbs. Following the loss of a major funding stream, this grant helps maintain their emergency services, including a community-run pantry and housing stability programs. With this support, Family Promise can continue preventing homelessness and providing essential resources to families at risk.

Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project (FLAP)

Grant Amount: \$15,000

FLAP provides legal assistance, Know Your Rights education, and direct financial support to low-wage immigrant workers in Evanston. This grant helps FLAP expand outreach and mutual aid to workers facing threats of deportation, wage theft, and unsafe working conditions. The investment empowers immigrant families with legal tools, emergency aid, and the knowledge to protect themselves.

Infant Welfare Society of Evanston (IWSE)

Grant Amount: \$15,000

IWSE delivers high-quality early childhood education and care to Evanston's most vulnerable families. Due to a staffing crisis and low reimbursement rates, one classroom is currently closed, limiting access for children on the waitlist. This grant helps IWSE stabilize operations and maintain critical services despite systemic challenges in the early childhood workforce.

James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy

Grant Amount: \$15,000

The Moran Center is launching the PEWS (Protect Evanston, Wilmette & Skokie) Project to empower residents with legal education and rapid response tools amid growing threats to immigrant communities. This grant supports Know Your Rights and allyship trainings, guardianship education, and the development of a multilingual communication app. The investment also strengthens inclusive infrastructure for future community convenings and emergency preparedness.



RESILIENCE GRANTS CONTINUED

Open Communities

Grant Amount: \$15,000

Open Communities is the only fair housing agency serving Evanston, working to prevent housing discrimination and educate residents on their rights. After an abrupt termination of federal funding, this grant helps sustain fair housing investigations and community outreach. The investment preserves fair housing protections for Evanston residents during a time of heightened housing insecurity.

Padres Empoderados

Grant Amount: \$15,000

Padres Empoderados is organizing a Family Preparedness Workshop to help immigrant families in Evanston prepare for detention or deportation emergencies. This grant supports educational materials, legal consultations, childcare, and meals to ensure the workshop is accessible and impactful. The investment empowers families with critical knowledge and personalized legal guidance to navigate potential crises.

PEER Services, Inc.

Grant Amount: \$15,000

PEER Services provides affordable substance use treatment and mental health support for Evanston residents, many of whom rely on Medicaid. With recent state and federal funding cuts, this grant helps PEER continue serving low-income clients without service interruptions. The investment ensures access to lifesaving treatment during a time of fiscal uncertainty.

Rebuilding Exchange

Grant Amount: \$15,000

Rebuilding Exchange promotes sustainability and workforce development through the reuse of building materials. After the sudden freeze of a \$3.8 million federal grant, this funding helps the organization retain key staff and stabilize operations. The investment ensures Rebuilding Exchange can continue training workers and reducing carbon emissions through innovative reuse practices.



2025 GRANTS

COMMUNITY-LED GRANTS

Community Voices, Community Choices

The following organizations were selected by ECF's community-led committees to receive unrestricted operating support through the Spring 2025 Community-Led Grant cycle. Each reflects a strong commitment to equity and meaningful impact in Evanston.

TOTAL FUNDING (SPRING 2025) - \$300,000

Books & Breakfast

Grant Amount:\$25,000

Books & Breakfast is an educational equity initiative partnering with District 65 to support Black, Latinx, and Free and Reduced Lunch-eligible students by disrupting the impacts of systemic racism and filling opportunity gaps. Dedicated to advancing educational equity through reading support programs, Books & Breakfast is rooted in a vision of an inclusive Evanston where every child is valued and connected, and where all students are empowered to reach their full academic potential in just and equitable school communities.

Connections for the Homeless

Grant Amount:\$25,000

Connections for the Homeless serves over 3,000 Evanston residents annually through homelessness prevention services, shelter, and housing. With a mission to end homelessness one person at a time, the organization also leads advocacy efforts to address systemic inequities and the root causes of housing instability, building innovative, community-driven solutions for a more equitable Evanston.

Erie Family Health Centers, Evanston Branch

Grant Amount:\$25,000

Erie Family Health Centers' resolute belief that healthcare is a human right drives them to confront health inequities and work to help all people live their healthiest lives. They are committed to eliminating barriers to care and addressing the comprehensive needs of underserved Evanston residents, both inside and outside the exam room, through the availability, accessibility, affordability, and high quality of our whole person care.



COMMUNITY-LED GRANTS CONTINUED

Evanston Grows

Grant Amount:\$25,000

Evanston Grows is a collaborative nonprofit advancing health equity through increased access to healthy food, food literacy education, and urban agriculture. By developing a sustainable and just local food system and offering workforce development for future urban farmers, Evanston Grows supports resilient communities and improved well-being across Evanston, with an emphasis on the historically segregated 5th ward in Evanston.

Evanston PEACE- A branch of Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)

Grant Amount:\$25,000

For over a decade, Evanston PEACE (Parents of Evanston Advocating for Change & Equity), an Evanston-based and serving branch of Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) has built the leadership and organizing capacity of under-resourced parents to advocate for equitable programs and policies across education, recreation, housing, and civic life, improving outcomes for local children and families.

Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum

Grant Amount:\$25,000

Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum is dedicated to elevating Native voices through education, advocacy, and awareness. By sharing authentic Indigenous histories and perspectives, the museum fosters cross-cultural understanding and enriches Evanston's cultural landscape with diverse programming, exhibitions, and educational resources.

Her Rising Initiative

Grant Amount:\$25,000

Her Rising Initiative is a youth-led nonprofit working to close the leadership opportunity gap for girls, particularly Black and Latine youth, through events, journals, and a podcast. Founded by teen author and CEO Cherie Animashaun, the organization originated in Evanston with its signature event, Girls Who Lead, addressing disparities in academic achievement and leadership representation.

Infant Welfare Society of Evanston

Grant Amount:\$25,000

Infant Welfare Society of Evanston (IWSE) provides exceptional care and education for infants and young children while supporting families as effective parents and advocates in their child's development. Through its Baby Toddler Nursery, Teen Baby Nursery, and home-based Family Support program, IWSE ensures children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The organization also leads advocacy efforts locally and statewide, advancing equity, funding, and workforce development in partnership with the Evanston Early Childhood Council and the Early Childhood Alliance.



COMMUNITY-LED GRANTS CONTINUED

James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy

Grant Amount:\$25,000

The James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy sustains a community-based lifeline of integrated legal, mental health, and restorative services for young people and families. By making these supports more accessible, the Moran Center can stem the poverty-to-institutionalization pipeline that widens gaps in opportunities for clients and instead build a restorative community where all youth and families thrive.

Open Communities

Grant Amount:\$25,000

Open Communities mission aims to protect neighbors' rights to fair housing and prevent homelessness in Evanston. The organization continues defending Evanstonians against housing instability and discrimination to create a welcoming community we can all call home. They foster thriving, inclusive communities through fair housing enforcement, housing counseling, education, outreach, and advocacy. Their free services are offered in English and Spanish to increase accessibility.

Shorefront Legacy Center

Grant Amount:\$25,000

Shorefront is a historic organization dedicated to collecting, preserving, and sharing the history of Black people who lived on Chicago's suburban North Shore, founded in response to the lack of representation of Black history in local history organizations, which were not collecting or preserving the stories of Black residents in the area. This funding supports the expansion of public programming, as well as the maintenance of archival collections.

Sokana Collective Worldwide

Grant Amount:\$25,000

Sokana Collective works to eliminate barriers for birth workers and families by offering workforce development and direct doula services focused on maternal and infant health. With a commitment to culturally sensitive, community-based care, the Collective trains doulas to address health disparities and support families in Evanston and the surrounding Chicagoland area.



2025 GRANTS

CATALYST GRANTS

Where Bold Ideas Begin

Catalyst Grants are small but powerful seed investments that help bold ideas take root. Unlike our community-led grants, Catalyst Grants are directed by ECF to provide flexible, early-stage funding for emerging initiatives, professional development, and innovative projects that meet evolving needs in Evanston. These grants often support new or under-resourced efforts that, with the right spark, can grow into lasting community impact.

TOTAL FUNDED (SPRING 2025): \$33,566.00

City of Evanston – 2025 Town Gown Conference

Grant Amount: \$2,000

Supports travel and registration for local community members to attend the 2025 International Town & Gown Conference (ITGA). The conference fosters collaboration between universities and cities, and this grant ensures residents from neighborhoods adjacent to Northwestern University have a voice at the table.

City of Evanston – UpSquad

Grant Amount: \$5,666

Covers ECF's share of the UpSquad platform, which connects Leadership Evanston alumni to local volunteer, board, and City Commission and City Committee opportunities. This digital hub also supports collaboration between ECF and community partners through shared communications and engagement space.

Evanston Community Cooperative – Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangement (MEWA)

Grant Amount: \$5,500

Helps launch the Evanston Community Cooperative, a new nonprofit offering shared back-office services and collective health insurance to local organizations. Funds support startup legal costs and a portion of administrative fees, advancing nonprofit sustainability and collaboration.



CATALYST GRANTS CONTINUED

Evanston Public Library – Evanston Care Network Sunset

Grant Amount: \$5,400

Supports the responsible sunsetting of Evanston Care Network, a COVID-era platform that connected residents to critical services. The project will transition users to FindHelp.org and other resources, ensuring vulnerable residents continue to access support during and beyond the platform's retirement.

Evanston RoundTable Media – Racial Equity Journalist

Grant Amount: \$15,000

Helps fund a racial equity journalist at the Evanston RoundTable through a Report for America fellowship. The reporter will cover stories on reparations, education, policing, and equity—amplifying Evanston's efforts to become a more just and inclusive city.

COLLECTIVE AND ENDURING GRANTS

Rooted in Partnership, Built to Last

Collective & Enduring Grants support long-term solutions through collaboration and multi-year investments. These grants fund partnerships between nonprofits and community stakeholders working together to tackle complex challenges and drive lasting, systemic change in Evanston. By supporting shared strategies over multiple years, ECF helps build stronger, more resilient systems that serve the community for the long haul.

TOTAL FUNDED (SPRING 2025): \$55,000.00

Books & Breakfast – 2025 Summer Program

Grant Amount: \$30,000

Expands Books & Breakfast's summer academic programs and connects students to enrichment camps in response to major budget cuts at District 65. The grant supports staffing to help families navigate complex enrollment processes and funds a new Summer Math Intensive alongside their existing literacy program.

City of Evanston – Financial Empowerment Center

Grant Amount: \$25,000 (Year 1 of 2-year grant)

Helps launch Evanston's Financial Empowerment Center, offering free, one-on-one financial counseling services to residents. In partnership with the YWCA, the center will integrate financial coaching into housing, employment, and social services to promote long-term financial stability and equity.

