LISC Chicago – Quality-of-Life Plan Engagement in 2020

Released January 13, 2020

This year LISC Chicago seeks to begin new work with up to two city of Chicago communities dedicated to leading continuous catalytic change. We are issuing a citywide call for groups of diverse community stakeholders to organize an outreach campaign and launch pilot projects in their neighborhoods. These projects will culminate in the creation of a Community Assets & Opportunities Report, and set the stage for communities demonstrating wide and deep engagement to continue on and complete a comprehensive Quality-of-Life Plan (QLP).

Eligible communities are those with a large low-income population or those having experienced population shifts due to displacement or immigration, with a focus on the South and West Sides. Rather than individual organizations, LISC is inviting advisory committees to apply as a group (designating a fiscal agent) to jointly complete the Community Assets & Opportunities Report in up to six months’ time. The advisory committee will work together to engage the broader community in documenting its history and assets, current opportunities and challenges, and anticipate shifts and trends in their larger environment. Selected applicants will participate in the Engagement Phase, which includes training, asset mapping and development of an outreach campaign. LISC will provide funding through the fiscal agent for a full-time community organizer to coordinate the advisory committees’ efforts and in addition will support community-designed pilot projects with a total pool of up to $30,000. During this process, LISC will work with communities to connect to citywide initiatives and partners, and provide broader technical assistance based on the assets and issues that surface.

Communities within the city of Chicago that have an existing LISC Quality-of-Life Plan are eligible to apply to renew their plan if the previous plan was published before 2015, as well as Chicago communities that have not completed a QLP in the past.

**Timeline overview for 2020 Quality-of-Life Plan Engagement Phase**

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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>January-March</td>
<td>LISC RFP released, advisory committee formalization and application</td>
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<tr>
<td>April-August</td>
<td>Asset mapping, outreach campaign, pilot projects (shorter period as applicable)</td>
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<td>By September</td>
<td>Community meeting, reflection and group assessment by advisory committee and LISC on next steps</td>
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**BACKGROUND:** Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Chicago is the local office of the nation’s leading community development investment organization. Together with residents and partners, we build resilient and inclusive communities that are great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families. We are an investor, capacity builder, convener and innovator. Our focus is on equitable development — ensuring that every neighborhood and its residents have the opportunity to benefit from economic transformation by building community wealth.

Guided by a goal to foster socially and economically vibrant neighborhoods with living-wage jobs, thriving local businesses, quality housing options and reliable transportation, we rely on the collective wisdom of those who know their neighborhoods best. Equally important, we seek to ensure that as neighborhoods improve, current residents are empowered to stay and contribute to the future of their communities.

**QUALITY-OF-LIFE PLANNING:** LISC supports neighborhood planning that builds local capacity for strong relationships, collaborative decision-making and action among community stakeholders to drive equitable change and investment into the neighborhood. Beginning with the New Communities Program (NCP), LISC embarked on a decade-long process to develop and implement comprehensive plans in 16 Chicago neighborhoods. NCP established the model for continual expansion of LISC’s Neighborhood Network, allowing additional communities to create or renew their own plans. LISC has directly supported and published 27 Quality-of-Life Plans (QLP) in Chicago neighborhoods, leveraging more than $1 billion in new community investment aligned with the visions laid out by each community.

QLPs are comprehensive visions focused on issues identified and chosen by local stakeholders after extensive community engagement and assessment of local assets specific to the community. Each plan is supported by a neighborhood-based convening agency that leads the planning process and typically continues the convening role into implementation. Beginning in 2020, and based on where past plans have been most successful in sustaining over time, LISC will support new Quality-of-Life Plans to create annual action plans. These annual action plans identify practical actions the group assembled in the community and its active outside partners can accomplish the in the coming year to move towards the QLP vision, and are intended to be updated each year to reflect new opportunities and evolving power of this active Quality-of-Life Plan coalition.

LISC’s role in implementation focuses on housing and economic development strategies that seek to improve equity in the community and create models for greater equity across the city, leveraging our role as a real estate and small business lender and work with Financial Opportunity Centers on individual/family wealth building. Our goal is to use the comprehensive vision and goals established by the community to focus on a few key community-led equitable development projects. However, LISC seeks to actively build relationships between community stakeholders and organizations outside the community that can support community goals identified on other topics such as education, public safety, immigration or environment and open space.
RFP Criteria for Community Assets & Opportunity Report – Engagement Phase

ELIGIBLE NEIGHBORHOODS: Prospective applicants must represent a community that exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- Neighborhoods within the city of Chicago with a large population of low-income residents, or have been impacted by population shifts due to displacement or immigration – with a focus on the South and West Sides
- LISC Neighborhood Network neighborhoods, if the last Quality-of-Life Plan/update was published before 2015

HOW TO APPLY
Visit our website for a copy of this application: https://tinyurl.com/2020QLP

1. The fiscal agent designated by the Advisory Committee should submit answers to the questions below on behalf of the committee with required documents attached to the application (latest 990, W-9 from https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf, and 501(c)3 determination letter).
2. The Advisory Committee Commitment Letter (available at this link) signed by all members must be included in application.
3. Email the application, any questions or requests for clarification to ChicagoQLP2020@lisc.org.
4. The application closes Friday, March 13, 2020 at 11:59 pm.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:
Please answer the following questions in no more than three (3) pages total, not including the commitment letter.

1. Advisory Committee: Please provide a list of advisory committee members and role of each (e.g. resident, non-profit, business/support, government) and area of expertise (e.g. housing, public safety, mental health) if applicable. How has this group has collaborated in recent years, and which members have been part of those collaborations? Please note that all members must sign the commitment letter form provided below.
2. Community Opportunity: What is the geographic area of Chicago you are targeting, and why this area now? What are the opportunities that a Quality-of-Life Plan would help leverage (e.g. investments happening or challenges to the community)? When did or will those things happen?
3. Community Collaboration: Please provide a brief three-year history of community collaborations that any of the advisory committee members have been a part of, whether wholly in the neighborhood or part of larger outside initiatives. Collaborations may include a wide range of group efforts, such as coalitions, networks, initiatives, partnerships, etc., and do not need to have included all members of the advisory committee – just one or more.
   a. Please list other key members of these collaborations.
   b. Briefly describe what these collaborations have achieved in the last three years and what challenges they have faced.
c. What other projects/efforts are currently ongoing in your community that advisory committee members may not be a part of, and how do you see the Engagement Phase of this project helping to connect/engage those efforts?

4. **Resident Engagement:** How have your advisory committee members engaged residents over the last three years, including approximately how many residents were engaged altogether?
   a. How do you see this opportunity deepening your resident engagement?

5. **Fiscal Agent:** What organization will serve as fiscal agent during the development of the Community Assets & Opportunity Report? Please confirm that they meet the criteria contained in LISC and HUD requirements – see FAQ.
   a. What past projects or work demonstrates the fiscal agent’s capacity to complete this project successfully?
   b. What staff will be the point/lead in this effort?

**PROPOSALS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THE FOLLOWING:**

- Number/strength of examples of diverse partnerships across sectors among the advisory committee members, along with complexity and success of projects/initiatives these partnerships have taken on. **Please note that communities submitting multiple applications are unlikely to be selected.**

- Demonstration of both a clear opportunity for the community and capacity for the advisory committee to leverage opportunity as a catalyst for community growth/renewal.

- Strength of existing cross-sector collaborations in the community including diverse expertise that can leverage local assets, opportunities and challenges.

- Residents are deeply and widely engaged in broad community efforts.

- Fiscal agent and staff must exhibit evidence of past program management and strong financial management. (Note fiscal agent must submit latest 990, related audits, and 501(c)(3) status letter from the IRS.)

LISC acknowledges that most applications may not meet all of these criteria, and we hope that the QLP process can help build capacity in one or more. Successful applications will demonstrate strength on at least two to three of the criteria above, and must identify a qualified fiscal agent.

**Each member must sign the attached Advisory Committee Commitment Letter. Please use this link to download the Advisory Committee Commitment Letter to sign and edit. Send this letter back via the ChicagoQLP2020@lisc.org email along with the application.**
Frequently Asked Questions

When will we be notified if our advisory committee has been chosen?

April 1, 2020

What are LISC’s goals for Quality-of-Life Plans (QLPs)?

LISC sees community planning as more than generating good projects and ideas – although these are important. Quality-of-Life Plans (QLPs) seek to establish or strengthen community-wide processes that arrive at, own and adapt the best ideas and projects for a community through the active and ongoing participation of a diverse group of local stakeholders in the community. Research has shown these are community processes with:

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<tr>
<th>1. Aligned Vision</th>
<th>2. Constant Engagement</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Long term vision and outcomes are clear, actionable &amp; regularly referenced</td>
<td>• Open invitation and clear path to engage for all people and institutions</td>
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<td>• Responsive actions and meetings build on the last &amp; incorporate current reality</td>
<td>• Shared leadership prioritizing listening and learning over existing power</td>
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<td>• Responsibility is shared but accountability is maintained</td>
<td>• Competing interests balanced transparently and respectfully</td>
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<td>• Actions seek to change systems and structures that promote inequity</td>
<td>• Acting, not waiting</td>
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<td>• Local expertise engaged and grown</td>
<td>• Tracking success</td>
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<td>• Strong citywide relationships with experts and resources</td>
<td>• Results-based adaptation</td>
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<th>5. Led by a Convening Agency who</th>
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<td>• Owns community goals and serves as a first point of contact</td>
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<td>• Is organizationally sustainable so that it will be able to track and consistently communicate status over time and drive future updates or adaptation</td>
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<td>• Has trusting/reciprocal relationships within and beyond the community, including with LISC</td>
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What happens during the Engagement Phase?

The Engagement Phase begins with training and technical assistance by LISC to lead an asset mapping exercise for the designated area. The advisory committee and LISC will together plan an outreach campaign to increase and sustain public engagement around current assets and opportunities in the
community, with benchmarks for what success looks like to potentially move on to a Quality-of-Life Plan. With the leadership and support of the community organizer working on behalf of the advisory committee through its designated fiscal agent, the committee and other local stakeholders will undertake a wide range of 1-1 and group outreach to key stakeholders in the community they identify over the course of up to six months. As the outreach unfolds and key issues or opportunities are identified, LISC will use its citywide network and relationships to help broker introductions to resources and partners who can potentially join in on specific topics. After a few months of outreach, the advisory committee will identify 1-3 early action projects to begin, using up to $30,000 from LISC as seed funding. The Engagement Phase will conclude by September with the publishing of the Community Assets and Opportunities Report at a community meeting and online by LISC. LISC will lead a reflection and group assessment with the advisory committee on whether benchmarks were met and any next steps.

**Our community has completed several recent studies and/or strategic planning exercises, do we have to go through asset mapping and start from scratch?**

Bringing past studies and other plans are welcomed as a foundation for communities to engage and build on. The legacy of LISC Chicago Quality-of-Life Plans provides a unique collaborative experience and overall comprehensive planning process. As long as benchmarks have been successfully met, the advisory committee is welcome to complete each phase more quickly, based on an agreement with LISC before the Engagement Phase begins.

**My community isn't defined by just one community area, we would like to cover more. OR We would like to focus on a corridor/street in the community and not the entire community, can we apply?**

LISC will not define community plan areas. Boundaries of the community should be agreed by the advisory committee and located within the potential planning location. However, the goals highlighted in the application should be rational and sustainable in engaging more coverage area during this process. Successful QLP processes have typically actively engaged between 3/4% and 1% of the population in the community targeted, which often is between 500 and 1000 people. Larger target areas require greater engagement – this can be difficult but LISC welcomes communities with strategies to achieve it. The advisory committee should agree on a target area that will achieve impact but be feasible to reasonably engage. **Note: the target area must be in the city of Chicago, but for neighborhoods near the city border, could potentially include adjacent portions of other municipalities if the advisory committee deems appropriate.**
We just saw this application but we don’t have a full advisory committee that meets LISC’s requirements, what should we do?

Not a problem – LISC assumes that advisory committees are unlikely to be formed and active in all cases. The goal is to help spur energy around community visioning and vitality. The creation of the advisory committee is to assist in creating a table for residents, community-based organizations, businesses and other diverse resources within the community. There are two months allocated for the advisory committee to form and apply. The application is due March 13, 2020 – our hope is this gives time to help confirm a group that meets the requirements for an advisory committee, as long as a core is already working together. LISC also plans to hold a workshop on the morning of January 31 to help define and provide some suggestions for helping to identify a strong advisory committee – see the website for more information and to register.

Who receives the full-time organizer and funding for pilot projects?

The advisory committee must agree on a qualified fiscal agent (see next question) to receive funding and staff the full-time community organizer at the time of the application in March 2020. As described in the commitment letter, the fiscal agent employs or contracts with the community organizer and holds and distributes funds from LISC for the pilot projects, but acts on behalf of the advisory committee as a whole.

What are the criteria for eligible fiscal agents or convening organizations?

Organizations eligible as fiscal agents in the Engagement Phase or to apply later as convening agencies include non-profit organizations registered as exempt from Federal Income Tax under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501c3 or 501c4, and have filed a current 990 form with the IRS. Applicant organizations must currently employ a full-time executive director and be current on financial audits to meet LISC government grant guidelines for HUD Section 4 funding. A 990 form may be accepted for the first year in lieu of audits, but audits must be in place after year one. If selected, fiscal agent organizations must provide current registration of no active disbarment or suspension on www.SAM.gov, DUNS number and articles of incorporation and bylaws.

What happens if we don’t meet the benchmarks set by the end of the Engagement Phase?

If an advisory committee does not achieve the benchmarks mutually agreed upon with LISC at the beginning of the Engagement Phase, this grant and project ends with the publishing of the Community Assets & Opportunities Report by LISC. LISC will provide the report in digital form to the advisory committee as a foundation for additional fundraising around specific projects, as well as supportive recommendations towards capacity and success for the future. The committee is welcome to re-apply at the next launch of Quality-of-Life Plans for an additional engagement period – in the past, communities have sometimes dedicated 12-24 of engagement before they had met the engagement they saw as necessary to launch a plan.
Beyond the Engagement Phase: how do we complete a Quality-of-Life Plan?

After the completion of the (up to) six month Engagement Phase, LISC will consider these neighborhoods for support establishing or renewing a Quality-of-Life Plan (QLP).

From LISC’s perspective, engagement is a key part of this readiness criteria – typically successful QLP processes have engaged between 3/4% and 1% of the population on the community targeted, usually between 500 and 1000 people. Community meetings are typically a large part of this, but 1-1 campaigns, existing meetings of local institutions and targeted youth engagement are also normally part of the process. The latter are particularly important for ensuring a core group committed to an ongoing role – typically 8-10 or more local institutions with varying expertise, depending on their capacity, are necessary to drive plan implementation.

LISC’s model also requires a convening agency to forge partnerships with other local organizations, residents and citywide agencies to address the neighborhood’s challenges and opportunities. Before proceeding with a new or renewed Quality-of-Life Plan vision and action plan process, LISC requires a consensus from the Advisory Committee proposing an eligible local convening agency to serve in this role for a short planning period and year one implementation. Through LISC, the convening agency will receive technical and financial assistance over the course of up to eighteen months – planning, implementation of the year one Action Plan and updating of the second annual Action Plan. LISC’s direct financial commitment ends at this point, so LISC encourages the year one Action Plan to include a strategy to continue this function going forward.

Convening Agency Responsibilities:

- Acts as “local intermediary,” managing relationships and building collaborations among organizations to achieve more results;
- Mobilizes broad-based constituency of residents and institutions;
- Convenes and facilitates community meetings and supports issue area working groups and subcommittees;
- Monitors local progress on a community-driven plan and promotes tangible results by all participants holding each other accountable;
- Leverages new resources locally;
- Engages in program assessment and evaluation and completes annual LISC-administered network survey/focus group;
- Participates in LISC meetings, workshops and initiatives as appropriate; and
- Provides documentation and reporting on plan and progress.

Questions LISC asks when considering a new QLP convening agency:

Organizational Sustainability
- Does the organization have a clear mission, vision and values?
- Is there a dedicated person/consultant engaged to manage fiscal data?
• Is the organization up to date with filing their 990?
• Has the organization had a recent audit and does it show stable finances?
• Is the Executive Director a full time staff member?
• Do the Board and Staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities?

Community Engagement
• Is the organization seen as a leader in the community?
• Is the organization addressing systemic inequities in the community outside of their regular programs?
• Is the organization involved in major issues that are being addressed in the community?
• Is the organization currently convening a group of community stakeholders?
• Is the organization aware of the broader issues/challenges/concerns of residents within the community?
• Does the organization use communication tools to share information?
• Does the organization provide outreach to the community? If so, what mechanisms are used?
• Has the organization facilitated any community events or workshops?
• How does the organization manage community tensions?
• Does the organization have a clear vision of how a QLP would create greater impact through strengthened relationships?
• Has the organization previously completed a Quality of Life Plan?
• Does the organization network well and collaborate with other organizations?
• Will key stakeholders support leadership from this organization for QLP Planning and Implementation?
• Do other partners describe the organization networking and collaborating well?

External Collaboration
• Is the organization connected to external networks?
• Were those external connections formed through the organization or another entity?
• Are other funders engaged in the work of the organization?
• Does the organization participate in any other programs with the city, county or state?
• Does the organization participate in any grassroots collaboratives beyond the neighborhood?
• Is the organization open to collaborating with outside volunteers and organizations?