

WEST SIDE UNITED: Building Blocks to Better Health

What is West Side United?

West Side United (WSU) is an ambitious health equity effort by six hospitals (AMITA Health, Cook County Health, Lurie Children's, Rush, Sinai Health, UI Health) working to reduce life expectancy gaps of up to 16 years between Chicago's downtown and 10 West Side neighborhoods by 2030. WSU seeks to improve neighborhood health by addressing inequality in healthcare, education, economic vitality and the physical environment using a cross-sector, place-based strategy. Partners include healthcare providers, community organizations, residents, the faith-based community, business, government and others working together to coordinate investments and share outcomes. Visit <http://www.westsideunited.org/> for more details.

What is the West Side United Small Business Grant Pool and who is funding it?

WSU seeks to distribute \$500,000 to West Side small businesses who are creating jobs and wealth in their neighborhoods. These grants can supplement other capital that entrepreneurs are planning to invest in projects that will help them further strengthen their businesses. The grants will complement several other initiatives WSU has undertaken to address West Side inequality (refer to westsideunited.org for further details). JP Morgan Chase, Northern Trust, and West Side United are providing the funds. Accion Chicago is serving as the fiscal agent for the program.

Who is Accion Chicago?

Accion is a nonprofit organization that provides the coaching, capital, and connections small business owners need to create wealth and jobs throughout Illinois and Indiana. Visit www.accionchicago.org for more details.

How large are the grants?

Entrepreneurs can request between \$1,000 and \$30,000, and must articulate in their grant applications how they will use the funds to grow their business.

Who can apply for the grants?

The owners of small businesses located in 10 West Side Neighborhoods – Austin, Belmont Cragin, East Garfield Park, Humboldt Park, Lower West Side (Pilsen), Near Westside, North Lawndale, South Lawndale (Little Village), West Garfield Park and West Town – are eligible to apply. Startups are encouraged to apply.

How will the funding organizations decide which applications to fund?

The criteria that the evaluation committee will use include the following:

- Strength of the small business (measured by 2018 profit and revenue)
- Importance of the business to the surrounding community (evaluated based on the narrative provided in the grant application)
- Proposed use of the grant funds (evaluated based on the narrative provided in the grant application)

When are applications due, and when will the grant awards be announced?

Applications are due on October 31st and the grants will be announced by December 15th.

How can businesses apply, and who can answer my questions?

Small businesses from the west side are encouraged to apply via www.westsideunited.org/events. Paper copies will be available through Accion Chicago (135 N Kedzie Ave) as well as at the information sessions that will be listed on the web site. Applicants with questions should contact Rachael Wilson, West Side United Small Business Program Manager at info@westsideunited.org