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Together We Heal Creative Place (TWHCP) funds 47 artists and community-based organizations for medium- and large-scale creative placemaking projects in low- and moderate-income Chicago neighborhoods.

City of Chicago Unveils Microsite Highlighting 47 Transformative Creative Placemaking Grant Projects

Together We Heal Creative Place promotes racial healing and community development in Chicago neighborhoods

CHICAGO – Today, **Mayor Brandon Johnson**, [The City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events](#) (DCASE) and [Office of Equity and Racial Justice](#) (OERJ) proudly announce [a new microsite](#) (chicagocreativeplace.com) featuring 47 community-driven creative projects aimed at promoting racial healing and revitalizing neighborhoods. The platform, part of the [Together We Heal Creative Place](#) (TWHCP) cultural grant program funded by the American Rescue Plan Act as part of the Mayor’s Road to Recovery Plan, provides a comprehensive overview of the projects spread across Chicago’s north, south, east and west sides, including an

interactive map directing the public where to visit a calendar of events and resources for both artists and community members.

Launched in 2022, TWHCP is DCASE and OERJ's response to the urgent need for racial equity and community healing in neighborhoods historically affected by disinvestment and the COVID-19 pandemic. TWHCP is a resulting product of [OERJ's Together We Heal Framework](#) launched in 2022 and harnesses the practice of creative placemaking: *The confluence of arts, culture and community-guided design to transform public spaces into vibrant hubs of expression and connection.*

"I am proud that my administration is empowering community artists, leaders and organizations to address the racial, health and economic challenges that have long impacted our communities," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "Through art and transformative storytelling, we are reclaiming our narratives, and the origin stories about our individual and collective spaces, and envisioning a future filled with hope and opportunity for all Chicagoans."

Supported by a record \$5.8 million in funding, the 47 community-led projects are an intentional curation of performances, activations, public art and inclusive initiatives that promote healing, engage communities, beautify public spaces, build and/or renovate community spaces, and drive economic growth and celebrate local cultural richness.

"This citywide investment in intentional creative placemaking is crucial for nurturing cultural, social and economic vitality throughout neighborhoods," said **DCASE Commissioner Clinée Hedspeth**. "By integrating artistic and cultural efforts into community planning, we ensure all neighborhoods benefit from improved quality of life and increased opportunities for engagement and growth."

TWHCP gives grantees community agency by centering them as designers of spaces and engagements that serve as a solution to inequities in communities.

"Projects such as *unBlocked Englewood*, *Sankofa Story Garden*, and *South Shore Remembers* enable communities to reclaim control over their resources and transform their surroundings to enhance quality of life," said **Dr. Meida McNeal, DCASE Senior Manager of Arts and Community Impact Investments**. "Creative placemaking helps foster connection, comprehension and healing, steering Chicago closer to our shared vision of a fairer and more cohesive city."

In 2023, the City increased its cultural grants by 25 percent from the previous year, allocating \$23.5 million, including \$10 million for public art, underscoring its commitment to enriching Chicago's arts scene. In addition to funding assistance, TWHCP grantees receive technical assistance from City agencies and selected Chicago-based consultants to design and implement their projects, provide support services, capacity building workshops, networking opportunities and more.

“These projects are for Chicago, by Chicago,” said **Dr. Sharon Moore, Program Manager and Author's Circle Facilitator of ConTextos**, a TWHCP grantee and nonprofit organization providing literary arts and educational programming to promote healing and dialogue through storytelling. “Together We Heal Creative Place allows us to reclaim our past, transform our present and shape an inclusive future for all Chicagoans.”

For more information and to stay updated on the Together We Heal Creative Place Program and citywide creative placemaking efforts, visit chicagocreativeplace.com. To connect via social and subscribe to DCASE’s newsletter to receive details on upcoming events and more, visit:

- [Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoDCASE/](https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoDCASE/)
- [Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/chicagodcase/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/chicagodcase/?hl=en)
- [X: https://twitter.com/chicagodcase](https://twitter.com/chicagodcase)
- [LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/chicagodcase](https://www.linkedin.com/company/chicagodcase)
- [YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/chicagodcase](https://www.youtube.com/chicagodcase)
- [Newsletter: https://cloud.citynews.chicago.gov/DCASE_signup](https://cloud.citynews.chicago.gov/DCASE_signup)
- [Together We Heal Impact Report: https://chicagoyearofhealing.org/#community](https://chicagoyearofhealing.org/#community)
- [OERJ Together We Heal: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/together-we-heal/home.html](https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/together-we-heal/home.html)

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About The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events:

The City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) supports artists and cultural organizations, invests in the creative economy, and expands access and participation in the arts throughout Chicago’s 77 neighborhoods. As a collaborative cultural presenter, arts funder, and advocate for creative workers, our programs and events serve Chicagoans and visitors of all ages and backgrounds, downtown and in diverse communities across our city — to strengthen and celebrate Chicago. DCASE produces some of the city’s most iconic festivals, markets, events, and exhibitions at the Chicago Cultural Center, Millennium Park, and in communities across the city — serving a local and global audience of 25 million people. The Department offers cultural grants and resources, manages public art, supports TV and film production and other creative industries, and permits special events throughout Chicago. For details, visit [Chicago.gov/DCASE](https://chicago.gov/DCASE) and [stay connected via our newsletters and social media](#).

About The Office of Equity and Racial Justice:

The Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ) seeks to advance institutional change that results in an equitable transformation of how we do business across the City of Chicago enterprise. This includes the City’s service delivery, resource distribution, policy creation, and decision-making. OERJ will do this by supporting City departments in normalizing concepts of racial

equity, organizing staff to work together for transformational change, and operationalizing new practices, policies, and procedures that result in more fair and just outcomes. Visit [Chicago.gov/equity](https://chicago.gov/equity).