



HEALING ARTS CHICAGO – CALL FOR ARTISTS

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Wednesday, October 1, 2025 at 5 PM CT

Click [here](https://www.cybergrants.com/dccase/2025HealingArtsChicago) to submit your application through CyberGrants.

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INTRODUCTION

[Healing Arts Chicago](#) (HAC) is a program of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) in partnership with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and City Colleges of Chicago. The program offers free arts services to support mental health and wellness at the City of Chicago's Mental Health Centers throughout the year. It positions the healing arts as a vital, community-centered tool in substance use recovery, harm reduction, and mental health.

The program explores career pathways for artists centered in healing modalities and trauma-informed care through training, certification, and artist apprenticeships. Selected artists will be trained as community health workers to offer creative wellness strategies to clients served at the City's seven mental health clinics, as well as to provide arts services in community contexts, leading outreach and engagement activities consistent with those provided by other CDPH community health workers. CDPH mental health clinic sites include:

- Englewood West 63rd Street Health Hub
- Bronzeville East 43rd Street Health Hub
- Greater Lawn West 55th Street Health Hub
- Lawndale South Western Avenue Health Clinic
- North Park North Pulaski Health Clinic
- Pilsen South Ashland Health Hub
- Roseland East 115th Street Health Hub

Priority will go to artists from and/or with existing community connections to the neighborhoods that the City's mental health clinics serve.

HAC supports continued recovery from the social, economic, and health impacts of the pandemic by creating job opportunities for creative workers, integrating the arts into the healthcare delivery system, and promoting overall community health and wellness using arts focused strategies. This program builds partnerships between city agencies, community health centers, local artists, and communities.

Arts-Focused Community Health Worker Training Program at City Colleges

As part of the apprenticeship, selected artists will participate in the Malcolm X College Community Health Worker (CHW) Program, which educates students to enter the field as knowledgeable and culturally competent CHWs. The program seeks to equip graduates with the skills to provide compassionate and holistic care to facilitate improved health outcomes for community residents. In partnership with HRSA's Opioid-Impacted Scholarship Program, students will receive scholarships for tuition, books, and stipends throughout their time in the CHW program. This is in addition to the compensation provided as part of the contract with DCASE.

This program supports their apprenticeship experience and also includes Mental Health First Aid certification training, overdose prevention training, and monthly check-ins with fellow OIFSP scholars to discuss behavioral health career pathways. Additional one-day and limited, intensive training may also be offered. The curriculum will prepare certificate seekers to serve as a liaison between the healthcare system and the community with a focus on community and arts centered techniques. The apprenticeship model provides an investment in student success and the development of real-world skills through on-the-job training. In addition to a livable wage and access to a high demand career, benefits include mentoring, coaching support, and quality instruction.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Required courses are taken over the year alongside field placement.

- Community and Public Health
- Introduction to Community Health Work
- Community Health Worker Arts and Health
- Nutrition, Movement, and Health Basics
- Mental Health Care
- Mental Health First Aid
- Field Placement

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Communicate with a diverse patient population using effective oral and written communication
- Understand the fundamentals of epidemiology
- Identify the role nutrition plays in health
- Understand common mental health issues
- Understand the foundations of arts in health as a field and practice
- Identify, understand, and practice creative wellness strategies in different arts modalities (visual, literary, performing arts/embodiment)

PROGRAM TIMELINE

- December/January 2026: After December enrollment, the CHW Program begins during Malcolm X's Spring term in January (initial coursework); Artists begin working with HAC Leadership team to understand placements, connect with CDPH clinicians, develop programming, and build outreach strategies
- Summer 2026: Artists move into CDPH sites and soft launch arts services/programming; Artists participate in the annual Arts x Health Summit (late summer 2026)
- Fall 2026: Artists continue second semester coursework and officially begin apprenticeships and arts services.
- Winter 2026: Artists complete CHW certification and Malcolm X coursework
- 2027: Artists lead full four, 8-10 week sessions of arts services in CDPH clinics and community contexts, in addition to participating in outreach activities and the annual Arts x Health Summit in late summer 2027

- o Session 1 – January to March
 - o Session 2 – April to June
 - o Session 3 – July to September
 - o Session 4 – October to December
- Artists will be contracted for approximately 924 hours of work per year, or 77 hours per month on average. Hours will be tracked across categories including educational requirements, clinic site time (arts services, administration, planning, coordination with Clinical Buddies and clinic staff and reporting), community outreach and engagement, and arts services delivered in community contexts.

PROGRAM GOALS & OUTCOMES

- Demonstrate how arts and creativity can be used as a community wellness strategy through quantitative and qualitative data
- Develop career pathways for creative workers concerned with public health, building a pipeline from training/certification to job placement
- Build connections between communities and neighborhood health centers aiming to bring improvement to client experiences and holistic care

APPRENTICESHIP AWARD

DCASE and CDPH will select up to ten (10) artists for this apprenticeship program. Each artist will be awarded \$70,000 totaling the artist's salary and benefits. The award is commensurate with City Colleges' requirements for full-time sponsored apprenticeships with local healthcare organizations and companies (2000 hours commitment at \$20 per hour minimum).

The artist cohort will represent a spectrum of artists with experience in healing modalities including those without certification in healthcare training and those with health-related certifications, licenses, and/or degrees.

Artists selected for the program will receive the following benefits in partnership with Malcolm X College's Opioid-Impacted Scholarship Program (OISFSP):

- Fully funded tuition package from City Colleges including tuition, books, and stipends
- Materials and supplies budget (\$5,000) to support their programming at mental health clinics

Malcolm X College OIFSP Scholarship proudly partners with City Colleges to support a scholarship for students in the Community Health Worker basic certificate program. As part of this program, the Malcolm X OIFSP Scholarship is responsible for the expenses of the tuition (\$2,448.00 in-district; \$6,448.00 out-of-district) covering the CHW coursework, book voucher (\$480.00) and Upass (\$70.00).

SCOPE OF WORK

Selected artists will be contracted from January 2026 to December 2027, for approximately 924 total hours per year, or 77 hours per month. During this time, they will be responsible for the following:

Year 1

- Completion of yearlong community health worker certification program
- Full-time apprenticeship placement at one of seven City mental health clinics, and delivery of arts services in community contexts with external program partners, as needed

- Support of marketing and community outreach and engagement efforts to increase awareness of the HAC program and services
- Participation in planning, research, evaluation, and execution of the annual Arts x Health Summit, which takes place in late summer each year
- Compliance with data collection, documentation, and reporting requirement

Year 2

- Full-time apprenticeship placement at one of seven City mental health clinics
 - Commitment to 15-20 contact hours weekly with clients using creative wellness strategies from visual arts, literary arts, and/or embodied/performing arts
 - Commitment to 10-15 hours per week for preparation, rotations outside of artists' primary clinic placements (i.e., short visiting artist series or popup workshop experiences), and administrative processes including data reporting, evaluation, outreach, planning with health/clinician team.
- Support of marketing and community outreach and engagement efforts to increase awareness of the HAC program and services
- Participation in planning, research, evaluation, and execution of the annual Arts x Health Summit
- Compliance with data collection, documentation, and reporting requirement
- Should an artist be interested in continuing their educational training and fulfill the requirements of the program, Malcolm X will offer the opportunity for HAC artists to continue on to become Certified Recovery Support Specialists (CRSS) or Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS)

Artists are not restricted from holding other forms of employment. However, artists must be available for the required number of training and apprenticeship hours including administrative duties (30-35 hours per week).

Bilingual artists are strongly encouraged to apply.

ARTIST DELIVERABLES

- Completion of community health worker certification
- Preparation and implementation of session activity plans with City clinicians as part of field placement
- Preparation and implementation of program marketing and community outreach to support individual artist programming and overall program visibility
- Meetings with clinic mentor/supervisor
- Attendance at monthly cohort and site team meetings during placement
- Collaborating with other artists in this cohort, the HAC leadership team, and the creative producer, artist will help create and produce culminating creative public event(s), including the Arts x Health Summit

ARTIST ELIGIBILITY

Artists must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for the program:

- Be a resident of the City of Chicago, Illinois with a valid street address (no PO boxes). A Driver's License, State I.D., or Chicago CityKey showing Chicago address must be provided. No other proof of Chicago residency will be accepted. Chicago must be the home base and geographic focus for applicants.
- Be at least 18 years old.

- Demonstrate evidence of a high school degree, GED, or comparable. You will be required to submit your high school transcript, or transcripts for coursework completed above the high school level.
- Be a US Citizen, providing either a birth certificate or a passport (this is a requirement of the educational funding sources).
- Include an artist resume/CV with at least two years of professional experience as an arts maker, educator, and/or facilitator.
- Have or be able to secure general liability insurance at the time of contracting.

To be considered for the apprenticeship program, artists must demonstrate the following expectations and commitments:

- At least two (2) years of professional arts experience with a focus on community integrated artistic creation, instruction, and/or facilitation.
- A developed creative practice in one or more creative disciplines such as visual arts, literary arts, and/or embodied/performing arts.
- An interest and/or background in health and/or healing modalities as a component of their creative practice.
- Availability to enroll at Malcolm X College in December 2025 and start community health worker certification training in January 2026.
- A commitment to the apprenticeship and completion of the community health worker certification from January – December 2026. *If an artist already has comparable health credentials, revised training arrangements may be made.*

HOW TO APPLY

To prepare your application, you will need:

- 1) Proof of Chicago residency with an ID that shows your current, physical address. Any of the following will be accepted:
 - Driver's License
 - State ID
 - Chicago CityKey
 - Note: any ID submitted must be a current, valid ID. Expired IDs will not be accepted.
- 2) Proof of U.S. Citizenship. Any of the following will be accepted:
 - Birth Certificate issued by a U.S. State, or by the U.S. Department of State
 - U.S. Passport
 - Certificate of Citizenship
 - Naturalization Certificate

This documentation is required by the funding source for the tuition reimbursement and educational stipends.

- 3) A maximum two (2) page letter of interest (PDF, 11 or 12 pt font) that clearly states:
 - Why you are interested in the art and health aspects of this apprenticeship program and the anticipated impact it could have on your future as a working artist.

- A description of your history as an artist centered in themes and/or modalities of healing, creative therapies, and/or trauma-informed strategies, either formally or informally.
 - Examples of your past projects and teaching/facilitation style using visual arts, literary arts, and/or embodied/performing arts.
 - Your approach to working with communities as an artist.
- 4) A two- (2) page resume or curriculum vitae (PDF) including evidence of high school degree, GED, or comparable.
 - 5) A curriculum sample that demonstrates your facilitation philosophy and practice. Lesson plans can be from classes, workshops, or other group-based events that feature group facilitation, processing, and/or learning. (PDF)
 - 6) Work samples (from the past 5 years) that reflect your artist approach with an emphasis on themes of health, trauma, healing, and/or community wellness and vibrancy. Please follow the guidelines for various artistic disciplines:
 - **Film & Media Arts, Performing Arts (Theater/Dance), Music:** Up to five minutes of video or sound recordings
 - **Literary Arts:** No more than 10 pages of literary samples
 - **Visual Arts/Design:** 8-10 Images
 - If your work is **Multi-Disciplinary**, you are welcome to submit a combination of work samples, being aware of these size, length, and number restrictions.
 - i. For example, you may submit a 2.5 minute video and five images, but you may not submit a maximum length (five minute) video and the maximum number (10) of images.
 - ii. Reviewers will be instructed not to review materials beyond the limits listed above.
 - CyberGrants includes space to provide an annotated list detailing your Work Samples. Please make sure to include the title, creative discipline, year completed, media and dimensions (if applicable), location (if site-specific), and client or commissioning entity for each corresponding artwork (if applicable).
 - CyberGrants also provides a space to provide details about accessing, reviewing work. If media links are submitted, please include one to two (1-2) sentences to describe the context and beginning/end timestamps for what you would like reviewers to focus on, and any necessary passwords.

We strongly recommend submitting your application earlier than the stated deadline. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted or reviewed.

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Applicants will be vetted by a committee of stakeholders, including representatives from DCASE, CDPH, artist and healthcare professionals, and community members with collective experience (professional or personal) spanning arts, culture, healthcare, public health, community building, and/or organizing. Finalists will be invited to interview and share a sample workshop based on a competitive review of the following:

- **Artistic Merit:** Artistic merit and professional qualifications demonstrated in a dynamic creative portfolio that includes evidence of a clear interest and/or experience in arts and healing and/or trauma informed strategies (10 points)
- **Quality of Applicant's Facilitation Approach:** The applicant's approach to group facilitation and/or creative learning experiences possesses rigor, curiosity, originality, intention, and values participation and collaboration. (10 points)
- **Presence of a Care Aesthetic:** The applicant thoughtfully demonstrates approaches to, and an interest in, weaving care and healing into their artistic practice as a response to trauma and violence. (5 points)
- **Potential Impact on Applicant:** The program's potential to positively impact the applicant's work/career. (5 points)
- **Public Benefit:** The applicant demonstrates potential to positively impact Chicago's residents and communities. (5 points)
- **Equity:** A commitment to equity and access, as demonstrated through past work and leadership. (5 points) Note: *The City of Chicago defines equity as both an outcome and a process that results in fair and just access to opportunity and resources that provide everyone the ability to thrive. Please visit the City of Chicago's Office of Equity and Racial Justice for more information about the City of Chicago's Equity Statement of Principles.*

TIMELINE

Event	Dates
Application Opens	Saturday, August 30, 2025
Virtual Information Session	Tuesday, September 9, noon - 1 p.m. Register to attend.
Virtual Information Session	Thursday, September 18, 6 - 7 p.m. Register to attend.
In-person Information Session Date TBD, please visit Chicago.gov/HealingArts for updates	Malcolm X College Date TBD, please visit Chicago.gov/HealingArts for updates.
Application Closes	Wednesday, October 1, 2025, at 5 p.m.
Finalist Interviews Applicants should hold these days in their calendars.	Tuesday, November 19, 2025, & Wednesday, November 20, 2025
Artists Selected, Malcolm X Enrollment	December 2025
Artist Apprenticeship and Coursework Begin	January 2026
Contract Term	January 2026 - December 2027

QUESTIONS

Please email CulturalResources@cityofchicago.org with questions. Kindly include "Healing Arts Chicago – Artist Application Question" and your name in the subject line.

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Healing Arts Chicago responds to ongoing public health and safety initiatives in Chicago, strengthening what trauma-informed and culturally responsive health services can look like.

Established by City Council Ordinance in October 2023, the Mental Health System Expansion (MHSE) Working Group proposed a framework and roadmap to expand behavioral and mental health clinical services, reimagine a citywide response to behavioral and mental health crises, and increase community awareness around available resources. On May 31, 2024, the *People's Vision for Mental and Behavioral Health: Mental Health System Expansion Working Group Report* was published. The MHSE Working Group's recommendations aim to achieve the following goals:

1. Expand mental health clinical services;
2. Improve and expand non-police response for behavioral and mental health crises; and,
3. Increase community awareness of available mental health resources.

Healing Arts Chicago is aligned with CDPH's efforts in support of the recommendations in the MHSE Working Group's report.

Healing Arts Chicago acknowledges "structural racism and other systems of oppression as the root causes of Chicago's gaping health inequities, including inequities based on gender and income." In alignment with the 2023 Citywide Plan's public health & safety goals, this effort works to demonstrate arts in health strategies that help to "reduce threats to physical and mental health, prioritize public health, and help to reduce inequities."

The original Healing Arts Chicago pilot was part of a national arts and health initiative, One Nation One Project. The National League of Cities (NLC) Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (IYEF) competitively selected nine sites to participate in a pilot peer learning cohort for its initiative, *Improving Community Health and Resilience through the Arts*. The Arts & Health pilot cohort included the City of Gainesville, Florida; the City of Chicago, Illinois; the Town of Utica, Mississippi; the City of Winston-Salem, North Carolina in partnership with Forsyth County; the City of Providence, Rhode Island; the City of Rhinelander, Wisconsin; Harlan County, Kentucky; the City of Edinburg, Texas; and Phillips County, Arkansas. Each site was led by local artists, community health workers, and municipal officials who worked together to create a large-scale, participatory project with health and recovery at the center of sustainable change. The initiative was carried out in partnership with [One Nation One Project \(ONOP\)](#), a national arts and wellness project with the goal to amplify the proven benefits that arts engagement has in fostering holistic recovery, well-being and social cohesion in communities.

Helpful links:

- [Healing Arts Chicago](#) – program homepage
- [Mental Health System Expansion Working Group](#) – information on the ordinance and report
- [One Nation One Project](#) – national arts & health wellness initiative
- [National League of Cities](#) – ONOP collaborating partner
- [Community Health Worker Certification Program](#) – Malcolm X College (City Colleges)
- [City Mental Health Centers](#) – information about the City's seven mental health clinics

- [Health Equity Zones](#) – six geographic areas across Chicago focused on improving community health led by regional and community organizations

About the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE):

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. [Chicago.gov/DCASE](https://www.chicago.gov/DCASE)

About the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH):

CDPH works with communities and partners to create an equitable, safe, resilient and Healthy Chicago. <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdph.html>

About City Colleges of Chicago (CCC):

City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) aims to put every student on the path to upward mobility. City Colleges of Chicago is the largest community college system in Illinois, with more than 3,800 faculty and staff serving 54,000 students annually at seven colleges and five satellite sites. Over more than one hundred years, City Colleges has transformed the lives of more than one million students through education. City Colleges of Chicago aims to ensure the success of every student and serve as an economic engine for the City of Chicago.