

**Application form:**

**Community Planning Program and**

**Local Technical Assistance Program**

**DEADLINE: Noon on Thursday, June 25, 2015**

This application form is online at [www.rtachicago.com/applications](http://www.rtachicago.com/applications). You may submit the form by email to applications@rtachicago.com.

Upon receipt of application, you will receive an e-mail verifying that your application has been received.

**1. Name of Applicant:**

Chicago Infrastructure Trust

**2. Main Contact for Application:**

|  |
| --- |
| Name: Charisse Conanan Johnson |
| Title: Director |
| Phone number: 312-809-8080 ext. 112  |
| Email: ccj@shapechicago.org |

**3. Type of Applicant (please check any that apply):**

\_\_\_\_ Local government

\_\_\_\_ Multijurisdictional group\* Please list the members of the group (including

 government and nongovernmental organizations):

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\_\_X\_\_ Nongovernmental organization\* Name of local government partner(s):

City of Chicago Department of Planning & Development

City of Chicago Department of Buildings

21st Ward Alderman, City of Chicago

6th Ward Alderman, City of Chicago

\*Applications submitted by multijurisdictional groups and nongovernmental organizations must include a letter indicating support from each relevant local government. See the FAQs for more information. Nongovernmental applicants are strongly encouraged to contact CMAP, RTA, or CCDPH prior to submitting their application to discuss their project and the demonstration of local support.

**4. Project Type (please check any that apply):**

Please check all statements below that describe characteristics of your project. (This will help us determine whether your project is best handled by CMAP, RTA, or CCDPH.)

\_X\_\_ My project involves preparation of a plan.

\_X\_\_ My project helps to implement a past plan.

\_X\_\_ My project links land use, transportation, and housing.

\_\_\_\_ My project has direct relevance to public transit and supports the use of the existing transit system.

\_\_\_\_ My project is a bicycle, pedestrian, or active transportation plan in suburban Cook County.

\_\_\_\_ My project is not directly related to transportation or land use, but implements GO TO 2040 in other ways.

**5. Local Match Requirement (please initial to indicate you are aware of the local match requirements):**

I am aware that a local match will be required for most projects, and understand that if my project is selected it is up to the project applicant to contribute a local match. (See the program guide for further details on local match requirements.)

\_X\_ Yes, I understand that applicants will be required to contribute a local match.

**6. Project Location:**

**Please provide a brief description of the location of your project. You may include a map if that helps to describe location, but this is not required. If your project helps to implement a past plan, please include a link to that plan.**

Phase 1 of the project will take place in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood, specifically on Lowe Ave. between 77th and 76th streets.

Please see this [link to the CIT Housing plan](https://www.dropbox.com/s/vyrbfp9l0a87tbg/CIT_CMAP%20LTA%20application.pdf?dl=0), which includes long-term planning maps, Phase 1 maps of Auburn Gresham, and the associated demographics of the Auburn Gresham community.

Please see [this link to Phase 1 Site Specific Maps](https://www.dropbox.com/s/9zn5lgianhvc9bd/CIT%20%26%20DePaul%20Institute%20for%20Housing.pdf?dl=0) which have been created in partnership with the DePaul Institute of Housing. These maps detail the surrounding property composition, foreclosure accumulation, and method of property accumulation.

**7. Project Description:**

**Please tell us what you would like to do in your community, and what assistance is needed. If you have more than one idea, please submit a separate application for each project. Please be specific, but also brief (less than two pages per project idea)—we simply want to have a basic understanding of what you want to do. Program staff will follow-up with you if we need any additional information to fully understand your proposed project.**

The Chicago Infrastructure Trust’s Housing Initiative will create a self-sustaining neighborhood revitalization solution by developing new market-rate housing for Chicago’s underserved communities. Over the next 10 years, the Trust plans to build 1,000 “FIT (Finding Innovation Together) Homes” on vacant lots spread across the City of Chicago.

The Trust is seeking assistance to execute on its Housing Plan, as detailed in the above link. We would like to utilize the Homes for a Changing Region Toolkit. The toolkit will be extremely helpful in identifying characteristics of future populations as well as redevelopment analysis and future housing demand, which are critical components of any community redevelopment plan. The toolkit will be a robust analytical aid to our existing community engagement approach, especially in helping us answer the questions: Can existing residents afford to stay here in years to come and what is my community's capacity to accommodate future residents? We are also seeking additional funding to support the cost of our external partnerships and contractors.

The Trust will launch a cost-effective and innovative housing design-build competition in the summer of 2015. The Trust’s desire is to harness the best and brightest minds in the architectural, art, finance, construction, and real estate development community to propose housing designs that are innovative and cost-effective so that they can meet the housing market buying power in Chicago’s underserved communities. The Trust plans to restore the vacant lots to productive use using:

**• Innovative and cost-effective housing design, which will potentially include building some components of the home in a manufacturing facility**. While the realization of a fully operational manufacturing is 3-5 years away, the Trust has started analyzing the trade-offs of building some components off-site, and precision-built as opposed to on-site directly on the lot. Cost-effective housing design also means that the Trust must appeal for changes to the Chicago Building Code, zoning, permitting, and inspection requirements. In order to increase its chances of success, the Trust realizes that the creation of a manufacturing facility and a change in coding and zoning regulations will most likely happen in phases. The Trust believes that it can drive down the cost of a home to less than $130,000.

**• Selling or renting the homes at a digestible price point.** The Trust wants to create FIT homes for sale and for rent. Either way, the Trust believes that a housing resident should spend no more than $800 on its monthly housing cost (excluding utilities, taxes, maintenance, and/or insurance). In order to make the FIT Homes attainable, the Trust wants to partner with a mortgage lender to create a special package that entails a sub-3% interest rate and character-based underwriting standards related to employment and not FICO scores. The Trust believes that it will sell the FIT homes for more than $125,000.

**• Creating a financing-friendly environment for developers.** The Trust recognizes the need to help developers attain favorable terms to build a FIT Home. The Trust wants to partner with an established short-term construction lender or community development financial intermediary (CDFI) to develop a special financing package specifically for this project.

The Trust originally undertook its Housing Initiative in early 2014, responding to needs of a large underserved community - the 40,000 people on the Chicago Housing Authority’s affordable homes’ waiting list. The Trust also discovered that the City owned 15,000 vacant lots, predominantly concentrated on the West and South sides of Chicago. The Trust had a desire to address the housing shortage. With government subsidies and tax credits waning, however, the Trust concluded that any solution to this problem needed to have a self-sustaining funding component.

As a result, the Trust embarked on building a tax-credit free, non-subsidy reliant, sustainable solution for the neighborhoods with large clusters of vacant lots. Subsequently, the Trust expanded its purview of “underserved communities” to reflect the population of the community where there are clusters of vacant lots. On the South and West sides of Chicago, for example, the population is predominately low-to-moderate income. Furthermore, there are large populations of seniors, disabled persons, and veterans. Many families are also living with multiple generations under one roof, albeit from the recent grad to the eighty-year-old grandmother.

Now, the Trust wants to develop a market-based solution to fill in the vacancies with homes that meet the needs of the market where residents live. To this end, The Trust will build FIT (Finding Innovation Together) Homes on its vacant lots so that they will be livable and attainable for the communities in which they reside. By leading with a market-based housing solution, the Trust will help revitalize neighborhoods and also help address the job, healthcare, and cultural components that must complement any community revitalization strategy.

The Trust has secured home construction funding from Strides for Peace, a non-profit dedicated to reducing gun violence in Chicago, to execute on a proof-of-concept project to build two single-family houses in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood. With the Strides for Peace partnership, the Trust plans to use the proof-of-concept phase to evaluate the feasibility of its aforementioned plan. Strides for Peace’s Founder Maggie Baczkowski has also introduced the Trust to Father Pfleger and the St. Sabina community, who is an official Trust partner for the project. Father Pfleger is a key stakeholder in the Auburn Gresham community, and said that “one of the greatest things we need for stabilizing and continuing to build our community is attainable housing,” and is committed to the project’s success. In addition to Strides for Peace and St. Sabina, the Trust has also officially partnered with the Chicago Architectural Biennial, the American Institute of Architects, the Chicago Architectural Foundation, Clayco Corp, and Elevate Energy.

The Trust has met [with the following stakeholders](https://www.dropbox.com/s/u68s4zldvq17lg5/CIT%20Key%20Stakeholder%20Info.pdf?dl=0) for its housing project as it recognizes the importance of stakeholder input in successful planning and execution. The Trust will continue to obtain key stakeholder input from the City of Chicago, architectural firms, architectural schools, manufacturing facilities, developers, construction companies, financing companies, and the community at large to develop a holistic solution to neighborhood revitalization.

In summary, the Trust wants to use its funding to:

* Utilize the Homes for a Changing Region Toolkit, a powerful tool to aid our revitalization strategy.
* Provide the appropriate level of financial support for external contractors and partnerships so that it can execute on the plan.
* Engage the community in a thoughtful and strategic way. The Trust has already secured a commitment from Adelheid Meyers, professor at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, to execute on a community engagement strategy post the design-build competition.
* Evaluate the feasibility of a manufacturing plant, which will allow homes to be built and jobs to be created in the community.

The Trust has already received a letter of support from [Alderman Howard Brookings, 21st Ward – Auburn Gresham](https://www.dropbox.com/s/6te1pwo7ff85rr5/Letter%20of%20Support_Alderman%20Brookings.pdf?dl=0) and is seeking a letter of support from the 6th Ward Alderman and the Department of Buildings. We approached the Department of Planning and Development for a letter of support and they informed us that they are not providing letters of support to individual entities for this CMAP grant given the inefficiencies that it causes to their operations; they are more than willing to speak of their support of us to any CMAP entity.