



WHOLE



PHILANTHROPY:



CONSCIOUSNESS



+



CONNECTEDNESS

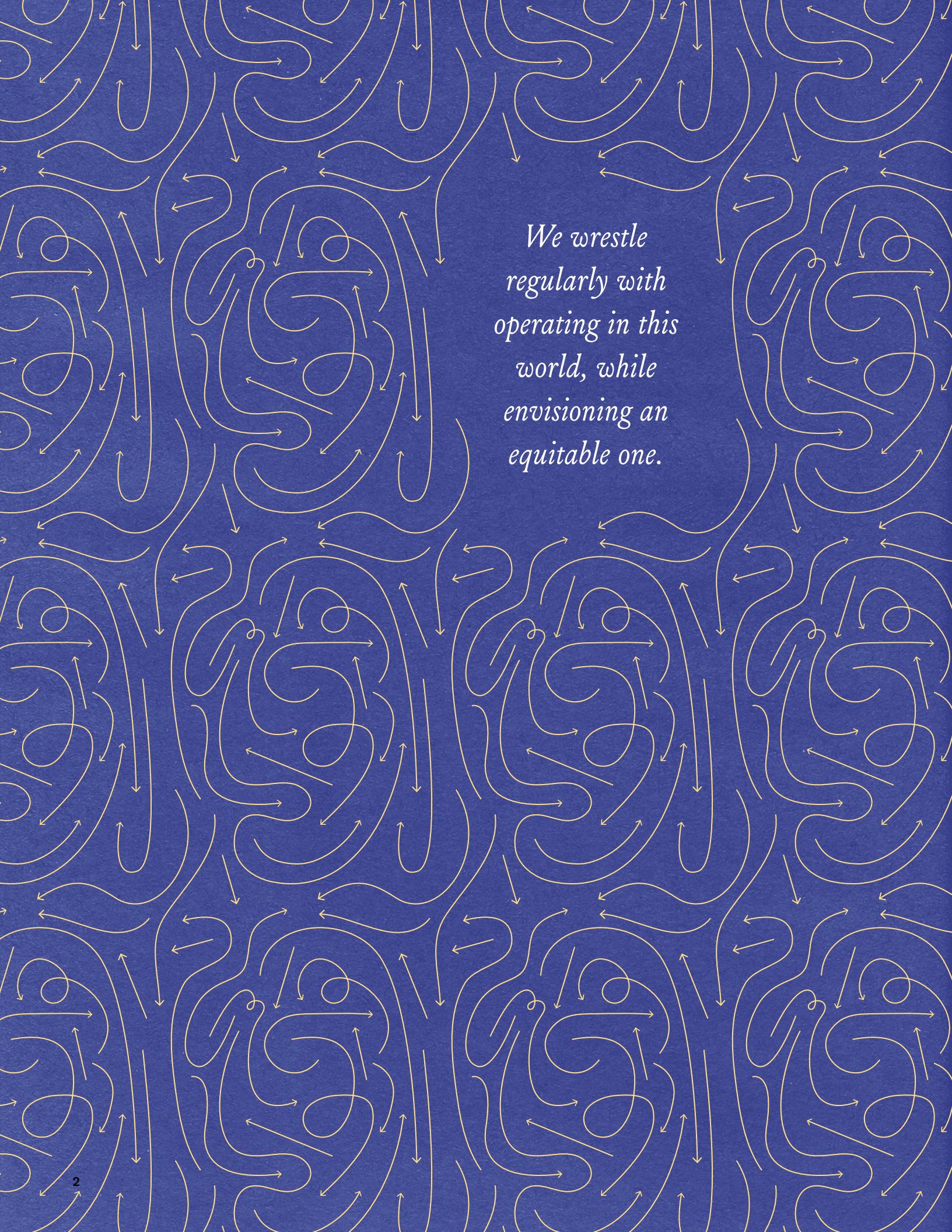


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WITH, NOT FOR

**CHICAGO
BEYOND** ➔



*We wrestle
regularly with
operating in this
world, while
envisioning an
equitable one.*

Restoring the philanthropic sector's promise of equitable social change requires radically reorienting philanthropy around a mission and practice of justice.

WHOLE PHILANTHROPY is our approach to operationalizing this transformation. By honoring the contexts in which our work takes place and the human dignity and value of the people we work with, we hope to build a deep foundation of trust and solidarity with our partners to achieve our mutual aspirations for Chicago's young people.

We hope this approach allows us to work more productively — and joyfully — with our partners in our joint pursuit of freedom.

CONTEXT

Our North Star is freedom, which requires liberatory consciousness to show up in this work in ways that are righteous and true for the communities we serve. Like many in philanthropy, we hold ourselves accountable for taking actions that exemplify our beliefs and working to construct viable pathways on that road toward freedom, specifically for Black and Brown people.

We recognize that all too often philanthropy falls short in constructing those pathways. Despite decades of “defining the problem” and implementing “solutions,” we are left with minimal long-lasting results. It’s tempting to attribute these failures to societal forces, especially given the growing awareness of how structural racism and inequality shape and distort young people’s lives. But as [critiques of philanthropy](#) underscore, a sector grounded in charity rather than justice is itself a party to those forces. Traditional institutional philanthropy exacerbates the inequities it seeks to alleviate by operating in a way that draws sharp lines between givers and receivers, haves and have nots, appraisers and the appraised.

At Chicago Beyond we believe there is a practical alternative to traditional institutional philanthropy that can invigorate the sector’s ability to create this deep change. This approach requires shedding practices typical of charities and setting freedom as our North Star.

The process, which we call Whole Philanthropy, is an expression of our founding commitment to do what is needed for Chicago's young people, and a product of our intensive engagement with the ecosystem of people, organizations, and communities that work together to help young people thrive. As an approach to funding, Whole Philanthropy is re-centering humanness. It is about doing away with the false dichotomy of "us and them." It's about recognizing that we are in this together, fighting for and envisioning true freedom for all. It requires interacting with our partners,* not in a paternalistic way, but as equals. Our model forges deep connection with our partners, seeks to rebuild ownership among those we serve, and unlock the abundance of collective and often untapped resources among stakeholders.

As an antidote to the typical philanthropic power dynamic, Whole Philanthropy is grounded in justice. Justice is not just an abstract state of liberation that exists "out there." We enact justice every day: in each

encounter with others, through every relationship we build, with every plan we make – our actions can restore or harm people and communities. Centering justice in this way challenges us as funders to fundamentally change our assumptions and actions.

Whole Philanthropy is by no means the answer to the systemic problems that undergird philanthropy. We wrestle regularly with operating in this world, while envisioning an equitable one. Whole Philanthropy is an intentional practice of doing the best we can at each turn, with a fierce commitment to adapting and learning. At Chicago Beyond, making philanthropy whole is an ongoing journey – it is the orientation to how we approach everything we do. We are sharing now so that partners, our peers, and others in our community can continue to challenge us and hold us accountable to this **orientation**, so we can continue to do better for our young people, and so we collectively can create the impact we wish to see. We must steady our feet persevering on this new terrain.

*Chicago Beyond refers to our investment recipients as "partners," not "grantees."

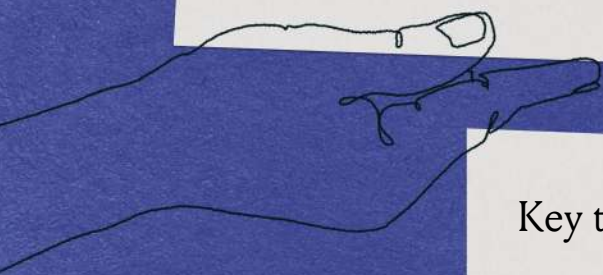


WHY ORIENTATION?

The instinctual way of working is attempting to make the world better by focusing on changing things external to us.

For greater and holistic impact, we need to instead focus on examining and modifying our orientation to this work.

We must see ourselves as key actors with power in the systems we are working in. Actors that can ultimately upend and shift the very nature of system.



Key to this is recognizing...

WHEN WE CHANGE
WHAT WE
NOTICE,
WE CHANGE
HOW
WE SEE,
WE CHANGE
WHAT
WE DO.

THIS IS OUR ORIENTATION.

One that we strive to apply
to everything we do...

CONSCIOUSNESS

CONNECTEDNESS

+

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WITH, ~~NOT FOR~~



Consciousness

Requires noticing and examining the perceptions, assumptions, and dynamics that inform our individual and organizational beliefs and practices; Being conscious requires us to see differently and bring awareness to our own biases and assumptions as well as our interconnectedness.

Connectedness

Requires engaging with *all* individuals and communities as full and complete, deserving of respect and engagement, as *humans*.



With, Not For

Results in us standing in solidarity with our partners.

How does this
orientation show
up in our work?

We try to apply
this orientation in
all that we do.

We share two examples here...

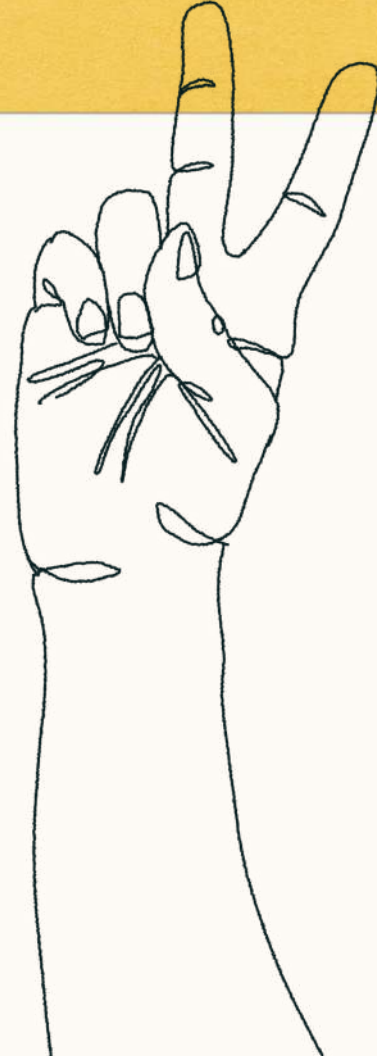
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**HOW WE
MEASURE
IMPACT**



2

**HOW WE
PARTNER**





HOW WE MEASURE IMPACT

OUR

IMPACT

PHILOSOPHY

At Chicago Beyond, one of the key goals for measuring the impact of our investments¹ is our ability to hold ourselves accountable for our actions – for us to be conscious of the consequences of our actions. It also allows us to learn as an organization and shape our future strategy.

1. Refers to investment of dollars, team time, and other intangible resources in service of our mission

THE **BIG IMPACT** QUESTION

“How, and to what degree, have our actions created the conditions so that all young people, regardless of their zip code, have the opportunity to achieve their fullest human potential?”



OUR

IMPACT

PHILOSOPHY

PRINCIPLES

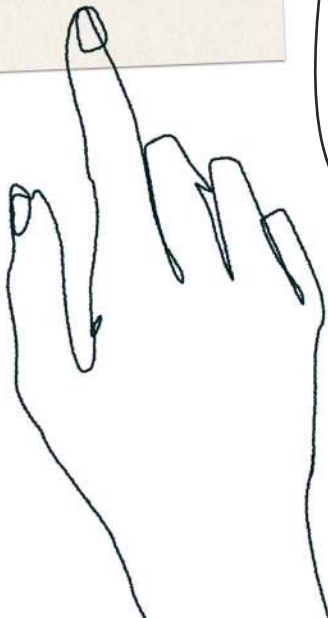
**HOW WE SHOULD
MEASURE IMPACT**

1
Prioritize what's important,
instead of searching for the
perfect answer

2
Focus on the key questions
to answer over the easy
metrics to measure

3
Center voices closest
to the work

These principles articulate
how we aspire to measure
impact and what we
believe is important



WHAT WE SHOULD MEASURE

4 Our role, in the context of an ecosystem of actors and historical conditions

5 Both intended outcomes and unintended consequences

6 The messy and complex

AND ALSO

7 This is imperfect – stay flexible and adapt

THE

DETAILS

BEHIND

OUR

IMPACT

PHILOSOPHY

How We Should Measure Impact

I

**PRIORITIZE WHAT'S
IMPORTANT, INSTEAD OF
SEARCHING FOR THE
PERFECT ANSWER**

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE....

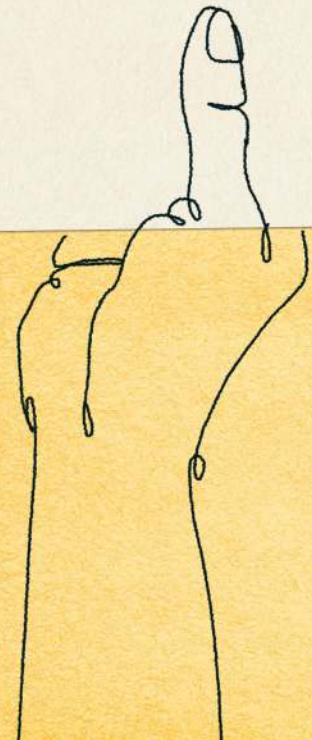
This work is incredibly urgent – lives are literally at stake

INSTEAD OF...

Optimizing for the most comprehensive impact measurement

WE TRY TO...

Prioritize sources of information that will enable us to learn and move quickly in response





2

FOCUS ON THE KEY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER OVER THE EASY METRICS TO MEASURE

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE....

The most important insights are not always easily measurable

INSTEAD OF...

Starting with the measures that are easy to count (or countable at all)

WE TRY TO...

Begin with the questions that could show us how well we are serving young people, then attempt to answer them with the data available (stories, signals, numbers, etc.)

3

CENTER VOICES CLOSEST TO THE WORK

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE....

Young people should be at the center of everything we do

INSTEAD OF...

Only using our own perspectives and third-party observers such as researchers

WE TRY TO...

Find authentic ways to center the perspective of young people and the people that work closest to them, such as our partners

What We Should Measure

4 OUR ROLE, IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ECOSYSTEM OF ACTORS AND HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE....

In assessing impact, we, not our partners, should be the “object of learning” (i.e., the ones being evaluated)

INSTEAD OF...

Summing the impact of the work of our partners or assessing “partner performance” as our own impact

WE TRY TO...

Understand how our actions contribute to the impact we notice, in the context of other actors

5 BOTH INTENDED OUTCOMES AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE....

Positive intent does not automatically equal impact that meaningfully helps

INSTEAD OF...

Only considering positive outcomes

WE TRY TO...

Consider the unintended consequences or costs of our actions (e.g., the cost, in organizational time, for an early-stage organization to complete an investment proposal) and change our behavior as a result (e.g., co-creating investment proposals with potential partner organizations)



6 THE MESSY AND COMPLEX

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE....

Human beings and the environments we live in are extraordinarily complex

INSTEAD OF...

Synthesizing our impact into a few clean “key metrics”

WE TRY TO...

Consider the holistic, multi-dimensional impact of our investment, even if messy. Specifically, this means considering things like:

Non-financial investment

(such as through our time, network, platform, and physical space)

Less tangible outcomes

(such as changes in attitudes or orientation)

Ecosystem effect

(such as the impact of how our actions influence other actors)

Broad time horizons

(such as the 5- or 10-year consequence of a movement started today)

and Also

7 THIS IS IMPERFECT – STAY FLEXIBLE AND ADAPT

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE....

Rigid rules or templates can inhibit creative, “out of the box” opportunities

INSTEAD OF...

Assuming our framework for impact is perfectly comprehensive

WE TRY TO...

Consider ways to drive impact, beyond what may be captured in what we measure, evolving our framework for impact in the process



HOW WE PARTNER

OUR

PARTNERSHIP

MODEL

We offer partners multi-faceted support without judgment. We act from shared purpose, moving in response to our partners' individualized contexts, strengths and needs. We strive to create the conditions for greater freedom in the work.

This framework offers a conceptual idea of how we work in practice with our partners over the course of an investment. Although the components and timing of activities may differ based on partners' unique circumstances, all partnerships start by building **REAL RELATIONSHIPS CENTERED ON TRUST.**

Resources

We provide access to sustained transformative funding. Additional resources take various forms from a physical space to healing supports for front-line staff.

Growth Support

We provide thought partnership and support to grow—both what is imagined and capacity to act on it, rooted in the partner's vision. Sometimes, this takes the form of us acting adaptively in the ideation, design, and launch of new initiatives. We listen, we support imagining, and we help execute.

Connection

We build connective tissue by bridging connections across silos, convening, and speaking up truthfully.

Amplification

We help amplify partners' voices and visions, as we collectively advocate for more authentic narratives of our young people and communities.



Mutual Learning

We learn alongside the partner and wrestle with critical questions together. This both supports our adaptation and the partner's growth. It enables specificity and context to continually shape our understanding of the dynamics faced by individuals, communities, and systems, and our role in it.

We consider this a working model and remain open to modifying our approach to meet the needs of partners at a particular moment in time. We come together with a mutuality of purpose and with the expectation that we and our partners will be changed by the process.

Some examples of how our partnership model comes **to life**

REAL RELATIONSHIPS CENTERED ON TRUST

- Relationship begins to form even before investment, when a Chicago Beyond team member works closely with a potential partner to articulate its vision for a partnership, which often includes drafting a robust proposal to remove the burden of any paperwork for the organization
- Through working on various projects together over multiple years, building deeper relationships within partner organizations and with their stakeholders; Owning our missteps; Showing (not telling) that we continue to be there when it is hard, and changing tangibly from feedback
- Team members showing up in support of partners consistently over time, and without judgment (such as being present at meaningful moments, discussing fears for the community while helping weed a community garden, sharing a meal at the community Iftar)

RESOURCES

- Funding that is substantial relative to previous dollars but right-sized for potential, and supports to succeed with that funding, such as a multiyear \$1M financial investment in a partner that has less than \$30K annual operating budget, and support to build new financial processes now needed
- \$250K fund that is strategized, shaped and owned by community residents
- Chicago Beyond's Home for Social Innovation, physical space for partners to host events for their participants, hold team workshops, work and collaborate, etc.
- Funding to support an organization's multi-year learning collaboration with a similar organization in another city so they can both grow the impact of their work

GROWTH SUPPORT

- Responsive action. For example, during the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic, in response to calls from partners, building food infrastructure, supporting a new social enterprise to package, and coordinating trucking logistics to deliver through hyperlocal relationships with families thousands of boxes of food, diapers, and other basic necessities, which totaled \$250K each week
- With a partner, designing, funding, and learning from a new [safe housing concept](#), which was recognized by the *Chicago Tribune* [editorial board](#)
- Collaborating on a revenue strategy to enable a partner to sustain its growth post Chicago Beyond's investment
- In response to frontline staff's vicarious trauma and burnout, supporting organizational design to implement clinical support, peer supports, and new practices

CONNECTION

- Connecting hyperlocal and institutional voices so the action actually looks different, such as experiences of trauma and healing at individual schools and reshaping a district-wide approach
- Convening and inviting funders into concrete ways to move funds to resident-led efforts and impactful work outside of traditional nonprofit structures

AMPLIFICATION

- Narrative investments, such as the [Unpacking series](#), which reached over 100,000 people and bridges the personal to the systemic, unpacking the perpetuation of bias and discrimination that show up in racialized outcomes for communities of color today
- Speaking up when partners ask us to, and when harmful narratives are presented

MUTUAL LEARNING

- Through steps and missteps with partners, seeing the ways in which evidence gets in the way of the impact, resulting in changes in Chicago Beyond's approach, and resulting in the guidebook [Why Am I Always Being Researched?](#) used in 90+ countries and all 50 states
- Chicago Beyond's investing dashboard focuses as much on our action and impact as those of our partners; our efforts are accountable to where the dollars are actually going (for example, the % of Black-led, hyperlocal geographies), signals of trust, emergence and joy

A minimalist line-art illustration on a textured yellow background. Two hands are shown holding a white square. The hands are drawn with simple black outlines. A thin black line starts from the top right, loops around, and ends in an arrow pointing to the top of the white square. The white square contains the text 'CHICAGO BEYOND' in blue, with 'BEYOND' followed by a right-pointing arrow. Below this is the website address 'www.chicagobeyond.org' in a smaller, black font.

**CHICAGO
BEYOND** →

www.chicagobeyond.org