WIEBOLDT FOUNDATION
CAPACITY-BUILDING COHORT

The Chicago organizing community is faced with a daunting task. As we acknowledge nearly 2 years with COVID-19, we are also forced to acknowledge the physical and emotional impacts of structural violence on communities. Whether we’re talking about the steady stream of police misconduct inflicted on Black men and women; or the recent assaults and murder of Asian and Asian descendant residents; or the decimation of Native Americans on reservations as a result COVID-19 infection; or the inability of undocumented immigrants to receive life-saving health care as a result of their citizenship status; we’ve witnessed countless atrocities that have affected our collective psyche in a myriad of ways.

Nevertheless, the first responders in all of these occurrences have been community-based organizations that predominantly utilize direct action community organizing as its methodology to create change. There is a critical need for capacity-building support for these institutions, but also for the broader ecosystem in which they operate to create better overall sustainability and resilience.

The 2022 Wieboldt Foundation Capacity Building Initiative seeks to fill an unfortunate void that exists. Intensive capacity-building funds are hard to come by, yet essential to strengthen, stabilize and enhance the impact of community organizing nonprofits. In this regard, these entities would function like any business; better equipment, stronger skills, and streamlined operations contribute to an improved bottom line – measured here in overall impact rather than profit. Additionally, fostering collaboration among a cohort of community organizing groups is important to the sustainability of the ecosystem.

Eight to ten applicants will be accepted to join the inaugural cohort. As part of the application and criteria for selection, applicants will be expected to:

- Identify a specific campaign they want to advance through their participation in the cohort;
- Verify 3 consecutive years of existence as a base-building community organization;
- Confirm an organizing budget no greater than $500,000;
- Complete a self-assessment of various organizational capacities; and
- Commit at least 3 hours per month to the initiative from the executive director, lead organizer and leader/member for a 12-month period.

Once accepted into the cohort, the Wieboldt Foundation will review the self-assessment with each respective organization to determine the appropriate focus areas for training. Cohort members will be expected to participate in monthly 90-minute gatherings for information sharing and skill development. Separate sessions will be scheduled with individual coaches to target agreed-upon skill development. The topics for the monthly gatherings will be based upon the recurrent themes in the self-assessments conducted. A final assessment will be conducted at the end of the first 12-month period to determine areas of growth and/or decline.

Cohort members will be expected to select a partner from within the cohort to create 4-5 pairs. These pairs are meant to provide additional support to the members between sessions. The comradery that can develop between the cohort members in the pair and the entire cohort is meant to engender the solidarity that is needed to effectively carry-out systems-level transformation. Additionally, it strengthens the entire organizing ecosystem by strengthening the ties between the individual leaders, the organizational bodies, and the respective communities from which the people emerge.

In short measure, these areas are the life-blood of any base-building institution. Participatory democracy requires a level of proficiency that has to be developed. This initiative will serve as a major contributor to that responsibility. These organizations will be better equipped to transform our Society in ways that make a real difference in everyday people’s lives.
WIEBOLDT FOUNDATION
CAPACITY-BUILDING COHORT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

Organization___________________________________________________________
Address________________________________________City________State_______Zip________
Telephone________________________Website____________________________________

Please circle social media platforms utilized: Facebook | Twitter | YouTube | Instagram | Other _

Executive Director____________________________________Cell #________________________
Email address___________________________________________________________

Other Contact________________________________________Cell #________________________
Email address___________________________________________________________

Requested grant amount: $____________________ Last year’s grant amount $______________

Dates of current fiscal year__________________________________________

Current Fiscal Year Organizational Budget $________________________
Current Fiscal Year Community Organizing Budget $________________________
(only if a portion of total organizational budget)

Please provide a breakdown of revenue sources by percentage of total budget:

Local foundations/corporation  Federal government
National foundations/corporations  State government
Membership dues  City government
Fundraising events  County government
Direct Mail  Other

Most recently completed fiscal year total revenue $________________________
Most recently completed fiscal year total expenses $________________________

Number of full-time staff:_________; of this number, how many are organizers_________
Number of part-time staff:_________; of this number, how many are organizers_________

Please include the following documents with your application:
・ Current fiscal year (projected/proposed) organizational budget & organizing budget separately
・ Most recent balance sheet and income & expense statement
・ Independent, financial audit for most recently completed fiscal year (or balance sheet and income & expense statement if audit unavailable)
・ Copy of most recently filed Federal 990 tax form
・ Listing of current fiscal year revenue sources indicating whether committed, pending, or potential and the purpose of the funds (e.g., general operating, program/project, capacity building)
・ Board of Directors and staff listing
In a separate document, please answer the following questions.

1. Briefly describe your organization’s history, organizing efforts and goals. Include your mission statement. [150 words or less]

2. Identify and describe how “organizing” works in your organization; provide specific examples and accomplishments. Who and/or what determines the organizing campaign issues/priorities, goals, targets, tactics, etc.? Who within the organization works to move campaigns forward? [150 words or less]

3. Using a recent campaign your organization has led, describe how your organizing efforts lead to systems-change. Include the issue(s) addressed, target(s) identified, composition and size of the base involved, etc. [150 words or less]

4. Download the self-assessment and the self-assessment summary. Complete the summary, and include it as an attachment with your application.

5. From the self-assessment, please explain the rationale behind the responses provided. For example, if you measure your organization’s “leadership structure/accountability” to be at Level 3, explain why you believe Level 3 best captures your present status. [1-3 sentences per “capacity element”]

6. From the self-assessment, please identify the 3 “capacity elements” you’d most like to strengthen, and the 3 “capacity elements” where you believe your organization is the strongest and why.

7. Each organization has to commit to 3 representatives participating in the cohort. One representative has to be the executive leader meaning they have organizational decision-making power (executive director, president, chief executive officer, etc.). One representative has to be the person responsible for leading the organizing efforts (lead organizer, organizing director, senior organizer, etc.). One representative has to be a member/leader who is best-positioned to help build the capacity of the organization and is actively working on organizing campaigns. Please provide the names, titles, and contact information for these 3 individuals.

8. Cohort participants have to commit to a minimum of 3 hours per month. Are you able to make that commitment?

9. Organizations in the cohort receive a $25,000 technical assistance grant to assist with capacity-building efforts. Please outline how those funds will be utilized. [100 words or less]

10. Please provide the contact information for the person completing this application.

Send your application and all attachments to: vivien.tsou@wieboldt.org by 5pm on December 22, 2021 with “Capacity-building Cohort Application: Your Organization’s Name” in the subject line of the email.