



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

University of Chicago Announces Programs to Support South Side during COVID-19 Crisis

UChicago to provide meal preparation and delivery in alliance with the Greater Chicago Food Depository, bridge funding and rent relief for small businesses and nonprofits on the South Side

HYDE PARK, CHICAGO March 28, 2020 — The University of Chicago today announced the first stage of an effort to provide emergency support and address some of the immediate needs of local residents, businesses, and community-based nonprofits on the South Side as they navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. The program will launch on Monday, March 30.

Through [UChicago's Partnering for Community Impact](#) initiative, support will come through three main programs: preparing and delivering meals to South Side residents; supporting South Side businesses and their employees; and supporting South Side nonprofit organizations and the vulnerable populations they serve. The programs will help address the urgent food security needs on the South Side, as well as begin to bridge the financial and resource gap for local businesses and community-based nonprofits in this critical period before public and private sector assistance is fully mobilized.

These efforts, which reflect the University's deep institutional commitment to supporting the vitality and strength of Chicago and the South Side in particular, will provide at least 225,000 meals over the course of the next 10 weeks (a minimum of 3,000 meals per day) to South Side residents through use of the University's existing infrastructure and an investment of \$1 million in food through direct funding and philanthropy while providing \$1 million in direct funding support in the form of bridge grants to local small businesses and nonprofits as they fight to support their employees and clients and stay afloat during this unprecedented crisis.

"The University of Chicago has a deep commitment to the people of the South Side, and these new efforts build on this commitment at a time of dramatic challenge and uncertainty. By working in close coordination with local community organizations and a variety of partners in the nonprofit, private, philanthropic, and government sectors, we will help meet critical needs of the South Side communities of which we are a part," University President Robert J. Zimmer said.

"In response to the COVID-19 crisis, I commend the University of Chicago for its continued commitment to the South Side communities facing heightened insecurities at this critical time—both financially and from a public health perspective," Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot said. "Now is the time for all of Chicago's leading institutions to come together to work on behalf of our most vulnerable, and I'm pleased that the University is collaborating with the City's non-profits and aldermen, as well as providing financial assistance to community small businesses."

Details on key support areas:

Preparing and Delivering Meals to South Side Residents in Partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository

The University will use on-campus dining facilities to prepare meals that will be distributed in partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository to various locations within the University's nine-community footprint on the South Side (Douglas, Grand Boulevard, Greater Grand Crossing, Hyde Park, Kenwood, Oakland, South Shore, Washington Park, and Woodlawn). At least 3,000 breakfasts, lunches, and dinners will be provided seven days a week through June 12 (a minimum of 225,000 total meals), following strict public health and safety protocols regarding social distancing and sanitation.

The University and the Greater Chicago Food Depository, which is co-leading the city of Chicago's massive food assistance effort during the pandemic, will coordinate closely with the local aldermen and other local community partners to make sure residents are aware of the distribution locations where they can access the food and, starting on Monday, March 30, visit coronavirusupdates.uchicago.edu/community-support for a list of sites at which the meals prepared by the University will be distributed.

Residents of the South Side in need of food assistance should visit www.chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food/ for a complete list of Greater Chicago Food Depository distribution locations.

Supporting South Side Small Businesses and Their Employees

Across the South Side, small businesses are encountering acute challenges in the face of COVID-19. In response, the University will take the following steps to help them continue paying their employees and reopen their doors when the crisis subsides.

- *Independently owned and operated businesses not affiliated with the University within the University's nine-community footprint (Douglas, Grand Boulevard, Greater Grand Crossing, Hyde Park, Kenwood, Oakland, South Shore, Washington Park, and Woodlawn) are eligible to receive **up to \$7,500 to address immediate cash flow issues** through a grant program administered by the University's Office of Civic Engagement. This program will serve as a critical financial lifeline for these businesses as they prepare for the federal, state, and local grant and loan programs that are coming online.*
- *Independently owned and operated businesses within the University's nine-community footprint with a lease with the University or a University-controlled affiliate are eligible to receive **rent relief** as well as **up to \$7,500 in direct financial support** depending on the number of employees.*
- *The University's **Polsky Exchange startup hub will move upcoming small business workshops online and** is developing content tailored to the business' needs during this time. The workshops will be available for public access. The University is **exploring ways to expand the Exchange's Small Business Growth Program** and training student consultants to address business' recovery needs remotely.*

“While closing restaurant doors was necessary to keep everyone safe, our mayor and governor had to make the tough decisions for the greater good. The side effects of the closures have been financially devastating to those of us in the hospitality industry,” owner and executive chef Erick Williams of Hyde Park’s Virtue Restaurant and Bar said. “I am encouraged that we are all in this together. I commend the University of Chicago for its initiatives to help local employees make ends meet until promised and needed resources come available. Community is everything in times like these.”

On Monday, March 30, small businesses interested in learning more about the grant program should visit coronavirusupdates.uchicago.edu/community-support.

Support for South Side Nonprofit Organizations

In many neighborhoods, community-based nonprofits are the frontline human service providers for their community. The University’s [Community Programs Accelerator](#) (CPA), run by the Office of Civic Engagement, has provided capacity building resources to more than 150 South Side nonprofit organizations. To support these organizations, current CPA nonprofits, as well as CPA alumni, will be eligible to apply for the following support:

- *A bridge fund will help existing and former nonprofit members of the Community Programs Accelerator at the core, associates or special project levels **cover general operating costs or expenses associated with moving programming online with up to \$7,500 of assistance.***
- *Additional teams of UChicago **students will be trained and mobilized to act as 1-on-1 virtual consultants** for existing and former members in need of support.*

“This kind of support means we’ll be able to reach more of the vulnerable residents we serve with housing assistance, legal guidance, and employment and family services at a time when people are struggling to pay their immediate bills and are afraid of facing eviction,” Shammrie Brown, executive director of nonprofit The Chance Center in Greater Grand Crossing, said. “With the University’s help, we’ll be able to provide more food and other essentials to our community members, shift more of our direct service work online and otherwise adapt to this new reality in time to meet the expected rise in demand.”

The University’s COVID-19 community support initiative also includes a campaign to support local UChicago Medicine health care workers on the frontlines of confronting this crisis, as well as the patients and families who are affected. The **UChicago Medicine COVID-19 Response Funds** are covering costs for patient and family hardship support, technology to connect patients and families during visitor restrictions, hospital equipment and supplies, transportation, and other urgent needs.

The University will continue to prepare and adapt to help those in the community and city who need it most. For more information and updates visit coronavirusupdates.uchicago.edu/community-support

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