



Announcing the Obama Building Equity Fund

In the spring of 2017 the Obama family made a \$1 million gift to the Funder Alliance with instructions to use the funding to support a "generational shift" in Chicago's building trades workforce. The Obama family knew that under-representation of communities of color and women in building trades careers is a persistent problem, especially for Chicago's African-American community. They also firmly support career pathway and apprenticeship programs for young adults as proven solutions to workforce challenges.

In response to the gift and the guidance received with it, the Funder Alliance is creating the **Obama Building Equity Fund** and has designed philanthropic investment strategies to both meet the donor's wishes and advance CWFA objectives. After a planning period working with the Chicago Jobs Council, the Funder Alliance has settled on the core strategies for the Fund, and is releasing an RFP today as it shifts from planning to implementation.

The core strategies of the Obama Building Equity Fund will be:

Strategy 1: *Creation of a Barrier Reduction Fund* -Working with the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago, the Funder Alliance is creating a fund that eventually will be accessed by multiple partners and deployed to reduce discrete barriers to an individual's success in the building trades. For more about this strategy see the RFP released today, the Barrier Reduction Fund is meant to be integrated with the programs supported through the RFP.

Strategy 2: *Support for Building Trades Workforce Programs* - The planning period confirmed that programs that support individuals along their building trades career pathway can be highly effective. The chief purpose of the RFP released today is to enable the Fund to support those programs directly.

Strategy 3: *Organizing Buyers and Builders* - The Funder Alliance is committed to aligning investments with larger efforts to move the construction sector towards greater workforce equity. Organizing efforts for both construction buyers (public, private, institutional) and builders (contractors and sub-contractors) are in planning stages and the Funder Alliance is working with both.

Strategy 4: *Alignment with Chicagoland's Career Pathway System* - The Funder Alliance is doing a great deal already to [strengthen the Chicago region's Career Pathway System](#) and is committed to ensuring all Cook County young adults have the information, guidance and support they need to make their own best choice among multiple pathways to post-secondary success. A small portion of the Fund will be used to help ensure building trades pathways are well represented at the critical transition point between secondary and post-secondary systems.
