



**2021 DESIGN IMPACT GRANT PROGRAM NOMINATION PERIOD NOW OPEN**  
**Designing A Better Chicago's Initiative Recognizes and Supports Those Using Design for Civic Good**

**(Chicago, IL - January 2021)** If there was ever a time to recognize and support individuals and organizations using design for civic good, it's now. Designing a Better Chicago, a collaborative initiative organized and supported by NeoCon® and theMART, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), and the Design Museum of Chicago, is now accepting nominations for its second annual [Design Impact Grant Program](#). The 2021 initiative will provide \$25,000 in project-specific grants to individuals and organizations using design or design principles to directly address pressing issues in Chicago communities.

Launched in 2020, the Design Impact Grant shines a light on Chicago's extraordinary design legacy—the local talent, assets and community that have long supported civic good through design. Last year, Designing a Better Chicago was thrilled to offer this grant to two exceptional organizations—Chicago Mobile Makers and Maplewood Housing for the Visually Impaired. It also recognized seven additional projects for their outstanding work, ideas, and efforts in the Chicago community. The Design Impact Grant monies are generously funded by NeoCon and theMART.

Nominations are required for this invitation-only program and are due by midnight on **March 12, 2021**. Winners will be selected by the Advisory Committee in Summer 2021. Grant guidelines and a detailed timeline are available [here](#). Additional information about Designing a Better Chicago can be found at [designingabetterchicago.org](http://designingabetterchicago.org).

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**About NeoCon:** NeoCon is the world's leading platform and most important event for the commercial interiors industry, held each year at theMART in Chicago. Since launching in 1969, NeoCon has served as the annual gathering place for the commercial design world's manufacturers, dealers, architects, designers, end-users, design organizations and media. The three-day event showcases game-changing products and services from both leading companies and emerging talent—providing unparalleled access to the latest and most innovative solutions. A robust educational program of keynote presentations and CEU sessions offers world-class expertise and insight about today's most relevant topics as well as the future of commercial design. [www.neocon.com](http://www.neocon.com)

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**About theMART:** theMART (formerly The Merchandise Mart), located in the center of the sought-after River North submarket, is interwoven into the fabric of Chicago as an innovator in business, technology, culture, art, media and more. As the largest privately held commercial building in the United States, it is one of the world's leading commercial buildings, wholesale design centers and the preeminent international business location in Chicago. Encompassing 4.2 million gross square feet, theMART spans two city blocks, rises 25 stories, and is visited by an average of 30,000 people each business day and nearly 10 million people annually. Offering continuous innovation and creativity from leading manufacturers and design forward showrooms, theMART serves as the home to Chicago's most creative and technologically innovative companies.

**About the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events:** The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy. This includes fostering the development of Chicago's non-profit arts sector, independent working artists and for-profit arts businesses; providing a framework to guide the City's future cultural and economic growth, via the 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan; marketing the City's cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors.

**About Design Museum of Chicago:** A local, non-profit cultural institution with a gallery in the Loop, the Design Museum of Chicago strives to meet people where they are and make design accessible to everyone, facilitating conversations comprised of a variety of voices, backgrounds, and viewpoints. They believe that design is not just a single discipline or process, but rather a persistent element in our everyday experiences with the fundamental capacity to improve the human condition. Formerly the Chicago Design Museum, they create free and low-cost programming about a wide variety of topics, from architecture in Ireland to games in modern culture.

