

CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE CENTER

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National Endowment for the Humanities awards \$300,000 to the Chicago Architecture Center through NEH CARES

Major grant to increase access to the tenth annual Open House Chicago festival and support ongoing remote engagement programs for all ages

For immediate release June 23, 2020

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CHICAGO – The [Chicago Architecture Center](#) (CAC), under the leadership of [President and CEO Lynn J. Osmond](#), is honored to announce \$300,000 in support from the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) through the [NEH CARES](#) program, providing emergency funding to cultural nonprofits for a range of humanities activities across education, preservation and access, public programming, digital humanities and scholarly research. The NEH CARES grant will fund three distinct yet mutually supportive areas of CAC programming for the general public, accessible to all Chicagoans as well as design-interested people across the United States and around the globe.

“Over the past few months we have witnessed tremendous financial distress at cultural organizations across the country, which have been compelled to furlough staff, cancel programs, and reduce operations to make up for revenue shortfalls caused by the pandemic,” says [NEH Chairman Jon Parrish Peede](#). “The National Endowment for the Humanities is pleased to provide \$40 million to preserve thousands of jobs at museums, archives, historic sites, and colleges and universities that are vital to our nation’s cultural life and economy.”

Launched April 4, 2020, the organization’s ongoing series of [CAC Live](#) programs allows CAC members and other communities of all kinds to enjoy presentations on a wide range of architecture-related topics from the comfort of their own homes. A portion of funding from the NEH will extend and expand the subcategory of CAC Live programs developed and led by representatives from the CAC’s corps of more than 600 docents and volunteers, whose in-person responsibilities—primarily leading CAC tours—have been curtailed by the public health crisis caused by COVID-19. (Select CAC walking tours, each limited to six attendees, resumed on June 20, 2020.)

A portion of funding from the NEH will also support the development and implementation of digital tools, including an application for mobile devices, for the public to use during the CAC's tenth annual, free [Open House Chicago](#) (OHC) festival, slated to return October 17 and 18, 2020 with possible additional dates to be announced. The second-most widely attended event of its kind in the world, OHC attracted 109,000 individuals in 2019, who made 370,000 total site visits to 352 sites in 39 Chicago neighborhoods, plus the near suburbs of Evanston and Oak Park.

Given the likelihood of continued limitations on public gatherings and challenges in welcoming groups into building interiors, the CAC will optimize these NEH-supported digital tools to help the festival retain its significant historical impact. The OHC 2020 experience will blend virtual elements and tangible community engagement with the self-guided exploration that OHC attendees have come to expect and enjoy. As in years past, OHC 2020 will be a broad-based way for Chicago residents and visitors to examine the city's architectural, cultural and socio-economic history. At least 20 neighborhoods, again plus Evanston and Oak Park, will be highlighted during OHC 2020 with an intentional focus on, and engagement with, neighborhoods prioritized by the City of Chicago's [INVEST South/West](#) initiative.

Support from the NEH CARES grant will also fund a new slate of remotely accessible, online classes, discussions and lectures that welcome people from across and beyond Chicago to learn more about architecture, design culture and urbanism.

Further information about these NEH-supported initiatives—in addition to new and continued offerings for children and families, CAC members and the general public—will be shared in releases to follow during the coming months.

About the National Endowment for the Humanities

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy and other areas of the humanities, by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Visit neh.gov for additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs.

About the Chicago Architecture Center

The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1966, dedicated to inspiring people to discover why design matters. A national leader in architecture and design education, the CAC offers field-leading tours, programs, exhibitions and more that are part of a dynamic journey of lifelong learning.

Opened to the public in 2018, its riverfront location is in the heart of the city, where Michigan Avenue meets the Chicago River, featuring nearly 10,000 square feet of exhibition space filled with super-sized models—and views—of iconic skyscrapers built over the course of more than a century. Exhibitions focus on Chicago's diverse neighborhoods, housing types, leading

architects and future projects, and include the largest scale model of the city, with more than 4,250 miniature buildings, interactive touchscreens, and a cinematic backdrop animating key moments in its history. Highly knowledgeable, enthusiastic CAC docents guide visitors and residents through more than 75 walking tours with more than 7,000 annual departures, plus the Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady.

Through partnerships with schools and youth-serving organizations, the CAC reaches approximately 30,000 K–12 students annually, while teacher workshops provide educators with tools and resources they need to advance STEM curricula in their classrooms. Committed to increasing access for populations historically under-represented in ACED (architecture, construction, engineering, and design) professions, the CAC offers many of its education programs—and all of its programs for teens—at no cost to participants. CAC programs for adults and members include talks with acclaimed authors and practicing architects, in-depth presentations on issues and trends in urbanism, and classes unlocking a wide range of subjects with connections to the built environment.

Proceeds from programs, tours and the CAC Design Store, as well as from grants, sponsorships and donations, support its educational mission. Visit architecture.org to learn more and follow @chiarchitecture and #chiarchitecture on social media.

