



2022 Annual Report



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A Word from Our CEO and Chair

Dear Chicago Scholars Community,

So much has changed since our 2020 annual report. Jeffery Beckham, Jr. became our new CEO in April 2021; our staff and Scholars transitioned from fully remote work and programming to hybrid options; our work and the way we advise and guide Scholars adapted to seismic shifts in college admissions and the labor market.

But despite the numerous transitions of 2021 and 2022, Chicago Scholars has grown. We welcomed 550 members of the Class of 2027 with our first in-person New Scholar Orientation since 2019. With our partners at Youth Guidance, CHAMPS and Project OneTen, we launched the Young Men of Color Initiative, designed to combine our organizations' support systems for young men of color and to bring them into the Chicago Scholars community. Community and business partners from across the city worked with us to create seven new scholarships exclusively for Chicago Scholars students. Most importantly, we have seen Scholars, alumni and community members embody our CS Way values by showing up and caring for each other in myriad ways.

While we're proud of all we've accomplished, we're looking to the future with even greater expectations. We have a ten-year vision for the next phase of Chicago Scholars' organizational life, featuring an app that will more effectively bring our curriculum to students who need it, increased diversity in our Scholar classes, and increase the number of students served. We're pushing to increase the amount of emergency funding available to our Scholars and to ensure 100% of them have an internship before they leave college. These are big dreams, but we're dedicated to making them come true.

At the core of our work is our commitment to not only prepare our Scholars for the world, but to prepare the world for our Scholars. As we continue to build partnerships with nonprofits, schools, businesses and funders in Chicago and beyond, we are changing the narrative about first-generation, low-income students from Chicago while providing those students with the opportunity to find role models and mentors that look like them. We know that seeing is believing; what's more, we know that in order to believe you belong at a top university, in a boardroom, or in a career you'd never heard of before, you must be able to see someone like you in that position.

We hope that as you read this report, you see our vision for the future of our organization and the incredible foundation upon which that vision rests. We hope that once you see it, you will believe in it as strongly as we do.

Sincerely,



Jeffery Beckham, Jr.
CEO, Chicago Scholars



Kris Carey
Chair, Chicago Scholars Board of Directors

Welcome to CS 3.0: Chicago Scholars in 2022 and Beyond

It's no secret Chicago Scholars is an organization with a radical vision for the future of learning and work in Chicago. As a staff, we turn our desire for a vibrant city with diverse leadership that truly reflects our population into action every day. But as the pandemic years have shown, maintaining momentum toward our goals requires flexibility, a willingness to evolve, and an unwavering dedication to our goals. We believe our new set of organizational "stretch goals," put in place alongside our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, brings the lessons of the last two years into conversation with our audacious goals.

Affectionately called "CS 3.0" in recognition of the vision set by our third CEO, Jeffery Beckham, Jr., the goals and plans below form the foundation for Chicago Scholars' future in Chicago and beyond.



Meet REACH

Our curriculum works. When academically ambitious first-generation and low-income students enroll in and persist through Chicago Scholars' 7-year program, 78% graduate from college within 6 years, compared to only 48% of their fellow Chicago Public Schools graduates. Our success has put our curriculum in high demand all over the country. Meanwhile, our plans to connect with 1,000 students per year in the Chicago area and expand the kinds of programs we offer require more funding than we can sustainably raise in traditional nonprofit models. In response, we are developing a one-of-a-kind app that will deliver our curriculum to students far beyond Chicago – an estimated 1 million users. This app will be administered through an LLC that will be owned by, and generate revenue for, Chicago Scholars' core mission and work.

Internships for All

Internships are a crucial part of a young person's professional development and career preparation. It's not just an opportunity to get work experience and network – it's also a chance to develop key social and professional skills, discover new career paths, and determine if a given field is the right fit. Our internship program, Emerge, gives Scholars incredible access to top companies and has even resulted in several post-grad job offers. Even so, we only have the capacity to accept a fraction of each Chicago Scholars class to Emerge. We want to close this opportunity gap and ensure each Chicago Scholar has at least one internship before they graduate from college by 2032. To learn more about Emerge, turn to page 7.

Young Men of Color Initiatives (YMOC)

Chicago's Young Men of Color face deep inequities in their college and career outcomes. Only one in eight Black men and one in five Latine men who attend Chicago Public Schools will have a college credential within 10 years of high school graduation; 30% of Black men and 13% of Latine men between the ages of 16 and 24 are out of both school and work, compared to 7% of their White male peers. It doesn't have to be this way. When young men of color enroll in Chicago Scholars' 7-year program, they successfully make the transition from high school to college and from college to career. But young men of color are underrepresented in our Chicago Scholars classes because they often need support earlier in their school careers to ensure they stay on-track to qualify for our programming. With the help of our community partners, we are embracing the full abundance of Chicago's youth-centered nonprofits and creating a pipeline from middle school to career through the Young Men of Color Initiatives (YMOC). YMOC will nurture relationships with organizations that offer services we cannot, such as mental health resources and social and emotional learning. To learn more about YMOC, turn to page 5.

Scholar Dollars

As first-generation, low-income students, Scholars are more likely than their peers to face a financial emergency, need funds for necessities like textbooks, or be underfunded for educational experiences like internships or study abroad. Currently, Chicago Scholars offers gap funding through grants called Scholar Dollars to help address this need. We want to increase the amount of funding available to our Scholars so they can persist through college and have an equitable experience in and outside of the classroom.

Bigger Chicago Scholars Classes

The Class of 2027 had 550 Scholars, and we are grateful for the chance to work with every single one. But every year, we have to turn away hundreds of qualified applicants, and there are thousands more Chicago students who meet the criteria to become a Scholar. By some estimates, the total number of juniors in Chicago high schools who are first-generation or low-income and have a GPA of 3.0 or above is between 3,000 and 5,000. By 2032, we want to expand our capacity to serve 1,000 new Scholars every year.

Joining the Kindergarten to Career Pipeline

Our programming only works if students are prepared to take advantage of it. For many, that preparation begins in early childhood, but for many more, the opportunity to gain important educational, social and emotional learning isn't available until high school – if at all. Chicago Scholars isn't equipped to work with young children, offer mental health resources, or begin building community before students are old enough to be Scholars – but there are many nonprofits throughout the city who do those things well already.

Instead of stretching ourselves in ways we are not equipped, Chicago Scholars is embracing an abundance mindset and cultivating relationships with our colleagues in youth services across Chicago. We're working to create a "warm hand-off," or a smooth transition, from organization to organization so Chicago's youth are getting the services they need from early childhood to career.



Young Men of Color Pilot Changes the Narrative Around Chicago's Young BIPOC Men

One of Chicago Scholars' most enduring goals is to contribute to a city run by people who reflect the demographics of its citizens. But we face a major stumbling block in achieving that goal: Young men of color, especially young Black and Latine men, are consistently a minority in Chicago Scholars' programming. As of 2022, 11% of Scholars identified as Black men, and 17% as Latine men.

Yet these are some of the young people who need our programming the most. The current outcomes for young men of color in the city of Chicago are damning. Only one in eight Black men and one in five Latine men who attend Chicago Public Schools will have a college credential within 10 years of high school graduation; 30% of Black men and 13% of Latine men between the ages of 16 and 24 are out of both school and work, compared to 7% of their White male peers.

According to Chicago Scholars' Managing Director of Strategic Engagement, Derrick Fleming, Jr., the biggest reason for this discrepancy is that young men of color often need support in meeting their academic and personal goals earlier than current Chicago Scholars' programming allows, and what programming does exist outside of Chicago Scholars often does not focus heavily on college and career access.

Enter Young Men of Color Initiatives (YMOC), a program designed by Fleming, Kyle Larry, Chicago Scholars Class

of 2020 and Senior Associate of Scholar Experience, David Leon, Chicago Scholars Class of 2020 and Senior Associate of Scholar Recruitment, and Alberto Morales, Founder and CEO of Morales Consulting and Chicago Scholars Class of 2012.

With the help of community partners Youth Guidance, CHAMPS and Project OneTen, the Young Men of Color Initiatives will begin its interventions in "the lost year" – sophomore year of high school – with workshops and experiences designed specifically to guide participants as they explore academic, social and emotional learning, identify affirmation, belonging, and their future professional journeys. The curriculum is grounded in the latest research and years of proven programming from all organizations involved.

"This is something that's very special and personally very meaningful to me as I have been working to support boys and young men color for the past 10 years of my career," Fleming said. "When young men of color enroll in Chicago Scholars' 7-year program, they successfully make the transition from high school to college and from college to career. With the help of our community partners, we are embracing the full abundance of Chicago's youth-centered nonprofits and creating a pipeline from middle school to career."



The first participants in the Young Men of Color pilot program were a cohort of 60 sophomores from Julian, Gage Park, Michele Clark, and Kelly High Schools, Chicago Public Schools with existing Youth Guidance: Becoming a Man programs. This "pilot" cohort attended Chicago Scholars' Young Men of Color Seeing is Believing: The Experience & Program Kickoff at the Onsite College and Leadership Forum. Those students were joined by 40 additional young men of color who are high school juniors connected to Young Men of Color partner organizations.

"These students are academically ambitious, but due to the systems in place they're often overlooked or left behind," Larry said. "We wanted to mitigate these issues and show them they don't have to become a product of the systems that are trying to keep them down." Larry said this work was especially important to him as a Chicago Scholars alumnus, and he saw it as an opportunity to "do something for the nonprofit that helped raise me and continuing the work that I love to do."

YMOC is especially focused on giving its participants role models who look like them – and the opportunity to literally see a future in which a person from their background can achieve whatever they want.

"Growing up in the community I came from, Belmont Cragin, knowing what these students come from — this program is close to me," Leon said. "The YMOC program would've helped me greatly build confidence in my identity and given me the community to express myself more freely. While Chicago Scholars did that to an extent, since I changed schools a lot and attended a predominantly white high school, it didn't help me understand why I felt some things about myself, my identity, and people of color because I didn't have someone to give me that understanding."

But this emphasis on "seeing and believing" cuts both ways. Fleming and Morales said they believe that it's not enough for young men of color to envision a future for themselves beyond their neighborhoods – the public narrative around young men of color from Chicago must also change.

The Young Men of Color program is actively seeking out men of color from any professional background who are willing to serve as mentors to participants or volunteer at events. For more information, please contact Derrick Fleming, Jr. at dfleming@chicagoscholars.org.



Emerge: Celebrating 5 Years of Scholar Success with More to Come

Five years ago, Chicago Scholars staff began brainstorming a solution to a consistent problem: How do you support college students as they prepare for the transition to careers? And how do you give them the chance to explore career paths they may not even know exist – all while finding mentors who look like them?

They found the answer when Invest For Kids' (IFK) co-founder Ron Levin, announced he wanted to deepen IFK's ongoing partnership with Chicago Scholars.

"IFK wanted to find a strong partner organization to focus on career development and opportunity for Chicago youth from low-income families," said Barb Wolf, Director of Giving for Invest for Kids. "We approached Chicago Scholars with that particular goal in mind."

An ad-hoc team of Chicago Scholars' staff was assembled and charged with the task of creating and implementing an internship program in a month. IFK stepped up to fully fund the first iteration of the program. Emerge was up and running, with 21 Scholars in its first class and 12 career partner organizations.

At first, Emerge was focused on high school seniors and college first-years and emphasized professional development. Embracing the idea that "seeing is believing," the initial class of Emerge Scholars were given access to a week-long orientation, Growth Labs that provided opportunities for reflection and skill building, and exposure to leaders from a variety of professions and personal backgrounds. These focus areas came directly from Scholars, who shared they wanted the chance to learn, reflect, and get support from career coaches.

"We saw that there were more opportunities available for upperclassmen," said Sasha Peña, Managing Director of Career and Leadership Advancement at Chicago Scholars. "We wanted to provide an early internship experience... [our focus on professional development] really made this program unique."

Reaching students early in their college career also gave many Emerge Scholars the information they needed to select a major or focus on academic subjects that might be useful in their long-term career.

"From my past experience in Emerge, I have realized just how much I have grown both on a personal and professional level," wrote Sana Leebe, class of 2022, in her application to go through Emerge a second time. "Working at the Cook County State's Attorney Office helped me realize that I want to continue studying political science and serve my country and my city through law. Through the internship, I was reaffirmed in my belief to attend law school."

As Emerge grew, it quickly gained students and partner organizations, some of whom not only stepped up to pay Emerge interns for their time, but to sponsor other organizations who couldn't afford to hire an intern. In recent years, some Emerge partners began to offer scholarships for students who interned with them. Other companies have sponsored internship placements or invested in Emerge without officially partnering with the program.

"We definitely scaled very quickly, especially as word got out and partners wanted to pay and make time to

incorporate Emerge into their budgets," Peña said.

Emerge's rapid growth gave Scholars a wide variety of opportunities – and allowed them to explore their interests in unexpected ways.

"The Emerge program allowed me to truly break into the finance industry, and now I hope to be able to leverage the program's connections in order to access the niche investment banking segment of finance," said Martin Rusanov, class of 2022, in a testimonial written after his internship. "Given that investment banking is an apprenticeship-like job, the strategies that Emerge offers will allow me to quickly adapt to a new working environment and information."

On Fridays, Emerge Scholars are divided into cohorts and each cohort is assigned to a different venue where they experience new spaces throughout the city, meet industry leaders, and engage in programming intended to develop professional and leadership skills. These seminar days are designed to complement the ongoing learning occurring at their respective internships.

Several Emerge alumni have gone on to prestigious

internships, been offered full-time jobs at their host companies, or discovered new career paths through Growth Labs. IFK remains dedicated to the program, offering significant financial support every year. Peña said her goal is to eventually scale the Emerge program to host 100 Scholars each summer.

For several alumni, their time in Emerge not only gave them professional experience but reaffirmed their sense of belonging in Chicago and in the workplace.

Reflecting on his Emerge experience, Steven Li, class of 2024, wrote:

"While I build these tangible skills, ranging from knowledge of new industries and data algorithms and structures, only a community of likewise individuals and passionate Emerge staff can progress my career aspirations to embrace the Chicago I grew in. I am a Chicago Scholar and that's why I'm here."

If your organization is interested in partnering with Emerge, please contact Sasha Peña, Managing Director of Career and Leadership Advancement, at spena@chicagoscholars.org.



Funding the Future of Chicago

In 1996, Chicago Scholars' programming was grounded by a simple priority to provide one-time, \$1,000 scholarships to one student from every high school in Chicago.

The intervening 26 years have seen Chicago Scholars grow far beyond its original charge, offering mentorship, college counseling, application support, career and professional development services, family resources, and more. Even with this updated programming, Chicago Scholars' scholarship offerings continue to be important and have continued to grow. In the last three years, Chicago Scholars has taken on the management of 10 scholarships funded by our community and corporate partners, family foundations, and other supporters.

Amy Galibois, Director of Scholar Supports and Scholarships, said the evolution of Chicago Scholars' scholarship programs has, in some cases, gone beyond funding to include access to paid internships or networking opportunities.

"It's more than just money," Galibois said. "[Those organizations are saying] we're investing in you, and we want you to have access."

While most of the scholarships administered by Chicago Scholars are only open to Scholars in the program, there are a handful that prefer Scholars but will award funds to other students. Galibois said many of the scholarships are awarded to those who are already in college, a rare opportunity to support students whose needs may have changed since they were admitted.

Current scholarship opportunities encompass a variety of identities, career interests, and academic areas, from the hyper-specific like Invenergy's scholarship for those interested in renewable energy to the more flexible like the Generations Scholarship, which is open to any Scholar attending college. Galibois said this variety is the result of cultivating partnerships across industries and interest areas.

"We're really excited to increase the breadth of opportunities that tap into a wide range of Scholar interests and identities," Galibois said, and added that it's exciting to see partnerships and offerings grow as organizations get to know Chicago Scholars – and the Scholars themselves.

Those relationships are paying off. In Fiscal Year 2022 alone, Chicago Scholars reviewed 150 applications and administered 85 scholarships worth \$377,500.

In addition to the exclusive opportunity to apply for many of these awards, Chicago Scholars also supports students seeking aid by streamlining the scholarship application process, offering support as Scholars prepare their applications, and reaching out directly to students from underrepresented communities to encourage them to apply.

Anyone interested in establishing a scholarship in partnership with Chicago Scholars should reach out to Amy Galibois at agalibois@chicagoscholars.org.



Looking Forward, Reaching Back: Scholar Starts Nonprofit to Support Other Young Black Men

When Steve Wilson thinks about Chicago Scholars and Unprecedented Chicago, the word that comes to mind is "responsibility."

"I feel like if I'm privileged to have the opportunities that I have; to be a Chicago Scholar, to be at The Ohio State University, to have internships... [I have] a responsibility to reach back and make sure the guys that are coming after me and are going to be going through the same things... understand what it's going to look like, how to not make the mistakes that I have made, the process is expedited and a little bit easier," Wilson said.

Wilson, a current Class of 2023 Chicago Scholar, is the co-founder of Unprecedented Chicago, a community-based organization that provides scholarships, peer mentoring and other professional opportunities to young Black men from Chicago. The organization aims to "change the narrative and shift the culture" by reframing how young Black men are seen in society. Since it was founded in 2020, Unprecedented Chicago has accepted 16 students, four of whom were already Chicago Scholars when they were accepted.

Wilson said Unprecedented Chicago's relationship with Chicago Scholars has grown naturally over the years. In 2020, Chicago Scholars reached out to Wilson to offer support in his vision for Unprecedented Chicago; in 2021 and 2022, Unprecedented Chicago was the recipient of the More Just and Equitable Ways Forward Grant, an award established by Chicago Scholars to support Scholars' projects committed to social justice and civic engagement.

"In the future I want to help Chicago Scholars increase the number of young Black men in [their] program," Wilson said, noting that he is eager to continue and expand Unprecedented Chicago's relationship with Chicago Scholars.

For the younger Chicago Scholars students also involved in Unprecedented Chicago, the opportunity to be taken under Wilson's wing has given them more than access

to volunteer opportunities, networking, and scholarship money.

Mustafa St. Claire, Chicago Scholars Class of 2025 and Sports Medicine major at Howard University, said he was especially moved by the ability to see successful Black men from Chicago at Unprecedented Chicago events and in the organizations' network.

"What made [Unprecedented Chicago] appealing to me was just the fact that it was a nonprofit for young Black men," St. Claire said. "Growing up, I didn't hear or see too many things specific to helping Black people, especially young Black men. At the ceremony we had [to award our scholarships], just seeing all the Black success made me excited for the future. That was very important to me."

"I always wanted to be a part of something," says Roderick Elston, Chicago Scholars Class of 2025 and Sales and Marketing major at Xavier University of Louisiana. "As a young Black man, Unprecedented Chicago seemed to be something of distinction... and I just wanted to take part in it."

Wilson said that while Unprecedented Chicago is still a work in progress and a learning experience for him, "it's slowly but surely turning into what [he] imagined it could be." In the future, he hopes to continue expanding the program and its partnerships with other Chicago nonprofits and finding new ways to support Unprecedented scholars.

For Wilson's fellow Chicago Scholars in the program, though, the opportunity is already paying off.

"The turnout of me just filling out that one application [for Unprecedented Chicago] was very, very big," said Kenneth Strong, Chicago Scholars Class of 2025 and Marketing major at the University of Illinois. "Unprecedented Chicago has touched my life in so many ways I couldn't really even imagine not even looking into it."

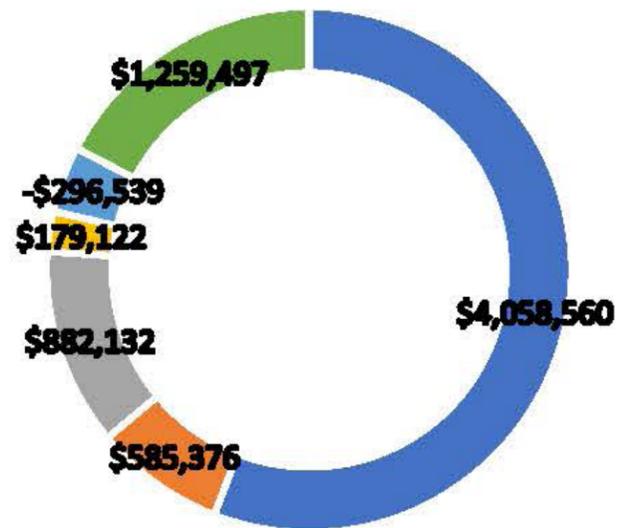
Learn more at www.unprecedentedchi.org, or @unprecedentedchi on Instagram.



FY 2022 Finances (7/1/21-6/30/22)

Revenue

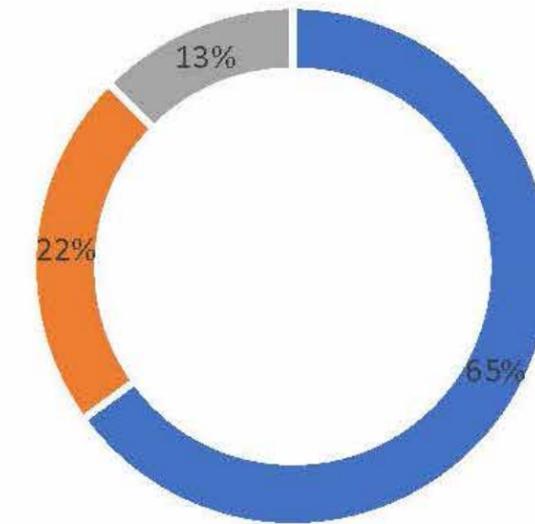
*All numbers pending final financial audit



- Contributions and grants
- Donated goods, facilities and services
- Special events (less cost of direct benefit)
- Program service fees
- Net investment income
- Other income

Organizational Expenses

*All numbers pending final financial audit



- Program Services
- Administration
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Director of College Counseling & Family Engagement
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