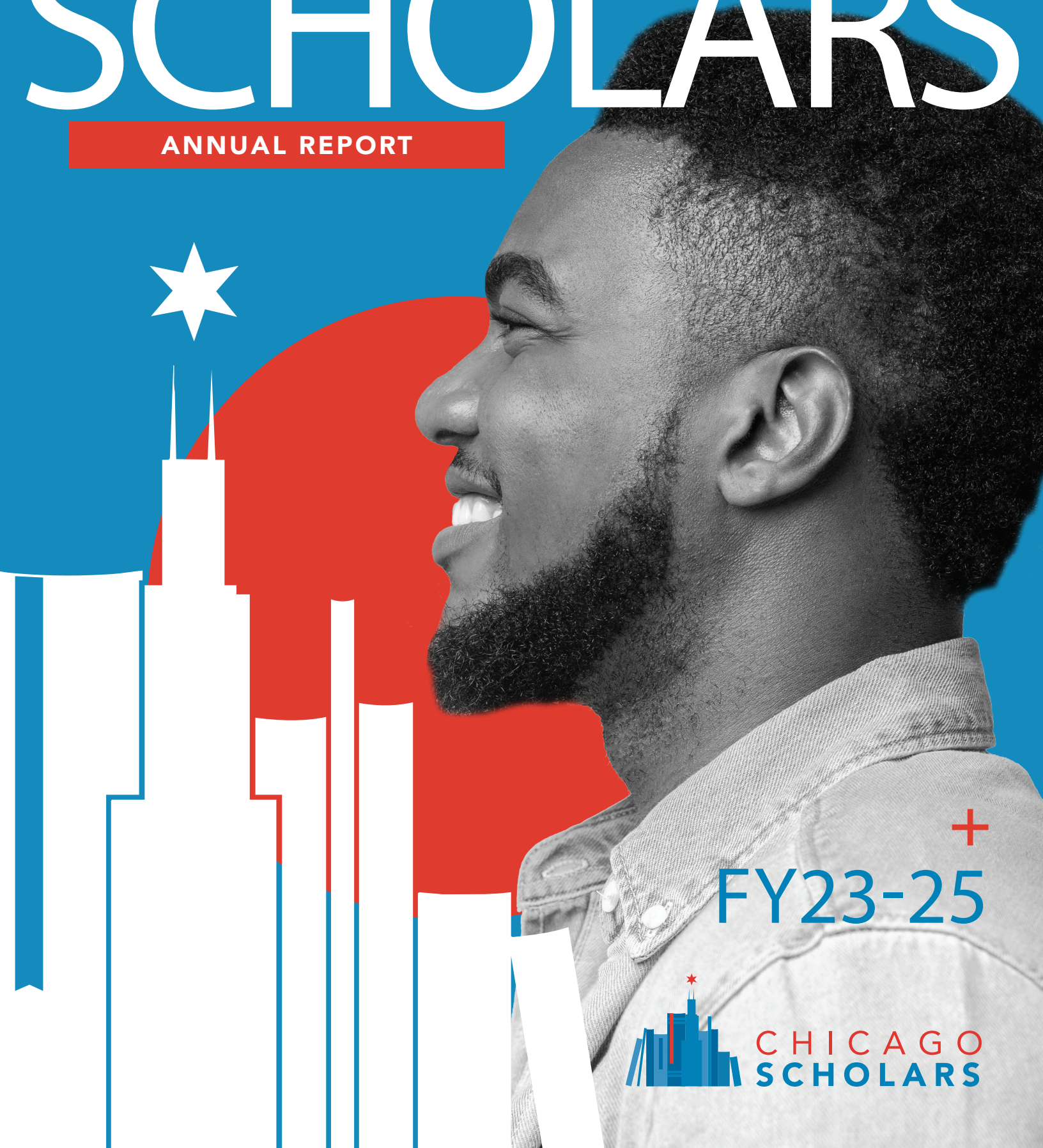


CHICAGO

SCHOLARS

ANNUAL REPORT



+
FY23-25



CHICAGO
SCHOLARS

CHICAGO SCHOLARS
IS CREATING A
COMMUNITY
THAT WILL SHAPE
CHICAGO'S FUTURE.
OUR WORK GOES WAY
BEYOND COLLEGE
ADMISSION — WE'RE
BUILDING A NEW PATH
FORWARD.



A LETTER FROM OUR CEO & BOARD CHAIR

Dear Chicago Scholars community,

In this report, we're looking back at our progress and achievements over the last three years, a time in our history known as Chicago Scholars 3.0. Our dedication to our mission and continuous improvement allowed us to meet the moment in uncertain times. We were able to stand with our Scholars through a chaotic financial aid season, the Supreme Court's decision to end race-based college admission decisions, and the ongoing turbulence in American higher education. We took these issues as evidence that our services were needed more than ever. Armed with a strategic plan with four focus areas – focus on our core, build catalytic relationships, drive Scholar and Alumni outcomes, and transform neighborhoods, systems, and lives – we got to work.

These years were not easy, but the challenges have only made us – and our Scholars – shine brighter.

Since June 2022, we've seen:

- **1,583** Scholars enter and move through our program
- **Three classes** of Scholars graduate from college
- The launch of REACH, which has paved the way for **20,000+** students to receive college and career support
- **1,627** Scholars and CBO students attend Onsite, receiving **\$111.7M** in scholarships and **2,232** offers of admission
- **\$996,000** awarded in Chicago Scholars-exclusive scholarships

This list barely scratches the surface of the opportunities Chicago Scholars 3.0 created, and we're excited to share stories from our Scholars and Alumni about the impact of each pillar of the strategic plan that guided it. But even as we celebrated our successes, we could see the changes our Scholars would face when they entered college and the workforce, particularly with the advent of AI.

Enter our new strategic plan, focused on the future and designed to turn Chicago Scholars into **Chicago's Homegrown Talent Hub**. You'll learn more about our new plan at the end of this report.

We're proud of what the last three years allowed us to create, and of the future those years led us to envision. We hope you come away from this report feeling the same.



Jeffery Beckham Jr.
Chicago Scholars CEO &
REACH Pathways Co-CEO



Nathan A. Ulery
Governing Board Chair

THE SCHOLAR JOURNEY

START

1 APPLICATION

Students apply to Chicago Scholars in their junior year of high school. To be eligible, they need a 3.0 GPA or better, a desire to go to a four-year college or university, and to live and attend school in the City of Chicago. The application is meant to reflect a college application, which means essays, short answers, and demographic information are required.

2 APPLICATION READING

Once the application deadline has passed, Chicago Scholars staff, board members, and specially-trained volunteers read every submission – as many as 1,200 each year! Readers make sure each applicant meets the basic requirements and advocate for the applications they feel are particularly strong.

3 INTERVIEWS

When all the applications have been scored, around 800 students are invited to an interview. These interviews are conducted by volunteers and sponsored by our partners. Each student gets 20 minutes to expand on their application and show us why they should be a Scholar.

6

COHORT AND MENTOR MATCHING

Now that the new class has been selected, each Scholar is carefully placed in a cohort of around 10 other students, and each cohort is matched with two or three mentors. Mentors are adults who commit to sticking with their cohort for two years and offer support through the college application, college choice, and first-year adjustment periods.

5

WELCOME CALLS

Welcome call day is the best day of the year! All Chicago Scholars staff are assigned a list of accepted applicants and make personal phone calls to welcome them to the program.

4

SCHOLAR SELECTION

Members of our Programs team spend several days combing through interviewers' notes and scores from application readers. The goal is to select a class of around 550, but there's no exact number we accept year to year.



FINISH

7

NEW SCHOLAR ORIENTATION

In June, the new class – named for their projected college graduation year – gathers for an orientation. It's a chance for new Scholars to meet their cohort and mentors, learn what's required of them as Scholars, and start thinking about the college application process.

8

APPLICATION SEASON

The real work begins for the Scholars in July, when they attend College Fair and start workshops, writing labs, and interview labs with their cohorts. These sessions guide Scholars through the process of selecting a college, filling out applications, financial aid, and writing personal statements. Scholars also meet individually with their college counselors for more personalized advice.

9

ONSITE

Onsite is Chicago Scholars' signature event, and it brings together more than 100 colleges, hundreds of Scholars and students from partner organizations, hundreds of volunteers, and our whole staff. Scholars finish their college applications by the end of September to secure interviews with their top-choice schools at Onsite. While uncommon, some schools even offer same-day admissions decisions and merit scholarships.

12

ALUMNI LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION

When they graduate from college, Scholars become members of our vast Alumni network. Our Alumni are all over the country and in a wide range of professions. Several have even returned to work for Chicago Scholars, to mentor or volunteer, or to serve on our boards. No matter what, they're still part of the Chicago Scholars community – once a Scholar, always a Scholar.

11

COLLEGE SCHOLAR PROGRAMMING

Once they're on campus, Scholars aren't required to attend structured programming like they did in high school. Instead, they opt in to the programs they find most useful, like mental health first aid classes, holiday socials, and career roundtables. We also offer grants and emergency funds to make sure Scholars get the most out of their education.

10

COLLEGE CHOICES

Scholars aren't finished when they send off their applications. As they receive their admissions decisions, Scholars continue to meet with their college counselors and attend workshops to make sure they're choosing the college that is the best match, fit, and financial fit for them.

FOCUS ON OUR CORE

At its core, our work is about our Scholars and building pathways for them to achieve their dreams. The following is a reflection from Juan Pineda, Class of 2029, who interviewed with the University of Michigan at Onsite in 2024, where he will be a first-year undergraduate in 2025.

“When I first started Chicago Scholars, I was excited but also scared about what the future might hold. I knew my sister had been in the program before me, and she told me it had changed a lot since her time as a Scholar. That made me feel like I had to prove myself, like I had to go above and beyond. I worried that I wasn’t doing enough compared to other students in the city, especially those who went to bigger schools with more resources. Coming from a smaller high school, I sometimes felt like I was already behind.

But being part of Chicago Scholars showed me that I wasn’t.

One of the biggest highlights of my life was attending Onsite in October 2024. I was actually the first student to arrive because of my sister’s role with the event, and I remember feeling nervous in the best way. [Note: Juan’s sister, Valery Pineda, Class of 2023, was employed with Chicago Scholars at the time. She is now working at Adler Planetarium and is a Chicago Scholars mentor.] When I got my schedule the week before, I saw my first interview was with Princeton University. Yes, that Princeton. And my second was with the University of Michigan. Almost every school I met with that day was a dream school, but those two were definitely in my top three. I also had the chance to speak on stage at Onsite to share about REACH Pathways, an incredible program I still work with today.





Then, on January 25, just two days before my birthday, I found out I got into the University of Michigan. I cried, hugged my family, and just kept thinking about how a school like that believed in me. I knew right away it was the place for me. Was it a little scary as Decision Day got closer? Definitely. My family and I talked a lot about what it would mean to be the first to go out of state for college. We thought about the costs, the distance, the homesickness, all of it. But I was reminded by my sister not to let fear hold me back. I'm so grateful I had someone encouraging me to try something new and take that leap.

Now that I'm preparing to start at Michigan, I look around and realize I'll be the only one in my senior class going to college out of state. And already, underclassmen are asking how I did it. **The first thing I tell them? Apply to Chicago Scholars. That's where it all started for me.** If you're reading this, here's my advice. It doesn't matter what school you go to or where you come from. If you have people in your corner—whether it's your family, your mentors, your friends, or a program like Chicago Scholars—you already have everything you need to succeed."



A portrait of Marci Santos, a young woman with long, wavy red hair, wearing a black turtleneck and a grey pinstriped blazer. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus.

“I’VE HAD THE
FREEDOM TO
EXPLORE AND
TAKE ADVANTAGE
OF EVERY
OPPORTUNITY ON
CAMPUS THAT I’M
INTERESTED IN.”

BUILD CATALYTIC PARTNERSHIPS

MARCI SANTOS



When we say that we're preparing our Scholars for the world and the world for our Scholars, we mean it. But we can't do it alone. Through catalytic partnerships with colleges, community-based organizations, scholarship funders, and corporations, Scholars gain hands-on experience in the workforce and build a foundation for change in their communities – all while they're still in college.

Magid Glove and Safety, an environmental health and safety company based in Romeoville, IL, has been a Chicago Scholars partner since 2022. The result is the Rusty Cohen Legacy Scholarship Fund, which aids young adults with an interest in environmental health and safety or business as they attend and graduate from college. Each year, the scholarship committee selects one student to receive a scholarship of \$20,000 over four years. Recipients are also guaranteed an internship at Magid after their first year of college and a one-time, \$1,000 stipend if they study abroad.



"In 2021, we wanted to offer a scholarship to honor the memory of Rusty Cohen, a family leader who had been actively involved in working with students from under-resourced communities to help them get into and graduate from college," said Gigi Cohen, Executive Vice President at Magid Glove & Safety. "Like the Chicago Scholars team, we believe that a college degree does more than change the course of a student's life – it brings opportunities and new perspectives to their community. Through our partnership with Chicago Scholars and the Rusty Cohen Legacy Scholarship Fund, we are hoping to help develop the future leaders of Chicago!"



Marci Santos (Class of 2027), received the award in 2023 and has used it to help fund her studies at Hope College. At Hope, Marci majors in Business and Political Science. As a Magid intern, Marci worked in the HR Department and created an extensive survey for new hires, along with hosting regular candid conversations with the intern team. "Being a recipient of the Rusty Cohen Scholarship has allowed me to do things I had never thought of before coming to college. I'm a first-generation student, so I had no real reference to the classes I would be taking or what opportunities there would even be on campus for me," Marci said. "This scholarship lifted the financial load significantly. With the scholarship, I've had the freedom to explore and take advantage of every opportunity on campus that I'm interested in. Not only that, but I have been able to allocate more time to my studies and maintain good grades."

The Rusty Cohen Legacy Scholarship has been awarded to three other Scholars: Sam Vargas (Class of 2026), Sergio Bahena (Class of 2028), and Jayden Tyler Nuamah (Class of 2029).

Amy Galibois, the Director of Scholar Supports & Scholarships at Chicago Scholars said, "Our partnerships, particularly those that provide our Scholars with scholarships or internships, are powerful because they greatly enhance our ability to help our Scholars thrive. They allow us to connect our Scholars with people and institutions who believe in their potential, build supportive relationships with them, and invest in their future."



Driving Scholar and Alumni outcomes means support far beyond college matriculation and graduation. The accomplishments of our Scholars and Alumni show how vital this commitment is – and the influence of our nearly 7,000-strong community can't be denied.

Oscar Cazalez and Charles Mitchell show what a difference our program has on Alumni and their continued growth in their careers. They joined us in our office for a conversation about the impact of Chicago Scholars on their lives.



CHARLES MITCHELL

Hi Everyone! Charles Mitchell, Chicago Scholars Class of 2025. I just graduated from Tufts University with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. I'm also a Cubs Scholar, Class of 2020. This fall, I'll be headed to Seattle to start my new role as a software development engineer at Amazon.



OSCAR CAZALEZ

Hi there, my name is Oscar Cazalez, Chicago Scholars Class of 2017. I'm currently a senior Data Analyst at Bank of Montreal (BMO).

CAN YOU EACH TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A SCHOLAR?

CM:

I would say my experience as a Chicago Scholar was very different. My class came in during the height of the pandemic, and I didn't really know many of the other Scholars, but I was deeply connected to the seven other Scholars from my high school, the Latin School of Chicago. That year, Onsite was entirely virtual, which is obviously a very different experience than Scholars had previously. But it was still an incredibly enriching and exciting experience, which led me to Tufts University. Once there, I met two other Chicago Scholars, and we stayed pretty close and in contact with one another.

OC:

My experience was also unique, just in a different way. I came to the United States with my family when I was 11 years old, grew up in Pilsen, and eventually went to Chicago College Prep. During my senior year I was applying to all of these schools, and I was getting in. Chicago Scholars was so helpful because they connected me with so many resources and so many people too. Being first-generation, the oldest with four brothers, that was intimidating at first, but then I took it head on. Chicago Scholars was really that resource that pushed me forward. Tim Schwertfeger, one of the original founders of the organization, has been a great mentor to me. Ultimately, Chicago Scholars has given me so much, so when there is an opportunity to volunteer or mentor, I can never say no.

WHAT HAS KEPT YOU CONNECTED TO THE ORGANIZATION AS AN ALUM, AND DO YOU HAVE PLANS TO STAY CONNECTED?

CM:

Over the past four years, I've worked really closely with Amy Galibois, a staff member at Chicago Scholars, who has become like a mentor for me. One thing we've talked about lately is how I can stay connected, because I would love to stay connected with Chicago Scholars and Cubs Scholars. I get \$5,000 a year with my Cubs scholarship, and I'm a QuestBridge Scholar as well, so I got a full ride and Cubs Scholars helped me pay for any flights or technology that I needed during that time. I can't just use that money on flights and technology alone, so I still have about \$8,000 left over. I've been talking with Chicago Scholars about how I can donate that money to help other Scholars pay for their needs and resources.

OC:

Chicago Scholars has poured so much into me. When I think of myself and how I grew up, the scholarships, the people who took coffee chats with me, the people who read my essays — I am a product of that. A lot of people invested a lot of resources in me, so I feel like I have to pay it forward. I've learned all these gems and all this information because Chicago Scholars put me in rooms [with mentors]. It's really important to stay connected, to pass on the gems because I do believe there's a lot of talent in Chicago. It just needs to be nurtured.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR SCHOLAR EXPERIENCE HELPED YOU GET TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

CM:

Going to Tufts and knowing that I had two other Chicago Scholars there with me. We stayed close throughout all four years. And my mentorship with Amy. She has always been there for me the past four years. When I was studying abroad in London my junior year... she made sure she gave me all the right tips, safe ways to travel, and so much advice because I was the first person in my family to travel outside of the U.S. I was very optimistic about it, but I believe that she could sense I was a little nervous despite everything. So, in one of our semester calls, she sat me down and gave me all the tips and made sure I knew that she was there for me and if I ever needed anything.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL MAKES CHICAGO SCHOLARS UNIQUE AMONGST OTHER COLLEGE SUCCESS ORGANIZATIONS?

CM:

Chicago Scholars really keeps you homed in on what your roots are, where you're going to come back to, who you should give back to, and going to school with other Chicago Scholars really helps remind us of where we come from.

OC:

In my experience, what makes them unique is that they never said no, and they were always willing to help me out. Whatever I needed, if I was interested in finance, if I needed recommendation letters or help applying to a new scholarship, they were there. So that's what it is, they never say no to students when it really matters — they find a way to get you to where you want to be.

CHARLES, WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SCHOLARS WHO ARE JUST STARTING THE PROGRAM?

CM:

Some advice that I have for Scholars who are just joining the program is to take advantage of everything Chicago Scholars gives to you. From my experience, as a first generation, low income student, and the oldest of two other siblings, I wanted to take advantage of everything that was put on my plate just to show my siblings that the world is your oyster, the sky is the limit, there are so many things out there for you that you can do. However, I also kept that mindset in college and joined so many student orgs. Another piece of advice is don't burn out too quickly. You do not have to do everything at once. If you feel like you're burning out too quickly, take some time for yourself because you don't have to prove anything or to anyone, you are exactly where you're meant to be.

OSCAR, WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SCHOLARS WHO ARE JUST GRADUATING FROM COLLEGE AND STARTING THEIR CAREERS?

OC:

A big thing for first-generation students is often impostor syndrome. Sometimes you feel like an impostor. I definitely felt that way at the beginning of my career, and I shouldn't have felt that way. I was comparing myself to other people, and that's not good. At the end of the day, you need to think about your growth and that self-awareness piece is so important when working in a corporate setting. Eventually, you'll find people you can relate to, whether it's your teammates, executives, or support groups at work - once you start reaching out, you'll find your people. When I joined the Latino Alliance at BMO, I found people that share similar experiences as me. Leave the impostor syndrome at the door, be a sponge, learn from others (as many people as you can), and really think about the skills that you want to grow. That self-awareness piece is key if you really want to advance your career.

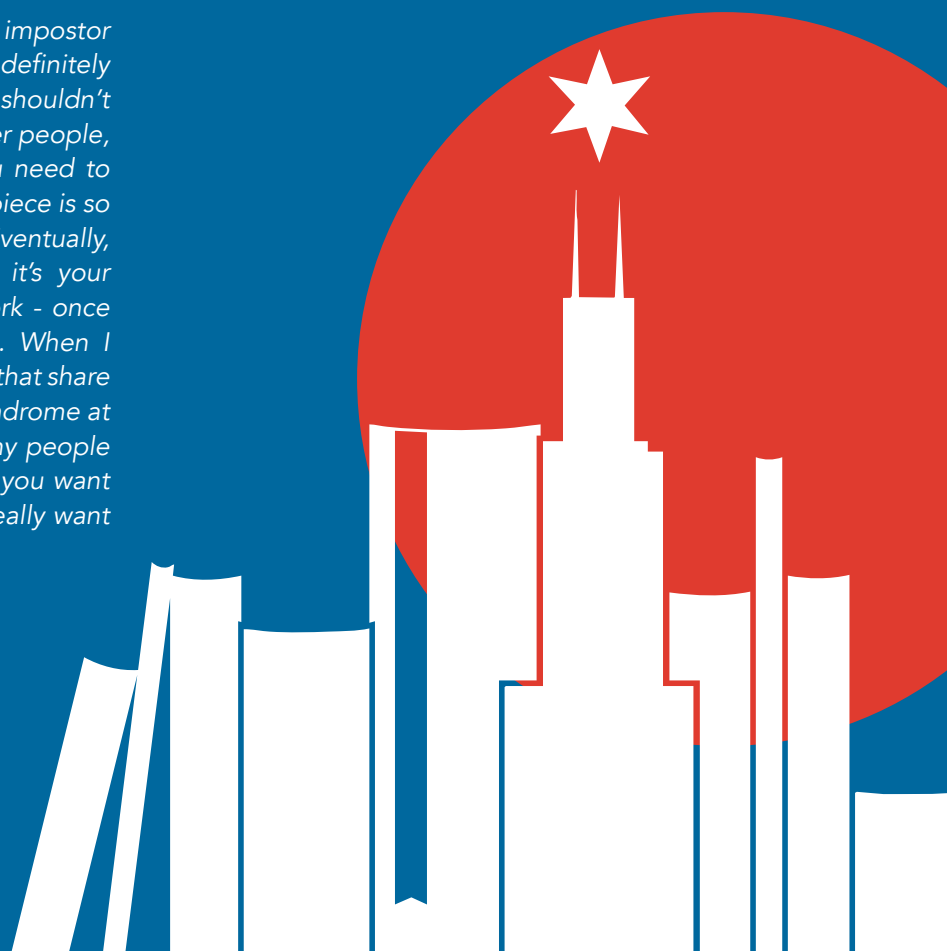
WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUNG ADULTS IN CHICAGO TODAY?

CM:

What I'm seeing a lot of people, especially within our generation within this day and age, a lot of people are using their voices (especially young people) in Chicago...I hope that young people continue to use their voices and talents to advocate for themselves and their communities. I'm proud to represent an organization like Chicago Scholars, because I really feel that it's giving students the tools and experience they need to be the leaders of real change in the city and the country.

OC:

Think about what motivates you. As you grow up, that's really going to be your fuel to keep moving ahead. When I was going to school, my parents and my family were my motivation, but as I started to progress into college, I realized a lot of younger students were watching what I was doing. Think about those things, because as you're growing, you're going to see how you want to handle yourself and the what ifs.



NUMBERS YOU CAN SEE IMPACT YOU CAN FEEL



6000+

Lives transformed over the last 28 years thanks to Chicago Scholars.

\$6.8B

The estimated increase in the lifetime earnings of all Scholars, approximately \$1.2M per student.

\$53.67

The ROI for each \$1 invested in Chicago Scholars. On average, each CS Alum contributes \$500K back to their community.

\$700M

The cumulative merit aid awarded to Scholars, who receive an average of 2.5x more aid than the typical undergrad.

2.5X

Scholars who are young men of color (YMOC) earn 2.5x more than the average YMOC in Illinois.

4 IN 5

Scholars are Black, Latinx or Indigenous, compared to 1 in 5 Illinois college graduates.



TRANSFORMING NEIGHBORHOODS, SYSTEMS, AND LIVES

The chance to pursue their dreams does more than just create opportunities for Scholars. It gives Scholars the opportunity to transform their communities and change the world for the better. Just ask Eva Maria Lewis and Daniela Fernandez, two Alumni who used their Chicago Scholars experience to launch nonprofits that seek to change their communities for the better.

"In literally every sense of the word, I would not be here without Chicago Scholars," said Daniela Fernandez, Class of 2015.

In her first year at Georgetown University, Daniela founded Sustainable Ocean Alliance with the goal of empowering young people all over the world to restore the health of the ocean. The organization is now home to the world's largest network of young

ocean leaders across 168 countries and provides support to for-profit startups committed to positive impacts on the world's oceans.

"Every step of the way, Chicago Scholars has shaped my journey, my life, and who I am today," Daniela said. "I saw Chicago Scholars as a beautiful model that, in some ways, I am now replicating through the work at Sustainable Ocean Alliance in that we also provide access to resources and mentorship to young people globally to help protect the ocean. It was an inspiration in so many ways."

Daniela is now the Founder and CEO of Velemar, an asset manager that partners with investors and organizations dedicated to ocean innovation and building assets in the blue economy.



“

EVERY STEP OF THE WAY,
CHICAGO SCHOLARS HAS
SHAPED MY JOURNEY, MY
LIFE, AND WHO I AM TODAY.”

“

I WANT PEOPLE
TO KNOW
THAT CHICAGO
SCHOLARS IS AN
ORGANIZATION
THAT SEES THE
DIAMONDS IN
THE ROUGH.”





At Free Root Operation, Founder and Executive Director Eva Maria Lewis (Class of 2021) works to end poverty-based gun violence through wraparound economic development and wellness programs.

"We're trying to create avenues of support that a lot of adults don't receive," Eva Maria said. "We serve people from ages 18-65. We're picking up where schools dropped the ball and facilitating generational change and growth."

Eva Maria saw the transformational power of investment firsthand during her time with Chicago Scholars and in the early days of Free Root Operation.

"In the early days of me figuring out my nonprofit, Chicago Scholars let me have team meetings in the building, let me use the printer, and were just so open to what I was doing, even if they didn't see the whole vision," Eva Maria said. "On breaks from college

over summers, I was able to use the space and use resources in unconventional ways. Chicago Scholars showed me what commitment to support looks like."

Since its inception, 1,800 women impacted by gun violence in Cook County have joined Free Root Operation's network and participated in its programs, and many of them have grown into advocates for reform in their communities. For Eva Maria, Chicago Scholars is a model of the transformation possible when communities invest in their people.

"I want people to know that Chicago Scholars is an organization that sees the diamonds in the rough. The diamonds aren't rough among people; the rough is divestment," Eva Maria said. "We are all young people with so much promise that statistically would be written away. And Chicago Scholars is saying no, there is more here, more to your story than the cards your family was dealt."

REACH: PATHWAYS TO INNOVATION



Technology and innovation were at the crux of Chicago Scholars' previous strategic plan when it was written in 2022, and it plays an even larger role in the vision put forward for 2025 and beyond. REACH, a web-based tool that uses AI technology to bring Chicago Scholars resources to students outside of our program and far beyond Chicago, was born out of this commitment.

REACH is the product of REACH Pathways, a for-profit entity owned by Chicago Scholars with the intention of removing barriers to education and career access and providing a steady funding source for Chicago Scholars' core program.

"Chicago Scholars has always been about removing barriers and creating access, and REACH amplifies that impact through technology," said Kenneth Woodard, co-founder and head of product at REACH Pathways. "Where we once [could only help] students one-on-one, REACH now serves 20,000 plus learners."

Chicago Scholars CEO Jeffery Beckham, Jr., also serves as Co-CEO for REACH Pathways. For Jeff, who spent his early career in the tech sector, REACH is a way to combine his expertise in software development, technology marketing and sales, and Chicago Scholars' programming to benefit the organization and the community.

"It's a difficult financial landscape for any nonprofit, and this moment requires organizations to innovate in order to stay afloat," Jeff said. "REACH allows Chicago Scholars to not only work toward our goal of serving all students who would qualify for our program, but

to do so in a way that is sustainable and brings in new funds for the organization as a whole."

REACH also gives students a voice in their own career pathways. More than 20 Scholars serve as REACH Ambassadors, a contract position that pays them for their expertise in the needs and interests of today's college and high school students. Through partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and colleges across the country, REACH has been able to scale and increase Chicago Scholars' reputation as an organization that is building the future.

"REACH positions Chicago Scholars at the forefront of career development innovation," Kenneth said. "As we expand our partnerships and refine our AI-powered platform, we're not just serving current students—we're building infrastructure for future generations. I am super excited about the innovative approach REACH has taken and Chicago Scholars, by extension, has embraced. Together, we have demonstrated that Chicago Scholars doesn't just adapt to change; we lead it."

REACH closed a \$1.99 million investment round in 2025 and is central to Chicago Scholars' goal to serve more than 40,000 students by the end of Fiscal Year 2028.

"This is not about replacing or usurping the core programming Chicago Scholars has built over its 30-year history," Jeff said. "It's about enhancing our ability to provide that programming and growing alongside our Scholars and their needs."



\$1.99M
Investment secured in 2025.

40,000
Number of students that REACH will serve by the end of fiscal year 2028.



**REMOVE BARRIERS,
CREATE SUCCESS**







WINS BY FISCAL YEAR



FY 2023

- Recognized as an Inclusive Workplace by Best Companies Group, December 2022-December 2023



FY 2024

- SXSW Rising DEI Innovation – Finalist
- Fast Company's World Changing Ideas, Education Category – Chicago Scholars and REACH Pathways
- Young Nonprofit Professionals Network Chicago Nonprofit of the Year
- Clayco Foundation Juneteenth Fund Community Champion
- Chicago Cubs Champion of Chicago
- National Black Prosecutor's Association President's Award for Community Excellence
- Chicago Bears My Cause, My Cleats featured organization
- Chicago Scholars and REACH Pathways both selected as Chicago Innovation Award finalists



FY 2025

- Selected as a One West Side organization
- REACH Pathways wins Chicago Innovation Award
- Nike Black Community Commitment grantee

CHICAGO SCHOLARS FINANCIALS

REVENUE	FY 2024	%	FY 2025 (DRAFT)	%
Contributions and grants	5,575,500	79%	4,959,114	79%
Donated goods, facilities, and services	128,405	2%	106,965	2%
Special Events (less cost of direct benefit)	374,200	5%	371,340	6%
Program service fees	345,970	5%	289,641	5%
Net investment income	611,459	9%	511,066	8%
Other income	25,767	0%	993	0%
TOTAL	7,061,300	100%	6,239,118	100%

EXPENSE	FY 2024	%	FY 2025 (DRAFT)	%
Program Services	5,833,484	75%	4,773,182	74%
Administration	826,580	11%	767,909	12%
Fundraising	1,115,577	14%	924,552	14%
TOTAL	7,775,641		6,465,643	

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\$100,000+

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Best Portion Foundation
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Maria Lin
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Mesirow Financial
Michael McAdams
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Victory Park Capital Advisors, LLC
Virgil Abloh Foundation

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DEAR
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Alam, Mahirah

Interviewer	Interviewee	Interview Type	Time	Interview Length
Interviewer 1	Interviewee 1	Interview	10/10/2014	15
Interviewer 2	Interviewee 2	Interview	10/10/2014	15
Interviewer 3	Interviewee 3	Interview	10/10/2014	15
Interviewer 4	Interviewee 4	Interview	10/10/2014	15
Interviewer 5	Interviewee 5	Interview	10/10/2014	15
Interviewer 6	Interviewee 6	Interview	10/10/2014	15
Interviewer 7	Interviewee 7	Interview	10/10/2014	15
Interviewer 8	Interviewee 8	Interview	10/10/2014	15
Interviewer 9	Interviewee 9	Interview	10/10/2014	15
Interviewer 10	Interviewee 10	Interview	10/10/2014	15

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The Chicago Scholars Strategic Plan 2026-2028 marks a transformative chapter, designed to significantly scale our impact and firmly establish us as Chicago's Homegrown Talent Hub.

Driven by evolving needs and extensive community engagement, this plan introduces a powerful 'flywheel' framework to attract, support, and engage Scholars, drive innovation, amplify our story, and inspire critical investment. We are committed to harnessing our rich history of innovation to significantly grow our Scholar classes, maintain outstanding Scholar and Alumni outcomes, and secure the long-term financial sustainability that will ensure Chicago Scholars will prepare many, many more generations of Chicago's future leaders. This plan outlines clear goals, leverages technology and partnerships, and solidifies our commitment to accountability and lasting change.



DO YOU SUPPORT CHICAGO TALENT?

An investment in Chicago Scholars is money well-spent; on average, every dollar invested in Chicago Scholars sees a \$53.67 return to the communities in which our Alumni live through their increased productivity and civic engagement.

We would also love to welcome you to our community of volunteers, mentors, and partners that make a difference in Scholars' lives every day. Learn more at chicago-scholars.org/get-involved. With your help, Chicago Scholars can be the homegrown talent hub we strive to become.



ON TRACK TO SERVE 2,000 SCHOLARS ANNUALLY

SUSTAIN SCHOLAR OUTCOMES AT SCALE



PAID INTERNSHIPS FOR SCHOLARS

DEEPLY ENGAGED, GROWING ALUMNI NETWORK



ALL SCHOLARS ARE AI FLUENT

REDUCE SCHOLAR GRADUATION DEBT



BOLDLY MARKET OUR STORY

RAISE REVENUE TO SCALE IMPACT



BECOME PART OF OUR STORY

The future is bright because of our Scholars, but we can't support them without the help of our community. Whether you invest your time and talents by volunteering or make a donation, your commitment to Chicago Scholars is a commitment to the whole city.

Will you help us build Chicago's homegrown talent hub?



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