

DRAFT – DO NOT RELEASE

Media Contact:

Danielle Lerner

480.489.0336

Danielle@wilksgrp.com

The Chicago School Announces Inaugural Group of Clinical Psychology Impact Fellows

CHICAGO, [September 1, 2026] – [The Chicago School](#) announced the inaugural recipients of its Clinical Psychology Impact Fellowship, a prestigious full-tuition fellowship created to support incoming Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) students dedicated to advancing public mental health through clinical excellence, leadership, and service. The fellowship's full tuition support makes graduate education more accessible while preparing fellows to create greater impact in communities and across the country.

Each year, fellows will contribute to the field and their communities through scholarly presentations, community-based service projects, leadership and advocacy activities, and public-facing mental health education. Fellows will design and implement initiatives that respond to community needs, share research and insights at professional conferences and university events, and participate in leadership opportunities within the field of clinical psychology. They will also help advance public understanding of mental health through articles, media opportunities, and other forms of public scholarship while serving as ambassadors for The Chicago School and the profession.

The Chicago School will award the fellowship to one student at each of its campuses to recognize future clinical psychologists who are already demonstrating outstanding academic achievement, leadership potential, and an interest in opportunities to support underserved communities.

"Communities across the country need highly trained psychologists who are prepared to respond to increasingly complex mental health needs, yet the cost of doctoral education can be a significant barrier for talented students who want to enter the profession," said Lance Garrison, Ph.D., dean of the College of Professional Psychology at The Chicago School. "The Clinical Psychology Impact Fellowship was created to invest in exceptional students and prepare them

to become leaders who expand access to care and make a meaningful impact in underserved communities.”

The first cohort of The Chicago School fellows includes:

- Emily Garcia, attending the Anaheim campus, was inspired by her grandfather’s experience with Parkinson’s disease to pursue neuropsychology and expand access to affordable, culturally responsive care for people with neurological conditions.
- Juliette Celozzi, attending the Chicago campus, traces her interest in cognitive health to teaching her younger brother to read at age four and plans to pursue a career in neuropsychology.
- Spoorthi Aedma, attending the Los Angeles campus, has researched the intergenerational transmission of culture among first-generation women of color, shaping her commitment to culturally responsive mental health care for underrepresented communities.
- Alaris Wiggins, attending the Dallas campus, draws on her experiences growing up in Detroit and her background in forensic psychology to pursue research on childhood trauma and its potential connections to psychotic disorders.
- Makiya Hugee, attending the Washington, D.C., campus, has seen the consequences of delayed diagnoses through her work as an acute care psychiatric and emergency room social worker, inspiring her commitment to expanding early mental health assessment and intervention.

Each fellow was selected through a competitive faculty review process that considered candidates’ academic achievement, leadership potential, and commitment to advancing public mental health in underserved communities. This year, more than 70 students applied for the fellowship.

At a time when the cost of graduate education remains a significant barrier for many students, The Chicago School is investing directly in the next generation of mental health professionals through full-tuition support. By reducing the financial burden for high-achieving, mission-driven students, the fellowship will help prepare professionals to serve communities where mental health expertise is urgently needed. Fellows will extend that investment into communities through service focused on underserved populations, while also advancing the field through research and public scholarship.

“The Clinical Psychology Impact Fellowship is an outstanding program that directly translates The Chicago School’s mission of educating a next generation of change-makers to create a concrete impact in our communities,” said Michele Nealon, Psy.D., president of The Chicago



School. "These fellows have already demonstrated an extraordinary dedication to improving mental health outcomes, and we are eager to support their development as future leaders in the profession."

Applications for the next cohort of fellows at The Chicago School will open on January 4, 2027. For more information about the Clinical Psychology Impact Fellowship, please visit thechicagoschool.edu/impact-fellowship.

About The Chicago School

The Chicago School is a leading nonprofit university dedicated to training professionals for careers that improve the health of individuals, organizations, and communities. By combining education, innovation, community, and impact, The Chicago School Approach provides students with a practical and solutions-oriented education in an array of academic programs across psychology, medicine, business, counseling, and behavioral sciences. With more than 6,000 students and locations in Chicago, Dallas, Southern California, and Washington, D.C., the university's extensive network of community partnerships provides applicable training and networking opportunities.

The Chicago School is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. The Chicago School is a proud member of The Community Solution Education System, an integrated nonprofit system of colleges and universities working together to advance student success and community impact. To learn more, visit www.thechicagoschool.edu.