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The Chicago School Earns Prestigious Classification from The Carnegie Foundation for its Community-Embedded Partnerships

CHICAGO, January 12, 2026 – [The Chicago School](#) today announced it has earned the 2026 Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement, one of the highest national designations in higher education honoring institutions where community impact is core to its mission. This designation places The Chicago School among 277 institutions nationwide currently holding this classification.

The classification acknowledges The Chicago School's meaningful engagement in its communities, from community mental health clinics in Chicago and nonprofit capacity-building in Southern California, to more than 1,100 global community partnerships, including community training and practicum sites for current students, volunteer engagement, and professional development initiatives. Each year, The Chicago School contributes more than 1.2 million service hours through long-standing, reciprocal partnerships involving students, faculty, and staff.

"The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification reflects decades of purposeful partnership and our belief that education must serve communities, not stand apart from them," said Michele Nealon, Psy.D., president of The Chicago School. "We prepare students not only to succeed professionally, but to contribute meaningfully to the communities they serve. This recognition affirms that commitment."

A key element to this impact is community-embedded learning, which is integrated across more than 40 academic programs at The Chicago School. This approach connects academic learning with real-world experience and ensures that education is grounded in sustained, mutually beneficial engagement with communities.

In addition to providing hands-on opportunities, The Chicago School advances mental health education through the Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute for Mental Health Education. Through this work, community members across the Chicagoland area are provided with access to tools, training, and resources to support mental health. Together, these efforts demonstrate the measurable impact of community-

embedded learning and The Chicago School's ongoing commitment to service, collaboration, and community well-being.

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About The Chicago School

For 45 years, The Chicago School has been 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, health, 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. To learn more, visit www.thechicagoschool.edu. 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.