



Application Guidelines for UWGC Community Investments, 2024-2025

About the United Way of Greater Chattanooga

United Way of Greater Chattanooga's (UWGC) mission is to unite people and resources in building a stronger, healthier community. We envision a community where all people achieve their full human potential through education, stability, and health & well-being. From the unique position at the center of the nonprofit, government, philanthropic, and business communities, UWGC drives focused collaboration among our partners to address community-specific avenues for everyone to engage in creating social change.

The purpose of UWGC's Community Investments is to drive transformational change in our community by directing our limited resources towards data-driven efforts that deliver the highest return on investment as measured by education, stability, and health & well-being outcomes within the Steps to Success framework. We will continue to emphasize the importance of collaboration across non-profit organizations and we will enhance our grantmaking focus on 2-generational Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households with children. We prioritize funding of nonprofits that have an established presence in the county in which they're requesting funds.

Purpose of Application Guidelines

The purpose of the Application Guidelines is to clearly communicate each aspect of the Community Investment Application process and, ultimately, to encourage organizations doing outstanding work in areas of Education, Stability, and Health & Well-being to apply for funding.

We have an open, competitive, and inclusive application process to help identify which organizations have the potential for great impact. UWGC Community Investment grants are designed to fund exceptional programs through the implementation of the Community Investment process, a competitive and transparent allocation process that is open to all nonprofit (501c3) organizations that meet eligibility criteria.

Three Funding Opportunities:

1. **Impact Fund:** Investing in local nonprofits through competitive grants for collaborative and transformational work to find solutions to systemic issues in our community.
2. **Bridge Fund:** Supports programming which provides direct support for those who find themselves in a moment of immediate need.
3. **Catalyst Fund:** Accelerating impact by investing in innovation and nonprofit capacity.

The **Impact Fund** supports programs and initiatives addressing solutions to systemic issues in our community measured by education, stability, and health & well-being outcomes within the Steps to Success framework. Applicants are required to have at least one cross-sector collaborative partnership with public, non-profit, and/or private stakeholders. Types of applications for Impact would include data-backed programs or initiatives with proven results; provide comprehensive and coordinated services; and high quality, data-centered and effective services that can be grown and accelerated.



New The **Bridge Fund** supports programming which provides direct support for those who find themselves in a moment of immediate need (food, health services, transportation, disaster relief, housing, or childcare).

The **Catalyst Fund** supports programs and initiatives looking to accelerate impact through **Innovation or Capacity-Building**. Catalyst Fund applications look to fund innovative growth, emerging ideas, or creative solutions measured by education, stability, and health & well-being outcomes within the Steps to Success framework.

Types of Applications for **Innovation**:

- A new program or new aspects of an existing program
- Test a potential solution to a root cause issue or barrier to effectiveness in your work

Types of Applications for **Capacity-Building**:

- Investing in a nonprofit to bring it to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, so it may more effectively and efficiently advance its mission and future sustainability of the organization.

Applicant Requirements & Limits:

For the 2024-2025 Community Investment RFP, organizations are allowed to submit applications to the Impact Fund, Bridge Fund and the Catalyst Fund. Grants are awarded from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, with no option for multiyear funding. An organization may only apply once to the Impact Fund, which has no maximum request amount. An organization may only apply once to the Bridge Fund, which also has no maximum request amount. The Catalyst Fund provides the choice to select either applying for an Innovation or Capacity-Building grant (**you may not apply for both**), which are capped at \$30,000. An organization may **not** split the requested amount between the Innovation and Capacity grants to total \$30,000 – organizations may only select to apply to either grant for up to \$30,000. Proposals that have previously received Catalyst Funds are **not** eligible to apply for Catalyst Funds for the same programs or purpose again. An organization may apply to only one fund if they prefer. The most robust questions and requirements are within the Impact Fund and will simplify or vary depending on the fund and application chosen. These details will be within the [grant application portal](#).

Because the dollars United Way raises stay in the geographical area and community where they are raised, we must know which geographical area you are applying for.

Organizations are only allowed to apply once to each fund (Impact and Catalyst) for each respective geographical area. The three geographical areas are the following:

1. Hamilton County
2. Marion and/or Sequatchie County
3. North Georgia Counties: Catoosa, Dade, and/or Walker



If you are applying to multiple geographical areas, you must create separate individual profiles for each in order to submit multiple applications.

For example:

If *Nonprofit A* serves in Hamilton County and Catoosa County, and they want to apply to both Impact and Catalyst, they are eligible to apply for funding from both geographic areas. *Nonprofit A* would register an individual profile from one representative of the organization for Hamilton County, complete the eligibility, select “Hamilton County”, and select Impact Fund or Catalyst Fund (with the stream selection – either Innovation or Capacity-Building). *Nonprofit A* would then need to have another representative register an individual profile for North Georgia and follow the same steps.

If you have any questions regarding your specific circumstances, email our team at impact@uwchatt.org to schedule a time to meet.

We are not equipped to support the following proposals for funding:

- Capital Campaigns
- Endowments
- Individuals
- Membership dues
- Organizations that have a written policy of discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity or organizations that foster or encourage racial, religious, class, or other prejudices.
- Private schools, unless the majority of students represent low to moderate-income households or otherwise vulnerable children.
- Sponsorships or fundraising events

Timeline:

- December 18, 2024: Live Grant Application Info & Training (recording will be posted on website)
- January 22, 2024: Grant Portal Opens (via Survey Monkey Apply™)
- February 9, 2024: Deadline for Pre-Application submission (via Survey Monkey Apply™)
- January 24, 2024 – March 1, 2024 CI Staff Office Hours – every Tuesday & Thursday from 11am-12pm EST via Zoom
- March 1, 2024: Deadline for Full Application submission by 5:00pm (EST)
- February 2024: Volunteer Advocate Trainings
- March 2024: Volunteer Advocates review applications
- April 2024: Volunteer Advocates evaluations submitted; Community Investment Committee (CIC) orientation
- May 2024: CIC meetings with funding recommendations made
- May 2024: Funding recommendations made to Board of Directors
- June 2024: Grant Award Announcements
- July 1, 2024: Award dispersal to grant recipients begins
- August 20, 2024: Meet & Greet with all Grant Recipients and Volunteer Advocates



- November 2024: Shared Learning for Impact
- December 2024: Preparation for Mid-cycle reports
- February 5, 2025: Mid-cycle reports open
- March 1, 2025: Mid-cycle reports due
- April 2025: Shared Learning for Impact
- July 1, 2025: Final Reports Open
- July 31, 2025: Final Reports Due

Overview of Application Process

There are 11 steps in the Community Investment Application process. The bolded portions are the organization's responsibilities. The remaining steps are actions taken by UWGC & trained volunteers:

- 1. Agencies take Eligibility Quiz**
2. Approval or Denial of Eligibility
- 3. Pre-Application Submission**
4. Pre-Application Review & Selection
- 5. Community Investment Application Submission – Impact & Catalyst Applications**
6. Application Review & Scoring from Volunteer Advocates
7. Application & Scoring Consideration from Community Investment Committee
8. Funding Recommendations by Community Investment Committee
9. Review & Approval of Funding Recommendations by UWGC Board of Directors
10. Funding Approval
- 11. Agreement form Signed and Returned to UWGC**

The process opens and begins on January 22, 2024, with an Eligibility Quiz and Pre-Application Screening running concurrently to determine whether an organization will be invited to complete the Community Investment Application.

The Eligibility Quiz will include the following:

1. The organization must meet the IRS standards for nonprofit status 501(c)(3), faith-based organization, or governmental entity. Please submit your 501(c)(3) letter.
2. The applicant must supply the organization's most recent IRS Form 990 or 990 EZ. Can the organization submit 990 or 990EZ upon request in the future (churches are exempt).
3. The organization must be chartered prior to January 1, 2021 and have staff in the UWGC service region.
4. The organization must provide services in one or more of the six-county service region: Hamilton, Marion, Sequatchie Counties in Tennessee or Walker, Dade, Catoosa Counties in Georgia.
5. The organization must be able to supply the organization's EIN/Tax ID#.
6. UWGC conducts business through the internet and its website. Applicants must be able to send and receive email.



7. UWGC makes its investment payments through EFT and will request appropriate banking information from organizations receiving funds. Grant recipients must be able to provide banking information.
8. The organization must be committed and able to make measurable improvements for clients in one of the Steps to Success for which United Way will invest funds. Measurable improvements must align with published outcomes and indicators.
9. The organization must be willing and able to enter into a provider Agreement with United Way of Greater Chattanooga regarding participation in the United Way campaign and the provision of services in compliance with United Way requirements - including submission of beneficiary reports of client demographics, program reports detailing outcomes achieved, and any supporting information, as requested by UWGC.

The Pre-Application will ask the applying organization to provide a high-level introduction of the proposal to demonstrate (1) alignment with the Steps to Success Model; (2) understanding of the service population and community context; (3) overview of the proposal's approach; and (4) organizational information (including budget and Board of Directors).

Pre-Applications are due no later than February 9, 2024 in order to give ample time to access and complete the full application, if approved. After the Pre-Application is submitted, each Pre-Application will be evaluated by UWGC staff and will be approved or denied on a rolling basis. If the applicant is approved to move to the next stage, all answers from the Pre-Application will be brought forward into the full application with the option to edit or add for greater clarity and alignment.

Pre-Applications that pass initial evaluations and are selected to proceed further will be notified and asked to complete the full application. Applications for Impact and Catalyst funds are due March 1, 2024, at 5:00pm. Throughout the application period, UWGC staff will host weekly office hours to address any questions or concerns regarding each step of the application process. If additional questions are needed outside of the scheduled office hours, organizations may request a meeting with a UWGC staff member.

When the Community Investment Applications are submitted, each application will be collected by UWGC staff and shared with Volunteer Advocates for review and scoring based on grading rubrics. Volunteer Advocates may interact with applicants through Survey Monkey Apply™ to clarify questions for submitted applications. Following the scoring of the applications, the Community Investment Committee volunteers will review the application & scoring considerations and provide funding recommendations within the limits of available, allocable funds raised through UWGC's workplace & individual donations. Recommendations will be brought to UWGC's Board of Directors for final review and approval. To learn more about our volunteer-driven review process, [visit our website here](#).

All programs are evaluated using standardized tools that measure the relative strength of the application. Successful programs will demonstrate an ability to achieve client success in the priority areas identified by UWGC. Final funding decisions cannot be appealed. Denied application may request feedback through emailing impact@uwchatt.org. Funding decisions and notifications will be issued in



late June after the Board of Directors meeting, and the first payments will begin July 2024. Contracts must be signed and returned to UWGC no later than July 15, 2024. Funding periods follow the fiscal year from July 1, 2024 – July 31, 2025.

Community Investment Application Open Office Hours

Any organization is invited to join our UWGC Community Investment team every Tuesday and Thursday from 11am-12pm after the release of the RFP and applications on January 23, 2024. To register and gain access to the Zoom meeting, please visit our website and click the registration link.

After the Eligibility & Pre-Application deadline on February 3, 2024, only organizations who have been approved to apply to the final applications may continue to attend office hours. Denied organizations may request meetings with UWGC staff members after the close of the application, review, and awarding periods beginning in July 2024 by emailing impact@uwchatt.org to discuss proposal ideas and steps for future cycles.

Changes in Reported Information

If reported information changes during the Community Investment Application & Review process (after submission of the application but before funding has been awarded), the organization must submit written (preferably via email) notification to UWGC immediately after the organization becomes aware of the change that explains what the change has been, why the change was made, and what the effect of the change is on the program/proposal. Please direct such communication to impact@uwchatt.org.

If reported information changes after the proposal has been funded (after the grant has been awarded and organization has started to receive funding), the organization must submit notification to UWGC within 30 days after the organization becomes aware of the change that explains: what the change has been, why the change was made, and what the effect of the change is on the program. Please direct such communication to impact@uwchatt.org.

Funding Acceptance

If the application is selected for United Way Community Investment Funding – either partially or fully – the Organization will receive the following documents:

- Funding Letter
- Funding Year 2024-2025 Organization Agreement

By executing the Funding Year 2024-2025 Organization Agreement, the Organization accepts all United Way funding as awarded in the United Way Funding Letter. For the Organization to receive the awarded funds, the Organization must agree to all UWGC requirements, as outlined in the Funding Year 2024-2025 Organization Agreement. The Agreement must be signed and dated by the Organization's President/CEO.

In the following situations, an email must be submitted to United Way outlining the reasons for changes or declined funding:



1. If any program requires material changes as a result of the level of funding awarded. Changes to the program and continued funding of the program are subject to the approval of the Community Impact Committee.
2. If the Organization elects to decline funding.

Emails communicating material changes or declined funding should be sent to impact@uwchatt.org.

UWGC Community Investment Priorities: *Steps to Success*

UWGC is looking to fund programs that align with our three Focus Areas of Education, Stability, and Health & Well-Being. The problems facing the Greater Chattanooga region are immense, and they need comprehensive solutions. United Way is looking for collaborative solutions that can make an impact today and build in the years to come.

Our Community Investment Funds are driven by our Steps to Success model, which illustrates 9 key milestones on the path to success. There is no one solution to solve the challenges every individual and household in our community faces. Our framework, therefore, highlights the greatest ways organizations can comprehensively provide the best next steps for a person's whole life: from birth to childhood to adulthood and beyond.

UWGC's 9 Steps to Success:

1. **Basic Needs: Food, Safety, and Housing** – *Families and individuals must have a safe home with healthy food for everyone who lives there in order to work toward a higher degree of prosperity.*
2. **Born Healthy** – *Children must be born into safe homes with families who are socially, emotionally, and financially prepared to care for them.*
3. **Kindergarten Ready** – *In order to be kindergarten-ready, young children need quality early education, strong relationships with families, a safe and secure home environment and regular health and developmental screenings and support.*
4. **Third Grade Reading** – *Kids who are reading proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to graduate high school on time.*
5. **Middle School Engagement** – *Attendance and success in middle school are critical in keeping students on track for on-time graduation and preparing them to continue their education after high school or secure a self-sustaining job.*
6. **High School Graduation** – *A high school diploma is a critical milestone on the path to a post-secondary degree and/or a self-sustaining career.*
7. **College- Or Career-Ready** – *As they continue their education or enter the workforce, young people need access to skills and training that enable them to secure and maintain gainful employment with a thriving wage.*
8. **Financial Well-Being** – *In addition to covering basic expenses, families and individuals need financial stability to avoid debt, build savings and prepare for unanticipated expenses with a thriving wage.*
9. **Healthy and Connected Older Adults** – *Older adults and persons with disabilities must be emotionally and physically healthy, financially secure and socially connected.*