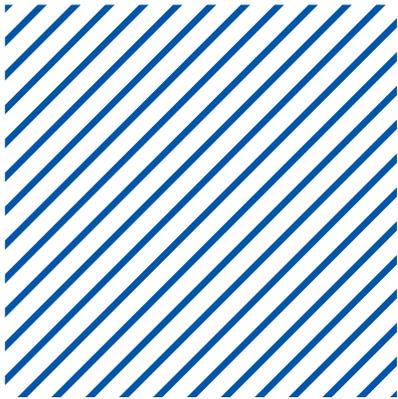


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# NOTICE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Community Investment Fund • 2024-2026



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We live by each other and for each other.

Alone we can do so little.  
Together we can do so much.

— Helen Keller

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**ABOUT THE UNITED WAY OF GREATER KNOXVILLE**

The core mission of United Way of Greater Knoxville (UWGK) is to unite people and resources, to strengthen communities and solve systemic issues. We envision an equitable community, where all people achieve their human potential. From our unique position at the center of nonprofit, government, philanthropic, business, education, and other community sectors, UWGK drives strategic alignment and collaboration while convening and creating avenues for every person to engage in creating social change.

For more than 100 years, community investment through grantmaking has been one of UWGK’s strategies for driving transformational change in our community. It is our aim to steward and direct resources towards data-driven efforts that deliver the highest return on investment, as measured through priorities outlined in each of our Impact Focus areas:



**EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**



**ECONOMIC MOBILITY**



**HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

As a force for good in East Tennessee, the United Way of Greater Knoxville (UWGK) is excited to announce our 2024-2026 grant cycle. Each 501(c)3 nonprofit organization operating in our region is a potential partner in change, and our community investment funding is dedicated toward supporting and amplifying your transformative work. We welcome all nonprofit organizations located in our service footprint (Knox, Jefferson, Claiborne, Grainger, and Union) to participate, if their activities align with our mission and impact priorities.

Whether you’re an established partner with United Way or exploring a fresh opportunity for funding and to join our regional efforts, the invitation to apply is for you.

**OUR VISION**

Creating an equitable community through partnerships, impact, and commitment to transformation.

**OUR MISSION**

Unite people and resources to strengthen communities and solve systemic issues.

**OUR IMPACT GOAL**

Engage community and mobilize resources to drive promising solutions that address the most pressing challenges and allow every person to thrive.

## PARTNERING WITH THE UNITED WAY OF GREATER KNOXVILLE IN DRIVING CHANGE

Partnering with United Way of Greater Knoxville means becoming a part of a broader network of changemakers, dedicated to making a tangible difference in the lives of people across our footprint in East Tennessee. Over the five past years, as our community navigated the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and other systemic crises, we have seen how collaborative approaches have sparked innovative solutions, expanded reach of services, increased participation of individuals with lived experiences in decision-making, and yielded significant positive individual and community outcomes.

UWVGK's commitment to strengthening local programs and social services is well-established and was amplified over the last few funding cycles. Since 2020, United Way has distributed more than \$54 million dollars in funding to more than 155 partner organizations, with processes including, but not limited to, outcomes-based grants, capacity-building grants, emergency food and shelter grants, and distribution of CARES Act Direct Pay and ARPA funding.

This invitation into partnership and call for grant proposals marks another opportunity to enrich our community through collaboration towards positive change. Our commitment includes facilitating shared efforts to explore root causes for community challenges, increasing nonprofit organizational capacity, and aligning efforts to create healthier communities, drive economic opportunity, and ensure positive outcomes for all of our neighbors, and for generations to come.

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## ABOUT UWVGK'S COMMUNITY INVESTMENT GRANTS

UWVGK Community Investment grants are designed to seed, scale, or support effective organizations delivering programs and initiatives that address systemic and community challenges. The two-year community investment grants award funds to organizations delivering program efficacy and results in response to prioritized community needs in our Impact areas.

Within this grant cycle, we will continue to emphasize the importance of collaboration across non-profit organizations. We will also enhance our grantmaking focus on Asset-Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households.

### WHO IS ALICE?

ALICE stands for asset limited, income constrained, employed. United Ways of Tennessee launched the ALICE data project to provide a comprehensive measure of financial hardship across our state.

The ALICE reports tell the story of our community members who are working hard but still struggling to survive. While ALICE may earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, ALICE still cannot afford the basic necessities for their family.

With your help, we can help these families reach financial stability and mitigate the impacts of economic strain.

Visit <https://uwvgk.org/alice> to learn more about ALICE and to access county-specific data and mapping.

**At least 39%**  
**of residents in our area are**  
**under the ALICE threshold**  
**and struggling with regular**  
**financial crises without the**  
**resources they need**  
**to succeed.**

We prioritize funding of nonprofits that have a commitment to inclusive approaches and equitable community outcomes. It is expected that applicants will have an established presence in the county in which they are requesting funds, and that applicants can demonstrate a depth of engagement with the populations and communities that they are proposing to serve.

The total funding amount available for grant awards is determined by the generosity of our community's contributions during our annual fundraising campaign. Applicants will need to identify what counties they will serve, as the dollars raised by United Way remain in the geographical area from which they are raised.

We have an open, competitive, transparent, and inclusive application process to help identify which organizations are committed to partnership with United Way for greater impact. Application procedures and requirements are designed to align and adapt to the size and complexity of the organization, as described in Our Grantmaking Process.

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## OUR GRANTMAKING PRINCIPLES

During the last 2 years, we have spent time visiting with our current and potential new partners, learning about how UWGK can best support them in fulfilling their missions.

UWGK wants to provide a supportive approach to funding and is adapting the Trust-Based Philanthropy model to our grant process. The values that drive this framework are shared power, equity, humility, transparency, and collaboration which will benefit the nonprofit sector of our community.

As we progress from a traditional grant-making role toward our vision of catalyzing change at the center of a thriving region, we are simplifying our investment processes and streamlining resources to maximize our collective impact. We will use these principles, to the extent possible, in each grant process:

- Soliciting and acting on feedback from funded organizations
- Providing up to two-years of operational funding in this cycle
- Simplifying paperwork and our application process, eliminating barriers to participation
- Committing to transparency and responsiveness
- Offering support for organizations beyond the check

### What does this mean for you?

- Organizations will complete one grant application that encompasses all your work instead of one for each program
- There will be 2 stages in the application process
  - Stage 1 questions about organizational mission and history, capacity, and service area – for the customization of the next stage of your application
  - Stage 2 questions will be based on your organizational lifecycle stage and alignment with our impact strategies, focusing more on expected outputs and outcomes
- Volunteer review committees will be organized by lifecycle stage, so organizations who are in earlier developmental stages will not be compared to those in more mature stages.
- Funds will be awarded based on pre-set investment targets determined by the needs of the community, available funding, the desire to fund organizations across the lifecycle stages, and other factors.
- Funding can be used for operational or programmatic expenses, as determined by your organizational needs.
- Capacity-building training will be available based on lifecycle, so your organization can continue to grow, share learning, innovate, and improve to better fulfill your mission

## LIFECYCLE STAGES

Applications will now be submitted per organization instead of per program. For our grantmaking process, we will focus on three general categories to identify the current stage for each organization: Start-Up, Growth, Mature. Descriptions of each stage are below, though criteria are not limited to the examples provided.

### Start-Up Stage Characteristics

- Experimental program(s)
- Most work relies on volunteers
- Strong emotional commitment to mission
- Must focus on gathering resources
- Limited financial resources and accounting systems
- Operations are informal

### Growth Stage Characteristics

- Programs begin to establish themselves
- Increase in staff
- More planning and oversight in focus
- Official promotions materials being used
- Formalize board
- Develop multi-year budget

### Mature Stage Characteristics

- Core programs established and recognized by community
- Systems and policies are followed; procedures and operational efficiency
- Staff organization chart set in hierarchical functions
- Board is diverse and well established; fundraising becomes key role
- In-house marketing and communications process
- Increase staff and volunteer training



## IMPACT PRIORITIES

Organizations will no longer be asked to apply for individual programs in a single impact area. We understand that the root causes of many of the challenges faced in our communities are systemic, and the issues are interconnected. As a result, highly effective programs include strategies and services that are also interconnected and often reinforce each other, within organizations and as organizations collaborate with one another to address needs and maximize community impact.

## ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Economic mobility refers to the capacity for individuals, families, and communities to improve their financial well-being, move up the socioeconomic ladder and to achieve lasting, self-sufficiency. Access to resources such as education/training, employment opportunities, financial education, affordable housing, basic needs assistance, and supportive social services enable people to pursue upward mobility. Within this priority, UWGK works with partners to address systemic barriers to economic advancement and promotes policies and programs that create pathways to financial stability and success regardless of background or circumstance.

### Focus Areas:

- **Family Stability:** support for basic needs (clothing, shelter, utility, legal, and other assistance) for households at risk of or experiencing financial crisis
- **Workforce Development:** education, training, job skill development, and employment services
- **Financial Management:** debt reduction, budget and credit counseling, financial literacy and coaching, access to affordable financial products and services, homeownership resources

### Potential Indicators/Outputs:

- # of Individuals who complete job skills training
- # of Individuals who earn job-relevant licenses, certificates, and/or credentials
- # of Individuals who gain employment or increase wages/earnings
- # of Individuals who access or maintain affordable permanent housing
- # of Individuals who complete budget, credit, or homeownership courses or counseling
- # of Individuals accessing basic needs supports or emergency assistance
- # of Individuals who decrease debt or increase savings

### Community Outcomes:

- **Reduced Poverty:** Economic mobility efforts aim to lift people out of poverty by providing the resources and support they need to achieve financial stability and independence.
- **Improved Quality of Life:** As people move up the economic ladder, they often experience improvements in their overall well-being and improved family stability, including better access to healthcare, education, housing, social networks, and other essential services.
- **Community Development:** Strong economic mobility can lead to vibrant and thriving communities by fostering local economic growth, reducing inequality, and promoting social cohesion.
- **Inter-generational Mobility:** Economic mobility can have long-term effects across generations, with children of upwardly mobile parents having better opportunities for success and economic stability.
- **Reduced Income Inequality:** Efforts to promote economic mobility can help reduce income inequality by creating more equitable access to opportunities and resources for all members of society.

## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Early care and education are critical building blocks for a child's future success and overall well-being; consequently, we prioritize high-quality, affordable early childhood education and care services to support children's development from birth through their early years.

Access to high quality educational and enrichment experiences are likewise critical for academic proficiency, career readiness, and overall well-being for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade, and beyond. United Way sees early care and education as essential components of a community-based, comprehensive approach to promoting the health, development, and future success of children and families.

### Focus Areas:

- **Access to Affordable, High-Quality Childcare:** initiatives to launch or expand childcare capacity, improve the quality of existing programs, and provide financial assistance to families in need.
- **Childhood and Youth Development Programs:** programs that target early intervention, wraparound supports to provide for health, mental health and development services, evidence-based home visiting, and family support services.
- **Access to Out-of-School Programming and Enrichment Opportunities:** programs that provide high-quality, affordable out-of-school care and enrichment opportunities for PreK-12th grade students.

### Potential Indicators/Outputs:

- # of Children (0-5 years) enrolled in high-quality early childhood programs
- # of Children receiving literacy or numeracy supports
- # of Students receiving health, mental health, or developmental services or prevention supports
- # of Parents/Caregivers receiving information, resources, tools, training, referrals, or counseling services
- # of Students gaining knowledge or skills within high-quality out of school care and enrichment programs
- # of Staff trained to support safe, stable, nurturing environments for children, youth, and the adults that care for them

### Community Outcomes:

- **Improved School Readiness and Social Development:** Children who participate in high-quality early childhood education programs are more likely to enter school ready to learn. They may demonstrate better language and literacy skills, math skills, social-emotional skills, and cognitive abilities, setting a strong foundation for academic success.
- **Narrowed Achievement Gaps:** By providing all children with a strong educational foundation from an early age and providing academic supports and interventions, we aim to help mitigate disparities in academic achievement and longer-term outcomes in educational attainment.
- **Increased Caregiver Engagement:** To maximize effectiveness, early childhood and youth development programs often involve parents and caregivers in their children's learning and development. By providing support, resources, and education to families, we can help strengthen parent-child relationships, increase family involvement in education, and empower caregivers to support their children's holistic development.
- **Positive Health Outcomes:** Childhood and youth development initiatives contribute to improved physical and mental health outcomes for children by promoting healthy behaviors, strengthening social relationships, providing access to healthcare services, and addressing drivers of overall well-being.
- **Economic Benefits:** Investing in early childhood education and positive youth development yields long-term economic benefits for individuals and society as a whole. By equipping children with the skills they need to succeed academically and in the workforce, these initiatives can lead to higher earning potential, reduced reliance on social services, and increased economic productivity.

## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Healthy communities are places where all residents have equitable access to the resources and opportunities needed to thrive physically, mentally, and socially. Within this impact area, we prioritize collaborative efforts to address reduce risk factors, increase health promotion and prevention, and address root causes of health disparities. Healthy communities are characterized by strong social connections, safe environments, and accessible, quality healthcare services. UWGK has a systems focus in food security as a determinant of health and social connectedness, exploring its linkages to poverty and to overall well-being for both children and adults.

### Focus Areas:

- **Access to Mental Health Services and Social Connectedness:** development and expansion of programs that support health outreach, preventive care, and mental health services, including screening, education, counseling, therapy, support groups, crisis intervention, and treatment
- **Access to Affordable, Healthy Food:** a systems approach that encompasses food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste and recovery, including food skills, food enterprise, and food systems planning and innovation.
- **Women's and Maternal Health:** access to prenatal and postpartum care, maternal education, maternal mental health, domestic violence prevention/intervention

### Potential Indicators/Outputs:

- # of Participants accessing mental health services
- # of Individuals served with access to affordable healthcare services and supports
- # of Individuals served through health outreach or health education efforts
- # of Individuals with increased food knowledge and skills
- # of Individuals provided access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally relevant food

### Community Outcomes:

- Increased access to healthcare services through increased collaboration among diverse stakeholders to address determinants of health
- Improved mental health outcomes, including increased awareness, access to resources and destigmatization of mental illness
- Increased self-reliance for individuals and communities to meet their food and health-related needs
- Enhanced, equitable food system ensuring food security for all
- Reduced rates of chronic disease and improved health outcomes
- Enhanced social support networks and community resilience to address health disparities and to promote overall well-being
- Greater utilization of community resources and programs to support healthy lifestyles, including fitness initiatives, the development of food knowledge and skills, chronic disease management prevention and education
- Empowerment of individuals and families to make informed decisions about their health and advocate for their needs within their communities

## OUR GRANTMAKING PROCESS

### Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must have tax-exempt status under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code or have a fiscal sponsor who is a 501(c)3. Additional information about fiscal sponsorship can be accessed through the grant application
  - This will be verified using Charity Check by Candid.
- Applicants must have a Board of Directors that meets regularly as directed by the IRS and organization's bylaws
- Applicants must provide programs or services in at least one of the following counties included in the grantmaking footprint of the United Way of Greater Knoxville: Claiborne, Grainger, Jefferson, Knox, and Union
- Applicants must have programs or services that align with our mission and impact priorities in Early Care & Education, Economic Mobility, and Healthy Communities

### Funding Availability

Organizations will be eligible for up to \$200,000 per year in the Community Investments grant process. The exact amount approved per organization will be based on alignment with impact priorities, the lifecycle stage/reported organizational capacity, volunteer recommendations, and staff reviews in order to match our investment targets.

This is a competitive grant process, and proposals will be considered against one another. Funding is not guaranteed even for organizations who have previously received grants from UWGK.

### How to Apply

All applications must be submitted through our grant portal, which can be accessed at <https://uwgk.org/partner>.

### Evaluation of Applications

All funding decisions are made at the discretion of the United Way of Greater Knoxville's Board of Directors based on the recommendations of volunteer committees and staff reviewers.

Staff will review applications to confirm the following:

- Completion of application and inclusion of requested documentation
- Organizational participation in community convening, collaboration, and impact-area partnerships

Volunteer review committees will evaluate applications on the following:

- Alignment with UWGK impact priorities
- Intended plan for programs and services
- Commitment to equitable outcomes

### Notifications and Additional Information

- Organizations will be notified about funding decisions through email in August 2024.
- If awarded a grant, the partner agreement will be assigned through our grant portal and must be completed before installments are paid.
- Awards will begin in September, with a biannual schedule for distribution of funds.
- Narrative and fiscal reports will be assigned through the grant portal. See timeline for specific dates.
- Any significant changes to the organization and your work should be shared with UWGK.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- May 19: 1st Stage Applications Due
- June 3: 2nd Stage Applications Available - Email Notification will Provide Access
- June 23: 2nd Stage Applications Due
- August 23: Organization Notifications
- August 30: Agreements Due

September 2024: 1st Installment of Grant Awards Distributed



UWGK will host online Office Hours to answer questions, with multiple opportunities throughout the grant process. Links to register for office hours sessions are available through your grant application form.

May 7 • 10:00-10:30 am

May 14 • 3:00-3:30 pm

May 23 • 11:00-11:30 am

May 29 • 2:00-2:30 pm

June 6 • 10:00-10:30 am

June 13 • 3:00-3:30 pm

June 20 • 3:00-3:30 pm