

## 2024 Request for Proposals – Impact Fund

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### Introduction

United Way of the Midlands (UWM) is pleased to offer its 2024 Impact Plan for grant funding. Opportunities in this Plan will support the great work of our local non-profit community and collaborative work with partners. We are proud to work alongside community partners to deliver quality programs, address critical needs and create pathways for resiliency and success. Thank you to our partners, volunteers, and donors for your dedication to this work.

### Background on UWM

United Way of the Midlands (UWM) was established in Columbia in 1925. We provide critical health and human services needs in Calhoun, Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland, and Orangeburg Counties. With a mission to unite people and resources to improve the quality of life in the Midlands, United Way of the Midlands focuses on helping provide a strong safety net, space for non-profit collaboration, and pathways to resiliency. More than 30,000 donors support United Way, and we work with 70 Community Impact Partners. Our annual impact on the Midlands is over \$20 million.

### Our Work

UWM deploys community resources through direct programs including operations of a free dental and eye clinic and literacy tutoring program, coordinator of community systems such as our role as lead of the local homeless coalition, and funding for community programs. We served over 40,000 people last year through these collaborations. UWM offers grant funding through a variety of sources, including our Community Impact fund and the federal Emergency Food and Shelter Program and Continuum of Care.

### Assessment of Community Needs

In 2021, UWM completed a new Community Assessment. This was the first scan of community needs and aspirations in several years. The Assessment process used data in our focus areas of health, education, and financial stability plus a series of community conversations to include the voice of people who live and work in our six-counties. The Assessment showed systems-level needs such as deeper collaboration among the non-profit sector, improved community voice and collaboration in local government policy making, and the effects of the Pandemic on community engagement and overall well-being. The Assessment also highlighted the deep need for affordable housing, workforce development, and supports for children and families such as childcare, youth development programs, and career exploration. Other needs included mental health supports due to the Pandemic, fresh food access, transportation, and supports for home repair. UWM's 2021 Community Assessment can be found at [www.uway.org](http://www.uway.org)

## INVESTMENT PRIORITIES 2024-2025

### Overview

UWM believes that strong foundations for success are created through meeting basic needs, collaboration with local partners, and addressing root causes of issues. Homelessness, food insecurity and other basic need gaps are indicators people have other unmet needs that are causing instability. Our goal is to play a role in addressing basic needs, but to look further upstream to more comprehensive solutions rather than one-time assistance that often perpetuates cycles of poverty.

## For FY 2024-25, UWM will focus Impact grant funding in four key areas:

### Competitive funding categories

1. Ensuring a strong safety net
2. Creating pathways to resiliency

### Special funding categories (See page 5 for more information)

3. Capacity building, especially non-profits serving more rural areas
4. Two-generation approach to creating pathways out of poverty for families with children

## FY 2024-25 COMPETITIVE FUNDING CATEGORIES

**Applications with be accepted until March 15, 2024, at 5:00 pm** through the [e-CImpact Database](#). Late applications will not be accepted. Priority points in application scoring will be allocated to programs primarily serving or located in our more rural counties of Calhoun, Fairfield, Newberry, and Orangeburg.

### Ensuring a strong safety net

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UWM plays a significant role in supporting our basic needs safety net in the Midlands. From funding, convening partners, and providing leadership, we help people reach and maintain stability. In continuing this role, UWM will allocate competitive grant funding towards projects in the six-county region that support basic needs.

Eligible safety net grant strategies include:

- Food insecurity
- Healthcare, including specialty care
- Behavioral healthcare
- Housing services (sheltering, case management, etc.)
- Home repair

### Creating pathways to resiliency

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While ensuring basic needs are met is the first step, addressing root causes of economic instability is critical to creating successful pathways. Resources to develop these pathways to long-term stability will be awarded to programs through our competitive grant process.

Eligible resiliency pathways grant strategies include:

- Early education support
- Youth development and social emotional learning
- Workforce development
- Financial education

## Tiered grant approach for Competitive Funding

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### Tier 1 \$5,000 - \$14,999

- Intended for smaller organizations or specific interventions of larger organizations
- More limited application narrative and reporting
- Financial audit additional documentation needed for organization above \$500,000 in revenue

### Tier 2 \$15,000 - \$74,999

- Intended for mid to larger size organizations supporting significant levels of work
- Requires additional documentation such as copy of independent audit for all applicants regardless of revenue size

### Tier 3 \$75,000 - \$200,000

- Support significant levels of work that demonstrate deep collaboration with community partners
- Supports evidenced-based or evidence-informed practices
- Demonstrates processes for review of programs for performance improvements
- Uses a trauma-informed approach
- Independent audit required

### DEADLINES

**Full applications for competitive funding due March 15, 2024, at 5:00 pm**

Awards will be announced for competitive funding by May 16, 2024

## FAQs for competitive grants

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### Grant Eligibility for competitive grants

- All applicants must be UWM certified Impact Partners being in good standing or having the ability to achieve certification by April 24, 2024. For more information about becoming a UWM partner agency, please contact Elliott Epps at [eepps@uway.org](mailto:eepps@uway.org)
- Local non-profits seeking resources that are not certified Impact Partners are encouraged to partner with eligible agencies.

### Ideal Grantee

- Demonstrates meaningful partnerships with both the people they serve and other community agencies that offer similar or complementary services.
- Is thoughtful of inclusion and equity in their organizational practices and program operations.
- Has a healthy mix of funding supporting the program/organization. UWM's resources should not be the majority of funding.
- Understands the effects of trauma and uses approaches that incorporates trauma-informed care or other practices.
- Uses evidenced-based, promising practices, or employs strategies driven by direct consumer input on effectiveness.
- Reviews program for performance improvements or adjustments on a regular basis.
- Reviews program delivery, staff training, and agency policies for bias or perpetuation of structural racism.
- Applies for only essential resources needed.

**On the application, there's an option to be considered by Women in Philanthropy. What does that mean?**

Women in Philanthropy (WIP), an engagement network of UWM, are donor investors that focus their resources on increasing the financial stability of women and women with children. WIP prioritizes programs that serve women that may have economic instability, but not in active crisis such as currently experiencing homelessness. Agencies that wish to be considered by WIP should indicate this on the application using the check box. WIP encourages opportunities for their members to provide volunteer service with the program. If not selected by WIP, programs will automatically be included in the remaining Community Impact application review teams for further consideration.

**What is the start and end date?**

Grants will start July 1, 2024 and end June 30, 2025. Funds must be expended during the grant period. Carryover funds are not allowed.

**Are grants reimbursable?**

No, UWM distributes funds monthly in equal amounts sent by direct deposit.

**How much should we apply for?**

Agencies should submit one application for competitive funding categories to address all strategies listed within our focus areas and outcomes they propose to address. We use a tiered application system with additional program, reporting, and financial accountability as the amount requested increases. The minimum grant size is \$5,000. Typically, UWM will not provide grant funding to a single agency more than \$200,000 across all competitive strategies, and most grants will be lower than the maximum amount. You will be asked to provide a rationale for the amount requested. Grants of any level are not guaranteed even for programs previously funded.

**Is there an average grant size?**

No, but we would consider grants above \$75,000 significant and most awards would not be at that level or above.

**Should we apply for more than we need, just in case?**

No, apply for the essential resources needed only. Sometimes applicants will apply for slightly more than their needs in case grant awards are less than hoped. However, UWM will likely not have time to negotiate budgets so applying for more than what is essential may result in an award not being issued. Also, a scoring element on the application is the rationale for the amount requested and return on investment.

**How are funding decisions made?**

UWM deploys trained volunteers to review applications according to a scoring matrix based on return on investment, rationale for amount requested, application quality, partnerships with complementary programs, and clarity. UWM's Community Impact Committee makes funding recommendations to our Board of Directors. Grants are typically funded according to scoring results; however, special consideration is given to programs operating in rural areas and programs demonstrating a high level of community partnerships.

**You referred to a 'healthy mix of funding'. What does that mean?**

Typically, UWM will not fund more than half of a program or organization's total budget (if the organization only has the single program you are seeking support). This applies to requesting more than 50% of a staff position as well.

**Are grants renewable next year?**

FY 2024-25 grants are one-year and not “renewable”. Each grant year is a new competitive process.

**Is there a match requirement?**

No, there is not a matching funds requirement for competitive category grants. If you are working with the two-generation Siemer model, a match is required (contact staff for details).

**Can we apply for general operating support?**

Yes, but your work must address UWM’s focus areas and catalogue of outcomes. We do not have caps on operating versus program specific support; however, budgets should be detailed and requests reasonable. In other words, apply for the funds you need to make a program work but only request essential resources. Applying for more than the essential amount needed may result in a lack of an award.

**As a United Way partner agency are we guaranteed funds?**

No, grant funds are highly competitive. We typically have many more requests than resources will allow to be funded. At times, even quality programs or quality applications cannot be awarded based on resource levels. Receiving funding in a previous grant cycle does not guarantee additional support.

**Are there any special requirements for certain grants?**

If you serve people experiencing homelessness, participation in the Homeless Management Information System and participation in the annual point-in-time count are required.

**When will we hear about a funding decision?**

Awards will be announced by May 16, 2024.

**Can we submit multiple applications?**

No, submit one application for all competitive funding category strategies/outcomes proposed.

**FY 2024-24 SPECIAL FUNDING CATEGORIES**

Special funding categories are separate from the 2024-2025 Competitive Funding. UWM had a Two-Generation partner solicitation in 2022 and will continue to work with these partners for the 2024-25 cycle. Capacity Building opportunities will be announced throughout the year.

**How do we ask questions?**

UWM will host a virtual information session on Monday, February 12, 2024 at 1pm. [Click here to join the meeting.](#) After the session, if you have questions contact Will Price at [wprice@uway.org](mailto:wprice@uway.org).

[Apply Now for Competitive Impact Funding](#)