



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

2026-2027 Annual Grant Cycle

United Way Fox Cities

*Initial Release Date: **September 30, 2025***

Introduction

United Way Fox Cities (UWFC) improves lives by bringing diverse people together to build a stronger, more caring community for everyone. Through our Annual Grant cycle, UWFC supports nonprofit partners that strengthen youth opportunities, build a healthy community, and promote financial security.

This 2026-2027 grant cycle represents a new approach for United Way Fox Cities. Based on extensive community and nonprofit input, we are testing new ways to simplify applications, reduce burden, respond to community needs, and improve transparency. We expect this process to be iterative. Creating something effective requires two-way communication. We will continue to provide opportunities for feedback as we develop this new funding model.

This grant opportunity follows a two-step process designed to reduce unnecessary work for nonprofits. First, all applicants must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). Second, only organizations invited after the LOI stage may submit a full application. The LOI allows UWFC to confirm eligibility and fit before inviting organizations to complete the full application.

CONTENTS

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)	1
Introduction	1
PURPOSE AND FUNDING OVERVIEW	3
FUNDING PRIORITIES AND SCOPE	4
How We Got Here	4
Funding Priorities by Impact Area	5
ORGANIZATIONAL ELIGIBILITY	6
USE OF FUNDS	6
Allowable Uses Of Funds	6
Ineligible Uses Of Funds	7
LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)	8
FULL APPLICATION	9
REVIEW CRITERIA	9
REPORTING AND LEARNING	9
TERMS AND CONDITIONS	10
NON-DISCRIMINATION	10
QUESTIONS AND SUPPORT	11
UPDATE LOG	11

PURPOSE AND FUNDING OVERVIEW

For the May 2026-April 2027 grant cycle, United Way Fox Cities (UWFC) will prioritize programs that address **immediate support** and **stabilizing essentials**, in response to community input and the current shifting landscape of local safety net services.

Geography: Outagamie, Northern Winnebago, and Calumet Counties

Grant period: May 2026-April 2027

Payment schedule: Grants will be paid in monthly disbursements

Funding availability: UWFC commits to funding only what we raise, therefore our grant decisions are made after our annual fundraising campaign concludes, typically in March.

Timeline:

Application Step	Date
Letter of Intent Opens	October 1, 2025
Letter of Intent Due	October 31, 2025, 5pm
Invitation to Apply	November 12, 2025
Grant Application Opens	December 1, 2025
Grant Application Due	January 30, 2026, 5pm
Decision Announcement	April 14, 2026

Office hours are available during the open LOI period in October and for invited grant applicants during December and January. See our Grant Resources page for more information.

FUNDING PRIORITIES AND SCOPE

In the 2026-27 funding cycle, United Way Fox Cities will invest in organizations that provide **immediate support** and **stabilizing essentials** for individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of, hardship or instability.

Services may include responses to an urgent crisis (such as loss of housing, violence, or sudden health needs) or provide consistent access to essentials that keep people from falling into crisis (such as daily childcare, afterschool care, or ongoing mental health treatment). Programs that primarily serve individuals who are stable and not at risk of falling into crisis— such as general wellness, enrichment, or recreational activities – are not in scope.

Please reach out to our team at grants@unitedwayfoxcities.org or visit our office hours during the open LOI period to clarify funding priorities and alignment with your services.

How We Got Here

United Way Fox Cities organizes its work under four Impact Areas:

- **Youth Opportunity** – Helping young people realize their full potential
- **Healthy Community** – Improving health and wellbeing for all
- **Financial Security** – Creating a stronger financial future for every generation
- **Community Resiliency** – Addressing urgent needs today for a better tomorrow

Through these areas, we combine grantmaking, partnerships, coalitions, and advocacy to address both urgent needs and long-term systems change.

In July 2025, UWFC hosted Help Us Focus sessions with community members, nonprofit partners, and volunteers. These sessions confirmed that our community values a both/and approach – investing in crisis response today and stabilizing essentials that prevent people from falling into crisis tomorrow.

As a result, the **2026–27 Annual Grant Cycle** will invest in direct services under the first three Impact Areas: **Youth Opportunity, Healthy Community, and Financial Security**. These are the areas where grant funding can most directly support individuals and families.

The fourth Impact Area, **Community Resiliency**, is equally important but is addressed through other UWFC-led strategies rather than this grant process. A core piece of Community Resiliency is **211**, our 24/7 helpline that connects individuals to critical resources, tracks emerging needs, and strengthens the region’s overall capacity to respond to crises. We also pursue resiliency through building nonprofit capacity, coalitions, partnerships, and advocacy to address systemic challenges such as childcare, housing, and mental health.

Funding Priorities by Impact Area

Youth Opportunity

- **Childcare and Early Childhood** – safe, reliable, accessible, or emergency/respice care.
- **Afterschool** – structured, reliable out-of-school-time programs that provide daily supervision, academic or social support, and safe environments for children and youth who would otherwise be at risk without care.
- **Safe Adults** – services that provide access to frequent, reliable and sustained adult relationships that address critical hardship or instability.

Healthy Community

- **Physical and Dental Health Care** – access to care for uninsured or underinsured individuals. Connections to medical and dental homes, and insurance navigation.
- **Safety from Violence** – crisis hotlines, shelter, safety planning, crisis support, or other immediate support and responsive programming for survivors of violence and abuse.
- **Nutrition and Food Security** – same-day groceries, prepared meals, food boxes, culturally relevant staples, or consistent access to nutrition needed for daily health.
- **Mental Health and Substance Use** – Services that stabilizes individuals who would otherwise experience crisis.

Financial Security

- **Housing** – emergency shelter/lodging, eviction prevention, utility shut-off prevention and restoration, urgent habitability repairs (e.g., furnace, burst pipes), and short-term rent assistance to maintain stability.
- **Transportation** – services that support transportation to access healthcare, basic needs, or access to employment.
- **Basic Needs** – providing daily essentials that allow people to live with dignity.

ORGANIZATIONAL ELIGIBILITY

Organizations requesting funds must:

- Have an active volunteer board of directors.
- Be tax-exempt as described in section **501(c)(3)** of the Internal Revenue Code and in good standing with the **State of Wisconsin**.
- Serve individuals in Outagamie, Calumet, or Northern Winnebago counties.
- Deliver at least one service within the funding priorities listed below.

UWFC does not fund:

- Organizations that discriminate (see [Non-Discrimination](#) section).
- Organizations that refuse services based on religion or require attendance in religious activities as a condition of service.
- Organizations with a primary focus on animal welfare, arts, or the environment.

USE OF FUNDS

Allowable Uses of Funds

- Salaries/staffing, and fringe
- Transportation costs needed to deliver or access services
- Supplies/materials necessary for services
- Direct assistance to resolve immediate needs
- Reasonable operations/overhead necessary to deliver services

All costs must be necessary, reasonable, documented, and tied to eligible operations or services within the grant period.

Ineligible Uses of Funds

- Uncontrolled cash or cash-equivalent distributions (e.g., gift cards) *without* documented controls/audit trail.
- Capital projects, renovations, vehicles, or major equipment purchases.
- Debt reduction/servicing: no loan payments, deficit coverage, or organization debt relief (*does not restrict client rent/utility arrears paid to prevent eviction/shut off*)
- Endowments or investment funds: no creation or expansion of endowments, reserves, or capital campaigns
- Program development, research, pilots not identified in application materials
- Advocacy or lobbying
- Sponsorships or fundraisers
- Costs incurred before the award period
- Alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, weapons, or ammunition
- Professional development or conferences
- Stand-alone administrative/technology upgrades
- Funds may not be used to supplant funding or resources that are available from other sources

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

All applicants must complete a Letter of Intent (LOI) to be considered for funding. The LOI will confirm eligibility and alignment with UWFC's funding priorities before inviting organizations to submit a full application. Submitting an LOI does not guarantee an invitation to apply.

Submission instructions

- Opens: **October 1, 2025** | Due: **October 31, 2025, at 5:00 pm**
- Support: grants@unitedwayfoxcities.org | Optional office hours available.

LOI Questions

Organizational information

1. Organization Name, Employer Identification Number (EIN), and Address
2. Website
3. Primary grant contact person (name, title, email, phone)

Eligibility Confirmations

All certifications must be checked to be eligible.

- ☐ We have an active volunteer board of directors
- ☐ We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in good standing with the IRS and State of Wisconsin
- ☐ We serve individuals in Outagamie, Calumet, or Northern Winnebago Counties
- ☐ Our funding request fits within UWFC's 2026-27 funding priorities
- ☐ We comply with UWFC's Non-Discrimination policy

Funding Alignment

4. Briefly describe what the requested funds will support and how this aligns with our funding priorities. (2,000 characters)
5. How do you know if you are serving the people most in need? (2,000 characters)

Funding Request

6. What is the estimated grant amount you are requesting? A range is acceptable at this stage.

FULL APPLICATION

The full application and its review criteria are currently in development and will be released prior to the LOI deadline of October 31st.

Submission instructions:

Organizations selected to apply will complete the full application through our EC-Impact portal. Once informed of selection to apply, applicants are strongly encouraged to register and begin setting up their account early, as technical questions occasionally arise.

Technical support: For questions about EC-Impact, contact grants@unitedwayfoxcities.org. UWFC will also host optional office hours during both LOI and application phases.

REVIEW CRITERIA

UWFC aims to make the review process transparent and fair. Applications will be reviewed for their alignment with funding priorities, demonstration of community need, feasibility of the proposed activities, and the organization's ability to track and report outputs.

The detailed review criteria and scoring rubric are in development and will incorporate ongoing input and feedback.

REPORTING AND LEARNING

UWFC recognizes that learning is as valuable as numbers, and reporting is designed to be light-touch and reflective. Grantees will be expected to share both quantitative results and insights from their work.

The specific reporting format and requirements are still being developed and will incorporate ongoing input and feedback. Final instructions will be shared prior to the full application deadline on **January 31, 2026**.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By accepting funding, grantees agree to the following:

- **Use of funds:** Funds must be used for eligible services within the grant period and UWFC service area.
- **Payments:** Disbursed monthly through ACH.
- **Records & Audit:** Grantee must retain records for at least three years or by standard document retention guidelines; UWFC reserves the right to request documentation of costs and results.
- **Compliance:** Grantee agrees to non-discrimination, antiterrorism certification, and adherence to all applicable laws.

Final terms and conditions will be detailed in the grant award letter.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

United Way Fox Cities works to build a more caring Fox Cities so all can thrive. UWFC will not knowingly fund organizations that discriminate based on ability to pay, social or economic class, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, pregnancy, disability, family status, race, color, national origin, religion, or any other characteristic protected by law.

UWFC also recognizes that some organizations focus their efforts on addressing disparities among specific populations. Services designed for particular groups (e.g., racial or ethnic communities, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals) are eligible if participation is open to all within that group and practices are not exclusionary on the basis of other characteristics listed above.

QUESTIONS AND SUPPORT

Attend office hours posted here: <https://unitedwayfoxcities.org/grant-resources/>

Email grants@unitedwayfoxcities.org

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will be posted to our website:

<https://unitedwayfoxcities.org/grant-resources/>

UPDATE LOG

Date	Change Description
September 30, 2025	Initial Release