REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

United Way Fox Cities

2027-2028 Annual Grant Cycle

This Request for Applications (RFA) explains who is eligible to apply, what UWFC will fund, how to apply, how requests are reviewed, and what is expected of funded organizations. It also includes the Letter of Interest (LOI) and Full Application questions.

CONTENTS

Request for Applications 1

1. Overview 2

2. Funding Priorities and Scope 3

3. Funding Principles 5

4. Organizational Eligibility 6

5. Use of Funds 7

6. Letter of Interest (LOI) 8

7. Full Application 10

8. Review and Decision Process 18

9. Reporting, Learning & Partnership 19

10. Award Requirements and Terms 20

11. Non-Discrimination 21

12. Questions, Support & Updates 21

1. OVERVIEW

United Way Fox Cities (UWFC) improves lives by bringing diverse people together to build a stronger, more caring community for everyone. Through the Annual Grant Cycle, UWFC invests in nonprofit partners whose direct services help individuals and families meet immediate needs, maintain stability, and reduce the likelihood of future crisis.

All interested organizations begin by submitting a short Letter of Interest (LOI). UWFC reviews LOIs to determine which organizations will be invited to submit a Full Application.

Invited applicants will provide more detail about their services, community need, anticipated reach, results, and budget. The Full Application should be generally consistent with the LOI. Applicants considering significant changes should contact UWFC before submitting.

KEY INFORMATION

Item	2027–2028 Cycle
Letter of Interest (LOI) period	November 2-23, 2026, at 11:59pm
LOI Application	Apply for Letter of Interest here: [LOI Application]
Full Application Period	By invitation only - December 14 - January 31, 11:59pm
Service area	Outagamie County, Calumet County, and Northern Winnebago County
Grant period	May 1, 2027–April 30, 2028
Payment schedule	Monthly disbursements through ACH
Funding availability	UWFC commits to funding only what we raise. Final award decisions are made after the annual campaign concludes.
Funding decisions	On or near April 20, 2027
Minimum funding request	$5,000
Questions	grants@unitedwayfoxcities.org

Optional office hours will be available during the open LOI period and during the Full Application period. Office hour information and FAQs will be posted on UWFC's Grant Resources webpage.

2. FUNDING PRIORITIES AND SCOPE

For the 2027–2028 Annual Grant Cycle, United Way Fox Cities will fund direct services that help individuals and families meet immediate needs, maintain stability, and prevent future crises.

This funding cycle focuses on people experiencing or at risk of hardship or instability. General wellness, enrichment, or recreational programs that primarily serve people who are not at risk are outside the scope of this funding cycle.

Applicants must demonstrate how their proposed services align with at least one funding priority listed below. Requests may align with more than one priority when appropriate.

UNITED WAY IMPACT AREAS

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

UWFC's Impact Areas describe the broad areas of our community impact work. For this Annual Grant Cycle, applicants must align with at least one specific Funding Priority under Youth Opportunity, Healthy Community, or Financial Security.

Community Resiliency is an important UWFC Impact Area and is supported through other UWFC initiatives rather than this Annual Grant Cycle.

2027-2028 FUNDING PRIORITIES

Youth Opportunity

- **Childcare & Early Childhood** – Safe, reliable, accessible childcare and early childhood services for families experiencing or at risk of hardship or instability, particularly those who may otherwise lack access to childcare, including emergency or respite care.
- **Out-of-School Time** -- Structured before-and-after school, summer, or other out-of-school time programs that provide consistent supervision, support, and safe environments for children and youth who may otherwise lack access to reliable care or support.
- **Supportive Adult Relationships** – Services intentionally designed to connect young people experiencing or at risk of hardship or instability with frequent, reliable, and sustained relationships with supportive adults.

Healthy Community

- **Physical and Dental Health Care** – access to medical, dental, or preventive care for uninsured or underinsured individuals, including connections to medical and dental homes and insurance navigation.
- **Safety from Violence** – crisis hotlines, emergency shelter, safety planning, crisis response, or other immediate supports for survivors of violence and abuse.
- **Food Security** – same-day groceries, prepared meals, food boxes, culturally relevant foods, or other reliable access to nutritious food.
- **Mental Health and Substance Use** – crisis intervention, stabilization, counseling, treatment, recovery supports, or other services that prevent or respond to behavioral health crises.
- **Access, Navigation & Specialized Supports** – Culturally responsive, individualized, or specialized services that help people experiencing barriers access essential resources, navigate complex systems, maintain stability, and increase independence. This may include services for people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, culturally specific

communities, or other populations whose needs span multiple service systems or require tailored support.

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.
- **Essential Needs Assistance -** Providing essential goods or direct financial assistance that help individuals and families meet immediate daily living needs and maintain stability and dignity, including hygiene items, diapers, clothing, household necessities, and emergency financial assistance not otherwise addressed within another funding priority.

3. FUNDING PRINCIPLES

Funding Priorities describe the types of services UWFC seeks to support. Funding Principles guide how UWFC reviews requests, makes funding decisions, and works with funded organizations.

Local Impact. UWFC funds organizations that operate and provide services within the Fox Cities service area. Organizations with a broader regional footprint should clearly demonstrate their local presence, services, and impact within the Fox Cities, including the portion of their work and population served within the region.

Sustainability & Diversification. UWFC considers a program's reliance on United Way funding as part of its assessment of long-term sustainability. Programs should demonstrate appropriate funding diversification or a realistic plan toward greater sustainability, recognizing that exceptions may be appropriate for new programs, uniquely impactful services, or critical unmet needs.

Capacity Building as Strategic Investment. UWFC considers capacity-building requests when they directly support the delivery or improvement of services aligned with an eligible funding priority. Consideration is also given to how these investments strengthen long-term organizational effectiveness, improve service quality, or reduce duplication and gaps in the local network of services.

Duplication & Ecosystem Health. UWFC considers how proposed services fit with other services available in the Fox Cities. Applicants should demonstrate how they coordinate with others, provide something different, or address needs that existing services cannot fully meet.

Performance & Continuous Improvement. UWFC values meaningful measurement, participant feedback, learning, and the use of information to improve services. Measurement expectations should be proportionate to the nature and scale of the work.

Equity & Community Need. UWFC considers demonstrated community need and disparities in access, outcomes, or service availability, with particular consideration for populations experiencing greater barriers or unmet needs.

Transparency & Communication. UWFC seeks open, timely communication with applicants and funded partners and expects organizations to communicate significant changes, challenges, or opportunities that could affect funded work.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL ELIGIBILITY

Organizations requesting funds must:

- ✓ Have an active volunteer board of directors.
- ✓ Be tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and in good standing with the IRS and State of Wisconsin or operate under an eligible 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor.
- ✓ Provide eligible services to individuals in Outagamie County, Calumet County, or Northern Winnebago County.

- ✓ Request support for work that aligns with at least one 2027–2028 funding priority.
- ✓ Comply with UWFC's Non-Discrimination policy and applicable laws and grant requirements.

UWFC does not fund organizations whose primary focus is animal welfare, arts, or the environment through this Annual Grant Cycle. Organizations may not require participation in religious activities as a condition of receiving funded services.

Fiscal Sponsorship (If Applicable)

UWFC accepts applications from groups operating under an eligible 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor must be responsible for receiving, managing, and overseeing grant funds on behalf of the sponsored group.

Applicants must identify their fiscal sponsor in the LOI and provide a current, signed fiscal sponsorship agreement if invited to submit a Full Application. The arrangement must remain in effect during the proposed grant period.

UWFC may request additional information or clarification regarding the fiscal sponsorship arrangement during the application review process.

5. USE OF FUNDS

ALLOWABLE USES

- ✓ Salaries, staffing, and fringe benefits connected to eligible services.
- ✓ Transportation costs needed to deliver or access eligible services.
- ✓ Supplies and materials necessary to provide eligible services.
- ✓ Direct assistance used to resolve eligible needs, with appropriate controls and documentation.
- ✓ Reasonable operating and overhead costs necessary to deliver eligible services.
- ✓ Capacity-building expenses that directly support the delivery or improvement of services aligned with an eligible Funding Priority.

INELIGIBLE USES

- × Cash or gift card assistance without appropriate tracking, documentation, and safeguards.
- × Capital projects, major renovations, vehicles, or major equipment purchases.
- × Organizational debt reduction, deficit coverage, loan servicing, endowments, reserves, or capital campaigns.
- × Activities or pilots not described in the approved request.
- × Lobbying, political campaign activity, sponsorships, or fundraisers.
- × Costs incurred before or after the grant period.
- × Alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, weapons, or ammunition.
- × Professional development or conferences
- × Stand-alone administrative or technology upgrades that are not part of an eligible capacity-building request.
- × Expenses already covered by another funding source (supplanting).

6. LETTER OF INTEREST (LOI)

All applicants must submit an LOI to be considered. The LOI is intentionally brief and allows UWFC to confirm eligibility, local fit, priority alignment, and proposed scope before asking organizations to complete a Full Application. Submission of an LOI does not guarantee an invitation to apply or an award.

Submit your LOI here between November 2 and November 23, 11:59pm: LOI Application

LOI QUESTIONS

LOI Area	Information Requested
Organization Information	Organization name; EIN; organization address; website; primary contact name, title, email, and phone.
Fiscal Sponsorship	Is your organization or group applying under a fiscal sponsor?

Program or Service	Program or service name, if the request supports a specific program or service.
Estimated Funding Request	Estimated UWFC funding request **and** estimated annual program/service budget. *Minimum funding request: $5,000. Requests below $5,000 will not be considered.*
Eligibility Confirmations	Confirm active volunteer board; 501(c)(3) status and good standing (or operate under an eligible fiscal sponsor); service in the UWFC service area; alignment with funding priorities; and compliance with UWFC requirements.
Funding Priority Selection	Select the funding priority that most directly aligns with this request.
Additional Funding Priorities	Select additional funding priorities that this request meaningfully addresses.
Request Summary	Briefly describe what UWFC funds would support and how the request aligns with the selected funding priority or priorities.
Priority Populations	Which priority population(s) does this program or service intentionally seek to reach or specifically design services to support?
Geography Selection	Identify the Fox Cities geography served through this request. Outagamie, Calumet, and/or Northern Winnebago Counties
Geographic Alignment	Briefly describe the program's geographic reach and how it meaningfully serves individuals within the UWFC service area.
Rural Outreach (Optional–for learning purposes only)	UWFC is gathering information to better understand how organizations reach rural communities and identify opportunities for future outreach and partnerships. Responses will not affect invitations to submit a full application or funding decisions.

	Does your organization have strategies, locations, outreach, partnerships, or service models specifically designed to reach rural communities? (Yes/Partially/No) If yes or partially, please briefly describe your organization's rural outreach efforts.

The LOI establishes the proposed scope of the funding request. Organizations invited to submit a Full Application should generally maintain the same program/service, priorities, and overall scope. Contact UWFC before making a significant change.

7. FULL APPLICATION

Only organizations invited by UWFC after LOI review may submit a Full Application. Applicants should focus all responses on the work included in the funding request and on its impact within the UWFC service area.

The Full Application should remain consistent with the scope described in the applicant's Letter of Interest, including the funding priorities, priority populations, services, and overall purpose of the request. If circumstances have changed or an applicant is considering a significant change to the proposed scope, please contact UWFC before submitting the Full Application.

Instructions on how to apply, including logging in to the grant application portal (e-CImpact) will be sent within the invitation to apply.

All narrative questions in the full application have a maximum character limit of 4,000 (system limitation).

A. ORGANIZATION & FUNDING REQUEST

- Organization and contact information
- Organization Mission
- Program/service name
- Total UWFC amount requested

- Annual program/service budget
- Current Organization budget
- Geographic Reach
    - Approximately what percentage of the individuals served by your organization reside within UWFC's service area?
    - Of the individuals your organization serves within UWFC's service area, approximately what percentage reside in each of the following areas? The total should equal 100%
        - Outagamie County: ___%
        - Calumet County: ___%
        - Northern Winnebago County: ___%
    - If helpful, briefly explain your organization's geographic reach, how you estimated the percentages, or any factors that may affect how these figures are interpreted.

B. FUNDING PRIORITY & POPULATION ALIGNMENT

1. Which Funding Priority most directly aligns with this request?

Select one primary Funding Priority.

2. Does this request meaningfully address any additional Funding Priorities?

Select all that apply, if any.

3. Which populations does this request intentionally seek to reach or specifically design services to support?

Select all that apply.

Selections should remain generally consistent with your LOI. Contact UWFC if the scope of your request has changed significantly.

C. COMMUNITY NEED, SERVICES & REACH

1. **What community need will the proposed services address in the Fox Cities?**

Please describe:

- How the need shows up in the Fox Cities and why it is significant.
- Who is most affected by the need.
- Available information supporting the need, such as community data, service trends, organizational experience, or input from people affected.
- Any significant gaps or limitations in available data, if applicable.

2. **What services will you provide to address this need, why have you chosen this approach, and how are you prepared to deliver them?**

Please describe:

- The specific services or activities included in this funding request.
- How these services address the identified community need.
- What informs your approach, such as established practices, experience, or lessons learned.
- The staffing, resources, or organizational experience that support your ability to provide these services.

3. **Who will you primarily serve through this request, and why is this population a focus?**

Please describe:

- The population(s) your services are intended to reach and why they are a focus.
- Relevant barriers, disparities, or circumstances that may increase their risk of hardship or instability.
- How you make your services accessible to the people you intend to serve.

Access considerations may include cost, eligibility, transportation, language, disability access, location, hours, documentation, technology, or childcare, as applicable.

4. **Anticipated Reach during the grant period.**

Please provide your anticipated reach for the programs or services included in this funding request.

Measure	Within UWFC Service Area	Total (All Service Areas)
Anticipated unduplicated individuals served		
Anticipated households served (if applicable)		

- UWFC's service area includes Outagamie, Calumet, and Northern Winnebago counties.
- Count each individual or household only once during the grant period, regardless of how many times they receive services.
- If unduplicated counts are unavailable or inappropriate for your service model, briefly explain how you measure reach (up to 2000 characters).

D. COORDINATION & SUSTAINABILITY

1. **How do your services work alongside other organizations or services in the Fox Cities?**

Please describe:

- Key partnerships, referral relationships, or coordination efforts that support the services included in this request.
- How your services complement or differ from similar services available in the Fox Cities.
- Any significant service gaps, unmet needs, or barriers to collaboration.

You do not need to list every partner. Focus on the relationships and coordination efforts most relevant to this funding request.

2. **What are the most significant factors that could affect your ability to provide these services during the grant period, and what are you doing to address them?**

Please describe:

- Significant external factors affecting your services, such as changes in funding, policy, workforce, economic conditions, community needs, or partnerships.
- How these factors may affect service demand, organizational capacity, or program sustainability.
- Steps your organization is taking or planning to take in response to these factors.

E. MEASUREMENT, QUALITY & LEARNING

Identify **1-3 outputs** and **1-3 outcomes** *or* **quality measures** for the services included in this request.

1. Outputs

Outputs are tangible, usually numerical deliverables that answer, "What did we do?" Examples include people served, meals distributed, nights of lodging, rides, counseling sessions, or hours of care. For each output, provide:

- Output name/description.
- Baseline from a recent period, if available.
- Target for May 1, 2027–April 30, 2028.

2. Outcomes or Quality Measures

Outcomes describe meaningful changes resulting from services and answer, "What changed?" Examples include improved housing stability, increased food security, or improved mental health.

Quality measures assess how well a service was delivered or experienced and answer, "How well did we do it?" Examples include participant satisfaction, timely access to services, or successful completion of a service plan.

For each measure, provide:

- Outcome/quality measure description.
- Baseline from a recent period, if available.
- Target for May 1, 2027–April 30, 2028.

- A short description of how results are tracked and used to improve services.

3. Optional United Way Worldwide Measures

Applicants may identify United Way Worldwide shared measures they already collect and would be able to report if funded. This item is for learning and portfolio-level understanding and will not influence funding.

Please see the separate United Way Worldwide Measures document for more information.

F. BUDGET & FUNDING

1. How will you use the requested UWFC funding, and why is the amount requested appropriate for the proposed services?

Please describe:

- How UWFC funds will support the services included in your request.
- Significant expenses or assumptions, such as staffing, direct assistance, supplies, or operating costs.
- How the amount requested relates to the services and number of people you expect to serve in the Fox Cities.
- Other funding or resources supporting the proposed work, as applicable.

Your response should be consistent with the program/service budget you submit.

2. Financial Context (optional)

You may explain:

- Significant surpluses, deficits, reserve changes, or unusual financial trends.
- One-time revenue or expenses, or changes in major funding sources.
- Organizational growth, restructuring, or other circumstances that may affect how reviewers interpret your financial information.

This question is optional and does not need to repeat information already provided elsewhere.

G. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES– OPTIONAL

1. **Is there anything else UWFC should know to understand this request's alignment, local impact, or approach? (Optional)**

Please use this space only for information not already addressed elsewhere in your application. This question may be left blank.

2. **Volunteer Engagement Opportunities (Optional)**

UWFC is exploring ways to connect nonprofit partners with volunteer resources that support their work. Your responses will help us identify future opportunities and will not affect application scoring or funding decisions.

Which of the following volunteer engagement opportunities might benefit your organization? (Select all that apply.)

- **AmeriCorps:** Exploring opportunities to host an AmeriCorps member to support organizational or program capacity.
- **Skilled Volunteering:** Connecting with volunteers who can contribute professional expertise or specialized skills, such as technology, marketing, finance, strategic planning, or other organizational needs.
- **Group Volunteering:** Engaging teams of volunteers in projects, events, or activities that support your organization's mission.
- **None** of these opportunities at this time.
- **Unsure** / Would like to learn more.

3. **Application Sharing with other Funding Partners. (Optional)** Would you authorize UWFC to share your application and supporting materials with other funding partners, such as the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, for consideration of potential funding opportunities?
    a. Yes
    b. No

Your response will not affect UWFC's application review, scoring, or funding decisions. Selecting "Yes" does not guarantee funding or further consideration by the Community Foundation.

H. REQUIRED UPLOADS/ATTACHMENTS

1. Board of Directors roster.
2. Two most recent completed fiscal years of year-end financial statements.
    a. Submit financial statements for each of your organization's two most recently completed fiscal years. Statements should include, at minimum:
        i. Statement of Financial Position/Balance Sheet
        ii. Statement of Activities/Income Statement
    b. Audited statements may satisfy this requirement if they include the required information.
3. Current organizational operating budget. The board approved or current operating budget for your organization's current fiscal year.
4. Program/Service Budget – the current budget for the program(s), service(s), or work included in this funding request. Applicants may use their own format or UWFC's optional template.
5. Most recent IRS Form 990 or 990-EZ.
6. Most recent independent audited financial statements or financial review, if applicable. If your organization does not obtain an independent audit or financial review, please indicate why in the budget & funding optional narrative section.

Applicants may use their own budget format or a UWFC-provided template. Budget categories and totals should be clearly labeled and consistent across the application and attachments.

Financial Document Format

Financial documents should clearly identify the organization, fiscal year or reporting period, financial categories, and totals.

Excel (.xlsx) files are generally preferred for budgets and organization-generated financial statements. Clearly formatted PDFs are also acceptable. IRS Form 990s, audits, and independent financial reviews should be submitted as PDFs.

Please avoid screenshots, unlabeled accounting exports, or documents that are difficult to read.

END OF FULL APPLICATION GUIDANCE

8. REVIEW AND DECISION PROCESS

United Way Fox Cities (UWFC) uses a multi-step review process that brings together staff, community volunteers, and organizational leadership to inform funding decisions. Our goal is to make thoughtful, consistent funding decisions that reflect community needs, available resources, and UWFC's Funding Priorities and Principles.

Letter of Interest Review

UWFC staff review Letters of Interest (LOIs) to assess organizational eligibility, alignment with funding priorities, geographic fit, and the proposed scope of services. Organizations whose requests align with the funding cycle may be invited to submit a Full Application.

Full Application Review

Full Applications undergo several stages of review:

- **Staff Review:** UWFC staff review applications for completeness, eligibility, alignment with funding priorities, and consistency with the proposed scope. Staff may contact applicants for clarification or additional information.
- **Volunteer Financial Review:** Community volunteers with financial expertise review submitted financial information to better understand organizational financial health, sustainability, and potential risks. Financial findings provide context for funding

recommendations and are considered alongside the organization's proposed services, community impact, and other application information.

- **Community Impact Volunteer Review:** Community volunteers review applications to assess community need, proposed services, anticipated results, access and reach, coordination with other services, and the reasonableness of funding requests. Volunteers consider how the proposed work aligns with UWFC's Funding Priorities and Principles.
- **Funding Recommendations:** UWFC staff and volunteers consider application reviews, financial findings, available funding, community needs, and the overall mix of services supported to develop funding recommendations.

Final Funding Decisions

Funding recommendations are presented to UWFC's Board of Directors for consideration and approval. Final awards depend on campaign outcomes.

An invitation to submit a Full Application does not guarantee funding, and prior funding does not guarantee future funding. UWFC will communicate funding decisions to applicants following Board approval.

9. REPORTING, LEARNING & PARTNERSHIP

UWFC asks funded organizations to report on the services provided, people reached, results achieved, and lessons learned. Reporting helps UWFC and its partners understand community impact and identify opportunities for improvement. Reporting may include:

- People reached, including agreed-upon demographic and geographic information when collected.
- Actual results for the outputs and outcomes/quality measures identified in the application.
- Relevant United Way Worldwide measures identified in the application, when applicable.

- Significant changes in services, demand, access, capacity, partnerships, or community conditions.
- Learning about what worked, what changed, challenges encountered, and implications for future work.
- Partnership feedback through a separate process designed to help UWFC improve its grantmaking and partnership practices.

UWFC recognizes that organizations collect information in different ways and that not every measure is appropriate for every service. Reporting requirements are flexible and will be confirmed with funded organizations.

10. AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND TERMS

- **Use of funds** – Awarded funds must be used for the approved purpose, eligible services, UWFC service area, and grant period.
- **Payments** – Awards are generally disbursed monthly through ACH, subject to the final award agreement.
- **Changes** – Funded partners should contact UWFC before making significant changes to the approved scope, use of funds, or service model.
- **Records** – Grantees must retain appropriate financial and program records consistent with applicable requirements and organizational retention practices. UWFC may request documentation related to costs and results.
- **Compliance** – Grantees must comply with applicable laws, UWFC's non-discrimination requirements, antiterrorism certification, and terms included in the award agreement.
- **Communication** – Grantees are expected to communicate significant changes or challenges that may affect funded work in a timely manner.
- **Final terms** – The award letter and grant agreement will outline the terms and conditions of funding.

11. 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 recognizes that some organizations intentionally focus services on populations experiencing particular disparities or barriers. Services designed for particular populations may be eligible when that focus is connected to the need being addressed and practices comply with applicable law and UWFC requirements.

12. QUESTIONS, SUPPORT & UPDATES

Questions about eligibility, funding priorities, or application requirements may be directed to grants@unitedwayfoxcities.org. Applicants can also find office hours, frequently asked questions, and updates on UWFC's Grant Resources webpage.

UWFC may update or clarify this RFA during the open cycle. Material changes will be documented in an update log and communicated through the Grant Resources webpage and, when appropriate, directly to applicants.

Update Log

Date	Change
October 2026	Initial release of the 2027–2028 Annual Grant Cycle Request for Applications.