

Greater Twin Cities United Way 2025-2028 Community Investments Request for Proposal Guidelines

Summary: Greater Twin Cities United Way seeks to award grants to organizations that meet the requirements of this Request for Proposal.

Applications are due **Tuesday, October 15th, 2024 by 4pm** in our grants portal. Please visit our [website](#) to begin your application.

Key Dates for Applicants

RFP Application Information Session (sign up here)	Tuesday, August 27, 2024 at 9am
Application Opens	Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at 9am
Applications Due	Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 4pm
Applicants Notified of First Round Decisions	January 2025
Site Visits Held	January 2025 – March 2025
Applicants Notified of Final Grant Decisions	May 2025
Grant Term Begins	July 1, 2025

For more information, contact:

Email inquiries: rfp@gtcuw.org

Many community stakeholders provided insight, input, and feedback into the Community Investments funding opportunity. Thank you!

Introduction

Greater Twin Cities United Way exists to fuel lasting change toward our vision of a community where all people thrive regardless of income, race, or place. Because a prosperous future belongs to everyone, our mission is to unite changemakers, advocate for social good, and develop solutions to address the challenges no one can solve alone.

Greater Twin Cities United Way seeks to disrupt the extent to which income, race, or place predicts a person's ability to thrive. We do so by advancing household stability, educational success, and economic opportunity, toward outcomes where:

- Homelessness is prevented whenever possible, and when not, is rare, brief, and nonrecurring.
- Residents have access to food that is nutritious, culturally relevant, and affordable, toward long-term food security.
- Families and caregivers are equipped to support children in becoming successful learners, and children enter kindergarten ready to learn and thrive.
- All youth have the skills, mindsets, and relationships to choose and direct their own future success.

- All adults enter the workforce prepared for skilled employment and increased wealth.

These outcomes reflect the voices and goals of our community, and we work in partnership to achieve them. Greater Twin Cities United Way is unique because toward each outcome, we meet urgent needs and make the lasting change necessary to address the root causes of disparity.

This Request for Proposal (RFP) seeks to fund organizations and partnerships advancing equity through direct services that align with GTCUW outcomes.

Specifically, the RFP will prioritize organizations which:

- Are led by, with, and for communities that experience systemic inequities based on race, income, and place;
- pursue work that is responsive to and powered by engagement with the community served
- and hold a clear vision for a more equitable and just future for their community

Funding Opportunity Overview

- Greater Twin Cities United Way **will provide annual grants** for organizations working in the nine-county metro in one or more of our five impact areas: Housing, Food Security, Early Childhood Education, Career & Future Readiness, and Economic Opportunity.
- Greater Twin Cities United Way **makes a three-year commitment to fund organizations.** However, grants are annual and will be renewed each year for three years. Grant amounts may vary year to year based on available Greater Twin Cities United Way funds.
- Grants are **unrestricted, general operating funds** with a requirement for grantees to track program-specific outcomes over the grant period. Grant funds may not be used for direct lobbying or capital improvements.
- Organizations that receive grants will **report annually on outcomes that illustrate impact and progress over time** toward Greater Twin Cities United Way's [long-term outcomes](#).
- The minimum grant size is \$50,000 annually. Grant awards will be no more than 20% of an organization's budget. Grant awards will be dependent on total funds available and total number of applicants. In past funding cycles, most grants ranged from \$50,000-\$125,000 annually.
- Greater Twin Cities United Way seeks to **fund organizations with a strong focus on racial equity** and will prioritize these organizations when making decisions about grants.
- Greater Twin Cities United Way seeks to **fund organizations in its nine-county service region.**
- Greater Twin Cities United Way **welcomes applications from organizations doing work in partnership.** If applying as a partnership, select one organization to be the "lead applicant". The "lead applicant" will fill out the application on behalf of the partnership. If funded, the "lead applicant" will be the organization that receives grant funds. Please see Frequently Asked Questions on our [website](#) for more information on applying as a partnership.
- **Organizations new to Greater Twin Cities United Way are encouraged to apply.**

Organization Eligibility Requirements

In order to apply to this RFP, your organization must answer YES to all the following criteria.

Please note that there are additional eligibility criteria specific to each impact area. Please go to the relevant impact area section below to learn more.

- Your organization must be a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization OR a fiscally sponsored by an organization that is classified as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.
- 50% or more of the people served by your organization are living at or below [200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines](#).
- 50% or more of the people served by your organization reside in the nine-county metro region.
- Your organization provides direct services to individuals.
- Your organization has been in operation for at least two years OR you are a fiscally sponsored group that has been in operation for at least two years.
- Your organization's current budget is at least \$250,000 OR you are a fiscally sponsored group where both your group and the fiscal sponsor each have a budget of at least \$250,000.
- For organizations required to complete an audit (by law, nonprofits are only subject to audit if they have annual total revenue over \$750,000), your most recent audit DOES NOT contain a [Going Concern disclosure](#) and your audit opinion is [not qualified and free of material weaknesses](#).

For any special considerations related to these criteria, please contact us at rfp@gtcuw.org to determine your eligibility.

Note on Financial Review: Your organization must meet the financial standards for Greater Twin Cities United Way grantees based on a review of your financial documents in order to receive funding. You will be asked to upload the following financial documents as part of the application:

- Last three years of 990s
- Most recent organization budget or forecast
- Most recent board-approved audit
- 501c3 determination letter
- If applying as a fiscally sponsored organization or partnership, program or project budget
- If not funded by Greater Twin Cities United Way before, W9

Funding Priorities

These criteria are not required but your application will be scored based on how well it meets these criteria. Organizations that meet or exceed the following criteria will be most competitive for funding*:

- Your organization serves at least 60% of people who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Pacific Islander and/or People of Color.
- At least 50% of your organization's senior leadership team (defined as those who engage in such business activities as setting organizational goals, building strategic plans, and making organizational decisions) identifies as Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Pacific Islander and/or a Person of Color.
- Your organization demonstrates strong engagement with the community served that informs service design and delivery and is responsive to community issues and solutions.
- Your organization provides a holistic approach to service delivery.

- Your organization’s work aligns with, and drives change toward Greater Twin Cities United Way’s long-term outcomes.
- Your organization articulates how its work creates an impact for the people it serves.
- Your organization demonstrates a strong approach to the continuous improvement of programs and services.
- Your organization holds a clear vision for future success or impact that drives change toward racial, economic, and place-based equity.

*Greater Twin Cities United Way reserves the right to make awards that support our cultivation of a balanced grant portfolio that most effectively advances our mission, goals, and priorities across each of the 9 counties in our region. Toward this end, we **encourage applications from organizations serving rural communities** where demographic-based priorities may be difficult to meet. In addition to criteria identified in this RFP, funding decisions will include considerations of service area demographics, local disparities, geography, and scale among other factors.

Impact Areas

Organizations must apply in at least one impact area. Where there are multiple strategies within an impact area, organizations may choose one or more. Organizations are welcome to apply in multiple impact areas if you meet the eligibility requirements, and, if funded, may be funded in all or only some of the areas in which they applied. We anticipate funding organizations working in a single impact area and those working in multiple impact areas. Organizations will be responsible for reporting on required outcome measures for each impact area in which they are funded.

Applying in multiple areas will neither advantage nor disadvantage an organization in the scoring and review process.

See the tables below for the eligibility requirements, funding priorities, and required outcome measures for each impact area.

Please reach out to Greater Twin Cities United Way at rfp@gtcuw.org if you have questions about whether your organization meets these considerations.

IMPACT AREAS & LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Early Childhood Education: Families and caregivers are equipped to support children to be successful learners, and children enter kindergarten ready to learn and thrive.

Career and Future Readiness: Youth are equipped with the knowledge, skills, mindsets and relationships to choose and direct their own future path and contribute to their communities.

Housing: Homelessness is prevented where possible and when not, is rare, brief, non-reoccurring.

Food Security: People have access to food that is nutritious, culturally relevant and affordable, toward long term food security.

Economic Opportunity: Adults enter the workforce prepared for skilled employment and increased wealth.

Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education – Eligibility

In order to apply in this impact area, organizations must answer YES to all of the criteria under each strategy they are applying to. Organizations may apply under one or both strategies.

Strategy 1: Early Childhood Programs (direct service to children)

Yes/No - Programs and services are Early Childhood Education programs that serve children ages birth until starting kindergarten.

Yes/No - If the program setting is a licensed classroom or center, the license is in good standing and is 3- or 4-star Parent Aware rated.

Strategy 2: Family Education Programs (direct service to families and caregivers)

Yes/No - Programs and services serve the adult families/caregivers of children from prenatal to kindergarten.

Yes/No - Programs equip families and caregivers to support children to meet successful learning milestones by the time they enter kindergarten.

Not Eligible: District public, private, or charter public PK-12 schools or school-operated programs

Early Childhood Education – Funding Priorities

Organizations that meet or exceed the following criteria will be more competitive for funding.

Work in this area should be focused on ensuring that families and caregivers are equipped to support children in becoming successful learners, and children enter kindergarten ready to learn & thrive.

- Programs support developing and actualizing the goals of children, families, and caregivers
- Programs provide interventions and/or referrals for children not on track to become successful learners (including age-appropriate development, early literacy, social emotional learning, cultural and linguistically relevant skills)
- Programs connect families to food, housing, financial, and other supportive services in addition to core early childhood education related programming

Early Childhood Education – Required Outcome Measures

- Number of children served through Early Childhood Education programs and services
- Number of adults served through Early Childhood Education programs and services
- Number of children who are on-track to be ready for kindergarten
- Number of children not on-track for school who demonstrate growth
- Number of adults who report increased capacity to help children to be successful learners

Career and Future Readiness

Career & Future Readiness – Eligibility

In order to apply in this impact area, organizations must answer YES to all of the following criteria.

Yes/No - Programs and services serve youth ages 5-18 (grades K-12)

Yes/No - Program participants receive a minimum of 60 hours of programming/services a year

Not Eligible: District public, private, or charter public PK-12 schools or school-operated programs

Career & Future Readiness – Funding Priorities

Organizations that meet or exceed the following criteria will be more competitive for funding.

Work in this area should be focused on ensuring youth are equipped with the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and relationships to choose and direct their own future path and contribute to their communities.

- Programs support 50% or more of middle school youth (ages 11-15)
- Programs build strong social-emotional learning skills, mindsets and behaviors.
- Programs facilitate connections to caring adult relationships.
- Programs provide youth empowerment, voice, and/or leadership opportunities.
- Programs provide or connect participants to supportive services in addition to core programming. (For example: food, transportation, childcare for younger siblings, internet connectivity and/or other supports for youth and their families.)

Career & Future Readiness – Required Outcome Measures

- Number of youth served through Career and Future Readiness programs and services
- Number of youth who build strong social-emotional learning skills, mindsets and behaviors

Housing

Housing – Eligibility

In order to apply in this impact area, organizations must answer YES to all criteria under each strategy they choose. Organizations may apply under one or both strategies.

Strategy 1: Homeless Prevention

Yes/No - Programs and services serve those who meet HUD's definition of [imminent risk of homelessness](#).

Yes/No - Programs and services keep people imminently at risk of homelessness in safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Strategy 2: Homeless Response

Yes/No - Programs and services are intended for individuals, unaccompanied youth, or families who experience literal homelessness, or are fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence (see more on these definitions [here](#)).

Yes/No - Programs and services support people in obtaining and maintaining safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Housing – Funding Priorities

Organizations that meet or exceed the following criteria will be more competitive for funding.

Work in this area should be focused on ensuring homelessness is prevented where possible and, where not, is rare, brief and non-recurring.

Strategy 1 & 2:

- Programs provide low-barrier supportive services that are not time-limited, and which help people obtain and maintain safe, stable, and affordable housing.

- Programs utilize a housing-focused approach and provide holistic supports to participants to improve health and safety, while developing and actualizing participants' own goals.

Housing – Required Outcome Measures

- Number of individuals served through housing programs
- Number of individuals who maintain housing for at least six months because of programs and services
- Number of individuals who obtain housing because of programs and services

Food Security

Food Security – Eligibility

In order to apply in this impact area, organizations must answer YES to all criteria under each strategy they choose. Organizations may apply under one or both strategies.

Strategy 1: Short-Term Food Security

Yes/No – Programs are categorized as food shelves, meal programs or food banks.

Yes/No – Programs provide holistic services that support households in increasing their overall stability, such as those that address income/wealth building, stable housing, and improving health.

Strategy 2: Long-Term Food Security

Yes/No – Programs provide direct services focused on land access and/or accessing markets for the sale of locally produced food.

Yes/No – Programs result in communities having increased access to fresh food that is locally grown/produced via land access, community-defined and led sustainable solutions, and other food justice efforts that work toward equitable access and participation in the food system.

Not Eligible: Programs and services where food is only a supplemental or occasional component.

Food Security – Funding Priorities

Organizations that meet or exceed the following criteria will be more competitive for funding.

Work in this area should be focused on ensuring residents have access to food that is nutritious, culturally relevant and affordable, toward long-term food security.

- Programs provide access to food that is nutritious, culturally relevant, and affordable.
- Programs provide a dignified, culturally affirming, and welcoming experience.
- Programs focus on food justice for Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Pacific Islander, and/or People of Color that addresses access and affordability beyond SNAP and other public benefits.

Food Security – Required Outcome Measures

Strategy 1: Short-Term Food Security

- Number of individuals served through food programs categorized as food shelves, meal programs or food banks.

Strategy 2: Long-Term Food Security

- Number of individuals served by direct services that support land access and/or market building

Economic Opportunity

Economic Opportunity – Eligibility

In order to apply in this impact area, organizations must answer YES to all criteria under each strategy they choose. Organizations may apply under any strategies for which they are eligible.

Strategy 1: Employment and Training

Yes/No - Programs and services provide employment and training support.

Strategy 2: Entrepreneurship Support

Yes/No - Programs and services provide entrepreneurship support.

Yes/No - Programs and services must *specifically* serve Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Pacific Islander, and People of Color entrepreneurs.

Yes/No - Programs must provide services for established small/micro businesses, supporting them to build capital, capacity, and business development.

Strategy 3: Financial Accessibility

Yes/No - Programs and services support financial accessibility through the delivery of a financial product and/or service.

Yes/No - Programs and services support individual-level wealth building by integrating a financial product and/or financial service into a program's direct service. *(For example, an early childhood education program with a College Savings Account product or a housing program with a lending circle for participants.)*

Not Eligible: Organizations that provide a stand-alone financial product/service not embedded within a service delivery model. *(For example, an organization addressing financial accessibility solely through offering tax preparation would not be eligible.)*

Economic Opportunity – Funding Priorities

Organizations that meet or exceed the following criteria will be more competitive for funding.

Work in this area should be focused on ensuring that adults enter the workforce prepared for skilled employment and increased wealth.

Strategy 1: Employment and Training

- Programs support individuals with barriers to employment in building their confidence and connectedness toward skilled employment and/or increased wealth along a participant-centered career continuum
- Programs assess participants' education, skills, and interests relative to placement in education and training.
- Programs provide or connect participants to financial coaching, financial products, income support or related services that support individuals towards increasing their financial health.

Strategy 2: Entrepreneurship Support

- Programs provide a continuum of access to unconventional and traditional capital (e.g. micro-lending, credit-building loans, SBA loans, etc.).
- Programs provide or connect participants to personal finance services including financial counseling, financial planning, and tax preparation.
- Programs work to change current structures and systems to allow for greater accessibility for Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Pacific Islander, and People of Color entrepreneurs to capital and entrepreneurial services.

Strategy 3: Financial Accessibility

- Programs provide a financial product/service is a new, seeking to eventually expand or replicate.

Economic Opportunity – Required Outcome Measures

Strategy 1: Employment and Training

- Number of individuals served through employment and training programs and services
- Number of individuals who complete at least one training or education component
- Number of individuals who obtain employment
- Average hourly wage at placement
- Estimated % of participants who retain their job for 12 months or more

Strategy 2: Entrepreneurship Support

- Number of individuals served through entrepreneurship programs and services
- Amount of loans/grants dispersed to entrepreneurs
- Number of jobs created
- % of businesses who achieve sustainability or growth

Strategy 3: Financial Accessibility

- Number of individuals enrolled in the product or service
- Number of participants who report increased wealth/financial stability

Greater Twin Cities United Way's Learning Approach & Required Outcomes

Organizations will be expected to report data annually on required outcomes in each impact area they are funded in.

Organizations are required to submit written annual reports to Greater Twin Cities United Way that include:

- organizational demographics of people served disaggregated by race, income, and county if there has been a significant change from what was reported in the application;
- impact area outcomes data;
- and narrative reporting.

Application Process

Organizations wishing to apply for this RFP must submit an online application by **October 15 at 4pm.**

Applications will be scored by a team of Greater Twin Cities United Way staff and community members against an evaluation rubric. The application will ask questions in each of the below areas and weight them as indicated.

Evaluation Rubric

Area of Assessment	% of Total Score
<i>Community Representation</i>	20%

<i>Responsiveness to Community</i>	<i>35%</i>
<i>Program Approach & Impact</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Organizational Vision for the Future</i>	<i>20%</i>
Total	100%

Applications will be reviewed by a team consisting of Community Reviewers and Greater Twin Cities United Way staff. Organizations with high-scoring applications will be invited to participate in a site visit with Greater Twin Cities United Way staff to learn more about their organization. Site visit details including agendas and questions will be shared before the visit. Advancing to a site visit does not guarantee funding. We anticipate receiving at least twice as many applications as we are able to fund.

Applicants that do not score high on their application will be notified in January 2025 that they are no longer being considered for this funding opportunity.

Following site visits, Greater Twin Cities United Way staff will recommend final grant decisions to the Greater Twin Cities United Way Board of Directors.

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions via a short virtual meeting with United Way staff following the Board of Directors decision in early May 2025.

Greater Twin Cities United Way reserves the right to make awards that support our cultivation of a balanced grant portfolio that most effectively advances our mission, goals, and priorities. Toward this end, and in addition to criteria identified in this RFP, funding decisions will include considerations of geography and scale among other factors.

Timeline

The timeline for the RFP is as follows:

Key Dates	
Application Opens	September 4 th , 2024 at 9am
Applications Due	October 15 th , 2024 at 4pm
Applicants Notified of First Round Decisions	January 2025
Site Visits Held	January 2025 – March 2025
Applicants Notified of Final Round Decisions	May 2025
Grant Term Begins	July 1, 2025

Payments, Reporting and Other Grantee Requirements and Opportunities

- Grant payments are made on a monthly basis. Funded organizations will be asked to provide direct deposit information for payment.
- Grantees are required to submit written annual reports to Greater Twin Cities United Way that include organizational demographics of people served disaggregated by race, income, and county if there has been a significant change from what was reported in the application; impact area

outcomes data; and narrative reporting. Greater Twin Cities United Way staff develop the annual report and will work with grantees to help them complete it.

- Grantees should expect regular check-ins with Greater Twin Cities United Way staff towards the goal of building a strong partnership.
- Grantees will be invited to participate in the Greater Twin Cities United Way Leaders United, a reflective peer group made up of grantee leadership staff.

How To Apply

Grant applications must be completed online. The application will open Wednesday, September 4th, 2024 at 9am, and will close on Tuesday, October 15th at 4pm.

Application Resources and Other Questions

During the application period, Greater Twin Cities United Way staff are available to answer your questions and assist with your application. Our [website](#) will be updated on September 4th at 9am with information on how to get questions answered or schedule a meeting with one of our staff.

Online Training Session

August 27, 2024 from 9-10:30am. Please click [here](#) to register for the training session.

A recording of the training session will be available on our website beginning August 29, 2024.

Frequently Asked Questions

Please see our Frequently Asked Questions on our [website](#). We update this document on a weekly basis.