2025-2028 Community Investments Request for Proposal (RFP)
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated 9.20.24
This document will be updated on a weekly basis with new questions and answers. Please reach out directly with questions not addressed here at rfp@gtcuw.org.

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General Eligibility & RFP Questions

Eligibility

1. **May I apply for the Community Investments RFP if I am not currently receiving funding from GTCUW?**
   Yes. The RFP is an open and competitive grant making process regardless of whether your organization currently receives GTCUW funding. Any organization who meets the eligibility requirements and performs work pursuing the outcomes detailed in the RFP is encouraged to apply.

2. **What is the nine-county area that GTCUW serves?**
   GTCUW serves the nine-county region of Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott and Washington.

3. **My organization does not meet the organizational eligibility requirements, but my program does. Can we still apply?**
Unfortunately, no. Your organization must meet all eligibility requirements to apply. This is true even in cases of large organizations such as hospitals or universities. See the **Partnerships** section below for more information on Partnerships eligibility.

4. **My organization does not currently collect the required outcomes data for the impact area(s) we would like to apply in. How does this impact our eligibility?** *[added 9.20.24]*
The required outcomes section for each impact area is intended to communicate to organizations the outcomes data that are required as part of annual reporting, if an organization is funded. By checking the box next to the outcomes your organization collects, you are simply attesting that you collect them. Whether or not your organization currently collects the required outcomes in a particular impact area does not impact eligibility.
If you do not currently collect one or all of the required outcomes for the impact area(s) you are applying in, do not check the box next to that outcome and describe why you do not collect that outcome in your narrative. We understand that many organizations experience barriers to collecting certain information, and the information you provide will help us work together toward that data collection, if your organization is funded.

5. **My organization works nationally and has a local affiliate in the Twin Cities. Our organization as a whole does not meet the eligibility requirements, but our local affiliate does. Can we still apply?** *[added 8.29.24]*
As the grant funds are general operating dollars to the organization, the Community Investments RFP will only fund organizations that are located in the nine-county region, AND where 50% of the people they serve reside in the nine-county region.

For organizations that are affiliates or part of a national network of organizations, they must meet the following additional requirements, which help to ensure that all funds stay in the Twin Cities community:
- Grant dollars must go directly to the Twin Cities organization and must be fully controlled by the Twin Cities organization. Organizations who will have the grant dollars go to the national organization's main office first and are then passed down to the local affiliate are not eligible.
- The Twin Cities organization must operate as an independent organization (even if it legally is not). This is includes having its own local board, setting its own strategy, and having full control over its budget, hiring, and other business descriptions and activities.

We strongly recommend that organizations who work nationally request a meeting with a GTCUW staff to discuss your eligibility before applying.

Funding Priorities

1. **My organization does not meet all the funding priorities. Are we still able to apply?**

    Yes. The Funding Priorities in the RFP Guidelines show which criteria will be scored highest in the review process. While organizations that meet or exceed **all** the criteria will likely be most competitive for funding, we also expect to fund organizations that meet or exceed only **some** of the priority criteria. Overall competitiveness for grant funding will depend on how many applications we receive and who applies. Please reach out to us at rfp@gtcuw.org if you would like to discuss the funding priorities further.

2. **Why is United Way prioritizing organizations led by and serving Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian and Pacific Islander and/or Communities of Color?**

    United Way exists to disrupt the extent to which income, race or place predicts a person's ability to thrive. We know that race, in particular, is the largest predictor of inequities in our region.

    Evidence shows that investing more heavily in organizations with strong racial equity practices, meaning organizations led by and for Communities of Color AND with a track record of results, leads to better impact and outcomes for the people the organization supports.

    Our priority in this RFP is to resource organizations best positioned to address the most persistent inequities in our region, and we believe the best way to do that is through prioritizing organizations with strong racial equity practices.

3. **For Senior Leadership demographics, does that include Board members or only staff at the organization?** *[added 8.29.24]*
    The application will ask for disaggregated race/ethnicity demographics for Board members, but this section is not scored. We ask about Board demographics to better understand the demographics of nonprofit boards in our community.

4. **How do you define Senior Leaders?** *[added 8.29.24]*
    We define senior leaders as those who engage in such business activities as setting organizational goals, building strategic plans, and holding significant decision-making responsibility for the organization. If you have questions about how to define senior leadership at your organization, please contact us.

5. **Our organization is led by and/or serves mostly white people. Are we able to apply?**

    Yes. We anticipate funding both organizations that are led by People of Color and organizations led by white people. However, **all organizations funded must have a strong commitment to racial equity** with practices and impact to back it up.

6. **Our organization serves people in a geographic area where the racial/ethnic demographics make it challenging to meet the funding priority of "60% of people served identify as Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Pacific Islander and/or People of Color". Are we able to apply?**

   We are committed to funding organizations across our nine-county service region and invite organizations working outside of Hennepin and Ramsey County to apply, even if they serve less than 60 percent of People of Color and have leadership representation of less than 50 percent People of Color. In addition to criteria identified in the RFP, funding decisions will include considerations of service area demographics, local disparities, geography, and scale among other factors.

7. **Our organization's mission is focused on a population that experiences inequities in our region but does not meet the race/ethnicity priority set forth in the RFP. For example, we are focused on supporting LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, immigrant/refugee groups that identify as white or other groups. Are we able to apply?**

   Yes. We recognize that while race/ethnicity is the largest predictor of inequities in our region, there are many other groups that experience inequity as well. We also recognize the intersectionality between race/ethnicity and other identities. While this RFP will prioritize organizations led by and serving People of Color, we do anticipate funding white-led organizations as well. If you feel your organization meets the criteria of the RFP and holds a strong commitment to racial equity (regardless of who you serve), we invite you to apply.

Partnerships

Organizations considering applying as a partnership are strongly encouraged to contact us at rfp@gtcuw.org to discuss your eligibility before applying.

1. **If I am applying for a partnership, who should complete the application?**
   Partnering applicants should elect one organization to be the Lead Organization. This organization will complete the proposal and if awarded the grant, will receive funding and be responsible for reporting requirements on behalf of the partnership. The Lead Organization must meet all the RFP's eligibility criteria and meet GTCUW's financial assessment. Other partnering organizations in the Partnership must meet some of the eligibility criteria (see next question).

2. **My organization is applying as a member of a partnership but is not the Lead Organization. What eligibility criteria must my organization meet?**
   Partnering applicants who are *not* the Lead Organization must:
   - Be a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization or fiscally sponsored
   - 50% or more of the people served by the organization are living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

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- 50% or more of the people served by the organization reside in the nine-county metro region
- Your organization provides direct services

3. **I am the Lead Organization for a partnership. Do I fill out the questions on behalf of my organization or on behalf of the partnership?**
The online application will provide specifics on which questions should be filled out on behalf of the Lead Organization and on the partnership's behalf. The Lead Organization must meet all Organizational Eligibility criteria and meet the financial assessment requirements.

4. **How is Greater Twin Cities United Way defining a partnership?**
Creating long-term solutions to the outcomes defined in this RFP are enhanced by holistic thinking. GTCUW encourages applicants who may not be eligible on their own or feel they may be more competitive relative to the RFP's priorities by working with others, to pursue partnerships with other organizations that bring different competencies to the table. Successful applicants will demonstrate how their partnership meets the priorities of the RFP. Please contact us at rfp@gtcuw.org if you are considering applying as a partnership for additional guidance.

5. **I am part of an established coalition/collective that would like to apply. Are we eligible?**
Coalitions or collectives (groups of organizations) that meet the eligibility requirements and feel their work fits within the RFP are welcome to apply.

6. *I am part of a partnership whose work together is new or has been in place for less than two years. Can we apply?*
If the Lead Organization meets the eligibility requirement of operating for at least 2 years, your partnership and its work together can be new or around less than two years. Please keep in mind that the application will ask for the results and impact of your partnership's work together. If your partnership's work is new, is it recommended you include relevant information about similar work the organizations in your partnership does.

7. *What are you looking for in terms of a Partnership Budget in the application's Finance section?*
We are looking for a budget that represents the work your partnership is doing together, similar to a Program budget. For example, if your partnership is working together over three different areas of work, it would make sense to combine those areas into one budget. The purpose of asking for this is to understand the size, scale and cost of your partnership's work.

Application/RFP Questions

1. **I'm interested in applying for multiple impact areas. How should I do this?**
When completing an application in our online portal, you'll be asked to check boxes for the

impact area(s) you intend to apply within. The questions you see appear in the rest of the application will depend on which boxes you select. To read about each impact area, please review our full RFP Guidelines *before* starting your online application. <u>Only submit ONE application per organization.</u>

2. ***Does applying for multiple impact areas lessen my chances of being funded? Increase my chances?***
   We encourage organizations to apply for as many impact areas in which they feel they fit. It will not hurt their application in any way. We expect to fund applications that apply in single areas as well as applications that apply in multiple areas. Organizations funded in multiple impact areas will be expected to report on outcomes in each of the impact areas in which they are funded.

3. **I changed my mind and no longer want to apply for an impact area I selected. What should I do?**
   To unselect an impact area that you no longer wish to apply for, simply unselect the box next to that impact area. Please reach out to us at rfp@gtcuw.org for technical assistance if needed.

4. **My program is part of a much larger institution (i.e.; university, hospital system, etc.). Am I still eligible to apply?**
   As long as your parent institution meets the core eligibility criteria outlined in the RFP and your program/activities meets the impact area eligibility outlined in the RFP, you are eligible to apply. For the application, please note the following directions:
   - For the Financial Review section of the application, please use your **parent organization's financials.** We may follow-up to request additional financials from your program's perspective.
   - For the Organization questions of the application, please complete responses from the perspective of your parent organization.
   - For the Impact area-specific or program questions of the application, please fill out from the perspective of your program.
   - **Reach out to us at rfp@gtcuw.org for further guidance.**

Required Data: Demographics and Outcomes

1. **Should my demographic information include everyone served by my organization?**
   Yes, it should include all participants served by your organization's **DIRECT SERVICE** programs regardless of the impact areas under which you are applying or if your direct services align with United Way's impact areas. The intent of the demographics section is to a) understand the total number of individuals served in a "typical year" by your organization's direct service programs, and b) understand the more detailed demographic landscape of your typical community.

2. **How do you define "direct services"?** *[added 8.29.24]*

   Direct services are activities that work directly with an intended population to address the needs of individuals. This may include providing 1:1 or group support, community events, or other direct interactions with constituents that occur in an in-person or virtual environment.

   When counting the number of people your organization serves through direct services, do not include indirect interactions with the general public, such as those you reach through the organization's social media platforms.

   Please contact us for more information on how your organization should categorize your services for this RFP, if needed.

3. **What are your expectations around tracking individuals and families living and working at 200% of poverty or below? Is proxy data acceptable if we do not capture income data from our participants?**
   We recognize that income data is not always accessible, but we ask that all applicant and funded organizations do their best to gather this information during their participant intake process. Please feel free to use proxy data as needed, such as participant eligibility for government programs like SNAP, Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare, or others as applicable. There is space to provide a short, written explanation of your use of proxy data at the end of the organizational demographics section.

4. **Are there a minimum number of participants served required for this grant?**
   There is no minimum requirement for number of participants served.

Review Process

1. **When is the application period?**
   The RFP opens on September 4, 2024 at 9am and will close on October 15, at 4pm.

2. **Who will be reviewing the proposals?**
   Proposals will be reviewed and scored by a team of three reviewers. Each review team is made up of a staff person from GTCUW's Community Impact team and at least two community reviewers who have lived and/or professional experience in GTCUW's impact areas. Community reviewer input is represented in final decision making to the greatest extent possible.

3. **How will proposals be scored?**
   An evaluation rubric will be used by each reviewer and include four areas of assessment:

   - Community Representation: 20%

- Responsiveness to Community: 35%
- Program Approach & Impact: 25%
- Organizational Vision for the Future: 20%

4. **Does every applicant get a site visit?**
   No. We will receive more applications than we are able to fund under this RFP and therefore will only invite applicants with high scores to participate in a site visit. Applicants will be notified if they are receiving a site visit in the first two weeks of January, 2025. Site visits will be held in January, February, and early March 2025.

5. **Does receiving a site visit mean I'm likely to receive funding?**
   Not necessarily. Due to the high volume of applications we receive and availability of funding, we anticipate only being able to fund a portion of applicants who receive a site visit.

6. **If I receive a site visit, will United Way staff want to observe my program in action?**
   No. While we are still working out the logistics of site visits, the visit will focus on conversation with your organization's leadership and program staff. We will not ask to observe programs.

Grant Terms

1. **When will funding begin for those who are awarded a grant under this RFP?**
   Grant funding will begin July 1, 2025.

2. **What is the anticipated grant term?**
   Grants are awarded for one year and may be renewed for up to two additional years. Grant agreements may be renewed on an annual basis through June 30, 2028 based on available funding. Note that funding amounts may shift based on available funding.

3. **What data will organizations that are awarded funding be required to report to Greater Twin Cities United Way? How often will reporting occur?**
   Organizations funded through the 2025-2028 Community Investments grants will be asked to complete a report annually over the course of the grant period. In the context of these annual reports, funded partners will be required to provide three types of data:
   a. Organizational-level demographic data for total number of individuals served through direct service programs in the given grant year.
   b. Quantitative (numerical) data for the required outcomes measures associated with the specific impact areas in which they are funded, broken out by participants' race/ethnicity, income level, and county.
   c. Quantitative (numerical) or qualitative (narrative) data illustrating your work toward your organization's unique vision for impact.

Further information may be gathered during the grant period through site visits, convenings, and/or surveys to support Greater Twin Cities United Way's learning and field building agendas.

4. **What is the anticipated payment structure?**
   GTCUW will electronically deposit 1/12th of the grant amount each month for the length of the grant period in the bank account you provide.

5. **If an organization is funded, how much money can they expect to receive?**
   The minimum grant size is $50,000 annually. 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.

6. **When will organizations be notified about funding?**
   All applicants will be notified of funding decisions in May 2025 following GTCUW Board of Directors approval.

7. **How much funding is available? How much do you intend to fund in each impact area?**
   The total pool of funding and funding by impact area is unknown at this time. We do anticipate funding organizations working in each impact area.

Impact Area Specific Questions

Early Childhood Education Specific Questions

1. **My organization does work that meets both the Early Childhood Programs and Family Education Programs eligibility criteria. Can we apply for funding for both?**
   Yes, organizations may apply for just one strategy, or both. If you apply for both, please clearly delineate the work of each program in your answers.

2. *I run an Early Childhood Education program that is part of a school. Am I eligible to apply?*
   Unfortunately, no. Early Childhood Education programs that are part of a district, private, charter or public K-12 schools are not eligible to apply.

Career and Future Readiness Specific Questions

1. **How do you define Middle School?**
   We define middle school as grades 6-8.

2. **How will GTCUW prioritize middle school programs?**
   Programs that serve a majority of middle school youth (i.e., >50% youth grades 6-8) will be scored higher than other programs.

3. **Is my program for high school students eligible under this impact area?**
   Programs that only serve youth under kindergarten age and/or young adults beyond 12th grade are ineligible. Only youth grades K-12 (i.e., youth ages 5-18 years old) will be considered as part of the application.

4. *I run a Career and Future Readiness program that is part of a school. Am I eligible to apply?*
   Unfortunately, no. Career and Future Readiness programs that are part of a district, private, charter or public K-12 schools are not eligible to apply.

5. *What meets the eligibility requirement of a minimum of 60 hours of programming/services a year?*
   For the Career and Future Readiness eligibility criteria of participants receiving a minimum of 60 hours of programming/services a year, organizations need to offer at least 60 hours of programming or services per year to youth participants. This means youth participants should have the chance to take part in at least 60 hours of your organization's programs and services each year. It is not required that every youth participate in 60 or more hours of these programs and/or services.

6. *How many students need to engage in 60 hours of programs/services each year to meet the eligibility requirements for Career and Future Readiness?*
   It is not a requirement that all, or even most, students meet that 60 hour per year minimum. Instead, the key is that youth participants have the opportunity to participate in at least 60 hours of programming and services each year.

Housing Specific Questions

1. **What is your definition of homelessness?**
   The Homeless Response strategy in this RFP utilizes the definitions of "Literally Homeless" and "Fleeting/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence" as defined by HUD.

   Literally Homeless: An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
- Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); OR
- Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution

Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV: Any individual or family who:

- Is fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;
- Has no other residence; AND
- Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing

2. **How are you defining "at imminent risk of homelessness"?**

   An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
   - Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance
   - No subsequent residence has been identified; AND
   - The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

   We recognize that there are several definitions of "imminent risk or at-risk of homelessness". The purpose of providing this definition is to give applicants a sense of the population we seek to impact through this work. Applicants should determine if their work under this strategy meets the intent of the above language.

   More information on definitions of homelessness can be found here.

3. **My organization supports youth experiencing homelessness. Is our organization able to apply?**
   Yes. If you are serving youth that meet the definitions of homelessness outlined above, you are able to apply.

4. **My organization supports individuals experiencing domestic violence. Is our organization eligible to apply?**
   Yes. If those you are serving meet the following definition, you are eligible to apply:

   Any individual or family who:

- o Is fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;
- o Has no other residence; AND
- o Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing

5. **My organization supports people at-risk of homelessness and those that are currently experiencing homelessness. Can I apply for both strategies?**
Yes, organizations may apply for just one strategy, or both. If you apply for both, please clearly delineate the work of each program in your answers.

6. **I'm a property developer/owner, and I contract with organizations to provide supportive services at our developments. Can I apply?**
Unfortunately, no. Unless your organization is providing the supportive services, you are not eligible. However, the organization you contract with for supportive services is welcome to apply.

7. **My organization works with people who are at-risk of being evicted and have applied for eviction prevention assistance. Is this type of work eligible for funding?**
Yes, as long as your organization meets the eligibility requirements of the RFP, you are eligible to apply.

Food Security Specific Questions

1. **My organization runs a food shelf/meal program/food bank AND does work toward long-term food security solutions. Can I apply for both strategies?**
Yes, organizations may apply for either strategy, or both. Be sure your organization meets all the eligibility requirements of each strategy before applying.

2. **I am applying under the short-term food security strategy (food shelf/meal program/food bank). Our program just provides food to clients, we do not offer other services. Am I eligible to apply?**
No. In order to apply under the short-term food security strategy, organizations must provide additional services that contribute to long-term stablity (either themselves or through partnerships) IN ADDITION TO food. Examples of these services are housing, education, employment and training, and assistance connecting to public benefits such as SNAP are also eligible.

3. **The RFP will not fund programs and services where food is a supplemental or occasional component. How do you define "supplemental or occasional food"?**

Supplemental food programs such as backpack programs, after school meal programs or other programs that do not consistently provide for the full nutritional needs of an individual are not eligible to apply on their own. Supplemental food programs anchored in a food shelf, meal program or food bank are considered part of the food shelf/meal program/food bank and are eligible.

Economic Opportunity Specific Questions

1. **My Entrepreneurship program serves a racially/ethnically diverse set of business owners. Am I eligible to apply?**
Given limited funding, only programs and services that are designed to specifically serve Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Pacific Islander, and People of Color entrepreneurs are eligible to apply. Note that your broader organization may serve a wider population. This eligibility is confined to the program-level only.

2. **How do you define adult as it relates to Economic Opportunity or workforce programs.**

   We define adult in this impact area as age 18 or above.

3. **What does "new" mean in the priority criteria for Strategy 3: Financial Accessibility?**
While we do not have a firm timeframe through which we consider a program or approach "new," the goal of this strategy is to identify organizations who are taking innovative approaches to programs and services that support individual wealth-building. For this strategy, "new" can be understood as the creation and distribution of a never before seen program or service. It can also be understood as the introduction of an existing program or service to a community that did not previously have that level of access.