



United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County

IMPACT BASED FUNDING GUIDE

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OVERVIEW

At United Way, we know the importance of stepping back and reflecting on the history of our organization. We are proud of the support we've provided to our four-county footprint over the past many years. We are especially proud where our support has effectively addressed needs in the community leading to big solutions to big problems. These are big solutions that we accomplished together as a community.

To ensure that our United Way is maximizing the impact that our donors and volunteers are making, we have assessed how to best meet our community's current needs. We have updated our United Way's funding model to an Impact Based Funding model.

The Impact Based Funding model is better aligned with current community needs, donor desires, and will allow United Way and our donors to deepen our collective impact in our community. This shift is designed to allow us to collectively solve more of our community's biggest issues with less duplication, fewer silos and more coordination and impact.

Investments will be made to organizations that demonstrate they can advance the work of our Key Initiatives. In addition, a modest amount of funding will support Community Resiliency through information and referral, local disaster response, or sustainability of past collective impact efforts. Impact Based Funding allows us to more effectively drive community-wide progress on important issues by allocating more funding and staff capacity to these strategies.

Local nonprofits will be invited to complete a Letter of Intent (LOI) in one or more of these strategies. They must show capacity to measure towards our community-level goal or equivalent.

IMPACT BASED FUNDING INVESTMENT AREAS OVERVIEW

United Way is reserving most of our available funding for a competitive application process for multi-year grants (whenever possible) aligned with key initiatives. Multi-year funding commitments are renewed annually, with an opportunity to re-apply after the final funding year if that key initiative is continuing.

Our four key initiatives are listed below.

- [Safe & Stable Homes](#)
- [Techquity](#)
- [Reducing Barriers to Employment & Advancement](#)
- [Teen Mental Wellness: Empowering Minds](#)

In addition to Key Initiatives, United Way will invest in [Community Resiliency](#).

Primary & Secondary Investment Areas

Each application area listed in this document has primary and secondary investment areas noted. Primary investment areas include strategies that are essential to meeting the key initiative goal and will receive roughly 90% of available funding. Secondary investment areas include strategies that will meaningfully accelerate progress towards the goal. These are important to meeting our goals, but do not have activities directly related to accomplishing the community-wide goal and will receive approximately 10% of funding available in each area.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & ORGANIZATION STANDARDS

ALL APPLICANTS

To receive funding from United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County, an organization must meet United Way's eligibility requirements and, on an annual basis, confirm they are meeting our organization's standards.

Additional eligibility requirements may be required. More information is included in the overview and requirements for each investment area.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for United Way funding, organizations must:

1. Be a nonprofit provider to people residing in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, or Washington Counties. If the organization serves Washington County, they must provide services to Germantown residents.
2. Be tax-exempt as described in section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, in good financial standing, and have been operating locally for a minimum of a year.
3. Applicants who do not meet the above requirements may use a fiscal agent that does meet the requirements.
4. Be governed by an autonomous Board of Directors.
5. Demonstrate that it meets all applicable requirements of local, state, and/or federal government concerning credentialing, accreditation, and/or licensing. This also includes written non-discrimination, conflict of interest, and whistleblower policies in the (1) provision of its services, (2) selection of Board, volunteers, committee members, and (3) the employment of staff.
6. Consent to the full disclosure of its financial condition when necessary or requested.

United Way does not fund:

1. Political causes, candidates, organizations, or campaigns,
2. Organizations that refuse services based on religion or require attendance or participation in religious services/activities as a condition of assistance,
3. Athletic teams or events,
4. Booster or social clubs, and
5. Individual needs, such as scholarships or other forms of individual financial aid.

ORGANIZATION STANDARDS

United Way asks that funded organizations certify annually that they are in compliance with the following standards. Annual certification of these standards will occur at the time of signing the Collaboration Agreement unless otherwise noted.

- Regularly convene a voluntary, local board of directors or an advisory board/committee.

- Have on file at United Way accurate and up to date banking information for ACH transactions. ACH change forms are available on United Way’s website to be uploaded to a secure ShareFile site. <https://unitedwaygmwc.org/For-Nonprofits>.
- Have on file in e-CImpact, a copy of the most recent completed version of the following:

Due at the time of the full application, organizations submit:

- 501(c)(3) authorization letter.
- “Doing Business As” documentation (if applicable).
- IRS 990 or 990EZ (if 990EZ is submitted then Pro Forma pages must be submitted as well).
 - Organizations exempt from filing an annual 990 must upload a statement certifying the exemption and reason for the exemption.
- Board approved current fiscal year budget

Due at the time of the signed Collaboration Agreement, funded organizations submit:

- Organization’s board-approved nondiscrimination policy.
- Policy on Protecting Children (if organization serves children or youth in any capacity).
- Current Board membership roster showing the members’ affiliations and terms of service with Board officers indicated.

DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

All funded organizations are required to report unduplicated demographic information for all participants served using the categories listed below.

Required demographics:

- **Age Groups:** 0-3, 4-5, 6-11, 12-17, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75-84, 85-94, 95 and older.
- **Gender:** Male, Female, Transgender, Non-binary/Genderfluid/Prefer to self-describe, prefer not to say (Please note that Non-binary/Genderfluid/Prefer to self-describe is one category).
- **Household Income:** \$0 to \$9,999, \$10,000 to \$14,999, \$15,000 to \$24,999, \$25,000 to \$34,999, \$35,000 to \$44,999, \$45,000 to \$54,999, \$55,000 to \$64,999, \$65,000 to \$74,999, \$75,000 to \$84,999, \$85,000 to \$89,999, \$90,000 or more, free and reduced lunch (if income data is not available).
- **Racial Background:** African American/Black (not Hispanic or Latino), Asian (not Hispanic or Latino), Caucasian/White (not Hispanic or Latino), Hispanic/Latino, Hmong/Laotian (not Hispanic or Latino), Middle Eastern (not Hispanic or Latino), Native American (not Hispanic or Latino), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (not Hispanic or Latino), Multi-racial, Other.
- **ZIP Code:** All zip codes in Milwaukee, Washington, Ozaukee, or Waukesha, outside of four-county area, or currently experiencing homelessness.

Additional data collection may be required. More information is included in the overview and requirements for each investment area.

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

If funding is awarded each organization will be asked to review and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the Collaboration Agreement prior to funding being released.

You may review the draft [Collaboration Agreement here](#).

Important Note: United Way reserves the right to make changes to the Collaboration Agreement prior to issuing it to funded organizations for signatures.

APPLICATION PROCESS

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) GUIDE

Detailed information on how to complete a letter of intent and scoring rubrics can be found in the [LOI Guide](#).

LETTER OF INTENT DECISION PROCESS

The Impact Based Funding Letter of Intent (LOI) process serves a few purposes, including helping United Way understand the level of interest in the funding opportunities and narrow down the pool of applicants needing to complete a full application.

LOI Review Committees established by United Way staff will review all LOIs to identify projects with the greatest potential for lasting community impact. Scoring rubrics can be found in the LOI Guide. Additionally, factors involved in a decision of whether or not an organization moves on to the application round include both the individual Letter of Intent score and a comprehensive review of all the organization's letters of intent (if an organization submits more than one LOI). As a result, high rubric scores do not guarantee an organization will be invited to complete a full application.

IMPACT BASED FUNDING (IBF) APPLICATION GUIDE

Detailed information on how to complete the application and scoring rubrics can be found in the [IBF Application Guide](#).

Application Decision Process

Application Review Committees established by United Way staff will review all applications to identify projects with the greatest potential for lasting community impact. Scoring rubrics can be found in the application guide. Factors involved in a decision of whether or not an organization is funded include both the application score, a comprehensive review of all the organization's applications (if an organization submits more than one application), and the virtual meeting. As a result, high rubric scores do not guarantee an organization will be funded.

KEY DATES AND REGISTRATION LINKS

- ✦ **LOI training:** September 30, 2025 – In-person & October 8, 2025, Virtual.
- ✦ Virtual LOI training has been recorded and is available [here](#).
- ✦ **October 20, 2025:** LOI Opens for 2026-27 Grant Cycle.
- ✦ **November 10, 2025:** LOI Submission Deadline.
- ✦ **December 19, 2025:** LOI Decision Notifications Sent.

- ✦ **Full Application Training:** A link to the [application guide](#) will be sent to all applicants no later than January 20, 2026 via email (Constant Contact).
- ✦ **January 20, 2026:** Full Application Opens.
- ✦ **February 16, 2026:** Full Applications Due. Virtual Meeting Scheduling due.
- ✦ **March 9 – March 27, 2026:** Virtual meetings.
- ✦ **June 1, 2026:** Full Application Decision Notification.
- ✦ **July 1, 2026:** 2026-27 Grant Cycle Begins & Award Letters Issued.

SAFE & STABLE HOMES OVERVIEW & REQUIREMENTS

OVERVIEW

Organizations funded through the Safe & Stable Homes: Ending Family Homelessness initiative collaborate in a Collective Impact model towards shared outcome goals of meeting criteria established by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness of ending family homelessness by meeting these five overarching goals: improved identification of housing unstable families, increased prevention services, streamlined coordination of services, swift service provision, and sustainable systems change. Safe & Stable Homes aims to meet & sustain this definition of ending family homelessness: family homelessness is prevented whenever possible, and when a homeless episode can't be prevented, a system operates efficiently to ensure the experience is rare, brief, and non-recurring for the family.

If an organization receives a Safe & Stable Homes (SASH) grant, they may use it for general operating expenses. When applying for a grant in a particular SASH strategy area, grant writers can focus on a specific program that meets the strategy objectives or explain how components of different programs across an organization meet the strategy objectives.

At the end of the grant cycle, funded organizations are responsible for reporting on how their organization met aligned metrics of the strategy area they received their grant in.

PRIMARY STRATEGY AREAS

Array of Shelter & Housing Support

Supports immediate, transitional, and permanent housing options that ensure no families experience unsheltered homelessness and allows our system to move families swiftly into appropriate long-term housing options.

Anticipated number of grants to be awarded in this strategy: 16

Flexible Financial Assistance

Supports organizations that provide families with financial assistance that is intended to prevent an eviction and/or keep a family stably housed. Examples include rent, rent arrears, or utility assistance, as well as security deposit or first month's rent for families moving out of homelessness.

Anticipated number of grants to be awarded in this strategy: 4

Homeless System Infrastructure & Housing Navigation

Embeds multi-sector points of identification and referral of families in need of housing security resources. Builds strong coordinated entry referral systems to connect families to the most

appropriate resource in their situation. Housing navigation supports staff that work alongside families to find and access affordable housing.

Anticipated number of grants to be awarded in this strategy: 3

Legal Assistance for Eviction Cases

Supports organizations that provide free legal or mediation services for families facing an eviction or establishes/maintains an online and/or physical resource center that provides resources and referrals to tenants facing eviction and to landlords considering filing an eviction.

Anticipated number of grants to be awarded in this strategy: 4

Wraparound Supportive Services

Supports organizations that provide services to improve a family's chance of success once housed. Ideal populations for this priority area include families in Rapid Rehousing programs or who have moved into permanent housing within the past year. Examples include tailored childcare support, financial coaching, life skills workshops, or protective payee programs.

Anticipated number of grants to be awarded in this strategy: 14

SECONDARY STRATEGY AREAS

Household Budget Support and Financial Counseling

Supports HUD-certified housing counseling agencies that can provide home-buying counseling, foreclosure prevention assistance, and general financial counseling to improve and stabilize low-income household budgets. The intention of this secondary strategy is to bolster long-term housing stability for working families.

Anticipated number of grants to be awarded in this strategy: 2

Special Projects

Special projects may be created based on designated government, foundation, or corporate grants received and/or a unique pilot project in collaboration with United Way. Past examples have included Right to Counsel, Family Flex Fund, and special projects for families with companion animals. When these project opportunities arise, partner organizations will be reached out to directly for an invitation to apply for funding.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The organization must have a program or programs that align with Safe & Stable Homes: Ending Family Homelessness strategy.

Preference will be given to organizations that serve families composed of at least one parent/caregiver and one child under 18.

OUTCOME CRITERIA

Organizations awarded a grant through Safe & Stable Homes will be asked to report back on outcome metrics related to the strategy area(s) the organization is funded for. The outcome and aligned metrics for each strategy area are listed below.

Array of shelter & housing support

Key Outcome:

Homelessness is a rare and brief experience.

Aligned Metrics:

- ✧ # of households accepted into emergency shelter or transitional housing programs by the funded organization.
- ✧ # of households accepted into Rapid Rehousing or Permanent Supportive Housing programs by the funded organization.
- ✧ # of households exited from funded organization into permanent housing destinations.
- ✧ # of local coalition staffing calls the funded organization attended to align current queue of participants needing shelter/housing with best match of services within current availability.
- ✧ Average length of time families experienced homelessness between the point of entry into funded organization and the point of exit into permanent housing.

Flexible Financial Assistance**Key Outcome:**

Homelessness is prevented whenever possible.

Aligned Metrics:

- ✧ Average dollar amount distributed to families to prevent homeless episodes.
- ✧ # of households that indicated that an eviction or foreclosure was prevented due to financial assistance received.

Homeless System Infrastructure & Housing Navigation**Key Outcome:**

Homelessness is prevented whenever possible.

Aligned Metrics:

- ✧ # of households the program assessed as needing homelessness prevention resources.
- ✧ # of prevention and diversion resources the funded organization has in their database of referral resources.

Key Outcome:

Homelessness is a rare and brief experience.

Aligned Metrics:

- ✧ # of Category 1 participants assessed by Coordinated Entry staff.
- ✧ # of Category 1 participants connected to emergency shelter, housing program, or other resource that ends their experience of street homelessness.
- ✧ # of local coalition staffing calls the funded organization attended to align current queue of participants needing shelter/housing with best match of services within current availability.

Legal Assistance for Eviction Cases**Key Outcome:**

Homelessness is prevented whenever possible.

Aligned Metrics:

- ✧ # of participants receiving legal assistance or tenant/landlord mediation.

- ✧ # of participants receiving eviction prevention resource referrals.
- ✧ # of participants that received a direct/warm connection to another resource outside of the funded Safe & Stable Homes program.

Wraparound Supportive Services

Key Outcome:

Households do not experience repeated episodes of homelessness.

Aligned Metrics:

- ✧ # of households offered case management.
- ✧ # of households provided tailored childcare support.
- ✧ # of households that received financial coaching.
- ✧ # of households that received life skills workshops or coaching.

Household Budget Support & Financial Counseling

Key Outcome:

Homelessness is prevented whenever possible:

Aligned Metrics:

- ✧ # of households that stayed in their home due to foreclosure prevention assistance.

Key Outcome:

Households do not experience repeated episodes of homelessness.

Aligned Metrics:

- ✧ # of families that received financial counseling to improve their household’s financial situation.
- ✧ # of households that participated in homebuyer counseling.

FUNDING PARAMETERS

The IBF application process for SASH will be for a one-year grant cycle from 7/1/2026-6/30/2027. Funding offered per program will follow the table below of minimum & maximum grant requests per strategy and primary county served.

- Organizations can apply for multiple grants if they provide services across different strategies or service areas. Please complete a separate Letter of Intent for each strategy you are applying for.
- If your organization provides services across multiple counties, please choose the grant amount for the primary county served. If your organization has separate programs in different counties, you may submit an LOI for each county.

Strategy	Milwaukee	Ozaukee	Washington	Waukesha
Array of Shelter & Housing Support	\$40,000 - \$100,000	\$25,000 - \$60,000	\$25,000 - \$30,000	\$40,000 - \$80,000
Flexible Financial Assistance	\$15,000 - \$70,000	\$10,000 - \$65,000	\$10,000 - \$30,000	\$15,000 - \$70,000
Homeless system infrastructure & housing navigation	\$20,000 - \$80,000	\$10,000 - \$25,000	\$10,000 - \$25,000	\$20,000 - \$80,000

Household budget support and financial counseling	\$15,000 - \$40,000	\$15,000 - \$25,000	\$15,000 - \$25,000	\$15,000 - \$40,000
Legal assistance for eviction cases	\$25,000 - \$125,000	\$15,000 - \$40,000	\$15,000 - \$30,000	\$25,000 - \$90,000
Wraparound supportive services	\$25,000 - \$100,000	\$20,000 - \$65,000	\$20,000 - \$30,000	\$25,000 - \$75,000
Special projects	<i>Invite only</i>	<i>Invite only</i>	<i>Invite only</i>	<i>Invite only</i>

Contact Information

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TECHQUITY OVERVIEW & REQUIREMENTS

OVERVIEW

Techquity began during the COVID-19 pandemic as a means of emergency response and has since grown into a large-scale digital access program. To date, Techquity has served tens of thousands of individuals, especially with no-cost computers and digital skills training services. Organizations funded through the Techquity initiative will continue to empower people through access to essential digital tools and skills training.

Techquity's primary goal is to distribute 50,000 computers to people who need them by 2027. Techquity's secondary goal is to provide critical digital skills training services to eligible people, especially those receiving a Techquity computer.

Funded organizations will have wide discretion over what kind of digital skills training to offer and implement, based on the specific needs of their participants and the wider communities they serve.

Funded organizations may use funds for general operating expenses. When applying for funding in a specific strategy area, applicants may focus on a single program that aligns with the selected strategy, or they may describe how components across multiple programs within their organization contribute to the strategy's objectives.

At the conclusion of the grant cycle, funded organizations are responsible for reporting on how their organization contributed to the key outcomes and partners indicators within the strategy area they were funded under, in alignment with the broader initiative goal.

Organizations interested in the Techquity Key Initiative will only be considered for Impact Based Funding under the secondary strategy area of digital skills training.

PRIMARY STRATEGY AREA

Computer Distribution

Techquity provides no-cost, business-grade, professionally refurbished laptop computers to eligible people who do not own a personal computer. All computers are formally registered to recipients, and all recipients agree to specific terms and conditions for joining Techquity's computer program. By participating in the program, computer recipients have access to Techquity's Digital Navigators, or trained tech support professionals. Digital Navigators can troubleshoot someone's computer problems, help them find low-cost internet plans, or lead digital skills trainings for larger groups.

Important Note: If your organization does not intend to provide digital skills training and would instead like to become a computer distribution site, please contact Briana Fox at bfox@unitedwaygmwc.org. Impact Based Funding is not available for computer distribution work. This is intended to be a no cost strategy as United Way will provide no cost computers to organizations that distribute computers under Techquity.

SECONDARY STRATEGY AREAS

Digital Skills Training

Techquity organizes, leads, funds, and/or promotes digital skills training for community members seeking to improve either their overall computer competency, or a specific set of objectives related to school, employment, or healthcare. Certain digital skills training courses may include opportunities to gain industry-recognized credentials that could improve a person's competitiveness for certain jobs.

Grants awarded through this program will advance Techquity's secondary strategy for digital skills training. However, computer distribution can be included in an organization's digital skills program. United Way will provide required training for all organizations able to distribute computers through Techquity.

Special Projects

Special projects may be created based on designated government, foundation, or corporate grants received and/or a unique pilot project in collaboration with United Way. When these project opportunities arise, partner organizations will be contacted directly for an invitation to apply for funding.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Techquity Digital Skills grants have the following requirements:

- The organization must have a program or programs that align with a Techquity strategy.
- Organizations must be willing to distribute computers to eligible participants in digital skills training.
- Organizations cannot use computers as a condition of completing training. All enrollees meeting the criteria listed below must be offered a computer, regardless of whether or not they completed training.
- Organizations must prioritize the following demographic groups (Covered Populations) when promoting digital skills training sessions. Organization must verify the participants meets the Covered Population criteria below for all computer distribution:
 - ✧ People from low-income households (200% of the Federal Poverty Level or below)
 - ✧ Incarcerated or formerly incarcerated people
 - ✧ Aging people (60+)
 - ✧ Veterans
 - ✧ People with disabilities
 - ✧ People whose primary language is not English
 - ✧ Racial or ethnic minorities
 - ✧ People living in rural areas
 - ✧ The organization must agree to be trained in using United Way's data management system when enrolling all eligible participants for a computer.

DATA COLLECTION & OUTCOME CRITERIA

Organizations awarded a digital skills grant must demonstrate the impact the digital skills training had on their participants. Outcome data can be gathered via surveys, interviews, or other relevant means. United Way will not prescribe how this information is collected.

In the Year-End Report, funded organizations must provide and/or verify:

- [Unduplicated demographics](#) for each participants served.
- Individuals that complete at least 80% of the digital skills and literacy training.
- Each eligible participant who did not own a personal computer was offered one (provided at no cost by the United Way) either during or upon completion of their skills training;
- Whether each participant identifies as a member of one or more (8 total) Covered Population(s);
- All intended skills training sessions, classes, or other teaching activities were implemented as planned;
 - ✦ We understand that changes to training sessions, classes, or other activities happen. We ask funded organizations to seek United Way approval for any significant changes from what was described in the funding application.
- Positive impact of digital skills training on participants. This can be done by collecting information on each participant’s goals and whether the goals were achieved upon completing training, participant feedback indicating that the skills training improved their skills in a specific area or generally, and/or what activities the new digital skills will help them with the most (e.g. applying for a job, finding housing, completing schoolwork, etc.).

FUNDING PARAMETERS

The grant application process for Techquity will be for a 2-year grant cycle from 7/1/2026 – 6/30/2028.

Funding will be awarded per grant according to tiers listed below.

- Techquity funding awards will prioritize organizations that provide comprehensive training that covers a wide variety of current topics, is at least 4 hours in length, and/or conducted over multiple sessions.
- When estimating the number of individuals to be served, please include only those whose participation and outcomes you expect can be verified per the Outcome Criteria at the end of the training. Participants who begin but are unlikely to complete a given skills training should not be included in the estimated number served.

Tier	Grant Size Per Year	Estimated Individuals Served	Notes
Tier 1	\$10,000-\$49,999	25-75 annually	Smaller programs with intensive, specialized services and/or smaller participant bases.
Tier 2	\$50,000-\$74,999	76-200 annually	Smaller to mid-sized programs with longer-term, consistent participant cohorts.

Tier 3	\$75,000-\$99,999	201-350 annually	Mid-sized to large programs with longer-term, consistent participant cohorts seeking digital skills training in specific fields or areas, e.g., cybersecurity, data management.
Tier 4	\$100,000+	350+ annually	Strategic, large-scale programs delivering broad, system-level impact to participants and the wider community.
Special projects	\$100,000+	To be defined by project scope	Invite only.

Contact Information

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REDUCING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OVERVIEW & REQUIREMENTS

OVERVIEW

Organizations funded through the Reducing Barriers to Employment and Advancement (RBEA) initiative work toward a shared goal of supporting local, diverse individuals in overcoming systemic barriers to employment and career advancement. Led by United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County and in partnership with over 30 community-based organizations, the initiative aims to get 15,000 people ready to start stable careers having overcome key employment barriers by 2029.

Funded organizations may use funds for general operating expenses. When applying for funding in a specific strategy area, applicants may focus on a single program that aligns with the selected strategy, or they may describe how components across multiple programs within their organization contribute to the strategy's objectives.

At the conclusion of the grant cycle, funded partners are responsible for reporting on how their organization contributed to the key outcomes and indicators within the strategy area they were funded under, in alignment with the broader initiative goal.

PRIMARY STRATEGY AREAS

The Reducing Barriers to Employment and Advancement initiative focuses on reducing key employment barriers through three strategic priority areas:

Education, Training, and Credentials

Supporting programs that help adults obtain their GED, learn new skills or trades, and earn industry-recognized certifications to enhance employability and access to quality jobs.

Transportation Access

Investing in innovative transportation solutions, including programs that assist individuals with driver's license recovery or provide other mobility supports to improve access to employment opportunities.

Involvement In the Justice system

Strengthening programs that support individuals impacted by the justice system through workforce development, employment readiness, and policy advocacy aimed at removing systemic barriers to employment.

SECONDARY STRATEGY AREA

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy empowers individuals with the essential skills to support long-term economic advancement and financial stability. This strategy will help them sustain stable careers, providing the critical strategy to foster long term financial growth. It includes assessing financial security needs, completing individualized financial goal setting, connecting to asset-building resources like VITA tax preparation services, and access to ongoing financial coaching and financial education.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The organization must have a program or programs that align with a Reducing Barriers to Employment & Advancement strategy.

Organizations with **youth-serving programs** must demonstrate that they serve [opportunity youth](#). These are defined as youth who are between the ages of 16 and 24 and are neither enrolled in school nor working. Organizations **may also serve** youth enrolled in competency-based high school completion programs, as such individuals are considered at heightened risk of failing to complete high school. Youth focused organizations should use the funding parameters below to determine what tier of funding they are eligible to apply for, ensuring that the estimated number of individuals expected to meet the outcomes defined in this section.

DATA COLLECTION & OUTCOME CRITERIA

Organizations awarded a RBEA grant will be asked to report back on how many people met the criteria towards our goal that 15,000 people will be ready for stable careers using the criteria listed below.

Education, Training, and Credentials:

- Participants must receive a job credentialing certification, GED/HSED, skill certification, or equivalent. (i.e., CNA, CDA, Apprenticeship, Manufacturing (CNC), IT Services, etc.).
- Education support that takes multiple years (degree programs, etc.) must be completed during the years the organization is funded by United Way.

Transportation:

- Participants must have their driver's license reinstated within the program year.
- Participants must receive frequent transportation to work. Frequent is defined as 5 or more rides per week.

**Bus passes are not included as transportation.*

Involvement In the Justice System Focus:

Organizations must meet at least one of the following outcome criteria:

- Program that focuses on justice impacted individuals will need to provide evidence of employment resources, wrap around care, and skills.
- Participants must have their legal issue resolved (e.g., record expungement, fines cleared) within the program year.

Employment:

- Obtain employment (job placement).
- Demonstrate growth in multiple skills critical to job readiness (e.g., communication, time management, problem-solving).
- Programs must report on the average wage of any jobs secured by participants during the program year.

Financial Literacy:

Financial literacy is a secondary strategy in RBEA and does not have criteria towards the overall goal. Organizations funded for financial literacy will be asked to report on the metrics they collect for other funding sources.

Additionally, in the Year-End Report, funded organizations will be asked to report on the following including but not limited to:

- [Unduplicated demographics](#) for each participants served.
- The number of participants meeting the outcome criteria.

FUNDING PARAMETERS

The grant application process for RBEA will be for a 2-year grant cycle from 7/1/2026-6/30/2028.

- Funding offered per program will follow this table of tiered request per strategy.
- Special projects may be created based on designated government, foundation, or corporate grants received and/or a unique pilot project in collaboration with United Way.
- When reporting the estimated number of individuals served, please include only those who are expected to meet the Reducing Barriers to Employment & Advancement outcomes (e.g., obtaining a job, GED, credential, or resolving a barrier like license reinstatement).
 - ✦ For example, your organization may serve 1,000 people, but if only 25 are expected to meet the defined outcomes, you should report 25 as your estimated number served. In this case, your organization would qualify for tier 1.

Tier	Grant Size Per Year	Expected to Meet RBEA Outcomes	Notes
Tier 1	\$50,000 – \$74,999	25–75 individuals, unduplicated annually	Organizations serving smaller populations or programs with intensive, specialized services.
Tier 2	\$75,000 – \$124,999	76–200 individuals, unduplicated annually	Organizations serving mid-sized populations or programs with consistent annual reach.
Tier 3	\$125,000 – \$150,000	201–350+ individuals, unduplicated annually	High-capacity, multi-program, or multi-site providers.
High-Volume Tier	<i>Up to \$175,000</i>	600–1,000+ individuals, unduplicated annually	Strategic, large-scale partners delivering broad or systems-level impact.
Special Projects	<i>(Varies) Invite Only</i>	To be defined by project	Invitation-only.

Contact Information

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TEEN MENTAL WELLNESS EMPOWERING MINDS OVERVIEW & REQUIREMENTS

OVERVIEW

High Schools and programs funded through the Teen Mental Wellness: Empowering Minds initiative collectively work to create Mental Health Schools of Distinction by implementing comprehensive school mental health systems that support the mental wellness of students, their families, and school staff.

Together their aim is to elevate the mental wellness of 21,000 high school students by 2030. A list of the current Empowering Minds high schools can be found here under the investment area of Teen Mental Wellness: Empowering Minds. We ask that high schools interested in joining this initiative apply via a separate application process.

Funded organizations may use funds for general operating expenses. When applying for funding in a specific strategy area, applicants may focus on a single program that aligns with the selected strategy, or they may describe how components across multiple programs within their organization contribute to the strategy's objectives.

At the conclusion of the grant cycle, funded partners are responsible for reporting on how their organization contributed to the key outcomes and indicators within the strategy area they were funded under, in alignment with the broader initiative goal of elevating the mental wellness of high school students.

PRIMARY STRATEGY AREAS

Comprehensive school mental health systems (High School)

High schools are direct recipients of the majority of Teen Mental Wellness: Empowering Minds investments to support the development and implementation of the mental health services infrastructure. Schools will develop and submit a budget for review and approval prior to funding being dispersed. United Way provides implementation consultation and coaching that provides day-to-day technical assistance.

Important Note: Applications for this strategy are on a separate timeline. We will begin communicating about this opportunity in January.

School Based Mental Health Services

Funding is available for programs that provide mental health services in-school that address any of the [three tiers of the continuum of supports](#) including mental health promotion, early intervention, and treatment services. Examples include but are not limited to: therapy services; mental health education for students, their families, and school staff; and mental wellness school professional development. Programs that serve high schools or have plans to serve high schools are strongly encouraged to apply.

SECONDARY STRATEGY AREAS

Clinic Based or Community Based Mental Health Services

Funding is available for clinic based or community based programs that improve access to mental health providers and higher levels of mental health treatment including family therapy as well as psychology and psychiatry services for youth up to age 21. Specific funded services include diagnostic services, early intervention, treatment services, case management, and other clinic based or community based mental health services.

Mental Health Improvement Fund

This fund is in partnership with the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership. It supports organizations that provide mental health services for low-income, underserved adult and youth populations in Milwaukee County only. The goal is to increase access to mental health care, improve mental health outcomes, and promote health equity.

Important Note: Applications for this strategy are on a separate timeline. We will begin communicating about this opportunity in January.

Special Projects

Special projects may be created based on designated government, foundation, or corporate grants received and/or a unique pilot project in collaboration with United Way. When these project opportunities arise, partner organizations will be reached out to directly for an invitation to apply for funding.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The organization must have a program or programs that align with a Teen Mental Wellness: Empowering Minds strategy listed above including either school-based mental health services, clinic based or community based mental health services.

Program or programs must be evidence-based and trauma informed or trauma responsive.

DATA COLLECTION & OUTCOMES CRITERIA

In the Year-End Report, funded organizations will be asked to report on the following including but not limited to:

- [Unduplicated demographics](#) for each participant served.
- The number of participants served in the aligned program.
- The type of program and how it aligns with the Teen Mental Wellness: Empowering Minds initiative.
- Describe any mental wellness work conducted at any of the current [Empowering Minds high schools](#).
- Describe any changes in the organization's waiting list (if applicable) to receive the aligned services as a result of Impact Based Funding.
- Results from the outcomes tools identified in the LOI.

FUNDING PARAMETERS

2025 IBF grant application process for Teen Mental Wellness: Empowering Minds is a **three-year grant cycle** from July 30, 2026, through June 30, 2029.

- Organizations can apply for funding in both school based mental health services and clinic based/community based mental health services by completing separate Letters of Intent for each area.
- Organizations will receive the same amount of funding each of the three years.

Each strategy has the following funding maximums:

School Based Mental Health Services

Grants will not exceed \$200,000 per year per organization

Clinic Based or Community Based Mental Health Services

Grants will not exceed \$100,000 per year per organization

Contact Information

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COMMUNITY RESILIENCY OVERVIEW & REQUIREMENTS

OVERVIEW

United Way believes every community deserves to prosper. We work with our neighbors to build resilient communities that are more connected, supportive and ready to respond to any challenge. Organizations funded through Community Resiliency provide referral and support to access community resources, local disaster response, capacity building support for nonprofits, and sustaining a past collective impact effort. Additionally, United Way is reserving a modest amount of funding to be able to respond to unanticipated community needs.

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

Resource Referral & Support

The primary investment will be in a central access point for people who need help to take the first step toward regaining stability. Additional investment considerations may include warm lines that provide information, referral, and support services in times of need.

Local Disaster Response

Investments in this area ensure that people displaced by local disasters have adequate housing and their basic needs met, while also connecting them to other community-based resources.

SECONDARY STRATEGIES

Capacity Building Support for Nonprofits

Investments in this area meet the needs of nonprofits in Milwaukee, Washington, Ozaukee, and Waukesha counties by providing opportunities for nonprofit trainings, capacity building and technical assistance support, and access to nonprofit community resources to build strong nonprofit infrastructure.

Healthy Youth Legacy

Legacy investments support high-quality programming that are essential for sustaining the achievement of a collective impact or key initiative goal. These investments are significantly smaller than what was needed to reach our goal and may be fully reduced over time. Currently, the only area eligible for legacy funding is teen pregnancy and sexual violence prevention programming essential for ensuring that youth have access to evidence-based medically accurate sexual health information to prevent teen pregnancy and teen sexual violence.

Urgent Community Needs

A modest amount of funding will be set aside for United Way to provide funding for unanticipated community needs that we are well positioned to respond to.

Important Note: Applications for this strategy are on a separate timeline and dependent on our ability to raise unrestricted funds, or funds specific to a local urgent need. When urgent needs funding opportunities are available, qualification criteria, available grant award amounts, and a link to apply will be posted on our [funding opportunities](#) website.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Organizations applying for resources, referral & support, local disaster response, or capacity building support for nonprofits must provide services in **all four counties** of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha.

Organizations applying for Healthy Youth Legacy must utilize evidence-based and medically accurate curricula to be eligible for funding.

DATA COLLECTION & OUTCOMES CRITERIA

In the Year-End Report, funded organizations will be asked to report on the following including but not limited to:

- [Unduplicated demographics](#) for each participant served.
- The number of participants served in the aligned program.
- The type of program and how it aligns with the chosen strategy.
- Changes in the organization's ability to provide services as a result of Impact Based Funding.
- Results from the outcomes tools identified in the application. (where applicable).

FUNDING PARAMETERS

The grant application process for Community Resiliency/Legacy will be for a 3-year grant cycle from 7/1/2026 - 6/30/2029.

- There is no minimum or maximum award amount. Organizations should apply for the amount needed and will be asked to demonstrate a necessity for the amount requested.

Contact Information

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