

# 2026–2027 Community Program Fund

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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### 1. General Information

#### **Where can I find the full RFP and application materials?**

The 2026–2027 Community Program Fund Request for Proposal information is posted on the United Way of Central New York's website:

<https://unitedway-cny.org/rfp/>

#### **Who can apply?**

Applicants must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit or have a qualified fiscal sponsor
- Have operated for at least two years
- Deliver services in Onondaga County
- Have an annual operating budget of at least \$100,000 and a record of effective service delivery
- Employ at least one full-time staff member (1.0 FTE or greater)
- Align with at least one Impact Area and Path
- Address immediate/basic needs or systemic barriers, such as housing, food, transportation, financial stability, health, or youth opportunity
- Commit to tracking and reporting metrics (# served, % better off) – guidance and training will be provided
- Provide required financial documentation (IRS Form 990 and most recent financial statements)

#### **What are the priority populations for funding?**

We prioritize investments in programs that support:

- ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households
- Low-income families
- Children and youth



- Older adults
- Other vulnerable residents

### **Is this a multi-year grant?**

Yes. This RFP provides a **two-year funding opportunity (January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2027)**.

Applicants submit one application for the full cycle.

- Year 2 funding is contingent on compliance with reporting, monitoring, and grant requirements.

### **Can I apply for more than one program?**

Yes. If applying for more than one program, you must list each separately on the Eligibility Screen. If approved, you will then complete a full application for each. Each program will be reviewed independently.

### **If my program fits more than one Impact Area, can I select multiple?**

No. Each program must align with **one primary Impact Area**. You may reference secondary outcomes in your narrative, but for reporting and review purposes, only one Impact Area can be selected.

## **2. Funding & Awards**

### **How much funding can I request?**

- Estimated award range: **\$15,000–\$100,000 annually**
- Smaller, targeted programs should apply toward the lower end of the range
- Larger programs serving more participants or demonstrating deeper impact may qualify for higher amounts
- Actual award amounts depend on alignment, scale, and available resources

### **What is the funding structure for this grant?**

- **Grant Term:** January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2027



- **Commitment:** This is a **multi-year funding opportunity**. Applicants submit one application for the full two-year cycle.
- **Annual Awards:** Award amounts are determined each year and are dependent on the results of United Way's annual fundraising campaign.
- **Renewal:** Programs funded in Year 1 will be considered for continued funding in Year 2, provided the organization complies with reporting, monitoring, and grant requirements.

### What types of expenses can be funded?

Proposals may include requests for programmatic and operational support. Applicants are encouraged to clearly outline the organization's needs and how funding would benefit both the program and the community it serves.

United Way does **not** fund:

- Capital projects (e.g., building improvements, vehicles, major equipment)
- Direct lobbying efforts
- Endowments

### When will grant payments be made?

The first disbursement will occur in **January 2026**. Payments are typically made in monthly installments.

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## 3. Timeline & Application Process

### What are the important dates?

- **Week of August 25, 2025** – RFP released
- **Week of September 8, 2025** – Virtual technical assistance / office hours (attendance optional)
- **September 26, 2025** – Proposals due (11:59 PM)
- **September 22 – October 31, 2025** – Application review and decisions made
- **November 2025** – Award notifications sent
- **December 2025** – Award packets distributed, contracts due
- **January 2026** – First grant payment disbursed; reporting period begins



**Do I need to complete the application in one sitting?**

No. The online application system allows you to save your work and return later.

**Will late applications be accepted?**

No. Applications must be submitted through our online grants portal by **September 26, 2025 at 11:59 PM**. Late or incomplete applications cannot be considered.

**Can I get help with my application?**

Yes.

**Virtual Technical Assistance Sessions (optional):**

- Wed 9/10/25 – 12:00 pm
- Wed 9/10/25 – 3:00 pm
- Fri 9/12/25 – 9:30 am
- Mon 9/15/25 – 12:00 pm

*Registration links will be posted with the RFP.*

United Way Community Impact staff are available for technical assistance on the process but cannot provide feedback on application content.

Contact: **315.428.3744** or **[rfp@unitedway-cny.org](mailto:rfp@unitedway-cny.org)**

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## **4. Impact & Results**

**What are the Impact Areas and Paths?**

Applicants must align their program with one of four Impact Areas:

- Healthy Community
- Youth Opportunity
- Financial Security
- Community Resiliency



Each includes specific “Paths” with required measures. (See the RFP for the full framework and service examples.)

[View Impact Agenda Executive Summary](#)

### What is the Results Framework?

United Way uses a **Results-Based Accountability (RBA)** approach:

- **How much did you do?** (# served)
- **Is anyone better off?** (% or \$ outcome)

Applicants must:

- Select one Impact Area
- Choose the Path that best describes their work
- Report on:
  - **# Served** – total participants reached
  - **% Better Off** – % achieving the intended outcome

*Note: Outcomes will be reported as “of surveyed participants” and considered alongside other data (qualitative and quantitative).*

[View Results Framework](#)

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## 5. Financial & Eligibility Requirements

### What financial documentation is required?

Based on annual operating budget:

- **Over \$250,000:** IRS Form 990, most recent audited/reviewed statements, current year operating budget
- **\$100,000–\$250,000:** IRS Form 990/990EZ, most recent reviewed/compiled statements, current year operating budget

If unsure, contact Community Impact staff at [rfp@unitedway-cny.org](mailto:rfp@unitedway-cny.org).



### **Why does my organization need to provide financial documents?**

As stewards of donor contributions, United Way reviews applicant financials to ensure accountability, transparency, and organizational stability. This safeguards community investments and builds donor confidence.

### **Do I need to have a 501(c)(3) nonprofit status?**

No. If your group does not have a 501(c)(3), you can still apply if you have a **qualified fiscal sponsor**.

### **What is a fiscal sponsor?**

A fiscal sponsor is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit that agrees to accept and manage grant funds on behalf of another group.

### **Are faith-based organizations (such as churches) eligible to apply?**

Yes. Faith-based organizations may apply if they have 501(c)(3) status or a qualified fiscal sponsor. The proposed program must be offered in a non-discriminatory way, open to all community members, and separate from religious instruction or worship. Like all applicants, faith-based organizations and/or their fiscal sponsors are subject to the same fiscal review, reporting requirements, and documentation standards.

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## **6. After You Apply**

### **What happens after I apply?**

- Proposals are reviewed by staff and community volunteers
- Recommendations are presented to the United Way Board of Directors
- Final decisions are made by the Board

### **What kind of reporting will be required if we are funded?**

Funded partners will submit:

- Mid-year and year-end reports (with # served, % better off outcomes)
- Narrative updates on progress, challenges, and lessons learned



- Updated financial documents

United Way staff may also conduct site visits, request additional documentation, or invite partners to shared learning sessions.

**If my program is not funded, are there other ways to engage with United Way?**

Yes. Nonprofits can:

- Apply for future funding opportunities
- Join United Way-led coalitions and collaboratives
- Post volunteer needs through VolunteerCNY or join the Day of Caring
- List services in 211CNY for referrals
- Partner on initiatives such as VITA, Thrive at Work, Ride United, and more

