

2024 Community Impact & Innovation Grant Guidelines



United Way of Chester County (UWCC) is requesting proposals for Community Impact and Innovation Grants that primarily address issues related to building financial stability and self-sufficiency for individuals and families, helping children and youth achieve their potential, and improving health and well-being for all, with a priority emphasis on food insecurity, stable housing, and mental and behavioral health. UWCC remains focused on serving ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) and addressing the needs of disadvantaged and at-risk individuals and families in Chester County by funding effective and targeted programs and services.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must:

- Be invited to apply following submission of a Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI)
- Serve primarily Chester County residents and have full time physical presence and programming in Chester County
- Have 501c3 status or similar tax-exempt status
- Register with the State of Pennsylvania, Bureau of Charitable Organizations (as required)
- Offer programs/activities/services that align with UWCC goals and priorities, including addressing the needs of ALICE with specific attention given to ALICE Essentials
- Be willing to respond to UWCC inquiries regarding any information reported in proposals, including mid-cycle reports

Proposal Requirements

Eligible applicants must complete and submit a **Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI) NO LATER THAN Friday, March 29, 2024**. LOIs should be forwarded to Stephanie Miller at smiller@uwchestercounty.org and include the following:

- Mission statement of your organization
- Name and contact information of Executive Director and the person who will be responsible for completing an application, if different
- Statement of need, including projected use of funds
- Projected outcomes for funded activities, including how activities address the needs of ALICE

Organizations invited to submit a full application will be notified of next steps during the week of April 8, 2024. Please note: An invitation to apply is NOT a guarantee of funding regardless of past funding history. Full applications will open April 12 with a deadline of May 17, 2024. *No exceptions will be made. No late or incomplete applications will be accepted.*

Acknowledgment

Organizations submitting an LOI or application to UWCC acknowledge the following:

- Successful submission of an LOI or grant application is not a guarantee of funding
- The awarding of all grant amounts is at the sole discretion of UWCC and the Community Impact Council Review Team (Council) and will be dependent in part on apparent or emerging community needs at the time of evaluation
- No 2024 Community Impact & Innovation Grant will exceed \$50,000. For requests greater than this upper limit, please contact UWCC directly to discuss options.
- UWCC retains the right to request information regarding the utilization of any grant awarded, and that all grant funds must be used for the terms as outlined in the submitted application unless a request to use the funds otherwise is submitted to and approved by the Council
- All information presented as part of the application process is true and accurate to the best of the applicant's ability

*The mission of United Way of Chester County is to unite people and mobilize resources to build better lives and stronger communities.
Our vision for Chester County is a community where all residents have opportunities to achieve a vibrant and healthy quality of life.*

Community Impact Priorities

UWCC aims to provide investments and capacity building resources for social sector organizations, programs, and collaborative coalitions that provide direct services, positively influence systemic improvements, and fill identified unmet needs. Our 2024 Community Impact & Innovation Grants will prioritize the below goals, with a particular emphasis on food insecurity, stable housing, and mental and behavioral health.

Financial Stability and Self-Sufficiency

UWCC may invest in organizations and strategies that help individuals and families:

- Move toward financial independence and self-sufficiency while meeting basic needs
- Receive assistance to stabilize condition or increase stable income
- Gain or maintain stable housing

Helping Children and Youth Achieve Their Potential

UWCC may invest in organizations and strategies that provide:

- Children the opportunity for high quality early learning experiences in home, community and educational settings
- Students the opportunity for positive, skill-building and leadership opportunities that lead to success in and out of school
- Parents/caregivers the means to support the intellectual, physical and behavioral development of their children

Improving Health and Well-Being for All

UWCC may invest in organizations and strategies that:

- Help individuals gain access to medical/dental/behavioral health services
- Individuals prevent and/or address physical and behavioral health problems
- Help vulnerable individuals function as independent community members

United Way of Chester County is committed to equitable service delivery and funding practices, ensuring that organizations receiving United Way funding are committed to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Culture and can demonstrate that commitment in meaningful and measurable ways.

ALICE

As detailed in numerous reports compiled by United Way of Pennsylvania researchers, the ALICE Essentials Budget reflects the minimum income needed to remain self-sufficient and stable in Chester County municipalities. Subsequent reports outline the “significant number of positive changes for families and their communities” if households had sufficient income and resources, and the “tough choices ALICE and poverty-level families make when they do not have enough income to afford basic necessities, and how those decisions affect their broader communities.”

ALICE Essentials, as listed here, will be considered in addressing community needs and prioritizing funding proposals.

Safe, Affordable Housing

<i>Impact on ALICE</i>	Improved health through safer environments and decreased stress, improved educational performance and outcomes for children, greater stability for household members, a means to build wealth for homeowners
<i>Community Impact</i>	Less traffic, lower health care costs, better maintained housing stock, lower crime rates, less spending on homelessness/social services

Quality Childcare and Education

<i>Impact on ALICE</i>	Improved academic performance, higher lifetime earnings, higher graduation rates, improved job stability/access for parents, better health
<i>Community Impact</i>	Decreased racial/ethnic and socioeconomic performance gaps, decreased income disparities, high return on investment (especially for early childhood education)

Adequate Food

<i>Impact on ALICE</i>	Decreased food insecurity, improved health (especially for children and seniors), decreased likelihood of developmental delays and behavioral problems in school
<i>Community Impact</i>	Lower health care costs, improved workplace productivity, less spending on emergency food services

Reliable Transportation

<i>Impact on ALICE</i>	Improved access to job opportunities, school and childcare, health care, retail markets, social services, and support systems (friends, family, faith communities)
<i>Community Impact</i>	Fewer high-emissions vehicles on the road, more diverse labor market, decreased income disparities

Quality Health Care

<i>Impact on ALICE</i>	Better mental and physical health (including increased life expectancy), improved access to preventative care, fewer missed days of work/ school, decreased need for emergency services
<i>Community Impact</i>	Decreased health care spending, fewer communicable diseases, improved workplace productivity, decreased wealth-health gap

Reliable Technology

<i>Impact on ALICE</i>	Improved access to job opportunities, expanded access to health information and tele-health services, increased job and academic performance
<i>Community Impact</i>	Decreased “digital divide” in access to technology by income, increased opportunities for civic participation

Savings

<i>Impact on ALICE</i>	Ability to withstand emergencies without impacting long-term financial stability and greater asset accumulation over time
<i>Community Impact</i>	Greater charitable contributions; less spending on emergency health, food, and senior services

NOTE: More information regarding ALICE is available on the UWCC website at www.unitedwaychestercounty.org/our-impact/alice and at our partner sites www.unitedforalice.org or www.uwp.org/alice. Data presented in the following reports have been cited in part to develop UWCC priorities and grant guidelines: United Way of Pennsylvania; *COVID and Financial Hardship in Pennsylvania*. Harrisburg, PA. April 2023; United Way of Pennsylvania; *2021 PA County Profiles – Chester County*. Harrisburg, PA. January 2023.

Proposal Assessment Criteria

UWCC bases proposal evaluations – whether submitted by longtime grantees or first-time applicants – on the quality of the proposals and on the recommendations resulting from the Community Impact Review process. There are six key assessment areas considered grounding principles for UWCC, and may be evaluated through program reports, agency visitations, application details, financial documents, or some combination thereof.

- **Alignment with UWCC priority goals and population** - Funding priority is given to those organizations that offer programming that aligns most with UWCC goals, desired outcomes and target populations.
- **Quality** - UWCC is committed to supporting quality programs and services. This includes participant/consumer satisfaction, financial performance (e.g. budget/cost of service per consumer, etc.), alignment with industry best practices, and program performance levels.
- **Reach/scope** - Program must demonstrate the meaningful extent to which specified program objectives are being attained and a high proportion of the target population is served.
- **Demonstrated positive outcomes** - UWCC is accountable to donors to ensure contributions are used wisely and results are achieved. Gauging effectiveness is critical to ensuring that program design and implementation results in the desired improvement or changes sought. Programs should demonstrate the impact of a program, as well as continuously reflect and adjust program elements as needed to reach established program goals.
- **Collaboration & Partnership** - UWCC believes that the important and valuable work of United Way and grantees produces more meaningful results through strong collaborative efforts. By leveraging each other’s resources and expertise, we create efficiencies and can better serve consumers of services and the community at large. UWCC considers an organization’s cooperation with others, including a positive working relationship with UWCC, and seeks partners that will actively support and advance common goals through both program and community efforts.
- **Financial need** - Agencies requesting funding must demonstrate a financial need for funding consideration. Agency budgets and/or financial statements may be requested and evaluated.