



Request For Proposals 2025-2026 Grant Phase

United Way is on a mission to advance the education, economic mobility, and health of our community by mobilizing resources, people, and organizations. This Call for Proposals outlines details for investments in local organizations that support the pursuit of an equitable and inclusive Lancaster County, where all neighbors can thrive and maintain a dignified quality of life lasting through generations. We envision an equitable Lancaster County where everyone can succeed, and the entire community thrives as a result.

Recognizing that community issues are complex, we believe in investing in the fundamental building blocks that every person—and every community—needs to thrive: Education, Economic Mobility, and Health. This grant opportunity aims to discover scalable and innovative solutions to advance the education, economic mobility, and health of Lancaster County residents through focused Level Up & Launch Grants.

These grants are made possible by the contributions of thousands of community investors each year, and United Way is committed to serving as a strategic steward of these dollars.

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

United Way seeks to invest in scalable and innovative projects in our three priorities that demonstrate an awareness of service gaps and/or systemic challenges.

Education: Improved Children and Youth Success - | Universal Extracurricular Participation, Support Adults with incomplete education | Transportation

Economic Mobility: Achieve economic stability | Attain employment | Develop chosen pathways to career | Break generational poverty cycles | Support re-entry/recovery employment options | Transportation

Health: | Access care | Mental Health | Age with dignity | Transportation

Please note, in addition to grant dollars, UWLC is also offering capacity building opportunities to grantee organizations in terms of participation in Project Blueprint, various volunteer opportunities, etc.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Being part of a marginalized group has a big impact on a person's life outcomes, and we can only break the cycle by standing up for equity and justice. That is why UWLC commits to:

- Acknowledging and reconciling our historical role in perpetuating systems of inequality
- Changing inequitable systems that prevent our community from reaching its full potential.
- Embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion as individuals, as an organization, and with our community

- Recognizing that marginalized groups and systems change over time, we may be impacting un-noticed groups today differently than underserved groups yesterday.

As an organization we are always learning and unlearning so that we can improve our practices and our commitment to equity. We aspire to embed diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and belonging in everything we do by focusing on individuals, our organization, our interactions with the community we serve, and our stakeholders. In that process, we must include the voices of those who are marginalized or underrepresented. We are constantly building organizational capacity to engage meaningfully across differences and foster an inclusive culture.

At UWLC, we aim to address inequities and foster inclusion and advancement for underrepresented populations in the communities in which we live and work. We do this because a community that isn't whole and healthy at its margin cannot be whole and healthy for long in its center. ¹Our classification of underrepresented populations includes *individuals who are members of the Black and African-American community as well as Indigenous Persons and People of Color (BIPOC), who have been discriminated in this system on the basis of religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, poverty(rural & urban), incarcerated & re-entering the community/economy, or any other factor not relevant to a person's eligibility for service, and to advance and thrive in life.*

Our internal board-level Equity Committee is leading us in accomplishing the goals of our own strategic plan and working to ensure that all our programs and initiatives address the needs of everyone, particularly those who are marginalized and most underrepresented in our communities. Still, we are humbled by the significant work yet to be done. We acknowledge that we have much to do to become more equitable, inclusive, accessible, and intentional about cultivating belonging in our organization and in the communities we serve.

We seek to partner with others with the same commitment to equity - those who are at the forefront of this work and those who are just beginning their journey. We aim to support our community partners in developing projects and initiatives that promote positive change and growth within the community. We offer our assistance in creating an equitable nonprofit landscape in our community and ensuring community voice is integral to the work we support.

MATCH FUNDS: HOW DOES IT WORK?

Grants are awarded to organizations in amounts ranging from \$10,000 - \$50,000, which will be eligible for matching funds. A staged matching model strengthens project sustainability, incentivizes fundraising efforts, and ensures that funded projects have the financial support needed for long-term success.

Initial Grant Disbursement – Upon the grant award, United Way of Lancaster County provides the full amount of the grant award upfront, giving the grantee immediate funding to launch their project.

¹ We will be referring to this classification of ***underrepresented populations*** hereafter in this RFP announcement document.

Fundraising Phase – During the fundraising phase, grantees can raise funds up to the amount as their initial grant. This encourages them to engage community stakeholders, secure additional investors, and demonstrate broad-based support for their project.

Matching Funds Awarded – For every dollar raised (up to the grant amount), United Way of Lancaster County provides an additional dollar, effectively doubling the new funds secured.

3:1 Total Impact – If the Level Up & Launch grantee successfully raises the full match amount, the project budget reaches three times the original grant: the initial grant award + funds raised by the recipient + matching funds from United Way of Lancaster County.

For example, with a \$20,000 grant, the recipient receives the full amount upfront. If they then raise \$20,000 in outside funding, United Way of Lancaster County matches that with another \$20,000, resulting in a total project budget of \$60,000 (3:1 impact).

GOALS AND METRICS

PRIORITY I: EDUCATION

Success in life begins with a quality education, serving as the bedrock for individual and community success. A high-quality education, commencing with access to early-learning experiences and extending through post-secondary education, is crucial for charting a path to increased opportunities throughout an individual's lifetime. United Way collaborates with schools, parents, care providers, and other community partners to ensure that every child receives a strong start in life, teenagers possess the tools to learn and grow, and young adults thrive in their endeavors.

An equity lens in education shifts the focus from individual experiences to placing stronger responsibility on the structures, institutions, policies, and practices that have contributed to existing unequal conditions. Educational equity is attained when outcomes such as high school graduation and college attainment are no longer closely correlated with a student's race, income level, gender, ability status, or locality.

United Way of Lancaster County supports programs and initiatives that provide access to quality education for children, spanning from pre-K to 12th grade, as well as those supporting secondary education and specialized skills/trade schools.

Applicants should describe how their work contributes to one or more of the goals listed below, extracted from the Equity Profile of Lancaster County. The work should align with one or more of the strategies listed below, and applicants must be prepared to report on one or more of the measures provided.

Goal: Lancaster County's children and youth have access to quality education, so they gain the knowledge, skills, and credentials to be successful in their lives with opportunities that support the upward mobility.

Strategies:

- Increase access to high-quality early childhood educational experiences for children

(especially from underrepresented populations in the community) to support school readiness.

- Engage families, youth, schools, and community partners to ensure that students (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) have access to K-12 high-quality, high-performing schools.
- Partner with schools, especially those serving high-poverty and/or majority students of color, to provide support for after school programs and bring diverse educators on the staff.
- Partner with higher education and state teacher licensure departments to identify and support policies, practices, and investments to increase the number of BIPOC college students achieving teaching degrees.
- Partner with schools, community-based organizations and other funders to invest in and lead initiatives that improve high school graduation rates for students of color. Both academic and extracurricular activities can be considered.
- Provide high school and college students (especially those in high-poverty schools and/or in neighborhoods with majority students of color) support and services to ensure college access, persistence, and completion.

Measures:

- Investments in the number of students and families attending schools that are low-performing and/or more than 40 percent qualify for Free and Reduced Meals
- Number of K-12 children and youth (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) who participate in extracurricular activities, afterschool programs, summer programs and/or receive individualized supports for any of these categories.
- Number of youth (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) participating in internships and/or summer jobs or who participate in Career and Technical Education programs.
- Percent and number of children and youth (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) with access to computer software and hardware
- Number of community/state- coalitions or collaboratives focused on promoting quality, equitable K-12 education and high-quality afterschool and summer programs.
- Number of individuals/families (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) with access to transportation to attain the services offered in the community.

If you are proposing a project that does not track one of these measurements, please indicate how your metrics align with one of the community's collectively monitored outcomes: [ALICE](#) | [Places 2040](#) | [Equity Profile of Lancaster County](#) (See Resources section for website addresses)

PRIORITY II: ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Economic Mobility refers to the ability of individuals to enhance their own and their families' economic well-being. We firmly believe that ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities forms the cornerstone of a thriving community. Our vision is a community where every family attains financial stability, enabling them to achieve a dignified quality of life. A reduction in financial stressors not only leads to healthier lives but also contributes to better educational outcomes and a more productive workforce.

The capacity to improve one's economic condition is closely tied to discriminatory patterns that restrict opportunities and limit choices for some, while creating privileges for others. This has resulted in a society marked by significant economic disparities.

In every community within Lancaster County, individuals and households face economic and financial barriers that impede a good quality of life, as evident in Lancaster County's Racial Equity Profile. For instance, members of our Black or Latinx community are twice as likely to be unemployed as their white counterparts, experience childhood poverty at more than triple the rate of white children and earn less than their white colleagues despite having an equal level of education. Our goal is to set every person in the county on a path toward financial stability and economic success. This begins with providing equitable access to services such as job training, vocational training, career development, and financial education.

United Way of Lancaster County, in partnership with United Way Worldwide, advocates for ALICE – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE determines the income needed for a sustainable budget, known as The Household Survival Budget, reflecting the minimum cost to live and work in the modern economy. In Lancaster County, a household budget for a family of four - sustaining, but not thriving - would require an income of more than \$63,000 per year (excluding any childcare costs). Alarming, over 26% of families in our county have incomes below this survival budget.

Within this Priority Area, we will support programs that assist families, particularly those historically marginalized, in achieving economic and financial stability for both adults and youth (ages 16-24). Applicants in this category should outline in their proposals how their work contributes to our overarching goal of economic mobility. The work should align with one or more of the strategies listed below, and applicants must be prepared to report on one or more of the measures provided.

Goal: Individuals and families have equitable access and opportunities to improve their socio-economic status.

Strategies:

- Youth and adults (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) have the education, skills, networks, and opportunities to obtain and retain good jobs with

pathways for advancement.

- Youth and adults advance (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) to good jobs and careers in high-growth, high-wage sectors.
- Youth and adults Entrepreneurs (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) have equitable opportunities to use quality and comparable financial products and services.
- Provide parents (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) wrap around support that address the unique barriers parents face when aspiring to advance their own education and career opportunities.
- Equip individuals (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) with the tools and knowledge to access safe and affordable housing & achieve home ownership.
- Ensure equitable business opportunities for BIPOC-owned small businesses.

Measures:

- Number of individuals (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) who access affordable financial products and services (bank accounts, mortgages, consumer and business loans, lines of credit)
- Number of individuals (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) with access to affordable housing (i.e., less than 37 percent of income devoted to housing costs)
- Number of individuals (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) with access to employment opportunities that provides a minimum of living wage.
- Number of individuals participating in programs offering financial coaching/education, credit repair, savings plans
- Number of individuals (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) who access job skills training and land jobs that pay a minimum of living wage.
- Number of individuals/families (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) with access to affordable, quality childcare services
- Number of individuals/families (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) with access to transportation to attain the services offered in the community.
- Number of community/state-based coalitions or collaboratives focused on workforce development and/or job training.

If you are proposing a project that does not track one of these measurements, please indicate how your metrics align with one of the community's collectively monitored outcomes: [ALICE](#) | [Places 2040](#) | [Equity Profile of Lancaster County](#) (See Resources section for website addresses)

PRIORITY III: HEALTH

The health of individuals serves as a robust indicator of the overall health of a community. Historically marginalized populations and those residing on the economic margins face reduced access to healthcare systems and increased exposure to environmental hazards. Attaining and maintaining good health is crucial at every life stage. To enhance the overall health of our community, we facilitate access to quality and affordable primary, mental, behavioral, dental, and general healthcare services. Whether supporting seniors in aging in place or expanding access to preventative health education for sustaining or improving health, United Way is dedicated to enhancing the health of all.

It is essential to define Social Determinants of Health for working towards a standardized framework of access and attainment of healthcare in Lancaster County. Social determinants of health (SDOH) encompass the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age, influencing a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

Equitable health outcomes are achievable when individuals have the opportunity to reach their full health potential, and no one is excluded from realizing this goal due to their race, income level, gender, locality/residence, or any other socially determined factor. Disparities in access to quality healthcare and health outcomes are directly linked to historical and ongoing inequities. United Way is actively engaged in the community, prioritizing changes to institutions, policies, and practices to address persistent inequities in resources, support, and opportunities that contribute to health outcome gaps.

Within this Priority Area, we will support programs that enhance access to health-related services. Applicants in this category should describe in their proposals how their work contributes to our overarching goal of increased access to health services. The work should align with one or more of the strategies listed below, and applicants must be prepared to report on one or more of the measures provided.

Goal: Individuals and families have equitable access to healthcare and opportunities to improve their health.

Strategies:

- Promote affordable and comprehensive health insurance enrollment (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) as well as understanding accessibility and attainability of healthcare.
- Remove barriers to access public benefits and health resources.
- Work with community partners to provide increased access to senior services (especially from underrepresented populations in the community)

- Improve access to and quality of prenatal and postpartum care to women of color, with particular emphasis on Black women.
- Support and expand health services in under-resourced communities, especially low-income rural communities.

Measures:

- Number of individuals (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) participating in physical activity and/or healthy food access/nutrition programs.
- Number of individuals (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) served with access to healthcare services and supports.
- Number of individuals (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) who can obtain healthcare services and support.
- Number of individuals (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) on the path to healthy lifestyle with increased access to healthy eating and physical activity.
- Percent of mothers (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) who access prenatal care.
- Percent of babies (especially those born in underrepresented populations in the community) who experience healthy birth outcomes (e.g., carried to full term, born at a healthy weight and/or celebrate their first birthday)
- Number of individuals/families (especially from underrepresented populations in the community) with access to transportation to attain the services offered in the community.

If you are proposing a project that does not track one of these measurements, please indicate how your metrics align with one of the community's collectively monitored outcomes: [ALICE](#) | [Places 2040](#) | [Equity Profile of Lancaster County](#) (See Resources section for website addresses)

RESOURCE WEBSITES:

- ALICE: <https://www.unitedforalice.org/indicators/pennsylvania>
- Lancaster County Racial Equity Profile: www.equityprofilelancaster.com
- Places 2040: <https://lanastercountypanning.org/>

HOW TO APPLY

Applications are only submitted via online application. The link can be found on our website.

Applications must include the following information:

- Application Answers
- Program Budget
- IRS Nonprofit Determination Letter (see Attachment B)
- Board of Directors Roster

- Organizational Budget (current Fiscal Year)
- Organizations with an annual budget of more than \$500,000 must also submit their most recent audit.

Please note that our previous grantees of United Way support (EFSP, EITC, etc.) are eligible to apply. Last year's Level Up and Launch grantees **MUST** apply for a different project, or expansion of their project in collaboration with another organization.

SELECTION PROCESS

United Way staff members will initially review each application to determine if the applicant is eligible and if the application is complete. Complete applications that meet the eligibility criteria will move on to a more thorough review process. A select group of community members will evaluate the applications using a scoring rubric. Once the reviews are complete, reports will be created based on application scores as well as diversity across services provided, communities served, organization leadership, and other factors. Recommendations based on these reports will go before the entire United Way Impact Committee for approval. The United Way Impact Committee is a diverse group of community leaders and issue area experts who will approve the final recommendation that is presented to the United Way Board of Directors for approval.

In Person Grant Presentations

The selected applicants from the first round of review will have the opportunity to present their proposed program/project idea to the UWLC team and Level Up & Launch Grants Review Committee. This platform allows all applicants to effectively communicate their ideas to the reviewers and enables committee members to seek clarification by asking any questions they may have.

Expectations from grantees:

- Adherence to the grant reporting requirements, including monthly updates, mid-year reports, and annual reports.
- Nominate a staff person to serve as a liaison for all Level Up & Launch communication and coordination.
- Work with United Way's marketing team to publicize and highlight the initiative throughout the grant period.
- Availability to schedule United Way team site visits.
- Availability to present as a United Way partner organization during United Way's campaign period (advance notice and training will be provided by the Resource Development team for a 2-5 minute presentation).
- Maintain an up-to-date organization profile on PA211 and Get Connected volunteer portal websites.

QUESTIONS

All questions should be submitted in writing to grants@uwlanc.org.

APPENDICES

Attachment A – Sample IRS Nonprofit Determination Letter

ATTACHMENT A: IRS DETERMINATION LETTER

The IRS determination letter should look similar to the one below (name of organization and EIN redacted in the example).

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: JUN 03 2014

Employer Identification Number:

DLN:

Contact Person:

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Contact Telephone Number:

(877) 829-5500

Accounting Period Ending:

December 31

Public Charity Status:

509(a)(2)

Form 990 Required:

Yes

Effective Date of Exemption:

May 9, 2012

Contribution Deductibility:

Yes

Addendum Applies:

No

Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are deductible under section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code. Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

Organizations exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined that you are a public charity under the Code section(s) listed in the heading of this letter.