

**Columbus Area
United Way**



IMPACT GRANT Guidelines and Directions

Mission:

The Columbus Area United Way mission is to focus resources to measurably improve the education, financial stability, and health of our community.

**Columbus Area United Way, Inc.
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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Impact Grant program is to provide health and human service agencies and organizations an opportunity to seek funds for immediate and creative responses to the most pressing human needs in the areas of Youth Opportunity, Financial Security, Healthy Community and Community Needs. Impact Grants can be applied for in two different areas.

1. *One year demonstration or pilot project grant: Organizations are encouraged to test and develop new or improved ways of delivering needed services, services which address emerging or newly identified needs, or services which respond to previously unmet or underserved needs within the four-county service area of Boone, Colfax, Platte, and Nance counties. The desired results of these demonstration/pilot programs will be improved delivery or services for persons in need, and a stronger more integrated human service network in our community.*

2. *Impact Grants: Organizations that already have programs established that are addressing recognized concerns within the areas of Education, Financial Stability, Health and Community Needs. The objective of these impact grants will be to fund programs that will have measurable results that improve lives and make lasting change.*

4% of the interest earned by the Columbus Area United Way Endowment Fund is distributed back to the community through annual Impact Grants. It is recommended an Impact Grant application request be \$20,000 or less.

The considerations for these grants include:

- Programs which provide services in response to community identified needs.
- Programs which respond to new and/or emerging needs.
- Programs which utilize the Impact Grant as matching funds to secure other grants for provision of human services.
- Programs that will secure other funds, either grant or direct contributions, plus in-kind matching support.
- Proposals which document shared staff facilities and/or resources among two or more agencies, organizations, joint agency-business, or joint agency-government proposals. Special consideration will be given to programs which demonstrate a collaborative effort among groups.
- Programs which demonstrate the ability to become self-sufficient after initial funding.
- Programs not duplicated by other services/programs currently available.
- Programs which make extensive use of volunteers.

CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

- A. The applicant must be incorporated (or sponsored by an incorporated agency) as a non-profit human needs services agency/organization.
- B. The applicant must have tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Groups/organizations who are not incorporated or who do not yet have tax-exempt status must be sponsored by a non-profit, tax-exempt organization and provide a signed statement showing sponsorship agreement (call the United Way office for information)
- C. The applicant's primary geographical area of service and physical location must be in the Columbus Area United Way service area (Boone, Colfax, Platte, and Nance counties).
- D. The applicant must have a certificate of non-discrimination.
- E. The applicant must have an organized governing authority, comprised solely of volunteers, with responsibility to implement a program and to administer and be accountable for the dollars granted. The governing authority must represent the community which it seeks to serve, consist of a minimum of five (5) members and meet regularly.
- F. Requests for support must be consistent with the purpose of these grants (see page 2).
The following are examples of items that will not be considered for Impact Grant funding:
 - 1. Direct financial assistance to individuals or families.
 - 2. Capital expenditures unless there are matching monies or evidence of criteria need for the item for program services.
 - 3. Grants/stipends to conduct or attend conferences, seminars, and workshops.
 - 4. Audits.
 - 5. Other items deemed inappropriate by the Columbus Area United Way Board of Directors.
- G. Impact Grant recipients will be allowed to seek extended funding beyond the first year for stabilization purposes. This does not, however, obligate the Fund Distribution Committee to fund the reapplication but only to consider its request. To be eligible for consideration for a second period of funding, the organization must meet the following criteria:
 - 1. All concerns (administrative, management, program, facility, financial, etc.) expressed by the Fund Distribution Committee at the time of first year's funding will have been addressed with positive, demonstrated results by the organization.
 - 2. Demonstrated effectiveness of the applicant's program in meeting the proposed community need.
 - 3. Consistency of second year proposal with initial goals and objectives of the first year.
 - 4. A clear and operable plan for generating other resources. Columbus Area United Way encourages applicants to avoid an over dependence on only a few fund-raising sources.
 - 5. A financial/program report from the preceding year.
- H. Impact Grants will be considered on an annual basis.
- I. In order for Columbus Area United Way to assess and measure collective impact it is necessary for applicants to measure towards Columbus Area United Way strategic goals in the areas of Education, Financial Stability and Health. Columbus Area United Way Board of Directors did a Strategic Community Needs Assessment to determine the focus areas for Education, Financial Stability and Health which are outlined in detail in this document. However, if an Impact Grant applicant does not align with one of the current goals but is meeting an emerging need within the community, this falls under Community Needs pillar in which the applicant will need to determine measurable outcomes and indicators to determine the impact of the program within the community.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES/TIMETABLE

The application and approval procedure is as follows:

1. By December, online applications will be made available, and advertising begins.
2. The Columbus Area United Way will receive inquiries regarding Impact Grants.
3. In response to the inquiry, the Grant application information will be distributed to the applicant.
4. The applicant must submit the application using Columbus Area United Way online system, e-CImpact and meet Impact Grant criteria.
5. Applications will be accepted online and submitted no later than Wednesday, **January 15th, 2026, at 5:00 pm**. Applications received after this date will not be accepted.
6. The applications will be reviewed by the Fund Distribution Committee. The review may include conferences and/or on-site visits with applicants as the Committee deems necessary.
7. The review process will conclude with the Fund Distribution Committee making a recommendation to the Columbus Area United Way Board of Directors.
8. Notification of actions on requests will be given to applicants by the end of April 2025.
9. Successful applicants may be invited to the Columbus Area United Way Board meeting for distribution of checks.
10. The above-described time frame can be waived or altered at the discretion of the Board of Directors of the Columbus Area United Way.
11. Impact Grant funds will be distributed in one lump sum unless otherwise recommended by the Fund Distribution Committee.
12. An online report describing the progress of the applicant's program will be required six months and twelve months after the distribution of funds. The Fund Distribution Committee will review and monitor the Grant recipient as deemed necessary.

The Columbus Area United Way mission is to focus resources to measurably improve the education, financial stability, and health of our community. Part of the requirement of an Impact grant applicant is to determine which pillar and community outcome statement your program and/or initiative aligns with. Below you will find the scope and focus of each Pillar for your reference and information.

**COLUMBUS AREA UNITED WAY, INC.
IMPACT GRANT - PROJECT FUNDING SCOPE**

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY PILLAR

Community Outcome Statement: Improve Kindergarten readiness

FOCUS:

- Strengthening parent-child engagement through accessible early childhood experiences.
- Expand access to early childhood education for low-income or at-risk families
- Increase the number and effectiveness of trained early childhood professionals delivering quality care

Common Outputs and Indicators:

- #/% of families and caregivers who improve knowledge of childhood development (0-5 years)
- #/% of low-income or at-risk children assisted financially in accessing early childhood education programs. (0-5 years) (For example - scholarships, financial assistance, childhood subsidy)
- # of childhood professionals attending quality training supported by UW funding
- % of participants identifying resources, training, and tools that were helpful for providing early childhood care. (0-5 years)

Community Outcome Statement: Improve and maintain community public school 4-year graduation rate

FOCUS:

- Provide academic and enrichment support to at-risk students (e.g., after-school and summer programs).
- Collaborate with community-based organizations to provide whole-school supports (e.g., mentorship programs, academic supports, emotional intelligence skills and development).
- Facilitate successful college and career transitions via mentoring, internships, and soft skill development.

Common Outputs and Indicators:

- #/% of youth who identified learning at least one new skill
- #/% youth improve or maintain school attendance
- # of students served who participate in school and/or community-based out-of-school time programs

FINANCIAL SECURITY PILLAR

Community Outcome Statement: Strengthen financial security so more community members can live above the poverty level

FOCUS:

- Expand access to financial coaching and literacy education to help individuals manage money, reduce debt, and build savings
- Support individuals in securing family-sustaining jobs by increasing access to vocational training, continuing education, and career advancement opportunities that offer living wages and benefits
- Promote safe and affordable housing by assisting individuals and families with housing stability, reducing homelessness, and creating pathways to homeownership.
- Connect people to local resources that support their financial well-being, including public benefits, employment services, and community programs.

Common Outputs and Indicators:

- #/% of individuals who increase their disposable income by accessing benefits (e.g., SNAP, Medicaid, and/or Employer benefits) and/or reducing costs
- # of individuals who receive services related to housing (including utilities)
- Total # of individuals in programs designed to earn job-relevant licenses, certificates, and/or credentials
- #/% of individuals served who earn job-relevant licenses, certificates, and/or credentials

HEALTHY COMMUNITY PILLAR

Community Outcome Statement: Increase access to food for community members

FOCUS:

- Improve equitable access to nutritious food and reduce food insecurity for students, seniors, and families
- Strengthen collaboration between schools, farms, healthcare systems, and local organizations
- Expand food program participation through coordinated outreach, coordination and funding
- Reduce food insecurity by increasing the availability of fresh, local food and prepared meals

Common Outputs and Indicators:

% Increase in participation in Food Assistance Nutrition Programs (SNAP, WIC, Meals on Wheels, Free and Reduced School Meals, etc.)
of prepared meals, produce distributed or food boxes through community food programs

Community Outcome Statement: Improve overall community wellbeing focusing on mental health

FOCUS:

- Reducing the overall percentage of 12th grade students reporting difficulty concentrating due to mental/emotional problem from 35.6% to 33%
- Reducing the overall percentage of 12th grade students reporting poor mental health from 26.9% to 25%
- Reducing frequent mental health distress among adults (age 19+) within the last 30 days, by 2% (8.1 % to 6%)

Common Outputs and Indicators:

#/% of participants who avoid or reduce risky behaviors
#/% of participants maintaining meaningful relationships with adults or peers
of individuals assisted with accessing mental health services and/or Trauma- Informed care
#/% of participants increasing physical activity and/or sleep quality

COMMUNITY NEEDS PILLAR

Community Outcome Statement: Impact relevant community and emerging needs

Focus:

- New arising need within the community
- Need does not align with CAUW three pillars of Education, Financial Stability and Health

Common Outputs and Indicators:

- Organization will develop their own common outputs and indicators based on program and emerging need.