2022-2025 Community Investments Request for Proposal (RFP)
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated 9.13.21
This document will be updated on a weekly basis with new questions and answers. Please reach out directly with questions not addressed here at [rfp@gtcuw.org.](mailto:rfp@gtcuw.org)

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General Eligibility & RFP Questions

Eligibility

1. **May I apply for the Community Investments RFP if I am not currently receiving funding from GTCUW?**
   Yes. The RFP is an open and competitive grant making process regardless of whether your organization currently receives GTCUW funding. Any organization who meets the eligibility requirements and performs work pursuing the outcomes detailed in the RFP is encouraged to apply.

2. **What is the nine-county area that GTCUW serves?**
   GTCUW serves the nine-county region of Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott and Washington.

3. **My organization does not meet the organizational eligibility requirements but my program does. Can we still apply?**

   Unfortunately, no. Your organization must meet all eligibility requirements in order to apply. This is true even in cases of large organizations such as hospitals or universities. You may consider partnering with another organization that does meet the eligibility and applying as a partnership. See the **Partnerships** section below for more information.

Funding Priorities

1. **My organization does not meet all the funding priorities. Are we still able to apply?**

   Yes. The Funding Priorities in the RFP Guidelines show which criteria will be scored highest in the RFP. While organizations that meet or exceed **all** the criteria will likely be most competitive for funding, we also expect to fund organizations that meet or exceed only **some** of the priority criteria. Overall competitiveness for grant funding will depend on how many applications we receive and who applies. Please reach out to us at rfp@gtcuw.org if you would like to discuss the funding priorities further.

2. **Why is United Way prioritizing organizations led by and serving Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and Pacific Islander and/or Communities of Color?**

   United Way exists to disrupt the extent to which income, race or place predicts a person's ability to thrive. We know that race, in particular, is the largest predictor of inequities in our region.

   Evidence shows that investing more heavily in organizations with strong racial equity practices, meaning organizations led by and for Communities of Color AND with a track record of results, leads to better impact and outcomes for the people the organization supports.

   Our priority in this RFP is to resource organizations best positioned to address inequities, specifically racial and ethnic inequities, and we believe the best way to do that is through prioritizing organizations with strong racial equity practices.

3. **Our organization is led by and/or serves mostly White people. Are we able to apply?**

   Yes. We anticipate funding both organizations that are led by People of Color and organizations led by White people. However, **all organizations funded will have a strong commitment to racial equity** with practices and impact to back it up.

4. **Our organization serves people in a geographic area where the racial/ethnic demographics make it challenging to meet the funding priority of "60% of people served identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander and/or People of Color".**

   We are committed to funding organizations across our nine-county service region and invite organizations working outside of Hennepin and Ramsey County to apply, even if they serve less

than 60 percent of People of Color and have leadership representation of less than 50 percent People of Color.

5. **Our organization's mission is focused on a population that experiences inequities in our region but does not meet the race/ethnicity priority set forth in the RFP. For example, we are focused on supporting LGBTQI, people with disabilities, immigrant/refugee groups that identify as White or other groups. Are we able to apply?**

   Yes. We recognize that while race/ethnicity is the largest predictor of inequities in our region, there are many other groups that experience inequity as well. We also recognize the intersectionality between race/ethnicity and other identities. While this RFP will prioritize organizations led by and serving People of Color, we do anticipate funding White-led organizations as well. If you feel your organization meets the criteria of the RFP and holds a strong commitment to racial equity (regardless of who you serve), we invite you to apply.

Partnerships

1. **If I am applying for a partnership, who should complete the application?**
   Partnering applicants should elect one organization to be the lead applicant. This organization will complete the proposal and if awarded the grant, will receive funding and be responsible for reporting requirements on behalf of the partnership. The lead applicant must meet the RFP's eligibility criteria and meet GTCUW's financial assessment.

2. **I am the Lead Applicant for a partnership. Do I fill out the questions on behalf of my organization or on behalf of the partnership?**
   The online application will provide specifics on which questions should be filled out on behalf of the Lead Applicant and which should be filled out on behalf of the partnerships. The Lead Applicant must meet all Organizational Eligibility criteria and meet the financial assessment requirements. All other questions should be answered on behalf of the partnership.

3. **How is Greater Twin Cities United Way defining a partnership?**
   Creating long-term solutions to the outcomes defined in this RFP are enhanced by holistic thinking. GTCUW encourages applicants who may not be eligible on their own or feel they may be more competitive working with others, to pursue partnerships with other organizations that are directly eligible and/or bring different competencies to the table. Successful applicants will demonstrate how their partnership meet the priorities of the RFP.

4. **I am part of an established coalition/collective that would like to apply. Are we eligible?**
   Coalitions or collectives (groups of organizations) that meet the eligibility requirements and feel their work fits within the RFP are welcome to apply.

5. *I am part of a partnership that's work together is new or has been in place for less than two years. Can we apply? [New question: 9.13.21]*

As long as the Lead Applicant meets the eligibility requirement of being in operation for at least 2 years, your partnership and its work together can be new or around less than two years. Please keep in mind that the application will ask for the results and impact of your partnership's work together. If your partnership's work is new, is it recommended you include relevant information about similar work the organizations in your partnership do.

6. **What are you looking for in terms of a Partnership Budget in the Finance section of the application?** *[New question: 9.28.21]*

   We are looking for a budget that represents the work your partnership is doing together, similar to a Program budget. For example, if your partnership is working together over three different areas of work, it would make sense to combine those areas into one budget. The purpose of asking for this is to understand the size, scale and cost of your partnerships work.

Application/RFP Questions

1. **I'm interested in applying for multiple portfolios. How should I do this?**
   When starting an application in our online portal, you'll be asked to check boxes for the portfolio(s) you intend to apply within. The questions you see appear in the rest of the form will depend on which boxes you select, so please be sure of the area(s) you select before you get started. To read about each portfolio please review our full RFP Guidelines *before* starting your online application. Only submit ONE application per organization.

2. **Does applying for multiple portfolios lessen my chances of being funded? Increase my changes?** *[New question: 9.13.21]*
   We encourage organizations to apply for as many portfolio areas in which they feel they fit. It will not hurt their application in any way. We expect to fund applications that apply in single areas as well as applications that apply in multiple areas.

3. **I changed my mind and no longer want to apply for a portfolio I selected. What should I do?**
   Unfortunately, our online system does not easily allow applicants to edit the portfolio selected in Section A. of the application. Please reach out to us at rfp@gtcuw.org to make any edits to this portion of the application.

4. **My program is part of a much larger institution (i.e.; university, hospital system, etc.). Am I still eligible to apply?**
   As long as your parent institution meets the core eligibility criteria outlined in the RFP and your program/activities meets the portfolio area eligibility outlined in the RFP, you are eligible to apply. For the application, please note the following directions:
   - For the Financial Review section of the application, please use your **parent organization's financials.** We may follow-up to request additional financials from your program's perspective.

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- For the Organization questions of the application, please fill out from the perspective of your parent organization.
- For the Portfolio-specific or program questions of the application, please fill out from the perspective of your program.
- **Reach out to us at rfp@gtcuw.org for further guidance.**

Required Data: Demographics and Outcomes

1. **Should my demographic information include everyone served by my organization?** *[Updated question: 9.13.21]*
   Yes, it should include all participants served by your organization's **DIRECT SERVICE** programs regardless of the portfolio(s) under which you are applying or if your direct services align with United Way's portfolio areas. The intent of the demographics section is to a) understand the total number of individuals served in a "typical year" by your organization's direct service programs, and b) understand the more detailed demographic landscape of your typical community. Applicants may use data from 2019 if they wish, given the disruptions in service due to COVID-19 in 2020.

2. **What are your expectations around tracking individuals and families living and working at 200% of poverty or below? Is proxy data acceptable if we do not capture income data from our participants?**
   We recognize that income data is not always accessible, but we ask that all funded organizations do their best to gather this information during their participant intake process. Please feel free to use proxy data as needed, such as participant eligibility for government programs like SNAP, Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare, free or reduced lunches, or others as applicable. There is space to provide a short, written explanation of your use of proxy data at the end of the organizational demographics section.

3. **Are there a minimum number of participants served required for this grant?**
   There is no minimum requirement for number of participants served.

4. **What data will organizations that are awarded funding be required to report to Greater Twin Cities United Way? How often will reporting occur?**
   Organizations funded through the 2022-2025 Community Investments grants will be asked to complete a report annually over the course of the grant period. In the context of these annual reports, funded partners will be required to provide three types of data:
   a. Organizational-level demographic data for total number of individuals served through direct service programs in the given grant year.

b. Quantitative data for the required outcomes measures associated with the specific portfolios in which they are funded, broken out by participants' race/ethnicity, income level, and county.

c. Quantitative or qualitative data illustrating progress toward an additional grantee-developed outcome that represents the partner's unique vision for future impact, to be agreed upon with Greater Twin Cities United Way evaluators and Program Officers after funding decisions have been made.

Further information may be gathered during the grant period through funded partner site visits, convenings, and/or surveys to support Greater Twin Cities United Way's learning and field building agendas.

5. **Our organization generally tracks the outcomes data required for the portfolio(s) we want to apply under, but we are not sure if we will be able to break out this information by each participant's race/ethnicity, income level, and county of origin. How will this affect our competitiveness in this RFP process?**
An applicant's ability to meet the outcomes data requirements attached to this grant opportunity is one of many factors we are weighing in the review process. The required outcomes data section of the application is **not scored**, and the information you submit in this area will help us understand a) to what extent your organization is ready to provide the desired data at the outset of the grant, and b) if the organization is currently unable to do so, what kinds of barriers are standing in the way. It will be to your advantage to share as much context around any barriers as possible. Organizations that continue on to the site visit portion of the process will also have the opportunity to discuss the extent to which Greater Twin Cities United Way may be able to provide support to remove these barriers to outcomes data collection.

6. **I am a current United Way partner. On our most recent annual report, we were given the option of waiting to fill in our demographic data at the point of the Community Investments application. Usually, in the annual report, we fill out demographic data for each portfolio but in the application, it only asks for demographic data for our organization. Will we need to provide portfolio-level data at some other point during this process?** *[Updated question: 9/28/21]*

No, not during the application process. Currently funded organizations that apply for this RFP only need to provide their **organization's** demographic data in the application, not data at the program level. For your Year 3 annual report with United Way, we will be requesting portfolio-specific demographic data once again (data covering July 1 2021 – June 30 2022), so you and your team can expect that ask next year.

Review Process

1. **When is the application period?**
   The RFP opens on September 8, 2021 at 9am and will close on October 14, at 4pm.

2. **Who will be reviewing the proposals?**
   Proposals will be reviewed and scored by a team of three reviewers. Each review team is made up of a staff person from GTCUW's Community Impact team (the Lead Reviewer) and at least one reviewer from the community. Additional GTCUW staff will make the rest of the review team. Each proposal will be reviewed by three reviewers and receive three scores which will be averaged.

3. **How will proposals be scored?**
   Our scoring breakdown is available for you to review in our RFP Guidelines.

4. **Does every applicant get a site visit?**
   No. We will receive more applications than we are able to fund under this RFP and therefore will only invite applicants with high scores to participate in a site visit. Applicants will be notified if they are receiving a site visit in December 2021. Site visits will be held in January and February 2022.

5. **Does receiving a site visit mean I'm likely to receive funding?**
   Not necessarily. Due to the high volume of applications we receive and availability of funding, we anticipate only being able to fund a portion of applicants who receive a site visit.

6. **If I receive a site visit, will United Way staff want to observe my program in action? [New question: 9.13.21]**
   No. While we are still working out the logistics of site visits, the visit will focus on conversation with your organization's leadership and program staff. We will not ask to observe programs.

Grant Terms

1. **When will funding begin for those who are awarded a grant under this RFP?**
   Grant funding will begin July 1, 2022.

2. **What is the anticipated grant term?**
   Grants are awarded for one year with a 3-year commitment to funding. Grant agreements may be renewed on an annual basis through June 30, 2025 based on available funding. Note that funding amounts may shift based on available funding.

3. **What data will organizations that are awarded funding be required to report to Greater Twin Cities United Way? How often will reporting occur?**

Organizations funded through the 2022-2025 Community Investments grants will be asked to complete a report annually over the course of the grant period. In the context of these annual reports, funded partners will be required to provide three types of data:

    a. Organizational-level demographic data for total number of individuals served through direct service programs in the given grant year.

    b. Quantitative data for the required outcomes measures associated with the specific portfolios in which they are funded, broken out by participants' race/ethnicity, income level, and county.

    c. Quantitative or qualitative data illustrating progress toward an additional grantee-developed outcome that represents the partner's unique vision for future impact, to be agreed upon with Greater Twin Cities United Way evaluators and Program Officers after funding decisions have been made.

Further information may be gathered during the grant period through funded partner site visits, convenings, and/or surveys to support Greater Twin Cities United Way's learning and field building agendas.

4. **What else can I expect as a GTCUW grantee?**
   Please see our [website](#) for more information about being a GTCUW grantee.

5. **What is the anticipated payment structure?**
   GTCUW will electronically deposit 1/12th of the grant amount each month for the length of the grant period in the bank account you provide.

6. **If an organization is funded, how much money can they expect to receive?**
   The minimum grant size is $50,000 annually. Grant awards will be dependent on total funds available and total number of applicants. In past funding cycles, most grants ranged from $50,000-$150,000 annually.

7. ***If I am funded in more than one portfolio, can I expect to receive a larger grant? [Updated 9.28.21]***

   Not necessarily. While we do ask grantees to report on programmatic outcomes as part of this grant, funds are general operating and are not tied to requirements to increase programmatic outcomes (I.e., serve more people) or other activities that increase a program's cost. We do take into account the resources it takes to collect and report data to United Way annually as part of the grant award.

8. **When will organizations be notified about funding?**
   All applicants will be notified of funding decisions in May 2022 following GTCUW Board of Directors approval.

9. **How much funding is available? How much do you intend to fund in each portfolio area?**
The total pool of funding and funding by portfolio is unknown at this time. We do anticipate funding organizations working in each portfolio area.

Portfolio Specific Questions

Early Childhood Education Specific Questions

1. **My organization does work that meets both the Early Care and Parenting eligibility criteria. Can we apply for funding for both?**
Yes, organizations may apply for just one strategy, or both. If you apply for both, please clearly delineate the work of each program in your answers.

2. *I run an Early Childhood Education program that is part of a school. Am I eligible to apply?*
[New question: 9.13.21]

Unfortunately, no. Early Childhood Education programs that are part of a district, private, charter or public K-12 schools are not eligible to apply.

Career and Future Readiness Specific Questions

1. **How do you define Middle School?**
We define middle school as grades 6-8.

2. **How will GTCUW prioritize middle school programs?**
Programs that serve a majority of middle school youth (i.e., >50% youth grades 6-8) will be scored higher than other programs.

3. **Is my program for high school students eligible under this portfolio?**
Programs that only serve youth under Kindergarten age and/or young adults beyond 12th grade are ineligible. Only youth grades K-12 (i.e., youth ages 5-18 years old) will be considered as part of the application.

4. *I run a Career and Future Readiness program that is part of a school. Am I eligible to apply?*
[New question: 9.13.21]

Unfortunately, no. Career and Future Readiness programs that are part of a district, private, charter or public K-12 schools are not eligible to apply.

Housing Specific Questions

1. **What is your definition of homelessness?**

   We are utilizing the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency definition of homelessness, which defines homelessness as:

   An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, such as those living in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or places not meant for habitation.

2. **How are you defining "at imminent risk of homelessness"?** *[Updated question: 9.13.21]*

   An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
   - Residence will be lost within 30 days of the date of application for homeless assistance
   - No subsequent residence has been identified; AND
   - The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

   We recognize that there are several definitions of "imminent risk or at-risk of homelessness". The purpose of providing this definition is to give applicants a sense of the population we seek to impact through this work. Applicants should determine if their work under this strategy meets the intent of the above language.

3. **My organization supports youth experiencing homelessness. Is our organization able to apply?**

   Yes. If you are serving youth that meet the following definition, you are eligible to apply:

   Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth qualify under other Federal statutes, such as the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 60 or more days, have had two or more moves in the last 60 days, and who are likely to continue to be unstably housed because of special needs or multiple barriers to employment.

4. **My organization supports individuals experiencing domestic violence. Is our organization eligible to apply?**

   Yes. If those you are serving meet the following definition, you are eligible to apply:

   An individual or family who is fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, has no other residence, and lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

5. **My organization supports people at-risk of homelessness and those that are currently experiencing homelessness. Can I apply for both strategies?**

Yes, organizations may apply for just one strategy, or both. If you apply for both, please clearly delineate the work of each program in your answers.

6. **I'm a property developer/owner, and I contract with organizations to provide supportive services at our developments. Can I apply?**
Unfortunately, no. Unless your organization is providing the supportive services, you are not eligible. However, the organization you contract with for supportive services is welcome to apply.

7. **My organization works with people who are at-risk of being evicted and have applied for assistance through RentHelpMN or another rent assistance program related to the COVID-19 Eviction Moratorium ending. Is this type of work eligible for funding?**
Yes, as long as your organization meets the eligibility requirements of the RFP, you are eligible to apply.

Food Security Specific Questions

1. **My organization runs a food shelf/meal program/food bank AND does work toward long-term food security solutions. Can I apply for both strategies?**
Yes, organizations may apply for either strategy, or both. Be sure your organization meets all the eligibility requirements of each strategy before applying.

2. **I am applying under the short-term food security strategy (food shelf/meal program/food bank). Our program just provides food to clients, we do not offer other services. Am I eligible to apply?**
No. In order to apply under the short-term food security strategy, organizations must provide additional services (either themselves or through partnerships) IN ADDITION TO food that contribute to long-term stability. Examples of these services are housing, education, and employment and training. Assistance connecting to public benefits such as SNAP are also eligible. If your organization provides other services beyond those listed, contact us and we will help determine your eligibility.

3. **My food shelf provides information and referral services to SNAP for our clients. Does this meet the eligibility requirement listed in the RFP of supportive services tied to long-term stability?**
Yes.

4. **The RFP will not fund programs and services where food is a supplemental or occasional component. How do you define "supplemental or occasional food"?**
Supplemental food programs such as backpack programs, after school meal programs or other programs that do not consistently provide for the full nutritional needs of an individual are not

eligible to apply on their own. Supplemental food programs anchored in a food shelf, meal program or food bank are considered part of the food shelf/meal program/food bank and are eligible.

Economic Opportunity Specific Questions

1. **My Entrepreneurship program serves a racially/ethnically diverse set of business owners. Am I eligible to apply?**
Unfortunately, no. Given limited funding, only programs and services that specifically focus on ONE of the following populations: Black, Native, Latinx, Asian or Pacific Islander entrepreneurs are eligible to apply. Note that your broader organization may serve a wider population. This eligibility is confined to the program-level only.

2. **How do you define adult as it relates to Economic Opportunity or workforce programs.** *[New question: 9.13.21]*

We define adult in this portfolio as age 18 or above.