

**United Way  
of Rutland County**



# **2024 Community Impact Grants Handbook**

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# Introduction

## United Way of Rutland County's Mission & Purpose

*We unite Rutland County residents and resources to facilitate lasting positive change based on community needs.*

### **Who We Are:**

United Way of Rutland County (UWRC) is one of 1,200 United Ways in the United States and one of 1,800 worldwide. Serving Rutland County residents since 1943, we are an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the common good, focusing on Health, Education, and Financial Stability. We are one of the largest non-governmental fundraising organizations for local services within our community.

The United Way Worldwide (UWW) organization strives to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities around the world to advance the common good. UWW works to create positive and permanent change by forging unlikely partnerships, finding new solutions to old problems, and mobilizing the best resources. This is accomplished by working to positively impact the three UWW focus areas:

- **Health**
- **Education**
- **Financial Stability**

UWW implements a strategy to address the root causes of issues through mobilizing communities to create lasting community change. A market-driven community impact model is geared to moving beyond helping people to moving the needle on community problems and changing conditions.

### **What We Do:**

We collaborate with community organizations and businesses, and we join forces with dedicated leaders and volunteers to impact positive change. Together, we meet community needs that affect Rutland County residents, assuring a community-wide services infrastructure. We also mobilize the community to provide the financial and non-monetary resources needed to build a better community. Through a single, county-wide fundraising campaign, United Way of Rutland County raises resources that are then invested into programs that address the community's most pressing needs. We measure the impact of these programs by how well they solve problems and improve the lives of our residents. The outcome of all of this effort is a healthier and stronger Rutland County community.

### **What is a UWRC Community Impact Grant:**

UWRC raises funds on an annual cycle to help address the most critical areas of need in our community. The board and staff of UWRC work closely with local partners to make informed decisions relative to where funds can have the biggest impact, with an overall focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The Community Impact Grant application process is the main system for distributing these

funds. Rutland County nonprofit agencies are invited to submit proposals for projects or programs that will address issues within one or more of the Community Impact focus areas. Teams of community volunteers, Community Impact Committee members, and the UWRC board review the applications, and determine grant awards through a collaborative decision-making process. Once grants are awarded, UWRC staff collaborate with grantees to promote program success.

## Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion and Focus Areas

### Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

UWRC is proud of the work we have started and will continue to ensure that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is at the center of all that we do. We want to find out how our agencies are addressing DEI issues. For this reason, all proposals submitted should include a discussion of how the project goals and outcomes are informed by DEI principles. Proposals should demonstrate thoughtful consideration of barriers to access or success due to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, housing status, language, (dis)ability, age, size, religious commitment, or political perspective. See the Reference Materials at the end of this packet for a detailed discussion of DEI principles.

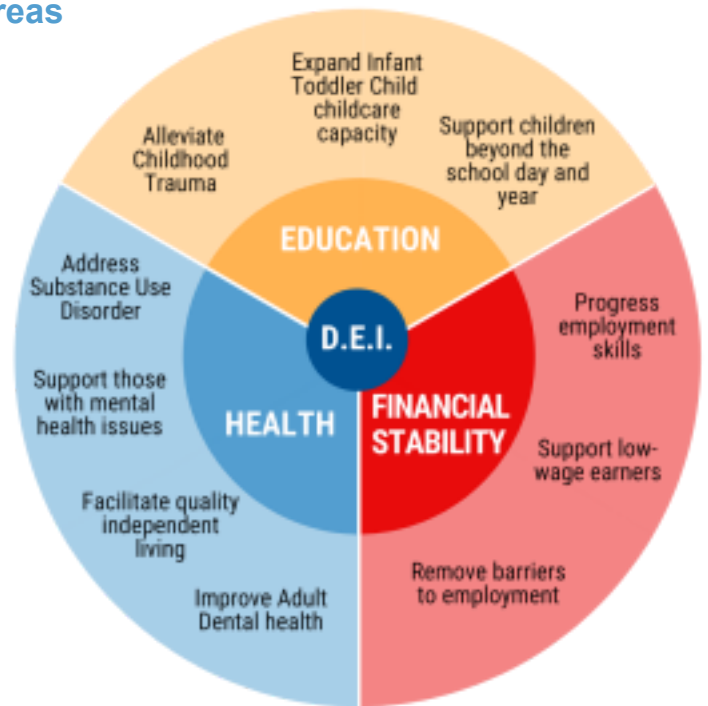
UWRC funding will favor projects and programs that target the three UWW focus areas. Figure 1 and the following section describe specific issues as examples.

### Focus Areas

#### Health

People with substance use challenges are provided with treatment and support to manage the condition and the adverse effects that arise from addiction.

- Those in recovery are given the help and support they need to minimize the chance of relapsing and maximize their potential.
- Mental Health
  - Screening and interventions are available and appropriate to individual needs.
  - Wrap-around services support and guide those with mental health issues to assist them in making the transition from intervention to independence.
- Independent Living
  - Basic needs, such as safety, healthcare, and nutrition, are met.



- Substance Use Disorder

*Figure 1* Examples of projects in the focus areas of Health, Education, and Financial Stability, all centered by a focus in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles.

- Higher needs, such as belonging and self-actualization, are met.
- Systems to support and guide people in making healthy choices are developed.
- Adult Dental Health
  - Support services are provided for adults in need of dental care.
  - Timely emergency dental treatment is available to those in need.

### Financial Stability

- Gaining Employment
  - Job seekers and under-employed workers receive support in securing appropriate employment.
  - Barriers to employment due to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, housing status, language, (dis)ability, age, size, religious commitment, or political perspective are removed.
- Barriers to Sustaining Employment
  - Employees are helped to meet the conditions of employment.
- Low-Wage Earners
  - Low-wage earners have access to opportunities for career advancement.

### Education

- Childcare
  - Childcare providers are supported in complying with regulations.
  - Professional development opportunities for childcare staff are expanded.
  - The capacity for infant and toddler childcare is increased.
  - Childcare becomes more accessible outside standard working hours.
- Trauma
  - Caregivers and teachers receive the training they need to identify signs of trauma. ○ Caregivers and teachers receive the training they need to institute a trauma-informed approach to supporting children of all ages.
- Beyond School
  - Expand opportunities and capacity for children from low-income households to participate in appropriate and supportive no cost and low-cost programs.
  - Remove barriers to enrollment and attendance.

# General Instructions

## Criteria for Funding

### Eligibility:

To be considered for a Community Impact Funding grant, an agency must:

- Be exempt from income taxes under section 501(c)3 of the IRS;
- Directly serve the residents of Rutland County, Vermont;
- Employ staff and provide services without discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, housing status, language, (dis)ability, age, size, religious commitment, political perspective or any legally protected status under Federal or State law;
- Be a financially secure, ongoing operation independent of any funding that may be received from UWRC.

### General Principles:

- To receive UWRC funding, proposed programs or projects must align closely with one or more of the Focus Areas of Health, Education, or Financial Stability. Proposed programs must also incorporate a thorough discussion of how the program will address equitable outcomes.
- All programs or projects funded by UWRC will detail specific goals with measurable outcomes, and the tools that will be used to measure those outcomes.
- Collaboration between and among agencies working towards common outcomes is encouraged, and joint proposals are welcomed.
- Proposals in areas where there is duplication of work by multiple agencies may be less likely to receive funding.
- Funding will be a competitive process based on the potential impact of the proposal for the community.

### Mini vs Full grants

- For requests for grants of \$3,000 or less, a shortened application form is used.

### Accountability

- All proposals, regardless of the amount requested, will be held to the same principles and practices of accountability.
- Outcomes must be clearly expressed in measurable terms. Applicants may use a Logic Model or Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework (see *RBA & the Logic Model* in the reference materials at the end of this document).
- All grantees will be required to submit a final report on the form provided. UWRC staff will meet with grantees on a regular basis to review program progress and evaluate report results. ● Should grantees fail to meet contracted outcomes at the final evaluation, UWRC reserves the right to recall prior funding (and agencies agree to return such prior funding upon request) and/or withdraw future funding.
- UWRC has the right to use at will submitted data from all its funded grants to demonstrate community impact to donors and partners.

### Fiscal Policy:

- Funding for 2024 does not guarantee future funding.
- Agencies may apply for grants for multiple programs, if each program has clear stand-alone outcomes. A separate application is required for each proposed program.
- There is no cap on the size of grants that agencies may seek.
- Awarded grant funds will be distributed in two equal payments. The first half is distributed prior to October 31; the second half is distributed prior to April 28.
- The grant review team will have discretion to fully or partially fund proposals, or to decide not to

fund.

- All funding is contingent on the success of UWRC's annual campaign.
- UWRC caps funding for administrative expenses at 15% of your total request; 85% of your submitted budget must show funds being used for direct services.

## Evaluation Criteria

Community Impact Grant funding will be distributed in consideration of the following:

- The demonstrated need in Rutland County for the proposal, and the anticipated impact in one or more focus areas for a defined population.
- Impact on equity is at the center of all noted project outcomes.
- The likelihood for success based on a clear, realistic plan and alignment with the mission of the applicant agency (or agencies).
- The potential outcome(s) to a defined population based on a well thought out system for tracking and reporting output(s). (see the References Section for definitions of key terms)
- The responsibility to distribute donor funds to fiscally sound organizations for cost effective programs or projects with clear budgets.
- The availability of additional resources and funding from non-UWRC sources.
- The size of the grant in relation to the agency's operating budget.
- The ability to leverage UWRC funds with matching funds from other sources.

## Evaluation Process

The UWRC Community Impact Committee meets regularly to ensure UWRC invests its resources where they are most needed and most effective. The Community Impact Grants review is conducted by three teams (Health, Education, and Financial Stability), each comprised of volunteers who live and work in Rutland County. Team members are trained in UWRC funding priorities and scoring criteria. Each team will also have a chairperson who serves on both the Community Impact Committee and the UWRC Board of Directors. This person also serves as liaison with the Board of Directors for final decision making on funding.

The UWRC Board is charged with making tough funding decisions for the good of the whole community, and relies heavily on the input of these teams. The Board makes these decisions objectively and is fully accountable to our generous donors and to all UWRC stakeholders. Input from numerous sources guides the process, including:

- Experience from past years of UWRC Community Impact programming;
- Directives from United Way Worldwide;
- Input from the Community Impact Committee and Community Impact Grants review teams;
- Input from UWRC Staff.

## Application Process

UWRC Staff are available and willing to assist your agency with the preparation of your application. See the next section for a timeline with each task deadline.

- I. Any agency interested in applying for a UWRC Community Impact Grant must attend a mandatory information session.
- II. Submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). Agencies failing to do this will not be considered for funding. Submissions must be received by 5pm on the closing date.
- III. The Community Impact Committee will review LOI's and invite applicants to submit full proposal applications based on program or project merit and 2024 funding priorities.
- IV. Invited agencies submit full proposal applications. The full application and any supporting documentation must be submitted in one email, or as one submission through the online application form. Submissions must be received by 5pm on the closing date.
- V. Grant review teams for each focus area (Health, Education, Financial Stability) will review proposal applications, assign scores, and make funding recommendations for each proposal. Agencies may be invited by the grant review teams to answer questions about their submitted

proposal.

VI. The Grant Review Team funding recommendations will be reviewed by the Community Impact Committee. The Community Impact Committee will make their funding recommendations to the UWRC Board of Directors, who will vote on final approval or denial for each funding recommendation.

VII. The UWRC Board of Directors will announce final funding awards for each grant proposal.

*The application process for mini grants is the same as the process for full grants. The only difference is a shortened application form.*

## Timelines for 2024 Grant Cycle

- **May 10, 2024** Q&A Information Session VIRTUAL (optional, time TBD)
- **May 14, 2024 5 pm EST** Deadline to submit Letter of Intent
- **May 15, 2024** Agencies invited to submit proposals will be contacted
- **June 7, 2024** Deadline to submit Proposal Application
- **June 8 – June 26, 2024** Proposal application review meetings by Community Impact Committee. Agencies may be invited to discuss proposals as needed
- **Week of July 8, 2024** UWRC Board of Directors reviews recommendations from Community Impact Committee and votes to award grants
- **July 15, 2024** 2024 Grant awards announced

- **July 1, 2024** 2024 grant cycle program year begins
- **August 31, 2024** Distribution deadline for first 50% of grant award funds\*
- **December 31, 2024** Distribution deadline for second 50% of grant award funds\*
- **March 30, 2025** Deadline to submit final report\*\*
- **June 30, 2025** 2024 grant cycle program year ends

*\* funding distribution deadlines are approximate and cannot be guaranteed*

*\*\* agencies should report results to date and if they anticipate any concerns meeting the program goals by August 31 based on those results*



# Reference Materials

## Definition of Key Terms

The most widely-used terms are explained here in the context of UWRC.

**D.E.I.** Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is a term used to describe policies and programs that promote the representation and participation of different groups of individuals, including people of different ages, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, genders, religions, nationality, socioeconomic status, housing status, language, size, political perspective, culture, or sexual orientation. This also covers people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, skills and expertise. *(For more information see the following reference section “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)*

**COMMUNITY:** Every person who lives and works in Rutland County

**POPULATION:** The people served by a particular program as defined by the organization implementing the program; this can range from a specific group (e.g., 0-5 yrs.) to the whole county.

**IMPACT:** The effect of an activity on the social fabric of the community and well-being of individuals and families.

**PROGRAM:** A planned series of activities or events designed to achieve a specific goal, that is to bring about a positive change in people’s lives.

**MISSION:** The purpose an organization strives to fulfill.

**LOGIC MODEL:** A planning tool that provides a step-by-step guide to program design and implementation.

**CONDITIONS:** The problems or needs that exist and point to the need for a program.

**INPUTS:** All the resources that are required to successfully run a program.

**ACTIVITIES:** The components of the program, such as meetings, events, education sessions, counseling, and assessments.

**OUTPUTS:** In the activities, what is done, how much is done, and who is reached.

**OUTCOMES:** The effects of the activities - for example learning, awareness, attitude changes, improved aspirations and motivation and increased skill.

**RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY:** Known as RBA, a recognized system of reporting outputs and outcomes of a program, and evaluation of how well the organization and program performed.

**DATA:** Facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.

**MEASUREMENT:** A method by which the amount and/or effect of an activity can be assessed--for example records of enrolment, use of questionnaires, interviews.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The acronym 'DEI' is shorthand for 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.' The University of Washington offers these definitions for the terms:

**Diversity** is the presence of differences that enrich our community. Some examples of diversity may include race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language, (dis) ability, size, age, religious commitment, or political perspective in our workplace. There are many more.

**Equity** is ensuring that access, resources, and opportunities are provided for all to succeed and grow, especially for those who are underrepresented and have been historically disadvantaged.

**Inclusion** is a community culture that is welcoming to all people regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, abilities, or religion and everyone is valued, respected, and able to reach their full potential.

Source: <https://www.washington.edu/research/or/office-of-research-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/dei/definitions/>

The case for DEI principles is broken down by the nonprofit coalition *Independent Sector* into five sections:

The **moral or social justice case** asserts that each person has value to contribute, and that we must address barriers and historical factors that have led to unfair conditions for marginalized populations. For example, racial equity refers to what a genuinely non-racist society would look like, where the distribution of society's benefits and burdens would not be skewed by race, and individuals would be no more or less likely to experience them due to the color of their skin. From a moral perspective, nonprofits are created to improve society, and as such they should be diverse, inclusive, and equitable.

The **economic case** is based on the idea that organizations and countries that tap into diverse talent pools are stronger and more efficient. Economists see discrimination as economic inefficiency – the result of a systematic misallocation of human resources. In fact, the Center For American Progress finds that workplace discrimination against employees based on race, gender, or sexual orientation costs businesses an estimated \$64 billion annually. That amount represents the annual estimated cost of losing and replacing more than 2 million American workers who leave their jobs each year due to unfairness and discrimination. In this argument, organizations should become more diverse and inclusive because it makes economic sense to leverage the talent pools of different populations.

The **market case** states that organizations will better serve their customers if they reflect the diversity of their market base. A dramatic demographic shift is under way in the U.S., which will be majority non white around 2043 according to the Census Bureau. In the private sector, companies such as Deloitte (a large international corporation with almost 350,000 employees) recognize the buying power of minority populations, and highlight that diversity is critical to growing market share and bottom line. In the nonprofit sector, clients are our customers, and they want to see themselves represented in the organizations that serve them. Donors are also customers, and organizations and their clients can benefit from the resources of different groups. What's more, organizations with diverse leadership are more likely to understand the needs of a diverse client base.

The **result** is that diverse teams lead to better outputs. Scott Page, author of *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools and Societies*, uses mathematical modeling and case studies to show how diversity leads to increased productivity. His research found that diverse groups of problem solvers outperform the best individuals at solving problems. Diverse nonprofit organizations, and the diversity of perspectives within them, will lead to better solutions to social problems.

Source: <https://independentsector.org/resource/why-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-matter/>

Here are some other resources that may be more specific to your project or organization:

Accountability and behavior change in the workplace, translating talk into action: The Missing Link in DEI | Lorén Cox | TEDxColumbiaUniversity <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpU6kP3sl24>

Person-First vs Identity-First Language <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LX0KI4xkco&t=2s>

Outright Vermont Education and Legal Rights Resources

<https://www.outrightvt.org/educationoutreach/education-and-legal-rights-resources/> Pride Center

Vermont Resources and List of Definitions: <https://www.pridecentervt.org/education/>

If you have more questions or would like to discuss your program's DEI outcomes and potential, you can reach out to:

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## RBA & the Logic Model

The nonprofit world has many different options for creating plans that will have true community impact. The UWRC grant application questions and final report questions use elements of Logic Models and Results-Based Accountability (RBA). If you are interested in learning more about these frameworks as tools for program building and assessment, you can check out these resources:

### Logic Model

In 1996, United Way of America (now United Way Worldwide) published the book *Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach*. While the book is no longer in print, you can read it online here: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1047&context=slceeval>

This webinar, while slightly dated, gives a good general explanation of a logic model, and great tips for creating your own:

<https://resources.foundant.com/education-webinars-for-nonprofits/logic-models-more-than-just-extra-work#main-content>

and they also have this template you can download as a starting point:

<https://info.foundant.com/rs/356-VHW-319/images/Logic%20Model%20Template.pdf>

### f Results-Based Accountability (RBA)

The beginning of this webinar gives a great explanation of RBA concepts and terms: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IYWeg-AFJ0>

Developed by Mark Friedman, RBA is being used throughout the United States. The rationale for embracing RBA is “Trying Hard is Not Good Enough” (the title of Friedman’s book); we need to produce and document results so we have a story to tell donors and all stakeholders.

<http://resultsaccountability.com/about/what-is-results-based-accountability/>

### RBA Explained in Brief

“*How much did we do?*” is similar to the output box of the Logic Model. Examples include number of people helped, amount of supplies distributed, facilities made available, and hours spent providing education.

“*Who is better off?*” is the evidence you served the population you pledged to help in the program proposal. Examples include age, gender, ethnicity, SES, occupation, and area of residence.

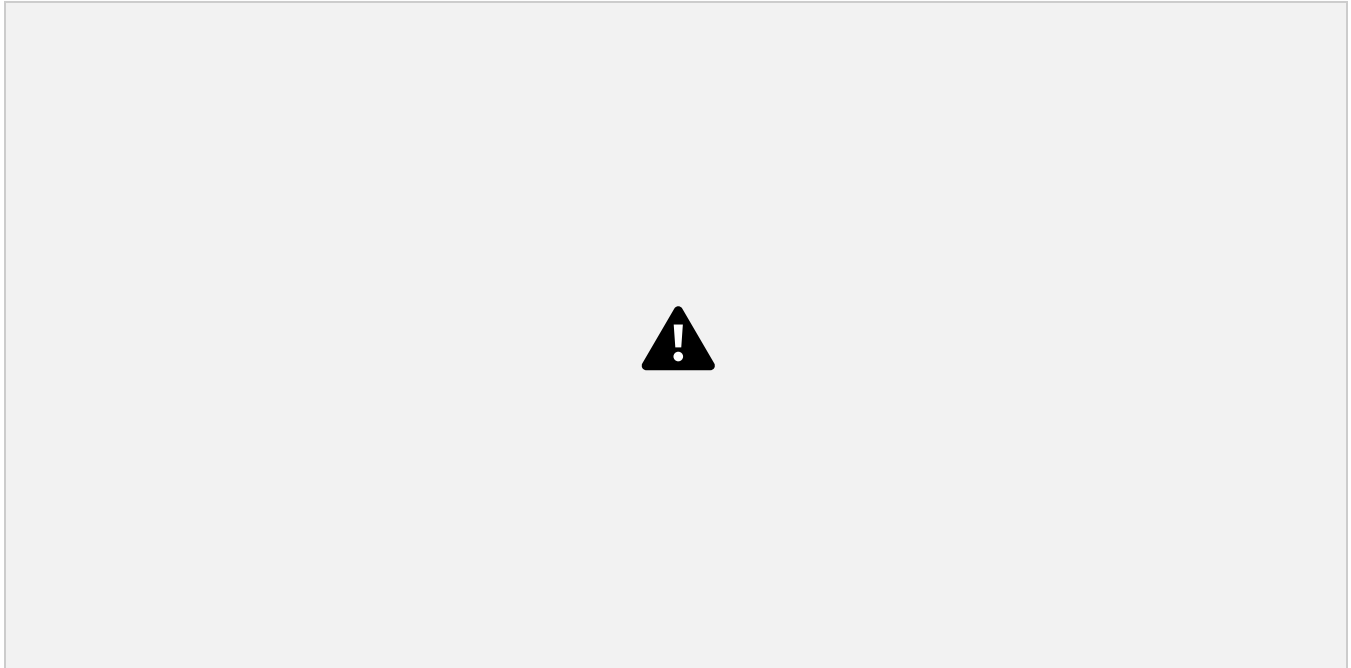
“*How well did we do it?*” refers to the quality of the program. You might ask, for example, if participants were satisfied, if the cost-achievement ratio was satisfactory, and how great were the changes. The perceptions people have of the program will be reported here.

“*How much are they better off?*” can be applied to outcomes (short/mid-term) and impact (long-term). Data collected must be valid and measured by reliable tools. Examples include measures of health, nutrition, and reduction in risk.

## Measurement of Outcomes

Saying that outcomes will be measured is not good enough (to quote Friedman). You need to identify how to do this from the outset. At least, explain how each outcome will be measured – in other words, the proof that it actually happened, and the extent to which it happened. At best, include copies of measurement tools with the application, for example questionnaires, enrollment forms, tests, and interview protocols.

Measurement of the outcomes which are the goals of the program should be expressed in the context of the four questions seen in this figure:



## United Way of Rutland County Pledge

In the same way we hold our funded partners accountable, the United Way of Rutland County will be accountable to stakeholders and the community for ensuring our funds have the greatest possible impact in our community.

We pledge to:

- Provide leadership in planning and implementing Community Impact;
- Ensure Areas of Need align with the greatest needs in our community;
- Make decisions based on reliable and valid data;
- Use objective, transparent methods to decide allocation of funding;
- Use accepted evaluation methodology to monitor programs;
- Collaborate with community stakeholders to plan for a brighter future.