



## **Washtenaw Responsive Basic Needs Grant RFP Questions and Answers**

### **Applications Due January 18, 2024 at 5:00PM**

#### **General Application Questions**

##### **What is the spending period for this grant?**

January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024. Since funding determinations will not be announced until early March, organizations will be able to retroactively charge eligible expenditures back to the start of the grant period.

##### **Can an organization apply for both the Racial Equity Fund and Washtenaw Basic Needs grant?**

Any eligible organization may apply for both opportunities as applicable. However, both are open, competitive processes and submission of an application does not guarantee funding. We will consider the availability of funds against the full spectrum of competitive applications received for each funding opportunity.

To view all open grant opportunities, visit: <https://unitedwaysem.org/about-us/our-partners/grants-hub/proposal-opportunities/>

##### **Does an organization need to be a non-profit to receive funding?**

Yes, these funds are meant to be dispersed as awards to non-profit organizations. An organization must be in good standing with the State of Michigan and the Internal Revenue Service and will be required to upload a copy of their IRS designation letter, 990 form, W-9, and financial statements. Organizations may apply via a fiduciary if applicable.

##### **Approximately how many grants do you anticipate awarding?**

The number of partners in a cohort is largely based on the number of competitive applications and available funding. Organizations may apply for funding ranging from \$15,000 to \$40,000. Investment decisions will be made based on a variety of criteria, including but not limited to the scoring rubric, geographic scope, gaps in services and client population, all of which are used to identify organizations that have the capability to create the most impact both individually and collectively for Washtenaw County.

##### **Does this application have a word count limit?**

No. There is not a word count limit.

##### **Is there an opportunity to gain access to grant questions for each section before submitting through Survey Monkey to allow for drafting answers offline?**

Yes. You can view the application questions on the grant landing page [here](#).

**Is it possible that, if selected, our award could be reduced to a lower amount than what was requested?**

Yes. It is possible that a final recommendation of award may be less than the amount for which an organization has applied. These decisions are made based on the strength of the application, proposed services, and geographic spread, among other considerations including United Way's overall budget for this RFP and the full portfolio of partners.

**Are Washtenaw-based organizations that have received funding from other United Way grant opportunities eligible to apply?**

Yes. The Washtenaw County Basic Needs grant is an open call for applications from both new and existing funded partners of United Way who meet the eligibility criteria and funding priorities laid out in the application.

**Can organizations that are not based in Washtenaw County, but serve Washtenaw residents apply?**

No. Organizations must be based (have a physical presence) in Washtenaw County AND serve Washtenaw County residents.

**Will you provide funding for existing programs or do you prefer to fund new programs/projects?**

For the 2024 Washtenaw Responsive Basic Needs grant opportunity, we are interested in funding organizations with established programs in the identified service domains. Established programming for this opportunity means that the program(s) and/or service(s) for which an organization is seeking funding must have been in operation for at least three years. The organization may have been operating for three years, but the program/services must also be in operation for at least three years.

**How were the service domains selected?**

In Washtenaw County 40 percent of households are unable to afford their most basic needs. For ALICE households we know that food, housing, and health care are drivers of stability. We also know through secondary data sources and conversations with community that the confluence of inflation, stagnant wages and the end of pandemic-era relief programs, like eviction moratoriums, SNAP emergency allotments, and Medicaid continuous enrollment are putting further strain on household budgets. The objective of the 2024 Washtenaw County Basic Needs grant is to provide timely flexible funding to support organizations working to meet increased need in these critical areas.

**Can you please expand on what is considered "emergency" in terms of food assistance?**

Eligible services under the emergency food domain include food banks, food pantries and community/soup kitchens.

**Is this expected to be the only round of Basic Needs RFPs for this calendar year?**

The merger between United Way of Washtenaw County and United Way for Southeastern Michigan took place on October 1, 2023. Prior to the merger, all Washtenaw County funds were invested through June of 2025. Current funding streams will remain focused on Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties. We are actively working on a unified funding strategy to support the four-county region and are committed to integrating Washtenaw County organizations and groups into future grant programs beyond these two exclusive opportunities to Washtenaw organizations and groups.

If and when additional opportunities become available, they will be shared with you through various communication channels and posted on our website: <https://unitedwaysem.org/about-us/our-partners/grants-hub/proposal-opportunities/>

### **What is the application review process?**

All applications will be reviewed by a minimum of three reviewers, including United Way staff members and external volunteers. Once reviews are finalized, we will present recommendations to our board of directors for their approval. Investment decisions will be made based on a variety of criteria, including but not limited to the scoring rubric, geographic scope, gaps in services and client population, all of which are used to identify organizations that have the capability to create the most impact both individually and collectively for Washtenaw County. Organizations can expect to receive funding decision notifications the week of March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

### **Through United Way of Washtenaw County, I was previously able to phone in my application. Can I still do that?**

Unfortunately, for this opportunity that option is not available. All applications must be submitted through United Way for Southeastern Michigan's grant management system, [SurveyMonkey Apply](#). For questions or support related to accessing SurveyMonkey Apply (SMA), please contact the Community Investments team at: [SMA@UnitedWaySEM.org](mailto:SMA@UnitedWaySEM.org).

### **Can both the fiduciary and sponsored organization apply for this grant?**

Yes. Both a fiduciary and the sponsored organization may submit individual applications for this grant. However, the programming and services that each is applying for should be different and specific to their organization.

If your organization is utilizing a fiduciary to receive funds, the fiduciary must be the organization that creates the organizational account within SurveyMonkey Apply. They also must complete the Organization and Financial Information profile.

United Way suggests having the fiduciary invite a representative of the sponsored/implementing organization to be a member of the account so that the sponsored/implementing organization can complete the application and subsequent reporting requirements.

### **If an organization provides services in more than one of the identified domains, should the application be combined into one organizational application? In other words, one application per organization?**

Yes. We will accept only one application per organization. If an applicant applies for support of services in more than one domain, the application should reflect all the domains and activities that will be supported by this grant.

**Can an organization submit more than one proposal under the same domain, but different program areas?**

No. We are accepting one application per organization for this opportunity.

**For the “primary population” question should we pick the group that is the highest percentage of our clientele? Or should we select “other” because we serve many populations?**

This question is designed to help us look across our grant opportunities and aggregate by service populations. Please select the population that makes up your organization’s largest percentage and/or represents your target group. In the “secondary population” question, please select all other relevant service populations. We understand that this list may not be comprehensive so please expand upon your target population(s) in the narrative questions of the application.

**Is there an application scoring rubric you can share?**

The scoring rubric along with other grant resources are available on our website for this opportunity and can be found directly in the links below.

[Grant Information Sheet](#)

[Application Questions](#)

[Scoring Rubric](#)

## **Organization and Financial Information**

**Does an organization need to have an audit, or will a financial review and 990 form be sufficient?**

Financial reporting documentation is required as a part of this application and should be uploaded to your Organization and Financial Information profile in Survey Monkey Apply. The type of documentation is dependent on the size of the organization’s operating budget. For more information on the specific documents required for your organization to fulfill this requirement, please refer to the Financial and Audit Requirement resource available in SMA under the Financial Information task: [UWSEM Financial and Audit Requirements resource](#)

If there are barriers to your organization providing this information or you have questions on allowable documentation please notify the Basic Needs team for further review and we will verify with our Finance team. You can reach the Basic Needs team at: [SafetyNet@unitedwaysem.org](mailto:SafetyNet@unitedwaysem.org).

**We are currently in the middle of our audit. Will our application still be considered if the audit isn't complete before the application due date?**

Yes, please communicate this to us within the application.

**If our 2023 audit is still in progress, can we upload 2022 information?**

Yes, we are looking for the most recent audit information and understand that based on an organization's fiscal year and associated lags in financial review this may be the case for some organizations. Please provide the most current information available at the time you apply.

## **Metrics and Reporting**

### **Could you please expand on metrics - milestones vs outcomes?**

For this grant opportunity, all applicants must project how many individuals or households will be served through this funding. Additionally, applicants must identify at least one additional metric they will use to measure success. The way in which an organization chooses to measure success may vary but, in all instances, should align with the proposed services and scope of work described in the application.

### **Is there a minimum number of clients needed to apply?**

There is no minimum expectation of a certain number of clients served. In general, we value quality over quantity and are trying to get a picture of scope and scale of the services that each applicant provides under the application domain(s).

### **Do all clients served by partners need to be considered ALICE? We serve older adults, many of whom are not employed. Is that an issue in relation to ALICE?**

No. We will not put restrictions on the use of funds in this way. We do want to understand how effective we are at reaching those below the ALICE threshold, including those below the federal poverty level and those that do not have incomes high enough to cover their basic needs.

Within the application, you will be asked to provide estimations/projections that will help us understand this, including demographic information and reach across the identified municipalities that have large concentrations of ALICE.

### **Can funding be used for other families/clients that fall below federal poverty level but are not living in the cities identified?**

Yes. We will not put restrictions on the use of funds in this way. We do want to track how effective we are at reaching ALICE populations in the municipalities that we have listed and serving populations in the ALICE municipalities that we have listed is an important part of our funding criteria.

### **Do you have any suggestions for how to indicate if the household is receiving multiple services?**

As part of the application, you will identify the overall number of unique individuals or households supported by this grant as well as the number of individuals/households helped by service category. We understand that an individual/household may receive services in more than one category. Please count them in each of the services they receive.

### **What sort of reporting will recipients of the grant be expected to provide?**

Organizations will be required to submit a final report at the end of the grant period in July. Grant reporting includes questions about the number of households or individuals served, demographic data and progress on grantee self-identified metrics. Narrative questions focus on implementation of the activities described including barriers and successes to date.

## **Budget**

### **If our organization has multiple programs but is only requesting funding for one of the programs, should the organization report only on the program being funded?**

We expect that many organizations have programs that will not be funded by a United Way Washtenaw Basic Needs grant. For reporting purposes, we are interested in understanding expenditures related to the work that we are funding.

### **Can funds be used for personnel expenses for staff operating our program?**

Yes. Personnel is an eligible line item for this grant.

### **Where can we find written specifics on the budget requirements?**

For guidance on the definitions of the line item categories and what to include in the budget narrative, please [consult this guide](#).

### **Is this funding to be used for project-specific support or for general operating costs for work in those domains?**

We are asking for organizations to fill out a budget and are leaving the description of use of funds up to each organization. We ask that organizations stay within a 10% allowance for overhead/indirect expenditures and approximately a 30% benefit rate.

### **Are there any restrictions on the budget as to what percent can be salary/indirect cost?**

When reviewing budgets, we do flag line items for indirect that are above 10%. If you have extenuating circumstances that make keeping your indirect below 10% challenging, please explain this in your application. We also look for benefits to be no more than 30% of your salary line item. If this is not the case for your organization, please explain why in your application. Aside from these stipulations, budgets can be very flexible to meet your needs.

### **According to the description, our requested amount cannot exceed 15% of the prior year's operating budget and cannot be less than \$15,000. However, 15% of our budget would be below \$15,000. Are we eligible to apply and for what amount?**

If fifteen percent of your organization's operating budget is less than the minimum award amount of \$15,000 you may apply for the minimum award amount. Financial reporting documentation is required as a part of this application and in combination with your proposed budget and spenddown plan will be taken into consideration as part of the review process.

Please keep in mind that submission of an application does not guarantee funding. We will consider the availability of funds against the full spectrum of competitive applications received.

### **When will grant funds be dispersed?**

Grant funds will be dispersed within 2-weeks of a fully executed contract. Since funding determinations will not be announced until early March, organizations will be able to retroactively charge eligible expenditures back to the start of the grant period.

### **Points of Contact for Further Questions**

For more information on these grant opportunities, please visit our grants partner hub website at: [UnitedWaySEM.org/Grants](https://UnitedWaySEM.org/Grants).

If you have questions related to the intent of the Washtenaw Basic Needs grant or specific questions related to the content of the application, please contact the Basic Needs team at: [SafetyNet@UnitedWaySEM.org](mailto:SafetyNet@UnitedWaySEM.org)

For questions or support related to accessing our grant management platform, SurveyMonkey Apply (SMA), please contact the Community Investments team at: [SMA@UnitedWaySEM.org](mailto:SMA@UnitedWaySEM.org)