

## **United Way for Southeastern Michigan Washtenaw Racial Equity Fund**

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

### **General Application Questions**

#### **What is the Racial Equity Fund?**

The Racial Equity Fund endeavors to provide financial support in the form of flexible, unrestricted and general operating grants with the intention of prioritizing funding solutions by leaders who are in close proximity to the opportunity/need the organization is trying to address.

The Racial Equity Fund sees value in funding a variety of organizations—from smaller, community-based, grassroots organizations; to medium-sized organizations focused on institutional change; to larger organizations with resources to focus on systemic and structural change, and particularly those excluded from the traditional funding ecosystem. Funding can be used as seed funding to support organization growth and scale to design new, creative ideas and/or to promote or expand existing racial justice and equity work.

#### **How was the fund and RFP process developed?**

The RFP process, language and rubric were designed by the Racial Equity Fund Workgroup — a group of local community leaders representing diverse communities across Southeastern Michigan including Washtenaw County. The workgroup is responsible for incorporating lived experiences at all levels of the grantmaking process. The process is anchored in support by the [Centering Community Voices Blueprint](#). The framework describes the need for centering community voices and highlights opportunities throughout the grant cycle for incorporating lived experiences of the communities served.

#### **Why convene a workgroup to lead the grantmaking process?**

Doing so is an important and effective way to support system changes and shift power dynamics. This will ultimately move individuals in underserved communities closer to having their basic needs met long-term and to reducing existing inequities.

#### **What was the workgroup tasked with?**

The workgroup was responsible for:

- Co-creating the Racial Equity Fund grant process.
- Setting funding priorities for the Racial Equity Fund centered on the lived experiences of community members.
- Determining RFP evaluation metrics and reporting guidelines.
- Developing a process to ensure a diverse applicant pool, including outreach to under-resourced and/or unfamiliar organizations.

- Drafting the RFP language.

**What is the spending period of this grant?**

January 1, 2024 through December 31, 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 grant 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 (\$200,000). Organizations may apply for funding ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000. 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.

**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?**

No. In an effort to ensure a diverse cohort of funded partners, the Washtenaw County Racial Equity Fund grant is open only to organizations that are not currently funded by United Way.

**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.

**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.

**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

**Metrics and Reporting**

**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?**

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.

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

Organizations will be required to submit a mid contract report in July and a final contract report in December.

**When will grant funds be dispersed?**

75% of 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. The remaining 25% will be released in July after successful submission of a mid-contract report.

**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 Racial Equity Fund grant or specific questions related to the content of the application, please contact the Basic Needs team at: [RacialEquityFund@UnitedWaySEM.org](mailto:RacialEquityFund@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)