UNITED WAY CENTRAL KENTUCKY
Fall 2025 Grant Welcome Packet
GRAYSON · LARUE · HARDIN · MEADE · BRECKINRIDGE
UNITED
MEANS All Y'ALL
LIVE UNITED
UNITED WAY
Central Kentucky

2025 Community Investment Grants Application Guide

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ABOUT UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL KENTUCKY

Since our inception in 2001, community leaders have come together to establish United Way of Central Kentucky as the most efficient way to identify and address critical health and human services issues in our region. While our community has responded to these needs with unprecedented generosity, challenges continued to persist and trap more local residents in the cycles of poverty. This caused our organization to shift from one that exists solely to raise funds for a variety of good causes toward a more focused, strategic convener of community change.

Our vision of a community where each individual is self-sufficient in the areas of Education, Financial Stability, Health, and can meet their own basic needs is primarily achieved through partnerships with agencies and programs. UWCK seeks a balance of qualitative and quantitative results and works to achieve a combination of funding that will ensure community results and achieved outcomes. All applicants must address their impact in one or more of UWCK's Focus Areas (**Education, Financial Stability, Health, and Basic Needs**) and achieve measurable results that demonstrate this effort to be eligible for funding.

Programs seeking funding are strongly encouraged to apply for initiatives that not only serve those in crisis, but implement collaborative strategies that keep individuals and families moving forward on the path to self-sufficiency.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROCESS

United Way of Central Kentucky saves the community thousands of dollars by consolidating nonprofit fundraising efforts, providing a clear form of accountability, and investing in programs that have the greatest potential to prevent problems from occurring in the future. UWCK's Community Investment Grants are awarded through an open, transparent, and competitive process that convenes community members to maximize the local impact of community resources. The objective is to identify the programs that can best contribute to achieving the Community's goal of reducing poverty through improved Education, Financial Stability, and Health while continuing to meet Basic Needs. In 2024, our grant process focused solely on meeting Basic Needs. While the full spectrum of the grant process is open in this 2025 process, the CIT will place priority on Basic Needs applications.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING & TYPES OF GRANTS

To be eligible to apply for a UWCK grant, a program must:

- Attend the annual grant training session to learn how to prepare a competitive application
- Concentrate its efforts and services within the United Way of Central Kentucky region (Hardin, Breckinridge, Grayson, LaRue, and Meade Counties)
- Align with at least one of UWCK's focus areas, ideally to achieve a Community Impact priority outcome(s) under Education, Health, Financial Stability or Basic Needs.
- Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, school district, or coalition of agencies with a nonprofit Fiscal Agent.
- Adhere to good governance standards by having an annual tax return (990/990EZ), an active Board of Directors, and an IRS determination letter verifying non-profit status. A complete annual independent audit or certification of financial controls is required based on the agency's revenue and/or funding request. Please review the content of the grant application to see what we require for programs to be considered for funding.
- Abide by the additional terms of the 2026 Memorandum of Agreement for Funded Programs.
- Grant recipients should be committed to recognizing the investment of UWCK through promotional opportunities to engage the public and grow support for the partnership (see co-branding requirement in MOA).

United Way of Central Kentucky **does NOT** typically fund:

- Arts and culture programs
- Sports teams and recreation activities
- Capital campaigns or projects
- Environmental projects or organizations
- Direct religious activities of religious groups or organizations

While these causes are important for creating vibrant communities we can all be proud to call home, they do not fit the focus of UWCK's Community Impact work. We are happy to share our knowledge with agencies seeking resources in these areas if you would like to contact us for an individual consultation.

Types of grants awarded by UWCK:

- **Impact grants**: traditional Community Investment process outlined in this guide.

All application materials can be found at www.unitedwayck.org under Grant Opportunities. Funding recommendations for all types of grants are determined by the Community Investment Team and approved by the UWCK Board of Directors.

ACHIEVING IMPACT THROUGH PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Given UWCK's enhanced emphasis on achieving results, applicants are required to implement common measurements for each program seeking funding. Progress toward these outcomes will be monitored through quarterly reports. Applicants must be able to measure at least one of the results listed below and may select which option best fits their agency's practices. Recommended descriptions and more detail can be found on the Community Impact Measurement Framework found on page 10 (*please note that there is no "Other" category option for any focus area).*

Education

Improving School Readiness

- # children receiving developmental screenings
- # children connected to ongoing supports
- # increased hours in program
- # families/caring adults engaged in child's learning
- # children under age 5 who receive a well-child checkup
- # caregivers reporting improved knowledge or skill
- *Born Learning Academies can report results using the same framework that is provided to other funders of this program*

Fostering Supportive Relationships

- # students promoted to next grade on time
- # students with improved grades
- # students with decreased unexcused absences or suspensions
- # students engaged in structured after-school activity
- # mentor/mentee relationships established
- # caring adults engaged in student's learning
- # families connected to ongoing supports

Financial Stability

Removing barriers to employment and education

- # participants gaining financial knowledge
- # participants who become "banked"
- # participants improving financial position
- # increase in average savings rate
- # participants gaining recognized skills or credentials
- # participants who become job ready
- # increase in job placement rate
- # increase in job retention rate
- # participants improving job quality
- # participants who acquire their own vehicle
- # participants securing reliable transportation source

Health

Promoting health, independence, and safety

- # individuals utilizing preventative and primary health care services
- # individuals receiving information on health benefits and access
- # individuals enrolled in health insurance, services, or benefits

- # individuals provided temporary safe shelter
- # individuals transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing
- # older adults or individuals with disabilities receiving services to allow them to live independently
- # individuals engaged in physical or wellness activities

Basic Needs **Providing a safety net of services to ensure basic needs are met**

- # individuals receiving emergency food
- # individuals receiving support to alleviate long-term hunger
- # individuals reporting increased food security
- # individuals receiving disaster relief or recovery services
- #individuals receiving clothing, hygiene supplies, or household goods
- # individuals provided with utility assistance
- # individuals provided with rent, mortgage, or deposit assistance to prevent homelessness
- # clients receiving legal representation

2025 COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROCESS TIMELINE

Date	Activity
October 30th 10:00-11:30 a.m. EST UWCK In Person	Grant training for current funded partners
October 30th 2:00 p.m. EST UWCK In Person	Grant training for new applicants/non-funded agencies
November 6th **12:00 pm EST Deadline**	**Short Form Application due from new applicants to UWCK**
November 10th	New applicants notified by UWCK if full application requested
November 25th **2:00 PM EST Deadline**	**All grant applications and supporting documentation due to UWCK in digital form from all applicants. Late applications will not be accepted.**
November 26th	Digital application handoff to CIT
December 10th	CIT questions and scores due to UWCK
December 11th	CIT questions sent to applicant programs via email
December 15th	Responses to CIT questions due to UWCK
December 17th	CIT Deliberations
December 19th	Special board meeting to hear CIT recommendations
December 22nd	Applicants notified of funding decisions. Grantees are sent letters, Award Acceptance Agreements, and MOA forms via email.
January 2027	Grant year begins and payments begin to disburse for agencies who complete and return Award Acceptance Agreement via email January 5th, 2027.

Quarterly Report Due Dates for Funded Programs:
Training and reporting template will be provided once funding has been awarded.
If UWCK funding is granted, you will be asked to provide a quarterly report which tracks your progress toward outcomes. A report template will be provided to your agency upon receiving funding and will be due to UWCK quarterly. Reporting dates for 2026/2027 are as follows:

April 1, 2026	**October 1, 2026**
July 1, 2026	**January 5, 2027**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Who decides which programs receive funding?** The Community Investment process is the method by which local community representatives volunteer to evaluate the proposals from programs seeking UWCK funding. Each applicant is vetted by all members of the Community Investment Team (CIT). CIT members include donors and volunteers who live and work in our community and ultimately make a funding recommendation to UWCK's Board of Directors. CIT members are recruited from across the region to ensure representation from all five counties served by UWCK and provide a thorough understanding of local needs. CIT members are thoroughly vetted for any conflicts of interest and may not be employed by any agency or program seeking UWCK funding. Each Community Investment Team volunteer spends an average of 40 hours vetting and identifying the programs that best align with our work in Education, Financial Stability, Health, and Basic Needs.

2. **How are applications reviewed?** Throughout the rigorous review process, CIT members utilize an assessment tool to rate applications based on their quality, alignment with United Way's funding priorities, and ability to demonstrate measurable results in their respective area of focus. A representative from each applicant program has the opportunity to answer questions and make a brief in-person presentation to the CIT during the review process. Programs are evaluated for their alignment with UWCK Community Impact goals, financial and organizational management, capacity to achieve projected goals, ability to show measurable results, and the resources it takes to obtain those results. Programs funded in the past will be evaluated on additional measures including compliance with annual Memorandum of Agreement, pursuit of supplemental funding sources, delivery of promised results, and support of the UWCK partnership.

3. **What programs were awarded 2024 grants?** Please see the list of currently funded partners available at unitedwayck.org

4. **Does a non-profit that was not selected for funding this year have the opportunity to receive funding in the future?** Absolutely. Feedback is provided by the Community Investment Team and United Way staff to agencies based on the evaluation of their program(s), enabling them to be more competitive going forward. We encourage agencies to apply for funding from United Way in subsequent years.

5. **What is the duration of funding awarded?** The majority of our grants are awarded on an annual basis, with an application and participation in the Community Investment Process being required each year.

6. **If my program is currently funded, does that guarantee funding in the next grant cycle?** No. The grant cycle takes place yearly, just because an agency may be a funded partner in the current grant cycle, it is not an indicator that you will be funded again the following grant cycle. At UWCK we have always provided direction to applicants and funded programs that UWCK grant funding should not be counted on as a source of revenue within your organization beyond the current fiscal year if you are a grant recipient.

7. **Does UWCK restrict my organization's fundraising with a Blackout Period?** As detailed in the Memorandum of Agreement there are several sources of supplemental revenue allowed during the

period of September 1st through October 30th, including special events with UWCK co-branding, investment income, product sales, grants, and unsolicited gifts, endowments, and bequests. Solicitation of employees through group meetings for direct financial support is prohibited throughout the year. Please review page four of the MOA prior to applying.

FEEDBACK FROM PAST APPLICATIONS

It is our hope that by providing you with these observations, you will be able to use them to assist in any future proposal writing undertaken by your organization. The following points were noted among proposals we have reviewed in the past:

Program

- Program goals were not consistent with UWCK focus areas and Community Impact priorities.
- Program descriptions were unclear and did not provide adequate information to determine what the program does and how the program goals will create change in the community.
- Programs were difficult to differentiate from overall agency operations. Agencies applying for multiple programs should be sure responses to every question address each program seeking funding.
- Some program descriptions were unclear and thereby difficult to evaluate. There should be no assumptions that a particular program is known or widely understood.
- No clear strategy was articulated to explain how the program will be sustained without UWCK funding. Organizations should provide examples of innovative ideas for sustainability or furnish details on their development plans rather than very general comments about their intent to fundraise in the future.

Need

- Proposal was not clearly focused on the impact of the funding in the local region where funding is being requested.
- Statistics and evidence used to substantiate need for the proposed program were out of date or not relevant to the local target population.
- Connection between the community need and the program's demonstrated ability (i.e. methodology/program design) to achieve the promised change was not clear. The application needs to clearly explain how program clients and the community will benefit from this program.

Results

- Proposals contained outcomes that were not easily measured and did not appear obtainable. Outcomes should be specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic. (i.e. a goal of "improving health and well-being" would be unacceptable without specifics of how this will be measured and quantified).
- Program outcomes included activities, such as participation or completion rates, rather than measurable change resulting from the program.
- Result metrics were not tied to the program's goals. Proposal did not address how the program helps the population achieve goals (i.e. how does this program help participants achieve self-sufficiency).
- Provided minimal information about one's approach to outcomes measurement.

Budget

- Proposals that included the entire organization budget and not the program's budget made it difficult to analyze the program's revenue and expenditures, separately from the organizational funding. Each applicant program should have a separate budget.
- Proposals were not clear on how the funding would be spent. Items listed were vague such as personnel, materials, etc., and often the optional space provided for additional budget comments and narrative was not utilized, thus omitting valuable opportunities for details.
- Organization projected budgetary deficits without any narrative stating why or how the program will be sustained despite the anticipated deficit.
- In instances where personnel costs may outweigh other program expenses, proposals lacked adequate comments to explain why this may be necessary for the program.
- Budget seemed to provide for services not described in program overview.
- Budget included several expenses for items outside of the program/focus area for which funds were being requested (i.e. significant expenses related to workforce development while the grant application is for a basic needs or healthy living program).
- Funding request far exceeded what is typical for a funded program, new applicant, or new program without a history of performance. Current grant award amounts can be found on our website.

QUESTIONS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

UWCK staff will be available for feedback on your individual questions during the grant training meetings. Please feel free to contact the UWCK office at (270) 737-6608 if additional questions arise during the completion of your application. We will make every effort to answer any questions.

CONTACT US

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COMMUNITY IMPACT MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

Education Priority – School Readiness: Improve school readiness for children beginning at birth **Target Population:** Families with children ages 0-5 **Population Indicator:** Percentage of children deemed Ready for Kindergarten per the statewide Brigance screener		
Funded Program Outcomes	**Indicators**	**Preferred Data/Definitions**
Ensure **academic and social preparedness** for kindergarten success	# of children receiving comprehensive developmental screening across all 5 domains	Children receiving comprehensive developmental screening across 5 domains as defined by the Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood. Screening tool should be one approved by the Department of Education's Continuous Assessment Guide (see p.23 http://kidsnow.ky.gov/Improving-Early-Care/Documents/Assessment%20Guide%20(Upd2010).pdf.)
	# of children connected to ongoing supports that address learning challenges	Children connected to ongoing supports that address learning challenges. Measure refers to challenges identified in screenings as defined above. Learning challenges are identified via screening tools that can be physical, health, cognitive, behavioral, or social-emotional development. Ongoing means support continues through entire program and into Kindergarten if possible.
Improve **access to high-quality child development** programs	Increased hours in program dosage for children	Time spent in STARS rated programs at beginning of program year/term vs. time spent at end of program year/term. Increased hours/days/weeks/months for service offered.
Increase **caregiver, knowledge, skills, and engagement** in child success	# of families/caring adults engaged in child's learning	Families/adults must report a combination of: 1. At-home materials or activities engaged in with children 2. Knowledge-based parenting tools 3. In person interaction with teacher (home visit or at school). UWCK will ask how you determined this data but will not require any specific questions or test so long as all these categories are covered.
	# of children under age 5 who receive a well-child check-up during the program year	UWCK will ask how you determined this data but will not require any specific questions or tool.
	# of caregivers reporting improved knowledge or skill as a result of program intervention	UWCK will ask how you determined this data but will not require any specific questions or tool.

Education Priority – Supportive Relationships: Improve outcomes for at-risk students through supportive relationships **Target Population:** All at-risk children with a special emphasis on 5th-9th graders **Population Indicator:** College or career readiness rate		
Funded Program Outcomes	**Indicators**	**Preferred Data/Definitions**
Improve **academic performance**	# of students promoted to next grade on time and with satisfactory credit hours	"Satisfactory credit hours" means number of credits required by district to progress to next grade level
	# of students with improved grades	UWCK will ask how you determined this data but will not require any specific questions or tool.
	# of students with decreased unexcused absences and/or suspensions once program year/term is completed	UWCK will ask how you determined this data but will not require any specific questions or tool.
Increase **involvement in positive activities**	# of children engaged in structured after-school program	Students are involved in a structured after-school setting compared to when they entered the program.
	# of students with increased involvement in extra-curricular activity	Students spend additional time involved in activities outside school hours compared to when they entered the program.
Increase **adult engagement** in child's success	# of mentor/mentee relationships established	It is well established that mentorship helps to positively influence young peoples' emotional, social and academic development. Indicate the number of mentor/mentee relationships provided through your programming.
	# of caring adults engaged in student's learning	Caring adults engaged in supporting student academically and/or emotionally. UWCK will ask how you determined this data but will not require any specific questions or tool.
	# of families connected to ongoing supports that address learning challenges	Learning challenges are identified via screening tools that can be physical, health, cognitive, behavioral, or social-emotional development. Ongoing means support must continue through entire program and into high school if possible.

Financial Stability Priority: Create pathways to financial stability through employment and education **Target Population:** Children and adults **Population Indicator:** Regional workforce participation rate		
Funded Program Outcomes	**Indicators**	**Preferred Data/Definitions**
Improve **financial knowledge and management**	# of participants gaining financial knowledge	In order to "gain financial knowledge," a client must attend/complete a module, class, workshop, and/or 1:1 coaching session that fully covers at least one of the five core competency areas: 1. Earning 2. Spending 3. Credit building & borrowing 4. Saving 5. Protecting finances
	# of participants who become "banked"	"Unbanked" means that the person is not fully participating in the mainstream financial system. A client "becomes banked" when they open a new checking or savings account at a mainstream financial institution.
	# of participants improving financial position	To improve financial position, clients must show progress in at least one of the following: 1. Increase net income (income minus expenses, i.e. Paying off debts, increasing income at job, etc.) 2. Improve credit score or content of credit report- using same reporting agency to measure over time (fewer delinquencies, more active trade lines, fewer collections/judgments, improved debt to credit ratio, etc.) 3. Increase net worth- a client demonstrates a gain in the worth when the value of their assets grows in comparison to liabilities.
	Average savings rate	Numerator: sum of total annual savings for all participants of the savings program Denominator: sum of gross annual income for all participants. "Average savings rate" is the savings rate for your agency's program for a single program year. "Gross income" includes gross earnings from work, as well as regular income from public benefits, child support, etc.
Find jobs and pursue career growth	# of participants gaining recognized skills or credentials	To "gain recognized skills or credentials," a client must complete one or more of the following: 1. Digital literacy training (computer) 2. English as a Second Language training 3. Adult literacy/math training 4. General Education Development (GED) certificate 5. High school diploma 6. Apprenticeship program 7. Occupational skills certificate or licensure 8. Associates degree (accredited) 9. Bachelor's (accredited)

Find jobs and pursue career growth (cont.)		10. Master's Degree (accredited) 11. "Soft Skills" training
	# of participants who become job ready	In order to be considered "job ready," a client must successfully complete the agency's entire job readiness training program. Ideally, programs should incorporate standardized testing for work readiness credential to determine if participant has fully incorporated the learning provided from the program. Note: longer-term clients should only be counted the first time they complete the job readiness training or if additional training components are added at a later date. Data sources: agency case notes, attendance, pre/post tests, completion records, certificates, etc.
	Job placement rate	Numerator: unduplicated # of participants placed in jobs during the program year. Denominator: # of participants served in program that were <u>not</u> employed at program entry or lost their job during program year. "Placed in a job" means a participant obtained and maintained paid employment at the same job for a minimum of 30 days. "Paid employment" can include paid internships, subsidized employment, transitional jobs, and part-time work.
	Job retention rate	Numerator: # of participants placed during program year who retain their jobs Denominator: # of participants placed during the program year. In order to be "retained" a client must be continuously employed for 90 days, either in the same job, a comparable/better job in the same organization, or another comparable job in the community. "Comparable" means a similar or better work hours, schedule, wage, benefits, etc. "Continuously" means working all weeks at least part-time for the 90 day period.
	# of participants improving job quality	In order to "improve job quality," participants must experience one or more of the following: 1. Increase in wages/earnings 2. Receipt of new/improved employer-sponsored benefits (vacation/sick time, insurance, 401K, pre-tax transportation, childcare, tuition reimbursement, etc.) 3. Gains in job security: increasing hours, temporary to permanent, off probationary period, join a labor union, etc. Improvements in job quality can be made through current job or movement to new /better job as long as the participant remains continuously employed for at least 90 days.
Remove transportation barriers to education and employment	# of participants who acquire their own vehicle	"Own their own vehicle" includes all types of cars, trucks, and motor vehicles whether purchased, leased, or given in-kind.
	# of participants securing reliable transportation source	"Reliable transportation" includes car repairs, van pooling, subsidized or vouchered transportation services.

Health Priority: Improve physical and mental health of Central Kentucky residents **Target Population:** Children and adults **Population Indicator:** Percentage of individuals with improved access to healthcare		
Funded Program Outcomes	**Indicators**	**Preferred Data/Definitions**
Increase **access to healthcare**, including mental health services and medications	# of individuals who are uninsured, economically disadvantaged, medically underserved, or living in rural areas utilizing preventive and primary health care services and programs.	Number of unduplicated individuals who use the preventive and primary health care services as a result of program activities. Includes mental health/counseling services, rehabilitation, and affordable prescription coverage.
	# of clients to whom information on health insurance, health care access and health benefits programs is delivered.	Number of unduplicated individuals who are provided with information, as a result of the grantee's activities. If more than one method of delivery is used (i.e. a group-level interaction followed by an individual-level interaction), count the client only once.
	# of clients enrolled in health insurance, health services, and health benefits programs.	Number of unduplicated clients who were ultimately enrolled in a health insurance, health services, or health benefits program. For example, enrolling a client in health insurance and then enrolling that same client in a prescription service would count as one client.
Provide access to **safe housing and independent living**	# of economically disadvantaged individuals, including domestic violence and abuse victims, provided temporary safe shelter.	Number of clients provided with temporary shelter as recorded by client database or tracking form.
	# of economically disadvantaged individuals transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing.	Number of clients living independently in safe and stable housing as recorded by client database or tracking form.
	# of older adults or individuals with disabilities receiving services that allow them to live independently.	Number of individuals receiving companionship or in-home caretaking services. Count number of qualifying individuals as defined above who receive the service. Each individual should be counted only once. If two eligible individuals live at the same address, they should both be counted. If an eligible individual lives with someone else who is not eligible, the non-eligible individuals in the household should not be counted. Each individual should be counted only once during the program year even though most individuals are likely to need ongoing support.
Encourage **healthy habits**	# of adults and/or children engaged in physical or	Unduplicated number of adults or children actively participating in preventative health and wellness activities, including school or after-school programming.

	preventative activities to improve health and wellness.	

Basic Needs Priority: Improve access to basic needs services for individuals and families **Target Population:** Children and adults **Population Indicator:** Percentage of individuals with improved access to basic needs services		
Funded Program Outcomes	**Indicators**	**Preferred Data/Definitions**
Improve **food stability**	# of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks, food pantries, or other nonprofit organizations.	Please note if your count of clients is duplicated or unduplicated.
	# of individuals receiving support, services, education and/or referrals to alleviate long-term hunger.	Please note if your count of clients is duplicated or unduplicated.
	# of individuals that reported increased food security for themselves and their children (household food security) as a result.	Pre/post questionnaire, post-program survey.
	# pounds of food distributed.	Distribution records.
Critical needs are met in time of crisis	# of individuals receiving disaster relief or recovery services.	Number of individuals receiving help recovering from natural or man-made disasters.
	# of individuals who received clothing, hygiene supplies, and/or household goods.	Number of individuals who received clothing and household goods as measured by client database or tracking form.
	# of individuals provided with basic utilities including water and heat.	Number of individuals provided with basic utilities including water, electricity, and heat as measured by client database or tracking form.
	# of individuals provided with rent, mortgage, or deposit assistance to prevent homelessness.	Number of clients receiving help with payments to secure or stabilize housing.
	# of clients receiving legal representation.	Unduplicated number of clients receiving legal advocacy in coping with crisis situations.

NOTES