

Community Impact Grants

Expression of Interest Applicant Guide

United Way of Calgary and Area



Who We Are

United Way of Calgary and Area (United Way) brings together local agencies, corporations, donors, volunteers, and government to create lasting social change in our city. Born as part of a worldwide movement more than a century ago, United Way's unwavering focus continues to be improving lives through the power of communities.

Mission: To mobilize communities for lasting social change
Vision: A resilient and caring community where everyone thrives

Background

Over the past five years, United Way has evolved its role as a convener, strategic investor, and community backbone. We have helped build coordinated systems of care, supported collaboration and innovation, and used data to guide decisions. In 2026, United Way launched a refreshed Community Impact Strategy that continues and sharpens this evolution toward a more focused, outcomes-oriented, and relationship-centred investment approach. The 2027 Community Impact Grants are part of that transition.

Funding Opportunity

We are pleased to launch our 2027 Community Impact Grants with an Expression of Interest (EOI) as the first step in a 2-stage funding process. The EOI is intended to open a respectful conversation about shared priorities, community strengths, emerging needs, ideas, and opportunities for partnership. This stage will help United Way and community organizations understand whether there may be a good fit before organizations are invited to provide more detail. If your proposed work meets all eligibility requirements and strongly aligns with our Impact Areas and strategic direction, you may be invited to complete a second-stage application.

Submitting an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to apply and does not create a funding commitment. Only selected EOIs will be invited to submit a second-stage application.

At-a-Glance

Topic	What applicants need to know
What this is	A first-stage Expression of Interest to help United Way understand eligibility, strategic fit, community need, proposed work, and high-level funding fit.
Who may apply	Registered Canadian charities and eligible incorporated non-profit organizations that meet the requirements for this process.
Geographic focus	Proposed work must be based in and focused on people in Calgary.
Strategic focus	The proposed work should align strongly with one United Way Impact Area: Economic Stability, Healthy Kids and Thriving People, or Connected Communities.
How to submit	EOIs must be submitted online via Microsoft Forms. Please do not submit your EOI via email. LINK: 2027 Community Impact Grant Expression of Interest
When to submit	Submissions are due November 27, 2026 at 4:00 pm MT
What happens after the EOI is submitted	United Way reviews EOIs for eligibility, strategic alignment, funding fit, and whether more detail is desired. United Way may contact applicants if clarification or further conversation would be helpful. Selected applicants will be invited to complete a second-stage application. Funding decisions happen later in the process.

Key Dates

Activity	Timeline
EOI application opens	October 22, 2026
EOI submission deadline	November 27, 2026, at 4:00 pm MT
Applicants notified and detailed application process opens for selected organizations	February 1, 2027
Second-stage application submission deadline	March 12, 2027
Funding decisions	Expected in early summer 2027 and are subject to approved criteria, available resources, and internal approvals.
Funding contracts begin	Expected to begin in fall 2027

What United Way is looking to support

Impact Areas

All community impact investments align to three Impact Areas. Applicants will be asked to choose one primary Impact Area that best fits the proposed work. An organization may submit a separate EOI for a different Impact Area if the proposed work is distinct. The examples below are not meant to be exhaustive. They are meant to help applicants understand the kinds of work that may align with this process.



Intervention Types

Applicants will be asked to choose a maximum of two Intervention Types that best fit the proposed work. United Way uses the following categories to define the kinds of interventions we invest in across our Impact Areas: Social Development, Prevention, Mitigation, and Crisis Response.



Is this opportunity a fit for your organization?

Use this quick check before starting your EOI. If you are unsure about your eligibility, contact grantsupport@calgaryunitedway.org.

Eligible applicants

- ✓ Registered Canadian charities.
- ✓ Incorporated non-profit organizations under the Alberta Societies Act or the Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act that can meet United Way requirements for charitable purpose alignment, eligible use of funds, documentation, and accountability.
- ✓ Organizations based in and focused on populations in Calgary.
- ✓ Organizations with a minimum annual operating budget of \$200,000 in each of their last two fiscal years.
- ✓ Organizations proposing work that addresses social issues aligned with one of United Way's identified Impact Areas.
- ✓ Faith-based organizations that meet all eligibility requirements and the proposed work does not include religious activities.
- ✓ Collaborations are welcome when the lead applicant meets United Way eligibility requirements and is responsible for accountability and reporting.

Not eligible for this EOI

- × Unincorporated groups or collectives.
- × For-profit businesses; hospitals; political parties; individuals; and, universities and academic institutions or municipalities as the lead applicant.
- × Activities that are religious in nature, capital expenditures, and deficit funding.
- × Work based in communities outside Calgary, including Chestermere, Cochrane, High River, Okotoks, Strathmore, or other area communities, which are considered through separate Area Community Partnerships processes.

What you will be asked in the EOI

Have this information ready before you begin your EOI application.

Organization profile

- Legal organization name and operating name, if different.
- Primary contact name, title, email, and phone number.
- Charitable registration or incorporation details.
- The year your organization was established.
- The number of paid staff members and active volunteers currently working with your organization.
- Whether you are a current, previous, or potential United Way-funded partner.
- Brief organizational mandate.
- Annual operating budget.

Strategic alignment and proposed work

- A short working title or name for the proposed work.
- The primary United Way Impact Area the proposed work most strongly aligns with and how it aligns with that Impact Area.
- The intervention type(s)—crisis response, mitigation, prevention, or social development—that best describe the proposed work.
- The current stage of the work, such as concept, early implementation, established, adapting, or scaling.
- Brief description of the work, intended outcomes, population groups, and neighbourhoods served.
- The issue, opportunity, or community need being addressed.
- Evidence, learning, community input, experience, or other context that supports the need.
- Your approach and why you have chosen it.

Funding request and budget fit

- Estimated annual funding request from United Way and estimated total annual budget for the projected work.
- High-level use of funds by category, such as staffing, program costs, collaboration, operating capacity, evaluation, community engagement, administration, or other eligible costs.
- Other confirmed or anticipated funding sources for the proposed work.

How to Submit an EOI

- All EOIs must be submitted online via the [2027 Community Impact Grant Expression of Interest](#) form by **November 27, 2026 at 4:00 pm MT**.
- Video or oral applications are not accepted at the EOI stage of this process.
- You may contact grantsupport@calgaryunitedway.org for questions and support.

How United Way will review EOIs

United Way will first check eligibility. Submissions that pass eligibility screening will be reviewed in the following areas. The review is intended to support consistent decisions and determine if a second-stage application will be invited.

Criterion	Indicators of a strong response
Alignment with United Way Impact Area	Identifies one clear best-fit Impact Area; briefly explains the connection; and names outcomes that are relevant to that area. A response does not need to address every initiative example.
Community Need, Opportunity, or Issue	Clearly identifies the population, place or community context, main barriers or opportunity, and why the issue matters. Local statistics, prevalence estimates, or quantified service gaps may strengthen the response but are not required for a high score when the need is otherwise specific and credible.
Evidence, Learning, and Community Input	Uses one or more credible forms of evidence—such as lived experience, community input, partner learning, practice knowledge, research, program data, or evaluation findings—and explains how that information informed the proposed work. No single evidence type, formal study, or internal outcome dataset is required.
Proposed Approach and Rationale	Briefly explains what will be done, who will be served, how the work responds to the need, and why the approach was selected. Provides enough delivery detail to judge feasibility without requiring a detailed workplan, logic model, or finalized implementation plan.
Organizational Fit and Capacity	Shows a relevant mandate and a credible combination of experience, relationships, staffing or volunteer capacity, leadership, systems, or implementation planning. Capacity is proportionate to the proposal; smaller or newer organizations can score highly when the work is appropriately scaled and needed gaps have credible plans.
Funding Request and Budget Fit	States the request and total project budget; provides expense categories that total 100%; identifies other funding where relevant; and presents a funding picture that is understandable and proportionate. Confirmed co-funding and a fully developed financing plan are not required at the EOI stage.

Scoring is one input into decision-making. United Way may also consider funding availability, portfolio balance, impact-area mix, geography, populations served, and strategic learning.

Tips for writing a strong EOI

- Use plain language. Avoid jargon and acronyms.
- Use your own words to clearly explain what the proposed work does, who it supports, why it matters, and how it connects to one of United Way's Impact Areas. Applicants do not need to repeat United Way language back to us.
- Applicants should choose one primary Impact Area that best fits each EOI submission. An organization may submit a separate EOI for a different Impact Area if the proposed work is distinct.
- Keep responses concise and specific. Focus your EOI on clarity, fit, and enough detail for reviewers to understand the work.

Additional Information and Support

If you have additional questions, please review our [FAQ document](#). We will update the FAQ regularly as new questions and responses become available. You may also contact grantsupport@calgaryunitedway.org with additional questions.

Glossary

Term	Plain language meanings
Expression of Interest (EOI)	A short first step that helps United Way understand whether there may be a fit before asking for a second-stage application
Impact Area	One of the main areas where United Way is focusing community investments: Economic Stability, Healthy Kids and Thriving People, or Connected Communities.
Capital expenditure	A major purchase or construction-related cost, such as buying land, buildings, major equipment, or renovations, unless otherwise stated as eligible.
Deficit funding	Funding used to cover previous shortfalls or debts rather than current or future eligible work.
Religious activities	Activities that preach and advance the spiritual teachings of a religious faith and/or maintain the doctrines and spiritual observances on which those teachings are based.
Intervention type	The way the proposed work creates change or supports people. United Way uses the following categories to define the kinds of interventions we invest in across our Impact Areas: Social Development, Prevention, Mitigation, and Crisis Response.