

FAQ from December 2024/January 2025 UWS Community Investment Webinars

This document aims to capture the main questions asked by participants in our informational webinars. It is not meant to be exhaustive of every possible aspect of the grant application process. Please use this document alongside our full Community Investment Guidelines and PowerPoint presentation available on our [Community Investments Webpage](#).

If I'm not working with one of your listed schools of focus, can I still apply

- Yes. All Education programs - whether working with preschool, elementary, middle or high school students/families - will select the School Attendance Zones corresponding to the communities to be served. This does not imply you directly partner with the school, only that you will be active in its community. If you work directly with a middle or high school overlapping with the elementary zones, still proceed with completing this section.

Can you clarify the 75% requirement and its relationship to ALICE?

- To be eligible for funding, at least 75% of your program participants must reside in our geographies of focus as listed in our Investment Guidelines. This holds **only** for the question of geography and communities.
- There is **no** minimum requirement for the number of ALICE individuals your program serves. While we are looking for programs with an ALICE focus, we do not hold applicants to a specific proportion, nor do we disqualify out of hand programs that work with individuals living in poverty or with populations whose income level cannot be determined.

Many of the indicators use the terms "age appropriate" and "ability appropriate." What do you mean by that?

- Particularly for young children, there are behavioral growth milestones that are tied to specific ages. Rather than require all children to be proficient in what is being measured at exactly the same age, or prescribing the amount of growth a child should make in a specific amount of time, we depend on your program to make that determination based on established research and best practices in child/youth development.
- Similarly, there are children, youth and adults who are developing differently than the norm. These individuals may never be able to read at grade level or hold a high-paying job; however, every individual can be supported and helped to grow at a rate and pace that is appropriate to their own capabilities. This is why we have some indicators that ask for 'ability-appropriate' growth, and we encourage programs serving these individuals to still apply.

What is the difference between a Result and an Indicator? Will we be required to report on the Results listed in the community impact investment guidelines?

- The Results listed for Education and Financial Security are vision statements for our Suncoast community. We do not expect or intend for each funded partner to be fully responsible for measuring the success of that Result – this is why we fund a variety of programs and list multiple indicators for programs to select for measuring progress.
- You will report on Indicators only – for example, while one of our Results reads: "Children enter kindergarten ready to learn," the associated indicators give applicants the option to focus on either literacy skills, social emotional skills, or parental support. In combination, these indicators will produce a community with children entering school readier to learn.

Do financial security grants focus only on job development for youth or adults or both?

- Your program can focus on either job exposure and training for young people OR on job development and placement for adults OR any combination.

Can you clarify the age focus of this funding stream?

- We suggest that you use the Indicator language to identify the age-focus of our funding. Both Education and Financial Security contain Results that cover children, youth and adults. However, the Indicators within each Result show whether you are seeking funding that supports a specific age group. Programs that work with a combination of ages are allowable, and applicants should select multiple Indicators showing the work being done across age groups.

If we are a previous/current recipient of an investment grant: 1-can we apply for the same program? and 2- Do our final outcomes from the current investment grant impact the upcoming investment grants?

- Yes, you can absolutely apply for the same program as the last community Investment process. Program Performance during the last multi-year community investment process will be one of many factors that are considered for funding.

Do we need to have a physical location in one of the counties to apply? We don't have a physical location in all five but we have programming in all the counties UWS serves.

- A physical location in the 5 county region is not required, but a requirement of the funding is that the funds are used to serve residents of the 5 county region. You will also need to explain your connection to the communities you propose to serve, so you'll need to communicate clearly how you build trust and relationships in communities where you are not physically located.

If we submit applications for two separate programs in the same funding focus area, is there a limit of programs in an agency that will be funded in one focus area?

- There is no limit to the number of applications you can submit in either focus area. You will need to submit a full proposal for each program you are looking to fund.
- While there is no set cap on the number of grants a single agency can receive, it is unlikely that any single applicant will be awarded for more than two programs.

Is there a funding cap per organization?

- We expect the funding cap **per program** will be around \$100,000 per year. Please ask for what you need to support the program knowing this limitation
- The cap applies to each program application you've submitted, **not** per organization.

Our program is also active in Pasco County/South Sarasota/Polk, etc., in addition to the counties served by UWS. Does that create an issue for applying and reporting?

- So long as 75% or more of the participants served by your program reside in our priority areas within Hillsborough, Pinellas, Manatee, Sarasota or DeSoto, being active in other counties does not negatively affect your application.

If we have an existing program and are looking to expand to an additional area, would we need a person dedicated to the expansion specifically? And are there restrictions on the type of staff who support the program?

- There are no restrictions on the type of staff paid for by our grant dollars. Our focus is on your program achieving its projected outcomes – we trust that you will make the correct staffing decisions based on your program need.

We don't have paid staff at this time can we still gain funding if we have a dedicated volunteer? What do you mean by “one full time person”

- We only require that the program has at least one person working/volunteering with your organization full-time who is committed to the management program as one of their duties. This person can be paid or unpaid.

What is the intended age group for youth focused services?

- For youth focused services that are not grade level reading (for ages 5 through 12) or kindergarten reading (for ages 0-6), youth is defined as anyone from 11 to 24 years of age.

Should we submit one application per county, or can we combine multiple counties into one application?

- Your program may focus on more than one of our Suncoast counties (it must serve at least one of them, but can serve more) and still qualify. In your application, you will select which counties you would serve through that proposal.
- If it is the same program being delivered to multiple counties, you should only submit a single application. If you have different programs operating in different counties, please submit a separate application for each program.

How are the metrics in school readiness and reading on grade level aligned with the metrics the school districts track? Also are direct partnerships with school districts encouraged in the grant applications.

- We strongly encourage applicants focused in these areas to review the state standards here ([Florida Assessment of Student Thinking \(ELA\)](#)) and here ([FAST STAR Early Literacy](#)). We do encourage you to understand your client's progress through a similar lens as the FL DOE, though we know you may not always have access to those results without permission from the family being served.
- Direct partnerships with school districts are not required for funding purposes, but you should consider whether or not your program's success (or your ability to measure that success) relies on a formal partnership with the school.

For the ZIP codes of focus and priority zones, should we base our application on where the service is delivered or the residential address of the person receiving the service?

- When known, you should consider the current or future residential address of the client being served. In cases where that is not possible to collect, use the location of service delivery.

After funding is awarded - if the program meets required outcomes the 1st year but fall short the 2nd year, will the agency still receive funding the 3rd year?

- Our team will meet with the agency to check in on why those outcomes haven't been met to evaluate what to do for the third year.

Can this funding be used in conjunction with other grant funding sources?

- Yes. We generally expect to be one investor among many for most of the programs we fund.

Do all clients served with a UWS grant have to be ALICE or could it be a mixed income level demographic?

- Your program must have a strong focus on ALICE, meaning that programs focused mostly or solely on serving individuals below the federal poverty level should not apply. However, grant dollars, once awarded, are not restricted solely to supporting ALICE individuals. Anyone who benefits from your program can be served via our grant funding.

For measuring financial well-being results – are there alternatives available to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s scale that is mentioned in the Investment guidelines?

- As noted in the Community Investment Guidelines, the CFPB scale is the preferred tool. However, for those you serve who speak another language, have limited literacy, or for any reason cannot engage with this tool, we will accept alternatives as proposed to us by the applicant.

Are there any restrictions on any kind of direct service being funded that is delivered online?

- No. However, you must serve and be able to prove that you serve individuals residing in our areas of focus. Online users outside of those areas or whose location is unknown would not count.

Are there any blackout days for us to be aware of for fundraising – specifically time frames where we have to stop our own fundraising because of United Way Suncoast’s fundraising efforts?

- No. We do not restrict any of the fundraising activities of our partners. We encourage you to be fundraising year-round!

How is UWS distinguishing between “new” vs. “expanded/updated” programs when making funding decisions?

- In the application, we ask if a program has been operating in its current capacity for a certain period of time. If you are proposing a change to the program that would be made possible by UWS funding, but the basic structure remains the same in spite of that change, you should not mark your program as “new.”

What can we *not* use UWS grant dollars for? Could this grant be used for a currently existing program looking to expand?

- UWS does not require our dollars to be spent or not spent on specific budget line items, with the exception of large capital purchases which cannot comprise more than 50% of your request from UWS.
- We do seek to understand the budget of your full program, its alignment with the goals of the program and our role in completing that budget. To that end, we do request a complete

line-item budget for your program during the application, but once awarded you are not restricted to certain line items when spending the grant.

- While our funding is not restricted to specific budget line items, we have found that certain benchmarks indicate a healthy program budget. Therefore, to be eligible for funding your budget must meet the following benchmarks:
 - Shared, indirect, and occupancy costs: 25% of three-year program budget or less
 - Salary and benefits: 80% of three-year program budget or less
 - Other direct program costs: no limit

Is the Community Impact Investment an upfront grant or based on cost reimbursement?

- We pay our grants in equal monthly installments, up front and not by reimbursement. Typically, we will not ask for receipts or detailed accounting of the expending of UWS grant funds – we trust you will use it for what is needed. However, funded organizations should be prepared to share financial records if asked, especially in cases where the program is not performing as projected or if there is a concern with that program’s management.