



Human Services Fund FY2026

Request for Proposal (RFP) Information and Instructions

Impact Award



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This packet provides information to apply for City of Cincinnati Human Services Fund Impact Award for the Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027, beginning on September 1, 2025.

The Request for Proposal is a comprehensive document that details the requirements for proposal submission, provides tools for fulfilling the requirements and outlines the reporting requirements and expectations for the Human Services Fund Impact Award.

RFP ISSUE DATE	March 5, 2025
PROPOSAL DUE DATE	April 21, 2025, 4:30 PM
OFFICE HOURS AND APPOINTMENTS	<p>Online Office Hours: Open Office hours will be held on Teams at the following times, please click the link to join the Teams meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM • Thursday, March 13, 2025, 12:00 – 1:00 PM • Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM <p>Individual appointments are available after February 11th, please use the following link to schedule a virtual 1:1 meeting with a UWGC staff member:</p> <p>https://outlook.office.com/bookwithme/user/b5a0c150e3324f53a7f57963c48c4337@uwgc.org/meetingtype/qm5c5hwx60yW1G6dXnasNA2?anonymous&ep=mlink</p>
DEADLINE FOR QUESTIONS	The deadline for questions is April 16, 2025, at 4:30 PM Eastern. Questions and/or inquiries must be submitted in writing to humanservicesfund@uwgc.org
SUBMISSION PROCESS	All proposals must be submitted online using United Way’s online application system called e-CImpact. Register here if you do not have an active account.
RFP WEBSITE	https://www.uwgc.org/partner-with-us/human-services-fund/ FAQ documents and guidance can be found here and will be updated frequently.
RFP CONTACT	humanservicesfund@uwgc.org

Cincinnati Human Services Fund

Request for Proposals

Impact Award

The Impact Award is part of the City of Cincinnati's Human Services Funding. It is funding for a single fiscal year, in this case for FY2026. The amount of the award will be determined by the budget that is passed by City Council at the end of June 2025. The award will represent 10% of the Human Services Funding budget; in FY 2025, the Human Services Funding budget was \$8.5M.

The Impact Award is for **one large scale social innovation project** that includes multiple partners with a diverse array of strategies. The United Way of Greater Cincinnati will contract with the lead agency and the lead agency will issue subcontracts to the partner agencies.

The Impact Award grantee and its partner agencies must use the funding on city residents only.

The FY2026 Impact Award is for: Food Insecurity as a part of the broader gun violence prevention strategies.

Background

Nationally, there has been a troubling increase in rates of food insecurity, especially among children. According to data from the USDA¹, between 2021 and 2022 there was a nearly 50% increase in food insecurity among children, which accounts for 4.1 million additional children going hungry. This is due, in part, to increased inflation stretching families' grocery budgets and the expiration of pandemic-era relief measures, such as the Child Tax Credit.²

¹ USDA. "Household Food Security in the United States in 2022 | Economic Research Service." Home | Economic Research Service, 23 Oct. 2023, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details?pubid=107702&v=2841.6>.

² The Annie E. Casey Foundation. "Child Food Insecurity in America - The Annie E. Casey Foundation." The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 19 Jan. 2023, <https://www.aecf.org/blog/child-food-insecurity>.

While the challenge of food insecurity has been exacerbated in recent years, it has deep rooted and historical structural causes. Research over the past several decades have confirmed an intricate connection between food insecurity and structural racism, generational poverty and affordable housing.³

The impacts of food insecurity are just as multifaceted and complex as its structural causes. Food access is essential not only for physical health and nutrition but is also intricately connected to mental health and wellbeing. Lacking access to food can lead to increased stress and anxiety, decreased performance in school and heightened rates of depression.⁴ For example, research has shown that “low-income adults with high food security screened at 14.3% for depression, 20.5% for anxiety, and 17.8% for high perceived stress, [whereas] low-income adults with very low food security screened at 54.9% for depression, 58.9% for anxiety, and 66.3% for high perceived stress.”⁵

For youth in the Greater Cincinnati area, one in five experience food insecurity.⁶ Across the city, 25% of Cincinnati’s population lives in a food desert. Furthermore, compared to the national average of 24-34 grocery stores within 1 mile of all residents, Cincinnati averages 14 or less.⁷ The Cincinnati Health Department’s Community Needs Assessment in 2023 included a “Local Conversations on Minority Health” where respondents ranked⁸ access to food as their second highest priority.

³ Feeding America. “What Is Food Insecurity? | Feeding America.” *U.S. Hunger Relief Organization | Feeding America*, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/food-insecurity>.
Odoms-Young, Angela. *Examining the Impact of Structural Racism on Food Insecurity: Implications for Addressing Racial/Ethnic Disparities*. Fam Community Health, 2018, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5823283/>.

⁴ Ejjohuo, Ovinuchi. *Nourishing the Mind: How Food Security Influences Mental Wellbeing*. Nutrients, 2024, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10893396/>.

⁵ Wolfson J.A., Garcia T., Leung C.W. Food Insecurity Is Associated with Depression, Anxiety, and Stress: Evidence from the Early Days of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the United States. *Health Equity*. 2021;5:64–71. doi: 10.1089/heq.2020.0059

⁶ Weingartner, Tana. “Food Insecurity Remains a Big Problem for Many in the U.S., and Locally.” *WVXU.Org*, 2024, <https://www.wvxu.org/local-news/2024-05-16/food-insecurity-cincinnati-feeding-america>.

⁷ The System to Achieve Food Equity (SAFE) Network, Year 2 Report, 2023–2024. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60d494b4d5d35b5459cb43a8/t/668c07106aa6d971b41363b9/1720452886685/SAFE+Year+Two+Report+-+Final_Small.pdf

⁸ City of Cincinnati Health Department, 2023–2028 Community Health Assessment. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/sites/health/assets/Documents/Cincinnati-Health-Department-2022-Community-Health-Needs-Assessment-data-update.pdf>

According to the CDC, 21.5% of adults in Cincinnati reported being food insecure in the last 12 months in 2020. However, in 2022, in the neighborhoods experiencing the most gun violence in Cincinnati, the percentages reporting the following rate of food insecurity are much higher. Rates could be as high as these numbers, per that CDC study:

- OTR Historic District (census tract 39061001700) - 25.2%
- Avondale (census tract 39061006800) - 42.2%
- West End (census tract 39061000200) - 46.9%
- Winton Hills (census tract 39061008000) - 60.2%
- East Price Hill (census tract 39061009300) - 44.8%
- Westwood (census tract 39061010002) - 32.7%
- Roselawn (census tract 39061027100) - 36.1%
- West Price Hill (census tract 39061009902) - 22.3%
- Mt. Airy (census tract 39061008501) - 43.6%
- Walnut Hills (census tract 39061003700) - 36.4%

The City of Cincinnati recently launched [Achieving Change Together \(ACT\) for Cincy](#), a new blueprint for addressing gun violence. This blueprint specifically highlights the need to address the challenge of youth gun violence by promoting thriving neighborhoods, improving mental health support and supporting youth-based programming. In community conversations, we have heard from local leaders that there is a strong connection between these factors influencing gun violence and the challenge of food insecurity. This is seen both on a neighborhood level with food deserts and on an individual physiological level, the lack of access to nutritious food negatively impacts youth development and healthy decision making. For example, we heard from one community council with high rates of violence that food insecurity was their top concern.

[Academic research from New Orleans](#) confirms this perspective and found that “food insecurity was an independent predictor of assault in victims of firearm injuries, and that food insecurity was associated with an increase in the rate of overall gun-related trauma.”⁹ We can see evidence of that connection in Cincinnati where the top five neighborhoods experiencing the most gun violence have double the SNAP participants than the City average overall (36% vs. 18%).

⁹ Taghavi, Sharven. *The Association between Food Insecurity and Gun Violence in a Major Metropolitan City*. *J Trauma Acute Care Surg*, 2022, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9233034/>.

This Impact Award provides an opportunity to pursue an innovative, collaborative, bold strategy to address food insecurity as part of the City's overall gun violence prevention strategy that will promote thriving neighborhoods and improve physical and mental health for families.

Priorities of Funding

1. Projects that prioritize community collaboration and include multiple organizations with one lead agency applicant. Collaborative applications must demonstrate how the partner program services will be woven together in order to achieve the innovative strategy; they should not be stand alone descriptions of each individual provider's standard services.
2. Projects MUST benefit residents in three or more of the top 10 neighborhoods experiencing gun violence:
 - OTR
 - Avondale
 - West End
 - Winton Hills
 - East Price Hill
 - Westwood
 - Roselawn
 - West Price Hill
 - Mt. Airy
 - Walnut Hills
3. Projects that utilize a diverse array of strategies, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Getting food into the hands of food insecure city residents
 - b. Using a client choice model where the client is involved in choosing the foods provided
 - c. Improving access to food by identifying and addressing barriers to a participants' ability to benefit including the operational hours of a service provider conflicting with a participant's work schedule, transportation barriers to access the service location etc.
 - d. Providing nutrition and cooking education
 - e. Developing and implementing an effective communication/marketing plan, to ensure potential beneficiaries are aware of services.
 - f. Including consideration of available cooking supplies (refrigeration, oven/stove, appliances, tools etc.), lifestyle and skills to utilize the available food donations

- g. Incorporating local food aggregation and community-supported agriculture (CSA)
 - h. Sharing resources to help prevent or minimize wasted food
4. Projects in which the beneficiaries include 2 or more of populations experiencing high rates of food insecurity: (italics direct quote from Annie Casey Foundation)
- a. Children in families of color
 1. *Children in families of color are more likely to not eat enough because their households cannot afford food, compared to kids in white families. In the fall of 2022, kids were not eating enough in nearly two in five Black (38%), Latino (37%) and multiracial (37%) households with children, and in nearly one-third (31%) of Asian households with children, according to the KIDS COUNT Data Center. These figures were well above the rate for white households with kids (21%).*
 - b. Single parent/caregiver families
 1. *Nationwide, one in three (33%) of households headed by single moms experienced food insecurity in 2022, about double the national average (17%) for all households with kids that year.*
 - c. Households with foreign born parents
 1. *In particular, U.S. citizen children of foreign-born mothers have a higher risk of food insecurity compared to kids of U.S.-born moms, regardless of race or ethnicity. Language barriers may be a factor for these families, with research showing that food insecurity is twice as high for children with limited English-proficient parents than kids with English-fluent parents.*
 - d. Families in which an adult has a disability
 1. *For households where an adult has a disability, 23% were food insecure in 2016–2021. The rate is far lower, at 8%, for households where no adult has a disability.*
 - e. People at high risk for experiencing social isolation
 1. *There is a significant correlation between food insecurity and an increased likelihood of experiencing social isolation and loneliness. Populations at greater risk of social isolation include low-income*

individuals, young adults, older adults, those living alone, immigrants, and members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

6. Projects that can articulate how they can be sustained after this funding is over.

Additional Desired Criteria

Projects demonstrating the following will receive additional points:

- Include a component of enrollment into SNAP or WIC for eligible participants.
- Include direct collaboration with (gun) violence prevention programs.
- Leverage partnerships and existing funds to implement, expand, and sustain the proposal.

Metrics

Success metrics might include:

- # of meals (or pounds of food) provided
- Quantitative impact on family stress relief / overall wellbeing as defined by % of depression, anxiety, or perceived stress since this was outlined in section 1. (for example # of ACES)
- Qualitative data on psychological and physiological impacts
- # participants who are eligible for SNAP are enrolled in SNAP
- # of participants who are eligible for WIC are enrolled in WIC
- # of transportation barriers eliminated
- # enrolled in WIC
- # of target population served: broken down into categories
- # in target neighborhoods served: broken down into neighborhoods
- Change of knowledge related to nutrition education

Connecting to Participants

All projects must ensure fair administration, creating welcoming environments where everyone can meaningfully participate and advance throughout all phases of the programming, including:

- Making sure that participants are truly connected with the program, rather than merely recipients of information;

- Creating program communication and materials that reflect participants' literacy levels;
- Providing resources when there are gaps in participation in the program due to digital divides and digital literacy, if applicable.

Ineligible Projects and Expenses

Projects and/or expenses that are **not** eligible for funding include:

- Project planning grants or research trial proposals.
- Salaries for lobbyists.
- Buildings or capital costs.
- Violence prevention projects that do not improve food security.

Award Terms

Grant Period

Funding under the Impact Award is for a one-time grant, to begin on September 1, 2025 and must be expended by August 31, 2027. The collaborative that is selected to receive funding will be notified in July 2025 of the grant award. The collaborative funded under this award will enter a subcontract with United Way of Greater Cincinnati, as the administrator of the Human Services Fund for the City of Cincinnati.

Reporting and Participation Requirements

The funded collaborative will be asked to report results, at the six months and one-year points. Programs may be asked to participate in meetings to review data, share common challenges, and support capacity building to improve data literacy and expand the use of data for decision making. Additional details will be provided at the time of grant announcements.

Funding Request

The actual amount of funding available for the FY2026 Human Services Fund will not be determined until City Council approves the FY2026 General Fund Budget, which typically occurs in June. It is anticipated that approximately \$800,000 dollars will be allocated for the Impact Award. Applicants are encouraged to submit requests within this funding range.

Policies and Eligibility

The following policies have been established:

- Agencies must be 501(c)3 organizations compliant with licensing, accreditation, and legal requirements. Nonprofit organizations do not need to be physically located in the City of Cincinnati, but City of Cincinnati Human Services funds may only be used to support city residents. Submitting a program proposal is not a guarantee of funding.
- The City of Cincinnati may elect not to fund or advance any applicants with known management, fiscal, reporting, program, or other problems that make it unlikely that they would be able to provide effective services.
- All funding decisions are made by Cincinnati City Council based on the recommendation of the Human Services Advisory Committee.
- Qualification under the criteria and eligibility requirements listed in the *Request for Proposal* does not entitle an organization to receive funding.
- The funded Impact Award project will be ineligible to receive any additional funding from the Human Services Fund for the duration of the grant period. That is, they may not receive a grant from both the Impact Award and Services category for the same project. However, members of the collaborative may, as individual organizations, request and receive funding through the HSF during the open application cycle for other unrelated programs/projects.
- The City of Cincinnati reserves the right to reject any and all programs, in part or in whole; to negotiate with applicants and to award funding to those programs deemed most likely to contribute to the success of the Human Services Fund priorities.
- Organizations may be the lead applicant for only one Impact Award proposal; organizations may be a partner in multiple applications.
- Partnerships may not duplicate programs/services provided by entities within the City of Cincinnati, e.g. Health Department, Recreation Department, etc., but are encouraged to consider how City programs and services may support their efforts.

- There is no preference for or against agencies that have previously received Human Services Funding or that have a relationship with United Way of Greater Cincinnati.
- The City of Cincinnati, in accordance with the Public Records Act (Section 149.43 of the Ohio Revised Code), defines records as including the following: any document – paper, electronic (including but not limited to e-mail), or other format – that is created or received by, or comes under the jurisdiction of this office. All proposal submissions on behalf of the City of Cincinnati are public unless they are exempt from disclosure under the Ohio Revised Code.

Proposal Questions and Instructions

The following questions and attachments must be completed and submitted by the deadline. Proposals not adhering to these requirements may not be considered for review.

All information will be submitted online using the e-CImpact Online Data Manager.

Applicant Information

- **Lead Applicant Name and Mailing Address**
Enter only the lead applicant's name (agency name)
- **Primary Contact for Proposal**
Provide name, title, email, and phone number for the primary contact for this proposal and all related communication
- **Lead Agency CEO Contact Information**
Provide name, title, and email address for the Lead Agency CEO
- **Lead Agency CEO Demographics**
Provide the gender, age range, and race/ ethnicity of the Agency CEO
- **Lead Agency Board Chair Contact Information**
Provide name, title/ organization (if applicable), and email address of the Board Chair
- **Agency Board Chair Demographics**
Provide the gender, age range, and race/ ethnicity of the Board Chair

- **Lead Applicant History, Mission & Purpose**
Briefly state the agency’s history, mission, and overall purpose.
- **Collaborative Partners**
List the collaborative partners names and provide a brief description of each partner
- **Type of Collaborative (Existing and Length or New)**
Select the type of collaborative. If existing, provide the number of years the collaborative has been in place.
- **Service Capacity and City of Cincinnati Residents Served**
Provide the total number of people served by the collaborative in an average 12-month period and the percentage of City of Cincinnati residents. Provide the top 10 City of Cincinnati zip codes served. If the collaborative is new, provide an aggregate number of the City of Cincinnati residents served by all collaborative partners.
- **Collaborative Project Name**
Provide the name of the collaborative project
- **Amount Requested**
Provide the amount of requested
- **Required Applicant Information Upload**
Using the provided Impact Award- Application Information Required Upload, provide the following information:
 - **Agency & Collaborative Partner Board Roster & Demographics:** Complete Tab 1. Board Rosters to provide the name, role, and demographics for all board members of each partner (lead and collaborative).
 - **Collaborative Partner CEO Contact Information and Demographics:** Complete Tab 2. Collaborative Partner CEOs to provide the name, title, gender, age range, and race/ ethnicity for the CEO of each collaborative partner
 - **Lead & Collaborative Partner Staff Race/ Ethnicity:** Complete Tab 3. Lead & Collaborative Staff to provide an aggregate overview race/ ethnicity of each partner’s staff.

The excel template will provide the following options for each category:

- **Gender:** Female, Male, Non-binary or Prefer to Self-Describe, Unknown/Not Collected
- **Age Range:** Younger than 25, 25-35, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 and older, Unknown/ Not Collected
- **Race/ Ethnicity:** Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American/American Indian/Alaskan Native, White/Caucasian, Two or More Race/ Ethnicities, Other/ Prefer to Self-Describe, Unknown/ Not Collected

Project Information

Collaborative Project Description & Key Strategies

Describe the proposed collaborative project including the role, responsibility, and experience of each partner organization and the key strategies the project is advancing or plans to advance. Share details about the communities or target populations the project seeks to serve.

Collaborative Structure and History

List any paid staff and explain their roles. If this is an existing collaborative, provide its history and results achieved. If this is a proposed new partnership, explain how the collaborative will be structured.

Collaborative's Capacity, Experience and Expertise

Briefly state the collaborative and lead agency's capacity, experience, and expertise to serve targeted communities, provide the proposed services, and implement the project as proposed. Explain how the partnership will have the capacity to achieve its proposed activities. Share how the partners in the collaborative are leveraging each other's capacity, experience, and/or expertise to create a greater impact than what is achievable when implementing individual efforts.

Data-informed Approach(es) and Impact

Share how the collaborative has used and plans to use data to inform the project, key strategies, and proposed impact. This could include details on evidence from proven models or research, best practices, past outcomes and internal learnings, or evidence in support of the collaborative's theory of change.

Current and proposed outcomes

Provide a brief narrative of current, if available, or proposed outcomes. Provide proposed outcomes for the following (if appropriate) along with how the outcome will be measured and methodology or data collection process.

Planning and Implementation Summary

Briefly summarize the proposed project plan detailed in the required upload, including project milestones, and key objectives with timeline. Share potential constraints, key assumptions or dependencies that could present a challenge to the proposed plan and how the collaborative plans to minimize or mitigate potential challenges.

Community Engagement and Voice

Share the collaborative's approach to community engagement and use of community voice in informing, guiding, or determining the proposed project/ approach and services. Please specify the specific role of community in decision making and providing feedback throughout the award period.

Systems Change Learning, Scale or Sustainability

Describe what you expect to learn throughout the implementation of the proposed project, specifically associated with learnings that could influence policy change or impact other system change levers in support of scaling solutions or sustaining the impact of the project. Share how the project plans to leverage other dollars during the implementation period and the plans to ensure sustainability, if appropriate, after the implementation period.

Required Uploads

- **Documentation of Collaboration:** Upload document(s) to support the current state/ structure of the collaborative. This could be a MOU among partners, Governance Structure or Partnership Agreements. **The lead organization must provide a letter of commitment/intent from each partner organization in the collaboration.**
- **Proposed Program Design*** (Note: While there is not a required template, this upload should include an overview of the proposed program design such as specifying the key drivers the program seeks to impact and its vision for change, proposed inputs, activities, milestones and short- and longer-term outcomes. Example tools include a Theory of Change or Logic Mode).

Project Budget

Complete the budget template in the e-CImpact online system for a projected program revenue and expenses for the period of September 1, 2025, through August 31, 2027
Place the requested grant award amount in Revenue: City of Cincinnati GFO

Proposed budgets should reflect reasonable, documented expenses that directly support program activities and demonstrate cost-effective use of grant funds. Totals should reflect what is needed to successfully run the program.

This is an overview budget for the entire project and all partners combined. A more detailed breakdown and accounting of the expenses and associated support documentation will be required to be submitted during the grant period.

Impact Award Proposed Program Budget		
Revenue	City Funds	Non-City Funds
Corporate		
Hamilton County		
Foundations		
Direct Federal Grants		
Fees for Program Participants		
City of Cincinnati – GFO (Grant \$ Requested Here)		
United Way of Greater Cincinnati		
State of Ohio		
Other – Please list all other specific sources of income		
Total Revenue (All Sources)		
Expenses		
Salaries (<i>Salaries no longer need to be itemized in this budget, please include the total amount to be applied for all salary</i>)		
Employee Fringe Benefits (<i>Include if fringe benefits are not included in the salary line item</i>)		
Contracted Services (<i>Itemized by subcontractor and associated cost; if awarded funding, contracts/ agreements with each subcontractor will need to be submitted and approved.</i>)		
Travel (<i>Mileage only within the City of Cincinnati at a rate not to exceed the current City mileage reimbursement rate.</i>)		
Space (<i>Total for Rent, utilities, telephone, building insurance, etc. Excludes cell phone stipends, long distance and directory assistance service.</i>)		
Consumable Office and Program Supplies (<i>Excludes food and beverage costs</i>)		
Operational Expenses (<i>Liability and Fidelity Bond insurance, printing, postage, etc.</i>)		
Other		
<i>Other - Please list all other expenses connected with this program that do not fit in a previous category.*</i>		
Total Expenses		

How Do I Apply? [Online Application Opens: March 10, 2025]

Step One: Review Grant Information and Eligibility Requirements



Prior to completing the application, please review all the information in this grant packet and any supplemental information, along with attending the Overview Webinar. This will help ensure that all organizations who apply are fully eligible and prepared to fulfill the requirements of grant funding.

Step Two: Complete the Full Application

United Way uses a grant application system called e-CImpact. You will be asked to use this system to complete the questions above. **The online application will be available March 10th.** At that point, you may visit <https://www.uwgc.org/partner-with-us/> to access e-CImpact.

- Click on the e-CImpact Online Reporting tile.
- If you are a current user, enter your username and password to log in and click to register for the application process.
- For new users, select the option to **create an e-CImpact account.**

- Username: Must be your organizational email address

- After creating an account, you will be able to click to register for the application process.

Complete instructions on accessing the application through the system will be posted <https://www.uwgc.org/partner-with-us/funding-resources/> by March 10th.