



2026/2027

Basic Needs

Request for Proposal

United for Community Resiliency

Please contact Connie Kraft at director@uwni.org for more information about this application.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

United Way of Northwest Illinois (UWNWIL) recognizes that when an individual is unable to meet their basic needs, it becomes more difficult to impact on long-term goals such as education, employment or housing.

UWNWIL wishes to assist those in need with services and assistance through local programs to bring back the stability they need to get back on track.

Organizations should not approach this application with the expectation of ongoing annual operating support.

Our approach, grounded in the real-world challenges low- and moderate-income families and individuals face as they navigate a complex and often fragmented system, our Basic Needs grant aims to equip families with the tools they need to move from crisis to stability, and from stability to long-term success.

Basic Needs Funding will be directed to programs and services that provide programs to stabilize those individuals and families faced with barriers in being able to meet their immediate needs due to loss of employment, housing, domestic violence, etc. To be considered for funding in our **Basic Needs** grant category, organizations must provide those facing economic hardship with services and assistance to get back on track and on the road to economic success. To be eligible for UWNWIL Basic Needs funding the agency program must serve at least 80% of individuals or families within the Federal poverty threshold.

IMPACT THEME: Community Resiliency

Our Commitment to Community Resiliency for Basic Needs

For UWNWIL, Community Impact is about improving lives by mobilizing people to create lasting change through increasing educational outcomes for children and youth, assisting families to become economically self-sufficient and improving the health and wellness of our community.

In addition to impacting long-term sustainable change by targeting our work in support of community outcomes in the areas of Youth Opportunities, Financial Security and Healthy Communities, UWNWIL continues to invest in Basic Needs to assist individuals and families facing life changing situations to get back on their feet (stabilization) and on the road to Economic Self-Sufficiency.

The Basic Needs Grant is intended to fund programs created to immediately help people with their emergency and basic needs. The intention of these grants is to fund intervention-related activities that address short-term client needs (as opposed to the long-term prevention related strategies of Community Impact in the areas of Youth Opportunities, Healthy Communities and Financial Security). The UWNWIL Basic Needs funding is intended for 501c3 organizations located in Stephenson, Jo Daviess and Carroll Counties which will allow awarded organizations to assist individuals. UWNWIL does not provide funds to individuals directly.

Basic Needs

Often referred to as a “safety net,” supporting access to basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, and transportation is more essential than ever.

- Programs funded through Basic Needs will assist families immediately with needs such as: shelter to housing, eviction or utility prevention, or transportation access

Desired Outcome

Community members have access to basic needs.

- Approaches include, but are not limited to: emergency shelter, food access, personal items, crisis healthcare and public health
- Examples of possible metrics include, but are not limited to: # of nights of shelter, # of meals provided, # of individuals receiving medical care, etc

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applicant organizations must meet the following:

- Be located in and provide service in at least one of the counties we serve (Stephenson, Jo Daviess, and Carroll Counties).
- Must be a 501c3 in good standing
- Have a mission that includes helping families living in the Federal Poverty Threshold.
- Have a non-discrimination policy or will adopt one if awarded funding (UWNWIL can help with this).
- In the need statement, Applicants must cite the county CHNA/IPLAN and ALICE data and state how the program meets a need in our community.

The following types of organizations are not eligible to apply:

- Animal Welfare Organizations
- Capital projects and/or campaigns
- Debt reduction and funding gaps
- Academic research
- Endowments
- Scholarships
- Sectarian or religious purposes
- To support candidates for public office or promote a partisan cause
- Organizations that re-grant funding

If awarded, agencies will:

- Receive grant funds over a one-year grant period, distributed in 12 monthly installments.
- Provide ACH information to United Way to allow direct deposit of funds.
- Provide “Impact of a Dollar” examples showing what donor contributions achieve.

REPORTING

United Way of Northwest Illinois believes that strong data and compelling stories are essential to shaping strategies that create real change for ALICE families and individuals. To move the

needle forward together, we must consistently collect both quantitative and qualitative information. Reporting not only demonstrates the impact of your work but also strengthens UWNWIL's ability to communicate results with donors, partners, and the community.

With this purpose in mind, UWNWIL has established the reporting requirements below. These expectations are designed to ensure accountability, highlight community impact, and support our shared goal of advancing long-term stability for ALICE households.

Annual Impact Report

All funded agencies must submit an Annual Impact Report by July 15th, 2027 using the UWNWIL template. The template will be provided at least three weeks prior to the submission deadline.

Agencies are Responsible for:

- Collecting and Reporting Data
- Number of unduplicated clients served.
- Demographic information (employment/retirement status, income level, etc., if collected).
- Outcome measures related to individuals and families served.
- Other indicators agreed upon at grant approval.
- Providing Narrative Information
- Brief description of any anticipated organizational or program changes.
- At least one impact story, and 3-5 photos with the appropriate consent or existing programs, please provide photos from the beginning of the grant period.
- Counterterrorism compliance certification.
- Confirmation of tax-exempt status and governance documents (or note of changes)

METRICS

Agencies are encouraged to select from the metrics provided below that align with their programs. In addition, applicants may propose their own metrics that best reflect the unique impact of their work, provided they clearly demonstrate a connection to United Way's core impact areas.

- **Households in Federal Poverty level served** (unduplicated)
- **% ALICE Household** (self-attestation or program eligibility proxy) [ALICE site for data here](#)
- **Outputs by service** (e.g., rent/utility assistance cases, food boxes/meal-days, rides, navigation contacts)
- **One short success story**

Post Award Requirements

Organizations that are awarded a UWNWIL Basic Needs Grant are expected to comply with the following:

1. Report on the agreed upon Metrics to UWNWIL in your mid year progress report and the annual final reports. Submit program and financial progress reports on time, as requested.
2. Meet all required reporting deadlines.

3. Implement publicity and co-branding with United Way of Northwest Illinois on your materials related to the funded program
4. Display the UWNWIL trademarked logo within their facilities and on all communications materials pertaining to UWNWIL -funded programs
5. All program marketing materials are to be submitted to UWNWIL to ensure accurate branding requirements
6. If there are any changes in program operations that impact the organization's ability to fulfill its requirements under this MOU, organizations are expected to meet with UWNWIL staff to discuss the situation and develop a plan of action.

Submission Dates and Times – **The application is due March 27th at 4:00 P.M.**

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| February 10th, 2026 | RFP available online (uwni.org) |
| Dates TBA | RFP Informational Session & Community Impact Introduction. |
| March 27 th , 2026 | Grant proposal due at 4:00P.M. |
| March 27 th , 2026 | Linkage agreement due (if collaborators) |
| April-May, 2026 | Committee Review |
| July, 2026 | Funding Award Announced |
| December 31 st , 2026 | 6 month progress report due (each year funded) |
| July 15 th , 2027 | Annual Report Due (each year funded) |

United Way of Northwest Illinois (“UWNWIL”) reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to: fund or not fund any application, award amounts that differ from those requested, fund only portions of a proposal, modify, suspend, or withdraw this RFP, request additional information, waive informalities, and reject any or all proposals. UWNWIL may terminate or discontinue funding, in whole or in part, at any time—(a) for convenience with notice, or (b) for cause, including but not limited to non-performance, misuse of funds, failure to meet reporting or compliance obligations, or violations of law or grant terms. UWNWIL may rescind, reduce, or delay awards if fundraising results or other material circumstances change.

No Obligation / No Contract. This RFP does not obligate UWNWIL to make any award. No contract is created by submitting an application; any funding will be governed by a separate award letter or grant agreement executed by UWNWIL. Application costs are the applicant's sole responsibility.