

United Way of 1000 Lakes Community Impact Grant Rubric

How To Use This Rubric:

United Way of 1000 Lakes takes a holistic approach to reviewing grant applications. A review panel will evaluate the extent to which each application fulfills the following criteria: alignment, equity, impact, systems improvement, and operations capacity.

These five elements are interrelated within organizations and their programs. For example, equitable programs accelerate outcomes and create a larger impact. Responses to questions or prompts in the grant application may reference multiple factors or elements within the rubric below.

Each of these factors are outlined below to help applicants identify the criteria by which reviewers will score their application. While it is not expected that applicants address all elements at each stage of the application process, successful applicants will demonstrate strengths in the majority of rubric elements over the course of the application process (including the initial proposal, full proposal, and program visit).

Examples within the rubric are intended to increase understanding of the application review process; they are not as a list of requirements, but rather illustrations of a strong application's attributes. There are many ways that applicants can demonstrate success in each of these areas.

RUBRIC ELEMENT	MAY LOOK LIKE
1. Alignment	Examples of exceptional alignment may look like:
1a. Program meets eligibility criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves primarily vulnerable and/or marginalized residents of greater Itasca County • Aligns with the strategic intent and identified priorities of United Way • Demonstrated local presence and programming in United Way of 1000 Lakes geographic service area • Program is operated by an eligible nonprofit agency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 501c3 • Government agency/unit • Faith-based organization demonstrating that there is no explicitly faith-related content included in the programming and no discriminatory restrictions on service recipients. • Community organizations without 501c3 status that can document a relationship with a proper fiscal sponsor
1b. Program provides high-quality programming and/or services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes an effective, research-based program model • Defines what program success looks like • Includes a focus on generational success to achieve long-term success • Uses quantitative data to document positive individual/family outcomes • Uses qualitative data to document individual/family success stories • Takes an intentional approach to address the multiple domains that impact individual/family success, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education spanning early childhood through secondary • Postsecondary and employment pathways • Family stability and economic asset-building • Holistic health and wellness • Social capital and connectedness
2. Equity	Examples of exceptional equity may look like:
2a. Program serves children and adults with limited resources in Greater Itasca County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collects participant income and demographic data • Disaggregates program outcome data by income level • Disaggregates program outcomes data by relevant demographics • Connects families with additional resources

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally removes barriers to education, health, and financial stability • Offers income-based supports (e.g., scholarships, vouchers) • Works with families to overcome financial obstacles
2b. Program design is responsive to individual and family needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program design is culturally responsive • Demonstrates awareness of participant demographics and how that may impact interaction with services • Offers supportive services to improve written and spoken English language proficiency, life skills, and cultural competency • Staff/volunteers reflect recipient/client demographics • Families are involved in program design and continuous improvement • Program materials reflect individuals' identities and cultures
2c. Program design and implementation is informed by an equity lens (racial, disability, and socioeconomic justice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff takes responsibility for creating a culture where children and families of different identities and experiences belong • Organization prioritizes equity training for staff/volunteers • Addresses patterns of systemic bias and inequitable outcomes • Organization understands that equity is an ongoing journey, and equity is part of continuous improvement plans • Program design is responsive to the demographics of program participants, centering on those who experience the greatest barriers to access
3. Impact	Examples of exceptional impact may look like:
3a. Program responds to local conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusts programming for participants based on changing needs in the community • Uses local-level data to inform programming • Collaborates with local partners (e.g., nonprofits, local government, community foundations, schools) to work toward whole family-level results
3b. If an existing program, demonstrates positive outcomes through data; if a new program, demonstrates strong potential for impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program uses evidence-based best practices • Defines what program success looks like and uses qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate program success • Disaggregates recipient/client outcomes data by race and income • Uses an evidence-based assessment tool to measure progress

<p>3c. Program demonstrates learning mindsets, including a commitment to continuous improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts internal program reviews • Meaningfully engages participants in decisions that impact how services are provided • Seeks out new learnings and encourages employees/ volunteers to constantly evolve their skills • Anticipates new community needs and adjusts programming responses accordingly • Uses local-level data to inform program
<p>4. System Improvement</p>	<p>Examples of systems improvement may look like:</p>
<p>4a. Program effectively collaborates with participants, partners, and/or other stakeholders to meet shared goals for the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on what is best for our community versus what is best for their organization • Demonstrated a history of positive collaboration • Knowledgeable about other community resources that impact outcomes for participants • Builds mutually beneficial partnerships with other agencies to meet the needs of participants, rather than duplicating services • Aware of cultural, resource, and power dynamics between agencies; budgets to pay less-resourced agency partners for services
<p>5. Operating Capacity</p>	<p>Examples of operational capacity may look like:</p>
<p>5a. Request amount is appropriate to program size, program plans, and available resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program has demonstrated financial sustainability, or the new program includes longevity plans • Budget accurately reflects and supports the program's goals, as described. • Reflects upon previous operating costs (if available) • Costs may be higher for an initial investment in a new program • Effectively secures and utilizes various resources to meet its objectives • Leverages funds from other sources