



# PROVIDENCE EQUITY FUND

AT UNITED WAY OF RHODE ISLAND

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



**United Way**  
of Rhode Island



**A view of downtown Providence, Rhode Island from the  
Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Bridge along the  
Providence River**

## INTRODUCTION

The Providence Equity Fund at United Way of Rhode Island is now accepting applications. This grant program is a collaborative initiative with the City of Providence aimed at addressing equity gaps in the community. This funding will support strategies that promote racial and social equity, economic mobility, and educational opportunities for underserved populations in Providence.

In alignment with **our mission to build racial equity and opportunity for all** Rhode Islanders, and to stay true to the spirit of the recommendations made by the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission, this funding opportunity will support projects and initiatives that seek to close the racial wealth gap, address the impact of urban renewal, and enhance cultural competency among K-12 youth.

This funding opportunity further aligns with the work of the Commission in recognizing the sociocultural context of Providence and the ways in which both historical and contemporary, ongoing racial discrimination has adversely impacted the lives of Indigenous and African heritage people. These forms of racialized discrimination were initiated through forced Indigenous land appropriation and African enslavement.

To review the recommendations in the Commission's full report, visit:

[https://www.providenceri.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ReparationsRecommendationsReport\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.providenceri.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ReparationsRecommendationsReport_FINAL.pdf)

In recognizing this irrefutable history as well as the areas in Providence demonstrating considerable economic need, this fund has adopted four eligibility categories for recommended investments to nonprofit organizations located in and/or providing services in the City of Providence:

This funding will focus on addressing the needs and residents of the following demographic groups:

**Indigenous and Tribal Peoples** – People who are a part of social and cultural groups that share collective ancestral ties before the European settlement of Providence and Rhode Island, including the natural resources where they live, inhabit, or from which they have been displaced.

**African Heritage People** – An ethnic group consisting of people with ancestry originating from sub-Saharan Africa. Today, the city's African heritage residents include, but are not limited to, African American, African, Bi-racial, Afro-Latino, Cape Verdean, and Afro-Caribbean.

**Qualified Census Tracts & Neighborhoods** – Under the final U.S. Treasury American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) rule, recipients of funding "were allowed to presume that families residing in Qualified Census Tracts (QCT) or receiving services provided by Tribal governments were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic." Providence QCTs eligible for these programs include Upper and Lower South Providence, Washington Park, Mount Hope (Lippitt Hill), Olneyville, Fox Point, Hartford, Elmwood, Smith Hill, Wanskuck, and Manton.

**Residents Facing Poverty** – Providence residents/households earning less than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) that are very low-income. Preference given to residents/households earning less than 30% of AMI who are extremely low-income households. Individuals who are eligible for programming include: Residents who were born in Providence; or, non-college students who have lived in Providence for a minimum of three (3) years or, for people who moved to Providence to attend a college or university, three (3) years from the last date of enrollment.

## FOCUS AREA

For this grant opportunity, United Way of Rhode Island plans to award up to \$1,500,000 over the next two years to provide operational support grants to Rhode Island nonprofits utilizing impactful strategies that address the following three areas:

- 1. Closing the racial wealth gap.** The racial wealth gap is defined as the disparity in wealth accumulation between different racial or ethnic groups. Examples of projects and programs may include but are not limited to:
  - Skill development, job training, and career advancement initiatives
  - Minority-owned business initiatives: small business loans, incubator programs
  - Homeownership and affordable housing initiatives: mortgage credit and down payment-assistance initiatives
  - Financial and economic empowerment programs: financial literacy programs and wealth-building programs such as savings and individual retirement accounts
- 2. Addressing the negative impacts of urban renewal including displacement, gentrification, historical and cultural loss and environmental impacts.** Some of the strategies to address these impacts may include:
  - Entrepreneurial resilience initiatives: Programs that support small businesses in targeted neighborhoods and census tracts, technology to sustain current business and leverage new business
  - Tenant support services and legal assistance to help residents navigate housing challenges
  - Community development initiatives to build the capacity of residents and organizations to participate in and shape the revitalization of their neighborhoods
- 3. Enhancing the quality of and access to culturally competent resources in Education and Out-of-School Time;** this will support nonprofit partners serving a high percentage of BIPOC and youth from lower income families. Initiatives may include but not limited to programs that incorporate artistic expressions with cultural identity, mentorship programs, community gardens/urban farming, STEM or STEAM programs and training and professional development opportunities to enhance program staff cultural competency.

## TYPE OF GRANTS

**General Operating Support (GOS)** grants of up to \$50,000 per year for two years may be requested by nonprofit agencies that are currently working on the above strategies and are addressing systemic barriers to opportunity for Providence's most vulnerable residents. A description of the proposed use of funds and a description of what success looks like for the organization's work will be required.

## GRANT PERIOD AND KEY TIMELINES

Applications will be due on Monday, May 6, 2024, 11:59 p.m.

Decisions and notifications for this RFP are expected to be made in June 2024.

## ANTICIPATED GRANT AMOUNTS

Up to \$50,000 per year for two years for General Operating Support grants (fully unrestricted).

## DOCUMENTATION

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

- An IRS issued letter of determination of **501(c)(3) status** or have a fiscal agent with 501(c)(3) status.
- A current IRS Form 990 (**990, 990-EZ, 990-N as appropriate**).
- An agency with annual expenditures of **\$750,000 or more** must have an audit prepared by an independent certified public accountant in compliance with RI State Law. A copy of their most recent audit or review and management letter must be included with the grant application.
- An agency with annual expenditures **of less than \$750,000** may submit unaudited financial statements, along with a letter from their board of directors (board chair or treasurer) outlining their financial management processes and acknowledging their fiduciary responsibility.

## REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed by United Way of Rhode Island's Community Impact & Equity (CIE) staff and volunteer members of its Community Impact Committee (CIC), Community Advisory Board (CAB), United Way of Rhode Island donors, and external community partners. Using a scoring rubric, the review committee will evaluate proposals and submit their recommendations to Community Investment staff.

This scoring rubric is shared here for your reference.

### PVD Equity Fund Scoring Rubric 2024\_2025

	0- Insufficient	1- Needs Improvement/ information	2- Adequate	3- Exemplary
<b>Alignment</b>	The organization's proposal does not align with any of the three PVD Equity Fund investment areas identified in the RFP.	Proposal is indirectly or secondarily aligned with the PVD Equity Fund investment areas.	Proposed project aligns with goals of the organization or the essence of the MRCR but lacks clear implementation	Proposed outcomes aligns with PVD Equity Fund investment areas, the goals of the MRCR, and the needs of one or more of the target populations/communities.
<b>Innovation</b>	The organization's proposal does not indicate or define any novel or innovative strategies to address investment area	Proposal demonstrates ideas or practices that are typical for the investment area	Proposal demonstrates some potential implementation of an emerging innovation or ideas, with some benefits specified.	Proposal indicates the implementation of new approaches as well as the clearly stated direct benefits of the approach
<b>Impact</b>	No demonstrated potential for ongoing impact and/or potential for impact is not addressed in full proposal. The project does not benefit the community.	Proposal demonstrates limited potential for impact; activities and outcomes are vaguely stated.	Proposal has potential for impact and provides adequate examples of proposed activities and outcomes; application does not fully describe impact potential or community reach.	Proposal outlines a significant positive impact for targeted communities, with clear strategies for empowerment. Proposal provides solid details about ongoing impact and strategies for sustainability.
<b>Equity</b>	The proposal lacks consideration of equity or any of the target populations identified in the MRCR	Proposal demonstrates limited efforts to ensure equity in project design and implementation	Proposal demonstrates some efforts towards equity but lacks comprehensive strategies or implementation	The proposal prioritizes the target communities throughout, with solid and robust strategies for reaching one or more MRCR defined populations
<b>Budget/Feasibility</b>	Budget and corresponding narrative lacks clarity	Budget is somewhat reasonable yet fails to identify additional resources or does not clearly state how funds will be utilized	Budget is within guidelines and includes a reasonable budget justification and narrative	Budget falls within guidelines, includes budget justification, narrative, identifies other funding sources, and maximizes proposed activities

0 - 5: Unsatisfactory

6 - 10: Average

11 - 15: Excellent

MRCR = Municipal Reparations Commission Report

## INFORMATION SESSIONS

United Way of Rhode Island staff will hold two 90-minute information sessions on:

- **SESSION 1**  
**Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024**  
**Time: 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**  
**Location: United Way of Rhode Island, 50 Valley Street, Providence RI 02909**
- **SESSION 2**  
**Date: Friday, April 19, 2024**  
**Time: 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
**Location: Rhode Island Black Business Association, 220 Smith St, Providence, RI 02908**

**Click here to register:**

<https://uwriweb.org/comm/SurveyNE.jsp?SurveyKeyHex=6B3567215B3271615C4F7E3E>

*Please sign up for only one (1) session as the information shared in each session will be the same.*

Both sessions will be hybrid. Please indicate if you can attend in-person or virtually. Meeting link will be shared once you register.

## VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

In addition to the information sessions, staff will hold virtual office hours at the following times:

- **Wednesday, April 17, 2024**      **10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**
- **Thursday, April 18, 2024**      **2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**
- **Monday, April 22, 2024**      **2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**
- **Thursday, April 25, 2024**      **1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**
- **Tuesday, April 30, 2024**      **11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

There will be no formal presentation during these times. Staff will be available to answer questions about application content, the platform, and/or the process.

**Register here in advance** to attend one or more of these office hour sessions:

<https://uwriweb.org/comm/SurveyNE.jsp?SurveyKeyHex=6B3567215B3271615C4F7E3E>

## APPLICATION DUE DATE

**Applications will be due on Monday, May 6, 2024 by 11:59 p.m.**

Reviewers will use the scoring rubric (see page 4) which is also provided to all partners. The review committee will evaluate proposals and submit their recommendations to United Way of Rhode Island staff and Community Investment Committee for final approval.

The United Way of Rhode Island may reach out to hold follow-up phone calls or virtual meetings with applicants, if necessary. Please be sure to include up-to-date contact information in the grant application.

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

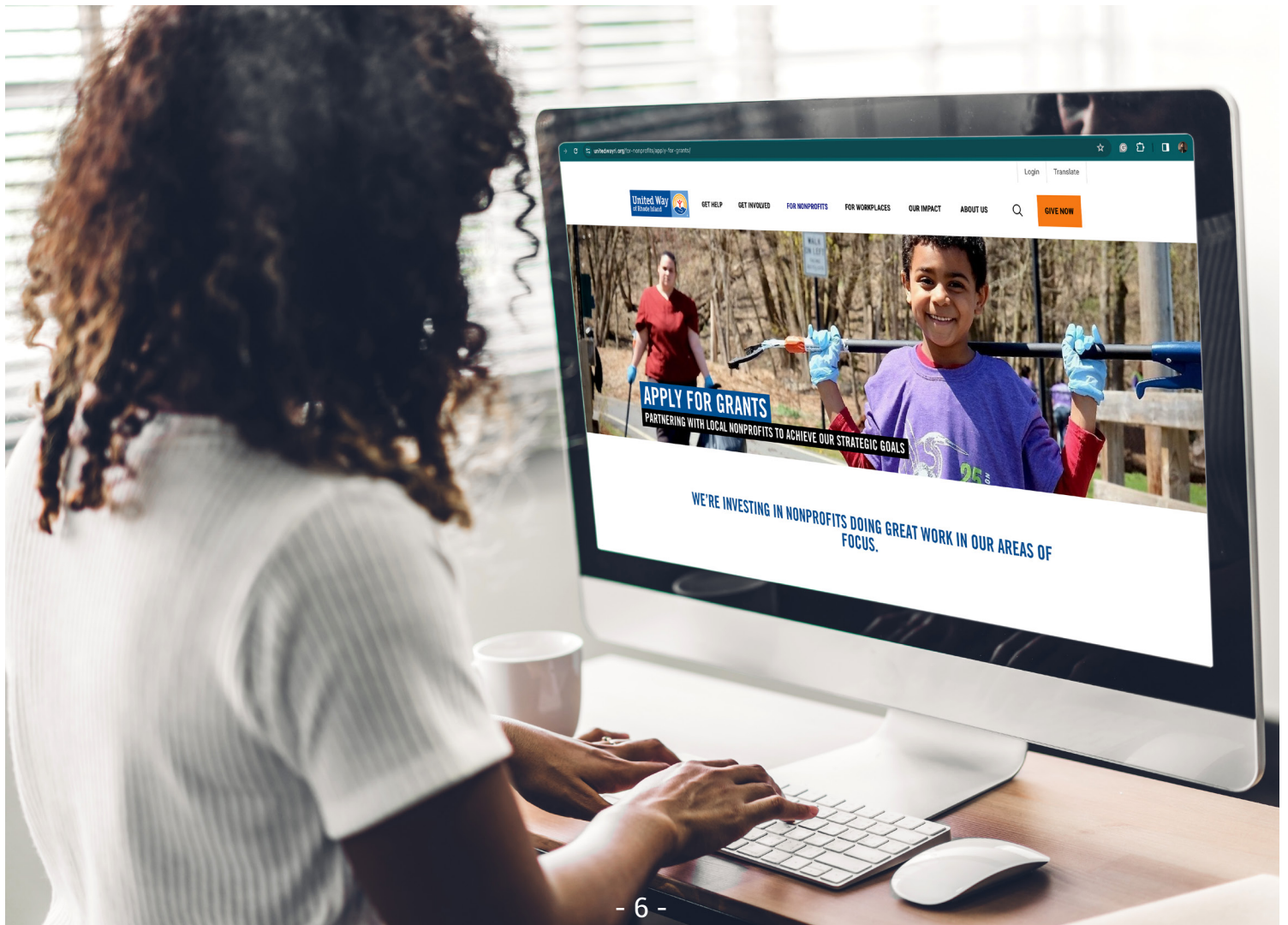
### Begin the application process:

- Visit our website (<https://www.unitedwayri.org/for-nonprofits/apply-for-grants/>) to access the new online portal.
- United Way of Rhode Island will only accept one proposal per agency.
- You might be required to create a new Username and Password.

### Join an information session

- RFP Release 90-minute information sessions (<https://uwrweb.org/comm/SurveyNE.jsp?SurveyKeyHex=6B3567215B3271615C4F7E3E>)

***Note: If you have not created an account since Fall of 2020 on United Way's new grantmaking platform, you will need to do so for this funding opportunity.***



## TIMELINE

Friday, April 12, 2024	PVD Equity Fund RFP Release
<p><b>Date:</b> Tuesday, April 16, 2024  <b>Time:</b> 10: 00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  <b>Location:</b> United Way of Rhode Island, 50 Valley Street, Providence RI</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Friday, April 19, 2024  <b>Time:</b> 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  <b>Location:</b> Rhode Island Black Business Association, 220 Smith St, Providence, RI</p>	<p><b>PVD Equity Fund RFP information sessions</b></p> <p>Both sessions will be hybrid. Please indicate if you can attend in-person or virtually. Meeting link will be shared once you register.</p> <p>Register here in advance:</p> <p><a href="https://uwriweb.org/comm/SurveyNE.jsp?SurveyKeyHex=6B3567215B3271615C4F7E3E">https://uwriweb.org/comm/SurveyNE.jsp?SurveyKeyHex=6B3567215B3271615C4F7E3E</a></p>
<p>Wednesday, April 17, 2024  10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.</p> <p>Thursday, April 18, 2024  2 p.m. – 3: p.m.</p> <p>Monday, April 22, 2024  2 p.m. – 3 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday, April 25, 2024  1 p.m. – 2 p.m.</p> <p>Tuesday, April 30, 2024  11 a.m. – 12 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Virtual Office Hours</b></p> <p>Register here in advance to attend one or more of these office hour sessions. Meeting link will be shared once you register.</p> <p><a href="https://uwriweb.org/comm/SurveyNE.jsp?SurveyKeyHex=6B3567215B3271615C4F7E3E">https://uwriweb.org/comm/SurveyNE.jsp?SurveyKeyHex=6B3567215B3271615C4F7E3E</a></p>
Monday, May 6, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.	<b>Application deadline</b>
June - July 2024	<b>Applicants notified of decision, contracts signed, etc.</b>

## QUESTIONS

Questions about RFP content, eligibility criteria, technical assistance, or general inquiries should be directed to [pvdequityfund@unitedwayri.org](mailto:pvdequityfund@unitedwayri.org). Technical assistance will not be available after 5 p.m. on May 6, 2024.

You can also refer to the FAQ Document for additional information.

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of Rhode Island

