

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

UNITED IS THE WAY



1. What is the United is the Way initiative?

Response: United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) is committed to supporting nonprofit organizations that play a vital role in our state. That is why UWRI is launching “United Is the Way”, a bold initiative to expand support for nonprofits and families amid growing federal uncertainty. As shifting policies threaten vital services, UWRI is taking swift decisive action to protect Rhode Islanders and the organizations that serve them.

2. How much money is available?

Response: Eligible social service organizations who are responding to the most essential needs (food, shelter, safety, access to healthcare and emergency relief) for marginalized and vulnerable Rhode Island residents may apply for one-time, emergency-based grants of up to \$50,000 with average anticipated grants of \$25,000 - \$30,000.

3. Who will be part of the review committee?

Response: Applications will be evaluated by a selection committee comprised of United Way staff and volunteers. The review process will be guided by a rubric that is available to applicants.

4. Do we need to submit eligibility documents? (501c3 determination letter, financials, etc.)

Response: Yes. Rhode Island-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations or fiscally sponsored organizations must provide their IRS determination letter.

Priority consideration will be given to organizations impacted by reductions, delays, or termination of government funding. Information about the applicant’s current budget and amount of government funding is requested in the application.

Supporting documents, such as letters of support, fiscal sponsorship agreements, etc., can be uploaded as part of the application.

5. Do we need to submit supporting documentation (i.e., grant cancellation, funding freeze, etc.) that indicates how the State and Federal changes have affected our organization?

Response: Yes. Documentation of federal actions, or delayed, reduced, or terminated funding is required. Applicants will also be required to describe how the state and federal changes have affected their organization. Documentation of loss of funding can be uploaded as part of the application.

6. Are current United Way grantee partners eligible to apply?

Response: Yes, current grantee partners are eligible to apply. However, as stated above, priority consideration will be given to social service organizations addressing basic needs that have impacted by reductions, delays, or termination of government funding who have provided supporting documentation of federal actions. Current Community Impact Fund grantee partners should communicate with their program officer to discuss their organization’s circumstance if assistance is needed beyond their upcoming grant payment.

7. Can I apply if my organization has not yet been affected by state or federal funding changes, but we have seen an increase in the clients we serve (i.e. need for additional staff or resources)?

Response: Yes, organizations that have seen an increase in the number of clients served can apply for this opportunity. In the application, organizations will be asked to describe the exact increase. For example: Between January 2025 and March 2025 our organization served one thousand clients. This represents a 45% increase over the average number of clients served each month (or over the same time last year.

8. Can we upload a video as a supporting document?

Response: You won't be able to upload a video, but you may submit a link to a video hosting site (i.e. YouTube, Vimeo). Reviewers will be able to access links included in your application.

9. How can organizations apply for funding from the United Is The Way initiative?

Response: To apply, please visit <https://unitedisthewayri.org/>.

10. What are the priority populations served by the United Is The Way Initiative?

Response: We are not prioritizing a specific population groups for this opportunity. However, organizations that apply need to provide critical direct services, such as food, shelter, and emergency relief to the community.

Additionally, priority consideration will be given to organizations impacted by reductions, delays, or termination of government funding who have provided supporting documentation of federal actions and being financially impacted.

11. Who can I contact for more information about applying for funding?

Response: You can contact:

- Roshni G. Darnal, roshni.darnal@unitedwayri.org, for general and eligibility-related questions.
- Ruth Saah, ruth.saah@unitedwayri.org, for any technical assistance with the application.

You can also register for one of the information sessions and/or office hours below.

INFORMATION SESSIONS:

United Way of Rhode Island will host virtual information sessions to provide guidance on the application process, funding priorities, and technical assistance resources.

- **Session 1:** April 4, 2025, 10 am – 11:30 am
- **Session 2:** April 11, 2025, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Register here: <https://uwriweb.org/InformationSession> to attend one of the sessions. Please only register for one session as the same information will be shared in each session. All information sessions will be offered virtually.

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS:

For one-on-one application support, virtual office hours will be available on the following dates:

- **April 18, 10 am – 11 am**
- **April 25, 11 am - 12pm**
- **May 2, 1pm – 2pm**

Register here: <https://uwriweb.org/OfficeHours> to attend one of the sessions. There will be no presentation during this time, but rather this will be an opportunity for anyone to drop by and ask any questions they may have. All office hours will be offered virtually.

12. Are there specific reporting requirements for organizations that receive funding?

Response: Yes, organizations that receive funding will be required to report on the activities and outcomes that these funds helped the organization accomplish. A report will need to be submitted in a 12 to 15-month timeframe, and reporting expectations will be shared in advance.

13. Where can I find additional resources and information about the United Is the Way Initiative?

Response: Please visit <https://unitedisthewayri.org/>. You can also email Roshni Darnal roshni.darnal@unitedwayri.org for general or eligibility related questions and Ruth Saah ruth.saah@unitedwayri.org for any technical questions about the application.

14. Is there another step in the process after the application?

Response: We do not anticipate another step in the process. There might be some follow up calls or emails after the application closes and during the review period, but that will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

15. Can we send the application to another staff member/grant writer within our organization?

Response: Yes, you are able to work with another person in the application. You can click on the “Collaborate button” (top right) and enter the email of the collaborator. You, as the main grant contact, can choose the level of permission for the collaborators.

16. Who do we contact for help with the portal?

Response: You may contact Ruth Saah at ruth.saah@unitedwayri.org.

17. I’m a new nonprofit, with no audited financials and/or no IRS form 990 can I still apply?

Response: The grant opportunity will prioritize existing Rhode Island-based and serving 501c3 nonprofits (or fiscally sponsored organizations) that are addressing basic needs as described above, and that are experiencing delayed, reduced, or terminated government funding. New nonprofits are welcome to seek technical assistance via the Alliance.

18. If I get denied, can I apply again?

Response: It depends on whether your organization was determined to be ineligible, or a lower priority.

19. My federal funding is delayed, the status of it is unknown, will I have to pay the grant back if I eventually receive the federal funds?

Response: United Way will consider options for supporting organizations experiencing delayed but expected government payments. This may include traditional grants, recoverable grants (i.e. repaid with 0% interest), or a combination of the two.

20. Is the RFP, application, or FAQ, available in other languages?

Response: The grant application portal uses Google Translate to be viewed in other languages.

21. Are these emergency funds expected to be spent by a certain date?

Response: There is no “spend by” date for these funds. Also, these funds are General Operating Dollars so an organization that receives these funds can use it to meet the needs of their organization. However, organizations who are funded will need to complete a report and share the impact of their work and funding received.