



United Way of Pierce County

Community Investment Request for Proposals **EQUITY FUND**

*Guidelines and Strategies for the
2025-2027 Community Investment Cycle*

Together, we will lift 15,000 households out of poverty by 2028

Applications are due by September 30, 2024

ABOUT UNITED WAY OF PIERCE COUNTY

By addressing the interconnected issues affecting children and families in our community, we are ensuring that families are stronger, individuals gain stability and kids are more successful. We know one organization alone can't solve our community's toughest problems. Moving the needle on challenging, complex issues like poverty requires individual and cross-sector collaboration that is focused on results. United Way can and does facilitate that work-- we are tackling poverty, one family at a time.

MISSION: *We mobilize and unite the caring power of Pierce County to tackle our community's toughest challenges to improve lives in measurable and lasting ways.*

OUR CAUSE: *We unite the community to end poverty, one family at a time.*

In Pierce County, we are united to fight poverty.

- We strategically invest in and develop programs that are aligned to address the root issues of poverty.
- We partner with the private, public, and non-profit sectors to leverage resources and educate the community about interconnected issues.
- We support those efforts with volunteer help and in-kind goods.
- We advocate at the state and local levels to make sure government resources for struggling families are available.
- We put every resource we have into breaking the cycle of poverty in Pierce County.

Please join us in our fight.

VISION: *A just, equitable, and inclusive Pierce County community where everyone has access to opportunities and the resources needed to thrive and achieve their highest potential.*

VALUES: *The Power of Community, Diversity, and Inclusion*

We believe in the power of community, in working and coming together. We believe in diversity and inclusion. We believe in integrity, fairness, and respect. Firmly believing that a person's race, level of income or geographic location should never limit their opportunity for success, we are committed to using a lens of equity for all work in which we lead, support, or invest.

Our community and our society are best when we extend a hand of compassion. We foster and promote an inclusive environment that leverages the unique contributions of diverse individuals and organizations in all aspects of our work. We know that by bringing diverse individuals and viewpoints together, we can collectively and more effectively create opportunities for a better life for all.

United Way of Pierce County
Equity Diversity Inclusion Statement of Principles
From Policy, to Practice, to Programs, to Performance
Revised and Approved by Board of Directors 12/09/21

United Way of Pierce County fights for every person in every community every day. We believe that every person is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect – equal treatment and access to justice, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it makes United Way a stronger organization.

We take the broadest possible view of diversity.

- We strive to be an anti-racist organization that puts equity, diversity, and inclusion at the center of our daily work, success factors, and performance outcomes.
- We value the visible and invisible qualities that make you who you are.
- We recognize that we are all situated into different matrices of power and privilege, and the first step is to take stock of that and not to disavow it or ignore it.
- We welcome that every person brings a unique perspective and experience to advance our mission and progress in our fight for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in every community.
- We believe that each United Way community partner, donor, volunteer, advocate, and employee must have equal access to solving community problems.
- We commit to using these practices for our business and our communities.
- We believe that people should be more than just represented in our democracy, society, and economy – their representation must include their ability to shape them.

Introduction

As our work to break down barriers to self-sufficiency has evolved, we have learned that we cannot effectively break the cycle of poverty unless we also address factors that impact the family unit or the household. As we have shifted our strategies, our cohort of investment partners has devoted time and energy to working cooperatively to serve their clients more effectively. We see organizations moving from transactional service provision to an integrated approach where they are learning about their participants' needs and challenges and working with others to address the household's needs more holistically.

For the 2025-2027 investment process, UWPC is looking for partners who are leaning into serving the whole person or whole household and working with others collaboratively to remove barriers to self-sufficiency. UWPC will be investing in programs and collaborations that align with a single focus:

Increasing individual/household stability by breaking down barriers to self-sufficiency toward the bold goal of lifting 15,000 households out of poverty and into self-sufficiency by 2028.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND INCLUSION

United Way believes that circumstances shouldn't dictate opportunity. We recognize that socio-economic, geographic, and racial disparities affect our community. While no one organization can solve systemic issues alone, we look to data and to community partners to determine our role in addressing what can be done to bridge the gaps in our urban and rural communities.

Equity is achieved through systematically addressing disparities in opportunities and outcomes caused by structures and systems through meaningful inclusion and representation of affected communities. Changes in institutional structures and systems are necessary to remove barriers and increase pathways to success. We are committed to looking at issues of race and socio-economic injustice, and we know the complexities of inequity run deeply throughout multiple interconnected systems in our society. Education, health care, child welfare, workforce development, transportation, housing, and other systems are tied together in a vast interdependent web of health and human services.

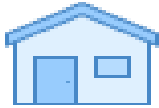
UWPC seeks to partner with organizations that are creating and maintaining an inclusive environment that is curious about, welcoming to, and supportive of differences in the pursuit of shared community aspirations by understanding, honoring, engaging, and including the richness and diversity of communities served. As a leader, convener, and funder, we are proud to join with other allies in the ongoing work towards greater equity in service to Pierce County's children and families.

FOCUS ON ALICE

In sharp contrast to the perceptions of the Puget Sound region being a prosperous tech and industry hub, there also exist pockets of poverty where residents lack public transportation options, live in food deserts, and experience barriers to accessing resources. There are communities where more than 70% of students qualify for free school lunch programs, with some schools close to 100%. It is evident that where you live, how much you make, and your race can be major predictors of your life experience and chances for thriving. UWPC seeks to partner with organizations demonstrating a commitment to intentionally focusing on increasing the social, racial, and economic equity in those communities most in need. UWPC refers to these households as ALICE: **ALICE: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed** — earning more than the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford the basics where they live. **ALICE** workers were celebrated as essential heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet they do not earn enough to support their own families.

Many individuals and families who have a job—even two or three—are doing everything they can to make ends meet yet struggle to get by each month. **ALICE** represents the growing number of households who are above the Federal Poverty Line, do not qualify for many government assistance programs, and are working yet cannot afford basic necessities to remain stable and self-sufficient.

ALICE households and households in poverty are forced to make tough choices, such as deciding between quality child care or paying the rent — choices that have long-term consequences not only for their families but for all.



ASSET LIMITED

ALICE has no safety net for emergencies



INCOME CONSTRAINED

ALICE's income falls short of basic necessities



EMPLOYED

ALICE is working, but can't afford the cost of living

INVESTMENT STRATEGIES:

United Way of Pierce County's goal for this investment cycle is to invest in small grassroots organizations that are by and for the BIPOC community. Grassroots organizations filling any service gap in their respective community are encouraged to apply for these funds. Ultimately, we are looking for services that help remove barriers to self-sufficiency and move families forward.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

United Way of Pierce County (UWPC) supports partnerships that stabilize households and break down barriers to self-sufficiency. UWPC's community investments are focused on achieving our bold goal of helping to move 15,000 households out of poverty and into self-sufficiency by 2028. Investments are also focused on achieving a just, equitable, and inclusive Pierce County community where everyone has access to opportunities and the resources needed to thrive and achieve their greatest potential.

For the 2025-2027 Community Investment Cycle, we will be investing intentionally for impact that aligns with our vision for equity by focusing specifically on ten (10) communities rated as low equity on the Pierce County Equity Index as well as communities with the highest percentages of ALICE which reflect disparities in the distribution of wealth in our community. Additionally, UWPC will be investing the highest amounts for the most impactful partnerships and **expanding access to funding for grassroots organizations that are innovating and engaged in capacity building.**

GOALS FOR THE HOUSEHOLDS WE SERVE:

- Every Pierce County household can achieve self-sufficiency
 - Community members have safe, adequate, and affordable housing
 - Families and individuals can provide all the essentials of daily living

GOALS FOR OUR NETWORK:

- An interconnected system of partners working on the most pressing challenges with a common agenda
- Mutual awareness of initiatives to reduce redundancies in navigation and increase access to services
- Shared data that drives best practices while centering lived experiences of poverty in our community
- Changes in systems and neighborhood conditions for a more just and equitable community



2025-27 EQUITY FUND

REQUIREMENTS	EQUITY FUND
FUNDING RANGE	\$1500-\$10,000
Measurable connection to the bold goal	✓
Commitment to equity and inclusion	✓
Proximity to need/geographic focus areas	✓
Focus on whole person/household	
Participation in Investment and Frontline Staff Cohort	encouraged
SSM assessment and disaggregate data (Transformational - required; Impact - optional if you have an equally robust way to measure progress toward bold goal)	
Collaborative (able to ID partners and track shared outcomes)	
Innovative, human-centered approach or model	
Budget <\$500,000 with a preference for organizations with a budget <\$250,000	✓
By and/or for BIPOC organizations only	✓

EQUITY FUND

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-led and serving nonprofits encounter serious barriers due to limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and years of underinvestment. The Equity Fund is designed to support under-resourced, grassroots organizations led by and serving BIPOC communities by investing unrestricted funding using a process leaning into trust-based philanthropy principles. UWPC will employ the following criteria when determining eligibility for the Equity Fund:

- ✓ Staff and board leadership are majority BIPOC (>50%);
- ✓ Serving majority BIPOC communities (>50%);
- ✓ Physically provides services in communities where significant populations of BIPOC households reside;
- ✓ Annual operating budget of no more than \$500,000, with a preference for those at less than \$250,000;
- ✓ Founded or evolved to serve the needs of communities of color; and
- ✓ Measurable connection to UWPC's bold goal of moving households toward self-sufficiency

Can an organization apply for funds more than once during this grant cycle?

The Equity Fund awards one-year grants. An organization or group can only receive one grant award each year (12 months). However, an organization that received an award in January 2025, for instance, could apply again and receive another award in January 2026 or 2027. Additionally, this fund will award grants at two points each year, in January and July. An organization that applies for an award in the January award cycle but does not receive an award will have its application automatically carried over and be considered for the July award cycle.

Application Submission

The Equity Fund application will remain open throughout the 2025-2027 investment cycle, with application review occurring twice annually. **Following is the investment review schedule:**

EQUITY FUND APPLICATION SUBMISSION TIMELINE

Investment Cycle	Award Timeline
Jun 7 – Sept 30, 2024	Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2025
Oct 1, 2024 – Mar 31, 2025	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026
Apr 1 – Sept 30, 2025	Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2026
Oct 1, 2025 – Mar 31, 2026	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027
Apr 1 – Sept 30, 2026	Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2027

Proposals must be received by UWPC, through the online application system, on or before 5:00 pm PST on Sept 30 for a January 1 award and March 31 for a July 1 award. Complete application requirements and access to the online application systems are available on our website at <https://www.uwpc.org/community-impact-equity-fund>

Requirements for Funding

To qualify for United Way of Pierce County funding, organizations must:

1. Qualify as a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status or have a verifiable 501(c)(3) fiscal agent
2. Programs or services must operate within Pierce County boundaries
3. Have the capacity to advance the goals of UWPC as described in the RFP

Grant Terms

Equity Fund grants are for a term of one year. Applicants may apply more than once, but may not apply more than once within a twelve month period.

Grant Conditions

United Way funding is based on the premise that partnership and collaboration are the cornerstones of our effort to create lasting change in our community. United Way recognizes the rights and authority of organizations, through their governing bodies, to determine their own policies and manage their programs. In that spirit, United Way delineates the following grant conditions to be acknowledged by grantees as part of their obligation upon acceptance of investment funding:

1. Communicate in writing to UWPC’s Community Impact team, as early as possible, whenever changes – which might affect the organization’s or program’s ability to deliver the results outlined in its proposal – have occurred, including changes in key staff.

Financial Reporting

We expect investment recipients to be able to produce line-item budget to actual reports covering the most recently completed fiscal year.

Reporting Requirements

The following reporting requirements will be part of the investment partner’s obligations upon acceptance of grant funding:

- **Periodic check-ins within the one-year grant timeframe**

Community Impact Staff Contacts

The Community Impact Team is responsible for UWPC’s Community Investment process. Technical assistance is available for anyone in need of support with outcome measures, evaluation, and other questions. Please reach out to clarify alignment, if you are unsure about whether or not a program or service fits within our focus areas.

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