

Overview

United Way Forsyth and Dawson Counties (UWFD) is pleased to release the 2026 Request for Applications (RFA) for its Community Investment Grant Program. This grant opportunity is designed to support initiatives that create lasting change in our communities by addressing root causes and building capacity across our four key impact areas:

- Youth Opportunity
- Healthy Community
- Financial Security
- Community Resiliency

UWFD has an open, competitive and inclusive application process to help identify organizations that demonstrate the greatest potential for impact within the greatest community needs.

Capacity Building Grants

- Award Range: \$10,000 - \$75,000
- Total (3 years): \$30,000 - \$225,000
- Grant Term: Up to 3 years (renewed annually based on performance)
- Focus: Organizational infrastructure, strategy development, technology, evaluation systems, or staff development that enhances long-term community impact.

Eligibility Eligible applicants include:

- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations
- Programs operating within the UWFD regional footprint (Forsyth and Dawson Counties)
- Organization must be committed to serving [ALICE](#) households
- Organization must have the capacity to manage grant funds effectively.
- Application must be reviewed and signed by your board chair



Timeline

RFA Release	January 15, 2026
Application Info Session	January 21, 2026
Application Due Date	March 27, 2026
Award Notifications	June 2026
Grant Project Period	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

How to Apply

Applications must be submitted via the UWFD online grant portal. An application template is provided below to assist in planning before submission.

How to Log In:

All applications are to be submitted through [Grant Interface](#), our online portal. Directions are located on the portal.

Grantee Requirements

All grantees receiving funding from United Way Forsyth and Dawson Counties (UWFD) are expected to adhere to the following partnership and accountability standards:

- **Execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**
Each grantee will enter into a formal MOU with UWFD outlining mutual responsibilities, funding terms, reporting requirements, and expectations for collaboration and visibility.
- **Submit Progress Reports**
Grantees must provide quarterly reports that document progress toward stated goals, key milestones achieved, challenges encountered, and measurable outcomes. Reporting templates and due dates will be detailed in the MOU.
- **Collaborate with UWFD During Implementation**
Grantees are expected to work closely with UWFD staff throughout the project



period to align efforts, share updates, and participate in strategic check-ins or site visits as appropriate.

- **Promote Partnership with UWFD**

Grantees must include UWFD's logo and approved partnership language on all public-facing materials related to the funded project, including but not limited to: flyers, press releases, reports, digital content, presentations, and social media posts. UWFD will provide brand guidelines and logo files.

- **Amplify the United Way Mission**

As community ambassadors, grantees are encouraged to actively promote their partnership with UWFD by participating in storytelling opportunities, spotlight features, interviews, or shared community events that demonstrate the collective impact of this work. Grantees may also be asked to contribute content (e.g., photos, testimonials, quotes) for use in UWFD's annual report, newsletters, or campaigns.

- **Participate in the Capacity Building Cohort**

All Capacity Building grantees will join a structured learning cohort designed to deepen organizational effectiveness and sustainability. Participation includes monthly engagements such as training sessions, peer learning exchanges, technical assistance, and collaborative discussions. These sessions are mandatory and will be tailored to support shared learning and regional capacity-building priorities.



Application Template

1. Organizational Overview

a) Mission, History and Overview of Services

- **Mission:** Clearly articulate your organization's mission, emphasizing it's alignment with the goals and values of United Way.
- **History:** Provide a brief history, highlighting key milestones.
- **Overview of services:** Detail the programs and services you offer, focusing on how they address the community's needs and contribute to positive outcomes.

b) Geographic area served

- **Counties and Communities:** Specify the counties and communities your organization serves, ensuring clarity in the geographic scope of your operations
- **Demographic Information:** Include relevant demographic details about the populations you serve such as age groups, race, socioeconomic status and other pertinent characteristics.

2. Project Description

Use this section to provide a detailed narrative of your proposed project. Be as specific as possible and include data, evidence, or examples where relevant. This section will be the most heavily weighted in the scoring process.

a) Project Name

b) Need Statement

Describe the specific community challenge or opportunity your project aims to address. Include relevant data, research, or lived experience to illustrate the scope and urgency of the need. Explain who is most affected by this issue and how the proposed project will make a meaningful difference.

c) Risks & Challenges

Identify any risks, challenges, or barriers that could affect the success of your project. This may include:



- Staffing capacity
- Community engagement
- Resource limitations
- Timing/logistics
- Policy or external factors

Also share how your organization plans to monitor and address these risks if they arise. Showing awareness of potential challenges demonstrates thoughtful planning and resilience.

d) Collaboration

Describe how your organization will collaborate with other partners, agencies, coalitions, or community groups in this project. Explain:

- Who are your key partners and what roles will they play
- How this collaboration enhances the project's reach, efficiency, or sustainability
- Any formal agreements or shared responsibilities in place (e.g., MOUs, data sharing)

If this is a solo project, describe how you coordinate with others in the community to avoid duplication or fill a gap.

e) Inclusion, Equity & Access

Explain how your project prioritizes equity, reduces disparities, and ensures access for underserved or marginalized populations. Describe any efforts to

engage diverse voices in project planning and implementation, and how you will monitor equitable impact throughout the grant period.

f) Goals & Objectives

List at least 3 clear goals for your project, along with measurable objectives that define what success looks like. Use the SMART goal framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Measurable, Time-bound). Describe the key activities and strategies your organization will implement to meet your objectives. Be sure to show how these efforts will enhance your organization's long-term strength.

g) Organizational Capacity

Highlight your organization's experience, staff qualifications, infrastructure, and systems that will support successful implementation of the project. If this is a new area of work, describe how you plan to build the capacity necessary to deliver results.



h) Impact Area Alignment

Clearly identify which of the four UWFD impact areas your project supports:

Youth.Opportunity?Healthy.Community?Financial.Security?Community.

Resiliency

Explain how the project's outcomes directly contribute to this area.

i) Sustainability Plan

Describe how you plan to continue, scale, or institutionalize the project after UWFD funding ends. Discuss potential sources of future funding, plans to integrate the work into ongoing operations, and how you will measure long-term impact.

j) Comparable Organizations

Please list the names of all organizations currently doing similar work to the project you are proposing.

This helps us better understand the local landscape, identify opportunities for coordination or collaboration, and ensure that resources are being used efficiently to meet community needs.

If you are already working with any of these organizations, please note the nature of the relationship (e.g., referral partner, funder, collaborative project).

3. Evaluation Plan (1 page max)

Use.this.section.to.explain.how.you.will.monitor.progress?assess.success?and.learn.
from.the.implementation.of.your.project;A.clear.evaluation.plan.not.only.
strengthens.your.application.but.also.helps.ensure.accountability.and.continuous.
improvement.throughout.the.grant.period;

a. Methods for Tracking and Measuring Success

Describe how you will evaluate the effectiveness of your project. This includes how you will track outputs (e.g., number of participants served, workshops delivered) AND outcomes (e.g., improvements in skills, behavior changes, systems-level impact). Your methods should align with the goals and objectives outlined in the Project Description and reflect both quantitative and qualitative data where appropriate.

b. Tools or Systems Used for Data Collection and Evaluation

Identify the tools, platforms, and processes you will use to collect and analyze data. This may include:

Survey tools (e.g., SurveyMonkey, Google Forms)



Case management or CRM systems

Pre/post assessments or screening tools

Observation protocols or checklists

Data dashboards or evaluation software

4. Budget & Justification

A clear and well-justified budget is essential to demonstrate the feasibility and fiscal responsibility of your proposed project. Your budget should reflect thoughtful planning, efficient use of resources, and alignment with the activities and outcomes described in your proposal.

Since Capacity Building grants are about strengthening internal infrastructure, systems and sustainability, applications should include additional line items that reflect the long-term, strategic nature of their goals and the budget should show how those investments will build lasting organizational effectiveness.

a. Budget Worksheet (Required)

All applicants must complete and submit the official **UWFD Budget Worksheet** (provided as a separate Excel file). The worksheet must include:

Detailed costs by category (e.g., personnel, supplies, travel)

Amount requested from UWFD

Other sources of funding (if applicable)

Total cost per category and overall project total

Budgets must be **balanced**, clearly itemized, and tied directly to the work described in your proposal.

b. Budget Narrative (Required)

In the narrative, you will provide a clear explanation for each line item in your budget. For each expense, address the following:

What is being funded? (Describe the item or service)

Why is it necessary? (Explain how it supports your project goals)

How were the costs calculated? (Provide assumptions, rates, or quantities)



Sample.budget.Narrativeç

- **What is being funded:** 0.5 FTE Program Coordinator
- **Why is it necessary:** Responsible for managing the daily operations of the initiative, coordinating with community partners, tracking participant engagement, and maintaining compliance with reporting requirements. This role will also lead the implementation of core project activities and serve as the primary point of contact for UWFD
- **How were the costs calculated:** The salary is calculated based on a \$60,000 full-time annual salary, with fringe benefits at 25%, totaling \$37,500 for the half-time role over 12 months.

Important Notes:

All costs must be **reasonable, necessary, and directly tied to project activities.**

UWFD funds may not be used for construction, lobbying, sponsorship of events, or costs unrelated to the funded project.

Applicants are encouraged to include **in-kind contributions or matching funds**, though they are not required.

c. Please tell us what percentage of your revenue falls under each category

Grants, Donations, Earned Revenue, etc...

d. Please tell us what percentage of your expenses falls under each category:

management and general, fundraising, programs

e. Please tell us what percentage of your board gives to your organization?

5. Attachments

- a) IRS Determination Letter
- b) Letters of Support (if collaborative)



UNITED WAY
Forsyth and
Dawson Counties

**2026 Capacity Building Grants
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- c) Financials based on the following:
- **> \$1,000,000** - most recent fiscal year financial statements AND most recent audited financials
 - **< \$1,000,000** – most recent financial statements
- d) Most recent IRS Form 990 or 990 EZ
- e) Board Member List
- f) Key Staff/Leadership List – name, title, brief bio and demographic information

Questions? Please contact Allison Mayfield at allison@unitedwayforsyth.com or visit <https://www.uwfd.com/grants> for technical assistance or general inquiries.

Rubric – Capacity Building Grants

★ Scoring Scale (0–4 Points per Category)

Score	Description
4 – Strong	Fully meets or exceeds expectations. Well-developed, clear, and aligned with United Way priorities. Outstanding level of detail and preparedness.
3 – Good	Meets expectations with a solid plan and thoughtful detail. Some areas could be expanded but the proposal is clearly viable.
2 – Adequate	Meets basic expectations. Some gaps in clarity, feasibility or detail, but still a workable project.
1 – Limited	Key elements are missing, vague or underdeveloped. Needs significant improvement or clarification.
0 – Not Addressed	This category was missed, irrelevant or fails to address the question or criteria.

Category	Scoring Categories
Organizational Capacity (0-4 Points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4 – Organization demonstrates strong leadership, a clear mission, and the systems to manage a grant effectively. Previous success with similar projects is evident. ✓ 3 - Organization has the systems and staff in place and appears fully capable of managing the project with minor gaps in experience or detail. ✓ 2 – Organization appears stable and capable but may lack experience with grants of this size or scope. ✓ 1 – Organization has limited capacity or vague description of who will manage the project. ✓ 0 - No evidence of readiness or infrastructure provided.
Alignment with Impact Areas (0-4 Points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4 – Project clearly and directly supports one or more of UW’s four impact areas with strong alignment in goals and outcomes. ✓ 3 - Project aligns with one or more UW impact areas with some strong components, but lacks full clarity or strength of connection. ✓ 2 – Project loosely connects to an impact area but could be more clearly defined. ✓ 1 – Minimal or unclear connection to UWNCG’s stated priorities. ✓ 0 – No alignment or unclear what the project supports.

Project Design & Feasibility (0-4 Points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4 – The project is well-planned, realistic, and includes a clear timeline and specific activities. ✓ 3 - Good plan with a clear timeline and activities, though one or two components could be stronger. ✓ 2 – Project is generally well-planned but lacks detail in one or two areas (e.g., timeline or staffing). ✓ 1 – The project is vague or lacks a clear structure for how it will be implemented. ✓ 0 – No plan or not enough information to determine feasibility.
Evaluation & Outcomes (0-4 Points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4 – Clear plan for how success will be measured, including data collection methods or tools. ✓ 3 - Basic outcomes and evaluation approach are included. May lack full detail but shows a commitment to measurement. ✓ 2 – Some evaluation metrics are listed, but overall approach lacks specificity or depth. ✓ 1 – Minimal or unclear approach to evaluating success. ✓ 0 – No evaluation plan provided.
Sustainability Plan (0-4 Points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4 – Strong plan to continue the project or benefits after the grant ends (e.g., future funding sources, integration into ongoing work). ✓ 3 - Sustainability is addressed with some promising strategies, though the plan is still in development. ✓ 2 – A general intention to sustain the work is expressed, but no concrete plan is shared. ✓ 1 – Weak or unrealistic sustainability strategy. ✓ 0 – No sustainability plan mentioned.
Budget & Justification (0-4 Points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4 – Budget is detailed, reasonable, and clearly tied to the proposed activities. ✓ 3 - Budget is mostly complete and reasonable, though a few items need clarification or additional detail. ✓ 2 – Budget has inconsistencies. Alignment with goals is not fully clear. ✓ 1 – Budget is vague, misaligned with project, or includes unallowable items. ✓ 0 – Budget not provided or does not align with the project.
Inclusion & Equity Lens (0-4 Points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4 – Strong focus on serving underserved communities and integrating equity into program design and delivery. ✓ 3 - Equity considerations are present and meaningful, though not fully integrated across all areas of the project. ✓ 2 – Equity is mentioned but is surface-level or not linked to outcomes or engagement strategies. ✓ 1 – Minimal or vague reference to equity or inclusion.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 0 – No mention of equity, access, or inclusion.
Innovation (0-4 Points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4 – Project introduces a new model, approach, or idea not commonly used in the region or sector. ✓ 3 - Some innovative elements are present and described clearly, but not fully developed or tested. ✓ 2 – Proposal hints at innovation but lacks clarity or evidence to support it as truly different or new. ✓ 1 – Slightly different from typical work, but not clearly innovative. ✓ 0 – No innovation or new ideas included.
Collaboration & Partnerships (0-4 Points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4 – Strong partnerships with clearly defined roles that enhance the project. ✓ 3 - Partnerships are present and relevant, but roles or strategy for collaboration are not fully detailed. ✓ 2 – Partnerships are vague or briefly mentioned with little explanation of collaborative approach. ✓ 1 – Partnerships seem minimal or underdeveloped with no clear plan. ✓ 0 – No partnerships described.

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 36
