



United Way
of Larimer County



EQUITY & EXCELLENCE COHORT PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND APPLICATION GUIDE

GRANT READINESS TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR
LARIMER COUNTY GRASSROOTS AND COMMUNITY-LED
NONPROFITS AND SOCIAL IMPACT ORGANIZATIONS

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OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

We are a Larimer United. We believe that equity is achieved when systemic, institutional, and historical barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities no longer predict socioeconomic, education, and health outcomes. We stand in firm opposition to all forms of racial and ethnic discrimination – and we know that is not enough. We actively seek opportunities to learn with and from our partners, stakeholders, supporters, and community members to better understand the complicated history of racism. We commit to advancing equity and justice through practice and policy changes at UWLC and catalyzing a shift from charity to change-making within our four focus areas of Youth & Education, Financial Stability, Nonprofit Excellence, and Community Engagement.

We acknowledge that incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion into our practices is an ongoing learning process, and as a result, we consider this statement to be a living document which reflects our evolving approach. We invite you to join us in making Larimer County a community where all people feel valued, safe, and have the opportunity to thrive.

ABOUT THE EQUITY & EXCELLENCE GRANT READINESS COHORT PROGRAM

APPLICATION PERIOD: MARCH 30TH - APRIL 15TH | COHORT TIMELINE: JUNE–DECEMBER 2022 | COST: FREE | CONTACT: MORGAN VANEK, DIRECTOR OF NONPROFIT EXCELLENCE, AT MVANEK@UWAYLC.ORG OR (970) 407-7045

INTRODUCTION

At United Way of Larimer County (UWLC), we believe the nonprofit sector plays a vital role in creating and maintaining a resilient community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, partnerships between public, private, and nonprofit organizations enabled an effective, efficient response to community needs. Nonprofits participated in collaborative efforts to distribute direct financial assistance and facilitate crucial programs for everything from meeting basic needs to increasing vaccine access and utilization. These activities highlighted the essential role of grassroots and community-led organizations (GCLOs) in serving Larimer County residents, particularly those from historically marginalized communities.

However, this work has also shed light on the critical need of many organizations for access to resources which increase their capacity to provide services and sustain their operations. This became especially clear as state and local agencies reviewed applications for pandemic-related funding support from local GCLOs. Although these applicants presented a compelling case for support and were well-qualified to facilitate the programs they sought support for and connect with their communities, many lacked the necessary infrastructure to successfully compete for and manage government funds.

To support GCLOs in developing policies, processes, and other requirements for successfully securing and managing grant funding (e.g., Title XI requirements, cash management, etc.), UWLC will select up to 10 local GCLO leaders to participate in a seven-month Grant Readiness Cohort program from June–December 2022.

Training and technical assistance will be provided by an experienced consultant with expertise in securing and managing federal funds, with additional support from UWLC’s Nonprofit Excellence program staff, who will work closely with UWLC’s partners in state, county, and municipal governments and other funding organizations to ensure alignment with standards and requirements applicable to cohort participants. There is no cost to participate in this program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This opportunity includes a variety of resources and support to prepare cohort participants for successful grant seeking and management, including:

- Five two-hour group training sessions in topics such as understanding funding solicitation requirements and evaluation criteria; OMB Uniform Guidance; pre- and post-award best practices for grants management and compliance; strategic considerations for collaborative funding partnerships; and other topics as needed or requested by cohort participants*
- Five hours of 1:1 consulting/coaching and individualized support for their organization’s specific needs

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- Facilitation and other support for collaborative grant funding opportunities with partner organizations
- A general operating grant for their organization

**As part of our commitment to centering impacted leadership, cohort participants will meet with the consultant at the start of the program to determine the specific areas of focus to be included in the cohort curriculum.*

Training and other meetings may be conducted virtually, at our offices, and/or at another location within Larimer County.

COMPENSATION

UWLC understands that many local GCLOs are operated by unpaid volunteers or part-time staff who may find it difficult to take time away from their jobs or other obligations for financial reasons. To eliminate this barrier, cohort participants will be compensated at a rate of \$28.54/hour (Independent Sector's current estimated national value of a volunteer hour) for 16 hours, or a total of \$456.64.

PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS AND KEY DATES

All participants in the cohort will be required to:

- Attend the initial planning session with all cohort participants scheduled for Wednesday, June 8th from 1–2 p.m.*
- Attend at least 4 out of 5 group training sessions, which will be held on the second Tuesday of each month from 1–3 p.m.*
- Utilize all five hours of 1:1 consultation and individualized support no later than December 31, 2022
- Participate in pre- and post-cohort assessments to assist United Way in evaluating the success of the program
- Submit a brief report outlining how the general operating support they received from United Way was used and the outcomes achieved* through their participation in this program.

**If needed, participants will receive support for establishing outcomes and developing tools to track their outcomes by the end of the cohort program.*

We strongly recommend that applicants reserve the dates listed above to ensure their complete and successful participation in the program. If you have concerns about your ability to meet the requirements listed above, please contact Morgan Vanek, Director of Nonprofit Excellence, at mvanek@uwaylc.org before submitting your application.

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

To be eligible for this opportunity, applicants must represent organizations which:

- Are located in Larimer County and providing programs or services which benefit Larimer County residents
- Are registered as a 501(c)(3) with tax exempt status in the State of Colorado, or are working with a fiscal sponsor (must have secured a fiscal sponsor by May 13th, 2022)

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- Provide services which address community needs or opportunities in one or more of United Way's focus areas
- Have annual operating budgets of less than \$500,000 and/or are led by people from the communities they serve
- Require support to develop knowledge, skills, and organizational infrastructure needed to successfully secure and manage grant funding

SELECTION PROCESS

United Way's Equity Advisory Committee, which is comprised of community members with lived experience and professional expertise in advancing equity, will evaluate proposals and determine which applicants will be selected to participate in this program. UWLC has allocated \$120,000 through its Equity & Excellence Fund to pair the technical assistance provided with general operating grants for selected organizations. The Equity Advisory Committee will determine funding award amounts across the 10 selected organizations.

The deadline to submit an application is April 15th by 11:59 PM. UWLC will notify applicants of our decision by May 31st.

HOW TO APPLY

To submit your application, please use [this link](#). Below, please find our comprehensive application guide, including the questions you will be asked and additional context to support the development of your responses. At the end of the document, you will find a list of weighted review criteria which will be used to evaluate your application. This is intended to help you understand the relative importance of each question and element in your responses. We encourage you to reference this guide and the review criteria frequently as you complete your application.

If you have questions, need help, or experience technical difficulties, please contact Morgan Vanek (she/her), Director of Nonprofit Excellence, at mvanek@uwaylc.org or (970) 407-7045.

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ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

IMPORTANT! BEFORE YOU BEGIN THE APPLICATION, PLEASE ENSURE YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROGRAM BY MEETING THE CRITERIA BELOW:

Is your organization located in Larimer County?

Yes No

Does your organization provide programs or services which benefit Larimer County residents?

Yes No

Does your organization hold 501(c)(3) status or are you working with a fiscal sponsor (or will you meet this criteria by May 13, 2022)?

Yes No

Do your organization’s programs or services address community needs or opportunities in one or more of United Way’s focus areas?

Youth & Education Financial Stability

Does your organization meet United Way’s definition of a grassroots and/or community-led organization?

Grassroots

Your organization has an annual budget of \$500,000 or less

Community-Led

Your organization is led by people who have shared identities or lived experiences with your target population (e.g., an immigrant-serving organization with an executive leadership team primarily comprised of immigrant(s); a domestic violence agency whose board has significant representation from victims and former clients)

If you are unsure whether your organization fits one or more of these criteria, please reach out to Morgan Vanek, Director of Nonprofit Excellence, at mvanek@uwaylc.org to discuss your eligibility for participation in this program before applying.

APPLICATION GUIDE: EQUITY & EXCELLENCE GRANT READINESS COHORT PROGRAM

APPLICANT INFORMATION

This section is intended to provide information about the individual applying to participate in this opportunity, including their contact information and role within their organization. This section is not scored.

- 1. Applicant Name:
- 2. Pronouns:
- 3. Email Address:
- 4. Phone Number:
- 5. Job Title (if applicable):

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

This section provides information about the applicant organization, including contact information and eligibility questions. For the narrative questions, we recommend that you write a total of one to three paragraphs in each response.

- 1. Organization Name:
- 2. Physical Location (city/state):
- 3. Website (if applicable):
- 4. Phone Number:
- 5. Year of Organization Founding:
- 6. Mission or Purpose Statement:

7. Nonprofit Status (select one)*:

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status in the State of Colorado
- Faith-based organization
- Working with a fiscal sponsor
- Will have a fiscal sponsor by May 13th, 2022
- Other: Click or tap here to enter text.

**Currently, organizations must meet one of the listed criteria to receive grant funding from UWLC. However, we have included an "other" option with a required description for applicants who do not fit these categories. If you select "other," we may reach out to you for additional details to confirm your eligibility.*

8. Geographic Area Served (select all that apply):

This question, along with the city and state where you are located, will help determine your eligibility for this program. Organizations selected for this program must be located in Larimer County and providing programs or services which benefit Larimer County residents.

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- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All of Larimer County | <input type="checkbox"/> Loveland | <input type="checkbox"/> Wellington | <input type="checkbox"/> LaPorte/Red Feather Lakes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fort Collins | <input type="checkbox"/> Estes Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Johnstown/Windsor | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click or tap here to enter text. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Berthoud | <input type="checkbox"/> Timnath | |

9. Please provide a brief description of your organization, including your target population, the issue or opportunity you are working to address, the programs or services you provide, and how you are working to advance equity (within your organization and/or in our community).

Your response to this question will provide additional context about your organization, including:

- *Target population – Who do you serve? Be as specific as possible (e.g., LGBTQ+ youth between the ages of 12-18; Spanish-speaking immigrant families living and/or working in Estes Park).*
- *The issue or opportunity you are working to address – Why does your organization or program exist? Why is it needed? How does it benefit the people you serve?*
- *Programs and services – Briefly describe the programs and/or services your organization provides, but don't limit your response to a list. Explain how each program addresses the need or opportunity you identified above and why you chose to address it in this way.*
- *How you are working to advance equity – Please be specific in your response. Share a story or an example(s) of ways your organization has addressed equity or hopes to advance equity (e.g., programs you've facilitated, changes to policies, practices, etc.).*

The following questions will help determine the extent to which your organization meets United Way's definition of a community-led organization:

10. Is your organization led by people from the community it serves?

- Yes No

11. Choose the option which best describes your organization by completing the statement below.

As a community-led organization, we are...

Community-Shaped – We consult with community members and/or program participants to provide input or feedback which helps us make decisions about our organization. We ask people with lived experience to share their perspectives and co-create solutions with us to achieve a shared goal.

Example: An organization which convenes an advisory committee of clients and/or community members to inform their strategic plan, develop new programs, and recommend internal policy changes

Community-Driven – Our community and the people we serve drive our programs and hold decision-making power within our organization. The majority of our organization's leadership is comprised of people who share the identities of the people we serve.

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Example: An advocacy organization which hires members of the community it serves to lead its programs, which focus on movement-building activities with high levels of community participation

Community-Owned – Our community and the people we serve identify the issues and opportunities we address and determine our approach to addressing them. They are in control of all resources and hold ultimate decision-making power in our organization.

Example: An association of mobile home park residents which joins together to purchase and cooperatively manage their neighborhood

N/A – None of these describe my organization.

12. Please provide additional information about how your organization meets the definition of “community-led” that you selected above.

This question will determine whether your organization meets UWLC’s definition of a grassroots organization.

13. Annual Operating Budget:

Less than \$500,000 More than \$500,000 Unsure

The following questions will help determine the extent to which your organization is advancing outcomes in one or more of United Way’s focus areas:

14. Do your organization’s programs and services directly address community needs or opportunities in one or more of the following focus areas? Select all that apply.

Youth & Education Financial Stability Not Applicable

15. How is your programming advancing outcomes within the focus area(s) you selected?

As United Way seeks to address identity-based outcome disparities within our focus areas, the following questions will help determine the extent to which your organization aligns with UWLC’s priority of investing in organizations which directly serve to advance equity in Larimer County.

16. Is your organization led by and/or primarily serving individuals from Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) or other historically marginalized communities?

Yes No

If yes:

Is your Board of Directors comprised of 50% or more BIPOC individuals? Yes No

Is your Leadership Team comprised of 50% or more BIPOC individuals? Yes No

Is the community that you primarily serve comprised of 50% or more BIPOC individuals? Yes No

PARTICIPATION NARRATIVE

Please provide a brief response (between one and three paragraphs) to each of the following prompts:

- 1. Please describe your interest in this opportunity. How will you and your organization benefit from your participation in this program? How will you leverage the funding you receive from United Way to increase your organization's impact for advancing equity in our community?**

Your response to this question will help us better understand the reason(s) you are applying to participate in this program.

- 2. Please describe your past experience (if any) with applying for and managing grants for your organization, including foundation and/or government grants.**

Because this program is intended to help participants develop knowledge, skills, and organizational infrastructure to support successful grant-seeking and management, applicants will not be penalized for a lack of experience in this area. Your response to this question is simply intended to help us understand your organization's current level of "grant readiness." There is no need to list every grant you have applied for or been awarded; however, you may provide specific examples if they are relevant. Feel free to describe successes as well as challenges you have experienced.

- 3. What are some challenges and opportunities you're currently seeing in your organization and/or your work that you could address more effectively as a participant in this program?**

Use this space to build upon what you wrote in your response to the previous question. Describe in detail what you hope to gain through your participation in this program. For example, are you hoping to improve your understanding of funding solicitation requirements and evaluation criteria, nonprofit accounting practices, outcome development and program evaluation, or something else?

- 4. Describe how you plan to use the general operating grant you will receive if you are selected to participate in this program.**

For example, will you increase capacity by hiring a staff member or contractor? Expand or change your programming? Cover operating costs such as rent or utilities? How will these expenses help your organization achieve the impact you described earlier in this application? Please list your projected expenses in order of importance.

- 5. Optional: Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?**

If there is anything else you'd like us to know about you, your organization, or your application, please share it here.

DOCUMENTATION

Please upload the following documents:

- Organization Budget
- W-9
- IRS Letter of Determination (if applicable)

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS (OPTIONAL)

This section is intended to help us better understand the composition of our cohort participants so that we can best support them and will not impact your ability to receive funding. This section is not scored.

1. Demographic Information

- I will share some or all of my demographic information.
- I do not wish to provide any of my demographic information. *

**Selecting this option skips the next questions*

6. Race & Ethnicity (select all that apply)

- Asian American/Pacific Islander/Asian
- Black/African American/African
- Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx
- Native American/American Indian/Indigenous
- White/Caucasian/European
- Multi-racial/Multi-Ethnic (two or more races or ethnicities)
- Decline to state
- Other: Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Gender Identity (select all that apply)

- Female
- Male
- Gender nonbinary/Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
- Transgender
- Decline to state
- Other: Click or tap here to enter text.

8. Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual or straight
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual (or other sexual orientations within the LGBTQIA+ community)
- Decline to state
- Other: Click or tap here to enter text.

9. Disability Status

- I identify as a person with a disability
- I do not identify as a person with a disability
- Decline to state

SCORING RUBRIC

ELIGIBILITY		
PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.	YES/NO	ELIGIBLE?
Is the organization located in Larimer County?	Yes	Eligible
Do the organization's programs and services benefit Larimer County residents?	Yes	Eligible
Do the organization's programs and services address community needs or opportunities in one or more of United Way's focus areas?	Yes	Eligible
Is the organization's annual operating budget \$500,000 or less AND/OR is it led by people from the community it serves?	Yes	Eligible
Is the organization a registered 501(c)(3) or do they have a fiscal sponsor?	Yes	Eligible
PROGRAM/PROJECT CRITERIA		
PLEASE RATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH:	WEIGHT	POSSIBLE POINTS
<p>The organization's programs or services address community needs or opportunities in one or more of United Way's focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>3 points</u>: The narrative response demonstrates a strong, direct connection between the organization's programs/services and outcomes and the United Way focus area(s). • <u>2 points</u>: The narrative response demonstrates a moderate or indirect connection between the organization's programs/services and outcomes and the United Way focus area(s) • <u>1 point</u>: The narrative response demonstrates a weak connection between the organization's programs/services and outcomes and the United Way focus area(s) • <u>0 points</u>: Neither focus area is selected 	1	3
<p>The organization is "community-led:"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>3 points</u>: Community-Owned • <u>2 points</u>: Community-Driven • <u>1 point</u>: Community-Shaped • <u>0 points</u>: N/A <p>*If the narrative justification for the applicant's selection is weak, please deduct one point from the score.</p>	3	9
<p>The organization's programs or services advance equity in Larimer County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>3 points</u>: The organization's programs and services <u>directly</u> serve to advance equity in Larimer County • <u>2 points</u>: The organization's programs and services indirectly advance equity in Larimer County • <u>1 point</u>: The organization's programs and services do not advance equity in Larimer 	3	6

<p>County, but the organization is led by and/or primarily serves individuals from Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) or other historically marginalized communities.</p> <p>• <u>0 points</u>: None of the above apply</p>		
<p>The organization currently lacks the knowledge, skills, and infrastructure needed to successfully apply for and/or manage grants, but has capacity to develop these within six months.</p> <p>• <u>3 points</u>: The organization is not "grant ready," but has some knowledge, skills, or infrastructure in place to provide a foundation for their development by the end of the grant period.</p> <p>• <u>2 points</u>: The organization has some experience with successful grant seeking and management, but needs support to sustain or expand their "grant readiness."</p> <p>• <u>1 point</u>: The organization has little to no experience and/or is unlikely to qualify for grant funding by the end of the program (e.g. lacks nonprofit status or fiscal sponsor, needs significant additional resources or coaching to be successful)</p> <p>• <u>0 points</u>: The organization has extensive experience with successful grant-seeking and management and is not in need of support in this area.</p>	3	9
<p>Overall Score</p> <p>Please rate the organization's fit for this program based on their application overall:</p> <p>• <u>3 points</u>: Excellent fit</p> <p>• <u>2 points</u>: Good fit</p> <p>• <u>1 point</u>: Moderate fit</p> <p>• <u>0 points</u>: Not a fit at all</p>	1	3
TOTAL		30