

United Way of South Central Indiana 2026 Grant Application



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Connecting people to possibility

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GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

We believe that lasting change for people in the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) population comes from a strategic focus on economic mobility, built on the foundation of stability, access, and opportunity. In Indiana, ALICE families earn above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but still struggle to afford the basic cost of living in their county¹. Our approach, grounded in the real-world challenges low- and moderate-income families and individuals face as they navigate a complex and often fragmented system, aims to equip families with the tools they need to move from crisis to stability, and from stability to long-term success.

Funding will be directed to agencies advancing long-term stability and opportunity for ALICE families and individuals. Grants will be awarded to nonprofit organizations contributing to United Way's core focus areas: Financial Security, Healthy Community and Youth Opportunity. Consideration will also be given to efforts that incorporate key enablers of success when these components directly support outcomes in the core focus areas and contribute to disrupting the cycle of instability.

IMPACT THEME: Empowering Pathways to Stability and Opportunity

Tagline: *Connecting People to Possibility*

United Way's goal is to disrupt the cycle of instability faced by ALICE families and individuals, recognizing that financial vulnerability, health challenges, and childhood development are deeply interconnected. To address the *instability cycle*, we focus on three core areas: Financial Security, Healthy Community, and Youth Opportunity.

I. FINANCIAL SECURITY

Financial literacy, debt reduction, resource education, supporting economic mobility, and workforce-linked services that help families build lasting economic security.

II. HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Programs that reduce food insecurity and improve access to nutritious, affordable food—including seniors and rural households—along with services that strengthen family and community health. These services can include building health literacy through nutrition education, expanding preventive care outreach, providing mental

¹ <https://unitedforalice.org/introducing-ALICE/indiana>

health support, managing chronic diseases, and increasing access to community-based wellness programs.

III. YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

We invest in the success of children and youth to interrupt generational poverty and build stronger futures. From birth through young adulthood, they need safe, enriching environments, well-equipped caregivers, caring mentors, and opportunities to grow up healthy and prepared for adulthood. When this happens, families and communities thrive. This work includes multigenerational initiatives that strengthen family well-being and create long-term pathways to education, employment, and health.

KEY DRIVERS OF SUCCESS

While these areas are not primary focus areas or funding priorities on their own, they are critical support that enable lasting stability for families and communities. United Way will consider these drivers in grant applications only when they clearly contribute to advancing our overarching goal of building financial security, healthy community, and youth opportunity. In other words, investments in the following key drivers will be evaluated **based on their direct impact in strengthening the core focus areas and disrupting the cycle of instability.**

- **Stable Housing:** Critical to family financial stability, health, and children's academic continuity
- **Reliable Transportation:** Necessary to access employment, childcare, food, education, and healthcare
- **Affordable Childcare:** Enables caregivers to work or pursue education while supporting child development. May be considered when addressing a temporary barrier such as the need for safe supervision or enrichment for children during work or training hours.
- **Language Access:** Increases program reach and effectiveness for diverse communities
- Others (when properly justified)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applicant organizations must meet the following:

- Provide service in at least one of the six counties we serve (Brown, Greene, Lawrence, Monroe, Orange, and Owen counties).
- Be a 501(c)3 or fiscally sponsored by one.
- Have a mission focused on helping families living at or below ALICE threshold².

² For information on the ALICE threshold, visit <https://www.unitedforalice.org/the-cost-of-basics/indiana>

- Offer programs/activities/services that align with at least one of United Way’s focus areas listed above.
- Have a non-discrimination policy or will adopt one if awarded funding (UWSCl can help with this).
- Request grant funding for up to \$25,000.00

The following types of organizations are not eligible to apply:

- Animal Welfare Organizations
- Hospitals
- Government or quasi-government agencies
- Organizations headquartered outside of the six counties we serve in the South Central Indiana region (Please note: local chapters of regional, state or national organizations can be considered if funds from this grant are spent locally)
- Organizations that regrant funding

If awarded, agencies will:

- Receive grant funds over a one-year grant period, distributed in 12 monthly installments.
- Provide ACH information to United Way to allow direct deposit of funds.
- Provide “Impact of a Dollar” examples showing what donor contributions achieve.

REPORTING

United Way of South Central Indiana believes that strong data and compelling stories are essential to shaping strategies that create real change for ALICE families and individuals. To move the needle forward together, we must consistently collect both quantitative and qualitative information. Reporting not only demonstrates the impact of your work but also strengthens UWSCI’s ability to communicate results with donors, partners, and the community.

With this purpose in mind, UWSCI has established the reporting requirements below. These expectations are designed to ensure accountability, highlight community impact, and support our shared goal of advancing long-term stability for ALICE households.

Annual Impact Report

All funded agencies must submit an Annual Impact Report during the last week of January using the UWSCI template. The template will be provided at least three weeks prior to the submission deadline.

Agencies are responsible for:

- **Collecting and Reporting Data**
 - Number of unduplicated clients served.
 - Demographic information (employment/retirement status, income level, etc., if collected).
 - Outcome measures related to Financial Security, Healthy Community and Youth Opportunity.
 - Other indicators agreed upon the grant approval.
- **Providing Narrative Information**
 - Brief description of any anticipated organizational or program changes.
 - At least one **impact story**, and 3-5 photos with the appropriate consent.
 - For existing programs, please provide photos from the beginning of the grant period.
- **Confirming Compliance**
 - Counterterrorism compliance certification.
 - Confirmation of tax-exempt status and governance documents (or note of changes).
 - Annual Board Chair signature to certify the report.

METRICS

Agencies are encouraged to select from the metrics provided below that align with their programs. In addition, applicants may propose their own metrics that best reflect the unique impact of their work, provided they clearly demonstrate a connection to United Way's core focus areas: Financial Security, Healthy Community, and Youth Opportunity.

REQUIRED INDICATORS

- Total number and/or percentage of unduplicated ALICE individuals or households served
 - Suggested Disaggregation: By county, race/ethnicity, gender, income level, family size, housing status.
 - Percentage of clients who are employed or retired (if you gather or can confidently estimate this)
 - Percentage of clients who are low to moderate income (if you gather or can confidently estimate this)
- Total number and/or percentage of participants who report increased stability or reduced barriers.
 - This indicator allows programs to define what stability means in context (e.g., housing secured, food access improved, job retained, etc.)
 - For example:
 - Financial literacy → fewer payday loans
 - Youth mentorship → improved attendance/stability at school
 - Health programs → consistent access to medicine or food

SUGGESTED INDICATORS

Financial Security

- Total number of individuals who received job skills training
- Total number of individuals who accessed financial services, products, and education (e.g., free tax prep, savings accounts, public benefits)
- Number and/or percentage of individuals provided employment services who gained employment
 - Number of individuals provided employment services
- Number and/or percentage of individuals served who increased their wages
 - Total number of individuals served in programs designed to increase wages
- Number and/or percentage of individuals served who increased their disposable income by accessing benefits and/or reducing their costs/expenses.
- Number and/or percentage of individuals who improved credit scores or reduce debt within 12 months
- Number and/or percentage of individuals that earn job-relevant licenses, certificates, and/or credentials
- Number and/or percentage of individuals served who obtained affordable, stable housing (rental), or home ownership
- Number and/or percentage of participants reporting decreased reliance on emergency financial assistance

Healthy Community

- Total number of individuals participating in physical activity and healthy food access/nutrition programs
 - Number and/or percentage of children/adults served who eat healthier, increase their physical activity and move towards a healthy weight
- Total number of individuals served with access to healthcare services and supports.
- Total number of individuals served with access to mental health services
- Number and/or percentage of youth/adults served who avoid or reduce risk-taking behaviors (e.g., alcohol/drug abuse, unprotected sexual activity)
- Percentage of reduction in food insecurity indicators (fewer skipped meals, greater meal consistency, etc.)
- Percentage of increase in preventive screenings (blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, etc.)

Youth Opportunity

- Total number of children (0-5) enrolled in high-quality early childhood programs.
- Total number of children served receiving literacy supports in K-3.
- Total number of families, caregivers served that are provided with information, resources, tools, trainings, and/or teaching skills to support their child's development (birth - 21)

- Total number of elementary/middle/high school youth served who participate in school and/or community-based out-of-school time programs and/or receive individualized supports
- Total number of youth participating in out-of-school time programs or mentorship initiatives
- Total number of youth who receive job skills training
- Number and/or percentage of children served who maintain satisfactory or improve school attendance
- Number and/or percentage of youth served who gain post-secondary employment, further education or credentials

Key Drivers of Success

- Number and/or percentage individuals adversely impacted and served that regain stability (i.e., reliable transportation, permanent housing, and employment)
- Number and/or percentage of caregivers able to attend training/work due to short-term childcare support
- Number and/or percentage of materials/programs translated or delivered in participants' primary language

FINDING OUR BEST FIT TO ACHIEVE THE GREATER GOOD

While some problems are easy to observe, many of their root causes lie beneath the surface. This diagram is provided as an example to help explain how we structure our thinking around the needs of, barriers faced by, and potential interventions for ALICE households and determine what our best “fit” in a partnership might be.

