



# Community Investment Standards and Practices for Funding and Reporting

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# Community Investment Overview

Brown County United Way's mission is to unite people, ideas, and resources to co-create community solutions that strengthen every person and every community in Brown County. Brown County United Way (BCUW) is committed to improving the health, education, financial potential, and connection of every person in our county. BCUW's investment processes and strategies provide funding to tax-exempt, community-based organizations for programs/projects/initiatives that serve Brown County residents and reflect this commitment.

We are grateful for the community members that trust and support our mission-driven community investment process. BCUW awards grant funding based on financial contributions from the annual fundraising campaign, donor designations, major gifts, and planned giving.

## Community Investment Process

We encourage organizations to submit proposals that clearly and concisely demonstrate how the organization is well-positioned to create impact in Brown County; and, how their program will contribute to achieving BCUW's goals in the community impact areas of health, education, financial potential, and community connection as measured by qualitative and quantitative data collection and outcomes.

## Community Investment Council Structure

Community investment councils inform and advise BCUW's funding processes and the development of strategies related to our community investment framework. People who live or work in Brown County may join community investment councils. The councils are comprised entirely of volunteers – issue experts and community members – who review proposals and make funding recommendations in favor of programs/projects/initiatives that implement strategies and best practices that will have the greatest impact on critical community issues.

## Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

The process of applying for and receiving a BCUW grant is competitive. While we cannot fund every proposal that is submitted, it is our intention to fund to the greatest extent possible proposals that excel in innovation, collaboration, and alignment to our community impact areas. Our goal is to make strategic investments in programs/projects/initiatives and organizations that are working to improve and enhance quality of life and promote a healthy, inclusive, and diverse community.

## Target Population

All BCUW funding opportunities are targeted toward impacting primarily those Brown County residents living at or below the ALICE® Threshold. ALICE®, defined as Asset Limited,

Income Constrained, Employed, includes people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, races, and ethnicities throughout our county, state, and nation. According to the most recent [ALICE® Report for Wisconsin](#), in Brown County, approximately one in three households lives below a basic cost of living threshold (the ALICE® Threshold). Households below the ALICE® Threshold are comprised of “poverty” households (defined as having annual household incomes which are at or below the Federal Poverty Level or FPL) and ALICE® households (households with annual income above the FPL but struggle daily to afford basic essentials such as housing, food, childcare, transportation, and healthcare).

### **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging**

BCUW’s deep commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) is embedded throughout our work. Accordingly, all grant proposals must demonstrate the applicant’s commitment to practicing nondiscrimination and actively promoting DEIB for all people.

### **General Application Process**

- BCUW RFPs typically open two months prior to the application deadline. See specific funding opportunities for more information.
- All applications and grant reporting information are contained within the [e-Clm Impact grant management system](#) on the BCUW website.
- Organizations and their proposals must meet certain standards to be considered for funding, including organization eligibility and financial strength and program/project/initiative design, impact, and budget.
- Initial screening: BCUW reviews the financial status of organizations requesting funding. This review includes an examination of one of the following: the organization’s financial statements, audit, or review. Audit and review require a copy of the management letter.
- The organizational and program budget financial information will also be reviewed.
- The deadline for organizations to demonstrate eligibility is specific to the funding opportunity.
- An organization must meet eligibility requirements in order to submit a proposal for review.
- An organization’s eligibility is confirmed by BCUW staff via the review of various documents and certifications provided by the organization prior to investment council review of proposals.
- Organizations must propose programming/activities which take place within Brown County and specific to a BCUW funding opportunity.
- Proposal reviews and grant award notifications are specific to individual grant cycle timelines. Proposals are reviewed and evaluated by investment council members. Council members then provide scores and funding rationales and recommend funding levels to BCUW staff and the Community Investment Committee (CIC) of the Board of Directors. CIC reviews these recommendations and rationales and makes funding decisions.

- Notifications are sent to applicants after final approval and will include funding amounts.

### **Rubric**

Investment council members consider and evaluate all information presented in the proposal during the scoring process.

Proposal evaluators will consider the following:

- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Alignment with BCUW's mission and funding priorities
- The case for funding
- Data collection and utilization
- Outcomes and outputs
- Budget and budget narrative

### **Funding Award Process**

Once a funding recommendation is approved:

- A grant award notification is issued by BCUW and to the funded partner or fiscal agent.
- A notification may contain an addendum listing funding conditions or contingencies to be addressed by the organization.
- Programs/projects/initiatives awarded grant funding are provided a funding agreement.
- Grant allocations are sent to the organization in accordance with the specific funding opportunity.
- Ongoing funding is dependent upon compliance with the funding agreement; community investment standards and practices; the timely compliance with the specifics of any addendum; and availability of funding.

### **Funding Communication**

Please refer to each funding opportunity for more information.

# Types of Proposals

Organizations shall identify whether a proposal is collaborative or individual as part of the application process.

## Individual Proposals

Individual proposals are defined as applications submitted by a single, eligible organization to support a program/project/initiative housed within the organization, in alignment with BCUW's mission and community impact agenda.

Applicants must adhere to the overall BCUW grant eligibility requirements and to the following eligibilities for individual proposals:

- The organization must adhere to nonprofit or other tax-exempt status requirements specific to the funding opportunity for which it is applying.
- The applicant solely assumes fiscal responsibility.
- The applicant is responsible for all granting processes.
- The applicant is responsible for program/project/initiative oversight and implementation.

## Collaborative Proposals

Applicants are encouraged to seek opportunities to collaborate with other organizations across sectors (public, private, and nonprofit or other tax-exempt organization), demonstrating partnership to address community needs, in alignment with BCUW's mission and community impact agenda.

Collaborative proposals must meet the following eligibilities:

- The collaborating organizations must adhere to nonprofit or other tax-exempt status requirements specific to the funding opportunity for which they are applying.
- All collaborating partners must be committed and engaged in the proposed program/project/initiative. The nonprofit or other tax-exempt status of another organization which is not a partner in the collaboration cannot be used for application purposes.
- The submitting organization is the designated fiscal agent for the proposal.
- All collaborating organizations are involved in:
  - Program/project/initiative implementation.
  - Shared contributions such as staffing and other resources (e.g., space, technology, supplies, etc.).
    - Organizations shall not supplant BCUW grant funding for program/project/initiative related expenses. Refer to the Helpful Terms and Definitions section for a definition of "supplanting."
- Collaborative applications require a joint letter of commitment from all collaborating partners.

# Eligibility and Documentation

Organizations that request and receive funding must continually meet and maintain compliance with BCUW eligibility requirements and funding standards and practices. This may require organizations to submit updated documents throughout the grant cycle. It is the organization's responsibility to notify BCUW of any and all changes to its compliance status and to provide information on time within e-CImpact.

## Initial Screen

Organizations are screened for eligibility via e-CImpact at the onset of the application process. If the organizational eligibilities are met, applicants will proceed with completion of the application process and submit the application according to the deadline outlined. If an organization does not meet one or more eligibility requirements, an applicant may reapply in the future as applicable.

## Articles of Incorporation

The organization is a nonprofit with a 501(c)(3) designation or other tax-exempt entity such as a governmental body, school district, municipality, or a community-based group in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service and/or the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions.

## Tax Exemption

The organization must provide documentation of the Internal Revenue Service ruling indicating that the organization or its fiscal agent is a tax-exempt organization.

## Governing Body

Governance of the organization must be vested in a responsible, active local board of directors. The board of directors must:

- Be comprised of unpaid volunteers and meet regularly.
- Strive to be inclusive and represent the community it serves.
- Assume responsibility for the organization's structure and function, including fiduciary, legal, policy making, planning, and reviewing responsibilities.
- Operate under clearly defined, board-approved bylaws.

## Non-discrimination

The organization must maintain board-approved, written policies of nondiscrimination and comply with all requirements of state and federal laws and regulations on nondiscrimination and equal opportunity, including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), with respect to board and organizational operations.

## **Financial Conditions and Accountability**

The organization must maintain accounting records in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. The organization is required to present a current, board-approved program budget demonstrating reasonable, diverse, and sustainable funding sources and expenses.

The financial statement, the financial statement review, or the financial statement audit are reviewed by the BCUW Finance Committee of the Board of Directors.

- Those organizations less than \$300,000 in REVENUE in a fiscal year may submit internally or otherwise generated statements of financial position and activities that have their governing board's approval.
- Those organizations between \$300,000 to \$500,000 in REVENUE in a fiscal year may submit a financial statement review from a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) who is not affiliated with the organization in place of a financial statement audit.
- Those organizations more than \$500,000 in REVENUE are required to complete a financial statement audit from a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) who is not affiliated with the organization.
- If no management letter is included in the financial statement review/audit, the organization's board officer or auditor must notify BCUW in writing that no letter was included.
- Organizations must upload yearly financial statement review/audits in e-CImpact under compliance, if available between RFP submission years.

## **Counterterrorism Compliance**

To comply with the USA Patriot Act, BCUW (and all United Ways) is required to:

- Affirm that BCUW funding will not be used toward terrorist activities and do not knowingly provide any kind of support to such persons or organizations.
- Screen all organizations receiving funds against federal terrorism "watch lists."
- Obtain certifications from funded organizations that they are not terrorists or a terrorist organization.
- Provide a certificate to donors (upon request) stating that BCUW does not and will not knowingly apply donated funds to provide any kind of support to terrorist organizations.
- When applying for funding, the organization must acknowledge that the organization complies with the USA Patriot Act.

## **Ongoing Compliance**

The following items must be kept current in e-CImpact:

- Current board of directors list: including board members' names, titles, affiliations, terms, board officer positions, and email addresses.
- The organization's financial statements, audit, or review (management letters when applicable).



- Counterterrorism compliance form.
- Update on program/project/initiative changes, including financial.
- Required reporting forms as appropriate to the funding opportunity.

Funded partners must demonstrate:

- Positive stewardship of BCUW funding.
- BCUW recognition/co-marketing specific to the funding opportunity.
- Compliance with all applicable guidelines, standards, and practices.

### **Ongoing Outcomes Review**

Investment councils receive and review required reports specific to the funding opportunity's cadence of review. The following is taken into consideration when current and future proposals are reviewed:

- The ability of the funded program, project, or initiative to demonstrate progress related to the outcomes and outputs outlined in the proposal.
- Compliance with current guidelines in the applicable grant cycle.

### **Financial Review**

BCUW's Finance Committee will review and assess financial information related to the organizational budget. BCUW may require additional information that clarifies organizational financials.

# Funded Program/Project/Initiative Conditions

## Local Impact

BCUW will fund only those programs/projects/initiatives impacting residents of Brown County – primarily those living at or below the ALICE Threshold – in alignment with BCUW’s mission and impact areas.

## Grant Requirements and Expectations

Ongoing funding is dependent upon the availability of BCUW funding per grant cycle; and compliance with the funding agreement and community investment standards and practices. Any grant funding that is awarded and unspent by the close of the grant cycle shall be returned promptly, without written request, to BCUW.

Funded programs/projects/initiatives shall collect the following information and report in a timely manner according to the due dates specified by BCUW:

### Outcomes/Outputs Measurement

The program/project/initiative must measure and report outcomes and outputs and any additional measures specified by BCUW.

Any changes to the program/project/initiative funded by BCUW dollars must be preapproved in writing by BCUW.

## Budgets

### Application Process

- The program/project/initiative budget and narrative must be completed as part of the funding application process.
- The specific need for BCUW dollars should be explained in the proposal narrative.
- The budget should demonstrate diversified funding sources.
- As part of the application process, the applicant shall explain how program/project/initiative dollars will be utilized if the amount of funding requested differs from the amount granted by a variance of 25% or greater.

### Upon Receipt of Grant Funding

- At the time of grant reporting, if the budget reflects an actual or projected deficit, the reason for the deficit shall be explained.
- Any proposed changes to the program/project/initiative budget relating to the use of BCUW dollars must be preapproved in writing by BCUW.

### **Program/Project/Initiative Changes**

- Funds shall be used solely for the granted purpose specific to the funding opportunity.
- The program/project/initiative must obtain prior written approval from BCUW for significant changes in activities, scope of service, and/or target population. Failure to do so may result in immediate discontinuation of funding.
- The program must notify BCUW of significant changes in staffing, at both organizational leadership and program staff levels, that impact program/project/initiative delivery.

### **2-1-1 Database**

- BCUW-funded programs/projects/initiatives are invited to provide and update organizational and program/project/initiative information within the 2-1-1 database.

### **Providing Feedback**

- BCUW values and encourages robust discussion with its partners. BCUW partners are encouraged to provide feedback to BCUW regarding the community investment process.

### **Noncompliance**

When working in partnership with BCUW, the funded partner agrees to comply with all BCUW standards and practices. If BCUW becomes aware that the standards and practices are not being followed by the partner, BCUW shall communicate with the partner in writing. Each situation will be evaluated on an individual basis and subjected to further review and resolution by BCUW.

# Marketing and Media

## **Recognition of Partnership with BCUW**

Funded partners are asked to publicly recognize their BCUW partnership in all marketing and media materials related to programs/projects/initiatives supported in by BCUW.

## **Partnership Visibility**

The BCUW logo should be placed on locally initiated written publications, digital communications, and media interactions of the partner. Please follow BCUW on social media and tag us in any posts related to funded programs/projects/initiatives.

BCUW will provide partnership recognition signage at no cost for display purposes at the program/project/initiative site(s).

## **Tours and Partner Spotlights**

Funded partners may be asked to participate in a program/project/initiative site tour and/or partner spotlight. The partner should help promote their tour/spotlight on social media. This can be accomplished by either sharing BCUW's post about the tour/spotlight or creating a new post and tagging BCUW.

# Reports and Reviews

## Reporting

All partners must submit reporting documents in e-CImpact specific to the funding opportunity that was awarded, by the specified deadline. All user information must be kept updated as necessary and reviewed. Reporting will include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Individual and household demographics
- Program progress and results
- Program financials
- Success stories
- Signed agreements
- Revised budgets
- Most recent financial statement review/audit
- Reports specific to the funding opportunity
- Other materials requested by BCUW staff or investment councils

## Deadlines and Extensions

### Deadlines

Organizations are responsible for meeting specific submission deadlines for all compliance documentation.

The filing dates of compliance documents and required reports are listed within the organizational profile in e-CImpact. The organization will be considered noncompliant due to its failure to submit the document/report within the allotted time.

Missing submission deadlines, and/or late and/or incomplete reports may negatively impact the organization's eligibility for current and/or future BCUW funding.

### Extension Request Process and Expectations

If any organization finds that it will be unable to meet a reporting deadline, it may request an extension of no more than 10 calendar days. The request must be submitted by email to the appropriate BCUW staff person at least five business days prior to the existing deadline and specify the reasons for the request and the proposed extension date.

Written approval or denial of requests for extensions will be sent to the organization via email. After review of the request, an email will be sent to the

primary contact as to whether the extension is approved or denied.

## **Reviews**

The purpose of the review process is to evaluate program/project/initiative progress and goals. BCUW investment councils review report submissions in e-CImpact specific to the funding opportunity that was awarded. Continuous communication, including in-person onsite visits, will also occur as a part of the review process.

# Helpful Terms and Definitions

**ALICE®:** Defined as Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed; includes people of all ages, backgrounds, and ethnicities throughout our county, state, and nation. ALICE® households earn more than the **Federal Poverty Level (FPL)**, but less than a basic cost of living (the **ALICE® Threshold**). Combined, the number of poverty and ALICE® households equals the total population struggling to afford basic needs.

**ALICE® Household Survival Budget:** The Household Survival Budget reflects the minimum cost to live and work in the modern economy. This budget is the basis for determining whether households are above or below the **ALICE® Threshold**, adjusted for different states, counties, and household types.

**ALICE® Household Stability Budget:** Reaching beyond the Household Survival Budget, the Household Stability Budget incorporates the higher costs for maintaining a more financially stable household over time, including a 10% savings category that can be used in an emergency, for additional education, or to buy a home.

**ALICE® Project:** The United for ALICE® Project provides a framework to measure and understand the struggles of the growing number of households who do not earn enough to afford basic necessities, a population called ALICE®. This initiative partners with state United Way organizations to deliver research-based data that can stimulate meaningful discussion, attract new partners, and ultimately inform strategies that affect positive change. The first [ALICE® Report](#) for Wisconsin was publicly released in September 2016.

**ALICE® Threshold:** Based on the ALICE® Household Survival Budget. Determines how many households are struggling to afford the basic necessities.

**Allocation:** Distribution of funding from Brown County United Way.

**Belonging:** A sense of fitting in and feeling valued.

**Best Practice:** A technique or methodology that, through experience, has been proven to facilitate better outcomes in a particular field.

**Community Impact Agenda:** BCUW's blueprint that defines the transformational change that we want to make within the community encompassing the impact areas of education, health, financial, and connection.

**Community Impact Areas:** Brown County United Way embraces the possibility that everyone should have the opportunity to equitably attain:

- **HEALTH:** Mental, physical, emotional, and social well-being for all in our community.
- **EDUCATION:** Pursuit and development of skills and information at all ages and stages of life.

- **FINANCIAL:** Realization of personal potential through available resources that allow individuals and groups to prosper in an economic system.
- **CONNECTION:** A sense of belonging, social support, meaning, and purpose.

Eligible programs/projects/initiatives must demonstrate alignment with one or more of these impact areas.

**Community Impact Indicators:** Indicators that guide the focus for BCUW's work.

- **Increasing Access:** Provides opportunities to support the health, education, and financial goals of all in our community. Creates pathways of continual wellness throughout the lifetime and community.
- **Ensuring Equity:** Ensures Individuals and groups are provided the support they need to meet their specific identified needs.
- **Reducing Stigma:** Addresses the historical and systematic negative impacts of discrimination that has denied individuals and groups health, education, and financial opportunities, treatment, and interventions and reduced the connection to community. Works to provide education and opportunity for stigma reduction and systematic change.

**Community Investment Standards and Practices:** Brown County United Way's set of expectations in order to receive and maintain grant funding.

**Diversity:** A range of people with various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds, with various lifestyles, experiences, and interests.

**Donor Designation:** A contribution of dollars directed by an individual or entity via United Way to a specific community-based organization. Designations may be directed to any tax-exempt organization in good standing.

**e-Impact:** The grant management system used by Brown County United Way to house and help facilitate funding applications, reports, and reviews.

**Equity:** Fairness and justice amongst groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically.

**Federal Poverty Level (FPL):** The federal poverty guidelines issued each year by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that determine individual and household public benefit eligibilities.

**Fiscal Agent:** An organization that receives Brown County United Way grant funding and agrees to all applicable conditions and responsibilities.

**Funded Partner:** An organization receiving Brown County United Way funding for a program, project, or initiative.

**Funding Opportunity:** An invitation to apply for a Brown County United Way grant to support a program, project, or initiative.



**Grant Cycle:** The timeframe within which funding is provided.

**Household:** A family or group of people living together.

**Household Survival Budget:** See ALICE® Household Survival Budget.

**Inclusion:** The practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.

**Investment Stream:** BCUW's targeted investments to improve conditions for individuals, the community, and society.

**Outcomes:** Benefits or changes for individuals or populations during or after participation in program activities reflecting a change in knowledge, attitudes, skills, behavioral changes, or changes in condition or status.

**Outputs:** Outputs are the direct products of program/project/initiative activities such as the number of participants served, number of classes taught, volunteer hours contributed, number of materials distributed, and other benchmarks that measure the volume/quantity of work accomplished.

**Program/Project/Initiative:** A set of activities, strategies, staffing, and services that focus on a target population to achieve a specific result or results, usually accompanied by a formalized process for measuring program/project/initiative performance.

**Qualitative Data:** Descriptive, interpretive, or subjective. Qualitative data can be used to explore experiences, opinions, and attitudes.

**Quantitative Data:** Numerical, countable, or measurable. Quantitative data can be used to test hypotheses, identify patterns, and make calculations.

**Reporting Requirements:** The information that is required to be collected for grant reporting to Brown County United Way.

**Review Process:** The process by which Brown County United Way applications and reports are evaluated.

**Request for Proposals (RFP):** The process developed to vet and select partners to receive funding.

**Stability Budget:** See ALICE® Household Stability Budget.

**Supplant:** Reducing funding already in place for a project, program, or initiative and replacing it with Brown County United Way funding.

**Strategy:** A plan to achieve one or more goals.

**Target Population:** A defined group of people that is intentionally being served by

particular programs, projects, or initiatives. A target population may be defined by geographic locations (e.g., residents of a neighborhood), by demographic characteristics (e.g., age, race, ethnicity, annual household income level, etc.), by relationship to an issue of concern (e.g., recent immigrants who are unemployed), or in other ways.

**Tax-Exempt:** Free from government taxation at federal, state, and local levels.