Background

United Way Elgin Middlesex (UWEM) creates real, lasting change to improve the quality of life in our communities. United Way identifies and understands the root causes of social issues; brings together research, experts and resources; initiates and invests in effective programs and services; and builds capacity in the non-profit sector.

We believe the root of all action for change is the ability to see and feel ourselves in the situations of others. We believe all people and all communities have the potential to overcome challenges. We treat people with dignity, fairness and equality. We make decisions based on the needs and expectations of our community and we believe it is imperative to measure and communicate our impact.

Poverty prevention and reduction

UWEM emphasizes poverty as a way to focus our work and impact in the community.

UWEM defines the state of poverty as one in which income is too low to provide for an adequate standard of living. Poverty is about more than income and is also about exclusion from resources, opportunities, and connections. For UWEM, poverty is not always about an income-test or an income cut-off line.

For the purpose of this application process, poverty reduction and/or prevention* projects must:

- Serve people who are living in poverty and/or;
- Serve people at risk of living in poverty and/or;
- Lessen the effects of poverty and/or;
- Prevent poverty and/or;
- Reduce the incidence of poverty in our community and/or;
- Address the root causes of poverty.

Agencies must present evidence and/or descriptive information to identify how the proposed project reduces or prevents poverty in at least one of the following ways:

1. Target population
   - The project prioritizes service to a specific group of people who are experiencing poverty or are at risk of experiencing a higher incidence of poverty than the general population. This could be based on demographics, a geographic area, etc.

   and/or

2. Project design and impact
   - The project lessens the effects of poverty and/or;
   - The project prevents poverty and/or;
   - The project helps break the cycle of generational poverty and/or;
   - The project helps people move out of poverty and/or;
   - The project creates systems change that reduces the incidence of poverty in our community.

Alignment to UWEM Community Impact Strategy
UWEM focuses on three impact areas through a poverty and equity lens:

- From poverty to possibility - Meeting basic human needs and supporting people in moving out of poverty
- All that kids can be - Helping children and youth reach their full potential
- A strong community with resilient & healthy people - Supporting personal well-being and strengthening communities

The UWEM Community Impact Strategy outlines four strategies to create social change in our community. These strategies are:

- Ignite awareness and understanding of the root causes of social challenges
- Inspire contributions of dollars, influence, time and knowledge for social change
- Influence systems and policies through advocacy
- Invest resources in programs, services and community convening

In addition to meeting poverty reduction and/or prevention* requirements, the project must align with one impact area in the UWEM Community Impact Strategy. A project may have several objectives and may fit under more than one of the impact areas. Agencies must select one impact area by considering the following:

- Choose the area that most clearly aligns with the primary focus of the project
- Choose the area for which the agency has the best ability to measure and report on. Successful applicants will be required to report outputs and outcomes for the impact area.

Community Fund funding streams

As part of our investment strategy, UWEM makes three funding streams available through the Community Fund:

- Core agency funding (Launch date: TBD) will provide general operating and program funding for core agencies that are key to a strong social safety net in Elgin Middlesex and that have a primary goal of preventing and reducing poverty.
- Program funding (Launched Fall 2021) will support evidence-based poverty reduction and prevention programs and services in Elgin and Middlesex.
- Project funding (Launching: Winter 2022) will provide one-time funding for time-bound projects that meet stated criteria.

Grant framework

- The project funding stream provides one-time grants.
- Grants will be in the amount of $5,000 to $15,000.
- Project activities may include but are not limited to:
  - Pilot programs
  - Program testing
  - Program start-up costs
  - Research
  - Organizational capacity building
- Funding agreements will start after April 1, 2022 and end on or before April 1, 2023.
- Funding will be provided for projects operating between May 1, 2022 and March 30, 2023.
- Agencies may apply for one project in this funding stream.
- Priority will be given to projects where UWEM is the sole funder.
• Funding will be provided one-time only and is not renewable.

**Eligible organizations**

The UWEM Community Fund – Project funding stream is open to all registered charities and qualified donees meeting stated criteria. Check the Canada Revenue Agency list of qualified donees by clicking here. Organizations must be providing service in Elgin Middlesex and preference will be given to organizations located in Elgin Middlesex.

**Host organizations**

A registered charity or other qualified donee can act as a host organization for a nonprofit organization that does not have charitable status and is not a qualified donee as defined by Canada Revenue Agency. In this case, the host organization will enter into a funding agreement with UWEM and assume financial and legal responsibility for the funded project including reporting requirements and agency expectations. Funding will be provided to the host organization.

**Eligible expenses**

Eligible expenses include:

• Wages and employment-related costs for project staff
• Fees for professional service
• Accommodation and supports for project staff, volunteers and project participants
• Project materials and supplies
• Printing and communication
• Travel costs for staff and volunteers
• Utilities, insurance, and rental of premises where project occurs
• Lease, purchase and maintenance of project equipment
• Administrative costs including evaluation, data collection, and other administrative costs directly associated with the project.

**Exclusions**

United Way Elgin Middlesex does not fund the following:

• Organizations that do not have charitable status and are not a qualified donee as defined by Canada Revenue Agency
• Individuals, including fees for travel to conferences, etc.
• Foundations, unions and professional associations
• For-profit organizations
• Organizations whose purpose is solely related to political activity
• Organizations that could be deemed discriminatory, as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code
• Organizations without a clear delineation between religion and community service as evidenced in the organization’s bylaws

United Way Elgin Middlesex funds may not be used for the following project costs/activities:

• Fundraising events
• Public education or awareness programs
• Conferences, films or videos
• Projects/services operating outside of Elgin Middlesex
• Projects/services not primarily focused on poverty reduction and/or prevention* as defined in this document
- Projects/services that could be deemed discriminatory, as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code
- Deficit or emergency funding
- The principal portion of mortgage payments or depreciation of buildings and equipment
- Capital campaigns or capital expenditures
- Religious activities
- Partisan political activity as defined by Canada Revenue Agency
- General operating funds for the purpose of organizational stability and/or COVID-19 pandemic recovery

Overall criteria

- Project aligns with UWEM’s Community Impact Strategy
- Project reduces or prevents poverty* in our community
- Project is led by an organization that is sustainable, stable and strong

Specific criteria

Eligibility

- The organization is a registered charity or qualified donee as defined by Canada Revenue Agency
- The organization has an active Board of Directors
- The organization has financial statements that have been audited by a licensed public accountant or, for those with annual revenues less than $250,000, an annual financial review.
- The organization has the capacity to fulfill UWEM reporting and outcome measurement requirements
- The organization operates in Elgin Middlesex
- Organization complies with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws and does not infringe upon any right under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Project design & impact

- The project reduces and/or prevents poverty* in Elgin Middlesex
- The project produces outcomes aligned with UWEM Community Impact Strategy
- The project takes a strong partnership/collaborative approach (if appropriate and needed)
- The organization is connected to the local coordinated social services system* (if appropriate and needed)

Equity

- The organization serves one or more equity-seeking populations*
- The organization operates using the principle of ‘nothing for us without us’*

Financials

- The organization is financially sustainable
- All sources of combined project funding do not exceed 100% of required project costs
- The project budget appears sound (i.e. sufficient revenue, balanced, reasonable expenses)
- The project budget includes operating expenses only
- The project budget includes expenses that support accessibility and inclusion appropriate to the population(s) being served (if appropriate and needed)
**Agency partnerships & investment committee**

Volunteers play a critical role in all UWEM funding allocation processes. The Agency partnerships & investment (API) committee is comprised of local volunteers who support the application review process, provide funding recommendations to the Board of Directors, and support the ongoing review of UWEM Community Fund investments on behalf of our donors. Additional volunteers are recruited to support the API committee for the funding allocations process as needed. The API committee and allocation volunteers are supported by and work alongside UWEM staff.

**Application process**

The application portal will open on or before February 1, 2022. Eligible organizations will complete a funding application. Information provided in the application will be used to make funding decisions.

All applications will be reviewed by a committee comprised of United Way staff and volunteers. The API committee will make funding recommendations to the UWEM Board who, in turn, will make final funding decisions.

All applicants will receive notification of funding decisions before May 31, 2022.

**Expectations of funded agencies**

Successful project funding stream recipients will be expected to:

- Meet the requirements of the funding agreement
- Connect UWEM to project participants/past participants to participate in media, events and/or donor engagement* activities (where appropriate)
- Report on project results as outlined in UWEM funding agreement

**Measurement framework**

As part of reporting, funded agencies will be required to submit data related to indicators included in the UWEM Community Fund measurement agreement and/or other agreed upon indicators. Prior to finalizing the funding agreement, indicators will be selected by UWEM and the funded agency to reflect the objectives of the project. Reported data will be aggregated and used by UWEM for external communication, donor stewardship and community planning.

**Reporting**

Funded agencies will be required to submit a final report highlighting expenditures and outcomes for the project. Funded agencies may need to provide additional information including but not limited to testimonials, client stories, semi-annual reports of successes and challenges, etc.

**Timelines**

Applications must be submitted in United Way’s online application system. These are the key activities with timelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information session</td>
<td>January 25, 2022 1:30 – 2:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application opens</td>
<td>February 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application deadline</td>
<td>February 15, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notification of funding decisions</td>
<td>May 31, 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Application support

UWEM is committed to supporting applicants throughout the application process.

An online information portal is available with supporting documentation including an applicant guide, FAQs and more:
www.unitedwayem.ca/whatwedo/community-fund-grants

For technical assistance and questions contact:
Jennie Malone, Community Impact Specialist
jmalone@unitedwayem.ca

* Please see Appendix 1: Definitions for explanation of this term.
APPENDIX 1: Definitions

Project
A project is a group of clear, related, complementary activities that are intended to achieve a desired outcome. The scale of a project can vary but must have a clear timeline with a defined beginning and end.

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Equity-seeking populations
Poverty and other social challenges impact everyone, but some groups and communities are disproportionately impacted because of deeply embedded social and structural inequities. The ongoing legacy of systemic discrimination and racism continues to influence our current system of laws, our institutions, and our culture. As a result, many people in the community are denied opportunities to reach their full potential. These populations are considered to be equity-seeking.

For the purpose of this application process, UWEM has prioritized the following equity-seeking populations* (in no specific order):

- People with low income or living in poverty including children and youth
- Indigenous peoples
- Racialized communities
- People experiencing homelessness
- Immigrants and refugees
- People who live in rural or remote communities
- Women and girls
- People experiencing intimate partner or gender-based violence
- People living with mental illness and/or addiction
- Persons with disabilities
- People who identify as LGBTQ2S+ or non-binary

Principle of ‘nothing for us without us’
This principle recognizes that individuals with lived experience (and/or current project participants) know what is best for themselves and their community, and that their participation is integral to the success of the project. Therefore, when the principle is used, the agency allows the needs and aspirations of the people being served to guide their work by providing meaningful opportunities for participation in project planning, leadership, evaluation, promotion, etc.
Coordinated social services system
An efficient and effective social services system that allows individuals and families to receive the programs and services they need and fully participate in their community.