



Mile High United Way



*Where Possibility Takes Root*

# STRATEGIC INVESTMENT GRANTS

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Due date to submit financial, overview, and demographic information online  
and select the date/time for a Zoom application call:

5:00 p.m. on March 3, 2025

# A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Dear Community Partners,

As we embark on a new chapter of collaboration and impact, I want to express our deep gratitude and admiration for your resilience. You, our partners, have consistently met challenges with creativity, strength and an unwavering commitment to our shared goal of a community united to create opportunities for all.

This resilience is especially critical in these uncertain times. Yet, as we look ahead, we are reminded that uncertainty has often been the catalyst for transformative action. It was during such a time in 1887 that Frances Wisebart Jacobs and her fellow visionaries laid the foundation for what would become United Way. Their audacious belief in the power of bringing people together to solve our most pressing issues, paved the way for over 137 years of impactful work.

Today, we honor that legacy in part through our Strategic Investment Grants. These grants are not just funding opportunities - they are the fertile soil **where possibility takes root**. Building on the groundwork laid by Wisebart Jacobs and her peers, we aim to spark solutions that address the most pressing needs of our time while empowering organizations like yours to innovate, sustain, and thrive.

We invite you to join us in this next chapter. Together, let us nurture the seeds of hope, creativity, and action, ensuring that every person, every family and every neighborhood has the chance to flourish.

Thank you for all you do to uplift and transform our community. It is your work that inspires and fuels ours.

In partnership,



Christine Benero  
President and CEO

## OUR VISION

A community united to create opportunities for all.

## OUR MISSION

Uniting people, ideas, and resources to advance the common good.

## WHAT WE DO

Working side-by-side with the community, Mile High United Way takes on critical human services issues facing our seven-county footprint of Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson counties. For the 2025-2027 grant cycle, our priority will continue to be placed on basic needs services (access to housing, access to food, tax preparation, and legal services), out-of-school time, and early childhood education.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

WE BELIEVE every person who calls Colorado home deserves the opportunity to thrive

WE BELIEVE every young child deserves a fair start

WE BELIEVE every child should be reading at grade level by the end of third grade

WE BELIEVE every young person should graduate from high school and have pathways to the job market or higher education

WE BELIEVE every family should be economically stable

WE BELIEVE in community

WE BELIEVE in neighborhoods

WE BELIEVE in authentic community engagement to drive our work

WE BELIEVE in the power of diverse and inclusive voices

WE BELIEVE in data

WE BELIEVE we are stronger when we are united

## OUR COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



### GIVING ALL CHILDREN A STRONG START IN LIFE

Ensuring all children in our community are able to enter kindergarten ready to succeed.



### SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Building educational success through partnerships schools, families and communities.



### CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

Ensuring people can meet their basic needs and have opportunities to move toward economic success.

# STRATEGIC INVESTMENT GRANT OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Strategic Investment Grant (SIG) opportunity is our flagship grantmaking program investing in eligible nonprofit organizations across the seven-county Metro Denver area. These organizations are an extension of our mission in the community.

The goal of this Strategic Investment Grant opportunity is to focus investments on strengthening organizations whose work aligns with our overarching strategy to provide high-quality early childhood education, high-quality out-of-school time programming and access to housing, food, legal services, and tax preparation. Strategic Investment Grants are awarded through a competitive, community-driven process.

## **EQUITY-FOCUSED:**

Over the years, our community, including everyone with whom we work and partner, has been our greatest teacher in advancing social justice and equity. From this learning, we've grown to adapt alongside the community, allowing ourselves to be led and informed by its needs while recognizing the privilege of our role. This perspective strengthens our ability to serve and fulfill our mission.

Through this funding opportunity, we are committed to addressing disparities in resources, opportunities, and outcomes for all individuals and communities, with a particular focus on those historically marginalized and under-resourced.

Additionally, the application emphasizes Representation. Beyond understanding your organization's efforts to enhance Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, we seek to learn how your leaders and decision-makers reflect the communities you serve.

## **COORDINATED IMPACT:**

The Strategic Investment Grants team has the privilege of learning about the challenges and triumphs of our nonprofit partners through their reports and site visits. Gathering this information helped us better understand what organizations were experiencing. However, we believe the information would be more valuable if shared with other nonprofits. We brought together groups of partner organizations to talk about the challenges they faced and the creative ways in which they addressed some of those challenges. The peer exchange was powerful: organizations expressed that prior to the meetings they felt alone in their struggles and that the creative solutions discussed led to strong collaborative efforts. As a result, we decided it is imperative that we create opportunities for more peer interaction, to bring about learning and

support.

- This RFP is an updated version of a co-created document that engaged approximately 50 nonprofit organizations.
- Among other things, organizations contributed to the creation of the goals for each of our funding areas and advised on reporting indicators.
- Funded organizations will convene once during each grant year to share progress toward the goals, engage in peer learning, commit to shared accountability, and participate in capacity building offerings designed to strengthen organizations and the positive impact they have on the communities they serve.

We call this Coordinated Impact: the synchronized efforts of many organizations progressing toward a shared community goal. This approach is designed to strengthen partnerships; enhance the work of each organization across multiple domains such as equity, leadership, and program evaluation; align efforts toward shared community goals; and better serve historically marginalized and under-resourced communities.

**Community Goals:** These co-created goals are what we will be working toward throughout this grant period. Organizations eager to work with us and show progress toward the selected goal through their work are welcome to submit an application for funding.

The goals are intentionally broad to accommodate multi-pronged approaches, multiple layers of programs, and the various programs that exist to address the needs of a diverse population in an equitable way.

**Convenings:** One meeting per grant year, per issue area, and will replace traditional written reports. In addition to learning how each organization is progressing toward their selected community goal, we will also be addressing some of the challenges we learned about during reporting and site visits. These include:

- Funding cliffs
- Diversifying funding sources
- Staff retention, recruitment, and burnout
- Uncertain political and economic climate

**Issue areas:** Using reporting data, 211 information, and community reports, we selected six issue areas for funding, under three categories:

#### 1. Basic Needs

- Access to Housing
- Access to Food
- Legal Services



- Tax Preparation
- 2. Out-of-School Time
- 3. Early Childhood Education

All the above fall under our vision: A Community United to Create Opportunities for All.

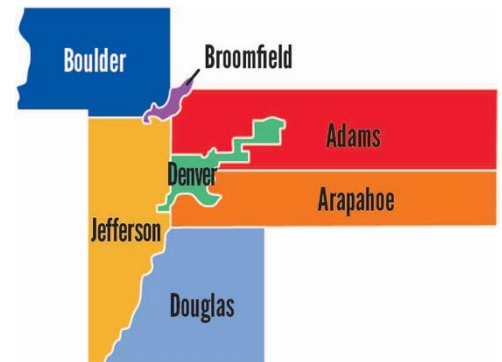
## A COMMUNITY UNITED TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.

ACCESS TO HOUSING	ACCESS TO FOOD	LEGAL SERVICES	TAX PREP	OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME	EARLY CHILDHOOD
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We have been actively wrestling with and reimagining the future of our grant investments. Coordinated Impact, this RFP, and our community goals are ambitious, and we believe this is what is needed. We invite you to join us.

### GEOGRAPHY:

We welcome any eligible organization serving the seven- county Metro Denver community (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson counties) to submit a proposal aligned with the funding priorities detailed in this document.



### FUNDING PERIOD:

This is a two-year funding cycle that begins July 1, 2025, and ends June 30, 2027.

- Year one funding: July 15, 2025 – June 30, 2026
- Year two funding: July 15, 2026 – June 30, 2027  
Funding for the second year is contingent on available funds and grantee performance. Each funding year is contracted separately.

# Apply for funding if your organization's services align with the following:

## ACCESS TO HOUSING

**GOAL:** Homelessness is preventable, rare, brief, temporary, and non-recurring.

STRATEGIES	EXAMPLES
Safety Net/ Immediate Needs	Drop-in centers Overnight shelters (including for survivors of domestic violence)
Transitional/ Temporary supportive housing	Tiny Homes Home Sharing Transitional Housing
Affordable stable housing/ Permanent supportive housing	Permanent supportive housing Homeownership programs

## ACCESS TO FOOD

**GOAL:** Individuals and families have access to nourishing food, relevant to their cultural, medical, social, and/or situational needs.

STRATEGIES	EXAMPLES
Food banks and food pantries	Mobile trucks Community food pantries
Meal Delivery/ Congregate meals	Meals-on-wheels On-site meal service
Food rescue	Gathering donated and excess food, and distributing to families and nonprofits
Safety net/ Support programs	Enrolling eligible individuals in SNAP, WIC, or other supportive programs

## TAX PREPARATION

**GOAL: Improve the financial stability of individuals and families.**

### **STRATEGIES**

Provide access to free, high-quality tax preparation services

Help eligible taxpayers claim the tax credits and deductions to which they are entitled

Increase financial literacy and help taxpayers build their financial capacity

Maximize tax refunds and reduce tax liabilities

## LEGAL SERVICES

**GOAL: Individuals and families receive quality legal representation for civil legal issues.**

### **STRATEGY**

Providing civil legal advocacy services for: preventing evictions and foreclosures; immigration, migrant, and refugee services; and accessing benefits



# OUT OF SCHOOL TIME

**GOAL: Children ages 5-12 consistently engage in high-quality Out-of-School Time (OST) programs year-round or for the duration of the school year. OST programs deliver engaging activities that honor and respond to the needs and interests of participants and community, and ensure a physically, emotionally, and socially safe space that supports learning. At least 60% of children served receive at least 75 hours of programming.**

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES
<p>Out-of-School Time organizations deliver high-quality programs that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Held year-round or for the duration of the school year.</li><li>• Engaging and responsive to the needs of participants and the community, ensuring a physically, emotionally, and socially safe space that supports learning.</li><li>• At least 60% of children served receive at least 75 hours of programming.</li></ul>	Reading, math, or digital literacy programs
	STEM-focused opportunities
	Art-centered opportunities that develop social, life, and creative skills

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**GOAL: All children up to age 5 flourish through a high-quality, multi-faceted, layered, comprehensive, inclusive, and responsive early care and education approach.**

STRATEGIES	EXAMPLES
High-quality early learning center care	Licensed childcare facility providing full day care (at least 5 hours per day)
High-quality family, friend, and neighbor care training and support	Intensive training programs that support informal childcare providers (at least 100 hours of instruction)
Parent/caregiver learning and support	Parent As Teacher Programs (at least 40 hours per program year) Home Instructions for Parents of Preschool Youngsters – HIPPY (at least 80 hours of instructor-parent time per year)

## GRANT APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for funding, organizations must meet the following criteria:

- Qualify under the IRS Code as a tax-exempt, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and be a legally established public entity in good standing with the Colorado Secretary of State. This includes organizations with fiscal sponsors that meet the 501(c)(3) or public entity eligibility guidelines as outlined.
- Collect basic demographic information on the clients they serve, the services they provide, and the outcomes they are achieving.
- Be able to aggregate and analyze data to determine program quality and effectiveness, to inform program improvement.
- Provide direct services.
- Certify that the organization complies with the USA Patriot Act.  
<https://www.fincen.gov/resources/statutes-regulations/usa-patriot-act>
- Be governed or advised by a volunteer Board and operate in accordance with bylaws.
- Have an annual independent audit for the most recent fiscal year completed by an independent Certified Public Accountant. If the organization's operating budget is under \$1,000,000, completed annual independent review and certified year-end financials approved by Board Chair and Executive Director may be submitted instead.
- Have accounting and financial reporting standards that are in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).
- Provide services in the seven-county Metro Denver area of Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson counties.

## GRANT APPLICATION INELIGIBILITY

Organizations demonstrating any of the following characteristics are ineligible to apply for funding:

- Organizations that are not tax-exempt under IRS Code section 501(c)(3), or that are not recognized as a legally established public entity. This includes organizations that do not have a fiscal sponsor that meets the 501(c)(3) and public entity eligibility guidelines as outlined.
- Organizations that have the IRS Private Foundation designation.
- Organizations/programs that cannot collect basic demographic information on the clients they serve, the services they provide, and the outcomes they achieve.
- Organizations that do not provide direct services related to our funding priorities.
- Organizations/programs requesting funds to provide direct medical care and/or treatment.
- Organizations that use funds for proselytizing and/or require participation in religious activities in exchange for services.
- Applications to support direct donations, scholarships or grants to individuals.

- Applications to support direct cash assistance, including providing gift cards.
- Applications to support endowment funds.
- Applications to support political campaigns.
- Applications for general operating support for K-12 schools, including charter schools.
- Applications for general operating support for school districts, and/or school foundations.
- Applications for general operating support for government entities.
- Applications to support field trips, summer camps, summer enrichment programs, one-time performances, or one-time projects/events.
- Organizations must be able to sign and abide by the requirements of our grant agreement (see example for [CCTC organizations](#) and [non-CCTC organizations](#)).

## KEY DATES AND PROPOSAL PROCESS

February 3, 2025	Strategic Investment Grant RFP released
February 21, 2025	Online <a href="#">application portal</a> opens <i>For organizations to upload financial, overview and demographic information</i>
February 10 – 27, 2025	Application <a href="#">Information Sessions</a> (online) <i>Join to get more information and ask your questions about the RFP</i> Application <a href="#">Bootcamp</a> (online) <i>Join for a masterclass on presenting your work through our Zoom format.</i>
February 3 – 28, 2025	Office hours <i>Call (303.561.2338) or email (<a href="mailto:mhuwgrants@unitedwaydenver.org">mhuwgrants@unitedwaydenver.org</a>) to talk through your proposal or ask us questions.</i>
March 3, 2025 (5:00 p.m. MT)	Due date to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload financial documents, organization overview, and demographic information</li> <li>• Select the date and time for your Zoom application call, based on your application funding area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Basic Needs</a> (Access to Housing, Access to Food, Tax Preparation, and Legal Services)</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Out-of-School Time</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Early Childhood Education</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
March 10 – April 11, 2025	Zoom application calls
June 2025	Final decision by Mile High United Way Board of Trustees Organizations notified as to the status of their application Grant agreements signed
July 2025	Funding begins upon completion of grant contract agreements

# PRIORITY POPULATIONS SERVED

Mile High United Way will fund organizations serving:

- At least 75 percent of individuals in families facing economic hardship and living at or below 300 percent of the most recent federal poverty guidelines.
- At least 75 percent of individuals from historically marginalized communities (see glossary for more information on historically marginalized).

# GRANT AWARD AMOUNT

The application does not request a grant amount from the organization. Successful applicant organizations will be funded within the award ranges below:

Organizations with operating budgets below \$250,000	Up to \$10,000
Basic Needs	Up to \$50,000
Out-of-School Time	Up to \$30,000
Early Childhood Education	Up to \$50,000

# TYPE OF SUPPORT

Organizations can apply for General Operating or Program support. The following organizations can apply for Program support only:

- Schools, school districts, school foundations.
- Government entities.

# REPORTING

Mile High United Way will provide a formatted online platform for your organization to enter required information. The information collected will include basic demographic information and mutually agreed upon indicators based on the funding request. Reporting indicators can be found in the application.

As part of the Coordinated Impact approach, funded organizations will meet once per funding year to share reporting measures, organizational challenges, and peer learning.

## ZOOM APPLICATION CALLS

We are excited to learn about your work through a Zoom conversation.

- Please select one time slot per organization for your call, based on the work for which you are applying (i.e., basic needs, out-of-school time, or early childhood education).
- The narrative questions of the application will form the basis of the call.
- Your narrative responses will be no longer than 25 minutes. This will be followed by a reviewer question period of no more than 10 minutes. The call will be no longer than 35 minutes.
- You are welcome to have up to four people on the call, including staff (not contractors or consultants), board, and client participants (if appropriate). **On SignUp Genius, please be sure that the names you enter will be the same for the people joining you on Zoom. These will be the only people we will be allowing into your Zoom call.**
- Each participant on the call will be expected to contribute to the application. No silent observers, please.
- If your organization requires translation services, you can indicate this when you sign up for your Zoom call. You can also have someone at your organization translate, as they may be more familiar with the language used in your work.
- Please join our application training sessions (info and bootcamp) for tips to have a successful Zoom call.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

We are committed to ensuring you present the strongest application possible. With that in mind, we welcome the opportunity to speak with you to provide clarification and guidance during this process.

To contact Mile High United Way about this Strategic Investment Grant opportunity, please call our dedicated information line, 303.561.2338, or email [mhuwgrants@unitedwaydenver.org](mailto:mhuwgrants@unitedwaydenver.org).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Preparing to submit a grant application can be a stressful time. To help keep your cup full, here are Mile High United Way staff-approved ideas to take care of yourself during this process:

[Calm](#) – App for meditation, mindfulness and stress reduction.

If Kaiser Permanente is your health provider, the Calm App is available free of charge.



[Yoga with Adriene](#) – Take a class on YouTube - From 5-minute flow workouts to 30-day challenges.

[Stress Baking](#) – A tasty way to deal with stress.

[Music Therapy](#) – Specially curated songs to get you ready for your Zoom call.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS (For the purpose of this RFP)

**Family** - Mile High United Way embraces an inclusive definition of family, dependent on every feature of a person's life, including beliefs, culture, ethnicity, and situational experiences.

**Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Care** - Informal in-home childcare is care provided in the child's or caregiver's home by a person who is a relative, friend, neighbor, babysitter, or nanny. Through this application we are looking to fund organizations that provide training and support to FFN care providers.

**Federal Poverty Guidelines** - Federal Poverty Guidelines, sometimes called Federal Poverty Levels (FPL), are income thresholds for households of a given size that are often used to determine eligibility for certain programs and benefits. Federal poverty guidelines are issued annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**Federal Poverty Guidelines for 300 Percent of FPL** - The measure of 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines means that an individual or family has income at or below 300 percent of the current poverty guideline for their household size. This is found by simply multiplying the current federal poverty guideline by four. Mile High United Way believes that a family with income at or below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines is often struggling to make ends meet.

Organizations eligible for this grant opportunity are those serving clients at or below 300 percent of the 2025 federal poverty guidelines. For more information, please see the table below or visit: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>.

Household Size	100% of FPL	300% of FPL
1	\$15,650	\$46,950
2	\$21,150	\$63,450
3	\$26,650	\$79,950
4	\$32,150	\$96,450

We recognize there are limits to data. Your organization may use measures other than to what we refer, to determine eligibility. Please note that all of the measures below fall within our criteria for serving clients at or below 300 percent of FPL.

Measure	Percent of Federal Poverty Guidelines/FPL
Area Median Income	Please see table below
CHIP (separate CHIP for uninsured children)	Up to 265%
School Lunch Program – Free Lunch	Below 130%
School Lunch Program – Reduced Price Lunch	Between 130% and 185%
Medicaid (Adults)	Up to 138%
Medicaid (Children 0-18)	Up to 147% of FPL
SNAP	Up to 130% of FPL

If your organization uses Area Median Income, please use the table below in comparison with the Federal Poverty Guidelines table to determine whether your clients are at or below 300 percent of Federal Poverty Guidelines (usually fall between 50 percent and 100 percent of the Area Median Income depending on number of persons per household).

2024 Area Median Income Limits (can be used for all seven-counties in the metro area)

2024 Area Median Income Limits (can be used for all seven-counties in the metro area)				
AMI	1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons
30%	\$27,400	\$31,300	\$35,200	\$39,100
50%	\$45,650	\$52,200	\$58,700	\$65,200
80%	\$71,900	\$82,150	\$92,400	\$102,650
100%	\$91,280	\$104,320	\$117,360	\$130,400

**GAAP** - Generally Accepted Accounting Principles is a collection of commonly followed accounting rules and standards for financial reporting. GAAP specifications include definitions of concepts, principles, and industry-specific rules. The purpose of GAAP is to ensure that financial reporting is transparent and consistent from one organization to another. For more information, visit the Financial Accounting Standards Board.

**High-Quality** – Within the early childhood field in Colorado, there is no agreed-upon definition of quality. It can refer to:

- A Colorado Shines rating of three (3) or higher.
- Low teacher-to-student ratios.
- Qualified, well-trained, skilled staff.

- A safe and healthy environment that supports children's health and well-being.
- Positive and supportive relationships between teachers and children.

Within the Out-of-School Time field in Colorado, there is no agreed-upon definition of high-quality. It can refer to:

- Qualified, well-trained, skilled staff.
- A safe and healthy environment that supports children's health and well-being.
- Positive and supportive relationships between teachers and children.
- Safe and inclusive environments.
- Engaging and meaningful activities.
- Opportunities for learning and growth.
- Alignment with participant and community needs

For this application, we would like you to tell us how your organization defines high quality.

**Historically Marginalized Communities** - Historically marginalized communities, those systematically excluded and discriminated against, face social, political, and economic inequities due to imbalances of power across economic, political, social, gender identity and cultural dimensions.

For the purpose of this RFP Mile High United Way is prioritizing the following groups and communities:

- Families and individuals with household incomes at or below 300% of the most recent Federal Poverty Level
- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)
- Women and girls
- People experiencing housing insecurity
- Older adults (People aged 65 and older)

## GRATITUDE

We continue to be in awe of how our nonprofit partners show up in service to our communities. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to supporting the well-being of children, individuals, and families. We look forward to learning about your work and partnering with you to create better opportunities for all.

